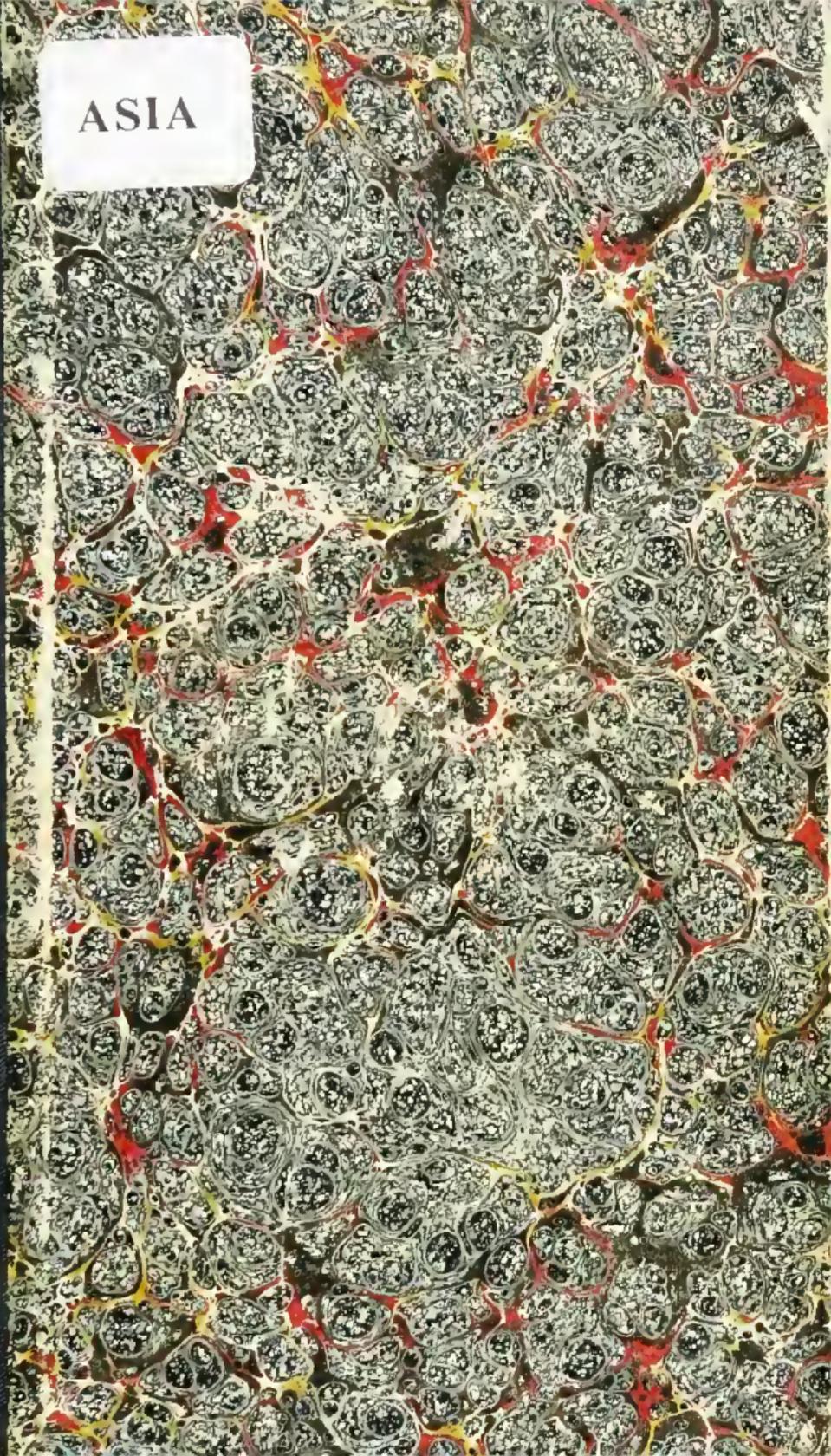


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FOLKLORE

IN

SOUTHERN INDIA.

PART I.

BY

PANDIT S. M. NATĒSA SĀSTRĪ,

GOVERNMENT ARCHÆOLOGICAL SURVEY.

BOMBAY :

EDUCATION SOCIETY'S PRESS, BYCULLA.

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FOLKLORE IN SOUTHERN INDIA

I.

THE STORY OF THE THREE DEAF MEN.

When any awkward blunder occurs from a person acting under a mistaken notion, there is a common proverb in Tamil to the effect that the matter ended like the story of the three deaf men—(*Muchechevidan kadaiyáy muḍindadu*). The following is the story told to explain the allusion :—

In a remote village there lived a husband and wife. Both of them were quite deaf. They had made this household arrangement, to cook cabbage with tamarind and soup without tamarind one day, and cabbage without tamarind and soup with tamarind on the other. Thus on every alternate day the same dishes were being repeated. One day, when taking his meal, the husband found the tamarind cabbage so very tasteful that he wanted to have it also next day, and gave instructions to that effect. The deaf wife did not understand the order. According to the established rule she cooked cabbage without tamarind next day. The husband when he sat down to his meal found his order disregarded and, being enraged thereat,

threw the cabbage against the wall, and went out in a rage. The wife ate her bellyful, and prepared tamarind cabbage for her husband.

The husband went out, and sat down in a place where three roads crossed, to calm down his anger. At that time a neatherd happened to pass that way. He had lately lost a good cow and calf of his, and had been seeking them for some days. When he saw the deaf man sitting by the way, he took him for a soothsayer, and asked him to find out by his knowledge of *Jóshyam* where the cow would likely be found. The herdsman, too, was very deaf; and the man, without hearing what he was saying, abused him, and wished to be left undisturbed. In abusing him the husband stretched out his hand, pointing to the neatherd's face. This pointing the neatherd understood to indicate the direction where the lost cow and calf would be found. So thinking, the poor neatherd went on in that direction, promising to present the soothsayer with the calf if he found it there with the cow. To his joy, and by mere chance he found them. His delight knew no bounds. "That is a capital soothsayer. Surely I must present him with the calf." So thought he with himself, and returned with them to the deaf man, and pointing to the calf requested him to accept it.

Now it unfortunately happened that the calf's

tail was broken, and crooked. The man thought the herdsman was blaming him unreasonably for having broken the calf's tail, while he knew nothing about it, and so by a wave of his hand denied the charge. This the neatherd mistook for a refusal of the calf, and a demand for the cow. The neatherd said, "How very greedy you are! I promised you only the calf, and not the cow." The husband said, "Never; I know nothing of either your cow or calf. I never broke the calf's tail. Some other must have done it." Thus they were quarrelling without understanding each other for a long time, when a third party happened to pass by. Understanding the subject well, and desiring to profit by their stupidity, he interfered and said in a loud voice, and yet so as not to be heard by the deaf husband, "Well, neatherd, you had better go away with the cow. The Soothsayers are always greedy. Leave the calf with me, and I shall make him accept it." The neatherd, much pleased to have secured the cow, walked home, leaving the calf with the third person. When the neatherd had gone the passenger said to the deaf man, "You see how very unlawful it is for the neatherd to charge you with an offence which you never committed. It is always the case with neatherds. They are the biggest fools in the world! But never mind, so long as you have a friend in me. I shall somehow explain to him your innocence, and restore him the calf."

The husband, much pleased, ran home to escape from the supposed guilt. At the expense of the stupidity and deafness of both, the third passenger walked home with the calf.

The husband on his return sat down for his dinner, and his wife served him the tamarind cabbage. He happened to put his finger to the place where the cabbage without tamarind had previously been served on the leaf. On applying it to his mouth he found it so very sweet that he demanded that dish again. The wife replied to him that she had already emptied the pan. "Then at least bring me the cabbage that is sticking against the wall," said the husband; and the wife did accordingly.

Here ends the story. The latter portion is also said to be the explanation of a proverb that is prevalent in Tamil,—"*Ševuru kīraiyai vaḷichchu pōḍuḍi śuṇaiketta mūḷi*," meaning, "O thou feelingless deaf woman, give me at least the cabbage that is sticking on the wall." This proverb is applied to stubborn wives who would have their own way, and not obey their husbands easily among unrefined society.

II.

WHY BRAHMANS CANNOT EAT IN THE
DARK.

Among Hindûs, especially among Brâhman̄s of the Madras Presidency—and I now see from personal observation that it is the same in the Bombay Presidency also—there is a custom, while taking their meals, of leaving their food uneaten when it so happens that from any cause the light is blown out. Of course this could occur only in the night-time. Such mishaps now-a-days take place only in poor families sitting down to supper with a single light. Hence the following story, told as the origin of this custom, is being forgotten. It runs as follows :—

In a certain village there lived a Brâhman̄ who had an only daughter. She was deeply read in Saṅskṛit and was of the most charming beauty. He procured a husband for her as deeply read as herself. The betrothal had already taken place. Just after the girl attained her puberty a day was appointed for her nuptials ; and the *muhûrtta* or auspicious time was fixed at the 10th *ghaṭikâ* of that night. On that very evening the son-in-law went to a tank to perform his *Sandhyâ vandana* or evening prayers. It swarmed with crocodiles. People never went near it. The son-in-law, being quite new to the village,

entered the tank without knowing anything of the danger. Unfortunately there was none near to warn him. He had set his foot in the water when a crocodile caught him by the leg and began to drag him. That very night was fixed for his nuptials and a crocodile was taking him to feast on his flesh. He was extremely vexed at the calamity, and said humbly to his enemy, "My friend crocodile! Listen to my words first and then decide for yourself. A wife, the only daughter of an old Brâhman, is waiting for me to-night. If you eat me now you take me away without my seeing her, my father-in-law and other relatives. Their hearts may break at the news of my death on the very day of the wedding. They may all curse you. If, on the contrary, you leave me now, I shall go home, speak to my wife and others about the sad calamity that has come over me, and after embracing and taking leave of her will come to you for your supper at the 15th *ghaṭiká*. Till then leave me." The cruel crocodile, though very fond of human flesh and himself dying of hunger, spared him for a few *ghaṭikás* at his humble request. After extracting several oaths from him for his return in accordance to his promise the crocodile went into the water.

The son-in-law also went home. All his joys fled away; how could he be pleasant after his promise to the crocodile. Still, to give no

uneasiness to the aged parents of his wife he underwent all the ceremonies and entered the bed-room at the 10th *ghatiká*. Only 5 more *ghatikás* remained for him to live in the world, as he thought. He in a few words explained everything to his wife, and asked her permission. She showed no sign of sorrow, preached to him about the iron hand of fate, and that he must undergo what was written on his forehead. She most willingly gave him permission, and he returned to the tank even a *ghatiká* earlier and called the crocodile, who came and seized him.

At this moment a certain light glittered before the eyes of the crocodile and vanished. It was a woman that did it. The wife, after consoling her husband and preaching to him about the supremacy of fate, had accompanied him unobserved with a lighted lamp concealed in a vessel. Just when the crocodile applied its teeth to the leg of her husband, she took the lamp out, showed it before the crocodile, and quenched it. Nor did it go without its intended effect. The crocodile left the husband to himself and said, "You had better go now. I will never touch you after a lamp was quenched when I began my meals to-day." The husband was astonished at the device of his wife and still more at the faithful observance of a rule in an unreasonable beast. From that day it was fixed that men, who are

more reasonable, should never eat when the lamp is blown out.

Another story is told. In a remote village there lived a poor woman who laboured from morning till night in different houses and returned to her hut with two measures of rice. That quantity would serve for ten ordinary persons. Being extremely poor she used to keep no lamp, but cook her rice in the dark, only guided by the light of the fire. When she sat down for her meals even the light of the fire decayed. So she had to eat in the dark. Though she used the full two measures of rice that she brought every day her hunger was never satisfied. She was always in extreme want.

Now it so happened that she had a younger sister who was somewhat richer than herself. The younger came to see her elder sister. The former never used to be without a light, and so asked her sister to buy some oil that night and light a lamp. The elder was compelled by necessity to do so; for that she devoted a portion of her two measures of rice and returned home with great uneasiness and perplexity of mind as to how less than two measures would furnish their supper that night, while full two measures were found insufficient on former occasions for herself alone. The lamp was set for the first time in her house and she cooked the remaining rice. The younger sister was astonished to see her using so much

for two. The elder, thinking with herself that the younger would soon see her mistake, cooked everything. Two leaves were spread and they sat down to their supper. Not even a fourth part of the rice in the pot was consumed, but already they were satisfied. The younger sister laughed at the foolishness of her elder, who now said, "I do not know what magic you have in you. Every day I cook two measures of rice and fast the whole night, without finding them sufficient for myself. Now a fourth of less than two measures has satiated both. Please explain the cause." The younger sister, who was very intelligent herself, wanted to find out the cause, and asked next day to serve the meals without the lamp. Instead of eating she stretched her hand in front and caught a lock of hair. She asked the other at once to light the lamp, which being done there was a devil sitting before her. On being questioned how he came there he said that he was used thus to go to every one who ate without a lamp, and swallow his meals fast without leaving him a morsel. The elder sister perceived her mistake and used a lamp from that day. The demon ceased to come. She had abundance for herself and something to spare. So when the lamp is blown out devils are said to come and eat out of our leaves. Hence is the custom to rise whenever such mishaps occur.

III.

THE SOOTHSAYER'S SON.

जन्मप्रभृति दारिद्र्यं दशवर्षाणि बन्धनम् ।

समुद्रतीरे मरणं किञ्चित् भोगं भविष्यति ॥

Thus a Soothsayer when on his death-bed wrote the horoscope of his second son, and bequeathed it to him as his only property, leaving the whole of his estate to his eldest son. The second son pondered over the horoscope, and fell into the following contemplations:—

“ Alas, am I born to this only in the world ? The sayings of my father never failed. I have seen them prove true to the last word while he was living ; and how has he fixed my horoscope ! *Janma prabhṛiti dāridryam !* From my birth poverty ! I am not to be in that miserable condition alone. *Dāśa varshāni bandhanam* : for ten years, imprisonment—a fate harder than poverty ; and what comes next ? *Samudratīrē maraṇam* : death on the sea-shore ; which means that I must die away from home, far from friends and relatives on a sea-coast. The misery has reached its extreme height here. Now comes the funniest part of the horoscope. *Kiñchit bhōgam bhaviṣhyati*—that I am to have some happiness afterwards ! What this happiness is, is an enigma to me : To die first, to be happy for some time after !

What happiness? Is it the happiness of this world? So it must be. For however clever one may be, he cannot foretell what may take place in the other world. Therefore it must be the happiness of this world; and how can that be possible after my death? It is impossible. I think my father has only meant this as a consoling conclusion to the series of calamities that he has prophesied. Three portions of his prophecy must prove true; the fourth and last is a mere comforting statement to bear patiently the calamities enumerated, and never to prove true. Therefore let me go to Bânâras, bathe in the holy Gaṅgâ, wash away my sins, and prepare myself for my end. Let me avoid sea-coasts, lest death meet me there in accordance with my father's words. Come imprisonment: I am prepared for it for ten years."

Thus thought he, and after all the funeral obsequies of his father were over, took leave of his elder brother, and started for Bânâras. He went by the middle of the Dakhaṅ, avoiding both the coasts, and went on journeying and journeying for weeks and months, till at last he reached the Vindhya mountains. While passing that desert he had to journey for a couple of days through a sandy plain, with no signs of life or vegetation. The little store of provision with which he was provided for a couple of days, at last was exhausted. The *chômbu*, which

he carried always full, replenishing it with the sweet water from the flowing rivulet or plenteous tank, he had exhausted in the heat of the desert. There was not a morsel in his hand to eat; nor a drop of water to drink. Turn his eyes wherever he might he found a vast desert, out of which he saw no means of escape. Still he thought within himself, "Surely my father's prophecy never proved untrue. I must survive this calamity to find my death on some sea-coast." So thought he, and this thought gave him strength of mind to walk fast and try to find a drop of water somewhere to slake his dry throat. At last he succeeded, or rather thought that he succeeded. Heaven threw in his way a ruined well. He thought that he could collect some water if he let down his *chombu* with the string that he always carried noosed to the neck of it. Accordingly he let it down; it went some way and stopped, and the following words came from the well, "Oh, relieve me! I am the king of tigers, dying here of hunger. For the last three days I have had nothing. Fortune has sent you here. If you assist me now you will find a sure help in me throughout your life. Do not think that I am a beast of prey. When you have become my deliverer I can never touch you. Pray kindly lift me up." Gaṅgâdhara, for that was the name of the Soothsayer's second son, found himself in a very perplexing

position. "Shall I take him out or not? If I take him out he may make me the first morsel of his hungry mouth. No; that he will not do. For my father's prophecy never came untrue. I must die on a sea-coast and not by a tiger." Thus thinking, he asked the tiger-king to hold tight the vessel, which he accordingly did, and he lifted him up slowly. The tiger reached the top of the well and felt himself on safe ground. True to his word he did no harm to Gaṅgâdhara. On the other hand, he went round his patron three times, and standing before him, humbly spoke the following words:—"My life-giver, my benefactor! I shall never forget this day, when I regained my life through your kind hands. In return for this kind assistance I pledge my oath to stand by you in all calamities. Whenever you are in any difficulty just think of me. I am there with you ready to oblige you by all the means that I can. To tell you briefly how I came in here:—Three days ago I was roaming in yonder forest, when I saw a goldsmith passing through it. I chased him. He, finding it impossible to escape my claws, jumped into this well, and is living to this moment in the very bottom of it. I also jumped, but found myself in the first storey; he is on the last and fourth storey. In the second storey lives a serpent half-famished with hunger. In the third storey lies a rat, similarly half-

famished, and when you again begin to draw water these may request you first to release them. In the same way the goldsmith also may request. I tell you, as your bosom friend, never assist that wretched man, though he is your relation as a human being. Goldsmiths are never to be trusted. You can place more faith in me, a tiger, though I feast sometimes upon men, in a serpent whose sting makes your blood cold the very next moment, or in a rat, which does a thousand mischiefs in your house. But never trust a goldsmith. Do not release him ; and if you do, you shall surely repent of it one day or other." Thus advising, the hungry tiger went away without waiting for an answer.

Gaṅgâdhara thought several times of the eloquent way in which the tiger addressed him, and admired his fluency of speech. His thirst was not quenched. So he let down his vessel again, which was now caught hold of by the serpent, who addressed him thus:—"Oh my protector ! lift me up. I am the king of serpents, and the son of Âdisêsha, who is now pining away in agony for my disappearance. Release me now. I shall ever remain your servant, remember your assistance, and help you throughout life in all possible ways. Oblige me : I am dying." Gaṅgâdhara, calling again to mind the *Samudratîrê maraṇam*—death on the seashore—lifted him up.

He, like the tiger-king, circumambulated him thrice, and prostrating himself before him spoke thus:—"Oh, my life-giver, my father, for so I must call you, as you have given me another birth, I have already told you that I am Âdiśêsha's son, and that I am the king of serpents. I was three days ago basking myself in the morning sun, when I saw a rat running before me. I chased it. He fell into this well. I followed him, but instead of falling on the third storey where he is now lying, I fell into the second. It was on the same evening that the goldsmith also fell down on the fourth storey, and the tiger whom you released just before me fell down into the first. What I have to tell you now is—do not relieve the goldsmith, though you may release the rat. As a rule, goldsmiths are never to be trusted. I am going away now to see my father. Whenever you are in any difficulty just think of me. I will be there by your side to assist you by all possible means. If, notwithstanding my repeated advice, you happen to release the goldsmith, you shall suffer for it severely." So saying, the Nâgarâja (serpent-king) glided away in zigzag movements, and was out of sight in a moment.

The poor son of the Soothsayer who was now almost dying of thirst, and was even led to think that the messengers of death were near him, notwithstanding his firm belief in the

words of his father, let down his vessel for a third time. The rat caught hold of it, and without discussing, he lifted up the poor animal at once. But it would not go without showing its eloquence—"Oh life of my life, my benefactor: I am the king of rats. Whenever you are in any calamity just think of me. I will come to you, and assist you. My keen ears overheard all that the tiger-king and serpent-king told you about the Svarṇataskara (*gold-smith*), who is in the fourth storey. It is nothing but a sad truth that goldsmiths ought never to be trusted. Therefore never assist him as you have done to us all. And if you do you shall feel it. I am hungry; let me go for the present." Thus taking leave of his benefactor, the rat, too, ran away.

Gaṅgâdhara for a while thought upon the repeated advice given by the three animals about releasing the goldsmith, "What wrong would there be in my assisting him. Why should I not release him also." So thinking to himself Gaṅgâdhara let down the vessel again. The goldsmith caught hold of it, and demanded help. The Soothsayer's son had no time to lose; he was himself dying of thirst. Therefore he lifted the goldsmith up, who now began his story:—"Stop for a while," said Gaṅgâdhara, and after quenching his thirst by letting down his vessel for the fifth time, still fearing that some one might remain in the well

and demand his assistance, he listened to the goldsmith, who began as follows:—"My dear friend, my protector, what a deal of nonsense these brutes were talking to you about me; I am glad you have not followed their advice. I am just now dying of hunger. Permit me to go away. My name is Mânikkâsâri. I live in the East main street of Ujjaini, which is 20 *kô*s to the south of this place, and so lies on your way when you return from Bânâras. Do not forget to come to me and receive my kind remembrances of your assistance, on your way back to your country." So saying the goldsmith took his leave, and Gaᅅgâdhara also pursued his way north after the above adventures.

He reached Bânâras, and lived there for more than ten years, spending his time in bathing, prayers, and other religious ceremonies. He quite forgot the tiger, serpent, rat, and goldsmith. After ten years of religious life, thoughts of home and of his brother rushed into his mind. "Enough of the merit that I have secured till now by my religious observances. Let me return home." Thus thought Gaᅅgâdhara within himself, and immediately he was on his way back to his country. Remembering the prophecy of his father he returned by the same way by which he went to Bânâras ten years before. While thus retracing his steps he reached that ruined well where he released the

three brute kings and the goldsmith. At once the old recollections rushed into his mind, and he thought of the tiger to test his fidelity. Only a moment passed, and the tiger-king came running before him carrying a large crown in his mouth, the glitter of the diamonds of which for a time outshone even the bright rays of the sun. He dropped the crown at his life-giver's feet, and leaving off all his pride, humbled himself like a pet cat to the strokes of his protector, and began in the following words:—

“My life-giver! How is it that you forgot me, your poor servant, for so long a time. I am glad to find that I still occupy a corner in your mind. I can never forget the day when I owed my life to your lotus hands. I have several jewels with me of little value. This crown, being the best of all, I have brought here as a single ornament of great value, and hence easily portable and useful to you in your own country.” Gaṅgâdhara looked at the crown, examined it over and over, counted and recounted the gems, and thought within himself that he would become the richest of men by separating the diamonds and gold, and selling them in his own country. He took leave of the tiger-king, and after his disappearance thought of the kings of serpents and rats, who came in their turns with their presents, and after the usual formalities and exchange of words took their leave. Gaṅgâdhara was ex-

tremely delighted at the faithfulness with which the brute beasts behaved themselves, and went on his way to the south. While going along he spoke to himself thus:—"These beasts have been so very faithful in their assistance. Much more, therefore, must Mânikkâsâri be faithful. I do not want anything from him now. If I take this crown with me as it is, it occupies much space in my bundle. It may also excite the curiosity of some robbers on the way. I will go now to Ujjaini on my way. Mânikkâsâri requested me to see him without failure on my return-journey. I shall do so, and request him to have the crown melted, the diamonds and gold separated. He must do that kindness at least for me. I shall then roll up these diamonds and gold ball in my rags, and bend my way home." Thus thinking and thinking he reached Ujjaini. At once he enquired for the house of his goldsmith friend, and found him without difficulty. Mânikkâsâri was extremely delighted to find on his threshold him who ten years before, notwithstanding the advice repeatedly given him by the sage-looking tiger, serpent, and rat, had relieved him from the pit of death. Gaṅgâdhara at once showed him the crown that he received from the tiger-king, told him how he got it, and requested his kind assistance to separate the gold and diamonds. Mânikkâsâri agreed to do so, and meanwhile asked his friend

to rest himself for a while to have his bath and meals; and Gaṅgâdhara, who was very observant of his religious ceremonies, went direct to the river to bathe.

How came a crown in the jaws of a tiger? It is not a difficult question to solve. A king must have furnished the table of the tiger for a day or two. Had it not been for that, the tiger could not have had a crown with him. Even so it was. The king of Ujjaini had a week before gone with all his hunters on a hunting expedition. All on a sudden a tiger—as we know now, the very tiger-king himself—started from the wood, seized the king, and vanished. The hunters returned and informed the prince about the sad calamity that had befallen his father. They all saw the tiger carrying away the king. Yet such was their courage that they could not lift their weapons to bring to the prince the corpse at least of his father; their courage reminds us of the couplet in the *Child's Story* :—

“Four and twenty sailors went to kill a snail;
The best man among them dares not touch
her tail.”

When they informed the prince about the death of his father he wept and wailed, and gave notice that he would give half of his kingdom to any one who should bring him news about the murderer of his father. The prince did not at all believe that his father was de-

voured by the tiger. His belief was that some hunters, coveting the ornaments on the king's person, had murdered him. Hence he had issued the notice. The goldsmith knew full well that it was a tiger that killed the king, and not any hunter's hands, since he had heard from Gaṅgâdhara about how he obtained the crown. Still, ambition to get half the kingdom prevailed, and he resolved with himself to make over Gaṅgâdhara as the king's murderer. The crown was lying on the floor where Gaṅgâdhara left it with his full confidence in Mânikkâsâri. Before his protector's return the goldsmith, hiding the crown under his garments, flies to the palace. He went before the prince and informed him that the assassin was caught, and placed the crown before him. The prince took it into his hands, examined it, and at once gave half the kingdom to Mânikkâsâri, and then enquired about the murderer. He is bathing in the river, and is of such and such appearance, was the reply. At once four armed soldiers fly to the river, and bind hand and foot the poor Brâhman, who sits in meditation, without any knowledge of the fate that hangs over him. They brought Gaṅgâdhara to the presence of the prince, who turned his face away from the murderer or supposed murderer, and asked his soldiers to throw him into the *kûrûgriham*. In a minute, without knowing the cause, the poor Brâhman

found himself in the dark caves of the *kâragriham*.

In old times the *kâragriham* answered the purposes of the modern jail. It was a dark cellar underground, built with strong stone walls, into which any criminal guilty of a capital offence was ushered to breathe his last there without food and drink. Into such a cellar Gaṅgâdhara was pushed down. In a few hours after he left the goldsmith he found himself inside a dark cell stinking with human bodies, dying and dead. What were his thoughts when he reached that place? "It is the goldsmith that has brought me to this wretched state; and, as for the prince: Why should he not enquire as to how I obtained the crown? It is of no use to accuse either the goldsmith or the prince now. We are all the children of fate. We must obey her commands. *Daśavarshāṇi bandhanam*. This is but the first day of my father's prophecy. So far his statement is true. But how am I going to pass ten years here? Perhaps without anything to keep up my life I may drag on my existence for a day or two. But how to pass ten years? That cannot be, and I must die. Before death comes let me think of my faithful brute friends."

So pondered Gaṅgâdhara in the dark cell underground, and at that moment thought of his three friends. The tiger-king, serpent-king, and rat-king assembled at once with

their armies at a garden near the *kárágrīham*, and for a while did not know what to do. A common cause—how to reach their protector who was now in the dark cell underneath—united them all. They held their council, and decided to make an underground passage from the inside of a ruined well to the *kárágrīham*. The rat *rāja* issued an order at once to that effect to his army. They with their nimble teeth bored the ground a long way to the walls of the prison. After reaching it they found that their teeth could not work on the hard stones. The bandicoots were then specially ordered for the business, they with their hard teeth made a small slit in the wall for a rat to pass and repass without difficulty. Thus a passage was effected.

The rat *rāja* entered first to condole with his protector for his calamity. The king of the tigers sent word through the snake-king that he sympathised most sincerely with his sorrow, and that he was ready to render all help for his deliverance. He suggested a means for his escape also. The serpent *rāja* went in, and gave Gaugádharma hopes of delivery. The rat king undertook to supply his protector with provisions. “Whatever sweetmeats or bread are prepared in any house, one and all of you must try to bring whatever you can to our benefactor. Whatever clothes you find hanging in a house, cut down, dip the pieces in

water and bring the wet bits to our benefactor. He will squeeze them and gather water for drink ; and the bread and sweetmeats shall form his food." Thus ordered the king of the rats, and took leave of Gaṅgâdhara. They in obedience to their king's order continued to supply provisions and water.

The Nâgarâja said :—"I sincerely condole with you in your calamity ; the tiger-king also fully sympathises with you, and wants me to tell you so, as he cannot drag his huge body here as we have done with our small ones. The king of the rats has promised to do his best to keep up your life. We would now do what we can for your release. From this day we shall issue orders to our armies to oppress all the subjects of this kingdom. The percentage of death by snake-bite and tigers shall increase from this day. And day by day it shall continue to increase till your release. After eating what the rats bring you you had better take your seat near the entrance of the *kârâgriham*. Owing to the several unnatural deaths some people that walk over the prison might say, 'How unjust the king has turned out now. Were it not for his injustice such early deaths by snake-bite could never occur.' Whenever you hear people speaking so, you had better bawl out so as to be heard by them, 'The wretched prince imprisoned me on the false charge of having

killed his father, while it was a tiger that killed him. From that day these calamities have broken out in his dominions. If I were released I would save all by my powers of healing poisonous wounds and by incantations.' Some one may report this to the king, and if he knows it, you will obtain your liberty." Thus comforting his protector in trouble, he advised him to pluck up courage, and took leave of him. From that day tigers and serpents, acting under the special orders of their kings, united in killing as many persons and cattle as possible. Every day people were being carried away by tigers or bitten by serpents. This havoc continued. Gaṅgadhara was roaring as loud as he could that he would save those lives, had he only his liberty. Few heard him. The few that did took his words for the voice of a ghost. "How could he manage to live without food and drink for so long a time?" said the persons walking over his head to each other. Thus passed on months and years. Gaṅgadhara sat in the dark cellar, without the sun's light falling upon him, and feasted upon the bread-crumbs and sweetmeats that the rats so kindly supplied him with. These circumstances had completely changed his body. He had become a red, stout, huge, unwieldy lump of flesh. Thus passed full ten years, as prophesied in the horoscope—*Dāśavarshāni bandhanam.*

Ten complete years rolled away in close imprisonment. On the last evening of the tenth year one of the serpents got into the bed-chamber of the princess and sucked her life. She breathed her last. She was the only daughter of the king. He had no other issue—son or daughter. His only hope was in her; and she was snatched away by a cruel and untimely death. The king at once sent for all the snake-bite curers. He promised half his kingdom, and his daughter's hand to him who would restore her to life. Now it was that a servant of the king who had several times overheard Gaṅgâdhara's exclamation reported the matter to him. The king at once ordered the cell to be examined. There was the man sitting in it. How has he managed to live so long in the cell? Some whispered that he must be a divine being. Some concluded that he must surely win the hand of the princess by restoring her to life. Thus they discussed, and the discussions brought Gaṅgâdhara to the king.

The king no sooner saw Gaṅgâdhara than he fell on the ground. He was struck by the majesty and grandeur of his person. His ten years' imprisonment in the deep cell underground had given a sort of lustre to his body, which was not to be met with in ordinary persons. His hair had first to be cut before his face could be seen. The king begged for

giveness for his former fault, and requested him to revive his daughter.

“Bring me in a *muhūrta* all the corpses of men and cattle dying and dead, that remain unburnt or unburied within the range of your dominions ; I shall revive them all :” were the only words that Gaṅgâdhara spoke. After it he closed his lips as if in deep meditation, which commanded him more respect in the company.

Cart-loads of corpses of men and cattle began to come in every minute. Even graves, it is said, were broken open, and corpses buried a day or two before were taken out and sent for the revival. As soon as all were ready Gaṅgâdhara took a vessel full of water and sprinkled it over them all, thinking upon his Nâgarâja and Vyâghrarâja. All rose up as if from deep slumber, and went to their respective homes. The princess, too, was restored to life. The joy of the king knows no bounds. He curses the day on which he imprisoned him, accuses himself for having believed the word of a goldsmith, and offers him the hand of his daughter and the whole kingdom, instead of half as he promised. Gaṅgâdhara would not accept anything. The king requested him to put a stop for ever to those calamities. He agreed to do so, and asked the king to assemble all his subjects in a wood near the town. “I shall there call in all the tigers and serpents and give them

a general order." So said Gaṅgâdhara, and the king accordingly gave the order. In a couple of *ghatikas* the wood near Ujjaini was full of people who assembled to witness the authority of man over such enemies of human beings as tigers and serpents. "He is no man ; be sure of that. How could he have managed to live for ten years without food and drink ? He is surely a god. Thus speculated the mob.

When the whole town was assembled just at the dusk of evening, Gaṅgâdhara sat dumb for a moment and thought upon the Vyâghrarâja and Nâgarâja, who came running with all their armies. People began to take to their heels at the sight of tigers. Gaṅgâdhara assured them of safety, and stopped them.

The grey light of the evening, the pumpkin colour of Gaṅgâdhara, the holy ashes scattered lavishly over his body, the tigers and snakes humbling themselves at his feet, gave him the true majesty of the god Gaṅgâdhara. For who else by a single word could thus command vast armies of tigers and serpents, said some among the people. "Care not for it ; it may be by magic. That is not a great thing. That he revived cart-loads of corpses makes him surely Gaṅgâdhara," said others. The scene produced a very great effect upon the minds of the mob.

"Why should you, my children, thus trouble these poor subjects of Ujjaini ? Reply to me,

and henceforth desist from your ravages." Thus said the Soothsayer's son, and the following reply came from the king of the tigers; "Why should this base king imprison your honour, believing the mere word of a goldsmith that your honour killed his father? All the hunters told him that his father was carried away by a tiger. I was the messenger of death sent to deal the blow on his neck. I did it, and gave the crown to your honour. The prince makes no enquiry, and at once imprisons your honour. How can we expect justice from such a stupid king as that. Unless he adopts a better standard of justice we will go on with our destruction."

The king heard, cursed the day on which he believed in the word of the goldsmith, beat his head, tore his hair, wept and wailed for his crime, asked a thousand pardons, and swore to rule in a just way from that day. The serpent-king and tiger-king also promised to observe their oath as long as justice prevailed, and took their leave. The goldsmith fled for his life. He was caught by the soldiers of the king, and was pardoned by the generous Gaṅgâdhara, whose voice now reigned supreme. All returned to their homes.

The king again pressed Gaṅgâdhara to accept the hand of his daughter. He agreed to do so, not then, but some time afterwards. He wished to go and see his elder brother first,

and then to return and marry the princess. The king agreed ; and Gaṅgâdhara left the city that very day on his way home.

It so happened that unwittingly he took a wrong road, and had to pass near a sea coast. His elder brother was also on his way up to Bânâras by that very same route. They met and recognised each other, even at a distance. They flew into each other's arms. Both remained still for a time without knowing anything. The emotion of pleasure (*ânanda*) was so great, especially in Gaṅgâdhara, that it proved dangerous to his life. In a word, he died of jôy.

The sorrow of the elder brother could better be imagined than described. He saw again his lost brother, after having given up, as it were, all hopes of meeting him. He had not even asked him his adventures. That he should be snatched away by the cruel hand of death seemed unbearable to him. He wept and wailed, took the corpse on his lap, sat under a tree, and wetted it with tears. But there was no hope of his dead brother coming to life again.

The elder brother was a devout worshipper of Gaṇapati. That was a Friday, a day very sacred to that god. The elder brother took the corpse to the nearest Gaṇêsa temple and called upon him. The god came, and asked him what he wanted. "My poor bro-

ther is dead and gone ; and this is his corpse. Kindly keep it under your charge till I finish your worship. If I leave it anywhere else the devils may snatch it away when I am absent in your worship ; after finishing your *pūjā* I shall burn him." Thus said the elder brother, and giving the corpse to the god Gaṇēśa he went to prepare himself for that deity's worship. Gaṇēśa made over the corpse to his *Gaṇas*, asking them to watch over it carefully.

So receives a spoiled child a fruit from its father, who, when he gives it the fruit asks the child to keep it safe. The child thinks within itself, "Papa will excuse me if I eat a portion of it." So saying it eats a portion, and when it finds it so sweet, it eats the whole, saying, "Come what will, what will papa do, after all, if I eat it? Perhaps give me a stroke or two on the back. Perhaps he may excuse me." In the same way these *Gaṇas* of Gaṇapati first ate a portion of the corpse, and when they found it sweet, for we know that it was crammed up with the sweetmeats of the kind rats, devoured the whole, and were consulting about offering the best excuse possible to their master.

The elder brother, after finishing the *pūjā*, demanded from the god his brother's corpse. The belly-god called his *Gaṇas*, who came to the front blinking, and fearing the anger of their master. The god was greatly enraged. The elder brother was highly vexed. When the

corpse was not forthcoming he cuttingly remarked, "Is this, after all, the return for my deep belief in you? You are unable even to return my brother's corpse." Gaṇéśa was much ashamed at the remark, and at the uneasiness that he had caused to his worshipper, so he by his divine power gave him a living Gaṅgâdhara instead of the dead corpse. Thus was the second son of the Soothsayer restored to life.

The brothers had a long talk about each other's adventures. They both went to Ujjaini, where Gaṅgâdhara married the princess, and succeeded to the throne of that kingdom. He reigned for a long time, conferring several benefits upon his brother. How is the horoscope to be interpreted? A special synod of Soothsayers was held. A thousand emendations were suggested. Gaṅgâdhara would not accept them. At last one Soothsayer cut the knot by stopping at a different place in reading, "*Samudra tîrê maraṇam kiñchit.*" "On the sea shore death for some time. Then *Bhôgam lhavishyati.* There shall be happiness for the person concerned." Thus the passage was interpreted. "Yes; my father's words never went wrong," said Gaṅgâdhara. The three brute kings continued their visits often to the Soothsayer's son, the then king of Ujjaini. Even the faithless goldsmith became a frequent visitor at the palace, and a receiver of several benefits from the royal hands.

IV.

RAṆAVÎRASING.

Once upon a time in the town of V a ñ j a i m â n a g a r,¹ there ruled a king, named Śivâchâr. He was a most just king, and ruled so well that no stone thrown up fell down, no crow pecked at the new drawn milk, the lion and the bull drank water from the same pond, and peace and prosperity reigned throughout the kingdom. Notwithstanding all these blessings, care always sat on his face. The fruit which makes life in this world sweet, the redeemer to him from the horrible Naraka of *Put*, a Putra, he had not. His days and nights he spent in praying that God might bless him with a son. Wherever he saw *pîpal* trees (*Aśvattharâjas*), he ordered Brâhman̄s to circumambulate them. Whatever medicines the doctors recommended he was ever ready to swallow, however bitter they might be. "Eat even ordure to get a son," says the proverb, and accordingly he did everything to secure that happiness, but all in vain.

Śivâchâr had a minister, named Kharavâdana, a most wicked tyrant as ever lived in the world. The thought that the king was without an heir, and had no hopes of one, awakened in

¹ Classical name of Karûr, a small but very ancient town in the Kôyambatûr District of the Madras Presidency.

his mind the ambition of securing for his family the throne of Vañjaimânagar. Śivâchâr knew this well. But what could he do. His only care was to send up additional prayers to frustrate the thoughts of Kharavadana, and to secure for himself a good position after death, without undergoing the severe torments of the *Put*, hell.

At last fortune favoured Śivâchâr; for what religious man fails to secure his desire? The king in his sixtieth year had a son. His joy can better be imagined than described. Lacs of Brâhmaṇs were fed in honour of the son-birth festival, *Putrôtsavam*, as it is technically called. The state-prisons were opened, and all the prisoners let loose. Thousands of kine and innumerable acres of land were offered to Brâhmaṇs, and every kind of charity was duly practised. The ten days of the *Sûtikâgrihavâsa* (confinement) were over. On the eleventh day the father saw his much longed-for son's face, and read on the lines of it great prosperity, learning, valour, goodness, and every excellent quality.

The cradle-swinging, naming, and other ceremonies were duly performed, and the prince grew up under the care shown to a king's son. His name the elders fixed as Sundara. The minister, whose only wish was to get the throne for his family, was much disappointed at the birth of a son to his master.

The whole kingdom rejoiced at the event, and the minister was the only man who was sorry. When one is disappointed in his high hopes and expectations, he devises plans to take away the barrier that lies in his way. Even so Kharavadana said to himself, "Let me see how the affairs get on. The old king is near his grave. When he dies, leaving a minor son, myself must be his regent for a time. Have I not then opportunity enough of securing for ever for myself and my family the throne of Vañjaimânagar?" So thought he within himself, and was quiet for a time.

Śivâchâr, who was a very shrewd man, on several occasions read the minister's mind, and knew very well how his intentions stood. 'This cruel devil may murder my only son. I care not if he usurps the throne. What I fear is, that he may murder him. *Na daivam Śaṅkarât param.* No other god but Śaṅkara. And he must have his own way. If it is so written on the prince's head I cannot avoid it.'" Thus sighed Śivâchâr, and this sorrow (*śoka*), made him leaner day by day. Just ten years after the birth of Sundara, the king fell ill and was on his deathbed.

Śivâchâr had a servant, named Raṇavîrasing, whom he had all along observed to be very honest and faithful. That servant the king called to his side, and asking all others except Sundara, who was weeping by his father's

pillow, to leave the room, addressed him thus :—
 “My dear Raṇavîrasing, I have only a few *ghaṭikas* before me. Listen to my words, and act accordingly. There is one God above us all, who will punish or reward us according to our bad or good acts. If by avarice or greed of money you ever play false to the trust that I am going to repose in you that God will surely punish you. It is not unknown to you what great difficulties I had in getting this only son, Sundara; how many temples I built, how many Brâhmanas I fed, how many religious austerities I underwent, &c., &c. God after all gave me a son.” Here his sorrow prevented him from proceeding further, and he began to cry aloud, and shed tears. “Do not weep on my account, papa! We cannot wipe off what was written on our heads. We must undergo happiness or misery as is thereon scratched by Brahmâ,” cried the prince. Raṇavîrasing was melted at the sight. He took the boy on his lap, and with his own upper garment wiped his eyes. The old man continued, “Thus you, my faithful Raṇavîrasing, know everything. I now wish that I had not performed all that I did to get this son. For when I die at this moment, who is there to take care of him for the next? Kharavadana may devise plan after plan to remove my boy from this world, and secure the kingdom for himself. My only hope is in you.

I give him into your hands." Here the aged father, notwithstanding his illness, rose up a little from his bed, took hold of his son's hand, and after kissing it for the last time, placed it in Raṇavīraśiṅg's, "Care not if he does not get the kingdom. If you only preserve him from the wicked hands of the minister whom I have all along seen to be covetous of the throne, you will do a great work for your old master. I make you from this moment the lord of my palace. From this minnte you are father, mother, brother, servant, and everything to my son. Take care that you do not betray your trust." Thus ended the king, and sending at once for the minister, when he came he spoke to him thus, "Kharavadana! See what I am now. Yesterday I was on the throne. To-day, in a few minntes, I mnst breathe my last. Such is the uncertainty of life. Man's good acts alone follow him to the other world. Take my signet-ring. [Here the king took the ring from off his finger, and gave it to the minister]. Yours is the throne for the present, as long as the prince is in his minority. Govern well the kingdom. When the prince attains his sixteenth year kindly give him back the throne. Exercise a paternal care over him. Find a good and intelligent princess for his wife." Suddenly, before his speech was quite finished, the king felt the last pangs of death. The sage-looking minister promised him everything.

Śivâchâr breathed his last. After the usual weeping and wailing of a Hindû funeral, his corpse was burnt to ashes in a sandalwood pyre. All his queens—and there were several scores—committed *satî* with the corpse. The ceremonies were all regularly conducted, the minister himself superintended everything.

Kharavadana then succeeded to the throne of Vañjaimânagar. Raṇavîrasing became the lord of the palace, and true to his promise exercised all care over his trust. He was always by the side of Sundara. That he might not lose the sweetness of boyhood in study and play, Raṇavîrasing brought to the palace 20 gentlemen's sons of good conduct and learning and made them the prince's fellow-students. A professor for every branch of learning was employed to teach the prince and his companions. Sundara thus received a sound and liberal education, only he was never allowed to go out of the palace. Raṇavîrasing guarded him very strictly, and he had every reason to do so. For Kharavadana, as soon as he became king, had issued a notice that the assassin of Sundara should have a reward of a *karôr* muhrs; and already every avaricious hand was in search of his head. Before the issue of this notice, Kharavadana found out a good girl and married her to the prince. She was living with her husband in the palace, and Raṇavîrasing strictly watched her, as she came from the

minister. He would not allow Sundara to sleep in the same room with her. These strict watches and barriers to the sweet marriage-bed displeased the prince, even with his faithful servant. But the latter could not help it till he had full confidence in her. He used to advise Sundara not even to take a betel-leaf from her hands. But love is blind. So the prince within himself accused his old guardian ; but he could not help following his orders. Thus passed on a few years.

Sundara reached his sixteenth year. Nothing happened about the transference of the kingdom ; the prince, almost in imprisonment in the palace, had forgot everything about the kingdom. Raṇavîraśiṅg wished to wait till, as he thought, the prince had acquired better governing faculties. Thus some time passed.

Full eight years had elapsed from the death of Śivâchâr. Sundara was already eighteen, and still he had not received his kingdom. Nothing was neglected in his education. Though Raṇavîraśiṅg exercised all paternal care over him, still it was not to his liking ; for he found in him a great barrier to the pleasures of youth. The only pleasure for the prince, therefore, was the company of his friends.

One fine evening on the fourteenth day of the dark half of Vaiśâkha month of the Vasanta season, the prince was sitting with his

companions in the seventh story of his mansion viewing the town. The dusk of evening was just throwing her mantle over the city. People in their several vocations were at that time ceasing work, and returning home. In the eastern division of the town the prince saw a big mansion, and just to break the silence asked his friends what that was. "That is the Râjasthânik Kachêri, a place you ought to have been sitting in for the last two years. The wretched minister, Kharavadana, has already usurped your seat ; for if he had intended to give you back the kingdom he would have done it two years ago when you reached your sixteenth year. Let us now console ourselves that God has spared your life till now, notwithstanding all the awards promised to the taker of your head. Even that proclamation is dying out of the memory of the people now." So said one of his friends and ceased.

These words fell like arrows in the ear of Sundara and troubled him. The shame that he had been neglected brought a change of colour over his face which all his friends perceived, and they felt sorry for having touched upon the subject. The prince, perceiving that he had played a woman's part among his friends, resumed or pretended to resume his former cheerful countenance, and changed the conversation to some pleasanter topics. They separated very late that night. Before doing

so, Sundara asked them all to present themselves in the durbâr hall early next morning. At the same time he also ordered Raṇavîrasing to keep horses ready for himself and his friends for a morning ride through the town the next day. "I was only waiting to hear such an order from your own mouth, *Mai Bâb Chakravarti*; I was thinking from your retired disposition that you were not an energetic man. I will have the horses ready." Raṇavîrasing at once issued orders to his servants to keep ready saddled and decked twenty-one horses for the prince and his companions. He also appointed a certain number of his men to ride in front of the party.

The morning came. The friends assembled as promised the previous evening. The prince and they, after a light breakfast, mounted their horses. The horsemen rode in front and behind. The prince with his friends marched in the middle. Raṇavîrasing with drawn sword rode side by side with him. The party went through the four main streets of the town. Every one rose up and paid due respect to their old king's son. When passing through the street where the minister's mansion was, Raṇavîrasing perceived that Kharavadana paid no respect to the royal march. This seemed a most unbearable insult to Raṇavîrasing. He bit his lips, gnashed his teeth, and wrung his hands. The prince observed all the mental pains of his faith-

ful guardian, and laughed to himself at his simplicity. About mid-day the party returned to the palace. The friends dispersed, and Sundara after the ceremonies of the new-moon day had a slight dinner, and retired to rest.

The morning ride was deep in the mind of the prince. Though he laughed to himself at the simplicity of Raṇavîrasing when the latter gnashed his teeth in the morning, the insult had left a stronger and deeper impression in his heart. The day was almost spent. Sundara took a very light supper, and shut himself up in his bed-room before the first watch was quite over. Raṇavîrasing, as usual, watched outside. The prince found his wife sound asleep in her bed, and without disturbing her he went up and down the room. A thread-like substance attracted his attention in a corner of the bed-chamber. On examination he found it to be a thread ladder. He had not even time to think how it came into the bed-chamber. Just then Raṇavîrasing had retired for a few minutes to take his supper. "The old fool is off now to eat; and Paramêśvar has thrown this ladder in my way. Let me now escape." Thus thinking, Sundara came out unobserved by his old guardian, and ascended to the top of the seventh mansion. From that place he cast his ladder towards a big tree in the East Main street. On pulling it he found it tight. "Let me get down, and Paramêśvar

will assist me." So praying, before the first watch was over, the prince got down from his palace, and was in a few minutes in the East street. The severe watch kept over him by Raṇāvīrasing made it very difficult for him to go out when he liked, and now by the grace of God, as he thought, he escaped that dark new-moon night.

"Life is dear to every one. What can I do if any of the minister's men find me out now and murder me? *Na daivam. Śaṅkarāt param.* No god but Śaṅkara, and he will now help me." Thus thinking he walked to the nearest pyal, and lingered there till the bustle of the town subsided. Nor was it in vain that he stopped there. He overheard while there the following conversation take place between the master and mistress of the house at which he lingered:—"Console yourself, my wife. What shall we do? Fate has so willed it on our heads. May Brahmā become without a temple for the evil that he has sent us. When the old king was living he appreciated my merits, and at every Saṅkrānti gave me *duo dakṣhiṇā* for my knowledge of the *Vēdas*. Now there reigns a tyrant over our kingdom. I was lingering here with the hope that the son of Śivāchār would one day come to the throne and relieve our sufferings. Now that such hope is altogether gone, I have made up my mind to leave this nasty city, and go to some

good place where there reigns a king to appreciate our *yôgyatâ* (merit)." Of these words Sundara overheard every syllable, and these supplied the *ghî* to the fire of shame and anger that was already burning in his mind. "Let me try to win back my kingdom. If I succeed, I save lives. If I die, I die singly. May Paramêśvar help me." So saying he walked out of the town, and passed the east gate. The night was as dark as could be, for it was a new-moon night. Clouds were gathering in the sky, and there were some symptoms of rain.

There was a Gaṇêśa temple on the way. As it was already drizzling, the prince went inside till the rain should cease. No sooner had he entered it than he saw two men, who by their conversation appeared to be shepherds, coming towards that same temple. They seemed to have been watching their flocks near an adjacent field, and had come to shelter themselves from the rain in the temple. Sundara when he saw them, trembled for his life, and crept in. The shepherds sat down on the verandah, and taking out their bags began to chew betelnut. An idle lizard began to chirp in a corner. To break the silence, one said to the other, "Well, Râmakôn, I have heard that you are a great soothsayer and interpreter of bird sounds and lizard speeches. Let me know what these chits of the lizard that we heard just now mean. Tell me." Râmakôn replied, "This is

news which I would never have revealed at any other time. But as no fourth person is likely to be here at this time on a rainy night, let me tell you that the prince of the town is now lingering here in this temple. So the lizard says. Hence I said, 'no fourth person.' I am glad that no evil hand has yet been tempted, though such a high price has been set upon his head. The very fact that he has lived up to this time unhurt in a tiger's domain augurs well for his future prosperity." Râmakôn had scarcely finished his speech when the idle lizard again made its chit, chit, and Râmakôn now asked his friend, Lakshmanakôn, for that was the other's name, to interpret those sounds. "This has rather a sad meaning for the prince. The Mantrî and Pradhânî are coming here in a few minutes (*nimishas*), to consult on a secret topic. So says the lizard," said Lakshmanakôn to Râmakôn, and at once a light was discovered at a distance. "It is the minister's carriage. Let us be off. God only must save the prince." So saying, they both ran away.

The feelings of the prince inside were like that of a man who was being led to the gallows. The bitterest enemy of his life, the minister himself, was coming to that very place where he was hiding. "I foolishly accused my old guardian, Raṇavîrasing, and now I see his good intentions. How I am to be spared from

this calamity Śaṅkara only knows." Thus thinking, he hurriedly fled to the inmost part of the temple behind the very image, and sat down there, still like a stump, without even breathing freely, lest his breath might reveal him. He had ample time there to admire the sound knowledge of the shepherds in interpreting the lizard chirps, their simplicity, their honesty and truthfulness; for had they been otherwise, they might at once have caught hold of the prince and made him over to the tiger minister. True to the interpretation of the second shepherd, a carriage stopped in front of the Gaṇeśa temple, and there came out of it the Mantrî and the Pradhâni. Excepting themselves and, of course, the carriage driver and, as we know, the prince behind the Gaṇeśa, there were no others there. Kharavadana and his subordinate chose that solitary place at the dead of night to hold secret consultations. The Mantrî spoke first, and one could easily perceive from his words that he was in a fit of anger. "Why should the prince be thus allowed to ride free through my streets? Of the innumerable servants who eat our salt was there not one to cut down that impertinent head?" roared the minister. The Pradhâni replied, "My king, my lord, excuse me first for the humble words that I am going to speak before your honour. We have taken up a kingdom to which we have no right. If the

prince had demanded the throne two years ago, we ought rightfully to have returned it to him. He never asked, and we did not restore it. He never troubles us with demands, but lives like a poor subject of the crown in his own quarters. Such being the case, why should we kill him? Why should we murder the only son of our old and much-respected king Śivâchâr? What I beg to suggest to your honour is, that we should no more trouble ourselves about his poor head." The Pradhânî, as he discovered that these words were not to the taste of Kharavadana, stopped at once without proceeding further, though he had much to say upon that subject. "Vile wretch! Dare you preach morals to your superiors. You shall see the result of this, before the morning dawns," bawled out the minister. The Pradhânî saw that all his excellent advice was like blowing a conch in a deaf man's ears. He feared for his own life, and so at once begged a thousand pardons, and promised to bring the head of the prince within a week. And as Kharavadana wanted only that, he spared the Pradhânî. They then talked on different subjects, and prepared to start.

The prince inside, behind the Gaṇêśavighraha, was now almost stifled to death. The short breaths that he inhaled and exhaled were themselves enough to kill him. Add to that the horrible words that fell on his ears. For

all that he continued to hide himself. Kharavadana and the Pradhâni finished their conversation and got into the carriage. Sundara called courage to his assistance, "Śaũkara has saved me till now ; he may so save me throughout." So thinking with himself, he boldly came out of the temple without making the least noise and sat behind the carriage, and, as it rolled on, thought again with himself : "I will follow these, come what may, and find out what more plans they devise against my life."

The carriage drove on to the opposite end of the town. It passed the west gate and entered a big park outside the town. The undaunted prince followed. In the middle of the park a fine tank was discovered. The banks looked like day, being lighted up profusely. In the midst of the tank a small island with a gaudy mansion was seen. Pillars of gold, sofas of silver and doors of diamonds made it the very *Indralōka* itself. A broad road with avenues of sweet smelling flowering trees connected the island with the bank. It was at that road that the carriage stopped. The prince, before that was reached, had got down and hid himself under the shade of a tree, to see unobserved all that passed in the mansion which he had every reason to believe was the destination of the minister. Kharavadana descended from the *bāṇḍi* and sent the Pradhâni home. What most astonished the prince was the absence of male servants in

that garden. At the entrance of the road twenty young females of the most exquisite beauty waited and conducted Kharavadana through the sweet bower to the mansion. When it was reached, the minister sat down on a most richly furnished gold couch, and ordered the females there to bring the queen. Ten females arranged themselves on each side of an ivory palanquin, and started, apparently, to bring the queen in it. "These females themselves resemble Rambhâ Urvaśî, &c. A woman who has the beauty to be borne on the heads of these females must, of course, be of the most unimaginable beauty in this world. Let me see her." Thus thinking, the prince Sundara anxiously waited the return of the palanquin. In a few minutes it came. A female of the most charming beauty jumped briskly out of it. The minister came running to give his helping hand to her. Horror of horrors, what sees the prince! It was his own wife, the very girl that the minister had married to him a few years before, that got down from the palanquin. "Are my eyes deceived? Do they perform their functions aright? Let me look once more." So again and again wiping his eyes to clear them a little, the prince saw distinctly. It was his very wife herself. "Oh, I most foolishly accused that grey-headed guardian for a wicked fool, because he would not allow me liberty with my wife. I now see what

he saw a long time ago. Perhaps if I had slept by her side I should have thus been brought in here by some secret way that these devils seem now to have to the inmost parts of the palace. If I had taken anything from her hands I should have died that very day. My poor old man, my Raṇavîrasing it is, who has saved me from all these calamities." These thoughts and a thousand more were passing through Sundara's mind when he saw his wife sitting down on the same couch with the minister. She accused him of the delay in murdering her husband, of his letting all opportunities escape during the morning ride. "Horrible! Did you, Kharavadana, marry me to such a faithful wife! Thank God and Raṇavîrasing that I have not fallen into her snares," thought Sundara to himself. The minister offered a thousand excuses, related to her all that had taken place between himself and the Pradhâni, and of what the latter had promised. Then they both retired to bed. At that moment the treacherous owl began [to] hoot, and one of the maid-servants, who happened to be a clever interpreter of owl-hootings revealed, to secure the favour of the minister, that the prince was lurking behind a tree in that very garden. Knowing the price set on Sundara's head even female hands flew to cut it off. All ran with torches to search the garden.

These words, of course, fell upon the ears of the prince like thunder. Before the people there began their search he began his race, jumped over a high wall, and flew like a kite. Before the lady-racers and the minister had left their sweet road to the tank-bank, Sundara found himself in the north street of the town. The news that the prince was out that night spread like a flame from the pleasure-park outside throughout the whole town, and before long avaricious persons were searching in the streets for his valuable head. Sundara thought it dangerous to pass through the streets, and wished to hide himself in a safe place. Fortune conducted him to one. It was a ruined old choultry, where food, during the days of his father, was distributed in charity to the beggars of the town, and which was now only resorted to by them to sleep, and not to receive rice. The prince entered it, and laid himself down in the midst of them, fortunately unobserved. He could hear from where he was the noise of the persons searching outside. In the garden the minister searched in vain, and accusing the female for her wrong interpretation as he thought, retired to bed.

Outside the north gate, at a distance of three *ghatikas*' walk, lived a robber. He used to start out on a plundering expedition once in seven years. In the houses and mansions he used to rob he took only jewels of various kinds,

Gómeda, pushparáya, (topaz) vajra, vaidúrya, &c.; gold and silver he rejected as being too mean for his dignity. As he was a gentleman-robber, he used to take a coolie with him on the way to carry his booty. Of course that coolie never returned from the cave. He was put to death after his services were over, lest he should disclose the secret of the robber.

Unfortunately that new-moon night happened to be the night of that cruel robber's plundering expedition. He came out, and when he saw people in search of the prince, thinking that he was not in his palace, he wanted to plunder it. Wishing a coolie he entered the ruined choultry to pick out one among the beggars there. Passing over the others he came to the prince. He found him stout and strong. "This beggar will do me good service to-day. I shall break my custom, and amply reward this man for his services." So thinking to himself, the gentleman-robber tapped Sundara with his cane on the back. The prince had just closed his eyes. In the short sleep that ensued he dreamt that the minister's servants were pursuing him, and that one had caught him. At that very moment the gentleman-robber's stroke fell upon his back, giving a sort of reality to his dream. He awoke with horror. "Tell me who you are," asked the unknown person. "A beggar," was the reply. "How does the night appear to you?"

asked the robber. "As dark as dark can be," replied the prince. The robber applied a sort of *kajjala* to the prince's eyes, and asked, "How does the night appear now?" "As luminous as if a *karôṛ* of suns were in the sky," answered Sundara. The robber applied a *tilaka* to the intended coolie's forehead and addressed him thus: "I am a robber, now going to plunder the palace, from which the prince is absent. Follow me. I shall reward you richly. The *kajjala* has made the night a day to you. The *tilaka* takes you unobserved wherever you wish to go." So saying, and dragging the coolie or supposed coolie by the hand the robber went off to the palace. Wherever he found a door locked he applied a leaf that he carried in his hand to the fastening, and behold the lock flew back, and the door opened of its own accord. The prince was astonished. In a few minutes the robber opened one and all of the gates and boxes, and extracted all the precious stones. He tied them up in a bundle, and set it on the prince's head, and asked him to follow. Sundara followed. He assisted in the plunder of his own palace, and carried the booty behind the robber, who, praised be his stupidity, never for one moment suspected he was a prince, but admired his coolie for the beauty of his person, thought of saving his life, and also of making him his son-in-law. For the robber had

a beautiful daughter, for whom he had long been searching for a suitable husband. So with this thought he reached the cave, stopped before it, and taking the bundle from the prince's head ordered him to go into a large cell, the mouth of which he covered with a big stone which he lifted up by pronouncing an incantation over it. The robber went with the bundle to his wife, and described to her the beauty of the coolie, and what a fair match he would be for their daughter. The wife did not like it, and asked her husband to do with the coolie as was usual, *i. e.*, murder him; and the robber, who, never in anything acted against the will of his wife, went in to fetch his weapon.

Meanwhile the robber's daughter, an excellent girl, of the most charming beauty, overhearing all that took place between her parents, came running to the cave where the coolie was confined. She pronounced a single word over the stone lid of the cave, and it opened, and the prince, who had lost all hopes of recovery, now beheld a beautiful girl coming towards him. "Whoever you may be, my dear coolie, fly for your life for the present. You are my husband. My father has so named you, but as my mother does not like it, he has gone to fetch his weapon to murder you. Excepting we three, none, not even Brahmâ, can open the once-shut gates. After hearing you once called

my husband, I must ever regard you so. Now fly, and escape my father's sharp sword. If you are a man, marry me in kind remembrance of the assistance rendered. If you fail to do so you are a beast, and I shall die a virgin." So saying she conducted out in haste the supposed coolie, who had only time to take a hasty embrace, whispering in her ear that he was the prince, and that he would marry her without fail. He now ran for his life. Fearing the robber would come after him he left the way by which he reached the cave, and passing through unknown fields reached the south gate of the town. By that time the search for him had almost abated, and the prince, praising God for his delivery, reached the south street. The night was almost spent. Before returning to the palace he wished to take rest for a few minutes, till he had recovered his breath, and so he sat down on the pial of an old and almost ruined house.

That happened to be the house of a poor Brâhmaṇ, who had not even sufficient clothes to wear. As the prince sat down in a corner of the pial the door of the house opened, and the old Brâhmaṇ came out. The old woman, the Brâhmaṇî, was standing at the door with a vessel containing water for her husband. Śubhâśâstrî, for that was the Brâhmaṇ's name, looked up to the sky for a couple of minutes, after which he heaved

a deep sigh, and said, "Alas, the prince, the only son of our former protector, Śivâchâr, is not to remain for more than two *ghaṭikas*, A *kâlasarpa* (black serpent) will sting him. What shall we do? we are poor. If we could begin *Sarpahôma* now we could tie the mouth of the snake, sacrifice it in the fire, and thus save the prince." So saying the poor Brâhman cried. Sundara, who overheard everything, jumped down in confusion, and fell at the feet of the Brâhman, who asked him who he was. "I am a herdsman of the palace. Preserve my master's life," was the reply. Śubhâśâstrî was extremely poor. He had no means to procure a small quantity of *ghî* even to begin the *hôma*. He did not know what to do. He begged from his neighbours, who all laughed at his stupidity, and ridiculed his astrology. The prince in a hopeless state of anguish wrung his hands, and in wringing them he felt his ring. Drawing it off his finger he gave it to Śubhâśâstrî, and requested him to pawn it. The latter resorted to the nearest bazâr, and awakening the bazâr-keeper procured from him a little *ghî*, by pawning the ring. Running home and bathing in cold water the Brâhman sat down for the *hôma*. The prince, fearing the serpent, wished to sit inside the house, but at a distance from the place of the ceremony. Just at the appointed hour a large black serpent broke through the sky, fell on the head of the prince, whom he

was not able to bite, and gave up its life in the fire. "This is no neatherd, but the very prince himself," said the Brâhmaṇî. Sundara rose up, and running circumambulated them thrice, spoke to them thus: "You alone are my parents and protectors. This night has been a most adventurous one with me. There was every possibility of my escaping every other calamity, and so I did. But no other power except yours could have averted this snake-bite. So my rescue is due to you alone. I have no time to lose now. Before daylight I must fly unobserved to the palace, and you shall before long see my reward for this." So saying, Sundara ran to his palace, and entered.

Raṇavîrasing was almost dead. The rumour that the prince was out reached him. He was astonished at the way in which Sundara had got out. He searched the whole palace. To his astonishment all the rooms had previously been opened and plundered. "Has the prince been stolen away by some vile tricks from the palace," thought Raṇavîrasing, and without knowing what to do he was buried in the ocean of sorrow, from which he gave up all hopes of recovering. What was his joy, then, when he saw the prince enter the palace just at dawn. "*Mai Bâb Chakravarti*, where have you been the whole night, throwing away the advice of your poor slave? How many enemies you have

in this world, you have yet to know," said Raṇavîrasing. "I know them all now, only listen to what I say, and do as I bid. I have won the crown without a blow. Thank the day that gave me you as my protector, for it was only yesterday that I had ample reason to verify your statements. My adventures would make your hair stand on end. Thank God, I have escaped from all of them unhurt. If you have a few men ready now, we have won the kingdom." So saying, the prince explained to him every point of his adventure. "If we catch hold of the minister now, we have done all." "I could never for one moment think that you in a single night could have seen and done so much. Now that heaven has shown you the way, I shall obey you," said Raṇavîrasing, and Sundara accordingly issued the orders. He described the house with the pial on which he had lingered for a while the previous night, and asked a servant to bring the owner of that house to the Râjasthânik office. Raṇavîrasing brought in the Pradhâni, who was extremely delighted at the good intention of the prince. He was offered the Mantri's place. Two were sent to the shepherds. Twenty were sent to the pleasure-park to have the minister and his sweet paramour brought to the court in chains. The female servants were also ordered to be brought. The robber and his cruel wife were not forgotten. The prince minutely

described the cave, and asked his servants to catch and imprison the robber by surprising him suddenly, without giving him time to have recourse to his vile tricks—lock-breaking leaf, *kajjala*, &c. The palace palanquin was sent for the robber's daughter, whom the prince had firmly made up his mind to marry. The palace elephants were decked and sent to fetch with all pomp Śubhâśâstrî and his wife to the court. Thus, without a single stroke, Sundara won the kingdom. Raṇavîrasing was thunder-struck by the excellent and bold way in which the prince in one night went through the series of calamities, and successfully overcame them all. The Pradhânî's delight knew no bounds. He himself broke open the court and every one connected with the previous night's adventure was ushered in. The prince bathed, offered up his prayers, and attended the council. When Śubhâśâstrî came in with his wife the prince put them on the *simhâsana*, and himself standing before them, explained to all his previous night's adventures, rewarded the poor Brâhmaṇ and the shepherds, punished by banishment the maid-servant who, knowing that the prince's head was coveted, revealed his concealment, and ordered his wife, the minister, the robber, and the robber's wife to be beheaded. He rewarded without limit his protector, Śubhâśâstrî, and married the robber's daughter, being won over

by her sincerity. The Pradhâni, as we have said already, he made his minister, and with his old guardian, the faithful Raṇavîrasing, the prince reigned for several years in the kingdom of Vañjaimânagar.

V.

“CHARITY ALONE CONQUERS.”

Dharmamé jayam.

In the town of Têvai¹ there lived a king called Suguna. He had an excellent minister named Dharmasîla. They ruled for a long time in prosperity over the kingdom. Both of them had sons. The prince's name was Subuddhi. He was a noble prince, and quite in keeping with his name, was always bent upon good to the world. The minister's son was named Durbuddhi, a most wicked boy, whose only delight was teasing beasts and birds from his infancy, and which ripened into all sorts of wickedness as he grew to boyhood. Notwithstanding the difference between their tempers, the prince and the minister's son were the best of friends. The motto of the prince was *Dharmamé jayam*—Charity alone conquers. That of the minister's son was *Adharmamé jayam*—Absence of Charity alone conquers. When rising from their beds, when beginning their prayers, when sitting down for meals or study, and, in fact, before beginning to do

¹ Têvai is the classical name of the modern town of Râmnâd in the district of Madnrâ.

anything, each repeated his motto. The people had great hopes in Subuddhi, whom they fully expected to see a good and benevolent king; but the minister's son all thoroughly hated. Even the minister himself, his father, hated his son for his vile turn of mind, which he found impossible to change. His only friend, as we have already said, was the prince, who, notwithstanding all his faults loved him sincerely. Both of them had grown up together from their very cradle, had played in the same dust, had read their lessons side by side in the same school under the same teachers. Fortune so ordained that the prince's mind should take such a bent, while the mind of the minister's son turned in a crooked way.

Nor was Durbuddhi insensible to the disgust and dislike which every one manifested towards him. He was well aware of all that was going on around. Still he would not change. "I have no friend in this world excepting yourself, my dear Subuddhi," exclaimed Durbuddhi one day to his royal friend while they were riding together. "Fear nothing. I shall ever stand by you as your true friend," replied Subuddhi. "My very father hates me. Who else would like me then? On the contrary, every one likes you. You may soon get yourself married to some beautiful lady, while I must remain a bachelor; for no girl would marry me. You may soon rise to the place of a king; but

I cannot become your minister, as the people do not like me. What can I do?" So said the minister's son, and hung down his head, as if conscious for a time of the utter hatred with which the people regarded him. Subuddhi replied, "Heed it not, I will make you my minister, give you everything you want, and see you well provided for." "If so, will you give me your wife one day, at least, if you happen to get married before me, and if I remain a bachelor after you," were the words which the wretched Durbuddhi shamelessly uttered to the face of his only friend. These words were enough in themselves to enrage the prince's mind. But he was of so good a nature that instead of becoming angry, he smiled at the stupidity of his companion, and agreed that he would thus give him his wife one day in case he got married first. Thus took place an agreement between Subuddhi and Durbuddhi when they were quite young.

Several years passed after this agreement, when one day the prince went to hunt in a neighbouring forest. His inseparable companion, the minister's son, and several hunters followed him to the wood. The prince and the minister's son both gave chase to a deer. They rode so much in advance of the hunters that they lost themselves in a thick jungle, where the latter could neither see nor follow them. The hunters returned after dark, and informed

the king and the minister about the disappearance of their sons. They thought that as their sons were grown-up men they need not fear for their safety.

The two friends chased the deer and found themselves in the midst of a thick forest in the evening. Except a slight breakfast in the early morning they had tasted no other food. Hunger was pinching them severely. The hot chase had awakened a severe thirst, to quench which they were not able to find a drop of water. In utter hopelessness of life they resigned themselves to the course of their steeds. The beasts seemed very well to understand the wants of their royal riders. They went on trotting, and at last, about midnight, stopped on the banks of a large tank.

The riders, who were almost dead with thirst, opened their closed eyes when the horses stopped. All on a sudden and to their great joy they found themselves on the banks of a large tank. Their joy knew no bounds. "Surely God takes care of His children. Had it not been for His kind care how could we have come to this tank, when we had resigned ourselves to the course of our horses?" thought Subuddhi to himself, and got down from his horse. The minister's son, who had become more exhausted by that time than his companion, also alighted. Subuddhi, true to the nobility of his mind, took both the steeds

first to water, and after satisfying their thirst and loosening them to graze by the side of a grassy meadow he went into the water to quench his thirst. The minister's son also followed. After a short prayer Subuddhi took some handfuls of water, and returned to the bank. Durbuddhi also returned. They chose a clean spot, and sat down to rest during the remaining part of the night. The prince when taking his seat pronounced his usual motto, "Charity alone conquers." And the minister's son also repeated his—"Absence of Charity alone conquers."

These words fell like venom into the ears of the prince at that time. He could not control his anger then, notwithstanding his mild disposition. The hardships of the day, their fortunate arrival on a tank in the dead of night to have their thirst quenched, were fresh in Subuddhi's mind, and the prayers that he was offering to God were not yet over. That the minister's son should never think of these, and go on with his own stupid motto even at that time became most unbearable to Subuddhi. "Vile wretch! Detested atheist! Have you no shame to utter your wicked motto even after such calamities? It is not too late even now. Mend your character. Think of the God that saved you just now. Believe in Him. Change your motto from this day." Thus spoke the angry prince to the minister's son.

Durbuddhi, who was naturally of a wicked

and quarrelsome temperament, flew into a rage at once at the excellent advice of the prince. "Stop your mouth. I know as well as you do; you cannot wag your tail here. I can oppose you single-handed in this forest." Thus saying, the minister's son sprang like an enraged lion at Subuddhi, who, as he never dreamt of any such thing, was completely overpowered by the wicked Durbuddhi. The prince was thrown down in the twinkling of an eye, and the minister's son was upon him. He severely thrashed his royal master, and taking hold of a twig that was lying close by, tore out the prince's two eyes, filled up the sockets with sand, and ran away with his horse, thinking that he had completely killed him.

Subuddhi was almost dead. His body was bruised all over. His eyes were no more. His physical pain was unbearable. "Is there a God over us all?" thought Subuddhi. The night was almost over. The cool and sweet breeze of the morning gave him some strength. He rose up, and crawling on the ground, found himself by touch at the entrance of a temple. He crept in, shut the gates and fastened the bolt.

It happened to be a temple of the fierce *Kāli*. She used to go out every morning to gather roots and fruits, and to return by evening. That day when she returned she found her gates shut against her. She threatened with

destruction the usurper of her temple. A voice, and we know that it was Subuddhi's, replied from within, "I am already dying of the loss of my eyes. So if in anger you kill me it is so much the better; for what use is there in my living blind? If, on the contrary, you pity me, and by your divine power give me my eyes, I shall open the gates." Kâlî was in a very difficult position. She was very hungry, and saw no other way of going inside than by giving Subuddhi his eyes. "Open the gates; your request is granted," said Kâlî. No sooner were these words uttered than the prince recovered his eyes. His delight may be better imagined than described. He opened the gates and vowed before Kâlî that he would from that day continue in that temple as her servant and worshipper.

The wretched Durbuddhi after his horrible act, rode on composedly, following the footsteps of his horse, and reached the forest where he was hunting the day before in company with the prince. He thence returned home all alone. When his father saw him coming back he suspected something wrong to the prince and asked his son what had become of him. "We chased a deer, and he rode so much in advance of me that he was out of sight, and finding all search vain, I returned alone," was Durbuddhi's reply. "This I would have believed from any one but yourself, Never plant

your feet in these dominions till you bring back the prince again. Run for your life," was the order of the minister, and Durbuddhi accordingly ran, fearing the anger of his father.

Thus the prince Subuddhi was serving in the Kâlî temple; and Durbuddhi, fully confident that he had killed his friend, roamed about from place to place, as he saw no possibility of returning to his own country without the prince.

Thus passed several months. The goddess Kâlî was extremely delighted at the sincere devotion of Subuddhi, and, calling him one day to her side, said,—“My son! I am delighted with your great devotion to me. Enough of your menial services here. Better return now to your kingdom. Your parents are likely to be much vexed at your loss. Go and console their minds.” Thus ended Kâlî, and Subuddhi replied: “Excuse me, my goddess, my mother. I no more regard them as my parents. This wood is not a large place if they wished to search for me. As they were so careless of me I shall also from this day disregard them. You are my father and mother. Therefore permit me to end my days here in your service.” So saying, Subuddhi begged Kâlî to allow him to stay, and the goddess agreed accordingly for some time at least.

After a few more months, Kâlî called the prince again to her and addressed him thus;—
“My boy! I have devised another plan. Better

not, then, go to your parents, as you do not wish to go now. At a short distance from this place, in the Kâvêrî country, reigns a staunch devotee of mine. His daughter had small-pox, and as he forgot to do proper respect to me, I have blinded both her eyes. The king has issued a proclamation that he will give the whole kingdom and his daughter in marriage to him who would cure her of her defect. He has hung up a bell (*ghanṭā*) at which every physician who wishes to try the case strikes. The king comes running as soon as he hears the sound, takes home the doctor and shows him the case. Several persons have tried in vain; for who could repair a defect incurred by the displeasure of the gods? Now I mean to send you there. That king is a staunch worshipper of my feet. Though I had punished him first, still I pity the sad calamity that has come upon his daughter. You had better go there and strike the bell. He will take you and show you the case. For three consecutive days apply my holy ashes to her eyes. Though fools may deride these ashes, still by them a true devotee can work wonders. On the fourth day her eyes will be perfectly restored. Then you will secure her hand, and what is more the country of Kâvêrî. Reign there, for you are born to reign, being a prince, and not to spend your time here in this wood. If you do not do so you will commit a sin, and what is more incur my dis-

pleasure." Thus ended Kâlî, and the prince could not refuse; for he feared the anger of the goddess. Agreeing to her words, and with her manifold blessings, he started and reached the kingdom of Kâvêrî.

He struck the bell. The king came running to welcome the new doctor. All the previous physicians had tried by medicines external and internal. The new doctor—prince Subuddhi—proposed to treat the case by *mantras*—incantations. The old king, who was very religious, fully believed that the new doctor might effect the cure; and just as he expected, on the fourth day his daughter's sight was completely restored. The king's joy knew no bounds. He enquired the parentage of the doctor; and when he came to know that he had princely blood in his veins, that he was as honourably descended as himself, his joy was greatly increased. He sent up a thousand prayers to the god for giving him a royal son-in-law. As promised in his notice, he would have to give his daughter to anyone, whatever he might be, who effected the cure. The lowest beggar, the lowest casteman, if he had only succeeded in curing her would have had as much claim to her hand as the prince-physician. So when the person that effected the cure proved to be a prince the king was extremely delighted, and at once made all arrangements for the marriage of his daughter and gave her to Subuddhi;

and himself being very old he gave the kingdom also to the prince at the same time.

Thus by the favour of Kâlî, Subuddhi had a princess for his wife and a kingdom to govern. Subuddhi, as we know, was an excellent man. Though he became king now, he consulted his father-in-law in all matters, and, in fact, acted only as the manager for the old man. Every evening he used to consult him for an hour or two before disposing of intricate cases. The duty of signing, too, he reserved for the old man. Thus even on those days when there were no cases he used to go to his father-in-law to get papers signed. Thus passed on a couple of years or so.

One evening, while sitting in company with his wife in the loftiest room of his palace after the duties of the day, he cast his eyes to the east main street and contemplated the bustle of that part of the town. Carts creaking under the load of merchandise, the flourish with which the goods and wares were exposed for sale, fashionable gentlemen in their fanciful evening costumes walking to and fro, the troublesome hawkers that stand by the roadside questioning every one as to what he would buy, and several other things interested him, and for a time made him somewhat proud even that he ruled over such a rich country. But sweetness is not always unaccompanied with bitterness. He saw in that same street

a man whose face was very familiar to him, but whom he could not at once make out. A black man was sitting on a projecting pial of a corner of a shop, and was mending some torn gunny bags. Subuddhi looked at him carefully. "Is it the minister's son, Durbuddhi? No; he is not so black; rather was not when I saw him last," thought Subuddhi with himself, and examining his face, he at last exclaimed, "It is he! It is he! It is my friend and companion." "Who is it?" exclaimed the princess, and rushed at once to his side. She had most carefully watched her husband's face for the past few minutes while he was in deep contemplation. "It is my friend, the minister's son, by name Durbuddhi. We were companious from our birth, we played in the same dust, read in the same school, and were ever inseparable companions. I do not know what has brought him to the condition in which I see him now," said Subuddhi, and sent some one to bring him. Of the wicked and base act of the vile Durbuddhi he did not care to inform his gentle wife, who now retired to her inner apartments, as decorum did not allow her to be in company with her husband when he was receiving others.

The persons sent brought in Durbuddhi. Whatever might have been the cruelty that he had received from the hands of the minister's son, the prince began to shed tears when he

saw his old companion ushered in, not in that blooming cheerful red complexion in which he had seen him last, but in a weather-beaten dark skin and dejected colour of a cooly in which he saw him a few minutes ago.

“I excuse you all your faults, my dear Durbuddhi. Tell me quickly what has brought you to this wretched plight,” asked Subuddhi, and while asking he began to cry aloud. The minister’s son also shed tears copiously, and cried or pretended to cry ; for be it known that he was a perfect scoundrel, born to no good in the world. “My own mischief has brought me to this plight. When I returned to our country after putting out your eyes and thinking that I had killed you, my father banished me from our dominions, and ordered me never to plant my feet within their limits without bringing you back. As I thought I had put an end to your life I never came back to that tank in search of you. I engaged myself as a cooly in the streets of this town after trying with no success several other places, and I now stand before you.” Thus ended Durbuddhi, and the prince quite forgot his cruelty to him. He ordered his servants to get the minister’s son bathed, and attired in as rich robes as he himself wore. Then he related to him his own story, without omitting a single point, and at once made him his minister.

The whole story of Durbuddhi, excepting

the single point of his having put out his eyes the prince related to his wife, father, and mother-in-law.

Thus was Durbuddhi again restored to his high position, through the liberal kindness of Subuddhi. Subuddhi did not stop even with this. He began to send him with papers and other things to the old king for signature. This went on for some months. All the while Durbuddhi was as obedient as might be, and by his vile tricks had completely won over the heart of the old king.

One evening, after the signatures were over, Durbuddhi stopped for a while as if desirous to speak. "What do you want," said the old king. "Nothing but your favour," was the only reply, after which he retired. Thus he went on practising for some days and weeks. Every day he stopped for a few minutes after the state business was over, and when the old king asked the reason for it went on giving evasive answers. At last one evening the old king was extremely provoked. The cunning Durbuddhi had purposely intended this. "What a big fool are you to stop every day as if wishing to speak and never to utter a word," broke out the old king. "I beg pardon of your honour; I was thinking all the while whether I should let out my secret or not. At last, I have come to the conclusion that I will keep it to myself," replied the diabolical Durbuddhi.

“ No, you shall let it out,” roared the old king, whose curiosity was more roused than abated by the words, purposely obscure, of the minister’s son. Durbuddhi, after pretending much uneasiness at the disclosure of the supposed secret, loudly began his harangue, “ My lord, ever since I came here I made enquiries about the nobility of your family, about the sacrifices that you and your ancestors have performed, about the purifications that you and your elders have undergone, and about a thousand other particulars, each of which is enough to secure you and your descendants the place of Achyuta (*Achyutapada*) himself. These delighted me for a time, I say for a time, for listen, please, to what follows. When I compared with the pure fame of your famous family, that of your son-in-law’s, my heart began to pain me. Indeed the pain which began at that moment has not yet ceased. Know, then, that your son-in-law is not a prince. No doubt he has royal blood in his veins, which makes him look like a king. How came he to be so skilful in medicine. Just enquire the cause. To be no more in the dark, the king of my country—over which my father is the minister—set out one day on *savár*. While passing a barber’s street he saw a beautiful damsel of that caste. Bewitched by her beauty the king wanted to have her as his concubine, notwithstanding her low position in society. The fruit of that

concubinage is your son-in-law. He being the son of a barber-mother acquired so very easily the art of medicine. That a king was his father makes him look like a prince. If he had been of pure birth why should he leave his kingdom, and come here to effect the cure of your daughter? Except this prince, or supposed prince, all those that came here were mere doctors by caste." Thus ended the vile Durbuddhi, and taking in his hand the papers, vanished out of the room quickly, like a serpent that had stung.

The sweet words in which the minister's son clothed his arguments, the rising passion at the thought that he had been falsely imposed upon by a barber's son, the shame or rather supposed shame that he thought had come over his family, and a thousand other feelings clouded for a time the clear reason of the old king. He saw no other way of putting an end to the shame than by the murder of his dear daughter and son-in-law first, and of his own self and queen afterwards. At once he ordered the executioner, who came in. He gave him his signet-ring, and commanded him to break open the bed-room of his son-in-law that midnight, and murder him with his wife while asleep. The *hukums* or orders given with signet rings ought never to be disobeyed. The executioner humbled himself to the ground as a sign of his accepting the order, and retired to sharpen his knife for his terrible duty.

Neither Subuddhi nor his affectionate wife had any reason to suspect this terrible order. The old queen and the treacherous Durbuddhi had equally no reason to know anything about it. The old man, after issuing the *lukum* shut himself in his closet, and began to weep and wail as if he had lost his daughter from that moment. Durbuddhi, after kindling the fire, as says the Tamil proverb, by means of his treachery, came back with the papers to the prince. A thought occurred in his mind that Subuddhi's fate was drawing near. He wanted to have fulfilled the engagement that took place between himself and the prince about the loan for a day of the latter's wife for his beastly enjoyment. The excellent Subuddhi who always observed oaths most strictly was confused for a time. He did not know what to do. To stick to the oath and surrender his wife to another; or to break it and preserve the chastity of his own wife. At last, repeating in his own mind, "Charity alone conquers," and also thinking that heaven would somehow devise to preserve his wife's purity he went to her, explained to her how the matter stood, and ordered her to sleep with the minister's son that night in his own bed-chamber. She hesitatingly consented; for as a good wife she could not disobey her husband's commands. Subuddhi then told Durbuddhi that he might sleep in his bed-room that night, and have his wife as his companion.

The princess went to her mother crying that her husband had turned out mad. "Or else who would promise to give his wife to another for a night. He has ordered me to sleep this night with the minister's son. What does he mean by that?" "My daughter! Fear nothing, perhaps in his boyhood, without knowing what the delicate duties of a wife are, he agreed to present you as a toy to the use of another for a night. The promise once made now pains him. Unable to break it, and leaving it to yourself to preserve your chastity, he has so ordered you. And he would, nay must, excuse you, if you by some means or other save yourself, and apparently make good your husband's promise also. A thought just comes to me how to do that. There is your foster sister exactly resembling you. I shall send her in your place, ordering her to behave like yourself in your bed-room." So consoling her daughter, the old queen at once made all the requisite arrangements. And, of course, Subuddhi had no reason then to know anything about them.

The night came on and the minister's son went to the prince's bed-room and slept with the supposed wife of his friend, with his lovely motto, "*Adharmamé jayam*," but he was soon to learn that *Adharmam* never conquers. For at midnight, just a few minutes after he had thought that his *Adharmam* had fully conquered, the door is forced open, and a ruffian with a

drawn sword blazing like lightning rushes in, and murders the pair. Thus in that very night in which Durbuddhi had reached the topmost point of his vice he was cut down by the supreme hand of God. For, it is said, that when crime increases, God himself cannot bear.

The morning dawned, Subuddhi rose from his couch, and after his morning prayers was sitting in the council hall. The princess and her mother rose from their beds, and were after their business. A servant just at that time came running to the old queen, and said, "Our king is weeping in his room that his daughter is now no more. I think that there is something wrong with his majesty's brains to-day. Come and console him." The queen, who knew nothing of what had happened, ran to her husband's room quite astonished at the change. The husband reported everything to her, the sage-looking minister's son, the barber son-in-law, and everything, and then concluded that their daughter and son-in-law were no more. "What! compose yourself. Our son-in-law is sitting in his durbar. Our daughter is just adorning herself in her dressing-room. Were you dreaming? Are you in your right senses?" said the queen. The king ordered the executioner to bring the heads, which, on examination, proved to be those of the minister's son and of the foster-sister. The queen told everything of the one-day-wife-giving engagement,

and her own arrangements about it. The old king could not understand what all this meant. He drew out his sword and ran to the durbar like a maddened lion, and stood armed before his son-in-law, "Relate to me your true origin, and everything respecting yourself. Speak the truth. How came you to learn medicine? If you are a prince why should you leave your own dominions and come down here? What about the beastly agreement of giving your wife to another? Who is this minister's son?" Subuddhi, without omitting a single point, related everything that had taken place, even to the putting out of his eyes. The old man threw down his sword, took his son-in-law in his arms almost, for so great was his joy at the excellent way which fate had prepared for his escape, and said, "My son, my life, my eye. True it is, true it is. *Dharma* alone conquers, and you that hold that motto have conquered everything. The vile wretch whom notwithstanding the series of rogueries that he practised upon you, you protected, has at last found out that his *Adharmam* never conquers. But he never found it out. It was his *Adharmam* that cut him off on the very night of his supposed complete conquest by it."

Letters were sent at once to Têvai, inviting Suguṇa and Dharmasîla to the happy rejoicings for the prince and princess's delivery, and a re-marriage was celebrated with all pomp

in honour of their lucky escape. Dharmasîla, as he disliked his son, never shed a single tear for his loss. Subuddhi lived for a long time, giving much consolation to his own and his wife's parents. Through the blessings of Kâlî they had several intelligent sons.





FOLKLORE
IN
SOUTHERN INDIA.

PART II.

BY
PANDIT S. M. NAṬĒSA SĀSTRĪ,
GOVERNMENT ARCHÆOLOGICAL SURVEY.

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VI.

VIDAMUNDAN KODAMUNDAN.

Mr. Won't-Give and Mr. Won't-Leave.

In a certain town there lived a clever old Brâhmaṇ, named Won't-Give.¹ He used to go out daily and to beg in all the houses round, under the pretence that he had to feed several Brâhmaṇs in his own house. Good people, that believed in his words, used to give him much rice and curry stuffs, with which he would come home, and explain to his wife how he had deceived such and such a gentleman by the imposition of feeding in charity many persons at home. But if any hungry Brâhmaṇ, who had heard of his empty boast of feeding Brâhmaṇs at home, came to him, he was sent away with some excuse or other. In this way Mr. Won't-Give brought home a basketful of rice and other necessaries every day, of which he only used a small portion for himself and his wife, and converted the remainder into money. And thus by imposition and tricks he managed to live well for several years.

In an adjoining village there lived another very clever Brâhmaṇ, named Won't-Leave.² Whenever he found any man reluctant and unwilling to give him anything that he begged

¹ *Kodâmundan.*

² *Vidâmundan.*

of him, he would persist in bothering him until he had wrung from him a dole. This Mr. Won't-Leave, hearing of the charity of Mr. Won't-Give and his benevolent feeding of Brâhmaṇs, came to see him one day and requested him to give him a meal. Mr. Won't-Give told him that for that day ten Brâhmaṇs had already been settled, and that if he came the next day he would have his meal without fail. Mr. Won't-Leave agreed to this, and left him for that day. Mr. Won't-Give had, of course, told him the very lie he was accustomed to tell all that occasionally begged meals of him.

Now Mr. Won't-Leave was not so stupid as to be thus imposed upon. He stood before Mr. Won't-Give's door precisely at the appointed *ghaṭiká* (hour) the next day, and reminded the master of the house of his promise. Mr. Won't-Give had never before been taken at his word, and determined to send away the impertinent guest by some stronger excuse than the first, and so he spoke to him thus:—
 “Sir, I am very sorry to say that my wife fell ill last night of a strong fever, from which she has not yet recovered. Owing to this unforeseen accident I have had to postpone my charitable feedings (*samârádhana*) till her recovery, so do not trouble me please for some days more.”

Mr. Won't-Leave heard these words with an expression of sincere, or rather seem-

ingly sincere, sorrow in his face, and replied :—
 “Respected Sir, I am very sorry for the illness of the mistress of the house, but to give up charitable feeding of Brâhmaṇs on that account is a great sin. For the last ten years I have been studying the art of cooking, and can now cook for even several hundreds of Brâhmaṇs ; so I can assist you now in preparing the necessaries for the *samârádhana*.”
 Mr. Won’t-Give could not refuse such a request, but he deceitfully determined in his mind to get Mr. Won’t-Leave to cook for him, and then to drive him away without giving him his rice. And so he said :—“Yes, that is a very good idea. I am much obliged to you for your kind suggestion. Come in. Let us cook together.” So saying the master of the house took Mr. Won’t-Leave inside and they both went into the kitchen, while the mistress of the house, at the command of her husband, pretended illness.

Now Mr. Won’t-Give was a good liver, and prepared with the assistance of Mr. Won’t-Leave several good dishes. And then the difficulty was to drive the fellow out, for the long-maintained rule of never feeding a single Brâhmaṇ must not be broken that day. So when the cooking was all over the master of the house gave to Mr. Won’t-Leave a *káśu* (copper coin) and asked him to bring some leaves from the *bázár* (for plates), and he accord-

ingly went. Mr. Won't-Give meanwhile came to his wife and instructed her thus:—"My dearest wife, I have spared you the trouble of cooking to-day. Would that we could get such stupid fools as this every day to cook for us! I have now sent him out to fetch us some leaves, and it won't look well if we shut our doors against him, or drive him away: so we must make him go away of his own accord. A thought has just come into my mind as to how we can do it. As soon as he comes you should commence to quarrel with me. I shall then come to you and beat you, or rather the ground near you with both my hands, and you must continue your abuse and cries. The guest will find this very disgusting, and will leave us of his own accord." Mr. Won't-Give had just finished his instructions when he saw Mr. Won't-Leave returning with the leaves.

The wife, as prearranged, abused her husband right and left for his great imprudence and over-liberality in feeding the Brâhman̄s. Said she: "How are we to get on in the world if you thus empty the house of everything we have in feeding big-bellied Brâhman̄s? Must you be so very strict in inviting them, even when I am sick?" These and a thousand similar expressions were now launched at the husband's head. He pretended not to hear it for a time, but at last, apparently overcome by anger, he went in and with his hands gave successive blows on

the floor. At every blow on the floor the wife cried out that she was being murdered, and that those who had mercy in their hearts should come to her rescue.

Mr. Won't-Leave from the court-yard of the house listened to what was taking place inside, but not wishing to interfere in a quarrel between husband and wife, left matters to take their own course, and got into the loft, where he hid himself, fearing that he would be summoned as a witness to the quarrel.

After a time Mr. Won't-Give came out of the room where he had been beating the floor, and to his joy he could not find the guest. He cautiously looked round him and saw no signs of Mr. Won't-Leave. Of course, having had no reason to think that his guest would be sitting in the loft, he did not look up there, and even if he had done so, he would not have found him, for he had hidden himself out of sight.

Mr. Won't-Give now carefully bolted the door and his wife came out and changed her dirty cloth for a clean one. Said her husband to her: "At last we have succeeded in driving him out, come, you too must be hungry; let us have our dinner together." Two leaves were spread on the ground and all the dishes were equally divided into them. Meanwhile Mr. Won't-Leave was examining all that took place below him and, being himself very

hungry, was slyly watching for an opportunity to jump down. Mr. Won't-Give, gloating over his trickery, said to his wife: "Well, my love, did I not beat you without hurting you?" to which she replied: "Did I not continue to cry without shedding tears?" when suddenly there fell on their ears, "And did I not come to have my dinner without going away?" and down jumped Mr. Won't-Leave from the loft, and took his seat in front of the leaf spread by Mr. Won't-Give for his wife. And Mr. Won't-Give, though disappointed, was highly pleased at the cleverness of his guest.

This story is cited as the authority for three proverbs that have come into use in Tamil:

"Nôvâmal adittén."

"Ôyâmal aludén."

"Pôkâmal vandén."

which represent the exchanges of politeness between the husband, the wife, and the guest, quoted in the foregoing paragraphs.

VII.

VAYALVALLAN KAIYAVALLA.

Mr. Mighty-of-his-mouth and Mr. Mighty-of-his-hands.

In two adjoining villages there lived two famous men. The one was called Mr. Mighty-of-his-mouth¹—one that could accomplish wonders with words alone. The other was called Mr. Mighty-of-his-hands²—one who could make no use of that glib instrument the tongue, but was able to bear burdens, cut wood, and perform other physical labour.

It so happened that they agreed to live together in the house of the Mr. Mighty-of-his-mouth, to try and see which of them was the superior. They accordingly kept company for several months, till the great feast of the nine nights (*navarâtri*) came on. On the first day of the feast Mr. Mighty-of-his-hands wanted to sacrifice a goat to the goddess Kâlî. So he said to Mr. Mighty-of-his-mouth, "My dear friend, we both are mighty in our way, and so it would be shameful for us to buy the goat that we want to sacrifice with money. We should manage to get it without payment." "Yes, we must do so, and I know how," replied Mr. Mighty-of-his-mouth, and he asked his friend to wait till that evening.

¹ *Vôyâlvallan,*

² *Kaiyâlvallan.*

Now there lived a shepherd at one *ghatikâ's* (hour's) distance from their house, and the two friends resolved to go to his fold that night and steal away one of his goats. Accordingly when it was dark they approached his fold. The shepherd had just finished his duties to the mute members of his flock, and wanted to go home and have his rice hot. But he had no second person to watch the flock, and he must not lose his supper. So he planted his crook before the fold, and throwing his blanket (*kambalî*) over it, thus addressed it: "My son, I am very hungry, and so must go for my rice. Till I return do you watch the flock. This wood is rich in tigers and goblins (*bhûtas*). Some mischievous thief or *bhûta*—or *kûta*³ may come to steal away the sheep. Watch over them carefully." So saying the shepherd went away.

The friends had heard what the shepherd said. Of course, Mr. Mighty-of-his-mouth laughed within himself at this device of the shepherd to impress upon would-be robbers that he had left some one there to watch his sheep, while really he had only planted a pole and thrown a blanket over it. Mr. Mighty-of-his-hands, however, did not see the trick, and mistaking the stick to be an

³ There is no such word as *kûta* in Tamil. The Tamil and other Dravidian languages allow rhyming repetitions of a word, like this—*bhûta-kûta*.

actual watchman sitting at his duty before the fold, spoke thus to his friend, "Now what are we to do? There is a watchman sitting in front of the fold." Thereon Mr. Mighty-of-his-mouth cleared away his doubts by saying that it was no watchman, but a mere stick, and entered the fold with his friend.

It had also so happened that on that very night a *bhūta* (goblin) had come into the fold to steal away a sheep. It shuddered with fear on hearing the shepherd mention the *kūta*, for having never heard of the existence of *kūtas*, it mistook this imaginary being to be something superior in strength to itself. So thinking that a *kūta* might come to the fold, and not wishing to expose itself till it knew well what *kūtas* were, the *bhūta* transformed itself into a sheep and laid itself down among the flock. By this time the two Mighties had entered the fold and begun an examination of the sheep. They went on rejecting one animal after another for some defect or other, till at last they came to the sheep which was none other than the *bhūta*. They tested it, and when they found it very heavy—as, of course, it would be with the soul of the *bhūta* in it,—they began to tie up its legs to carry it home. When hands began to shake it the *bhūta* mistook the Mighties for the *kūtas*, and said to itself:—“Alas! the *kūtas* have come to take me away. What am I to do? What a fool I was to come

into the fold!" So thought the *bhûta* as Mr. Mighty-of-his-hands was carrying it away on his head, with his friend following him behind. But the *bhûta* soon began to work its devilish powers to extricate itself, and Mr. Mighty-of-his-hands began to feel pains all over his body and said to his friend: "My dear Mighty, I feel pains all over me. I think what we have brought is no sheep!" Mr. Mighty-of-his-mouth was inwardly alarmed at the words of his friend, but did not like to show that he was afraid. So he said, "Then put down the sheep, and let us tear open its belly, so that we shall each have only one-half of it to carry." This frightened the *bhûta*, and he melted away on the head of Mr. Mighty-of-his-hands, who, relieved of his devilish burden, was glad to return home safe with his friend.

The *bhûta* too went to its abode and there told its fellow-goblins how it had involved itself in a great trouble and how narrowly it had escaped. They all laughed at its stupidity and said, "What a great fool you are! They were no *kûtas*. In fact there are no *kûtas* in the world. They were men, and it was most stupid of you to have got yourself into their hands. Are you not ashamed to make such a fuss about your escape?" The injured *bhûta* retorted that they would not have made such remarks had they seen the *kûtas*. "Then show us these *kûtas*, as you choose to

call them," said they, "and we will crush them in the twinkling of an eye." "Agreed," said the injured *bhûta*, and the next night it took them to the house of the Mighties, and said from a distance: "There is their house. I cannot approach it. Do whatever you like." The other *bhûtas* were amazed at the fear of their timid brother, and resolved among themselves to put an end to the enemies of even one of their caste. So they went in a great crowd to the house of the Mighties. Some stood outside the house, to see that none of the inmates escaped, and some watched in the back-yard, while a score of them jumped over the walls and entered the court-yard.

Mr. Mighty-of-his-hands was sleeping in the verandah, adjoining the courtyard, and when he heard the noise of people jumping, he opened his eyes, and to his terror saw some *bhûtas* in the court. Without opening his mouth he quietly rolled himself along the ground, and went to the room where Mr. Mighty-of-his-mouth was sleeping with his wife and children. Tapping gently at the door he awoke his friend and said, "What shall we do now? The *bhûtas* have invaded our house, and will soon kill us." Mr. Mighty-of-his-mouth told him quietly not to be afraid, but to go and sleep in his original place, and that he himself would make the *bhûtas* run away. Mr. Mighty-of-his-hands did not understand what his friend

meant, but not wishing to contradict his instructions rolled his way back to his original place and pretended to sleep, though his heart was beating terribly with fright. Mr. Mighty-of-his-mouth now awoke his wife, and instructed her thus : “ My dearest wife, the foolish *bhūtas* have invaded our house, but if you act according to my advice we are safe, and the goblins will depart harmlessly. What I want you to do is, to go to the hall and light a lamp, spread leaves on the floor, and then pretend to awake me for my supper. I shall get up and enquire what you have ready to give me to eat. You will then reply that you have only pepper water and vegetables. With an angry face I shall say, ‘ What have you done with the three *bhūtas* that our son caught hold of on his way while returning from school ?’ Your reply must be, ‘ The rogue wanted some sweetmeats on coming home. Unfortunately I had none in the house, so he roasted the three *bhūtas* and gobbled them up.’ ” Thus instructing his wife Mr. Mighty-of-his-mouth pretended to go to sleep.

The wife accordingly spread the leaves and called her husband for his supper. During the conversation that followed, the fact that the son had roasted three goblins for sweetmeats was conveyed to the *bhūtas*. They shuddered at the son’s extraordinary ability, and thought, “ What must the father do for his meals when a son roasts three *bhūtas* for

sweetmeats?" So they at once took to their heels. Then going to the brother they had jeered at, they said to him that indeed the *kútas* were their greatest enemies, and that none of their lives were safe while they remained where they were, as on that very evening the son of a *kúta* had roasted three of them for sweetmeats. They therefore all resolved to fly away to the adjoining forest, and disappeared accordingly. Thus Mr. Mighty-of-his-mouth saved himself and his friend on two occasions from the *bhútas*.

The friends after this went out one day to an adjoining village and were returning home rather late in the evening. Darkness came on them before half the way was traversed, and there lay before them a dense wood infested by beasts of prey: so they resolved to spend the night in a high tree and go home next morning, and accordingly got up into a big *pápal*. Now this was the very wood into which the *bhútas* had migrated, and at midnight they all came down with torches to catch jackals and other animals to feast upon. The fear of Mr. Mighty-of-his-hands may be more imagined than described. The dreaded *bhútas* were at the foot of the very tree in which he had taken up his abode for the night! His hands trembled. His body shook. He lost his hold, and down he came with a horrible rustling of leaves. His friend, how-

ever, was, as usual, ready with a device, and bawled out, "I wished to leave these poor beings to their own revelry. But you are hungry and must needs jump down to catch some of them. Do not fail to lay your hands on the stoutest *bhûta*." The goblins heard the voice which was already very familiar to their ears, for was it not the *kûta* whose son had roasted up three *bhûtas* for sweetmeats that spoke? So they ran away at once, crying out, "Alas, what misery! Our bitter enemies have followed us even to this wood!" Thus the wit of Mr. Mighty-of-his-mouth saved himself and his friend for the third time.

The sun began to rise, and Mr. Mighty-of-his hands thrice walked round Mr. Mighty-of-his-mouth and said, "My dear friend, truly you only of us two are mighty. Mere physical strength is of no use without skill in words. The latter is far superior to the former, and if a man possess both, he is, as it were, a golden lotus having a sweet scent. It is enough for me now to have arrived at this moral! With your kind permission I shall return to my village." Mr. Mighty-of-his-mouth asked his friend not to consider himself under any obligation, and, after honouring him as became his position he let him return to his village.

The moral of this short story is that in man there is nothing great but mind.

VIII.

THE MOTHER-IN-LAW BECAME AN ASS.

Little by little the mother-in-law became an ass—*varavara mámi kaludai pól áná!*, is a proverb among the Tamils, applied to those who day by day go downwards in their progress in study, position, or life, and based on the following story:—

In a certain village there lived a Bráhmaṇ with his wife, mother, and mother-in-law. He was a very good man, and equally kind to all of them. His mother complained of nothing from his hands, but his wife was a very bad-tempered woman, and always troubled her mother-in-law by keeping her engaged in this work or that throughout the day, and giving her very little food in the evening. Owing to this the poor Bráhmaṇ's mother was almost dying of misery. On the other hand, her own mother received very kind treatment, of course, at her daughter's hands, by whom the husband was so completely ruled over, that he had no strength of mind to oppose her ill-treatment of his mother.

One evening, just before sunset, the wife abused her mother-in-law with such fury, that the latter had to fly away to escape a thrashing. Much vexed at her unhappiness she ran out of the village, but the sun had begun to set, and the darkness of night was

fast overtaking her. So finding a ruined temple she entered it to pass the night there. It happened to be the abode of the village Kâlî (goddess), who used to come out every night at midnight to inspect her village. That night she perceived a woman—the mother of the poor Brâhman—lurking within her *prâkûras* (boundaries), and being a most benevolent Kâlî called out to her, and asked her what made her so miserable that she should leave her home on such a dark night. The old Brâhmanî told her story in a few words, and while she was speaking the cunning goddess was using her supernatural powers to see whether all she said was true or not, and finding it to be the truth she thus replied in very soothing tones :—

“I pity your misery, mother, because your daughter-in-law troubles and vexes you thus when you have become old, and have no strength in your body. Now take this mango,” and taking a ripe one from out of her hips she gave it to the old Brahmanî with a smiling face—“eat it, and you will soon turn out a young woman like your own daughter-in-law, and then she shall no longer trouble you.” Thus consoling the afflicted old woman, the kind-hearted Kâlî went away. The Brâhmanî lingered for the remainder of the night in the temple, and being a fond mother she did not like to eat the whole of the mango without giving a portion of it to her son.

Meanwhile, when her son returned home in the evening he found his mother absent, but his wife explained the matter to him, so as to throw the blame on the old woman, as she always did. As it was dark he had no chance of going out to search for her, so he waited for the daylight, and as soon as he saw the dawn started to look for his mother. He had not walked far when to his joy he found her in the temple of Kâlî.

“How did you pass the cold night, my dearest mother?” said he. “What did you have for dinner? Wretch that I am to have got myself married to a cur. Forget all her faults, and return home.”

His mother shed tears of joy and sorrow, and related her previous night’s adventure, whereon he said :—

“Delay not even one *nimisha* (minute), but eat this fruit at once. I do not want any of it. Only if you become young and strong enough to stand that nasty cur’s troubles, well and good.”

So the mother ate up the divine fruit, and the son took her upon his shoulders and brought her home, on reaching which he placed her on the ground, when to his joy she was no longer an old woman, but a young girl of sixteen, and stronger than his own wife. The troublesome wife was now totally put down, and was powerless against so strong a mother-in-law.

She did not at all like the change, and having to give up her habits of bullying, and so she argued to herself thus—"This jade of a mother-in-law became young through the fruit of the Kâlî, why should not my mother also do the same, if I instruct her and send her to the same temple." So she instructed her mother as to the story she ought to give to the goddess and sent her there. Her old mother, agreeably to her daughter's injunctions went to the temple, and on meeting with the goddess at midnight gave a false answer that she was being greatly ill-treated by her daughter-in-law, though, in truth, she had nothing of the kind to complain of. The goddess perceived the lie through her divine powers, but apparently seeming to pity her, gave her also a fruit. Her daughter had instructed her not to eat it till next morning and till she saw her son-in-law.

As soon as morning approached the poor henpecked Brâhman was ordered by his wife to go to the temple and fetch his mother-in-law as he had some time back fetched away his mother. He accordingly went, and invited her to come home. She wanted him to eat part of the fruit, as she had been instructed, but he refused, and so she swallowed it all, fully expecting to become young again on reaching home. Meanwhile her son-in-law took her on his shoulders and returned home, expecting, as his former experience had taught him, to see

his mother-in-law also become a young woman. Anxiety to see how the change came on overcame him and at half way he turned his head and found such part of the burden on his shoulders as he could see to be like parts of an ass, but he took this to be a mere preliminary stage towards youthful womanhood! Again he turned, and again he saw the same thing several times, and the more he looked the more his burden became like an ass, till at last when he reached home his burden jumped down braying like an ass and ran away.

Thus the Kâlî, perceiving the evil intentions of the wife, disappointed her by turning her mother into an ass, but no one knew of it till she actually jumped down from the shoulders of her son-in-law.

This story is always cited as the explanation of the proverb quoted above—*varavara mâmi ka!udai pôl ânâ!*—little by little the mother-in-law became an ass, to which is also commonly added *ûr varumbôdu ûlaiyiḍa talaippattâ!*—and as she approached the village she began to bray.

IX.

THE STORY OF APPAYYA.¹

अपूपेन हताः चोराः
 हता खड्गेन केसरी ।
 तुरंगेण हतं सैन्यम्
 विधिर्भाग्यानुसारिणी ॥

In a remote village there lived a poor Brâhmaṇ and his wife. Though several years of their wedded life had passed they unfortunately had no children ; and so being very eager for a child, and having no hope of one by his first wife, the poor Brâhmaṇ made up his mind to marry a second. His wife would not permit it for some time, but finding her husband resolved, she gave way, thinking within herself that she would manage somehow to do away with the second wife. As soon as he had got her consent the Brâhmaṇ arranged for his second marriage and wedded a beautiful Brâhmaṇ girl. She went to live with him in the same house with the first wife, who, thinking that she would be making the world suspicious if she did anything suddenly, waited for some time.

Îśvara himself seemed to favour the new

¹ [Compare the tale of Fattû, the Valiant Weaver, *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XI. p. 282 ff.—R. C. T.]

marriage, and the second wife, a year after her wedding, becoming pregnant, went in the sixth month of her pregnancy to her mother's house for her confinement. Her husband bore his separation from her patiently for a fortnight, but after this the desire to see her again began to prey upon his mind, and he was always asking his first wife as to when he ought to go to her. She seemed to sympathise fully with his trouble and said:—

“ My dearest husband, your health is being daily injured, and I am glad that your love for her has not made it worse than it is. To-morrow you must start on a visit to her. It is said that we should not go empty-handed to children, a king, or a pregnant woman : so I shall give you one hundred *apúpa* cakes, packed up separately in a vessel, which you must give to her. You are very fond of *apúpas*, and I fear that you will eat some of them on the way : but you had better not do so. And I will give you some cakes packed in a cloth separately for you to eat on your journey.”

So the first wife spent the whole night in preparing the *apúpa* cakes, and mixed poison in the sugar and rice-flour of those she made for her co-wife and rival ; but as she entertained no enmity against her husband the *apúpa* cakes for him were properly prepared. By the time the morning dawned she had packed up the hundred *apúpas* in a brass

vessel, which could be easily carried on a man's head.

After a light breakfast—for a heavy one is always bad before a journey on foot—the Brâhman placed the brass vessel on his head, and holding in his hand the kerchief containing the food for himself on the way started for the village of his second wife, which happened to be at a distance of two days' journey. He walked in hot haste till evening approached, and when the darkness of night overtook him, the rapidity of his walk had exhausted him, and he felt very hungry. He espied a wayside shed and a tank near his path, and entered the water to perform his evening ablution to the god of the day, who was fast going down below the horizon. As soon as this was over he untied his kerchief, and did full justice to its contents by swallowing every cake whole. He then drank some water and, being quite overcome by fatigue, fell into a deep slumber in the shed, with his brass vessel and its sweet, or rather poisonous, contents under his head.

Close by the spot where the Brâhman slept there reigned a famous king who had a very beautiful daughter. Several persons demanded her hand in marriage, among whom was a robber chieftain, who wanted her for his only son. Though the king liked the boy for his beauty, the thought that he was only a robber for all that prevented him from making up his

mind to give his daughter in marriage to him. The robber-lord, however, was determined to have his own way, and accordingly despatched one hundred of his band to fetch away the princess in the night without her knowledge while she was sleeping, to his palace in the woods. In obedience to their chieftain's order the robbers, on the night the Brâhmaṇ happened to sleep in the shed, entered the king's palace and stole away the princess, together with the cot on which she was sleeping. On reaching the shed the hundred robbers found themselves very thirsty—for being awake at midnight always brings on thirst. So they placed the cot on the ground and were entering the water to quench their thirst. Just then they smelt the *apūpa* cakes, which, for all that they contained poison, had a very sweet savour. The robbers searched about the shed, and found the Brâhmaṇ sleeping on one side, and the brass vessel lying at a distance from him, for he had pushed it from underneath his head when he had stretched himself in his sleep. They opened the vessel and to their joy found in it exactly one hundred *apūpa* cakes.

“We have one here for each of us, and that is something better than mere water. Let us each eat before we go into it,” said the leader of the gang, and at once each man swallowed greedily what he had in his hand, and immediately all fell down dead. Lucky it was that no

one knew of the old Brâhmaṇi's trick. Had the robbers any reason to suspect it they would never have eaten the cakes. Had the Brâhmaṇ known it he would never have brought them with him for his dear second wife. Lucky was it for the poor old Brâhmaṇ and his second wife, and lucky was it for the sleeping princess, that these cakes went, after all, into the stomachs of the villainous robbers!

After sleeping his fill the Brâhmaṇ, who had been dreaming of his second wife all night, awoke in haste to pursue the remainder of his journey to her house. He could not find his brass vessel, but near the place where he had left it he found several men of the woods, whom he knew very well by their appearance to be robbers, as he thought, sleeping. Angered at the loss of his vessel he took up a sword from one of the dead robbers and cut off all their heads, thinking all the while that he was killing one hundred living robbers, who were sleeping after having eaten all his cakes. Presently the princess's cot fell under his gaze, and he approached it and found on it a most beautiful lady fast asleep. Being an intelligent man he perceived that the persons whose heads he had cut off, must have been some thieves, or other wicked men, who had carried her off. He was not long in doubt, for not far off he saw an army marching up rapidly with a king at its head, who

was saying, "Down with the robber who has stolen away my daughter." The Brâhman at once inferred that this must be the father of the sleeping princess, and suddenly waking her up from her sleep spoke thus to her :—

"Behold before you the hundred robbers that brought you here a few hours ago from your palace. I fought one and all of them single handed and have killed them all."

The princess was highly pleased at what she heard, for she knew of all the tricks the robbers had previously played to carry her off. So she fell reverently at the Brâhman's feet and said :

"Friend, never till now have I heard of a warrior who single-handed fought one hundred robbers. Your valour is unparalleled. I *will* be your wife, if only in remembrance of your having saved me from falling into the hands of these ruffians."

Her father and his army was now near the shed, for he had all along watched the conduct of the robber chieftain, and as soon as the maidservants of the palace informed him of the disappearance of the princess and her cot, he marched straight with his soldiers for the woods. His joy, when he saw his daughter safe, knew no bounds, and he flew into his daughter's arms, while she pointed to the Brâhman as her preserver. The king now put a thousand questions to our hero, who, being well versed in matters of fighting, gave sound

replies, and so came successfully out of his first adventure. The king, astonished at his valour, took him to his palace, and rewarded him with the hand of the princess. And the robber chieftain, fearing the new son-in-law who single-handed had killed a hundred of his robbers, never troubled himself about the princess. Thus the Brâhmaṇ's first adventure ended in making him son-in-law to a king!

Now there lived a lioness in a wood near the princess's country, who had a great taste for human flesh, and so once a week the king used to send a man into the wood to serve as her prey. All the people now collected together before the king and said :—

“Most honoured king, while you have a son-in-law who killed one hundred robbers with his sword, why should you continue to send a man into the wood every week. We request you to send your son-in-law next week to the wood and have the lioness killed.”

This seemed most reasonable to the king, who called for his son-in-law and sent him armed to the teeth into the wood..

Now our Brâhmaṇ could not refuse to go for fear of losing the fame of his former exploit, and hoping that fortune would favour him, he asked his father-in-law to have him hoisted up into a big banyan tree with all kinds of weapons, and this was done. The appointed time for the lioness to eat her prey approached,

and as she saw no one coming for her, and as sometimes those that had to come used to linger for a short time in the tree in which the Brâhmaṇ had taken refuge, she went up to it to see that no such trick has been played upon her this time. This made the Brâhmaṇ tremble so violently that he dropped the sword he held in his hand. At that very moment the lioness happened to yawn and the sword dropped right into her jaws and killed her. As soon as the Brâhmaṇ saw the course which events had taken, he came down from the tree and invented a thousand stories of how he had given battle to the terrible lioness and overcome her. This exploit fully established his valour, and feasts and rejoicings in honour of it followed, and the whole country round blessed the son-in-law of their king.

Near this kingdom there also reigned a powerful emperor, who levied tribute from all the surrounding countries. To this emperor the father-in-law of our most valorous Brâhmaṇ, who, at one stroke, had killed one hundred robbers and, at another, a fierce lioness, had also to pay a certain amount of tribute ; but trusting to the power of his son-in-law, he stopped the tribute to the emperor, who, by the way, was named Appayya Râja, and who, as soon as the tribute was stopped, invaded his dominions, and his father-in-law besought the Brâhmaṇ for assistance.

Again the poor Brâhmaṇ could not refuse; for if he did all his former fame would be lost. So he determined to undertake this adventure also, and to trust to fortune rather than give up the attempt. He asked for the best horse and the sharpest sword and set out to fight the enemy, who had already encamped on the other side of the river, which flowed at a short distance to the east of the town.

Now the king had a very unruly horse, which had never been broken in, and this he gave his son-in-law; and, supplying him with a sharp sword, asked him to start. The Brâhmaṇ then asked the king's servants to tie him up with cotton strings tight on to the saddle, and set out on the expedition.

The horse, having never till then felt a man on its back, began to gallop most furiously, and flew onwards so fast that all who saw it thought the rider must lose his life, and he too was almost dead with fear. He tried his best to curb his steed, but the more he pulled the faster it galloped, till giving up all hopes of life he let it take its course. It jumped into the water and swam across to the other side of the river, wetting the cotton cords by which the Brâhmaṇ was tied down to the saddle, making them swell and giving him the most excruciating pain. He bore it, however, with all the patience imaginable. Presently the horse reached the other side of the river, where there

was a big palmyra tree, which a recent flood had left almost uprooted and ready to fall at the slightest touch. The Brâhmaṇ, unable to stop the course of the horse, held fast on to the tree, hoping thus to check its wild career. But unfortunately for him the tree gave way, and the steed galloped on so furiously that he did not know which was the safer—to leave the tree or to hold on to it. Meanwhile the wet cotton cords hurt him so that he, in the hopelessness of despair, bawled out *appa! ayya!*¹ On went his steed, and still he held on to the palmyra tree. Though now fighting for his own life, the people that were watching him from a great distance thought him to be flying to the battlefield armed with a palmyra tree! The cry of lamentation *appa ayya*, which he uttered, his enemy mistook for a challenge because, as we know, his name happened to be Appayya. Horror-struck at the sight of a warrior armed with a huge tree, his enemy turned and fled. *Yathâ rājâ tathâ prajāḥ*—“As is the king so are the subjects,”—and accordingly his followers also fled. The Brâhmaṇ warrior (!) seeing the fortunate course events had again taken pursued the enemy, or rather let his courser have its own furious way. Thus the enemy and his vast army melted away in the twinkling of

¹ Which in Tamil are exclamations of lamentation, meaning, Ah! Alas!

an eye and the horse, too, when it became exhausted, returned towards the palace.

The old king had been watching from the loftiest rooms of his palace all that had passed on the other side of the river, and believing his son-in-law had, by his own prowess, driven out the enemy, approached him with all pomp. Eager hands quickly cut the knots by which the victorious (!) Brâhmaṇ had been held tight in his saddle, and his old father-in-law with tears of joy embraced him and congratulated him on his victory, saying that the whole kingdom was indebted to him. A splendid triumphal march was conducted, in which the eyes of the whole town were directed towards our victorious hero.

Thus, on three different occasions, and in three different adventures, fortune favoured the poor Brâhmaṇ and brought him fame. He then sent for his two former wives and took them into his palace. His second wife, who was pregnant when he first started with the *apûpa* cakes to see her, had given birth to a male child, who was, when she came back to him, more than a year old. The first wife confessed to her husband her sin of having given him poisoned cakes and craved his pardon; and it was only now that he came to know that the hundred robbers he killed in his first adventure were all really dead men, and that they must have died from the effects of the poison in the

cakes, and since her treachery had given him a new start in life he forgave her. She, too, gave up her enmity to the partners of her husband's bed, and all the four lived in peace and plenty for many a long day afterwards.

X.

THE BRAHMAN GIRL THAT MARRIED A TIGER.

In a certain village there lived an old Brâhman who had three sons and a daughter. The girl being the youngest was brought up most tenderly and became spoilt, and so whenever she saw a beautiful boy she would say to her parents that she must be wedded to him. Her parents were, therefore, much put about to devise excuses for taking her away from her youthful lovers. Thus passed on some years, till the girl was very near attaining her puberty and then the parents, fearing that they would be driven out of their caste if they failed to dispose of her hand in marriage before she came to the years of maturity, began to be eager about finding a bridegroom for her.

Now near their village there lived a fierce tiger, that had attained to great proficiency in the art of magic, and had the power of assuming different forms. Having a great taste for Brâhman's food, the tiger used now and then to frequent temples and other places of public feeding in the shape of an old famished Brâhman in order to share the food prepared for the Brâhman. The tiger also wanted, if possible, a Brâhman

wife to take to the woods, and there to make her cook his meals after her fashion. One day when he was partaking of his meals in Brâhmaṇ shape at a *satra*¹, he heard the talk about the Brâhmaṇ girl who was always falling in love with every beautiful Brâhmaṇ boy. Said he to himself, "Praised be the face that I saw first this morning. I shall assume the shape of a Brâhmaṇ boy, and appear as beautiful as beautiful can be, and win the heart of the girl."

Next morning he accordingly became in form a great Śâstrin (proficient in the *Râmâyana*) and took his seat near the *ghât* of the sacred river of the village. Scattering holy ashes profusely over his body he opened the *Râmâyana* and began to read.

"The voice of the new Śâstrin is most enchanting. Let us go and hear him," said some women among themselves, and sat down before him to hear him expound the great book. The girl for whom the tiger had assumed this shape came in due time to bathe at the river, and as soon as she saw the new Śâstrin fell in love with him, and bothered her old mother to speak to her father about him, so as not to lose her new lover. The old woman too was delighted at the bridegroom whom fortune had thrown in her way, and ran home to her husband, who, when he came and saw the Śâstrin, raised

¹ A place of public feeding.

up his hands in praise of the great god Mahêśvara. The Śâstrin was now invited to take his meals with them, and as he had come with the express intention of marrying the daughter he, of course, agreed.

A grand dinner followed in honour of the Śâstrin, and his host began to question him as to his parentage, &c., to which the cunning tiger replied that he was born in a village beyond the adjacent wood. The Brâhman had no time to wait for better enquiry, and as the boy was very fair he married his daughter to him the very next day. Feasts followed for a month, during which time the bridegroom gave every satisfaction to his new relatives, who supposed him to be human all the while. He also did full justice to the Brâhmanic dishes, and gorged everything that was placed before him.

After the first month was over the tiger-bridegroom bethought him of his accustomed prey, and hankered after his abode in the woods. A change of diet for a day or two is all very well, but to renounce his own proper food for more than a month was hard. So one day he said to his father-in-law, "I must go back soon to my old parents, for they will be pining at my absence. But why should we have to bear the double expense of my coming all the way here again to take my wife to my village? So if you will kindly let me take the girl with

me I shall take her to her future home, and hand her over to her mother-in-law, and see that she is well taken care of." The old Brâhmaṇ agreed to this, and replied, "My dear son-in-law, you are her husband and she is yours and we now send her with you, though it is like sending her into the wilderness with her eyes tied up. But as we take you to be everything to her, we trust you to treat her kindly." The mother of the bride shed tears at the idea of having to send her away, but nevertheless the very next day was fixed for the journey. The old woman spent the whole day in preparing cakes and sweetmeats for her daughter, and when the time for the journey arrived, she took care to place in her bundles and on her head one or two margosa² leaves to keep off demons. The relatives of the bride requested her husband to allow her to rest wherever she found shade, and to eat wherever she found water, and to this he agreed, and so they began their journey.

The boy tiger and his human wife pursued their journey for two or three *ghatikās*³ in free and pleasant conversation, when the girl happened to see a fine pond, round which the birds were

² Among high caste Hindûs when girls leave one village and go to another the old woman of the house—the mother or grandmother—always places in her bundles and on her head a few margosa leaves as a talisman against demons.

³ A *ghatikâ* is 24 minutes. The story being Hindû, the Hindû method of reckoning distance is used.

warbling their sweet notes. She requested her husband to follow her to the water's edge and to partake of some of the cakes and sweetmeats with her. But he replied, "Be quiet, or I shall show you my original shape." This made her afraid, so she pursued her journey in silence until she saw another pond, when she asked the same question of her husband, who replied in the same tone. Now she was very hungry, and not liking her husband's tone, which she found had greatly changed ever since they had entered the woods, said to him, "Show me your original shape."

No sooner were these words uttered than her husband remained no longer a man. Four legs, a striped skin, a long tail and a tiger's face came over him suddenly and, horror of horrors! a tiger—and not a man stood before her! Nor were her fears stilled when the tiger in human voice began as follows:—"Know henceforth that I, your husband, am a tiger—this very tiger that now speaks to you. If you have any regard for your life you must obey all my orders implicitly, for I can speak to you in human voice and understand what you say. In a couple of *ghaṭikas* we shall reach my home, of which you will become the mistress. In the front of my house you will see half a dozen tubs, each of which you must fill up daily with some dish or other cooked in your own way. I shall take care to

supply you with all the provisions you want." So saying the tiger slowly conducted her to his house.

The misery of the girl may more be imagined than described, for if she were to object she would be put to death. So, weeping all the way, she reached her husband's house. Leaving her there he went out and returned with several pumpkins and some flesh, of which she soon prepared a curry and gave it to her husband. He went out again after this and returned in the evening with several vegetables and some more flesh and gave her an order:—"Every morning I shall go out in search of provisions and prey and bring something with me on my return: you must keep cooked for me whatever I leave in the house."

So next morning as soon as the tiger had gone away she cooked everything left in the house and filled all the tubs with food. At the 10th *ghaṭika* the tiger returned and growled out, "I smell a man! I smell a woman in my wood." And his wife for very fear shut herself up in the house. As soon as the tiger had satisfied his appetite he told her to open the door, which she did, and they talked together for a time, after which the tiger rested awhile, and then went out hunting again. Thus passed many a day, till the tiger's Brâhmaṇ wife had a son, which also turned out to be only a tiger.

One day, after the tiger had gone out to the woods, his wife was crying all alone in the house, when a crow happened to peck at some rice that was scattered near her, and seeing the girl crying, began to shed tears.

“Can you assist me?” asked the girl.

“Yes,” said the crow.

So she brought out a palmyra leaf and wrote on it with an iron nail all her sufferings in the wood, and requested her brothers to come and relieve her. This palmyra leaf she tied to the neck of the crow, which, seeming to understand her thoughts, flew to her village and sat down before one of her brothers. He untied the leaf and read the contents of the letter and told them to his other brothers. All the three then started for the wood, asking their mother to give them something to eat on the way. She had not enough of rice for the three, so she made a big ball of clay and stuck it over with what rice she had, so as to make it look like a ball of rice. This she gave to the brothers to eat on their way and started them off to the woods.

They had not proceeded long before they espied an ass. The youngest, who was of a playful disposition, wished to take the ass with him. The two elder brothers objected to this for a time, but in the end they allowed him to have his own way. Further on they saw an ant, which the middle brother took with him. Near the ant there was a big palmyra tree lying

on the ground, which the eldest took with him to keep off the tiger.

The sun was now high in the horizon and the three brothers became very hungry. So they sat down near a tank and opened the bundle containing the ball of rice. To their utter disappointment they found it to be all clay, but being extremely hungry they drank all the water in the pond and continued their journey. On leaving the tank they found a big iron tub belonging to the washerman of the adjacent village. This they took also with them in addition to the ass, the ant and the palmyra tree. Following the road described by their sister in her letter by the crow, they walked on and on till they reached the tiger's house.

The sister, overjoyed to see her brothers again, ran out at once to welcome them. "My dearest brothers, I am so glad to see that you have come here to relieve me after all, but the time for the tiger's coming home is approaching, so hide yourselves in the loft, and wait till he is gone." So saying she helped her brothers to ascend into the loft. By this time the tiger returned, and perceived the presence of human beings by the peculiar smell. He asked his wife whether any one had come to their house. She said, "No." But when the brothers, who with their trophies of the way—the ass, the ant, and so on—were sitting upon the loft, saw the tiger dallying with their sister they

were greatly frightened; so much so that the youngest through fear began to make water, and, as he had drunk a great quantity of water from the pond, he flooded the whole room. The other two also followed his example, and thus there was a deluge in the tiger's house.

"What is all this?" said the terrified tiger to his wife.

"Nothing," said she, "but the urine of your brothers-in-law. They came here a watch^a ago, and as soon as you have finished your meals, they want to see you."

"Can my brothers-in-law make all this water?" thought the tiger to himself.

He then asked them to speak to him, whereon the youngest brother put the ant which he had in his hand into the ear of the ass, and as soon as the latter was bitten, it began to bawl out most horribly.

"How is it that your brothers have such a hoarse voice?" said the tiger to his wife.

He next asked them to show their legs. Taking courage at the stupidity of the tiger on the two former occasions, the eldest brother now stretched out the palmyra tree.

"By my father, I have never seen such a leg," said the tiger, and asked his brothers-in-law to show their bellies. The second brother now

^a A 'watch' is a *yâma*, or three hours.

showed the tub, at which the tiger shuddered, and saying, "such a lot of urine, such a harsh voice, so stout a leg and such a belly, truly I have never heard of such persons as these!" he ran away.

It was already dark, and the brothers, wishing to take advantage of the tiger's terror, prepared to return home with their sister at once. They ate up what little food she had, and ordered her to start. Fortunately for her her tiger-child was asleep. So she tore it into two pieces and suspended them over the hearth, and, thus getting rid of the child, she ran off with her brothers towards home.

Before leaving she bolted the front door from inside, and went out at the back of the house. As soon as the pieces of the cub, which were hung up over the hearth, began to roast they dripped, which made the fire hiss and sputter; and when the tiger returned at about midnight, he found the door shut and heard the hissing of the fire, which he mistook for the noise of cooking muffins.⁵

"I see!" said he to himself, "how very cunning you are! you have bolted the door and are cooking muffins for your brothers! Let us see if we can't get your muffins." So saying he went round to the back door and entered his house, and was greatly perplexed to find

⁵ Tamil, *tósai*.

his cub torn in two and being roasted, his house deserted by his Brâhman wife, and his property plundered! For his wife, before leaving, had taken with her as much of the tiger's property as she could conveniently carry.

The tiger now discovered all the treachery of his wife, and his heart grieved for the loss of his son, that was now no more. He determined to be revenged on his wife, and to bring her back into the wood, and there tear her into many pieces in place of only two. But how to bring her back? He assumed his original shape of a young bridegroom, making, of course, due allowance for the number of years that had passed since his marriage, and next morning went to his father-in-law's house. His brothers-in-law and his wife saw from a distance the deceitful form he had assumed and devised means to kill him. Meanwhile the tiger Brâhman approached his father-in-law's house, and the old people welcomed him. The younger ones too ran here and there to bring provisions to feed him sumptuously, and the tiger was highly pleased at the hospitable way in which he was received.

There was a ruined well at the back of the house, and the eldest of the brothers placed some thin sticks across its mouth, over which he spread a fine mat. Now it is usual to ask guests to have an oil bath before dinner, and so

his three brothers-in-law requested the tiger to take his seat on the fine mat for his bath. As soon as he sat on it the thin sticks being unable to bear his weight gave way and down fell the cunning tiger with a heavy crash ! The well was at once filled in with stones and other rubbish, and thus the tiger was effectually prevented from doing any more mischief.

But the Brâhmaṇ girl, in memory of her having married a tiger, raised a pillar over the well and planted a *tulasî*⁶ shrub on the top of it. Morning and evening, for the rest of her life, she used to smear the pillar with sacred cow-dung and water the *tulasî* shrub.

This story is told to explain the Tamil proverb "*Šummá irukkiraya, šuruvattai kú-!ta!tuma,*" which means—

"Be quiet, or I shall show you my original shape."

⁶ A fragrant herb, held in great veneration by the Hindûs ; *Ocimum sanctum*. This herb is sacred alike to Śiva and Viṣṇu. Those species specially sacred to Śiva are—*Vendulasî*, *Siru-tulasî*, and *Siva-tulasî*; those to Viṣṇu are *Šendulasî*, *Karundulasî*, and *Viṣṇu-tulasî*.

XI.

THE GOOD HUSBAND AND THE BAD WIFE.

In a remote village there lived a Brâhman whose good nature and charitable disposition were proverbial. Equally proverbial also were the ill-nature and uncharitable disposition of the Brâhmaṇî—his wife. But as Paramêśvara (God) had joined them in matrimony, they had to live together as husband and wife, though their temperaments were so incompatible. Every day the Brâhman had a taste of his wife's ill-temper, and if any other Brâhman was invited to dinner by him, his wife, somehow or other, would manage to drive him away.

One fine summer morning a rather stupid Brâhman friend of his came to visit our hero and was at once invited to dinner. He told his wife to have dinner ready earlier than usual, and went off to the river to bathe. His friend not feeling very well that day wanted a hot bath at the house, and so did not follow him to the river, but remained sitting in the outer verandah. If any other guest had come the wife would have accused him of greediness to his face and sent him away, but this visitor seemed to be a special friend of her lord, so she did not like to say anything; but she devised a plan to make him go away of his own accord.

She proceeded to smear the ground before her husband's friend with cowdung, and placed in the midst of it a long pestle supporting one end of it against the wall. She next approached the pestle most solemnly and performed worship (*pújā*) to it. The guest did not in the least understand what she was doing, and respectfully asked her what it all meant.

"This is what is called pestle worship," she replied. "I do it as a daily duty, and this pestle is meant to break the head of some human being in honour of a goddess, whose feet are most devoutly worshipped by my husband. Every day as soon as he returns from his bath in the river he takes this pestle, which I am ordered to keep ready for him before his return, and with it breaks the head of any human being whom he has managed to get hold of by inviting him for a meal. This is his tribute (*dakshinā*) to the goddess; to-day you are the victim."

The guest was much alarmed. "What! break the head of a guest! I at any rate shall not be deceived to-day," thought he, and prepared to run away.

The Bráhmaṇ's wife appeared to sympathise with his sad plight, and said:—

"Really, I do pity you. But there is one thing you can do now to save yourself. If you go out by the front door and walk in the street my husband may follow you, so you had better go out by the back door."

To this plan the guest most thankfully agreed, and hastily ran off by the back door.

Almost immediately our hero returned from his bath, but before he could arrive his wife had cleaned up the place she had prepared for the pestle worship; and when the Brâhman, not finding his friend in the house inquired of her as to what had become of him, she said in seeming anger:—

“The greedy brute! he wanted me to give him this pestle—this very pestle which I brought forty years ago as a dowry from my mother’s house, and when I refused he ran away by the back-yard in haste.”

But her kind-hearted lord observed that he would rather lose the pestle than his guest, even though it was a part of his wife’s dowry and more than forty years old. So he ran off with the pestle in his hand after his friend crying out, “Oh Brâhman! Oh Brâhman! Stop please, and take the pestle.”

But the story told by the old woman now seemed most true to the guest when he saw her husband running after him, and so he said, “You and your pestle may go where you please. Never more will you catch me in your house,” and ran away.

XII.

THE GOOD WIFE AND THE BAD HUSBAND.¹

In a remote village there lived a man and his wife, who was a stupid little woman and believed everything that was told her. Whenever people wanted anything from her they used to come and flatter her; but this had to be done in the absence of her husband, because he was a very miserly man, and would never part with any of his money, for all he was exceedingly rich. Nevertheless, without his knowledge cunning beggars would now and then come to his wife and beg of her, and they used generally to succeed, as she was so amenable to flattery. But whenever her husband found her out he would come down heavily upon her, sometimes with words and sometimes with blows. Thus quarrels arose, till at last, for the sake of peace, the wife had to give up her charitable propensities.

Now there lived in the village a rogne of the first water, who had many a time witnessed what took place in the rich miser's family. Wishing to revive his old habit of getting what he wanted from the miser's wife he watched his opportunity and one day, when the miser

¹ [Compare the Sinhalese folktale given at p. 62, Vol. I. of the *Orientalist*.—ED.]

had gone out on horseback to inspect his lands, he came to his wife in the middle of the day and fell down at the threshold as if overcome by exhaustion. She ran up to him at once and asked him who he was.

“I am a native of Kailâsa,” said he, “sent down by an old couple living there, for news of their son and his wife.”

“Who are those fortunate dwellers on Śiva’s mountain?” said she.

On this the rogue gave the names of her husband’s deceased parents, which he had taken good care, of course, to learn from the neighbours.

“Do you really come from them?” said she. “Are they doing well there? Dear old people. How glad my husband would be to see you, were he here! Sit down please, and take rest awhile till he returns. How do they live there? Have they enough to eat and to dress themselves?” These and a thousand other questions she put to the rogue, who, for his part, wanted to get away as quick as possible, as he knew full well how he would be treated if the miser should return while he was there, so he said:—

“Mother, language has no words to describe the miseries they are undergoing in the other world. They have not a rag to cover themselves, and for the last six days they have eaten nothing, and have lived on water only. It would break your heart to see them.”

The rogue's pathetic words fully deceived the good woman, who firmly believed that he had come down from Kailâsa, sent by the old couple to her.

"Why should they suffer so?" said she, "when their son has plenty to eat and to dress himself, and when their daughter-in-law wears all sorts of costly ornaments?"

With that she went into the house and came out with two boxes containing all the clothes of herself and her husband and gave the whole lot to the rogue, with instructions to take them to her poor old people in Kailâsa. She also gave him the jewel box to be presented to her mother-in-law.

"But dress and jewels will not fill their hungry stomachs," said he.

Requesting him to wait a little, the silly woman brought out her husband's cash chest and emptied the contents into the rogue's coat,² who now went off in haste, promising to give everything to the good people in Kailâsa. Our good lady, according to etiquette, conducted him a few hundred yards along the road and sent news of herself through him to her relatives, and then returned home. The rogue now tied up all his booty in his coat and ran in haste towards the river and crossed over it.

No sooner had our heroine reached home than her husband returned after his inspection

² *Uparantî* or *upavastra*, an upper garment.

of his lands. Her pleasure at what she had done was so great, that she met him at the door and told him all about the arrival of the messenger from Kailâsa, and how she had sent clothes and jewels and money through him to her husband's parents. The anger of her husband knew no bounds. But he checked himself for a while, and asked her which road the messenger from Kailâsa had taken, as he said he wanted to follow him and send some more news to his parents. To this she willingly agreed and pointed out the direction the rogue had gone. With rage in his heart at the trick played upon his stupid wife our hero rode on in hot haste and after a ride of two *ghatikâs* he caught sight of the flying rogue, who, finding escape hopeless, climbed up into a big *pîpal* tree. Our hero soon reached the bottom of the tree and shouted to the rogue to come down.

"No, I cannot, this is the way to Kailâsa," said the rogue, and climbed up on the top of the tree. Seeing no chance of the rogue's coming down and as there was no third person present to whom he could call for help, our hero tied his horse to an adjacent tree and began climbing up the *pîpal* tree himself. The rogue thanked all his gods when he saw this, and waited till his enemy had climbed nearly up to him, and then, throwing down his bundle of booty, leapt quickly from branch to branch till

he reached the bottom. He then got upon his enemy's horse and with his bundle rode into a dense forest in which no one was likely to find him. Our hero being much older in years was no match for the rogue. So he slowly came down, and cursing his stupidity in having risked his horse to recover his property, returned home at his leisure. His wife, who was waiting his arrival, welcomed him with a cheerful countenance and said,

“I thought as much. You have sent away your horse to Kailâsa to be used by your father.”

Vexed as he was at his wife's words, our hero replied in the affirmative to conceal his own stupidity.

Thus, some there are in this world, who, though they may not willingly give away anything, pretend to have done so when by accident or stupidity they happen to lose it.



FOLKLORE IN SOUTHERN INDIA.

PART I.

BY

PANDIT NAṬĒṢA SÂSTRĪ,

GOVERNMENT ARCHÆOLOGICAL SURVEY.

Price, 1 Rupee ; postage, &c., 1 Anna.

Opinions of the Press.

UNDER the above title we have received from Mr. Naṭṣa Sâstrî a small collection of Indian Fables which forcibly call to mind the legendary tales with which bright memories of our early years are stored. The tales contained in this little book, however, differ considerably in one respect from those with which our youthful hours over the home fire-side were beguiled. Both alike amuse, and yet point a moral or proclaim a truth, but these fairy tales of an Eastern land, unlike our own, have blended with them peculiar mythological allusions which lend them

piquancy. The East has ever been the home of legendary lore, but unfortunately ignorance of the language of this country on our part, and of ours on the part of the native, has for some time prevented the European from learning the style of fairy tale with which the Indian grand-dame beguiles the evening hour, seated among her dusky offspring, or the way-side improvisator rivets the attention of the passer-by with his stories of quaint imagery, and half historical, half fictitious, or half probable and half improbable tales. It is the love of the marvellous with which the Eastern mind is so deeply imbued, that has to a great extent clouded the early history of this land. To trace the story of the good old days when Pandyapand Chola strove for mastery in Southern India is, owing to this, rendered well-nigh impossible. So intimately are copious myths blended with a little truth, that history has degenerated into fable, even in times so recent that in European history they seem but as yesterday. The little book before us goes far to show to the English reader what has hitherto been a closed book to many, the style of fiction which has thus impregnated the history of this part of the world. Historical allusions there are, but all blended, as we have said, with myth forming a quaint whole. In many instances the origin of proverbs and the reasons for certain Hindu customs are explained. Thus in one story we learn the legend on account of which the Brahman will not eat his food in the dark, while another explains the origin of the Tamil proverb, "Charity alone conquers." The English in which the tales are written is very good, and seldom does the author betray that the language in which he writes is any other than his own mother-tongue.

We find in it few indeed of those Indian peculiarities of language or composition from which native productions are seldom free. It is throughout most readably written, and we should strongly recommend any one who takes an interest in the literature of the East to peruse its fairy tales.—*The Madras Times*.

It is due to the patient researches of a class of *savants* and investigators that the Folklore of so many countries constitute an agreeable part of the literature of the world. Men of the highest intellect have addressed themselves, with more or less credit, to the task of collecting those legendary tales, myths, and similar things founded on some incident or tradition about which there is no historic certainty, and which are coloured by the glow of an imagination that runs riot. Every nationality in India has its Folklore, but it is only a small part of it that has been explored and brought to light, and there yet remains a large field for the industry of those who will take the trouble to discover the sort of legends that are retailed and believed in by the great mass of the people, legends the recital of which in prose or verse amuse the untutored fancy in numberless households or on the way-side. The late Mr. Gover published a work giving an interesting account of the Folklore in the Madras Presidency, and especially that in vogue among the Tamil-speaking population. Had he not been cut off in the prime of life and from amidst his useful municipal labours, this work would have been greatly extended. We have received a brochure of eighty-three pages, entitled "Folklore in Southern India" by a learned Pandit (S. M. Naṭeśa Sâstrî,) of the

Madras Presidency, employed in the Government Archaeological Survey. It is written in English in a pleasing manner, and is only the first part of the tales that make up the folklore in Southern India.—*The Madras Standard*.

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FOLKLORE
IN
SOUTHERN INDIA.

PART III.

BY

PAN̄DIT S. M. NAṬĒŚA SĀSTRĪ.

MEMBER OF THE COUNCIL OF THE LONDON
FOLKLORE SOCIETY.

BOMBAY :
EDUCATION SOCIETY'S PRESS, BYCULLA.

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TO
RICHARD GARNAC TEMPLE,
Captain, Bengal Staff Corps,

WHOSE WORKS FIRST SUGGESTED TO THE WRITER
THE IDEA OF COLLECTING
THESE TALES
AND WHO HAS DONE SO MUCH
FOR THE CAUSE OF INDIAN FOLK-LORE,
THIS LITTLE BOOK
IS INSCRIBED.

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P R E F A C E .

As many of my friends have suggested that I should state the source from which and the part of the country in which I heard the stories narrated in this volume, I have thought it advisable to give, in a few prefatory remarks, some details of my private life which throw light on the subject.

I am a native of the Trichinopoly District and was in my early days brought up in the villages of Lâlgudi and Kulitalai, where my parents lived. From my Childhood, stories and tales had a great fascination for me, and I was therefore a favourite with every old dame in my family who, being disabled by age from doing any household work, was glad to beguile her hours by playing upon my sense of the marvellous. Moreover having had the misfortune to lose my mother at a very early age, I was probably regarded as a fit object of compassion, and every story-teller in the village would

readily comply with the poor orphan's request for a story. I, thns, early acquired an aptitude for tales and this was considerably improved from the fact that my father's second wife happened to be a great repository of this kind of learning. Unlike the step-mother of fiction, she was very kind to me, and used to spend all her leisure moments in amusing her step-son. So, before I had reached the age of ten my taste for stories had become largely developed, and I had heard almost all that any man or woman in the village had to tell. By constant repetition and narration these tales became firmly rooted in my memory, and it was the greatest pleasure of my boyhood to amuse knots of eager listeners of about the same age as myself with side-splitting tales. Soon however my story-hearing and story-telling propensity had to lie dormant, for more serious studies intervened, and, until I had passed through college, I gave but little thought as to the use to which I could turn the peculiar knowledge acquired in my younger days. Afterwards, in 1881, I entered the Archæological Survey Department, and became a regular reader of the *Indian*

Antiquary. The perusal of Captain Temple's excellent contributions in that journal made me conscious for the first time that I could utilize my early knowledge of folk-tales in the advancement of folklore literature. I first wrote the Tales I remembered in Tamil, and then through the kind encouragement afforded me by Captain Temple, to whom I feel very much indebted, I was able to publish an English edition of the same.

Such is the short history of the source from which my tales are derived, and this is the origin of my humble work, which I now respectfully beg to place before the public.

S. M. N.

Brodie's Road, Mylapore—Madras,
December 1887.



FOLKLORE IN SOUTHERN INDIA.

XIII.

THE FOUR GOOD SISTERS.

In the town of Tañjai there reigned a king named Harijî, who was a very good and charitable sovereign. In his reign the tiger and bull drank out of the same pool, the serpent and peacock amused themselves under the same tree; and thus even birds and beasts of a quarrelsome and inimical character lived together like sheep of the same flock. While the brute creation of the great God was thus living in friendship and happiness, need it be said that this king's subjects led a life of peace and prosperity unknown in any other country under the canopy of heaven?

But, for all the peace which his subjects enjoyed, Harijî himself had no joy. His face was always drooping, his lips never moved in laughter, and he was as sad as sad could be, because he had no son. After trying in vain the various distributions of charitable gifts, which his elders and priests recommended, he resolved within himself to retire into the wilderness, there to propitiate Mahêśvara, the great god of gods, hoping thus to have his desires fulfilled. No sooner had this thought entered into his

mind than he called his ministers to his side, and, informing them of his intention, made over to them the kingdom of Tañjai. He gave strict orders to them to look after the interests of his subjects, warning them that, if they failed in this, they would have to pay forfeit with their heads. Thus appointing his ministers in his place, to order his realm during his absence, Harijî retired to the nearest jungle as a hermit.

The monarch of Tañjai, who had been attended with innumerable servants, now became his own servant and master. He removed all his royal garments and clothed himself with the bark of trees. To him, whose bed had been till then the softest of cushions made of the finest and most delicate cotton, the dried leaves now furnished a mattress. Roots and fruits were now his only food, in the place of a thousand different dishes, which had at one time been daily spread before him. Every morning he rose from his bed of leaves, bathed in the coldest water, and sat meditating on Mahêśvara till about the twentieth *ghaṭikâ*.¹ Then he would rise up and taste something of the roots or fruits he happened to see near him. In the evening again he would bathe and sit meditating till midnight. Then thrice sipping water only he would retire to rest (if

¹ 2 p.m.; a *ghaṭikâ* is twenty-four minutes, 30 *ghaṭikâs* make one day, and 30 one night. Thus 60 *ghaṭikas* make a day and night.

rest it deserves to be called) for ten *ghaṭikás*.² Such was his daily routine, and in this most severe penance he wasted away by degrees for nearly two years. All his ribs began to project from his sides, his skin dried up, and one could count his nerves and veins. For all that, he never wavered in his penance.

On the first day of the third year after Harijî commenced his penance, the great god Mahêśvara came to recognize the monarch in his devotee. Mounting his bull, with Pârvatî, his goddess, on his left, he appeared before the royal hermit who literally danced with joy at the sight of his long-looked-for god!

“Thy prayers and praises, my good son, have been rising before our throne in Kailâsa,³ for the past two years, like a pillar of virtue, and have brought me down to thee to grant thy boon. Ask and thou shalt have.” Thus spake Mahêśvara with a smile on his face and his right arm raised to bless.

“My great God,” replied the king, “language has no words to express the great joy and pleasure I have had to-day in that thou in thy holiness hast condescended to visit thy poor dog. This slave of thy most divine righteousness has had no child conferred upon him, though his beard has whitened with age. To gain this boon, and thus sweeten the few

² Four hours.

³ The abode of Śiva.

more years he has to drag out in this world, he has been propitiating thy divine holiness."

"All men must undergo the miseries of a former life in this one," replied the god. "However, for thy long penance we have been pleased with thee, and grant thee this request. Choose then :—A son who shall always be with thee till death, but who shall be the greatest fool in the whole world ; or four daughters who shall live with thee for a short time, then leave thee and return before thy death, but who shall be the incarnation of learning. To thee is left to choose between the two." Thus spake Mahêśvara; and Harijî the hermit chose the daughters. The god gave him a mango-fruit to be presented to his queen, and disappeared.

The fruit of his long penance Harijî thus held in his hand. He cared nothing for the prospect of having only daughters. Daughters or sons, he wanted to have children, and so his desire had been crowned with success. A thousand times happy he felt himself in the prospect before him, as he returned to his country. Great was the joy of his subjects and ministers, to see among them again their beloved sovereign.

The king called for his priests, and, fixing an auspicious hour for the presentation of the fruit, gave it to his queen. She became pregnant, and in due course gave birth to four

daughters as beautiful as Rati.* And thus Harijñ obtained four daughters by the grace of God in his old age. Their names were Gaṅgâbâi, Yamunâbâi, Kamalâbâi, and Nîlâbâi.

He left no stone unturned to give them a liberal education. Professors for every branch of learning were appointed, and the girls, before they were in their tenth year, had been taught the four *Vêdas*, the six *Śâstras*, the the sixty-four kinds of learning, and all the rest of it. They became great *Pandîtâs*, and were like four great jewels among the woman-kind of those days.

One day the old king was seated in the first storey of his palace to be rubbed over with oil.⁵ The oil-rubber began to apply the oil to his head so irregularly and in such a stupid way, that his daughters, who were looking on at a distance, were highly vexed, and calling to their mother asked her to interfere, and send the man away. Then they themselves applied the oil to their father's head, in so delicate a way that the old king did not in the least feel that anything was being rubbed over it. He was exceedingly pleased with them, and after sending them away finished his bath.

He now bethought him of Mahêśvara's condition when granting his desire for children,—

* The wife of Kâma (the god of Love) and goddess of beauty.

⁵ A South Indian custom, corresponding to a bath.

that his intelligent daughters should leave him before they had been long with him. "How will they leave me? If I give them away in marriage, then, of course, they will leave me: but if I prevent this, and make some other arrangement for them I shall avert the unhappy prophecy of the god!" So thought Hariji, and so has many another fool thought, only to bring down swift retribution on his head.

After finishing his ablutions the king did not go into the dining hall, but retired to his couch and lay down sulkily. According to the ancient customs of Hindû monarchs this was a sign of a great uneasiness of mind, and the news that the king had not taken even a grain of rice after his oil-bath spread throughout the palace. The queen came flying to know the reason of her lord's displeasure. "Call my minister at once," was his order, and the queen sent word to that officer.

As soon as the minister arrived the king ordered him to summon a great council within a *ghatiká*, as he had an important question which could be solved only by that learned body.

The assembly was hastily called, and the members collected, anxiously waiting for the matter to be set before them. The king came and took his seat, and after looking gravely round him rose up and said—"My learned councillors that have met here to-day, I have a great question to put before you for your

opinion. Many of you are traders, and occasionally, for various reasons, travel to different countries. When you procure a rare object, or a very precious jewel, or a valuable ornament, do you keep it for your own use, or do you give it away to somebody else? Kindly think over the matter well before you give me your answer."

Thus spoke Harijî, and all present exclaimed that, if the object were very rare they would prefer keeping it to themselves.

"Exactly! well said!" vociferated the king. "Even so do I wish to act! After great hardship and severe penance I obtained through the grace of Mahêśvara four daughters. They are my gems, my jewels, and my ornaments. Why should I give them away in marriage to another? Why should I not myself marry them and retain them under me? If you would keep the rare things you acquire to yourselves, why should not I also do the same?"

All his councillors hung their heads for very shame. They were disgusted at the turn which their generalization had been made to take and saying, "As it pleases Your Majesty," took leave of their sovereign, all thinking that their king had gone mad.

It was not from any insane tendency that the old king spoke in that shameless manner before so learned and respectable an assembly. He had firmly resolved within himself to

marry all his four daughters himself ; and as soon as his councillors had left him, he called his minister to his side, and asked him to go and consult his daughters about it. By this means the king foolishly thought that he would reverse Mahésvara's prediction that his daughters should leave him early, and see him no more till just before his death.

The minister was in a delicate position. If he objected to take the news to his daughters, the old king might be enraged and punish him : and if he boldly stood before the girls and spoke to them shamelessly about their father's intention to marry them himself, they might become enraged and murder him ! Of the two alternatives he chose death at the innocent hands of the princesses, rather than at the guilty hands of a king, who had become so mad as to be in love with his own daughters. So he went to them.

The princesses had as great a regard for their father's minister as they had for their father ; and when they saw him approaching their mansion they welcomed him, and, making him sit in their midst, wished to hear whether he had any special reason for his visit that day. When he heard the innocent talk of these children, who had not even commenced their teens, his eyes began to swim with tears at the thought of the unwelcome news he had to communicate to them. The

girls, who were naturally intelligent, at once guessed from his tearful countenance, that it must be some very bad news that he had to tell, and so the eldest broke silence by sweet and well chosen words :—

“ Our kind father, for so we regard you, what is the matter with you, that you have put on such a dismal face ? Disclose to us the burden of your heart, that we also may share in your woes.”

The minister could no longer contain his sorrow. He sobbed aloud and told them all the proceedings that had taken place during the day, and how very sorry he was that they should have that morning showed their skill to their father in the oil-bath affair. The girls were greatly affected at what they heard, and the eldest, Gaṅgâbâi, spoke as follows :—

“ From this minute our father is no more our father, since he has become so depraved as you represent him to be. We all now regard you as our father, and request you to oblige us in this delicate business. It is of no use to you to say ‘ no ’ to the king’s question. I shall give my consent to the marriage, and tell him at the same time that I have vowed to undergo a penance for six months, after which the marriage may be duly performed. For the present I request you to oblige us with a seven-storied mansion made of lacquered wood. In each storey I

request you to store up provisions sufficient for all of us for six years. The seventh storey must contain water: the sixth, vegetables; the fifth, rice; and so on: while we must occupy the first two stories and proceed to carry on our penance. You must come here with the king on the first day of the seventh month, and then you shall see a wonderful thing! For the present, please go and inform the king of our consent to the marriage and of the penance we have resolved on for six months, during which period we must be allowed to live unobserved."

The minister was delighted to see that the princesses, though they were young in years, had a very sound knowledge of the world. He promised to oblige them most willingly, and gave orders, with the permission of Harijî the king, for the building of the lacquered mansion and for the storage of provisions. As for the king, when he heard that his daughters had given their consent, he was overjoyed, and eagerly waited for the seventh month to come. He even took special care to see the mansion was built without delay. The minister, too, left no stone unturned to supply the provisions requisite for half a dozen years. The mansion was built, and the princesses took up their abode in it for their penance. As soon as they entered they bolted the door inside, and began to meditate upon the boon-conferring goddess, Varalakshmi. For six months they meditated,

and on the last day of the last month secured her favour. She appeared before them in a dream, robed in pure white silk, and applied *kuñkuma* (red powder) to their foreheads in token that she had favoured them, and that from that day they might depend upon her for assistance.

Now outside this mansion, which had been built in the city of Tañjai, Harijî was counting the days, and, to occupy his time meanwhile, had decorated the city for the coming wedding of himself with his daughters, and had sent invitations to all the corners of the world. Several kings, out of simple curiosity to see the mad performance—for the old Sovereign had proclaimed to the world that he was going to marry his own daughters!—came to Tañjai, and were waiting for the wedding day.

At last, the long expected first morning of the seventh month arrived, and Harijî sent his minister again to his daughters to ascertain their wishes. Again the daughters returned word that they gave their full consent to the marriage. Harijî was overjoyed at the second intimation of compliance, and decorated himself with all his choicest ornaments. With music before him he marched towards the lacquered mansion, the kings and the other guests following him to see how matters would terminate. When the processional music fell

upon the ears of the princesses, they contemplated Varalakshmi and prayed :—

“O benign Goddess, if thou wouldst have us become the wives of a suitable husband,—a noble prince,—let this mansion rise from its present position and fall again in the midst of a jungle untrodden by human feet! Let the gates of this mansion be shut to all that may desire to open them, except to him only whom thou hast appointed to be our husband!”

The eldest led the prayer, and had scarcely finished, when the procession stopped before the mansion. And lo! a crack was heard and the lacquered mansion, as if it had wings, began to soar into the sky! In a moment it vanished out of the sight of the sinful father; and all around him with one voice cried out that he was well repaid for his wicked thoughts. At last Harijī saw the guilt of his intentions, the just punishment with which the god visited him, the fulfilment of his prophecy, and his personal share in the early fulfilment of it. He was buried in the ocean of shame and sorrow, till those around him consoled him with that part of the prophecy, which promised that his daughters should come back to him before his death.

Within the mansion the four sisters continued to live as if it were their home. They had everything they could desire, and, excepting the time they were obliged to spend in cooking

and eating, spent their days in study and music. Their evenings they invariably spent most happily in playing the *sitâr*, and thus forgetting their sorrows. In this way they lived a life of innocent enjoyment, in the expectation that the goddess Varalakshmî would soon relieve them of their troubles by sending them a suitable husband.

At a distance of a hundred *kôs* from where the princesses' mansion had been located by the will of Varalakshmî, was a kingdom named *Śivapurî*. In it reigned a most just king named *Isabhajî*. He had an only son named *Thâñujî*, who was twenty years old,—an age which fitted him for taking the reins of the kingdom into his own hands. His royal father wished, therefore, to have his marriage celebrated. The bride chosen was the daughter of *Isabhajî*'s own sister, and therefore *Thâñujî*'s first cousin. All liked the proposed marriage, except the prince; for though the bride was as beautiful as the moon, she was blind of one eye!

“A one-eyed wife I will *never* marry!” was his reply to the several representations his relatives made to him.

Isabhajî was already very old, and his sole object in life was to see his son married, and to dandle a grand-child before his death. He had tried his best previously, on several occasions, to choose a young lady of noble family as a bride for his son, but *Thâñujî* would have none of

them. However, the king's sister, having great influence with him, compelled her brother to fix on an auspicious day for the marriage of his son to her one-eyed daughter Kuruḍi. Finding it hopeless to convince his father of his disinclination to marry a lady who was defective by nature, Thânujî outwardly consented, and the preparations for the celebration of the marriage were commenced on an enormous scale.

Two days before the time appointed for the marriage the prince desired to go out hunting in a neighbouring forest. His object was not really to hunt, but to disappear in the thick wilderness, and to run away in order to evade the marriage.⁶ The hunting expedition started in the early morning and reached the forest by about the sixth *ghaṭiká*. The hunting proceeded as usual till about the eighteenth *ghaṭiká*, when the prince was seen to run to a corner of the hunting ground, to disappear for a time, and then to emerge again from his place of concealment. The hunters, thinking that it was his pleasure, left him to himself, and engaged themselves in a different portion of the forest. Thânujî now found it a good opportunity to escape, and changing his horse for a fresh one, galloped towards the East and vanished from the sight of his vast army of

⁶ [This is a notable incident, as giving a *rational* explanation of the common disappearance of a prince on a hunting expedition in Oriental folktales. It usually takes place in a miraculous manner.—ED.]

hunters. Just about this time the hunt was brought to a close. "Where is the prince? Have you seen His Highness?" were the questions which the hunters put to each other. But the prince was nowhere to be found! They searched for him in the wood till darkness overcame them, and at last returned to Śivapurī, late at night, without him!

The old king was waiting the return of the prince with a sumptuous dinner; and when the hunters informed him of his disappearance he fell down in a swoon, as it were a tree cut at the roots! His sister and other relatives flew to his side to console him, and he was slowly brought back to his senses. It now became more than plain to him that he was himself the cause of the prince's flight, by having tried to force him to marry Kuruḍi against his will. He cursed Kuruḍi and her mother, he cursed himself, and he cursed every one involved in the proposed marriage! He at once sent for the palace soothsayer to consult him as to the safety of his son, and as to the probable date of his return. The soothsayer made his appearance and took his seat before the king with a palm-leaf book on his left and a square dice of sandal-wood on his right. When His Majesty explained to him the disappearance of the prince, and wished to know all about him, the soothsayer contemplated Gaṇeśa, cast the sandal-wood dice thrice, and

turned up a leaf of his palm-book, guided to the particular page by the number thrown by the dice. He then proclaimed :—

Śukra⁷ now reigns supreme; and Śukra's course is a happy course! A marriage will be gained in the East! Be cheerful, my son, for the lost thing will surely be found within the space of two years. Meanwhile give sumptuous dinners and fees to several Brâhman̄s every day, and Paramêśvara will help you!"

The faces of the king and of every one present glowed with joy as the soothsayer proceeded in his reading of the secret lore.

"A pair of shawls for the good soothsayer!" cried out Isabhajî; and the present was accordingly given. The king fully believed that his son was to return to him in two years, and in this belief he forgot all his sorrow at his disappearance.

Let us now see what happened to the prince after his escape from the hunters. He left them about noon and galloped towards the East. By about twilight fortune conducted him towards the mansion of lacquer. The appearance of the splendid building made of strange materials, and not of brick or stone or *chunam*,⁸ awakened his curiosity, and made him approach it. In addition to this, he was already dying of hunger, and wished for at

⁷ The planet Venus, which is *male* in India.

⁸ A strong plaster made of sea-shell lime.

least a mouthful of water. Being sure that he had left his hunters far behind, he approached the mansion and sat down in the marbled lacquer pavement of the outer verandah. The god of day was sinking down in the West, and the golden rays of his evening beauty seemed a thousand times more beautiful than he had ever seen them as they glittered on the lacquered covering of the grand palace, which by its loneliness struck awe into his mind. Before the mansion ran a rivulet from which our hero drank a handful⁹ or two of water, and overcome by fatigue stretched himself on the cool surface of the palace verandah, leaving his horse to get his water and grass himself.

It has been already said that the princesses inside the mansion used to spend their evenings in playing upon sweet musical instruments and in singing. Now as soon as Thàn-jì had stretched himself on the verandah to sleep, sounds of sweet music fell upon his ear. They were the most exquisite notes he had ever heard in his life. Like evening zephyrs in the spring they came gently to soothe his weariness. He sat up and listened for a while to the sweet flow of music above.

“Is there a heaven in this life?” said he to himself; “have some nymphs from the divine

⁹ Allusion to the native method of drinking water out of the hands by hollowing them into a sort of cup.

world made this mansion their abode? or do wicked devils dwell here to feast upon night-stricken passengers?¹⁰ However, whether they be good or bad, I *must* see the inhabitants of this palace, and leave to fate what it may bring upon me!"

The music now suddenly ceased, for it so happened that the *sitúr* had to be adjusted for a different tune. Meanwhile the prince rose, and went round the mansion to see whether there were any gates to it. On the North side of it he discovered a large gate-way, and inside it a gate. This he approached and gently touched, to see if it was shut or not. Now, since Varalakshmí had fixed upon prince Thâñujî as the husband of the four princesses, the gate of the mansion flew open,—as the gates of a river dam unlock to the rapid rush of released waters,—and discovered to him four beautiful maidens made a thousand times more beautiful by the strange and unexpected meeting, by their evening attire, and by the lovely *sitúrs* in their hands.

When the princesses saw the door open and their handsome visitor standing outside it, fearing to enter in, they breathed a thanksgiving to their goddess for the fair gift, and laying down their *sitúrs*, approached Thâñujî with due

¹⁰ [The allusion here is to the common Indian idea of the personal beauty of malignant female ghosts, who live by devouring human beings. See *Folklore of the Headless Horseman: Calcutta Review*, 1884.—ED.]

respect. All four humbly prostrated themselves before him and then rose up. The eldest began to speak, while the other three sisters eagerly watched the movements of the visitor's face.

"Lord and husband of us all," said she, "glorious is this day to us as it has brought here our partner in life. Strange and sad is our history, but nevertheless we are all mortals, warmed by the same human blood that circulates through your Lordship's veins and equally affected by the same joys and sorrows. We will reserve our story, however, till your Lordship has dined, as we see plainly by your face that you are greatly tired. Accept us as your Lordship's wives, and we for our part have earned the richest treasure the world can give us by having met you."

His vague fears about the mansion and its inmates suddenly melted away like snow before a powerful sun, when Thânujî saw the princesses and stood listening to the speech of the eldest. He also considered that day the most glorious of his life, and took leave of them for a few seconds to secure his horse, which for all the delight that had come to him he did not forget. He then bathed hastily in the hot water the ladies prepared for him, and after praying to the great God, who had been so bountiful to him that day, sat down with three of the ladies to take his dinner. The fourth

attended to the leaf-plates, and supplied fresh courses as each dish was consumed. They then related their previous stories to each other, and copiously did the prince shed tears, when he heard how it was that the princesses came to perform penance to secure the favour of Varalakshmî;—and the ladies, too, when they heard how king Isabhajî had worried their husband to marry his one-eyed cousin, and how he had run away from the hunting party to avoid the marriage which so disgusted him. All were glad at the fortunate turn their lives had taken, and from that evening the prince and the princesses began to live most happily together as husband and wives entirely forgetting their former homes.

Thus, hidden in an ocean of joy, Thânujî lived for two full years in the lacquered palace, in the company of the four princesses to whom fortune had conducted him; while they were one and all grateful to their goddess Varalakshmî for having sent them so noble and beautiful a prince as their partner in life. After two full years had been thus passed, the prince one day thought of his old father, and the usual cheerfulness left his face. His wives noticed the change and desired to be informed of the thoughts which were passing through his mind. He, noble in mind as in body, told them outright that he was thinking of his father, and that the idea of not having

seen him for two years made him sad. The eldest princess as usual was the first to speak :—

“ My dearest lord, it has been our misfortune to have lost a father, and we do not wish to see him again if we can help it. But we do not see any reason, therefore, why you should lose yours, who is also a father to us. Nor do we see why we should continue to live for ever in this wilderness, while you have a kingdom to govern. My advice is, that you go now to Śivapurî, see your old father, and interest him in our behalf, so that you may be able to take us where we shall have a home, a father-in-law to worship, and such society as becomes our position. You will thus be able to arrange for our living in the world like other people, without wasting our youth in this desert.”

The prince thanked his queens for their sound advice, who began to make preparations, for sending their husband back to his parents. They supplied him with fine sweetmeats for the way, and, with the good wishes of his wives, Thânujî started for Śivapurî.

He reached the town on the second evening after he left the lacquered palace, but the inhabitants were not able to recognize him, as it was already twilight. He arrived at the palace at about the third *ghatikâ* of the night, and prostrated himself before his father. The old king had been counting the days and the hours for his son's return, and as the second

year rolled away and the prince did not make his appearance, he had been greatly enraged against the soothsayer whose prophecy had thus nearly proved untrue. The cunning soothsayer had been daily predicting one week more when, fortunately for him,—or the old king's wrath would have known no bounds,—and fortunately for the old king himself, considering his advanced age,—the prince suddenly turned up. Isabhajî wept for mingled joy and sorrow; joy at having recovered his son, and sorrow at that son's neglect of his old father for so long. But all is well that ends well, so the old king praised his household gods for having given him back his son, and merely inquired into his history for the past two years.

When Isabhajî found out that by good fortune his son had won the love of the four princesses of Tañjai, he wished his son every prosperity in the world, and gave him permission to make every arrangement to bring them to the palace at Śivapurî, and to marry them regularly. But Thânujî wished to wait a while, and his father allowed him his way.

Now the news that Thânujî had won the love of the four fair princesses of Tañjai reached his aunt, the sister of Isabhajî, and his cousin, the one-eyed Kurudî. His aunt's dearest ambition had always been to unite her daughter to the prince, but she now thought that she must banish all hopes of its fulfilment, as long as

the four fair princesses lived. Her daughter, however, was a scheming sort of girl, and determined somehow to get one of the four princesses of Tañjai into her own quarters, and there to murder her.

“Then the other three ladies will spurn the prince,” thought Kuruḍi, “and he will have no other course open to him but to marry me.”

For this task she engaged a doubled-up old woman, instructed her as to the position of the lacquered palace, and told her that she was to try her best to get into the good graces of the princesses. She was to serve them for a time as a faithful servant, and wait her opportunity to bring one of them away. Should she succeed in this, Kuruḍi promised her ample rewards.

The doubled-up old witch started with provisions for a month, and erected for herself a temporary hut in the forest at the gate of the lacquered mansion. Her nights she spent on a platform on a tree for fear of beasts of prey, and her days in her hut. After cooking and eating a little rice in the morning she would take her stand near the gate of the mansion and hawl out:—

“My children! Have you all forgotten me, your poor old foster-mother? Oh, how tenderly I brought you all up in your earliest days! And remembering you, I have deserted all my relations, children and friends at Tañjai, and have traced you to this wood. If you would

take me into your service, I shall still continue to render you what help I can, in washing your clothes, in preparing your meals, in combing your hair, and other domestic duties, which it was once my delight to perform while I had the charge of you all till your seventh year. What a foolish old king he was to think of marrying you to himself, and thus to have lost you!"

These and a thousand mournful tales of the past, which she had carefully learnt from the one-eyed Kurudî and her mother, she would bawl out. But the ladies would never do anything without the consent of their husband, and their doors, too, would never open to any one except their lord.

After living with his father for a month, Thânujî returned to the lacquered mansion. He noticed the hut in front of the palace gates, but did not care to enquire who lived in it, and went on and touched the gate, which opened to him. He entered in and gave his wives all their father-in-law's presents, for the old king had sent them through his son several costly ornaments and cloths. The ladies put him a thousand questions as to how he spent the month, and were eager to see Śivapurî, and to live there as Thânujî's queens, under the kind protection of their good father-in-law. But the prince told them to wait for a few more months till his aunt could dispose of Kurudî in

marriage to some one, for he hated the idea of taking them to the palace while his cousin and enemy dwelt in it,—that cousin whose hand he had repeatedly refused, and whom he could never hereafter marry as long as he lived.

The prince's wives then told him about the old woman, and Thânujî had great doubts as to the wisdom of admitting her into the mansion. Having studied tricks at courts and elsewhere, he suspected that the old woman came from his one-eyed enemy; but she left nothing unaccomplished on her part. Her repeated cries, with which the serene palace of the wilderness began to echo, at last aroused some pity for her in the heart of the prince.

“Never mind,” said he at last, “let us admit her and watch her character. If it is suspicious, we will punish her; if on the contrary it is good, we shall be glad of having secured her services.”

Thus with his permission the old hag was entertained, and from that moment, it was as if a serpent had been entertained to sting its own master, who fed it with milk and fruits. Deep, tricky, and a trained witch, the old hag pretended to do all sorts of kindnesses to the Tañjai princesses and their affectionate husband.

There was nothing which she would not do with her own hands. Early she rose, bathed and cooked, and attended to the wants of the ladies, who after pleasant nights of singing and

dancing slept very late in the mornings. The princesses found her invaluable, and this necessity for her services, in addition to the assumed kindness of the hag, increased their liking for her. The ladies loved her, and their lord Thânujî saw no reason, for the five months he remained for the second time in the forest, to observe anything bad in the character of the old woman. Again, he remembered his old father, and so, recommending his queens to the kind care of the old dame, he again went to Śivapurî for a month, taking with him his wives' gifts to his father.

The old woman was only waiting for the return of the prince Thânujî to Śivapurî. The second day after he had left the palace, she induced the princesses to take an oil-bath, and in the oil she mixed a herb which was able to produce insensibility lasting for three days in the strongest constitution. While the oil was being applied to the heads of the princesses, they felt giddy, and before the bath was over one and all of them were in a dead swoon. The wicked old woman now took the eldest on her back, and leaving the others to themselves to live or perish, flew away to Śivapurî with the nimbleness of a vixen.

She placed her burden before Kurudî, who amply rewarded her and sent her away. This one-eyed devil in woman's form now proceeded to take full vengeance on one whom she

regarded as the chief of her enemies. She sent for a barber and had the hair of Gaṅgâbâi's head cut off, the insensibility that still overcame the poor girl making her unconscious of the loss of woman's most precious jewel. Kuruḍi, next proceeding to torture her enemy, sent for needles and thrust one into each pore of her skin. The pain caused by the needles made Gaṅgâbâi open her eyes, and being very intelligent, she at once guessed the calamity that had come upon her. Not caring for herself, she asked her enemy, the one-eyed Kuruḍi, whether her sisters were all safe.

"Yes they are, and *you* shall pay for all the mischief they have done and for your own to boot!" roared Kuruḍi gnashing her teeth.

Gaṅgâbâi then closed her eyes, never to open them again her enemy thought; for the effects of the drug, and pain caused by the needles, made her almost a corpse. Kuruḍi next tore out her eyes, and told two of her maid-servants to throw the now mutilated body into a ruined well at a short distance from the palace. They did so accordingly, and then went about their duties.

The whole of one day and one night Gaṅgâbâi floated on the water in that ruined well, without recovering from her swoon, and not until the morning of the fourth day after the oil had been applied to her head, did she fully come to her senses. At first she felt herself to be

floating on the surface of the water, but as soon as she began to recover her faculties her body began to sink. She caught hold of a step in the well, guided to it by instinct, for her eyes were gone, and she remained immersed in the water with only her face above the surface. The needle operation, her questions to a one-eyed lady about the safety of her own sisters, and that lady's affirmative reply—all came back to her recollection as if it were a dream. She now came to understand her misfortune.

“Ah! that I should have had confidence in that old woman,” she cried, “she must have given me some drug, made me insensible, and given me over to my enemy of the one-eye, of whom *Thânujî* used so often to speak. Alas! *Thânujî*, you are passing your days merrily with your father, not knowing the fate that has come over your wives, fully believing that the old woman, whom you recommended to them, is properly discharging her duties! I do not know what has become of my sisters! I do not know where I am! My eyes are gone!”

The needles embedded in her body gave her the most excruciating pain, and she was unable even to weep. At last she began to pant as if suffocated.

The well in which she was struggling for life belonged to a neatherd, and round it he kept a garden, in which there were half a dozen

beds containing tender cabbages. He came to water his vegetables, and on approaching the well with his pitcher he heard a voice as if in great pain, slowly issuing from it, but the water was too deep for him to see what was in the well. Now neatherds have queer notions as to devils and witchcraft, and he imagined that the sounds in the well emanated from a devil that must have taken up a temporary abode therein. So, he shouted out, looking down the mouth of the well,—

“O you devil! If you do not tell me who you are, and why you have thus invaded my possessions, I will throw rubbish into this already half-ruined well, and cover you up!”

Gaṅgâbâî, who was only waiting to hear some person's voice, spoke slowly, in pain though she was, as she was afraid that silence would mean burial in the well,—

“Kind and noble gentleman! I am too weak to tell you the whole story. I am a lady born of noble parents and have come to this wretched condition through my sins in a former life. If you will kindly take me up, regard me as one of your daughters, and restore me to health, I shall reward you amply.”

The neatherd, whose name was Gôvinda, was a man of very kind disposition, and his heart melted at the idea of calamity befallen one of the fair, sex born of noble parents. So

he got down into the well, took Gaṅgâbâi up, and shed tears to see so noble a form cruelly deprived of eyes and hair, and suffering from cruel tortures from needles.

“Cover my body with your cloth,” said the princess, “and take me to your home at once. I greatly fear my enemy may watch me and try to kill me again.”

So the neatherd, trembling at her words, took her home in haste. As soon as the princess felt herself safe in the house of the kind neatherd, she spoke to him thus :—

“My respected protector, my father,—for so do I regard you for taking me out of the well,—I am a princess and a virtuous lady. This is enough for you to know for the present. More I shall relate to you after I recover from my pain. If you begin to pull out the needles as I am, I should die, I think, before half a dozen were removed. You will do better by cooking rice in a large vessel, emptying it on the ground and holding me over the steam while you pull them out. Keep on doing this till the last needle is removed, and I shall get well.”

The princess then closed her lips, and her body was like that of one in deep slumber. The neatherd, who already respected the princess for the majesty of her form, now began the treatment according as she had said. That so noble a creature should have come to such calamity, aroused in his heart greater and

greater pity. The treatment went on for a week, during which, now and then, Gaṅgâbâî would relate to the old neatherd, who never left her bed-side, parts of her story. Thus by degrees Gôvinda came to know the whole of it. The princess, too, recovered, except that her eyes were gone, and her head still shaven. These defects had to be remedied before her health could be said to be really restored. For this she propitiated the boon-conferring goddess Varalakshmî, and then she sneezed, when lo! there dropped from her nostrils seven precious gems! She called to Gôvinda and addressed him thus:—

“ My respected Gôvinda, my kind protector, I have to trouble you still more. These seven gems has Varalakshmî just given me. Take six for yourself, convert the seventh one into money, and buy some cows. Milk all the cows morning and evening, boil down the whole of the milk into only two measures, and give them to me.”

The neatherd took the gems, locked six of them in his box and went with the seventh to the *bâzâr*. When he showed it to the gem-assayers they estimated its value at seven *lákhs* of *môhars*, for which enormous sum he disposed of it to a rich merchant. He could have purchased all the cows in Śivapurî for that amount, but instead of doing so, he bought only a hundred fine milch cows, and brought home the

other portion of the money. Gôvinda truthfully told what he had done to Gaṅgâbâi, and she was delighted at his uprightness. The neatherd, for his part, now began to regard her as a goddess. The milk of the one hundred cows he boiled down into two measures as directed, and placed them before her morning and evening. She used this milk in her food and daily improved in health.

We must here leave Gaṅgâbâi under the kind protection of our neatherd, and turn to inquire about her other sisters. It has been already said that all the four sisters fell into a swoon, when the old woman applied the oil to their heads. Gaṅgâbâi only was removed to Kuruḍi's palace, while the other three continued insensible for three days, coming to their senses on the fourth morning. What was their astonishment when they missed their eldest sister and the old woman! They began to suspect their husband.

"Has our lord played this trick upon us to take our eldest sister to his palace at Śivapuri and to leave us all here, in everlasting banishment? Shan't we be angry with him when he comes? For our sister will never forget us, and will soon bring him back."

Thus resolved they in their minds, and, being very innocent and timid, passed their days patiently waiting till their husband and their sister should return. They would soon return

together they thought, but they were doomed to be disappointed.

After staying with his father for a month, the prince returned to the forest with great eagerness to meet his dear wives, for he knew nothing of the calamity that had befallen them. When he entered he found no joy in the palace, but the three sisters lying down each by herself with no mirth or welcome in their countenances. He was greatly vexed, and missed his eldest queen, whom he loved best, and as to whom the other queens suspected him.

“Where is my Gaṅgâbâi, my dears? And why have you all got such dismal faces?” asked Thâṇujî.

Till then they had thought that their sister was safe with their husband at Śivapurî, but when the prince enquired after her, they fell off their couches, and, weeping and wailing, inquired what had happened to their sister! It was now plain that some trick had been played upon them all by the old woman. The prince asked them to relate what had taken place in the palace since he had left it, and they told him everything. It then became as clear as the day to Thâṇujî, that the old woman, who pretended such affection for them, was a rogue, and that she had taken his love Gaṅgâbâi to Kurndî for some foul purpose. He consoled his three other wives, cursed the day on which he took in the old woman, and started at once

in search of his lost love. Her sisters were equally anxious about her, and promised to be careful during his absence.

“The door shall open to none except to yourself, my Lord, and that, too, only when you bring us back our sister,” said the youngest of the sisters. And our hero, buried in the ocean of sorrow, and not knowing how to find his lost love, returned to Śivapurî.

He informed his old father Isabhajî of what had happened, and they both sent courtiers to different parts of the kingdom to make a careful search for Gaṅgâbâi. The prince also secretly made all the requisite enquiries in the palace where Kuruḍi and her mother were living. For six months the search went on, and yet no trace was found of the lost princess. Meanwhile Isabhajî was drawing day by day nearer to his grave, and again began to trouble his son about marrying the one-eyed Kuruḍi. But the prince would never agree to it.

While a whole army of courtiers were thus searching for Gaṅgâbâi in the various parts of the kingdom, she was living comfortably in Gôvinda’s house, and her diet consisted daily of the two measures of milk, morning and evening. Now Gôvinda had a daughter named Gôpî, and she and Gaṅgâbâi became very good friends. Gaṅgâbâi related to her her whole history one morning, and was anxious to do

something in revenge to Kuruḍi before joining her sisters in their palace. With a scheme for this in her head she addressed Gôpî thus :—

“My dear Gôpî, my story is as you have heard, and my heart burns within me when I think of my treatment at the hands of that one-eyed witch. I ask you now to help me to repeat Kuruḍi’s acts on herself. Convert the milk which your father brings to me at night into curds. Take the curds with you and cry out in the streets—‘ Good curds to sell ! Never have neatherds sold such curds ! Fine curds, one hundred *môhars* per measure ! Good curds ! Good curds !’ Every one will call you a fool for putting such a price on your curds ; but go to the palace and Kuruḍi will send for you and ask you the price of your curds. Demand as before one hundred *môhars*. She will give the money and buy your curds, and finding them very sweet will offer to buy some from you every day. Go on giving her the curds, but do not take money for them. Only cultivate her friendship. And then I shall let you know what we must do.”

Gôpî obeyed Gaṅgâbâi exactly and in this way secured the friendship of Kuruḍi. Then said Gaṅgâbâi to her :—

“ My dear Gôpî, when you go to-morrow to the palace put on a sad countenance, and, when Kuruḍi comes and asks you the reason for it, tell her that you have a sister who has had lately

small-pox and lost her eyes. Ask her to give you a pair of human eyes. She has with her my two eyes which she will give you. Bring them to me.”

Gôpî did as she was told, and when the eyes came into Gaṅgâbâi's hands she put them into the empty sockets and meditated on the boon-conferring goddess Varalakshmî, when her sight was completely restored. She now for the first time beheld Gôpî and her father the neatherd. She thanked them again and again a thousand times and asked Gôpî to beg her hair from Kuruḍi under the same pretence of having a sister who had lost hers. Gôpî, who who had now fully secured the affections of Kuruḍi, brought back Gaṅgâbâi's hair, and the princess put it on her head, and meditated on Varalakshmî; when lo! every hair returned to its proper place! Thus, through the neatherd and his daughter, and by the divine help of Varalakshmî, Gaṅgâbâi crossed the ocean of misery; and came back to her former self.

The news that Isabhajî was trying to compel his son Thâṇujî to marry Kuruḍi, was communicated by the one-eyed lady to her friend Gôpî. She also informed the neatherd's daughter that, though the prince was not agreeable to the match, he would be soon compelled to give his consent to it, to oblige his father and his aunt. These bits of information were duly passed on to Gaṅgâbâi, who now

thought this a good opportunity to wreak her vengeance on Kuruḍi. So she asked Gôpî to go to the palace next morning with curds, and to sit down rubbing her hair on the ground.

“My dear Gôpî,” said she, “if you will keep on rubbing your beautiful hair on the ground, Kuruḍi will call you mad, for thus insulting an ornament that nature has granted you. You must then tell her that a doctor has given you a prescription for making the hair grow quickly, that ever since you have applied it your hair has been growing at the rate of a cubit a day, and that as you are not able to take care of so great a quantity, you are rubbing it on the ground to check its growth. She will then ask you for some of the prescription, and you must agree to give it, and come to me.”

Gôpî agreed to all that Gaṅgâbâî asked her to do, and went to the palace. She pretended to rub her hair on the ground until Kuruḍi came and asked her the reason, when she replied as she had been instructed. Kuruḍi was naturally somewhat bald-headed,¹¹ and as Isabhajî had just made his son consent to marry her, her wedding day, for which she had been

¹¹ Long and flowing hair is considered one of the best personal adornments of the softer sex among the Hindûs.

[It may be noted here that the name of the one-eyed Kuruḍi is a Kanarese word, meaning ‘a blind woman.’—ED.] In Tamil also it means ‘a blind woman’ and hence her name as she had not one eye.—S.M.N.

so long waiting, was at last approaching. To make herself, therefore, as beautiful as possible by adding flowing hair to her charms, was an important point ; so she said to Gôpî :—

“ My dear Gôpî, I thank the day which first made us friends ! My hair is a weak point with me, and if you can make your hair grow at the rate of a cubit a day, I should much like to see your doctor, and show him my head also. Will you kindly bring him to me ? ”

Gôpî, as instructed, said—“ Undoubtedly he shall be here with me to-morrow, my noble lady ; ” and returned home.

Gaṅgâbâi was anxiously expecting to hear what had taken place in the palace between her friend Gôpî and her bitter enemy Kuruḍi, and, when the latter came home, she related how she had promised to bring the imaginary doctor next day to the palace. Gaṅgâbâi could have leapt for joy.

“ My end is attained, ” said she in great joy, eagerly waiting for the next day to come.

As already said, the old king had made his son Thâṇujî consent to marry Kuruḍi, and the wedding day had been fixed for the tenth day of the bright half of that very month. It was just ten days before the happy event was to take place that Kuruḍi was expecting to see the doctor with the wonderful power of breed-

ing hair. That morning Gaṅgâbâi changed her female attire for the first time in her life for a man's and wore a doctor's robes, and so well did she carry out the disguise that her friend Gôpî was hardly able to distinguish in the young doctor her friend Gaṅgâbâi. Thus metamorphosed and followed by Gôpî, Gaṅgâbâi reached Kuruḍi's house, where she was welcomed, and given a seat near its mistress.

"Can you indeed make hair grow very quickly?" asked Kuruḍi.

"Madam," replied the shami doctor, "I have, ever since I began practising the art, been most successful in it. On no occasion has the hair I have manipulated grown less than a cubit a day. I shall try the best of my medicines on your head. Only the old hair must be entirely removed, and the surface of the head must be turned over with a sharp knife for a day, before the medicine can be applied. In the case of tender constitutions there may be slight pain for a day, but on the second day the pain will go away, and shoots begin to appear. After that every day your hair will increase by a cubit, and a time will soon come when you will have to cut off a portion daily."

Kuruḍi listened to the doctor's plan, and thought to herself, that, out of the ten days that remained to her before the marriage,—making allowance for the time required for the shooting

of the hair,—she might have eight cubits' length on her head on her wedding day. So she at once sat down for a clean shave.

Gaṅgâbâi now wreaked full vengeance upon her enemy. Kuruḍi's head was shaved clean! The skin was then cut in all directions, and powdered pepper rubbed in—a soothing balm to a scored pate! Said the doctor:—

“Madam, the medicine has now been applied: you may feel a little burning sensation, but it will be all right in a day. To-morrow, or the day after, in the morning, the shoots will begin to sprout.”

Kuruḍi, in expectation of the fulfilment of her wishes, patiently bore the pain. A full day and night elapsed, but still the burning did not cease. Fearing that if the balm were removed the medicine would lose its effect, she patiently bore the pain for a second day, and on the third day as soon as the morning dawned she put her hand to her head to see if there were any signs of the sprouts. “The shoots have begun really to sprout,” thought she, for her fingers felt the worms which had already begun to breed in the matter formed on her head! Several of her servants, who had been ordered not to see her till then, were now called in to examine her head. Her mother, too, made her appearance. What they found was this:—Kuruḍi with her head shaved, ploughed up and pasted over with powdered pepper! They washed her

head with warm water and began to treat the wounds. But they were past all treatment ; for two days' exposure to such treatment had caused corruption to set in ! Still the fond heart of Kuruđi's mother left no stone unturned to restore her daughter. She sent servants to Gôpî to look for the doctor, but neither doctor nor Gôpî were to be found ; for the sagacious Gaᅅgâbâi had removed her protector Gôvinda and her friend Gôpî to a village outside the town on the night she tried her treatment on her one-eyed enemy.

Neither the old king Isabhajî nor his son Thânujî, of course, knew anything of what had passed in the palace where Kuruđi was living ; and, in honour of his marriage, the prince wished to have his rooms adorned with paintings, the better to receive his visitors during the ensuing wedding. He therefore proclaimed that he would greatly reward any good painter that would come forward. Gaᅅgâbâi, who was now living outside Śivapurî, came to know of Thânujî's proclamation, and dressed herself up as a painter, and appeared before the prince. He was charmed with the fair face of the painter ; and Gaᅅgâbâi's disguise was so complete that he failed to discover his lost love in the painter. He tested the sham artist's skill, but as Gaᅅgâbâi had learnt the fine arts in her younger days she easily stood the test. Then the artist put the following condition on

his undertaking the task,—that no one, not even the prince, should see him while at work, and that the prince must be the first to examine the pictures when finished. Thânujî, who was much taken by the painter, agreed to everything and left him to his work.

Gaṅgâhâî now bolted the door, and mixing her colours proceeded to represent her whole story on the walls, from the time that Thânujî went the second time to Śivapurî, to the point of her appearing before her lord as a painter. She drew the old woman flying with her to Kuruḍî; the torture she underwent at Kuruḍî's cruel hands; the scene at the ruined well; the portraits of Gôvînda and Gôpî, her protectors in her calamity; her revenge on Kuruḍî, in the disguise of a doctor; and lastly her appearance in the attire of a painter. She not only painted the scenes, but also added explanatory notes.¹² On the third day she came out of the room, and sent the messengers on watch outside to inform the prince that the painter had finished his work, and wanted to take his leave. When the prince came to examine the painter's work, he said :—

“My Lord, I shall come for my reward on Your Highness's wedding day. You had better examine the pictures in my absence at

¹² [A very necessary proceeding where native pictures are concerned!—ED.]

the fifteenth *ghaṭikā* this afternoon, for that, the soothsayers told me, is the auspicious *ghaṭikā* (hour). Kindly, therefore, do not examine them before that time, or I fear evil stars will make you judge ill of my powers of execution."

Gaṅgâbâi said this to gain time in order to reach her home before her lord should come to recognize her in the painter. The prince accepted these new conditions, for the painter's face exercised a wonderful influence over him. His misfortune in not recovering his lost love, his approaching wedding with one whom he hated from the very bottom of his heart, his unfaithfulness to his former wives in agreeing to marry Kuruḍi,—all these were passing and repassing through his mind every moment, as he waited impatiently for the time when he could examine this work.

At last the hour arrived. Thâṇuji entered his apartment to look over the paintings, and exclaimed:—

"My dear wives are painted here! Did the painter ever see them? Ah! My dearest Gaṅgâbâi is dying here! Most horrible! Oh wicked enchantress Kuruḍi! Oh kindly neat-herd Gôvinda! I shall well repay for your assistance."

Then like a mad man Thâṇuji wept and laughed, and laughed and wept, till he came to the end.

“After all my love is living !” exclaimed he, as he staggered about the floor, and fell heavily. His servants, who had been listening to all his ravings, at last dared to approach their lord, and flew to his assistance. They took him up and brought him round. “My carriage,” was all he said to them ; and they at once got it ready. He then drove outside the town to where the painter had told him he was living ; and there Gaṅgâbâi, who had rightly expected her husband to come to her directly he saw the pictures, was waiting to receive him. They flew into each other’s arms.

“I have at last found my lost gem, and never again while I live shall I lose it in the forest !” said the prince ; “God has given me back my lost gem !”

The princess only replied by her tears, for she could not open her lips. Presently, after the first excitement was over, they questioned each other as to their history during this calamitous period, and again wept over their misfortunes.

With Gaṅgâbâi by his side, Thânujî now drove to the lacquered mansion, sending word to his old father that he had discovered his lost love, and was going to the forest to bring all his dear wives to Śivapurî, and that, on the day originally fixed for the wedding, he would be married to them and never to Kurudî!

Alas for Kurudî! No medicines had any

effect on her. She died on the day before that appointed for her wedding, unable to bear up against her pains, external and internal. For remorse, at the torture she had inflicted on her enemy, overcame her mind before she breathed her last!

To return to the lacquered mansion. The prince met his other wives and gave them their lost sister, and returned to Śivapurî, relating stories all the way home, some of the calamities that had befallen him and Gaṅgâbâi, owing to their having entertained the old woman in their palace. When they reached Śivapurî, all excepting Kuruḍi's mother, were happy on the marriage day, on which Thâṇujî, with the consent of his father, properly married all his four wives.

After the princesses had thus lived for a short period with their husband, they heard that their father was dangerously ill. So, accompanied by Thâṇujî, they went and visited him before his death. The father had only time to beg their pardon before he breathed his last, leaving his large kingdom to his daughters. The princesses, remembering the minister's kindness to them, gave him their kingdom, and returning home to their husband's country, lived with him for many years in peace and prosperity, during which they did not forget the kindnesses that Gôvinda and Gopî had done to Gaṅgâbâi.

XIV.

THE MONKEY WITH THE TOM-TOM.¹

In 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.

¹ [Compare the story of “The Rat’s Wedding” from the *Panjab Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XI, p. 226ff: where however, a better moral from the tale is drawn.—ED.]

“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 *Paraiya*² coming with a tom-tom towards him.

“Brother *Paraiya*,” said the monkey; “I have a basketful of puddings to give you. Will you in return present me with your tom-tom?”

The *Paraiya* 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, 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.

² A low caste man; Pariah.

³ In response to the sound of the tom-tom.

XV.

GOOD WILL GROW OUT OF GOOD.

In a certain town there reigned a king named Patñpriya,¹ to whose court a poor old Brâhmaṇ, named Pâpabhîru,² came every morning, with a yellow lime in his hand, and presenting it to the king, pronounced a benediction in Tamîl:—

Nanmai vidaittâl, nanmai viḷaiyum:

Tîmai vidaittâl, tîmai viḷaiyum:

Nanmaiyyum tîmaiyyum pinvara kânalâm.

“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 Brâhmaṇ as he did his grey hairs.

In this way the presentation of the fruit was daily continued, though the Brâhmaṇ 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 *râjasêvana*, or duty to his king, the king's admiration to his old morning visitor the more increased.

After presenting the fruit the Brâhmaṇ waited upon his sovereign till his *pûjâ*³ was over, and then went home where his wife kept

¹ *i. e.* Lover of his wife.

² *i. e.* A shudderer at sin.

³ Worship of the household gods.

ready for him all the requisites for his own *pūjā*. Pâpabhîru then partook of what dinner his wife had prepared for him. Sometimes, however, a Brâhmaṇ neighbour sent him an invitation to dinner, which he at once accepted. For his father, before he breathed his last, had called him to his bedside, and, pronouncing his last benediction, had thus advised him in Tamīl—

*Kālai śōttai tallāde,
Kaṇṇil kaṇḍadai śollāde.
Rājanukku payandu nada."*

“ Morning meal do thou never spurn,
Nor say thou what thine eyes discern,
But serve thy king for fame to earn.”

Thus it was that Pâpabhîru 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 *ékādaśī*⁴ morning, Pâpabhîru went to the king to pay his respects as usual, with the lime and the benediction, but found that he had gone to his *pūjā* and so followed him there. On seeing the Brâhmaṇ, the king's face glowed with pleasure and he said :—

“ My most revered god on earth,⁵ I thought that some ill must have befallen you, when I missed you in the council-hall

⁴ The eleventh lunar day of every fortnight, on which a fast is observed by orthodox Hindus.

⁵ *bhūṣura, bhūḍēva*; a generic name for a Brâhmaṇ.

this morning ; but praised be Paraméśvara for having sent you to me, though it is a little late. I never do my *pūjā* 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 Brāhmaṇ was only too glad of the opportunity thus presented to him of serving his king, and so he ran to the *haram* and into the room where the king usually slept.

Now, Patnīpriya 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 *pūjā*. Of course the poor Brāhmaṇ, Pāpabhīru, knew nothing of this, and when he entered the room, a shocking scene met his eyes. He closed them for horror, and lifting up the pillow, felt for the scimitar, and 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 Brâhman 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 that had resisted the temptations of a wicked man, and stood before her royal husband who was at his worship. Patnîpriya 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 Brâhman, 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 to-morrow morning, I shall kill myself.”

The king was much vexed with what he heard, and all the regard he had for the Brâhman disappeared at once. He called two of his executioners and spoke to them thus before his wife:—

“Take to the east gate of the town a large iron caldron, and keep it boiling to the brim

with gingely oil.* 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 Brâhmaṇ, 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 Brâhmaṇ's death.

When his *pújā* was over the king sent for Pâpabhîru, and the poor Brâhmaṇ, 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 Brâhmaṇ, to-morrow 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

* Oil of sesamum : *til* and gingely oil are the ordinary names for this common product of India.

Pápabhîru would never return to him ; while the Brâhmaṇ, glad to be able to serve the king a second time next morning, went home and slept soundly. Early in the morning, even a *ghaṭikâ* 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, but had not walked far when a friend invited him to a *dvâdaśi*⁷ breakfast.

“ My poor old mother did not taste even a drop of water the whole of the *ékâdaśi*, (yesterday). Rice and hot water for a bath are ready. Pour a little of the water over your head,⁸ pronounce one *gâyatrî*,⁹ 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 Pápabhîru, 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 Brâhmaṇ’s death, but was afraid to send any one to inquire about it,

⁷ *Dvâdaśi* is the twelfth lunar day, on which early in the morning, before even the fifth *ghaṭikâ* is over, every orthodox Hindu is obliged by his religious codes to break the previous day’s fast.

⁸ Lit. a ‘chombu-full’: the *chombu* is a small vessel.

⁹ A sacred hymn.

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 Brâhman finished his *dvâdasi* 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 Brâhman, 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 Brâhman's head into his left. He then asked him whether he had not tried to dishonour his qucen the previous morning, and told him that

if he concealed the truth, he would make an end of him. The poor Brâhman now confessed what he had seen, on which the king threw down the scimitar and fell down on his knees before him.

“ The words of thy benediction, O respected Brâhman have only now been explained to me. Thou hast sown nothing but good ; and good in having thy life preserved, hast thou reaped. 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 said he, and ordered her to the gallows. The old Brâhman he appointed his Minister and reigned for a long time.

XVI.

PRIDE GOETH BEFORE A FALL.

Corresponding to this English proverb, there is one in Tamil,—*Ahambhāvam ālai aḷikkum*, “Pride of self destroys ;” and the following story is related by the common folk to illustrate it :—

In a certain village there lived ten cloth-merchants, who always went about together. Once upon a time they had travelled far afield, and were returning home with a great deal of money which they had obtained by selling their wares. Now there happened to be a dense forest near their village, and this, early one morning, they reached. In it there lived three notorious robbers, of whose existence the traders had never heard, and while they were still in the middle of it, the robbers stood before them, with swords and cudgels in their hands, and ordered them to lay down all they had. The traders had no weapons with them ; and so, though they were many more in number, they had to submit themselves to the robbers, who took away everything from them, even the very clothes they wore, and gave to each only a small loin-cloth (*laṅgōḷē*), a span in breadth and a cubit in length.

The idea that they had conquered ten men, and plundered all their property, now took possession of the robbers’ minds. They seated themselves like three monarchs before the men they had plundered, and ordered them to dance

to them before returning home. The merchants now mourned their fate. They had lost all they had, except their chief essential, the *laṅgôti*, and still the robbers were not satisfied, but ordered them to dance !

There was, among the ten merchants, one who was very intelligent. He pondered over the calamity that had come upon him and his friends, the dance they would have to perform, and the magnificent manner in which the three robbers had seated themselves on the grass. At the same time he observed that these last had placed their weapons on the ground, in the assurance of having thoroughly cowed the traders, who were now commencing to dance. So he took the lead in the dance, and, as a song is always sung by the leader on such occasions, to which the rest keep time by hands and feet, he thus began to sing :—

Námanum puli pēr,
Tálanum tiru pēr :
Śávana tálanai
Tiruváṇan śuttinán,
Śávana tálan mīdi.
Tá tai tōm tadiṅgaṇa.
 “ We are *puli* men,
 They are *tiru* men :
 If one *śá* man,
 Surrounds *tiru* men,
 Śa man remains.
Tá, tai, tōm, tadiṅgaṇa.”

The robbers were all uneducated, and thought that the leader was merely singing a song as usual. So it was in one sense; for the leader commenced from a distance, and had sung the song over twice, before he and his companions commenced to approach the robbers. They had understood his meaning, which however, even to the best educated, unless trained to the technical expressions of trade, would have remained a riddle.

When two traders discuss the price of an article in the presence of a purchaser, they use an enigmatic form of language. "What is the price of this cloth?" one trader will ask another. "*Puli* rupees," another will reply, meaning "ten rupees." Thus, there is no possibility of the purchaser knowing what is meant unless he be acquainted with trade technicalities.¹ By the rules of this secret language *tiru* means 'three,' *puli* means 'ten,' and *sávana* (or shortly *sa*) means 'one.' So the leader by his song meant to hint to his 'fellow-traders that they were ten men, the robbers only three, that if three pounced upon each of the robbers, nine of them could hold them down, while the remaining one bound the robbers' hands and feet.

The three thieves, glorying in their victory, and little understanding the meaning of the

¹ Traders have also certain secret symbols for marking their prices on their cloths.

song and the intentions of the dancers, were proudly seated chewing betel and *tambák* (tobacco). Meanwhile the song was sung a third time. *Tá tai tôm* had left the lips of the singer; and, before *tadingana* was out of them, the traders separated into parties of three, and each party pounced upon a thief. The remaining one—the leader himself, for to him the other nine left the conclusion—tore up into long narrow strips a large piece of cloth six cubits long, and tied the hands and feet of the robbers. These were entirely humbled now, and rolled on the ground like three bags of rice!

The ten traders now took back all their property, and armed themselves with the swords and cudgels of their enemies; and when they reached their village, they often amused their friends and relatives by relating their adventure.²

² [This story, apart from its folklore value, is specially interesting as showing that the customs mentioned, *Ind. Antiquary* Vol. XIV. p. 155 ff., as being prevalent at Delhi, regarding secret trade language are universal in India.—ED.]

XVII.

LIGHT MAKES PROSPERITY.

There is a Tamil proverb *dīpam lakshmī-karam*, meaning, "light makes prosperity," and the following story is related to explain it:—

In the town of Gôvindapâṭhî there lived a merchant named Paśupati Śeṭṭi, who had a son and a daughter. The son's name was Vinîta and the daughter's Garvî, 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. Garvî grew up to marry a very rich merchant, and gave birth in due course to three daughters, the last of whom was named Suguṇî. Vinîta, 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.

Paśupati Śeṭṭi died, and his creditors—for he had many—grew troublesome. All his property had to be sold to clear his debts, and in a month or two after his father's death Vinîta 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 Garvî, 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, Sugunî, alone remained unmarried.

Vinîta 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 never said a word. The vow of his childhood was, however, known to every one, and some came to sympathise with him ; while others spoke in a criticising tone to Garvî for having broken her promise, because her brother had become poor through unforeseen circumstances. Their remarks fell on the ears of Sugunî, who was as yet unmarried, and also was a very learned and sensible girl. She found her uncle Vinîta extremely courteous and respectful, and his sons all persons of virtue and good nature. The thought that her mother should have forgotten all these excellent and rare qualities in the presence of fleeting

mammon (*asthiraiśvarya*) vexed her heart very greatly. So, though it is considered most disrespectful for a girl in Hindû society to fix upon 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.”

Garvî 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 Sugunî persisted. So her marriage with the youngest son of Vinîta 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 Sugunî was determined to marry his youngest son, he was much pleased. He soon fixed upon two girls from a poor family for his other sons, and celebrated the three weddings as became his position.

Sugunî 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 every disregard her husband, or his brothers, or father.

Now Vinîta and his sons used to go out in the mornings to gather dried leaves which his three daughters-in-law stitched into plates (*patrávalî*), which the male members of the family sold in the *bâzâr* for about four *panams* each.¹ 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 Sugunî, 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 Sugunî 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 doing in her husband's home. Thus passed a couple of years.

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* (Brâhmañî kite) was at that moment describing

¹ A *panam* is generally worth two *ânas*.

circles in the air and, mistaking the glittering rubies in the ring for flesh, pounced upon it and flew away. Finding it to be no flesh he dropped it in the house of Sugunî'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. Sugunî called her husband and his brothers and thus addressed them :—

“My lord and brothers, kindly excuse me for having the king's ring. Exactly at mid-day 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 Sugunî, and expected a good result from this visit to the king.

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 Sugunî, 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 feminine majesty wishes you to permit her to enter it, boldly tell her to swear first never to

go out 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 Sugunî 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 Sugunî's house: for, by order of His Majesty, no light was lit in any other house. The *Ashṭalakshmīs*—the Eight Prosperities—entered the town that night and went house by house into every street. All of them were dark, and the only house lit up was Sugunî'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 *Mūdēvī*, 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 Sugunî’s house from that day. The three brothers and her father-in-law were overjoyed at the way Sugunî had driven away their poverty for ever, and even Sugunî’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 brings prosperity, and darkness adversity.²

² See also the second tale in this series ; *ante*, p. 7.

XVIII.

THE FIVE CUPS.

In a certain village there lived an extremely poor Brâhmaṇ, named Bhikshu, who had nothing to live upon. Every morning he rose in the *Brahmamuhūrta*¹ from his bed, went to the river, bathed, and finished his prayers by the third or fourth *ghaṭikā*² 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*.³ At about the tenth *ghaṭikā* Bhikshu used to return home with the vessel filled with rice and a few vegetables with which the charitably disposed had presented to him. He then performed his noonday ablutions and the *dévatârchana*—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 Brâhmaṇî ate. Such was their daily routine. If fortunately

¹ *Brahmamuhūrta*, the second half of the last watch of a night, from 4½ to 6 A.M.; so called as being sacred to Brahmâ.

² See *ante*, Vol. XIV. p. 135, note 3.

³ *Upanishad*, sacred writings of the Brâhmaṇs, explaining the true sense of the *Vêdas*.

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 Mahêśvara 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 *uñchchhavrittî*—the collection of alms! I beseech you to go somewhere and return with some learning in you.”

The Brâhmanî's words infused shame into her husband, 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 Brâhmanism 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 *ghaṭa* (pot) full of newly drawn water was coming towards her.

“My dear husband, the great god favours your journey. A *sumāṅgalī** 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

* A married woman, whose approach is a good omen. Omens differ in different countries: among the Drâvidians the good omens are—a married woman, virgin, dancing-woman, “double” Brâhman, music, flowers, fruits, flag, umbrella, sugar-cane, cooked rice, milk, flesh, fire, *tâḍī*, elephant, horse, cows, cloth, king, pearls, clarified rice (*akshata*) and fried rice (*lâja*). 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” Brâhman, three Vaiśyas, two Śûdras, tiger, serpent, fuel, scythe, wood-axe, crowbar, oil, new pot, a man in a masque, butter-milk (*châch*) 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! Haḍa!* &c.

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*⁵ tree fell into a deep slumber beneath it.

Fortunately for him, while he was thus sound asleep, Pârvatî and Paramêśvara happened to pass that way. The goddess was very hungry. Said she to her lord :

“ My great lord, here sleeps a poor Brâhmaṇ. The rice he brought for his meal is hanging in the *ingudî* tree. I am very hungry. Let us both eat of the bundle and then pursue our way.”

The great god could not but agree. He himself took down the bundle and went up to the flowing stream. Pârvatî 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 Pârvatî, and the great god,

⁵ (*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 *Râmâyana*, *Sakuntalâ* and other works.

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 the five cups in it where the bundle of rice had been, and went behind her lord to Mount Kailâsa.⁶

In the evening Bhikshu awoke, and there were only five or six *ghaṭikās* 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 over another met his eyes. As he separated the cups, from out of each there came out a being of the Divine World (*dévalôka*), 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

⁶ The abode of *Siva* in the *Himâlayas*.

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 *ghaṭiká*—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, my lady. The gift of Paramêśvara has been so great,” replied Bhikshu, and after carefully bolting the door, he went in, followed by his wife.

He then related to her how Paramêśvara 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 dining 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 *lôṭā*⁷ by the side of each guest,

⁷ A drinking cup with a neck smaller than its body.

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, who was notorious for his ambition for anything and everything, whose name was Âśâvân. He came to Bhikshu and requested him to give full particulars as to how he had obtained the cups. Bhikshu related to him the whole story to which Âśâvân 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 *ingudî* tree. There he suspended his rice, as Bhikshu had done, and pretended to sleep, but only kept his eyes closed. That day, too, Pârvatî and Paramêśvara passed that way and ate of his bundle. On returning to the bank the great god placed five cups also in Âśâvân's bundle, as he had done in Bhikshu's. Âśâvân 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. Âśâvân 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 Âśâvân !

XIX.

THE BRAHMARAKSHASA.

In a certain village of the country of Śeṅgalinīrpaṭṭu there dwelt a Brāhmaṇ, gaining his living by the alms he collected daily, and so he was in extremely poor circumstances. Poverty indeed had taken such a firm hold of him that he wished to fly to Bânâras. Accordingly, depending as usual upon what charity would provide for him on the way, he started with only one day's supplies tied up in a bundle.

When there wanted yet four *ghaṭikās* before sunset he had approached a thick wilderness, which was also long and wide, and studded with small villages here and there. After journeying through this for more than the four *ghaṭikās* he reached a splendid tank just as the sun was setting. Ablutions must never be foregone by a Brāhmaṇ, so he neared the tank to wash his hands and legs, to perform his prayers, and to eat what little his bundle contained. As soon as he placed his foot in the water he heard a voice calling out :—“Put not thy foot in this water ! Thou art not permitted to do so !”

He looked round about him and discovered nothing, and so not heeding the threat he

¹ Śeṅgalinīrpaṭṭu means “the land of the blue lily,” now corrupted into Chingleput.

washed his hands and feet, and sat down to perform his *sandhyāvandana* or evening worship, when again he heard a voice :—“Perform not thy *sandhyāvandana* ! Thou art not permitted to do so !”

A second time he gave no heed to the voice but proceeded with his prayers, and when they were over opened his bundle of food. As soon as he began to eat the same voice was again heard, but the Brâhman paid no attention, and finished his meal. Then getting up he pursued his journey, so as, if possible, to reach a village to sleep in for the night. He had scarcely advanced a step, when again the same voice forbade him to go on !

Having thus been barred four times the Brâhman boldly broke out and said :—“Who art thou, thou wretch ? And why dost thou thus forbid me every reasonable action.”

Replied a voice from a pîpal tree above him : “I am a *Brahmarâkshasa*, named Gâṇapriya.² In my former life I was a Brâhman, and learnt all the intricacies of music, but I was unwilling to impart my hard-earned knowledge to others. Paramêśvara was so greatly displeased with me that he made me a *Brahmarâkshasa* in *this life*³ and even now his rage seems not to have

² This means merely “lover of music.”

³ It is a common notion among Hindûs, especially among Brâhmaṇs, that he who does not freely impart his knowledge to others is born in the next life as a kind of demon called *Brahmarâkshasa*.

been appeased. At the distance of a quarter of a *ghatiká* from this spot is a ruined temple, in which *pújá* (worship) is conducted in a very rough way, and during the ceremony a piper plays upon a *nágasvara* pipe so very awkwardly, that its causes me the utmost mortification to listen to him. My only hope of escape is that a Brâhmaṇ will rescue me from this tree. You are the first Brâhmaṇ I have ever met with in this wilderness, and I have grown quite thin from the worry of hearing that awkward piper day after day! If I continue much longer in this tree, it will be the death of me! So pity my condition, I beseech you, and remove me to some tree five or six *ghatikás'* distance from this place, and leave me in peace there, so that I may be out of the reach of that horrible piper and get a little stouter. In return demand from me any boon and I will grant it."

Thus said the *Brahmarákshasa*, and in its very voice the Brâhmaṇ could discover its failing strength. Said he:—"I am an extremely poor Brâhmaṇ, and if you promise to mend my condition and to make me rich I will remove you to a good distance, where the sound of the cracked *nágasvara* shall never affect your ears."

The *Brahmarákshasa* thought for a few *nimishas* and thus replied:—"Holy Brâhmaṇ, every person must undergo what is cut upon his forehead by Brahmâ, in this world. Five

more years of poverty are allotted to you by fate, after which I shall go and possess the Princess of Maisûr, and none of the incantations which learned magicians may pronounce upon me shall drive me out, until you have presented yourself before the king of Maisûr and promised to cure her of me. He will promise you ample rewards, and you must commence the cure, when I will leave her. The king will be pleased and grant you several boons, which will make you happy. But you must never afterwards visit any place where I may be. It may be that I shall possess several princesses, but if you come there with the view of curing them I shall take your life at a blow. Beware !”

Thus spake the *Brahmarâkshasa*, and the Brâhmaṇ agreed to all the conditions and removed it to another *pîpal* tree seven *ghaṭikâs* distant from its then abode. It found its new home comfortable, and let the Brâhmaṇ pursue his way north to Bânâras, which he reached in six months.

For five years he lived in the Hanumanta Ghaṭṭa at Bânâras, performing ablutions to wash himself pure of all his sins. Then, thinking of the *Brahmarâkshasa's* promise, he returned towards the south, and after travelling for five months reached Maisûr, where he sojourned in an old woman's house and enquired the news of the day.

Said she:—"My son, the princess of this country, who is the only daughter of the king, has been possessed by a furious devil for the last five months and all the exorcists of Jambúdvîpa have tried their skill on her, but to no purpose. He who cures her will become the master of a vast fortune."

So said the old woman to the secret joy of the Brâhman at the faithful observance of its promise by the *Brahmarâkshasa*. He bathed and hastily took his meal, and then presented himself at the *darbâr* that very day. The king promised him several villages and whole elephant-loads of *mohars* should he effect a cure.

On these conditions he commenced his pretended exorcisms, and on the third day asked all the persons assembled to vacate the room in which the possessed princess was seated. Then he explained to his friend the *Brahmarâkshasa*, who was now possessing her, that he was the Brâhman who had assisted him in the wood five years previously. The demon was greatly pleased to meet its old friend again, and wishing him prosperity and warning him never to come again to any other place where it might go for shelter, took its leave. The princess came back to her former self, and the Brâhman, loaded with wealth and lands, settled down in Maisûr.

He had thus earned a name as an exorcist, and now cultivated that science secretly, so

that he soon became a master of it, and all over the country he became famous as a master-magician. He also became a favourite with the king of Maisûr, and married a beautiful Brâhmaṇî girl by whom he became the father of three children. Thus passed full ten years.

Meanwhile the *Brahmarâkshasa*, after going to several places, went to the country of Tiruvanandapuram (Trivandrum) and possessed the Princess of Travancore. Many masters of magic were called in, but to no effect. At length rumours about the master-magician of Maisûr reached the ears of the king of Tiruvanandapuram. He at once wrote to the Mahârâja of Maisûr, who showed the letter to the Brâhmaṇ. The invitation was a death stroke to our hero; for if he refused to go he would lose his good name and the favour of his king, and if he went he would lose his life! He preferred the latter alternative, and at once wrote out a *will*, leaving his estate to his children and confiding them to careful hands. He then started from Maisûr for Tiruvanandapuram, which he reached after journeying for a month. The king had so arranged for his comfort that he performed the journey with apparent ease: but his heart beating painfully!

He reached Tiruvanandapuram and tried to postpone his exorcisms for this reason or that for a short time, but the king was determined

to prove him. So he was asked to leave no stone unturned in order to effect the perfect cure of the princess. He had now no hope in this world, and thinking that his days were numbered he undertook the cure. As usual he made a pretence for a few days with his incantations, but he thought : " After all, what is the use of my thus prolonging my miseries, as it is settled that I must die ? The sooner there is an end to them the better !" So with a determined will to fall before the blow of the *Brahmarákshasa* he entered the chamber in which the princess was seated, but just as he entered a thought came into his mind and he said boldly :—" Will you now abandon her, you *Brahmarákshasa*, or shall I at once bring in the piper of the ruined temple near the wood, who is waiting outside ?"

No sooner had the name of the awkward piper fallen on the ears of the *Brahmarákshasa*, than he threw down the long pole, which he had in his hand to thrash the Bráhmaṇ with, and fell at his feet, saying :—

" Brother Bráhmaṇ, I will never even look back, but run away at once, if you will only never bring that piper to me again !"

" Agreed," said our hero, and Gāṇapriya disappeared.

Of course, our hero was greatly rewarded for his success and became doubly famous throughout the world as a master-magician !

XX.

THE SACHEL-BEARER.

Once upon a time, in the city of Pushpapura, there lived an office-messenger named Tan Singh. His pay was only seven rupees a month, out of which he spent five rupees for his maintenance and saved the rest. After five years, he counted his savings and found that they amounted to only Rs. 120. Counting the money over and over again, more than twenty times, Tan Singh could make no more of it than Rs. 120 ; and so he fell into a reverie and said to himself :—

“Alas ! after five years work I have been able to save only Rs. 120. What can this sum procure me ? Is it enough to buy me a good house to live in ? No ! Can I marry on it ? No ! I must serve another five years at least and save as much again to buy me even a small hut ! And as for a fair wife, I must at least have five or six hundred rupees, and to save that I must serve for more than twenty or thirty years ! By that time I may be dead ; so I must think of something else to do than leading so petty a life as this. They say that Tavudu Setti began ten years ago with the very small sum of ten rupees to trade in husks ;

and he is already a “Navakôṭi Nârâyaṇa Śeṭṭi,” owning big shops and half-a-dozen ships. I have twelve times as much as he had when he started in life. Why should not fortune favour me, too?”

With these thoughts in his head, Tan Singh resigned his post and, committing himself to fortune, opened a petty *bâzâr* for the buying and selling of husks like Tavuḍa Śeṭṭi. During the next year, after very careful trading, he was able to double his capital, and with his Rs. 250 he changed his husk *bâzâr* into a *bâzâr* for nuts and betel-leaves. After his second year his capital reached Rs. 500, and he soon changed his betel-leaf *bâzâr* into a sweetmeat one. Now sweetmeats in South India will bring in five or six times the sum laid out on them if the trader does not give credit. Tan Singh was very careful, and before the third year was quite over he had saved more than 3,000 rupees. He now thought that fortune was really favouring him as it had favoured Tavuḍa Śeṭṭi. Every year he changed his trade into a more and more lucrative and honourable one. He was very careful and honest, and never forgot his original poor condition. After ten years of successful trading he reached his ambition of becoming a “Navakôṭi Nârâyaṇa Śeṭṭi,” for he was now a great pearl merchant. Pearls and diamonds of the first water were his only articles of commerce. What was

his condition now compared with that ten years before? Then he was only a messenger on seven rupees a month: now he had more than a hundred messengers, to each of whom he was paying a monthly salary of seven rupees! Besides, his income now was more than that of a king!

Tan Singh thought that it would be a great sin in him if he did not enjoy his life, so he at once bought a large establishment at Pushpapura for Rs. 60,000, and married a lady, named Kamalâbâi, of the best Singh family of the town. His business never failed him, and his wife's star,¹ too, favoured his trade, for he grew richer and richer every day. Two years after his marriage he had a son, his first-born, who was very beautiful. He named him Râm Singh, and brought him up very tenderly. Three years after that he had another son, whom he named Lakshmaņa Singh; and in two years more he had a third son, the most beautiful of them all, whom he named Kṛishņa Singh. Thus, after seven years of married life, he was the father of three most beautiful sons, the eldest of whom was five years of age.

Being a rich and prudent man, he left no stone unturned to give a proper training to his

¹ It is a common belief, that when good or bad days come upon a family after taking in a new bride, it is her star that has brought them.

sons ; but, true to the proverb² that “ the eldest is always stupid,” Râm Singh was hopelessly dull. No amount of teaching had any effect on him, and his masters were not sparing of the rod. The *maulavî*, the *paṇḍit*, the *upādhyāyar*, and others came in their turn and spared no pains. But nothing had any effect on Râm Singh, who grew up a dandy, dressing like a king, eating like a glutton, and affecting loose and misguided society. Lakshmaṇa Singh was of a different mould ; not very intelligent, but very hard-working ; and, with the moderate brains that Paramêśvara had given him, he progressed fairly with his studies. In the youngest son the teachers found quite a student. He displayed extraordinary intelligence, grasped everything at the first teaching, and gave very great satisfaction alike to his masters and his parents. The latter were extremely fond of him, as he was their youngest and so full of promise.

In this way they went on with their studies till Râm Singh had reached the age of eighteen, while Lakshmaṇa Singh was fifteen and Kṛishṇa Singh thirteen : when a most unfortunate event occurred to the family.

Tan Singh one morning, after twenty years of married and prosperous life, bethought him of his former misery and his present happiness ;

² There is a Tamil proverb, “ *Mattadu muttannā*,”—the first is stupid.

and calling to Kamalâbâi, his wife, told her to give each of the boys a hundred rupees to be spent on a feast. Kamalâbâi accordingly gave Râm Singh his portion as soon as he returned from his morning walk, telling him that it was his father's present. He took it eagerly, without even inquiring what it was for, made a breakfast of cold rice, and then went into a dancing-girl's house and there made a present of it to her. Soon after Râm Singh had left the house, Lakshmana Singh came home from his teachers to have his breakfast of cold rice, and as he was sitting in front of his leaf, his mother gave him the money; and when he asked her why, she told him that it was for a feast. Lakshmana gladly received it, but spent it on books and clothes. Kṛishna Singh was always late for his meals, and when he returned home long after the others, his mother gave him his portion, while he was eating his cold rice, telling him that it was for a feast. Kṛishna Singh laughed at the idea of spending one hundred rupees in one day on a feast, and rebuked his mother for having brought the money to him, although his father had given it. He thought it very silly of his father to have thought of giving Rs. 300 in a day to his sons to be spent on such stuff. At that rate he would spend Rs. 9,000 in a month, and become a beggar in a year or two.

So he asked his mother to return the money to his father, request him to lock it up in his safe and devote it to some useful purpose. His mother returned it accordingly, and his father, overjoyed at the wit of his youngest son, desired the gift to be doubled. The boy persisted in his refusal, but his father would not yield, and tried to compel him to take the money. He sternly refused, however, and when his father wished to know what it was that made him, always so obedient, so very stubborn that day, he advised him not to attempt to find out impossibilities. Tan Singh grew extremely angry at this, and blinded by his pride of wealth, asked Kṛishṇa Singh whether anything was impossible to him in the world. Kṛishṇa Singh laughed at the folly of his father, and replied in the affirmative. Tan Singh then asked him to prove it, whereupon the boy asked his father whether it was possible for him to get his son married to the princess of Pushpapura. Not that he hoped to become the son-in-law of the king: he only brought this forward as an example of a thing that it was not in the power of his father to perform. No sooner did Tan Singh hear his son mention the princess, than he thought that he was really in love with her, and that too at so tender an age as thirteen! He pulled off his slippers at once, and severely thrashed him. Kṛishṇa

Singh took the insult coolly, and then plucking the slippers out of his father's hands, fled away with the swiftness of a kite. He lingered in the city without meeting any of his friends or relatives till it grew dark, and in the night went unobserved by anyone to the temple of Kâli.³ There he chose a suitable niche in one of the *prākāra*⁴ walls, and placing the slippers that his father had beaten him with in it, covered them up with *chunam* (mortar), and thus left them there in safety.

He did not now wish to remain in Pushpapura any longer;—and, young and tender as he was, he did not fear to go to some other town, and there try his fortune in an independent life. In this way Kṛishṇa Singh left the city that very night, and proceeded to the North without knowing where he was going to and without any premeditated plans, and committing himself solely to fortune. He walked till his feet pained him, ate what he could procure in the shape of roots and fruits, slept when he felt himself drowsy, and put no value on his life. Thus he journeyed through forests, mountains, deserts, and wilds for over a month till he reached a large city, which, on enquiry, he found to be Dhârâpura, the capital of the

³ Village goddess.

⁴ Circuit walls of a temple.

Emperor or *Īkachakrādhīpati*,⁵ to whom all the fifty-six⁶ kings of the world did homage.

Now the Emperor of Dhârâpura had no son, but an only daughter, who was considered to be the most beautiful princess in the world. Her name was Chandramukhî.⁷ She was only nine years of age, and was prosecuting her studies

⁵ The lord of one discus—a title which emperors in India always took from their privilege of wielding a discus (*chakra*), which privilege the minor kings had not.

⁶ The fifty-six kings of the world, according to the ideas current in South India, are the kings of

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|-------------------------|----------------|
| 1. Aṅga. | 29. Śālava. |
| 2. Aruṇa. | 30. Siṅgala. |
| 3. Avanti. | 31. Śīndhu. |
| 4. Āndira. | 32. Śīna. |
| 5. Ilāḍa (Lāṭa). | 33. Śūrasēna. |
| 6. Oṭṭiya. | 34. Śōla. |
| 7. Karuṣa. | 35. Śōnaka. |
| 8. Kalinga. | 36. Dirāvīḍa. |
| 9. Kannāḍa. | 37. Tuluva. |
| 10. Kannāḍa. | 38. Teṅgana. |
| 11. Kāśa. | 39. Nidada. |
| 12. Kāśūmīra (Kashmīr). | 40. Nēpāla. |
| 13. Kandhāra. | 41. Pappara. |
| 14. Kambōja. | 42. Pallava. |
| 15. Kiṣāra. | 43. Pāñchāla. |
| 16. Kuruku. | 44. Pāṇḍiya. |
| 17. Kūdaka. | 45. Pulinda. |
| 18. Kuntala. | 46. Poḍa. |
| 19. Kuru. | 47. Maghada. |
| 20. Kulinda. | 48. Machha. |
| 21. Kūrchchara. | 49. Marāṭa. |
| 22. Kēkaya. | 50. Malaiyāla. |
| 23. Kēraḷa. | 51. Mālava. |
| 24. Koṅgana. | 52. Yavana. |
| 25. Kōlla. | 53. Yuganda. |
| 26. Kōśala. | 54. Vāṅga. |
| 27. Śaka. | 55. Vauḡāla. |
| 28. Śavvira. | 56. Vidarbha. |

⁷ The moon-faced.

in the Prince's College of Dhârâpura. This Râjaknmâr, or Royal College, was an institution specially adapted to the education of the members of the royal family, and during the school hours a body-guard always waited outside it and also accompanied the princess and her fellow-students to and fro; the Minister's son, Râmachandra, the Commander-in-chief's son, and several other lads of noble parentage were her school-mates.

It so happened that Kṛishṇa Singh had to pass by the street in which the college was situated, and as one of the royal guard was a Singh by caste he recognised him as a caste-fellow; and pitying the forlorn condition of such a beautiful and tender boy he called him to his side, and asked him who he was. Kṛishṇa Singh, pretending to be an idiot, replied that he knew nothing about himself, that he had been wandering ever since he could remember, and that he had no relatives. At that moment Princess Chandramukhî happened to come outside the college for a cup of water, and was struck with the beauty and majesty of Kṛishṇa Singh, worn out and disfigured though he was after his wanderings. She asked him his name and parentage. He replied to the first question, and as to the second he said he knew nothing about himself, except that he was an orphan. She then asked him whether he would like to

serve under her. On his replying in the affirmative she appointed him as her *Tūkkuttūkki* or Satchel-bearer, and told him that his duty was ever to be by her side and to carry her satchel behind her, both when she went to the school and when she returned home. She promised in return to feed him and bring him up as well as herself. What more could Kṛishṇa Singh want ? He gladly consented, and accepting her offer with thanks followed her to her class, and ever afterwards attended upon her.

The princess obtained her father's consent, too, for Kṛishṇa Singh's employment as her satchel-bearer, and true to her word she brought him up very tenderly. He had his meals side by side with her, and, excepting that he was her satchel-bearer, there was no difference made between them. The general opinion among the people was that the emperor allowed such familiarity between his daughter and Kṛishṇa Singh, because he wished to marry them to each other when they were old enough ; but, as they were also of opinion that he was a very stupid boy they could not reconcile themselves to the idea of the marriage. For it should be said that Kṛishṇa Singh had, ever since he had entered the service of the princess, pretended that he was a fool, and when one of the princess's school-mates had asked him if he could write he had replied he could,—but about as well as

he could fly in the air! This too was not the only instance. On several occasions he behaved purposely so foolishly that every one that knew him thought him the silliest boy that had ever lived in the world. The princess also thought him so, but never lessened her care for him on that account, and continued on the most intimate terms with him: so much so that the public began to whisper now and then that she intended to marry him. To her credit, however, it must be said that she had no such intention. Had Kṛishṇa Singh shown that he was as intelligent as herself or more so, it would have been otherwise. The emperor alone entertained thoughts of their marriage, for he had pitched upon Kṛishṇa Singh as the best match his daughter could make. That he was very stupid did not matter much, because his daughter, who was very intelligent, could manage everything. It was necessary that her equal in beauty should be her husband, and as he had found one in Kṛishṇa Singh, why not accept him? So thought the emperor, and it was owing to this idea that he did not like to disturb the familiarity that was growing up between him and his daughter Chandramukhî.

The princess was fit to be married in her sixteenth year, *i.e.*, seven years after Kṛishṇa Singh had entered her service, and Râmachandra, the Minister's son, had long had thoughts

of marrying her, and had once or twice told her so. She also seemed to be agreeable, and continued to attend the college even after she was grown up.

One day before the college closed for the evening Râmachandra took a *ghaṭikā's* leave from his master and waited for a chance to speak to the princess. Presently she started homewards with the Tûkkuttûkki Kṛishṇa Singh walking on in front as usual with the satchel, and her guard following her. Râmachandra sat near a car (*ratha*) and asked the princess to come to him as he had a secret to tell her, telling her guard at the same time to stand where they could not overhear what he was saying. He also asked the Tûkkuttûkki to walk a few steps further. Now the Tûkkuttûkki pretending to walk on quickly managed to get unobserved to the other side of the car and overheard everything that passed between them :— Râmachandra asked the princess whether she would adhere to her promise of marrying him. The princess told him that she would be very proud of it, both on account of his high parentage and his intellectual attainments; but she also told him that her father might not like it, as he (Râmachandra) was not much to look at, and as it was his declared intention to give her only to one who was as beautiful as she was. She then said, that as she liked the idea of the marriage much, it would be best

to elope to some place where they could be married. Then they fixed a day for the elopement—the eighth day from that one—and separated. As soon as the day for the elopement was fixed on Kṛishṇa Singh ran off unobserved and stood where he had been told, and as the guard were at a distance where they could not have heard the conversation, Râmachandra and Chandramukhî both thought that no one had overheard them, and each went home with mind undisturbed.

The night passed as usual, but next morning, when the emperor was holding his *darbâr* (court), all of a sudden the Tûkkuttûkki came to him and told him that he wanted to speak to him privately about something. As the emperor loved Kṛishṇa Singh more than his life, he at once granted him his request, and asked everyone present to leave the room for a few minutes. Drawing a chair near him, he asked the Tûkkuttûkki to take it and to proceed with his news. But Kṛishṇa Singh asked him whether he knew how kings should educate their daughters! The emperor was quite confounded at this. He had always thought the Tûkkuttûkki to be the most stupid man on earth, and he had now posed him with a question which it was very difficult to answer! The Tûkkuttûkki next told him that such high authorities as Manu, Vyâsa⁸ and others had

⁸ Ancient codifiers of Hindu Law.

stated that a king should send his daughter to school till her seventh year; after which it was always better to have her educated at home by private teachers till she grew up, and that then she should be educated on the *pardá*-system, by which the master sits on one side of a screen and the girl on the other, neither being able to see the other. He also told the emperor that he had deviated from one and all of these sound rules, with the result that his daughter was no longer his daughter! He then told him what had happened the previous evening. The emperor was highly pleased at this display of sense and at the faithfulness shown by the lad in thus bringing this news to him in good time. He asked Kṛishṇa Singh to keep this a dead secret, as he would take the necessary steps to prevent the projected elopement from taking place.

The emperor at once issued an order summoning all the artisans of the place to attend the *darbár* in a couple of hours. The orders were duly obeyed, and when they came the emperor asked them whether it was possible for them to raise a great mansion, seven stories in height, in a couple of days. They replied that with the kind favour of the king they could do it in one day. He made the necessary arrangements for it, asking the minister and other officers to suspend all other work in

order to superintend the building of the mansion, and to procure all that was necessary for it. The emperor went to see his daughter and stuck beside her, watching her like a thief. No one knew what the mansion was meant for, and no one had the boldness to ask him, but the work duly progressed. It is said that even nature obeyed the emperor's orders, and that an enormous mansion, seven stories high, was completed before the eighth *ghaṭikā* of that evening. The minister and other officers deputed to look after the work then sent word to the emperor that the mansion was finished, and with his permission went home to dinner. Such was the haste with which the work proceeded to its completion.

The emperor now called all the eunuchs and told them that they were to guard the topmost three stories of the new mansion and allow no one to pass or repass, except one or two whom he was going to mention. As for the other four stories below he sent for pensioned soldiers and gave them the same orders. After thus, as it were, garrisoning the mansion, he told them all that it was meant for his daughter, where she was to live henceforth till her marriage, and that with her would always live twenty female servants as her attendants and friends, the head of whom was to be one Śellam. Only Śellam and the Tūkkuttūkki were to take provisions and other things to the seventh mansion,

and except Śellam and the Tûkkuttûkki, and, of course, her parents, no one was to be allowed to visit the princess. If any one, whoever he might be, were to enter any of the stories, even in ignorance of who was confined in the place, his head was to be cut off then and there. Thus the very next night after her projected plans the princess was imprisoned !

She had never dreamt of anything like this. No one, except the Tûkkuttûkki and Śellam, could, she was told, pass and repass the steps of those seven stories ! What was the cause of all this ? Had some spies brought the emperor news of her intended elopement after overhearing her ? No ! *That* could not be, for she had most carefully watched the place. Possibly the Tûkkuttûkki had somehow overheard her arrangements with Râmaachandra, and had played her false. How could that be possible in such a foolish creature ? However, in her uncertainty, she was anxious to examine him.

It was more than the 15th *ghaṭikâ* of the night. The princess was sitting in her chair in great distress of mind at the sudden frustration of her plans. Kṛishṇa Singh was sitting in front of her, and she began to examine him, commencing in this way :—“ Will the Tûkkuttûkki bring me that book from the cupboard and turn to the 11th page and read ?” Kṛishṇa Singh eyed her with anger for a couple of minutes, and rising up brought

the book from the cupboard; but instead of reading it tore it to pieces, and, holding the pieces between his thumb and fore-finger, smelt at them and began to cry aloud till he sobbed. It was with very great difficulty that the princess pacified him.

She then asked the reason of his grief, and pointed to the state to which the poor book was reduced. He said: "Princess! It was *you* that took me, an orphan, and protected me as tenderly as possible for seven years. You are rich. It would have cost you nothing to have asked one of your teachers to have devoted a *ghaṭikā* or two to my tuition: you did not do that. You are yourself so learned. I am ever by your side. You might have taught me for a *ghaṭikā* or two every day. That also you did not do. I am now more than twenty, and I do not know how to say '*Harihōm!*'" Knowing so much yourself, you purposely want to put me to shame in the presence of these slave girls. What else did you mean by asking me, who know nothing, as you know very well, to turn to the 11th page of that miserable book? I simplified everything by tearing the book to pieces. There it lies. All my ignorance is—your fault!"

Thus said the Tūkkuttākki, and the princess took him at his word, and setting him down for

* Salutation to Hari! Repeated by Hindu children before beginning the alphabet of any Indian language.

a fool of the first water thought that she must have been unwise to have entertained suspicions about so simple a man. She praised all her household gods for giving her his services, and now that the emperor had given him the privilege of passing and repassing the storeys of the mansion, she thought of turning that privilege to the best account. In a word she wished to employ him as a love-messenger to Râmachandra, and to entrust him with her letters to her lover! No sooner did this idea strike her than she took up a piece of paper and wrote thereon how she had been imprisoned, the unaccountableness of it, her undiminished passion for him, and her readiness to take up any course that he would recommend. Lastly, she requested Râmachandra to relieve her from her imprisonment, to take her somewhere or other, and there to marry her. After writing the letter she signed it most affectionately,—subscribing herself as his wife,—sealed it most carefully and gave it to the Tûknttûkki, asking him to take it unobserved to Râmachandra, her schoolmate and the minister's son. She also specially asked the Tûkkuttûkki to be very careful about the letter, not to drop it anywhere from carelessness, not to show it to anyone and to arouse no suspicions by carrying it openly. The Tûkkuttûkki asked her to disclose only to himself the contents of that letter about the safety of

which she was so very anxious. She laughed at his foolishness and told him that it contained a paper of questions! The Tûkkuttûkki pretended to be highly satisfied with her reply and promised to take the paper early in the morning to Râmachandra, as it was then so late.

As for poor Râmachandra, as soon as his father told him about the mansion, he at once thought within himself that somehow or other his conversation with the princess had become known to the emperor. He gave up all hopes of her, and trembled for his life. Would the emperor order his head to be cut off the next morning? He did not like to say anything to his father, but waited to see how matters would terminate.

The morning dawned. The princess and the Tûkkuttûkki got up from their beds, and hastily took their breakfast, and when it was over the princess ordered him to go to Râmachandra without losing any time. The Tûkkuttûkki rolled up the letter in half-a-dozen handkerchiefs, taking care to knot each of them in the presence of the princess. She laughed at his acts and told him that all those knots were more than enough for the safety of the letter. He then put the bundle under his arm and started off at once.

Now Kṛishṇa Singh had no idea of going to the emperor with the letter, for he had long known

that the emperor intended giving him his daughter in marriage; and, in spite of the unfavourable opinion of him entertained by the people and the princess herself, he was sure of securing her hand. When a danger had occurred to his plans in the shape of a projected elopement, he thought that unless he reported the matter to the emperor and got the princess into safe custody, he might lose her for ever; and so he had told him the story, and no doubt the princess was safe enough now! No Râmachandra could now steal her away. It was he that was to act the part of Râmachandra unknown to anyone, and prove what sort of man he was, and so falsify the general opinion entertained of him by others. He also thought that such a course would better secure him the heart of the princess and the praises of her father. It was to encompass this end that he had worked for a long time; and he now determined, if possible, to walk away with her on the proposed eighth day, himself acting the part of Râmachandra! He also thought that no ordinary course was now possible in so short a time as that.

Thus thinking he went down with the letter, and, going to the *bâzâr*, bought paper, pen and ink, and with these walked to the nearest jungle, where no one could see him. There he opened the letter, read the contents of it, and at once began a reply, as if from Râmachandra

to the princess ; for he it remembered that the Tûkknuttûkki had always been in the same class as the minister's son, and could imitate his handwriting very well.

The reply ran thus :—

“ My dear wife,—Many thanks for your affectionate letter. I had heard all about the mansion from my father, even before your letter came, and suspected something. Some devil has surely told your father of our arrangements, but I am not a man to be discouraged by such mishaps. Get your father to place you in the fourteenth room, from which I will arrange to take you on the sixth day hence. Only you must give me what assistance I need through this fool. Fool though he is, still you should be very glad of his help now, and send through him a *lâkh* of rupees to pay for our journey. The next letter will give you the necessary particulars. Your husband to be, Râmachandra.”

With a perfect freedom, and a perfect imitation of Râmachandra's handwriting, did the Tûkkuttûkki forge this letter. He then sealed it, safely knotted it in his handkerchief, and putting it under his arm, returned to the princess before midday. He arrived laughing, and told her how many times the minister's son kissed her letter containing the questions, and how delighted he was to receive it. This made the princess anxious to see the reply ; but the

Tûkkuttûkki would not give it up, telling her how uncharitable it was of her and of the minister's son to suspect him so much. For Râmachandra, he said, had also told him half-a-dozen times to be careful about the reply. But in the end he untied all the knots, and gave the letter to the impatient princess.

The princess read the letter and danced for joy. She kissed it more than a hundred times; and, going inside her room, called the Tûkkuttûkki to her, and asked him to swear not to say a word about the letters to anyone. She then packed up in small bundles the *lâkh* of rupees that Râmachandra wanted and told him to take them down one by one to her lover. As Tûkkuttûkki was doing this for himself, he managed it with all despatch in this way. He had been a regular customer to an old woman who sold sweetmeats in Dhârâpura; and so procured a room in her house and put the money in it.

When he had stored all his treasure there he changed his dress, and, disguised as an Arab, went through all the stables in the place in search of fast and sound horses. After great difficulty he procured two very fine *asvaratnas*,¹⁰ which could gallop at the rate of two *kôs* a *ghaṭikâ*¹¹ for a whole week, without taking any

¹⁰ Gems of horses.

¹¹ About 12 miles an hour.

food or drink. Such horses could not be had at all times, and it was by good fortune that the Tûkkuttûkki chanced on them. He paid Rs. 50,000¹² for them, and hired two grooms to take care of them. He also spent nearly Rs. 25,000 in saddling and ornaments. He paid something for the *paraiyas*,¹³ and the remaining Rs. 25,000 he spent in buying a rope ladder and a rare kind of saw.

After securing all these things, he wrote the following letter to the princess :—

“Dear Wife,—I really admire our Tûkkuttûkki. Though he is a most stupid fellow, he has somehow managed to bring the *lâkh* of rupees that you so kindly sent me in safety. I have bought two of the finest horses, which can go day and night at the rate of two *kôs* a *ghatikâ*. I send through our fool a rope ladder and a saw. For the saw alone I had to pay more than Rs. 20,000, for it is a magical one, and never makes any noise even if you cut iron with it. It is made of adamant, and can saw through the hardest iron in less than two seconds. On the fifth evening, I will go to East King’s Street, that is just opposite to the large topmost window of your mansion. At the tenth *ghatikâ* of the night, when all are sound asleep, you must get up without any

¹² Half a *lâkh* of rupees.

¹³ Low-caste servants who act as grooms : pariahs.

noise, saw through the window and cast the rope ladder towards the horses. I shall be there to catch it; and you must then descend by it, and we shall both be off on our horses in no time! Within the next five days send down to me as much money as possible for our expenses. I will also, without the knowledge of my father, bring something as well. Your affectionate husband, Râmachandra."

The Tûkkuttûkki closed the letter, and tied it up in his usual manner. In another handkerchief he tied up the saw and the ladder, and returned to Chandramukhî with them all.

As soon as he approached the princess he kept on smiling, and so she beckoned him while he was yet at a distance, and rebuked him for looking so happy. He could not help it he said—"for the horses were so very beautiful."

"What horses?" asked the princess.

"Why, our *yajamân*¹⁴ has bought two of the finest horses in the world. I have seen all the horses of our emperor, and none of them can approach these in beauty. I may not know how to turn up the eleventh page of a book, but you may depend upon my opinion as regards a horse!"

Thus spake the Tûkkuttûkki, but the princess wanted him to give up the letter he had, but

¹⁴ Master.

before he would do so, he placed before her the saw and the rope ladder. She put them in her desk, without even looking at them, as she was so impatient for the letter. At last he gave it her. How great was her joy as she drank in the contents of it with eyes wide open. The horses were ready for the elopement! The saw and the ladder (thank heaven she had them safe in her box!) were ready and with her! What more remained to be done? Money! But only for the expenses of the honey-moon! And she had plenty at her disposal, as her whole *khazána*¹⁵ had been removed to the mansion with her! She took the Tûkkuttûkki to her *khazána* and asked him to try and take it all down to Râmachandra, or at any rate as much as he could manage. He agreed on two conditions. She must explain to him: firstly, what those horses were for; and secondly, why she was emptying her treasury in that way and sending all her wealth to Râmachandra. She told him that on the next Sunday night (for that was the day fixed for the elopement), she, in company with Râmachandra had to go to the adjacent temple of Kâli, to propitiate the goddess, and that the money was for the expenses. And she again told him not to open his lips on the subject. He promised on condition she took him also to the temple! On her replying in the negative he began to cry and weep aloud. She then consoled

¹⁵ Treasury.

him in several ways, and promised on her return to bring him some rare and sweet *prasádas*.¹⁶ He then named 100 different kinds of *prasádas*, and insisted on her bringing them with her on her return. She promised (laughing within herself) to bring a hundred more in addition to those he had enumerated. He was then left to himself and managed to empty her whole treasury, and whatever he brought down he changed into *hundís*.¹⁷

Thus everything was settled : the horses for the journey, the expenses for some months at least in a strange country, and the due intimation of all these preparations to the princess, Chandramukhî being all the while under the impression that her beloved Râmachandra was no ordinary man to so quickly show the emperor that he could not secure his daughter.

But alas for poor Râmachandra ! What did he know of these goings on in Dhârâpura ? Ever since he had heard from the minister, his father, about the mansion, he had been in fear of his life, and had confined himself to his own room ! Alas for the poor *Ékachakrádhipati* ! What notion had he of the tricks that were being played in the very mansion that he had built in one day for his dear daughter ?

¹⁶ Remainers—always, puddings cooked of rice and other eatables—of an offering to the god or goddess.

¹⁷ Cheques addressed to the correspondents of a trader in a distant place.

The days went on, every moment seeming a year to the princess. At last Sunday came, and the princess, wishing to take her choicest ornaments and dresses with her, and not liking the Tûkkuttûkki to stay with her while she was preparing to descend, asked him to go down to Râmachandra, giving him a letter to the latter to keep him engaged somehow so as to prevent him from watching them. With great joy did the Tûkkuttûkki receive the letter, though he pretended to be very stubborn about staying and watching the preparations for the pilgrimage to the temple of Kâñi. He put her on her oath several times about the one hundred *prasâdas*, and went off thanking all his stars! For what would have been the end of all his preparations had not the princess sent him down? So thought the Tûkkuttûkki as he was descending, thanking his household gods for his good luck. The first thing he did when he got down was to tear the letter to pieces; and then he spent the whole day in getting the horses ready for a long journey, and in securing the *hundîs* in the saddles. As soon as it was evening he dismissed the two *paraiyas* (grooms) with presents, and himself assuming the disguise of a groom, brought the horses opposite the large window of the mansion in the East King's Street, and tied them to a tree.

Meanwhile the princess had been counting every minute of the day, and as soon as it was

twilight she saw the horses with a *paraiya* groom, and though they were a long way below her she had no hesitation in concluding that they were the finest and swiftest of horses. The Tûkkuttûkki being sure now of walking off with the princess, laid himself down to rest till the tenth *ghatiká*, and having been restless for the whole of the preceding week he slept soundly.

Now the emperor of Dhârâpura had in some way incurred the displeasure of a robber chief, who determined to punish him severely. The day fixed upon for this was that of the elopement. The town was to be plundered, and sixty-four petty chiefs had been told off to sack each of the sixty-four streets of Dhârâpura. Each one of these had a number of robbers under him, and the orders were that the very salt-cellars were to be taken out of the houses. One of these petty chiefs came to the East King's Street, where he saw the two splendid horses and the groom sleeping beneath a tree. He thought that they must be waiting for two gentlemen, who must be very rich to own such animals. So he told one of his comrades to sit down near them and watch his opportunity. He also told him to plunder the owners and bring off the horses with all the booty thus gathered. So the thief sat down by one of the horses and waited for the owners to turn up, while the Tûkkuttûkki snored away the night.

The appointed time approached. The princess had prepared everything for the journey, and had packed up all her ornaments and dresses in a small box. At the 10th *ghaṭikā* of the night she arose and found to her joy that all in the mansion were fast asleep. Thinking that her household gods were truly favouring her elopement with Râmachandra, obedient to his instructions she sawed through the window in two seconds and cast down the rope-ladder. Fortunately for her and for the snoring Tûkkut-tûkki it caught in a strong branch of the tree. She pulled it, and finding it tight thought that her Râmachandra was holding firmly on to it. She then began to descend. The sparkling jewels in her ears, which shone like burning fire in the dead of the night, and the height from which she descended were more than enough to infuse terror into the heart of the thief. He thought that no human figure could dare such an audacious thing at that hour of the night, and to imagine a woman descending through the air at such a time was to him beyond all possibility! The more he gazed at the descending princess the more his fears increased and he was almost mad by the time she neared him. Setting her down for a devil that was descending to prey upon him, he at once untied the horse he was sitting near and mounting it rode towards the South.

When the princess had nearly reached the

ground she saw one of the horses being ridden off and thought that Râmachandra was riding away in advance. "Perhaps Râmachandra thinks that I may speak a word or two on seeing him and thus arouse suspicion. That must be the reason why he goes on a little in advance." Thus she thought as she reached the tree, and again thinking that Râmachandra had purposely left the ladder in the tree to go on in advance, she got down from it, untied the other horse in haste, and followed the supposed Râmachandra!

About this time Śellam, the head of the female servants, got up and, finding the window cut, was much alarmed; but, as she possessed great presence of mind, she calmly searched for the princess before raising a cry. She could find the princess nowhere. The window that was cut and the ladder hanging from it showed what had happened. As she would be the first victim of the anger of the emperor, being the chief of the maid-servants, she made up her mind to escape the danger and to track the princess if possible. So she got down by the ladder with the saw in her hand, fixed the window in its place so as to prevent suspicion, for that night at least, and when she reached the tree destroyed the rope-ladder, which the princess in her hurry had left to tell its tale. She then ran with headlong speed in the track of the horses.

After Śellam had begun her race with the horses the Tûkkuttûkki awoke, but with his usual ingenuity, instead of losing courage at the course events had taken he was delighted at them! "Thank heaven. Paramêśvara kept me sound asleep! Somehow or other the horses have got away, and I dreamt I heard the footsteps of women here. Surely the princess must be on ahead not far off. Had I been awake I should have been in a very awkward position! There would have been nothing for it then but to make a clean confession of all my tricks. Perhaps she might have murdered me in her anger! Perhaps she might have returned to her mansion by the ladder and and tried to hide everything! Thanks to Parmêśvara, I was in a timely sleep and am thus relieved from much confusion. I will follow the princess, tell her that I have tracked her to her place of pilgrimage, and beg *prasâdas*! I will still play the simpleton."

With these ideas in his head the Tûkkuttûkki ran on post-haste to overtake the horses. The distance between the thief on the first horse and the second horse was that of a *ghatikâ*; that between the princess and Śellam was also a *ghatikâ*, and that between Śellam and the Tûkkuttûkki was likewise a *ghatikâ*. In this way they raced on the whole night.

The morning twilight approached, and the birds began to sing to announce the dawn.

All our racers found themselves in the midst of a thick jungle. The princess, even in the grey twilight (for so great was her anxiety to get a glimpse of her beloved Râmachandra), looked well at the rider of the first horse, and to her confusion and surprise found him to be a black awkward looking *ka!!a*¹⁵ instead of her lover! She spurred on her horse, went very near him and found him without doubt to be a *ka!!a*! She unsheathed her sword and with one stroke stretched him on the ground and secured the horse!

“Alas! was I created in this world merely to undergo calamities? By some mistake or other instead of Râmachandra a black *ka!!a* has been riding before me! Perhaps this thief has killed Râmachandra somewhere on the way and plundered his horse. I am now in the thick of the forest without assistance. I do not know what is to become of me. I will lie down here and die!” She sat down weeping, overcome with grief, but it was not long before, to her surprise, she saw Śellam in the distance. What was her joy then! Both flew into each other’s arms and embraced; and the princess now explained to her briefly all the previous story. While they were thus speaking they saw the Tûkkuttûkki running towards them at headlong speed, and the first question he put to the princess when he saw her was as to her promise to give him

¹⁵ A robber-class in South India.

the promised *prasâdas* ! She was highly vexed at his stupidity, but still thanking her gods for having sent the faithful fool to her, promised to give him the *prasâdas* before long.

Sellam was the first to console the princess. She advised her not to lose courage, and they then agreed that the best course would be to go to some unknown town, and there to live as private people, till better times. They then got upon the horses and asked the Tûkkuttûkki to run before them.

Now as to affairs at Dhârâpura. When the morning dawned the maid-servants of the mansion were greatly alarmed at the disappearance of the princess, Śellam and the Tûkkuttûkki, and reported the matter to the old king. He was extremely vexed, but ordered the maid-servants to keep the matter strictly secret, and live in the mansion as if the princess was present among them. He promised to make a secret search for the lost princess and sent his spies in several directions, and enquired about Râmachandra, and found that he was safe at home. The fact that the Tûkkuttûkki and Śellam had disappeared at the same time as the princess made the old king hopeful of her safety ; so the maid-servants returned to the mansion, and performed their duties just as if the princess was living among them, and supplies of provisions, as if they were for the princess, were sent up regularly.

Meanwhile in the forest the Tûkkuttûkki thought that really ill-luck never left him, for while Śellam rode side by side with the princess, he had to run before her like a dog! He did not, however, lose courage, and in this way the three journeyed on till the middle of the day, when the princess and Śellam became very tired. They were also very thirsty, and asked the Tûkkuttûkki whether he could get them a little water to drink. He asked them to sit down in the cool shade of a large tree, and went off to search for water. He looked about everywhere. At last, at about six or seven *ghaṭikās*' distance to the West, so it appeared to him, he saw a red glitter. He went towards it, and then saw a large lake. Horror of horrors! The water in the lake looked like blood, for it was very red! He, however, took a handful of it to drink,¹⁹ and behold when he put it to his mouth it became as pure as crystal. This made him think that there must be something near the lake which gave it its red colour, so he went round it.

To the extreme north he found a ruby as big as a man's thumb glittering like fire, which he picked up, and, after rolling it up in several wraps, tied it safely to his hip inside his clothes. He then collected the water in half a dozen *sēmbu*²⁰ leaves and returned to the ladies, who

¹⁹ Natives of India do drink water by handfuls.

²⁰ *Caladium nymphaefolium*, a garden plant, with large broad succulent leaves and roots.

drank it and rested for a while, resuming their journey at about the 20th *ghaṭikā*.

So far the Tūkkuttūkki did not know in what country he was travelling, and in the morning the party found themselves in the middle of a jungle with nothing to show them where they were going. But about the 25th *ghaṭikā* that evening they emerged from the jungle and neared a road. On enquiry the Tūkkuttūkki found to his great joy that it led to Pushpapura. His vigour was renewed by the news, and he was anxious, if possible, to reach Pushpapura before night, and actually succeeded in nearing the vicinity of his native city before it was dark. He then asked the princess and Śellam to sit down in a *chatram*²¹ with the horses, while he went into the town and hired a very spacious and convenient house, three stories high, and when he returned he took them to it.

The two women were most thankful for the assistance of the Tūkkuttūkki in their trouble, and asked him to get them what he could to eat for the night. He went to the chief temple of the town and brought away food enough for their purpose, and after eating a little of it the princess and her companion, much exhausted by their journey, retired to sleep. The Tūkkuttūkki, however, had no rest. He tied up the horses in the ground-floor of the house and took a big

²¹ An inn.

room in it for his own use, in which he secured the *hundis* and the other money he had so carefully hidden in the horses' saddles at Dhârâpura; and, though it was very late, he went to the *bâzâr*, where he bought everything that was necessary for a comfortable life in Pushpapura, except rice, which he purposely omitted to bring. He then retired to rest at about midnight.

They all got up very early in the morning, for 'light meals procure light slumbers.' The ladies found provisions, vessels and everything ready, and the Tûkkuttûkki told them he had managed to bring them all during the night, as he had seen that they were so tired by their journey that they would urgently require them in the morning. They were rather surprised at what they thought to be the dawn of intelligence in the Tûkkuttûkki, but their surprise was changed to amusement when, on enquiring for rice, they were told that he had forgotten to buy it! So they ridiculed him for his foolishness in having omitted the most important thing of all!

The princess now asked the Tûkkuttûkki to do the menial work of the household, draw water from the well, wash the clothes, bring the necessary provisions from the *bâzâr* and perform other out-of-door and petty services, while she asked Śellam to be cook. In this way they lived at Pushpapura as ordinary people without attracting any notice, the ladies never leaving

their third storey and returning to their former *gôsha*²² life, and managing to live in comfort through the assistance of the Tûkkuttûkki.

Meanwhile the Tûkkuttûkki always used to finish all his daily work in a few hours, and after taking his meals with the ladies, he used to go out and amuse himself by wandering up and down. He now bought another pair of very fine horses and a beautiful coach, and engaged four grooms for the horses, giving up the whole of the ground-floor of the house for stables. He also gave orders for some beautiful dresses and had them prepared according to the best fashion of the day. All this was done after dinner, for until then he had to draw water and do other menial work. The ladies knew nothing as to what he was doing, as the Tûkkuttûkki used to leave them in his dirty menial's dress and returned to them in the same clothes, but he spent his leisure hours in the town driving about up and down in his coach and four, dressed like a prince or even better !

Thus passed many days, till one day the Tûkkuttûkki determined to pay a visit to the king of Pushpapura. Now to visit a king empty-handed is always deemed to be a sin, so he took up the ruby he had picked up at the red lake with him as a present, and drove to the palace.

²² Closed life within doors : the *zanâna* system.

His rich dress, his beautiful person, the coach and four, and everything about him made him appear to be himself a king or a prince, so the king of Pushpapura did not think it at all odd that he should visit him, and treated him as an equal, going forward a few steps to meet him, and receiving him with a royal greeting. The Tûkkuttûkki asked after his good health and tendered his present, which went far to confirm the previous opinion the king had formed of his social position. He was indeed very pleased to receive so rare a gift, and told the Tûkkuttûkki that he had one gem of the kind, that he had for a long time been in search of another to match with it, and that he was accordingly all the more delighted now to have had one given him. The Tûkkuttûkki now insulted the king, or rather seemed to insult him, by saying that his was a gem of the first water, and that no other gem in the world could approach it either in beauty or value! The king flew into a fury at this piece of brag, and made the same boast as to *his* gem. They then both agreed to a wager as to which was the best gem. The king's stake was his kingdom in case his gem was found to be the inferior one, while the Tûkkuttûkki bound himself to serve the king for twenty-eight years in case he lost. Both the gems were then subjected to all possible tests. The best gem-assayers and merchants were called in, and one and all of them

gave it as their opinion that the Tûkkuttûkki's gem was immensely superior to the king's. The king thereupon true to his word told the Tûkkuttûkki to take possession of his kingdom.

Now our hero was not a person to be blinded by fortune, as he possessed a good deal of foresight. He thought that he would not be acting rightly if he took upon himself the duties of a king publicly, and he told the king that he was satisfied to be his agent ;—that is, as the king was rather old, he would take upon himself to do all the royal duties in the name of the king. The Tûkkuttûkki was to transact all the royal business, but the king was to sign the papers and appear to manage the State. He agreed to act thus during the lifetime of the old king, and then he was to succeed him. What more could the old king want ? He thanked the youth and named him henceforth “the Young King.” He asked him his parentage, and the now young king Kṛishṇa Singh replied that he was of Royal parentage, but more than this he would not say, asking the old king to excuse him, and saying that everything would be revealed to him in due course. The old king was delighted with Kṛishṇa Singh and wished to be relieved from the burden of the State at once, and agreeably to his wishes King Kṛishṇa Singh took at once upon himself the management of the kingdom of Pushpapura. Thus suddenly, by the caprice of

fortune, the Tûkkuttûkki turned into a king, and henceforth was known as King Kṛishṇa Singh.

In the evening, after the Court was over, King Kṛishṇa Singh started to go to his house in the city, accompanied by the palace band, horses, elephants and other royal paraphernalia as usual, but he forbade any of them to go on with him on the pain of death. Such things, he said, were meant for proud empty-headed kings, and not for persons like himself. All he wanted was to go home as an ordinary man without any pomp. Thus he returned home before the 5th *ghaṭikā* and resumed his duties as a menial! During the night and up to the 10th *ghaṭikā* of the morning he used to act as a servant under the princess and Śellam, and after his dinner he came down, dressed himself like a king and drove to the Court, and there swayed the whole kingdom till the second *ghaṭikā* of evening. This was his routine for several months.

Kṛishṇa Singh had studied the *Rājanîti*²³ so well that he ruled like Brihaspati,²⁴ being just to every one. The people were overjoyed at the justice and impartiality of their young king, and the old king, too, as he had no son, thanked the gods for having sent him one so intelligent and so able to wield the sceptre after him. He treated him very kindly, and had a high regard

²³ A popular book on politics according to Indian notions.

²⁴ The Minister of Indra, the Ruler of the Heavens.

for his merits, but he dared not ask him to disclose his parentage. Thus no one knew where he came from in the morning or where he went to in the evening, and though he attended the Court most punctually, and performed the duties of a king most satisfactorily towards all, from the highest to the lowest, the Ministers of the empire thought it very unfair on them not to know anything about him. They accordingly planned among themselves to go to the East Street in disguise and watch his carriage every evening.

After a while one of them thus found out Krishna Singh's house, as it happened, on the day that the princess took an oil bath in the third storey. Her hair was so long that it touched the surface of the second storey, and Sellain had to anoint her locks one by one. This Minister observed this also, and as it is the usual opinion that beauty and length of the hair go together, he set down the woman bathing inside to be a paragon of beauty, as indeed she was. "Who else should that beauty be but the lady of our revered young king?" thought he, "We should purify ourselves by a sight of her holy presence!" With these thoughts in his head he returned and informed his fellow-ministers of the place of their young king's residence. He also pointed out to them that eyesight was useless to them so long as the Queen—the lady of their young king—

remained unseen by them, explaining to them what he had observed.

Then all the ministers went to the old king and excited his curiosity till he, too, thought that he had been most foolish in not having made himself better acquainted with the young king. He now wished to manage to know more of him without injuring his feelings, as he had found him very stubborn on one or two occasions when he had questioned him about his country and parentage. So the Ministers proposed that they should forge a document to the effect that it was the custom to perform a certain festival called the *Swinging Feast* once a year in the great temple of *Kâli* at *Pushpapura*, insert this document in the records, and explain to the young king that it had not been held for the past few years owing to certain causes, but that, as they had now entered on a new epoch, it ought to be held as before. The document was to say that during this festival the rule was that every man, high and low, from king to beggar, must come and sit along with his wife on a swing to be set up in the great grove opposite the temple of *Kâli*, and there be swung to and fro.

Accordingly such a document was forged with the signature of the old king attached to it, and inserted among the records; the time for the festival becoming due being stated to be about a month hence. The young king

knew nothing about these plans, but he did know that no such festival was in vogue in Pushpapura, because he had previously carefully studied all the records. So when the ministers suddenly spoke to him about the Swinging Feast and asked him to issue the necessary orders for it, he thought within himself that it must be some trick played upon him. "Might it be that some of these Ministers have, after great difficulty, found out my residence and there have caught sight of the princess?" thought he: "Might it be that these people mistaking her for my wife have invented this feast merely in order to get a public view of her? Never mind! Let me satisfy them and thereby establish my claim as husband to Chandramukhi!" With these thoughts in his mind, and begging to be excused for the oversight, he at once issued the necessary orders, and everything was arranged. Meanwhile King Kṛishṇa Singh followed his usual life till the very day fixed for the festival.

It was now nearly a year since the princess left Dhârâpura; and all the while she had been living as a private person without seeing any one except Śellam and the Tûkkuttûkki. "Alas! What a cruel woman I am!" thought she; "I am the only child of my parents, and have left them to their fate, flying away hither. There I lived in all honour: here I am but an ordinary woman! I might have become the queen

of an empire some day if I had remained with my father: now I am ashamed to explain who I am! It is nearly a year since I grew up, and hundreds of princes would have been courting me by this time were I in Dhârâpura; but now I have not even a single prince to seek my hand. Śellam wants me to marry the Tûkkuttûkki. Alas, poor man! How could I marry him when he does not even know that two and two make four! I do wish my father would come in search of me!"

It was about noon when she fell into this reverie and the scorching midday sun together with the uneasiness of her mind produced a sort of head-ache which made her drowsy, when she was suddenly aroused by Śellam with a loud acclamation that her father the emperor had tracked them at last! "I have been thinking about this for the last half *ghaṭikâ*," said the princess. "Has the dream proved true? I have wished it, but still I very much fear the wrath of my father." So the princess, wringing her hands, asked Śellam to explain what she meant. "Does it require an explanation?" said Śellam. "Do not you hear the sounds of the drums and pipes announcing a royal progress? Why should these sounds be heard in this street on this day alone? We have been living here for nearly a year and at no time have we heard such sounds. It is this that makes me think that our emperor is in search of us."

Śellam had scarcely finished speaking when the royal procession stopped at their very gates. Their fears now knew no bounds and the princess changed colour. She asked Śellam to run down at once and see who it was that had alighted at their gates. Śellam ran down and what was her surprise when she found it was the Tûkkutûkki. "Do my eyes deceive me?" she exclaimed: "He was here two *ghaṭikās* ago washing the utensils; and now he comes, dressed like a king! Can my eyes see straight? Are my senses all gone?"

Nevertheless she could not deny that the person sitting on the threshold was the Tûkkutûkki. She ran up and reported to the princess that the king that had come was the satchel-bearer! The pomp with which he had come and the honour paid to him by all that accompanied him instilled a mysterious awe into the mind of the princess, and forsaking her *gôsha* for the time she ran down to meet him just as he was coming up. They met and saluted and she who commanded him till now found in his countenance an unspeakable majesty, which forced her to obey his orders. He adorned her with jewels from head to foot, while she gladly received the honours thrust upon her and asked him to tell her by what good fortune he had become king. He replied that everything would be revealed in time and that she must start without delay to the temple of Kâli for

the Swinging Festival. She could not but obey.

By this time a voice was heard :—“ My dear young king, why are you so late ?” It was the old king calling ! What were the thoughts of the princess now ? The Tûkkuttûkki that had but three or four short *ghaṭikás* ago washed her utensils had become a king, and was being called to in very affectionate terms by the old king ! Wonder of wonders ! she was impatient to ask, but there was no time. So they all started for the temple of Kâli.

As all the preparations for the feast had been made solely in order to get a view of the princess—now the young queen,—the ministers and others had a very good view of her, as she was kept swinging for a very long time in the swing in which she sat with King Kṛishṇa Singh. The old king threw a very valuable pearl *hâra*²⁶ over his new king’s neck. But he who had once had the patience to run for a whole day before the flying horses now found the *hâra* too heavy, so he took it off and hung it on the branch of a tree near the swing. The feast was kept up for a long while and the party did not return till about the second *ghaṭikâ* of the night. All the way home King Kṛishṇa Singh was praised as the noblest and most intelligent of kings. Here and there a petitioner stood forth and said :—
“ Good and gracious king, I have been waiting

²⁶ Garland.

for the whole of the last fortnight, please send me away soon."

The princess could not understand all this. "How was it that he who did not know how to turn to the 11th page was now a king!" thought she. "Let me wait. . Let me wait. It was haste that deprived me of my father." As soon as they reached home the princess asked King Kṛishṇa Singh to relate his story. He said he would take off his *aṅgarakhā* (coat) before telling her, and as he did so to his great vexation he found that he had forgotten the pearl *hāra* that the old king had given him. His face at once changed colour and his wife asked him what was the matter. "I have forgotten the *hāra*!" was his reply, and with that he began to descend hastily. The princess caught his arm and said: "My dear husband, don't you know that I am the daughter of an Emperor? I can get you hundreds of such *hāras*. Don't trouble yourself any more about it. Be quiet and stay here."

Kṛishṇa Singh told her that as she was young and inexperienced she spoke so, and that it was not right for him to neglect a present, even if it were a *kaudī*.²⁷ Besides he would be back in a couple of minutes. The princess proposed sending a servant, but he objected that if they did so the neglect might become known some

²⁷ *Kaudīs* used as money, one *kaudī* being equal to a sixteenth of a pie.

day and vex the old king. So he ran off and reached the grove. It was a very dark night, and a dead silence prevailed in it. Groping his way he crept to the tree on which he had suspended the *hâra*; and put out his right hand to take it. Horror of horrors! A black and hungry serpent that was sitting over it bit him severely and he fell down dead.

Alas! poor Kṛishṇa Singh! There was his newly married wife to whom he had not spoken a word as a husband! There was the old king entirely dependent upon him. He had not had time even to see his father Tan Singh. Poor old emperor, what would his feelings be when he came to know what had happened! Thus, leaving so many people that loved him at the moment of reaping the fruits of his labours, poor Kṛishṇa Singh died! But it was not for ever.

Between the *garbhagriha*²⁵ of the temple of Kâli and the inner chamber of the house of the princess of Pushpapura there was a subterranean passage, through which she used to come daily at midnight and propitiate the deity. That day too she came according to her usual custom and worshipped the goddess. After her prayers were over she requested Kâli to give her a good and noble husband and at once a voice was heard in the sky: "There

²⁵ The inmost shrine of Hindû temples in which the idol is worshipped.

lies a prince in my holy presence. He shall be thy husband." She ran headlong, and instead of a man sleeping she found a lifeless corpse. With the true faith of an affectionate wife she began to weep and wail, and at once another voice was heard: "My child, all this is my trick to prove you. Now that you have so successfully stood the test, return to my holy presence and with a handful of the sacred ashes go to him again, sprinkle them on his face, and request him to rise." She obeyed the orders of the Ambikâ,²⁹ and to her joy the man rose up, when she took hold of his hands and humbly asked him to accompany her home, telling him what had happened.

By this time the princess of Dhârâpura, finding that her husband was not returning, suspected something wrong, and flew to the grove with Śellam. When they reached the temple of Kâli, what did they find but another woman asking his hand! After a while the news of all this reached the ears of the old king, who was very glad to think that a divine order had been given to his daughter to marry the young king. But after having celebrated the Swinging Feast he was unable to deny the right of wifeship to the Dhârâpura princess, and so to avoid all misunderstandings he had them both married to Kṛishṇa Singh.

²⁹ Goddess.

Invitations to the marriage were sent out in all directions. The Emperor of Dhârâpura also, who had by this time come to know everything, proclaimed that he meant to give his daughter Chandramukhî in marriage to King Kṛishṇa Singh in Pushpapura. A closed palanquin, containing nothing, accompanied the female retinue of the Emperor, and in it the princess Chandramukhî was supposed to go to Pushpapura, where the marriage was celebrated with all deserving pomp, for kings bore the marriage palanquins of Kṛishṇa Singh and the two princesses. The Emperor was extremely pleased at the adventures of Kṛishṇa Singh and at his success in having won a kingdom of his own in addition to the empire he got with his wife.

The story is now almost ended, but a word as to what had become of Tan Singh all this while and of the slippers hidden in the temple of Kâli. Tan Singh, as his son had so intelligently prophesied, became poor very soon after Kṛishṇa Singh left him, and with his wife and two other sons was living in a hole and corner, having been by his own foolishness and extravagance reduced to his original condition of poverty. Kṛishṇa Singh had found this out as soon as he reached Pushpapura, but did not like to disturb his own plans by revealing himself just then. However, now that everything was about to be settled, he ordered a palanquin of flowers

to be brought to the temple of Kâli, took the slippers with which his father had beaten him out of the hole, placed them on it and brought them to the palace. He then sent word to his father Tan Singh that the king of the town wanted him with all the members of his family immediately. Tan Singh did not understand what the orders meant, but he was obliged to obey them.

Kṛishṇa Singh at once recognised his parents and brothers, but none of them recognised Kṛishṇa Singh in the young king, so he explained before the whole assembly all about his adventures from the time he had been beaten ; and, pointing to the slippers, he said : " By the good fortune of my father's slippers I am now the husband of princesses. He punished me for having demanded *one*, but as the shoes are a pair they have given me a pair of wives ! "

With these words he prostrated himself before his parents and brothers. They all wept for joy and sorrow, and he at once took them into the palace. King Kṛishṇa Singh after this lived a very long and prosperous life with his two beautiful wives, sometimes in Dhârâpura and sometimes in Pushpapura.

The story has ended, and nothing remains to be told except that Kṛishṇa Singh had a number of sons to console the sonless age of the old King of Pushpapura and of the Emperor of Dhârâpura.

XXI.

BRAHMARAKSHA AND THE HAIR.

In a certain village there lived a very rich landlord, who owned several villages, but was such a great miser that no tenant would willingly cultivate his lands, and those he had gave him not a little trouble. He was, indeed, so vexed with them that he left all his lands untilled and his tanks and irrigation channels dried up. All this, of course, made him poorer and poorer day by day. Nevertheless he never liked the idea of freely opening his purse to his tenants and obtaining their good will. While he was in this frame of mind a learned *sanyâsî* paid him a visit, and on his representing his case to him, the holy man said :—

“ My dear son, I know an incantation (*mantra*) in which I can instruct you. If you repeat it for three months, day and night, a Brahmarâkshasa will appear before you on the first day of the fourth month. Make him your servant and then you can set at nought all your petty troubles with your tenants. The Brahmarâkshasa will obey all your orders and you will find him equal to a hundred servants.”

Our hero fell at his feet and begged to be instructed at once. The sage then sat facing

the East, and his disciple the landlord, facing the West,³⁰ and in this position formal instruction was given, after which the *sanyásí* went his way.

The landlord, mightily pleased at what he had learnt, went on practising the incantation, till, on the first day of the fourth month, the great Brahmarákshasa stood before him.

“What do you want, sir, from my hands?” said he—“what is the object of your having propitiated me for these three months?”

The landlord was thunderstruck at the huge monster that now stood before him and still more so at his terrible voice, but nevertheless he said:—“I want you to become my servant and obey all my commands.”

“Agreed,” answered the Brahmarákshasa in a very mild tone, for it was his duty to leave off his impertinent ways when any one who had performed the required penance wanted him to become his servant; “Agreed. But you must always give me work to do, when one job is finished you must at once give me a second and so on. If you fail I shall kill you.”

The landlord, thinking that he would have work for several such Brahmarákshasas, was pleased to see that his demoniacal servant was

³⁰ This is always the course followed when a *guru* (moral teacher) instructs his *śishya* (disciple) in any *mantra*.

so eager to help him. He at once took him to a large tank which had been dried up for several years, and, pointing to it, spoke as follows :—

“ You see this large tank, you must make it as deep as the height of two palmyra trees and repair the embankment wherever it is broken.”

“ Yes, my master, your orders shall be obeyed,” humbly replied the servant and fell to work.

The landlord, thinking that it would take several months, if not years, to do the work in the tank, for it was two *kós* long and one *kós* broad, returned delighted to his home, where his people were awaiting him with a sumptuous dinner. He enjoyed himself amazingly with his wife, but when it was approaching evening he Brahmarâkshasa came to inform his master that he had finished his work in the tank! He was indeed astonished and feared for his own life!

“ What! finished the work in one day, which I thought would occupy him for months and years; if he goes on at this rate, how shall I keep him employed? And when I cannot find employment for him he will kill me!” Thus he thought and began to weep. His wife wiped the tears that ran down his face, and said :—

“ My dearest husband, you must not lose courage. Get from the Brahmarâkshasa all the work you can and then let me know. I’ll

give him something that will keep him engaged for a very very long time and then he'll trouble us no more."

But her husband only thought her words to be meaningless, and followed the Brahmarâkshasa to see what he had done. Sure enough the thing was as complete as complete could be, so he asked him to plough *all* his lands, which extended over twenty villages! This was done in two *ghatikas*! He next made him to dig and cultivate *all* his dry and garden lands. This was done in the twinkling of an eye! The landlord now grew hopeless.

"What more work have you for me?" roared the Brahmarâkshasa, as he found that his master had nothing for him to do and that the time for his eating him up was approaching.

"My dear friend," said he, "my wife says she has a little job to give you; do it, please, now. I think that that is the last thing I can give you to do, and after it, in obedience to the conditions under which you took service with me, I must become your prey!"

At this moment his wife came to them, holding in her left hand a long hair, which she had just pulled out from her head, and said:—

"Well, Brahmarâkshasa, I have only a very light job for you. Take this hair and when you have made it straight bring it back to me."

The Brahmarâkshasa calmly received it and sat in a *pîpal* tree to make it straight. He rolled it several times on his thigh and lifted it up to see if it had become straight : but no, it would still bend ! Just then it occurred to him that goldsmiths, when they want to make their metal wires straight, have them heated in a fire. So he went to a fire and placed the hair over it, and, of course, it frizzled up with a nasty smell ! He was horrified ! “ What will my master’s wife say if I do not return her the hair she gave me ? ” So he became mightily afraid and ran away !

This story is told to explain the modern custom of nailing a handful of hair to a tree in which devils are supposed to dwell to drive them away.

XXII.

THE BEGGAR AND THE FIVE MUFFINS.

In 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.

One day a poor Mâdhva Brâhmaṇ invited them to a feast, and, among Mâdhvas muffins (*tóśai*) 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 his collection of alms, she was just turning out of the pan the fifth muffin ! 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 understand 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 ?

Proposed the husband :—“ 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 she had none, and with closed eyes 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. Equally watchful was her husband over her.

Thus passed one whole day—two—three! The house was never opened! No beggar came to receive the morning dole. 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,” spoke the greyheads. 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 speculations, 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 of the village 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 firewood from each house for the funeral pyre.³¹ 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 !"

³¹ The village custom in South India when a death occurs in the village.

Immediately another voice replied from the woman's pyre :—

“I have gained the day ; let me have the three !”

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. He then went after the runaways and related to them the whole story of the five muffins to their great amazement.

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 ?

XXIII.

THE BRÁHMAN PRIEST WHO BECAME AN 'AMILDÂR.³

In the Karnâṭadésa there reigned a famous king named Châmuṇḍa, who was served by a household priest, named Guṇḍappa, well versed in all the rituals at which he officiated.

Châmuṇḍa, one day, while chewing betel-leaves, thus addressed Guṇḍappa, who was sitting opposite him:—

“My most holy priest, I am greatly pleased at your faithfulness in the discharge of your sacred duties; and you may ask of me now what you wish and I shall grant your request.”

The priest in his elation replied: “I had always a desire to become the '*ámildâr*'⁴ of a district and to exercise power over a number of people; and if Your Majesty should grant me this I have attained my ambition.”

“Agreed,” said the king, and as at that time the '*ámildârship*' of Nañjaṅgôḍ happened to be vacant, His Majesty at once appointed his priest to the post, thinking that a priest, who was so intelligent in his duties, would do well

³ A Kanarese tale related by a *risâldâr*.

⁴ A chief revenue officer.

on the new post. Before he sent him off, however, he gave Guṇḍappa three bits of advice :—

- (1). *Mukha kappage irabēku.*
- (2). *Ellāru keviannu kachchi mātān āḍu.*
- (3). *Ellār juṭṭu kayyalī irabēku.*

Meaning :—

(1). You should always keep a black (*i.e.* frowning) countenance.

(2). When you speak about State affairs you should do it biting the ear (*i.e.* secretly—close to the ear).

(3). The locks of all the people must be in your hand (*i.e.* you must use your influence and make every one subservient to you).

Guṇḍappa attended carefully to the advice so kindly given by the king, and the way in which he listened to it made His Majesty understand that he had taken it to heart. So with a smiling face the king gave the letter containing the appointment to Guṇḍappa, who returned home with a happy heart.

He told his wife about the change that had come over his prospects, and wished to start at once to take charge of the new post. The king and his officers at once sent messengers to Nañjaṅgôḍ informing the officers of the 'āmildārī there that a newly appointed 'āmildār would be coming soon. So they all waited near the gate of the town to pay their respects to the new 'āmildār and escort him into it.

Guṇḍappa started the very next morning to Nañjaṅgôḍ with a bundle containing clean clothes, six and twelve cubits long, on his head. Poor priest! Wherever he saw the *kuśa* grass on the road, he was drawn to it by its freshness, and kept on storing it up all the way. The sacred grass had become so dear to him, that, though he would have no occasion to use it as 'āmildār of Nañjaṅgôḍ, he could not pass by it without gathering some of it. So with his bundle of clothes on his head and his beloved *kuśa* grass in his hands Guṇḍappa approached the city of Nañjaṅgôḍ about the twentieth *ghatikā* of the day.

Now, though it was very late in the day none of the officers who had come out to receive the 'āmildār had returned home to his meal. Every one was waiting in the gate, and when Guṇḍappa turned up, no one took him to be anything more than a priest. The bundle on his head and the green ritual grass in his hands proclaimed his vocation. But every one thought that, as a priest was coming by the very road the 'āmildār would take, he might bring news of him—whether he had halted on the road or might be expected before the evening. So the officer next in rank to the 'āmildār came to the most reverend priest and asked him whether he had any news of the coming 'āmildār; on which our hero put down his bundle and taking the cover out

of it—containing the order of his appointment with a handful of *kuśa* grass, lest his clothes be polluted if he touched them with his bare hands, informed his subordinate that he was himself the 'āmildār!

All those assembled were astonished to find that such a stupid priest was appointed to so responsible a post, but when it was made known that Guṇḍappa was the new 'āmildār the customary music was played, and he was escorted in a manner due to his position into the town. He had been fasting from the morning, and a grand feast was prepared for him in the house of the next senior official, which Guṇḍappa entered to dine and take rest. He there informed the officials that he would be at the office at the 25th *ghaṭikā* of the evening. From the way in which he issued the order all thought that he was really an able man, and that he had come in the guise of a simple priest in order to find out the real state of his district. So every officer went home, bathed, ate his meal in haste and attended at the office.

The chief assistant took the 'āmildār to his house, and entertained his guest as became his position. Guṇḍappa, being a priest, was a very good eater, for never for a day in his life he had spent money out of his own pocket on meals, so what reason had he to enquire about the price of provisions? It was at

the expense of others he had grown so fat ! After doing more than full justice to all the good things, much to the secret amusement of his host and assistant, Guṇḍappa rose up from his food, and washed his hands. He then wanted betel-leaves, though to ask for these before the host offers them is very impolite. But his subordinate interpreted it as an order from a master and brought the platter containing the necessary nutmeg, mace, nuts, leaves, and *chunam* (lime).

Where is the *dakshina*?⁵ next asked the 'āmildār. His host did not quite understand whether this was meant in earnest or in joke, but before he could solve the question in his mind:—

“Where is the *dakshina*?” reiterated the 'āmildār, and his assistant, thinking that his new superior was prone to taking bribes, at once brought a bag containing 500 *mohars* and placed it in the platter. Now, a *dakshina* to a Brâhmaṇ is not usually more than a couple of rupees; but should an 'āmildār ask for one his assistant would naturally mistake him, and think he was hinting at a bribe !

Guṇḍappa, greatly pleased at a princely *dakshina* such as he had never seen before in all his life, at once opened the bag and counted out every gold piece in it, carefully tying them up

⁵ *Dakshina* (fee given in donation to Brâhmaṇs) is ordinarily given to priests after feasting them.

in his bundle. He then began to chew his betel, and at one gulp swallowed up all the nutmeg and mace in the platter! These acts made his assistant strongly suspect the real nature of the new 'ámildár; but then there was the order of the king, and it must be obeyed!

Guṇḍappa next asked his assistant to go on in advance of him to the office, saying that he would be there himself in a *ghaṭiká*. The assistant accordingly left a messenger to attend on the 'ámildár, and being very anxious to see things in good order left his house for the office.

Guṇḍappa now remembered the three bits of advice given by the king, the first of which was that he should always put on when in office, a black countenance. Now he understood the word "black" in its literal sense and not in its allegorical one of "frowning," and so, going into the kitchen he asked for a lump of charcoal paste. When this was ready he **blackened the whole of his face** with it, and covering his face with his cloth,—as he was ashamed to show it,—entered the office. With his face thus blackened and partly covered with a cloth the new 'ámildár came and took his seat. Now and then he would remove the cloth from his eyes to see how his officers were working, and meanwhile all the clerks and others present were laughing in their sleeves at the queer conduct of their chief.

The evening was drawing to a close, and

there were certain orders to be signed. So taking them all in his hand the assistant approached the *'ámildár* and stood at a respectful distance. Guṇḍappa, however, asked him to come nearer, and nearer the assistant came.

“Still nearer,” said Guṇḍappa, and nearer still came the assistant.

The second bit of advice from the king now rushed into the *'ámildár's* mind that he should bite the ears of his officials when he enquired into State affairs, and as Guṇḍappa's want of sense always made him take what was said literally, he opened his mouth and **bit the ear of his assistant**, while in a muffled voice he asked him whether all his people enjoyed full prosperity! The assistant, now in very fear of his life, roared out that all the people were in the fullest prosperity. But Guṇḍappa would not let go his ear till the poor assistant had roared out the answer more than twenty times. The assistant's ear soon began to swell enormously, and leaving the office in disgust, he started to report to the king the insane acts of the new *'ámildár*.

Two out of the three bits of advice from the king had now been duly obeyed, but the third—that the locks of all the people must be in his hands—remained unfulfilled, and Guṇḍappa wished to carry out that also quickly. Night had now set in, and as the *'ámildár* still remained in his seat all his officers were

compelled to do the same. In this way the tenth *ghaṭiká* of the night approached, and still the *'ámildár* would not get up, but sat with his black face secured in his cloth, now and then peeping out to see whether they were all asleep or awake. The fact was he was waiting for an opportunity to have all the locks of his officers in his hands! As soon as all his officers fell asleep he intended to cut off all their locks, understanding as usual the words of the king in their literal sense! At about midnight, never dreaming of the stupid act that the *'ámildár* was contemplating in his mind, every one fell asleep, and Guṇḍappa rose up and with a pair of scissors cut off all the locks of his officers. He then tied them all up in a bundle and returned to his assistant's house late at night, where the servants gave him something to eat; after which he started with his bag of *mohars* and bundle of locks to his king to inform him of how well he had obeyed his orders!

In the early morning he reached the presence of His Majesty only a *nimisha* (minute) after the assistant had arrived. Seeing the *'ámildár* the poor wretch was too afraid to lodge any complaint, but his swollen ear drew the attention of every eye in the assembly.

Guṇḍappa now stood before the king with the charcoal still on his face and said:—

“Most noble king, you ordered me to blacken

my face for my new duties. See, I have not even yet removed the dye! You ordered me next only to speak while biting an ear. Look, please, at my assistant's ear, who stands before you and tell me whether I have not obeyed you!! And as for having the locks of my officers in my hands; why here they are in this bundle!!!

Never before had the king seen an instance of such remarkable stupidity, and the thought that Guṇḍappa had shorn so many respectable heads of their locks, and had really bitten the ear of a worthy gentleman, brought much shame to his heart. He begged the pardon of the injured man and from that day forward was ever careful in the choice of his officers! Poor Guṇḍappa was dismissed even from the priestship, and his belly grew lean from having no longer the privilege of eating rich food at another's cost!

XXIV.

THE GARDENER'S CUNNING WIFE.

In a certain village there lived with his wife a poor gardener, who cultivated vegetables in a small patch in the backyard of his house. They were in thirty little beds, half of which he would water every day. This occupied him from the fifth to the fifteenth *ghatiká*.

His wife used to cut a basketful of vegetables every evening, and he took them in the mornings to sell in the village. The sale brought him a measure or two of rice, and on this the family lived! If he could manage any extra work of an evening he got a few coppers, which served to meet their other expenses.

Now, in that village there was a temple to Kâlî, before which was a fine tank with a mango tree on its bank. **The fish in the tank and the mangoes from the tree were dedicated to the goddess, and were strictly forbidden to the villagers.** If any one was discovered cutting a mango or catching a fish he was at once excommunicated from the village. So strict was the prohibition.

The gardener was returning home one morning after selling his vegetables and passed

by the temple. The mangoes, so carefully guarded by religious protection, were hanging on the tree in great numbers, and the gardener's eyes fell on them! His mouth watered. He looked round about him, and fortunately there was no one by, at least, as far as his eyes could reach. So he hastily **plucked one of the mangoes** and with nimble feet descended into the tank to wash it. Just then a most charming shoal of fish met his eyes. These protected dwellers in the tank had no notion of danger, and so were frolicking about at their ease. The gardener looked about him first and finding no one by **caught half a dozen stout fish** at one plunge of his hand. He hid them and the mango underneath the rice in his basket and returned home, happy in the thought that he had not been caught. Now he had a special delight in fish, and when he reached his house he showed what he brought to his wife and asked her to prepare a dish with the newly caught fish and the never-till-then tasted mango.

Meanwhile he had to water his garden, and went to the back yard for the purpose. The watering was done by a *pikóta*. He used to run up and down the pole while a friend of his, the son of his neighbour, lifted the water and irrigated the garden.

Meanwhile his wife **cooked the dish** of mango and fish in a pan, and found the flavour

so sweet that even while the dish was only half cooked she began to taste one bit after another till more than half had already gone down her throat! The dish was at last cooked and the few remaining slices in the pan were taken off the fire, so she went into the verandah and from thence saw her husband running up and down the *pikôta*. She beckoned to him that the dish was ready and that he should come in and taste it. However, he never noticed her, but kept on running up and down the *pikôta*, and while doing so he was obliged to wave his hands about, and this his wife mistook as an indication that she might eat up her portion of the dish. At any rate her imagination made her think so; and she went in and ate a slice, and then went out into the verandah again to call her husband, who was still running up and down the *pikôta*. Again, her husband, so she thought, waved his hands in permission to go on with her dinner. Again she went in and had another slice. Thus it went on for a full *ghatikâ* till the last slice was consumed!

“Alas!” thought she, “With what great eagerness my husband fetched the fish and the mango and how sadly, out of greediness, have I disappointed him! Surely his anger will know no bounds when he comes in. I must soon devise some means to save myself.”

So, she brought the pan in which she cooked

the fish and mango out of the house and covered it with another pan of similar size and sat down before it. Then she undid her hair and twisted it about her head until it was dishevelled. She then began to make a great noise. This action by a woman in an illiterate family of low caste is always supposed to indicate a visitation from a goddess or a demon : so when her husband from the *pikôta* tree saw the state of his wife, his guilty conscience smote him. The change in his wife alarmed him, and he came down suddenly and stood before her. As soon as she saw him she roared out at him :—

“Why have you injured me to-day by plundering my mango and fish? How dare you do such an irreligious act? You shall soon see the results of your impertinence!”

“The goddess has come upon my wife most terribly,” thought the poor man. “Her divine power may soon kill her! What shall I do?”

So he fell at the feet of the divine visitation, as he thought it to be, and said: “My most holy goddess, your dog of a servant has this day deviated from the straight path. Excuse him this time, and he will never do so a second time.”

“Run then with the pan which contains the results of your sin and dip it deep into my tank. Then shall the fish become alive and the mango shall take its place in the tree.”

The gardener received the order most submissively, and taking the pan in his hand flew to the tank. There he dipped it in the water and came back to his house fully believing that his sin that day had been forgiven, and that the cooked fish had become alive again and the mango a living one. Thus did the **cunning wife** save herself from her husband's wrath !

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By

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OPINIONS OF THE PRESS

FOLKLORE IN SOUTHERN INDIA.

PARTS I. AND II.

THE researches of Captain R. C. Temple and other specialists have awakened quite a lively interest in Indian folklore. Some very curious and interesting popular stories, illustrative chiefly of the sources of Tamil proverbs, are collected by Mr. Natesa Sastri in two little books entitled *Folklore of Southern India* (Trübner & Co.) In some of these the element of grotesque is exceedingly striking.—*The Saturday Review*, July 17, 1886.

THE increasing importance of the study of folklore is being illustrated on all hands at the present day. Its value in the elucidation of obscure myths and customs has been recently shown by Mr. Andrew Lang, who along with a wide philological knowledge possesses an intimate acquaintance with the folklore of many countries. Every independent worker, therefore, is doing valuable service in working up material for the generalization of the scholar. We congratulate Mr. Natesa Sastri on having begun this study, and we trust that the little volumes already published may be but the first fruits of a wider investigation. Comparatively little has been done in Southern India—a country which, with its numerous and hindering customs, should be a rich mine for many investigators. The study is one which can hardly be regarded as the province of the foreigner, —it is especially suited for the natives themselves; and of the many graduates who are passing annually through our University, some might well take up this subject, and carry on what the author of these volumes has begun.

The little stories are well told, and written with an almost thorough mastery of English. They are twelve in all, some of them giving the origin of Tamil proverbs and customs. One of the most interesting is the one told as explanatory of the custom prevalent among the Brahmins "of leaving their food uneaten when it so happens that from any cause the light is blown out;" another is that shedding light on the proverb, "Charity alone conquers;" while a third is related as the explanation of the proverb, "Little by little the mother-in-law became an ass." Space prevents our quoting any of the passages.—*The Madras Christian College Magazine*, May 1886. Vol. III.

WE owe an apology to the author of the abovementioned books for not noticing earlier his admirable renderings of the household stories current in Southern India. These stories are the truest embodiments of the native wit and wisdom that are more common and widespread in Hindu households than is ordinarily imagined, and a glance over them will give a very correct view of the inner life of the middle class Hindu household, its sense of humour, its incisive intelligence, the gentle lights and shades, and the mild frictions that chequer its otherwise unruffled course, the innocent and artless pleasures and festivities in which it delights, the essential simplicity that characterises its internal and external relations, and the thousand and one national idiosyncracies which pass in delightful panorama before the eyes of the delighted reader of these tales of fact in fiction. Any attempt on our part to summarise any of these tales would prove a thankless task, for not only have we no faith in such summaries, but they would take away from the acute pleasure and the astonished delight which these tales are sure to extort even from the most prejudiced reader. To its intrinsic merits the publishers have added those of good type and glazed paper. Europeans especially who are interested in India should be thankful for such an opportunity of learning some-

thing genuine about Hindu modes of feeling and living, and to such Europeans we confidently recommend a perusal of those delightful volumes which have won for Pandit Natesa Sastri the honour of being the only Hindu Member of the London Folklore Society.—*The Hindu*, Oct. 1886.

THE work which is now in the course of publication at Bombay by Pandit S. M. Natesa Sastri, of the Government Archæological Survey, under the title of *Folklore in Southern India* (Trübner and Co.), and of which the second part has recently appeared, will answer still more nearly to what they require. It appears to be a very genuine interpretation of the stories current among Tamil villagers, and, although not attractive to juvenile readers, nor always to be recommended to them, will be prized by students who wish for Indian tales exactly as they are told by natives.—*The Athenæum*, No. 3065, July 24, 1886.

UNDER the title of *Folklore in Southern India* a Native Scholar, Mr. S. M. Natesa Sastri, has commenced the publication of a collection of Tamil Popular Tales.

The two parts already published contain twelve stories. The work appears to be of a very genuine nature, and it is likely to be highly prized by all who wish to render themselves familiar with Indian thoughts and feeling.—*The Academy*, No. 741, July 17, 1886.

CONTRIBUTIONS to the published folklore of any nation are always valuable. In every country it is to the fables, the household tales, and the common songs of the people that we must look for the earliest and the most trustworthy manifestations of the people's real thoughts and characteristics. * * * * The difficulty of getting at the genuine feelings and thought of the people through the formidable barrier of Brahmanical influence is what makes contributions to the folklore of this country

especially valuable. Small, therefore, though the two little volumes of *Folklore in Southern India* published by Mr. Pandit Natesa Sastri be, they are welcome as a right step in the direction of unearthing and recording primitive stories popularly obtaining in different parts of the country. * * * *—*The Madras Mail*, March 1886.

WE have here two instalments of what bids fair to prove a most useful as well as highly entertaining collection of Hindu folktales, which the Pandit Natesa Sastri has been contributing to the *Indian Antiquary* during the past few years. A goodly portion of both the literary and the traditionary popular fictions of Indian countries has already been rendered accessible to English readers; but these fields are of vast extent, and much yet remains unexplored. In the former class are: Professor Tawney's complete translation of the *Katha Sarit Sagara*, "Ocean of the Streams of Story"—composed in Sanskrit verse, in the latter part of the eleventh century, by Somadeva, after a similar work, now apparently lost, entitled *Vrihat Katha*, "The Great Story," written in the sixth century, by Gunadhya; translations from the Buddhist *Jatakas*, or Birth-Stories, by Dr. Rhys Davids (Trübner), the Lord Bishop of Colombo (*Transactions of the Ceylon Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*), and the Rev. Dr. R. Moriss (in this *Journal*); and one Sanskrit version of the celebrated Fables of Bidpai, the *Hitopadesa*; but an English translation of the more important text, the *Panchatantra*, is greatly to be desired. Of the traditionary class of Indian Folk-Tales, we have such useful collections as Miss Frere's *Old Deccan Days*; Miss Stokes' *Indian Fairy Tales*; the Rev. Lál Bahári Day's *Folk-Tales of Bengal*; Steel and Temple's *Wide-Awake Stories*, from the Panjab and Kashmir; two volumes of Captain Temple's valuable *Legends of the Punjab*, &c.

And now English students of comparative folklore will cordially welcome this interesting collection of the

popular fictions of Southern India, in which may be found the sources of similar tales current in Ceylon. The first story is of "Two Deaf Men and a Traveller," and is related with considerable humour: the blunders made by deaf folks in endeavouring to conceal their "infirmity are favourite subjects of the popular tales of Europe as well as of Asia; thus, for instance, the Norse tale of "Goodman Axeshaft" has its close parallel in a Persian story-book. In the tale of "The Sootheayer's Son" (pp. 12—34) we find a singular variant of a world-wide apologue, of which well-known versions occur in the *Gesta Romanorum*, and Gower's *Confessio Amantis*: a traveller rescues a serpent, a monkey, a tiger and a man from a deep pit into which they had fallen; the man afterwards attempts to cause the death of his benefactor; but the animals testify their gratitude by gifts, and by extricating him from the ungrateful man's snare. The Buddhist original of this fine story will be found in the *Saccankira Jataka*, translated by Dr. Morris, *Folklore Journal*, Vol. III. pp. 348—353. The tale entitled "Charity alone conquers" (pp. 63—83), which bears evident traces, we think, of Buddhist extraction, is a Tamil version of another very widely-diffused story. It is own brother (as Baring-Gould would say) to the Norse tale of "True and Untrue"; the German tale of "The Three Crows" (in Grimm); the Portuguese tale of "The Poor Muleteer"; the Persian tale of "Khayr (i.e., Good) and his comrade Shar (Evil)"; and the Arabian tale of "Abù Niyyût and Abù Niyyûtin" (the Well-intentioned and the Evil-intentioned), which occurs in a MS. text of the *Thousand and One Nights*, preserved in the Bodleian Library, Oxford. In the diverting story of "Appayya" (pp. 104—115) folklorists will readily recognise a variant of the German tale of "The Brave Little Tailor" (in Grimm); the Chilian tale of "Don Juan Bolmodron" (*Folklore Journal*, Vol. III. p. 293), which is of Spanish extraction; the tale of "Fattù the Valiant Weaver," in *Wide-Awake Stories*, and a host of others. The third adventure of the hero of the Norse tale, "Not a Pin to

choose between them"—the Three Noodles—and that of his Italian cousin, in Miss Busk's *Folklore of Rome*, in which he persuades a simple-minded goody that he has come straight from Paradise, have their counterpart in the story of "The Good Wife and the Bad Husband" (pp. 131—135), especially the Norwegian version; from which it is probable was derived the Sinhalese folk-tale translated in *The Orientalist*, 1884, Vol. I. p. 62. We trust we have in the foregoing notes sufficiently indicated the general character of this new collection of Indian popular fictions, which cannot fail, we are confident, to be eminently serviceable to students of the science of comparative folklore, and to amuse, and even instruct, general readers. The two fasciculi before us are well printed and in a handy form, and we hope the work will soon be completed.—Mr. W. A. Clouston, Editor of *The Book of Sindibad, Bakhtyar Nama, Arabian Poetry for English Readers, &c. Popular Tales and Fiction: their Migrations and Transformations. Folklore Journal, London. Vol. IV. 1886.*

UNDER the above title we have received from Mr. Natesa Sastri a small collection of Indian Fables which forcibly call to mind the legendary tales with which bright memories of our early years are stored. The tales contained in this little hook, however, differ considerably in one respect from those with which our youthful hours over the home fire-side were beguiled. Both alike amuse, and yet point a moral or proclaim a truth, but these fairy tales of an Eastern land, unlike our own, have blended with them peculiar mythological allusions which lend them piquancy. The East has ever been the home of legendary lore, but unfortunately ignorance of the language of this country on our part, and of ours on the part of the native, has for some time prevented the European from learning the style of fairy tale with which the Indian grand-dame beguiles the evening hour, seated among her dusky offspring, or the way-side

improvisator rivets the attention of the passer-by with his stories of quaint imagery, and half historical, half fictitious, or half probable and half improbable tales. It is the love of the marvellous, with which the Eastern mind is so deeply-imbued, that has to a great extent clouded the early history of this land. To trace the story of the good old days when Pandya and Chola strove for mastery in Southern India is, owing to this, rendered well-nigh impossible. So intimately are copious myths blended with a little truth, that history has degenerated into fable, even in times so recent that in European history they seem but as yesterday. The little book before us goes far to show to the English reader what has hitherto been a closed book to many, the style of fiction which has thus impregnated the history of this part of the world. Historical allusions there are, but all blended, as we have said, with myth forming a quaint whole. In many instances the origin of proverbs and the reasons for certain Hindu customs are explained. Thus in one story we learn the legend on account of which the Brahman will not eat his food in the dark, while another explains the origin of the Tamil proverb, "Charity alone conquers." The English in which the tales are written is very good, and seldom does the author betray that the language in which he writes is any other than his own mother-tongue. We find in it few indeed of those Indian peculiarities of language or composition from which native productions are seldom free. It is throughout most readably written, and we should strongly recommend any one who takes an interest in the literature of the East to peruse its fairy tales.—
The Madras Times.

It is due to the patient researches of a class of *savants* and investigators that the folklore of so many countries constitute an agreeable part of the literature of the world. Men of the highest intellect have addressed themselves, with more or less credit, to the task of

collecting those legendary tales, myths, and similar things founded on some incident or tradition about which there is no historic certainty, and which are coloured by the glow of an imagination that runs riot. Every nationality in India has its folklore, but it is only a small part of it that has been explored and brought to light, and there yet remains a large field for the industry of those who will take the trouble to discover the sort of legends that are retailed and believed in by the great mass of the people, legends the recital of which in prose or verse amuse the untutored fancy in numberless households or on the way-side. The late Mr. Gover published a work giving an interesting account of the Folklore in the Madras Presidency, and especially that in vogue among the Tamil-speaking population. Had he not been cut off in the prime of life and from amidst his useful municipal labours, this work would have been greatly extended. We have received a brochure of eighty-three pages, entitled *Folklore in Southern India* by a learned Pandit (S. M. Natesa Sastri) of the Madras Presidency, employed in the Government Archæological Survey. It is written in English in a pleasing manner, and is only the first part of the tales that make up the folklore in Southern India.—*The Madras Standard*.

PANDIT S. M. NATESA SASTRI, *Folklore in Southern India*. Parts I-II. (Bombay, 1884-86) London, Trübner u. Co. in Comm. 135 S. 12mo. Rup. 2.

Von den verschiedenen Volksstämmen, welche Indien bewohnen, hat ein jeder seine eigentümlichen Erzählungen, Märchen, Legenden und Fabeln, welche für jedermann von Interesse sein müssen, der in die eigenartige Cultur jenes Landes, in das Leben und Treiben des Volkes tiefer hinsinzublicken Lust hat. Der Schatz dieser volksmässigen Erzählungen des Inderlandes ist bisjetzt nur zu einem kleinen Theile gehoben, aber es scheint, dass diese Arbeit gegenwärtig an mehreren Punkten zugleich in Angriff genommen wird. Ein grösseres, wertvolles Werk des Captain R. C. Temple

bringt uns in zwei Bänden "the legends of the Panjáb" (Bombay, 1886), und das vorliegende Buch des Pandit S. M. Naṭéśa Sâstrî macht uns mit einer Reihe von Volkserzählungen aus dem südlichen Indien bekannt, die in der tamulisch sprechenden Bevölkerung cursieren. Die erste Hälfte des Werkchens, welches im ganzen 12 Erzählungen enthält, erschien bereits im Jahre 1884, die zweite folgte in diesem Jahre. Manche dieser Erzählungen sind anziehend durch echt volkmässigen; Humor; einige sind mehr märchenhaft (z. B. das Brahmanenmädchen, welches einen Tiger heiratete; und die Geschichte von Appayya); andere kommen zu moralischen Schlussfolgerungen (z. B. Herr Stark-mit-dem-Mund und Herr Stark-mit-der-Hand; Güte allein trägt den Sieg davon); einige dienen zur Begründung bestimmter Sitten (z. B. "Warum die Brahmanen nicht im Dunkeln essen können") und namentlich oft von Redensarten, die im Volke üblich sind (z. B. die Geschichte von den drei tauben Menschen; Herr Will-nicht-geben und Herr Will-nicht-ablassen; die Schwiegermutter wird ein Esel u. dgl. m.); in andere endlich scheinen historische Züge verwebt zu sein (z. B. in die Geschichte von Raṇavîrasing). Das Englisch, in welchem der Verf.—ein geborener Inder—seine Geschichten erzählt, ist schon von der Madras Times und dem Madras Standard wegen seiner Reinheit und Vortrefflichkeit gelobt worden. Wir können nur wünschen, dass derartige Beiträge zur Kenntniss der volkmässigen Erzählungen der Inder, und zwar womöglich aus allen Teilen des grossen Landes, noch in recht grosser Anzahl an die Oeffentlichkeit kommen möchten. Wissenschaftlich gebildete Eingeborene werden vielleicht dei besten Sammler sein.

Dorpat.

L. V. SCHROEDER.

Translation.

Of the different races which inhabit India each one has its own peculiar tales, fables, legends and fairy-

tales, which must have an interest for any one who wishes to look further into the ways and life of the people of that country. The treasure of these popular tales of India has till now been only revealed in a very small measure, but it appears that this work is at present being attacked from various sides. A large valuable work of Captain R. C. Temple brings us in two volumes "The Legends of the Punjab" (Bombay, 1886), and the book which lies before us by Pandit S. M. Natesa Sastri makes us acquainted with a quantity of popular tales from the South of India which are current amongst the Tamil-speaking populations. The first half of this little work which altogether contains 12 tales, appeared in the year 1884, the 2nd followed in this one. Many of these stories are very attractive through their popular humour; some are mere fairy-tales (for example, the Brahmin Girl who marries a tiger and the story of Appayya); others have moral meanings (for example, Mr. Mighty with the mouth and Mr. Mighty with the hand: kindness alone carries off the victory therein); others again serve as the establishment of certain customs (for example, why the Brahmins will not eat in the dark); and again to illustrate figures of speech which are customary amongst the masses (for example, the story of The Three Deaf Men, Mr. Will-not-give and Mr. Will-not-leave, How the Mother-in-law became an Ass, &c.); finally in others historical features seem to be interwoven (for example, in the story of Ranavirasing). The English in which the author—a native of India—tells his tales has already been praised in the *Madras Times* and the *Madras Standard* on account of its purity and excellence. We can only wish that such contributions should know acquaintance with the popular tales of India, and indeed, if possible, from all parts of that great country should still come to light in great numbers. Learned, educated natives will probably be the best collectors.

Dorpat.

L. V. SCHROEDER.

THE DRAVIDIAN NIGHTS.

In July last year we had the pleasure of reviewing the first and second parts of Mr. Natesa Sastri's *Folklore in Southern India*, and we have now before us another translation from the Tamil, by the same Pandit, of a work which can be known to very few of our members, and which should possess no little interest for story comparers, and indeed all who are devoted to the study of the history of fiction. One important result of Mr. Natesa Sastri's translations from the Tamil must be to give another and telling blow to the theory of our European popular tales being the exclusive property of the Aryan race. They also seem to show, as it seems to us, the marked influence of the Tamil on the Buddhist literature of Ceylon and, in fact, suggest new questions as to the origin and diffusion of tales and apologues current throughout the whole of the Indian Peninsula.

Like nearly all Asiatic story-books, *The Dravidian Nights*, as the learned translator happily entitles the English rendering of the Tamil romance *Madana Kama Raja Kadai*, consists of a general, or leading story, within which are spliced or interwoven a series of tales, more or less appropriate to the circumstances which led to their narration.

* * * * *

* * * All students of folklore and of romantic fiction cannot fail to find this work very useful, and all lovers of fairy tales must be delighted with it from the beginning to the happy end. Considering that English is a foreign language to Mr. Natesa Sastri, the translation is on the whole very good, and we hope soon to hear of a new edition being required, the present one being, we understand, rather limited.—*The Folklore Society Journal, London. Vol. V. 1887.*

TOPOGRAPHICAL NOTES ON KANCHI.

WE notice with pleasure an interesting pamphlet of Pandit Natesa Sastriyar, the well-known author of the

Folklore of Southern India, entitled "Topographical notes on Kanchi." He gives a good description of the various temples in and about that ancient and historical town of Conjeeveram, and their probable ages, as denoted by the style of architecture and inscriptions. He classes these temples under three heads: the Pallava, the early Chola, and the later Chola. Of these the Pallava temples are the oldest, some of them being as old as the 7th century A.D. To this group belongs the temple of Kailasanatha. The most famous temples of Ekambara and Kamakshiamman belong to the 2nd period. The present temple of Varadaraja Perumal in what is misnamed as little Kanchi belongs to the last period, though it has been much altered and repaired, and bears considerable marks of the Vijianagar style of architecture. The old name of little Kanchi was Tiruvattiyur (fig-town or elephant-town) and contained originally a Saivite shrine which during the Vijianagar rule was converted into a Vishnu pagoda. The proofs that the Pandit adduces for this last assertion are many and various, and the time (a year and-a-half) which he has spent in Kanchi has not been in vain. We wish the Pandit would give us more of his researches and would continue to be useful in the new field which he has struck out for himself.—*The Hindu*.

