



1903

ROMANTIC TALES

FROM THE

PANJÂB

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY NATIVE HANDS

COLLECTED AND EDITED FROM ORIGINAL SOURCES

BY

THE REV. CHARLES SWYNNERTON, F.S.A.

Senior Chaplain to the Indian Government (retd.)

AUTHOR OF

"INDIAN NIGHTS' ENTERTAINMENT."



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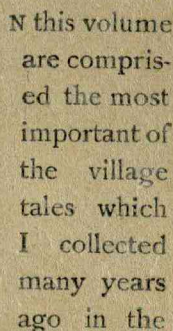
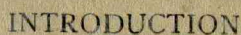


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INTRODUCTION

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neighbourhood of Attock on the Upper Indus. They were the stories of the people, of the professional bards or of the common villagers, as told by themselves, and they have been translated without any conscious embellishment. They were gathered at odd times and in different places, as the exigencies of the public service permitted, during two or three successive cold seasons, and of many a winter's night they were veritably the entertainment, when, after duty was over for the day, and dinner had been duly



despatched, we lighted our pipes and sat listening and scribbling, while a group of Muhammadan story-tellers, squatting on the floor within glow of our log-fire, enjoyed the pleasant hours quite as much as ourselves.

In this introduction I should like to describe the circumstances under which these tales were discovered, and then to point out certain elements which they possess in common with the stories and fables so familiar to us in classic mythology and biblical legend. But questions of deeper moment I must forego—as, for instance, the scientific value of these old-world tales, and, again, whether they are the survival of a stock once the exclusive property of one original tribe, whether they originated with the few and have been carried far and wide to the many, or whether, allowing for inevitable modifications, they sprang up independently in various centres as if on some principle of spontaneous generation, according to the observed tendency of the human mind to follow similar lines whatever the accidental environment may be—these and similar questions and the resolution of them, I would leave to those of my fellow-countrymen, who know not the penalties of exile, and who are accounted mighty to discern the origins of things vague, mysterious and legendary.

Of the household stories of the people of the Upper Panjâb by far the most popular are (1) the story of Hîr and Rânjha, and (2) the Legend of Rasâlu. To these might perhaps be added (3) the Love-tale of Mîrza and Sâhibânâh, and (4) the story of the immaculate Pûran Bhagat, Rasâlu's half-brother, both of which are also included in this volume.

The long story of Hîr and Rânjha I picked up at Dامتاور, close to Abbottâbâd in the Hazâra District, and in this wise came I across it.

Riding one day along the mountain-road that leads from Abbottâbâd to the village of Bagnôta perched high over



the precipitous sides of the Dhôr, I turned aside at Damtaur, intent on the acquisition of Graco-Bactrian coins, which a few years ago were plentiful enough over the whole of that once classic region, and entered the narrow tortuous streets of the village. It was evening and the warm air was throbbing with pulsations of mellow golden sunlight which flashed over the low gables of the cottages and smote the brown sides of the surrounding peaks with colour rendered the more brilliant and satisfying by reason of the depth and the warmth of the shadows between. As I advanced I could distinguish the rhythmical beating of a tom-tom varied with the strains of a *suringa* and now and then the vociferous singing of some professional bard. These things told me of festival, they proclaimed the fact that the whole village was *en fête* in honour of the nuptials of some dusky maiden who had been solemnly handed over to the custody of a lord and master of age as tender almost as her own. And, in point of fact, when I arrived at the open space in front of the *hujra*, or general guest-house, I found assembled there a company of the wedding-guests, all of the nobler sex, who were standing or squatting under a huge *pipal*-tree, listening to the black-bearded minstrel, Sher, son of Mîrza, whose fame abounded over all that country side. What was the legend? It was the thrilling adventures of Râja Rasâlu, Panjâb paladin without a peer, and I was just in time before dismounting to catch the hero's last dying speech, which, being in verse, was duly sung to the scraping of an ancient family viol, when his auditors, greedy for more, set up the cry—"Hîr and Rânjha! Hîr and Rânjha! O excellent *mîrâsî*, tell us the story of Hîr and Rânjha!"

Simple men are easily moved, and the mention of that simple story of hapless and triumphant love brought up many a straggler. The idlers in the rude verandahs around moved nearer to the original group; from the shadows of



blank walls and places unknown emerged several grey-beards, casting their cotton togas about their stately forms as they approached; timid-faced girls, darkly-veiled, gazed from house-tops, or peeped from neighbouring doors; and some staid matrons, returning home with pitchers of river-water on their graceful heads, shyly came to a halt between sunlight and shade, if so be they might catch fragments of a love-tale which, to their ears especially, though ever old, was ever new. It was a remarkable scene, and, moreover, a scene deeply instructive, because, though a picture of life in the Panjâb as it is, it was also picture of life as it ever has been. Changeless as yet, though certainly in the way of change, the East is still the East, and Sher the obscure and Homer the renowned might shake hands, if that were possible, across the gulf of ages, seeing that the conditions of life continue unaltered, and that customs, manners, domestic rule, mode of dress and style of dwelling—nay, even religion itself in some respects—remain at this day virtually the same as they existed of old. In the midst of such a scene as this, then, I first heard the story which for the first time is now presented to the English reader.

Of all traditional tales dear to the hearts of the people of the Panjâb, there is not one more deeply enshrined in the affections of that manly hospitable race than the love story of Hîr and Rânjha. That, like most tales of ages long betid, it is a composite story is true, and that in comparatively recent times it has been largely overlaid with deposits of Muhammadan feeling and sentiment is likewise true. The main argument, however, distinctly survives, and, whatever its origin, it is now fully established as a faithful reflex of domestic rural life in those remote places where the mighty Indus rolls forth from the restraining barriers of the Himalayas. It is the story of the fortunes of an exile, driven by force of circumstances from his ancestral



SHARAF THE BARD TELLING HIS STORIES.



home. No *motif* is more generally diffused than that, no basis of story or legend more universally popular. The divine folk-tales of the Old Testament and the delightful stories of classical legend and of mediæval romance owe most of their human interest to that idea. The type abounds everywhere, though each separate instance is differenced, as armorists say, with change, or colour, or metal, or augmentation, special to itself. And, while it does not necessarily follow that the element of love should interpose to support or to carry on the progress of the original idea, yet when it does interpose, whether incidentally as in the story of Joseph, or as determining cause as in the case of Orpheus, or as end and object of toil and labour as in the case of Arthurian legend, nothing can be imagined more enchanting to primitive minds than an old-world story of adventure so lightened and glorified. The story of Hîr and Rânjha is an example in point. There the principle of love, though of a somewhat naïve and archaic type, interposes with delicious effect, affording us an example of attachment and of constancy on the part of a despised oriental woman, which no influence on earth could either shake or undermine.

One or two other points of interest there are to be briefly noted. First, in the story of Hîr and Rânjha we have expression given to the universal belief of the old world in the potent properties of exquisite musical sounds. The hero Rânjha piping down the valleys, like Mîr-Shakârî in the legends of Rasâlu, or the god Krishna in Hindu mythology, is, after all, the Greek Orpheus, or the Teutonic magic fiddler, moving across the stage of historical romance in Indian dress. He enters as a votary of the flower-crowned goddess in the days when Music, heavenly maid, was young. He embodies a principle. Music, according to him, is mighty to quell whatever "evil spirit from the Lord"



may come to afflict the souls of men. Its hand is cunning to soothe and to bless, to heal and refresh both man and beast by virtue of an irresistible inherent power peculiar to melodious sounds, of which we, in these latter days, are only beginning slowly to realise the scientific and remedial importance—"in sweet music is such art!"

In the next place, the story carries a lesson almost forgotten in the modern degraded life of India, for it proclaims the doctrine that in love women should be free to choose for themselves. Herein lies the secret of its immense popularity among the women of the Panjâb. It pictures love both strong and free. Bartered and sold as they practically are, cribbed up within the narrow limits of their desolate *zanânâs* if rich, and if poor worked from morning till night like the beasts of the field, the women of the Panjâb find in the story of Hîr and Rânjha an expression of that reasonable liberty of action to which they vainly aspire, and a triumphant vindication of the inalienable rights of their sex, of which centuries of wrong and oppression have deprived them.

Again, the story of Hîr and Rânjha has undoubtedly descended from most ancient times, its origin being veiled in obscurity. The natives ascribe to it the greatest possible antiquity, an antiquity far anterior to the era of Muhammad, though in the Upper Panjâb the Muhammadans, as we have already noted, have appropriated the story and modified it to suit themselves. An old blind *khân* of Hazro, a most intelligent man well versed in the traditions of his district, believed it was as old as the times of Alexander; but I know no story of the ancient Greeks which it resembles, unless it be the myth of Hero and Leander. And indeed, "Hîr and Rânjha", as the people love to speak of it, and "Hero and Leander" possess features in common over and above the mere coincidence in the jingle of names. To



begin with, it is a most uncommon thing for the name of the heroine to take precedence of that of the hero, as it does in *Hîr and Râñjha*. I know of no other case in India like it. But this is precisely the case also in the myth of Hero and Leander. The accessories, too, are not unlike. Râñjha swims down the river to the garden in which he first discovers Hîr, and subsequently the two are divided one from the other by a waste of water, the Hellespont here becoming an arm of the river Chenâb. In the Indian story, too, the catastrophe which befell the unhappy lovers must in the original fable have been exceedingly tragic, for angels are introduced in order to account for their sudden disappearance. I think it would be time well spent to search for a variant of Hîr and Râñjha, either among the Hindus of the Panjâb, or else among the people of Hindustân Proper, whom the destructive conquests of the earlier Muhammadan invaders, Sabaktagin, Mahmûd of Ghazni, and their immediate successors, scarcely influenced at all. The enlightened Greek King, Menander, known in Bûddhist lore as Melinda, a successor of Alexander the Great, exercised sway down as far as the borders of Bengal, and if *Hîr and Râñjha* be a variant of *Hero and Leander*, some simpler version might thus be found which would satisfactorily establish the connection. And it would be a most interesting achievement to prove that the Greeks had left in India, as well as numbers of their lovely coins, one at least of their fascinating legends.

Another speculation of great interest is suggested by this popular story, though it finds far more pointed and cogent expression in the old national legends of Râja Rasâlu.

It will be observed that while the narrative is told in prose, the principal speeches, the more striking and imaginative utterances of the characters represented, are embalmed in verses, which are even still rich in archaic forms and

expressions now scarcely in general use at all. The whole story of Hîr and Râñjha contains in the original not fewer than forty-five distributed stanzas, of which in this edition I have rendered into verse only fourteen. The Legend of Rasâlu contains very many more, at the least a hundred all told. The hereditary bards, who are all densely ignorant of even reading and writing, invariably recite the prose portions. But the verses are treated in the traditional manner common to East and West, to India not less than to Moorish Spain, being chanted with loud voices to the accompaniment of viol or lute, and to weird chromatic melodies full of long wailing notes and minor cadences, which are all radically the same and evidently as old as the Arian immigration. The question arises—Has the story of Hîr and Râñjha, have the old legends of war and love, the songs and tales of Rustem, Rasâlu and many more, which for ages have been handed down by a caste or sect of illiterate bards, maintained their original form, or, like the Mahabhârata and the Râmâyana, the Iliad and the Odyssey, were they ever entirely metrical?

In considering this question we have to note the circumstances under which the stories have been transmitted and preserved. The Upper Panjâb is now but sparsely populated by tribes and families rude and poor, but in former times it was the home of peoples who flourished in numbers, and who had wealth and resources in abundance. Nor were the inhabitants ignorant and boorish then as they are now, but, on the contrary, they were advanced, equally with the rest of India, in letters, the sciences and the arts. Traces of that vanished civilisation are still to be seen in the surviving fragments of their literature, in their coins, their desecrated temples and their ruined tombs. The whole of northern India, extending as far westward as the Hindu Kush, shared in the peace



and progress of that civilisation, which had received its original impetus from colonies of Arian invaders. When Alexander the Great descended through the passes of Swât to the plains of Peshâwar and the banks of the Indus, it was to encounter learning and culture everywhere diffused, and the Râjpût king who feasted him and his Macedonian captains at Taxila was not less refined and not less courtly than the conqueror himself. It was the glory of the Greeks that wherever they went they were curious to observe and to learn. Hence, local institutions, political and social, were suffered to survive the blast of conquest, customs and manners were maintained, philosophies and creeds were respected, and the various nations and tribes rejoiced under a policy of wise and generous conciliation. At that time the Buddhist system of ethics, as a rule of life, was extending itself all over the Panjâb, and into Kâbul, Kashmîr and Thibet. Under Greek rule it must have grown and thrived enormously, because we find that on the accession of Azôka (*circa* B.C. 260) seats of learning, already famous all over India, flourished exceedingly. One of those university-centres made illustrious the city of Peshâwar. Another, perhaps still more famous, at which Azôka's son and heir received education in letters and conduct, had been established at the capital city of Taxila. That city, the site of which was more nobly lovely than that of Athens, exists no more, or rather it exists in part only beneath fields of barley and Indian corn or in crumbling ruin close to the modern military cantonment of Râwâl Pindi. Later on, in the century which immediately preceded the birth of Christ, hosts of Scythians subdued the whole of the Panjâb, but only to be subdued in their own turn by the beauty of the civilisation into the midst of which they had plunged, and the reign of the enlightened king Kanishka, whose temples, newly built or restored through the agency



of Greek artists, adorned every spot rendered sacred by pious custom or saintly tradition, marked the beginning of a new era in Buddhistic history. Like the Greeks before them, the Indo-Scythians identified themselves with the people of the land, they mixed with them as we do not, they intermarried with them as we do not, and they were proud to be known as "Râjpûts." For long centuries, therefore, no soil could have been more favourable than that of the Panjâb for the spontaneous growth and the jealous preservation of a refined, learned, and a romantic literature, and the national bards must have revelled in a plenitude of song and story, both written and unwritten, which not even the pitiless devastating conquests of Mahmûd could wholly obliterate or destroy.

Still, the Muhammadan eruption changed the whole face of the country and annihilated all the existing conditions of society. It came down like a flood, and with the savage fury of a flood it carried almost everything away. Well-modelled figures of Bûddha, portrait statues of princely benefactors, ideal forms of grace and beauty, wonderful sculptured illustrations in *alto relievo* depicting scenes in Buddhistic legend, were all deliberately destroyed—hammered to pieces one by one with systematic and cruel determination,—the temples and viharas or schools were utterly ruined, the glorious *stûpas*, gleaming with gold, were overthrown, priests, princes, and people were ruthlessly massacred, neither age nor sex was spared. Those tall, lithe, fierce-eyed Arab fanatics became the scourge and the death of whole races of men rendered unfortunately soft and effeminate, unwarlike and effete, by reason of wealth and luxury too long possessed, and by the very principles of their gentle non-resistant religion. Not till satiated with rivers of blood did their stern conquerors offer the wretched survivors the alternative of Islâm or the sword. I know



nothing so pathetic anywhere as the testimony to this fact which is to be seen in the hundreds of women's and children's beads of crystal and garnet, carbuncle and jade, which are yearly picked up on the desolated sites of the great cities of Akra and Taxila. And as the people and their temples perished, so must most of their literary treasures have perished too. The devouring flames of conquest must have consumed their books and manuscripts, and harsh laws must have checked the flow of tradition, proverb, and household-tale. Yet in the midst of the universal havoc the race of the bards, as a caste and institution, was preserved. They were driven into the fold of Islâm to sing of the exploits of other conquerors, and to learn and to recite on all suitable occasions the endless genealogies of other families. And with the bards survived also, we may be sure, some at least of the most famous pre-existent legends over and above those of Persian origin, on which even the "Image-breaker," Mahmûd the Ghaznavide, had been induced to smile. Of these local legends, the story of Hîr and Rânjha, and the veracious history of Râja Rasâlu, must have formed a part. In spite of the fact that they were the profane survivals of an infidel though refined past, they were suffered to live, if only to beguile the hours or to amuse the minds of women and children. But they were bound to vary, as well as to lose and deteriorate, for as a professional bard is held in far greater contempt by Musalmâns than by Hindus, so, as the caste sank more and more in knowledge and in social distinction, their legends preserved less and less of their original beauty of poetic form. Gradually, by the very force of circumstances, they tended to settle down to the level of plain unadorned narrative, and I therefore conclude that, in the quaint stanzas mingled and interwoven with the tissue of prose, which have resisted the wear and tear of centuries, we have the last survivals of immemorial Panjâb minstrelsy.



The Rasâlu Legend must not be dismissed without one word to itself, for it is a legend which simply teems with mythic elements.

The honour of the first discovery of Rasâlu for Englishmen appears to belong to General Abbott, a famous Frontier officer of the Government of India in the middle of the century. As far back as 1854 he made public a fragmentary version of one of the "Adventures" in Calcutta.¹

The next published version was one from Ghâzi on the Upper Indus. It was obtained direct from oral recital and published by me in the *Folklore Journal* of May 1883.

In August and September of the same year another and a very different version of Rasâlu's adventures was, I understand, published by subscription in Bombay.

Early in 1884 appeared my *Adventures of the Panjâb Hero, Râja Rasâlu*,² consisting of eleven distinct tales, most of them of great beauty, which were derived partly from my Ghâzi version, but chiefly from the versions of two professional bards, Sharaf and Jûma, both famous among the villagers of the Râwâl Pindî Districts; Sharaf middle-aged, and Jûma, according to his own solemn belief, not much less than a hundred and twenty. Some years later, Sher, a bard living near Abbottâbâd in the Hazâra District, in fact the *mirâsi* to whom I am indebted for the story of Hîr and Rânjha, furnished me with a fourth variant of the Rasâlu Legends, which constitutes the basis of the version now published, and which completes my collection.

These four several versions, while contradictory in some points, serve to supplement each other in many more. Thus Jûma's story of the Giants excelled Sharaf's in general interest and in dramatic completeness, but, on the other hand, Sharaf's possessed treasures which the quavering voice

¹ Journal of the Asiatic Society (Bengal) for 1854, pp. 123—163.

² Newman.



of Jûma sang not of at all, as the charming legend of Mirshakâri, and the Tale of the Swans. Again, Sher's version of the revolt and conversion of Rasâlu far exceeded in interest and importance the account of the same episode which I possessed in the *Ghâzi* variant. Then again, Sher called Rasâlu's steed Fulâdi, Sharaf called him Baurâki, the latter if I remember rightly being also the name of the famous war-horse of Rustem. To Sharaf again I am indebted for the beautiful lament which I have rendered,—

“Strange is Thy nature always, God most dread!” &c.

To the lover of comparative folklore, the legends of Rasâlu, all of them of great antiquity, should appeal with considerable power and interest. Whether derived from primitive solar myth, or from traditional fables of mere vulgar human adventure, they reverberate at least with the echoes of the household tales of many lands, and, like Hîr and Rânjha, they are not destitute of curious reminiscences of the myths of the ancient Greeks, so familiar to us in their mythology and in the pages of the tragic poets. Here and there in these old-world fragments we catch glimpses faint yet tender of the Golden Age dreamt of by the bards of yore. What could be more quaint and simple in the golden loveliness than the peaceful picture presented to us in the story of Râja Rasâlu and Râja Bhoj? It is as if the man of blood had passed out of a world of battle and strife into a region of a new and happy existence, as if he had stepped backward in the march of Time and was tasting the delights of that blissful era, in depicting which the wild dreamy eloquence of the Knight of La Mancha enchanted the ears of his rustic audience, for even to him it was not given to perceive until the very last that, after all, the Golden Age lies not in the visionary past, but in the bright unfoldings of an

assured future, in the crowning elevation of the whole race, in "the Christ that is to be."

The stories of Rasâlu open with a short compressed account of an incident in the youthful lives of Râni Lûna and her step-son Pûran, which is almost exactly the counterpart of the classic tale of Phædra and Hippolytus. The Greek hero declines to apprehend the overtures of his father's wife, he rejects them with horror and disdain, he is in consequence denounced by her, and Theseus his father, a demi-god in the toils of a girl, drives him away to exile and death. But Diana, ever enamoured of chastity, restores the youth to life, while the conscience-smitten Phædra acknowledges her crime. So, too, Puran is similarly tempted and accused and in like manner condemned. For years, like a corpse, he lies in a dry forsaken well close to Siâlkot, until a prophet of God raises him, restoring his dismembered body, while the remorseful Lûna confesses her wickedness in penitence and tears.

In the delightful tale of Mîrshakâri we are again in touch with some of the most famous stories of classical antiquity. Like Hîr and Rânjha, it is the story of Orpheus — of "Orpheus of delicate vein, whose music beasts and stones did follow," of "Amphion, Jove's son by Antiope, whose pipes gathered his flocks together when shadows fell," of Pan whose *syrinx*, blown by Khrishna, beguiled the nymphs of Hindustân. The Panjâbi word "bîp", which I translate "lute", means either a stringed instrument or a wind instrument. Sharaf believed Mîrshakâri's to have been the latter — the double pipes. These pipes, frequently seen in the Panjâb, are precisely identical with those which are figured in Egyptian temples and which were used among both the Greeks and Romans. They are the *tibia pares* of classic times, the Lydian pipes referred to by Horace, consisting of two separate reeds, the male and the female, the *tibia dextra* and the *tibia sinistra* an-

swering to the different tones of the human voice, and played upon by the one performer, both at the same time. In



ONE FORM OF THE PANJABI DOUBLE PIPES.

India the upper extremities of these pipes are often inserted into the hollow shell of a small gourd, which answers the



purpose of a receiver, and which is furnished as well with a single mouth-piece. This is the instrument which is used by travelling snake-charmers, and this too, according to Sharaf, was the instrument which discoursed the alluring music of Mīrshakâri. The whole story of the hunter king, however, is so redolent of classical myth, that I have adopted the alternative reading of *bîn*, and conferred on Mīrshakâri the stringed instrument in vogue among the Panjâbi bards, which I take to be the Indian form of the *lyra*, that is, the *cithera* of Apollodorus, using the term "lute" as being more generic than "lyre" and as being equally appropriate, according to Shakespeare's beautiful lines:—

Orpheus, with his lute, made trees,
And the mountain-tops that freeze,
Bow themselves when he did sing.

Now, concerning Orpheus, we read that his lyre was the gift of the god Apollo. In like manner, Mīrshakâri derived his from an immortal too, from Kwâjâ Khizâr, the tutelary deity of the Indus, a god whose prototype is uncertain, but whose cultus in a rude way still actually survives, who is thoroughly believed in and even worshipped by the Muhammadan dwellers by the "Father of Rivers," and whose aid is always invoked whenever the capricious flood threatens to undermine their ancestral fields or villages.

Then again, we think of Orpheus, as he is often pictured on the domestic walls of Pompeii, sitting in woodland glades and enchanting all nature with the golden tones of his lyre. So too Mīrshakâri is canopied by trees and seated upon rocks, ravishing with the dulcet music of his magic lute the poor dappled fools with which, even still, forest and woodland abound.

When we turn to the tales of the giants, we are greeted with a version of certain stories which are diffused universally. These giants, whether really giants, or, as seems more probable, the miserable hunted aborigines of the country,



something less than man and more than ape, are monsters, man-eaters, human in shape, demoniac in origin, who are a terror to gods and men. They live in the mountains and from the mountains they descend to ravage the plains. At last comes the deliverer Hercules in the person of Rasâlu, who slays them all but one, and who buries the one survivor under far-sounding Gandghar, just as, in classical mythology, those of the *gigantes* who escaped the avenging arm of the destroyer of their race are imprisoned in the roaring smithies of Aetna. Or, again, Rasâlu is Ulysses, who invades the giant-dwellers in mountain-caves and who, when the one-eyed Akâldeo hurls at him an enormous rock, receives the ponderous bolt with calm indifference on the top of his shield.

This introduction would be rendered tediously long—it is tediously long already—if all the coincidences of common traditional lore were examined and discussed in detail. In Kâg, the raven, is presented the fabled attendant of the Father of the slain, the ill-boding Bird of Fate.¹ In the flying serpent or dragon, which is doubtless the cobra-di-capello, may be detected that emblem of the creative principle in nature, or that manifestation of divine energy, which was ever an object of awe and worship all through the mysterious past of the mysterious East. The manner in which, in the episode, the subtle destroyer is represented hovering over the faces of weary sleepers, to draw away their life-breath, is strongly suggestive of the grim picture in the Völuspâ:—

Then will come the dim
And flying dragon:
The fierce serpent from below
The mountains of Nida;
He floats on his wings,
He hovers over the plain,
Nidhögg, over the dead.²

¹ Strong's *Frithiof's Saga*, Notes, p. 32.

² Bigsby's Translation,—*Old Places Re-visited*.



Again, in the speeches of the principal characters are embedded numbers of old aphorisms and proverbs, having their analogues in similar proverbs in other lands. And, further, we have the miraculous birth, and the unnatural contest between father and son, together with distinct references to charms and incantations, to witchcraft and the supernatural raising of storms, to the foundation-sacrifice of human blood and to the headless warrior, to adoration of fire, to fables of monoliths and to long-lasting periods of trance or coma, many of the traditions and superstitions, thus indicated, being extremely Scandinavian in character and similitude. Passing by these various points of antiquarian interest, we may conclude this part of the introduction with a few words on the subject of the enigmas and the maledictions which arrest the attention in more than one of these Eastern stories.

The riddles, the enigmatical puzzles, which occur in some of the tales of the Legend, all of them akin to the dark sayings of the Pythian Oracle as reported by Herodotus, are redolent of a world which has left its infancy far behind. In form and conception they are precisely like those which have been handed down to ourselves from the earliest periods of history. Thus, Samson, in the Book of Judges, has an adventure by the way. He kills a lion and when he sees it again, he finds a colony of bees settled in the hollow carcase. So he propounds to his enemies a riddle,—

“Out of the eater came forth meat,
Out of the strong came forth sweetness.”

In a similar way Rasâlu has an adventure in the forest. He remains a mute spectator of all the calamities which befell Mîrshakâri, and when arraigned by his foes baffles them with the riddle,—



“One was killed and two died;
Two were killed and four died;
Four were killed and six died;
Four were male and two were female.”

Not less ingenious were those fabled philosophers of old Egypt solemnly propounding their puerile riddle of the temple with a single shaft; or the Sphinx herself, that

“Subtlest of fiends,
Who ministered to Thebes heaven’s poisoned wine,
Unnatural love and more unnatural hate,”

puzzling her simple world with that most fateful riddle of all—“What is that which walks on four feet in the morning, on two feet at noon, and on three feet in the evening?”

But there is another passage in the Greek which forms a very near approach to the riddles of the legend we are now considering. It is a metrical riddle ascribed to an uncle of the famous Menander, one of the leaders among the Athenians of the New Comedy. His name Alexis of Tharü, he flourished about the year B.C. 356. I venture on the following free translation of the passage in question—

- A. Nor mortal, nor immortal doth it bide;
Nor man, nor god, but something else beside;
Ever it grows, ever endures decay,
Eye sees it not, yet all men feel its sway.
- B. How riddles catch you! Tell me then, dear Nurse,
What bantling’s this, of nature so diverse?
- A. ’Tis sleep, my child, ’tis sleep, that loves to bind,
In soothing rest, the labours of mankind.

Comparing these enigmatical curiosities of the ancients with the riddles which occur in the Rasälu Legend, we discern elements common to both the series. A simplicity amounting almost to childishness is the leading characteristic of every one of them—as, for instance, the riddle with



which Sirikap would baffle his unwelcome guest:—"What is that which has four beards, a blue foot, and a red neck?" or again, "There are four husbands and sixteen wives, four wives to each husband, all under the same roof. What is it?" The riddles of India are in short the riddles of the old tribal empires. They are the mental recreations of the literary infancy of the race. They often exhibit a community of tradition as remarkable as that of folk-tales themselves, and they clearly denote the constant intercourse which was undoubtedly carried on between East and West, between the Mediterranean and the Indus, long before the invasion of the Greeks. Nor, as regards India, has the taste for similar amusement at all diminished with the lapse of time. One of the favourite devices of village khâns in the Panjâb is the invention of riddles which are composed on all conceivable subjects, and which are despatched by messenger to special friends on neighbouring lands, who fail not to return the compliment in kind. By this means an endless contest in ingenious puzzling and guessing is maintained between squire and squire, and great is the triumph of him who solves a difficulty or perplexes an antagonist.

The next point to be observed is that which is suggested by Rasâlu's curse and indeed by the other curses too, both in the Rasâlu Legend and in the story of Hir and Rânjha. How universal, for instance, is that habit or custom by which mankind, or at least the religious races of the human family, and even the Deity Himself, are represented again and again as cursing the innocent earth or the fruits of the earth, in consequence of the occurrence of some terrible calamity, or the perpetration of some devastating wickedness! "Cursed be the ground for thy sake,"—"Ye mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew upon you!" these are words typical of maledictions to be found not only in the pages of Holy Writ, but throughout all history.



And what is true of history is true also of romance. The crazy curses of the *Agamemnon* which so distress the ear are an example in point. In *Æschylus* people curse after the fashion of the time, and so, with increase of invective power, curse also the characters of his great contemporary whose *Edipus Tyrannus* absolutely appals by its persistence in withering maledictions, as it displays the spectacle of the sightless old king, driven out by fate ever terrible, never relenting, and pouring forth as he pursues his journey of Death infallible anathemas over the heads of his two sons, already so unutterably miserable. In that tragedy is spoken a curse which compares with a curse in *Richard II.* and both may compare with the curse of Râja Rasâlu. Thus it runs in free rendering:—

And let them fail not to obey my hest,
Else may the Gods above rain baneful spells
On all their fields and blight their growing crops,
Yea, may their wives be childless! ¹

The gentle queen of Richard II. utters her curse in gentler wise:—

- Q. Gardener, for telling me this news of woe,
I would the plants thou graft'st may never grow.
G. Poor Queen, so that thy state might be no worse,
I would my skill were subject to thy curse! ²

And then in fairly exact translation the curse of Rasâlu, which was denounced as he gazed for the last time on the mango-trees in the garden of Koklâ:—

Oh, flushed with fruit, or bare of bough,
Fruit may ye never form again.
Dead is Koklâ, her place is void,
And flaming red the fires remain!

¹ *Edipus Tyrannus*, 269—271.

² *Richard II.* Act II, Sc. 4.



Lastly, we would observe, in those primitive times wisdom in kings was deemed phenomenal—does not the idea still prevail? That fact finds expression in the story of Rājā Bhōj who, when he had given foolish sentence, learns wisdom from the jackal's mysterious performances and his lies about the flaming Indus. The story is exactly paralleled in the life of Aesop, when half in mimic show, half in spoken word, he shows king Neco (B.C. 600), that as a Theban cat could not possibly have killed the far-off cock of King Lycerus, whose regulated crowing marked the passing hours of the night, so the royal mares of Egypt could not possibly hear, still less conceive by hearing, the neighing of the stallions of far-off Babylon.

But when did this famous hero live, where was his kingdom, who were his contemporaries?

To these questions no very exact answer can be given. Rasālu's name is neither inscribed on the glowing pages of history, nor can it be shown to survive on the enduring metal of ancient coins. He lives in the popular memory, and in the popular memory only. Is there a deep cavern in the mountain side? Then it was the hiding-place of Rasālu in exile, or the gloomy prison into which he thrust some miserable monster. Is it a remarkable glacial boulder, covered perhaps with cupmarks, or a circle of pre-historic monoliths, which challenge enquiry? They are the missiles hurled by Rasālu in some doughty contest at the head of an antagonist only less powerful than himself. Has some solid Buddhist *stūpa* or airy Rājput castle, nobly designed and superbly built, escaped utter destruction at the hands of the iconoclast Muhammadans? It was the lofty palace-tower from which, one lovely winter's day, the Rāni Koklā espied in her garden of mangoes a handsome stranger-prince gazing at her beauty, enrapt. In short, legend and tradition open and close the one volume of Rasālu's life.



But legend and tradition, charming and suggestive as they are, are unfortunately not of much account in the domain of history. Nevertheless, let us see how far these uncertain quantities will carry us, if only in the way of conjecture.

1. They tell us that there was a prince famous in story named Rasâlu, a son of Râja Sâlivahân and a descendant of Vikramâjît.

2. They tell us that he sprang from Siâlkot in the Panjâb, and that his sway extended from Ujain to Kâbul.

3. They tell us that he became a convert to Muhammadanism and that he finally suffered defeat at the hands of a prince apparently inferior to himself, living west of the Indus.

Now, though the Vikramâ era, still in use in Hindostân, begins B.C. 56, that beginning of all things is considered merely nominal, being ante-dated some centuries. The great battle of Korur in which Vikramâjît, otherwise Harsha of Ujain, finally defeated the Mlekkas is believed to have occurred A.D. 544. According to Wilson, this monarch extended his arms as far west as Kâbul. Briggs states that his empire was overthrown by Râja Sâlivahân one hundred and thirteen years subsequently, since the era of Sâlivahân, still in vogue among the Hindus of the Dakkan, began nominally, A.D. 77. This consideration would bring us to *circa* A.D. 700 as the earliest approximate date for Râja Rasâlu, the very period when the Muhammadan invaders were over-running Central Asia.

Rasâlu was a Râjpût of Siâlkot, and Siâlkot, as the name implies, was the stronghold of the Syâls, a great tribe, still flourishing, who popularly claim descent from Râja Rasâlu himself. Their old capital town lies near the Jammû border of Kashmîr. According to Brahmin tradition, it was founded by the famous Râja Sâl or Sâlya of the Mahabhârata, the original ancestor of the Syâls. It is

contended that Rasâlu, a name which occurs also in the forms of "Rasâl" and "Rasâlua,"¹ is not so much a personal name, not a birth-name so much as a descriptive cognomen, and that it signifies "Prince of the Syâls." If this were so, as a learned pundit friend maintained, Rasâlu might possibly be identified with one of the Râjpût kings of Gandhâra (Kâbal), who flourished before the Muhammadan conquest—as, for instance, with Râja Kallar (circa 850)



who, according to Thomas and Cunningham, was identical with Syâl-pâti-Deva of the *Bull and Horseman* series of coins. It did not escape the notice of Cunningham

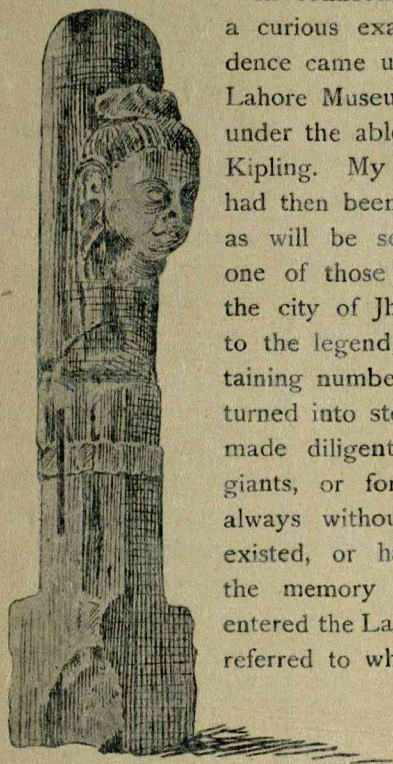
that Syâl-pâti is no more a personal name than Rasâlu. It is a dynastic title, and it signifies "Lord of the Syals."

But if Rasâlu was a family designation rather than an actual birth-name, the same remark holds good of his great antagonist Râja Hôdi. In the Peshâwar Valley this prince is known as Hôdi, a word which round Jalâlâbâd assumes the form of Ude. And Ude is the province of Ude-nâgra, by the Greeks called Udiana, answering to the region watered by the Kâbul river. So that, in short, neither is this name a personal one, that is, a birth-name, but in a sense dynastic or descriptive too.

It will be seen that these biographical considerations are purely conjectural and therefore for historical purposes valueless, and I am conscious that they will appear trivial and even unnecessary in the eyes of men of exact historical science. All the same they serve a useful purpose in so far as they tend to emphasize the fact that the real name of the hero, round whose memory these legendary tales of

¹ *Nâm râkhiâ Rasâl.—Torâ torâ tûr dissen, Sûn Râjeâ Rasâluâ.*

various epochs are made to revolve, like planets round a central sun, has still to be established.



HEIGHT, 9 FT. 7 IN.
 BASE, 1 FT. 7 IN. SQUARE.

In connection with the Rasâlu Legend, a curious example of unexpected coincidence came under my notice once in the Lahore Museum, when that institution was under the able direction of Mr. Lockwood Kipling. My *Adventures of Râja Rasâlu* had then been published some time, and, as will be seen by the present volume, one of those adventures had to do with the city of Jhilam, near which, according to the legend, "There is a territory containing numbers of giants who have been turned into stone." At Jhilam I had often made diligent search for those petrified giants, or for any tidings of them, but always without success. No such thing existed, or had ever been seen, within the memory of man. Scarcely had I entered the Lahore Museum on the occasion referred to when I saw that the collection

of ancient sculpture had been enriched by the recent acquisition of a large *lingam*, the acknowledged symbol of the God Siva,

having a human head projecting in high relief near its summit, and, in answer to my enquiry, Mr. Kipling told me that it had been discovered *close to Jhilam*, many feet below the level of the ground, by some engineers who had been sinking foundations for a bridge. This interesting relic, this "giant turned into stone," must have been one of the many Brahmanic phallic idols which had fallen before the zeal of



the first Muhammadan invaders who, as they could not utterly destroy, used sometimes to bury the images of the uncircumcised dogs of India, a fact of which I have had ocular testimony on more than one occasion. In the present instance the head appeared to be that of a woman with her hair tied up in a knot, or rather roll, on the top of the head, an arrangement very commonly seen among the sacred Indian sculptures of the early part of our own era, as witness many a like example from the Peshâwar Valley, from Jalâlâbâd, and from Swât. The pillar is carved in red sandstone, and I here present the reader with a view of it, together with its dimensions, taken from a sketch kindly made for me by Mr. Kipling himself. The testimony which it affords as to the antiquity of the legend is the curious and interesting record of a monument which must have lain hidden beneath the surface of the earth for nearly a thousand years. ¹

Of the other stories published in this volume, that of Pûran Bhagat, as I have already pointed out, is really the story of Hippolytus. Another well-known variant of the same old tale is the biblical legend of Joseph, on which has been founded the famous Oriental romance of Yusuf and Zulaika. Of the Panjâb version it is to be noted that the incident of the pit forms a most striking feature. Pûran passes into the nether world and there remains for years, twelve in number, corresponding to the number of the months in the year, and of the signs of the Zodiac, and then is brought back to the earth again by an exercise of supernatural power. But the story affords, too, another incident in common with a circumstance recorded in the Old Testament, for as the rod of Aaron budded in the sacred enclosure of the Ark, so the dead trees in the garden

¹ On many of the old existing *lingams* in Râjpûtâna there occur as many as four finely cut human heads crowning the summit like a garland.



of Pûran revived and shot forth leaves in the presence of exceptional sanctity of character.

Of the loves of *Mirza and Sâhibhân* I suspect I have not a complete version, but rather two imperfect ones. At any rate I have not the metrical version of Pîlo the poet, nor do I think it exists, though the few stanzas which occur in my version may have been derived from the work attributed to him. Pîlo was a Panjâbi Muhammadan whose home was in a village on Mount Gandghar, and who lived long ago, but concerning whom little appears to be known. The reputed tomb of the two unfortunate lovers, united at last in death, is still preserved with jealous care, and has become a place of pilgrimage, especially for young people pierced by the dart of unrequited love.

Analogues of the "droll" will be found in most collections, while the story of the man who expected his priest to turn his ass into a man is also a variant of many similar tales.

This volume contains only two or three jungle-stories, one of which is merely a brief apologue.

The Story of a Ruby, with its accompanying lesson so remarkably true to life, seems to belong to a class by itself, of which I have found but the one specimen only.

Of the two stories, *Nek Bakht* and *Gul Bâdshâh*, much remains to be written did space allow. In the latter tale are embalmed, like flies in amber, some very curious things that would well repay examination—as, for example, the incident of offering messes of food, periodically laid out among the tombs, to the spirits of the departed, who fail not to come to time—an incident analogous to the beautiful post-funeral observances of the Phoenicians, Cypriotes, and Etruscans, and still to be met with, as in India, but nowhere so charmingly exemplified as in the touching domestic rites of the Japanese on their All Souls' Day,



when daintiest dishes of selected food, and tiny cups of "Number-one" *saki*, are piously set before every family-altar to please the returning ghosts, and when gay lanterns are slung from eave and bough to light them on their noiseless way to their old homes, as well as to cheer them when, at mid-night, the gentle creatures troop back to their dim abodes in the under-world. Nor was it possible not to include in this collection at least one typical story of witchcraft, for that is a superstition so universally diffused, and so persistent in its grip on races of men, whether savage or civilised, that it must surely correspond with some of the deepest tendencies of human character and human temperament. Such a story is the story of the Adventures of Nek Bakht, a king whose lucky name,¹ as if on the principle of dreams, wrought for that luckless man only a sorry destiny.

The illustrations in the body of the volume are all from the pencils of native draughtsmen. The four in outline were procured for me by Mr. Lockwood Kipling, C.I.E., to whom I tender my grateful thanks for his courtesy. The rest, together with that of the group in this introduction, were the work of a Hindu friend of my own, by name, Mûl Chand. His initial letters are very commendable, being ingeniously contrived and most cleanly and beautifully drawn. The sketch of the *mîrâsî* or bard is a portrait from a photograph of Sharaf, which was taken by Mr. John Burke, whose excellent work is well known in the Upper Panjâb. To all these gentlemen, as well as to T. L. Barlow, whose kind assistance I have already acknowledged elsewhere, my thanks are hereby accorded.

C. S.

Shekh Budîn, Panjâb.

June 1893.

¹ "Good Luck."



SHARAF
A PANJABI BARD.

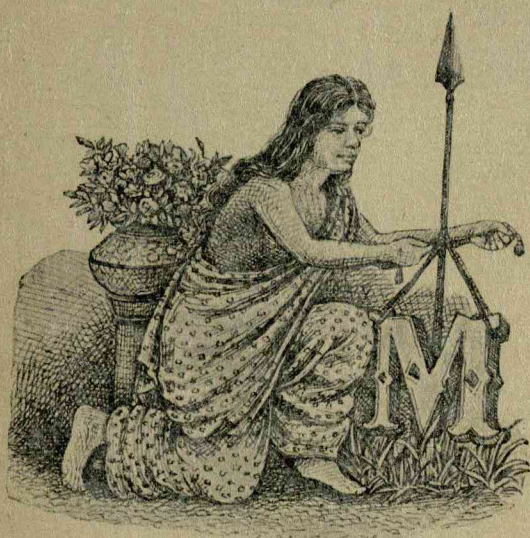


XLIX

CSL

THE LOVE STORY OF HIR AND RANJHA

original edition



THE LOVE STORY
 OF HIR
 AND RÂNJHA ¹

ANY years ago, in
 quite the olden
 time, there lived
 three brothers,
 Nûr Khân,
 Chûnd Khân,
 and Rânjha. Of

these three the two elder were married, but Rânjha, whose
 pet name was Dhîdo, was only a stripling.

One day Nûr Khân and Chûnd Khân came to Rânjha
 and said, "Dhîdo, our father is now dead, and as for us
 we have families to feed. But you, Brother, do nothing at
 all on the farm. All you do is to ramble uselessly after
 the buffaloes and goats, playing old tunes. So we two
 have decided to divide the inheritance into three parts, and
 we now tell you plainly that from this time forth you will
 have to manage your own land yourself.

"Up, Brother, up—thy piping days forego—
 See where the blacksmith sweats beneath the shade!
 These useless bars, with many a lusty blow,
 Quickly he'll change to ploughshare and to spade;
 Then haste we home again to fix the line
 That shall divide our heritage from thine."

¹ The verses in this tale are translations of verses in the original Tânjâbi.

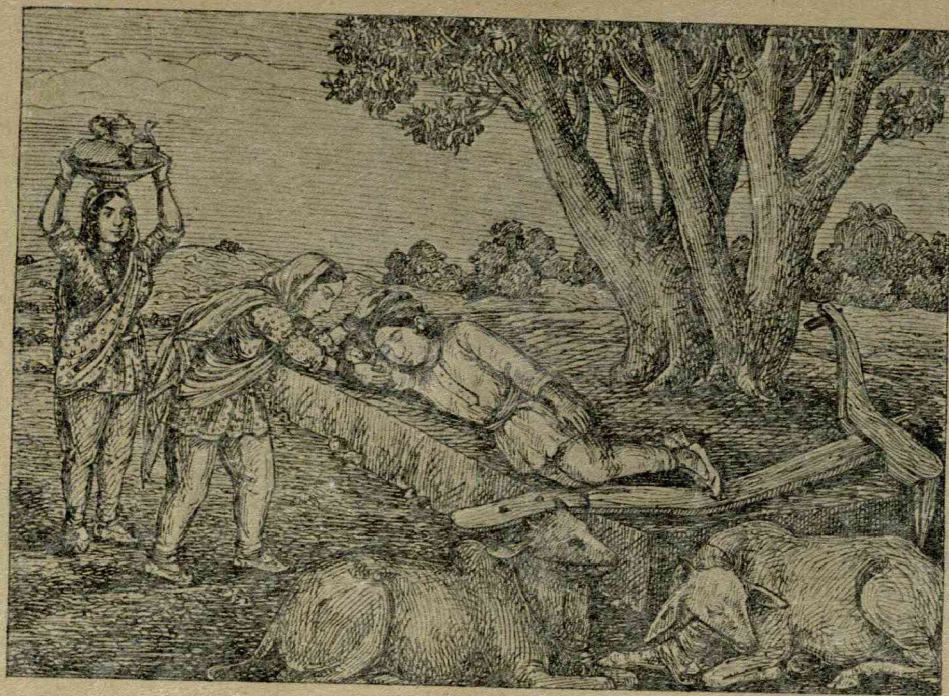


ROMANTIC TALES FROM THE PUNJAB

in vain Rânjha, and in vain his sisters, the wives of his brothers, urged that he was still but young and untrained. The iron was wrought up, the land was divided, and the lad was left to do the best he could. To make matters worse, the portion assigned to him was wild uncleared jungle. He merely got barren land which had never been broken at all, and of which the soil was poor, bearing stones, and scrub, and coarse grass. It was land far too savage for him to reduce to order at all. Nevertheless, taking with him his yoke and his plough, and driving his oxen before him, the boy set out early in the morning to clear it and till it. Hard was the task and stiff the ground, and soon his arms began to tire, and his bullocks to flag, and when at last his ploughshare snapped in twain in the stony furrows, he sat himself down, and bitterly weeping complained—"I was the son of my father's old age, and nothing of this kind have I ever seen before. Cruel unnatural brothers are mine to give me barren land!" Saying these words he loosed his oxen from the yoke to wander at will, and lay down to sleep under the shade of a tree.

By-and-bye, when the sun was high in the heavens, out stepped his two sisters from the house, bearing in their hands some *chûri*,¹ and calling the boy by his name. As they came along the fields they passed their husbands busy at the plough, and they stopped a moment and said, "Do you know where Dhîdo is?" And their husbands looked up and told them where to seek him. But when the women reached the spot they found him lying asleep, his work unfinished and his oxen loose. So they slapped his cheeks with the tips of their fingers and woke him up, and began to reproach him, saying, "O Dhîdo, for shame!—

¹ Chûri, sweet cake.



RANJHA ROUSED BY HIS SISTERS-IN-LAW.



RANJHA ON THE MARCH.



THE LOVE STORY OF HIR AND RANJHA

"You love to tend the lazy herd,
To sleep beneath the shady tree;
You love to startle beast and bird,
Playing your flute's soft minstrelsy.
But now thy sisters stand and weep,
They cry, 'O thou whom others keep,
When wilt thou learn
Bread of thine own to earn?'"

Saying these words they took him, and the broken plough and the oxen, and coming to their husbands they complained about him. "O Dhîdo," said the brothers, "it is not lawful food you eat, and, unless you work and earn for yourself, no longer can you remain with us. See to it therefore, for we mean what we say!"

Rânjha felt grieved as he listened to these words which vexed his very soul, and all the night long he lay awake, turning them over and over. He could not sleep and at last he determined that when the morning came he would leave the village and never return again. In vain his sisters strove with him, coaxing him to stay. He left them as the day broke, and with only his scarf and his staff started off on his travels. All day long he walked, never stopping for a moment to rest, and in the evening it so happened that he approached a certain village named Kharlân-di-Mâri, and, because he was worn with hunger and fatigue, he entered it, and made his way to the mosque, intending to spend the night there.

Now it was then close on the hour for prayers, and soon the people began to assemble, and one of them saw him and said, "Son, you look like a wayfarer, have you had anything to eat?"

"No," answered he, "I have eaten nothing at all. Early in the morning I left my house in Takht-Hazâra and I have only just arrived." Then went a lad to his home and brought him some food, and he ate and drank and



ROMANTIC TALES FROM THE PUNJAB

revived. But it was winter time, and he, lying on the floor in the open mosque, became sick with the pangs of fever, and his fever and sickness troubled him sore. And when the people came together again to say their morning prayers, they looked at him, and, seeing how ill he had been, they said to him, "And how have you passed the night?" Then said Rânjha, "I came from Takht-Hazâra,—

"At dawn of day I broke away,
Nor lingered once to rest,
Till in your village mosque I lay,
By want and grief oppressed;
A little boy went round, by pity led,
And begged me alms—some butter-milk and bread.—

"I tell you I am the son of a good man," said he, "and one well-to-do, and never before have I seen such troubles. I have become sick from the cold, and I pray you therefore to let me warm myself somewhere at a fire."

One of the villagers at once took him to the village smithy, and he sat down and began to warm himself over the glowing charcoal. Meanwhile the smith snatched out a bar of hot iron, and holding it on the anvil he told his two lads to beat it with their hammers. Then, looking at Rânjha and observing that he seemed a fine stout young fellow, he bade him also take a hammer, and smite while the others rested. Rânjha felt ashamed to refuse the man so small a service, so he sprang into the pit, and seizing a sledge, he struck the red-hot iron three or four times, but, as he struck, the blood started from the veins of his arms. And when he laid the hammer down he said,—

"Cold was the night, a homeless wanderer I,
Vainly for fire I searched from door to door,
And when I raised the ponderous sledge on high,
My very blood came trickling to the floor."



RANJHA IN THE MOSQUE.



RANJHA AT THE SMITHY.



But the blacksmith was astonished. "Ah, what delicate limbs!" cried he. "Are you a King's son, or born of some fairy race? In my house you would never earn even your keep, and therefore, boy, go, seek your fortune elsewhere, in the name of God!"

So Rânjha left that place, and his heart was sad, but as he went along he chanced, to his great joy, to see a certain woman putting some fire into an oven, for she was a bread-seller and he determined to go near to her, and to sit down and warm himself. As soon as he entered the door of the court, however, he was arrested by the cries of three or four young girls. "O youth," cried they, "whoever you are, is it among a parcel of girls you wish to sit? Surely a house full of women is no place for you!" But the mistress of the house, whose name was Mirabân, observing how handsomely he carried himself, called him in and made him sit down by the side of the stove, and the boy did as he was bidden and came into the courtyard and sat down, and the heat of the stove warmed his blood, and his eyes began to shine. By-and-bye the woman glanced at him again, and perceiving that he had something hidden away under his arm, she asked him what it was. "Whenever I am sad," said he, "I take my flute and play upon it, for it amuses me, and I carry it wherever I go." Then all the girls, and the woman herself as well, would have him play them a tune to pass the time, and at first he refused to play at all, saying it was better not, but, when they came clustering round him, crying, "Play us something, play us something!" he put the flute to his lips and began to play. But the effect of that music was such that the girls and even the woman of the house herself became possessed, being rendered utterly distraught by the sound which filled their ears, and they began to dance like mad things, all over the court, keep-



ROMANTIC TALES FROM THE PUNJAB

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ing time with feet and hands. Yea, the very cakes in the stove danced till they turned as black as coal. Seeing her cakes burnt to ashes, Mîrabân was filled with grief and sorrow of heart, and, waxing wrath, she snatched up her *kûndi*¹ and gave Rânjha two or three strokes on the back with it, saying, "O, you sorcerer, you have made us all silly! Out of my house at once—you are not worth a pin!" Thus the boy would have had to wander forth again, but, looking at the woman, he said, "O you lady-compounder of loaves, listen to the words of your spiritual guide! Go to Madam Oven, lift up the cover from her mouth, and look within!" Then she took off the top of the oven and looked down and saw that the cakes were no longer burnt as before, but all done to a turn; and when she considered the thing, she guessed that Rânjha had mystic power in him, and she approached him humbly, and besought him to stay with her for a time, seeing also indeed that her own good man was a poor creature, and that Rânjha on the contrary was young and stout.

Soon after, her husband, who had gone to the forest for fuel, came back with a load of logs on his head, and as he threw them to the ground he observed the youth seated, like a prince, on a couch, with the best carpet in the house spread under him, and so he said to his wife, "Who is your visitor?"

"You do not know him," answered she. "But I know him, for he is my family *pîr*,² come from my father's village."

So Rânjha remained in the house of Mîrabân for three or four days, but at the end of that time he began to get tired of his dull life and longed to go away. In the middle of the night, therefore, when husband and wife

¹ Kûndi, the hooked stick with which the cakes or loaves are taken out of the oven.

² Spiritual guide.



RANJHA'S MAGIC FLUTE.



were both asleep, he arose softly and stole away; but as he stepped over the threshold the woman heard him and awoke, and when she found that he had gone she also went after him. Pursuing him along the stony footpath she soon drew nigh him, but Rânjha turned and threw stones at her, telling her to be gone. So she stopped and cried, "O you cursed of God, why would you hide yourself? Mîrabân is calling you. Have you eaten poison, or wholesome food, in my house?" Then came also her husband, and he, overhearing all that was said, bade her return. "Come here, Mîrabân," said he. "Was this man your lover, that you speak him fair and foul in the same breath?"

"And do you not know?" answered she. "You were sleeping I think. But understand he is a thief. He took up all our precious things and was going off. We were ruined indeed if I had not wakened in time."

Then as she caught Rânjha by one arm, her husband seized him by the other, and as a captured thief he was dragged back to the house and put in the stocks, and there in the chamber alone he was left to pass the night.

Now in the morning, when her husband had gone forth as usual for a load of wood, Mîrabân came privately to the lad, bringing him *chûri*, and she opened her heart to him, saying, "My dear love, do you not see that I love you? I love you, and how then can I bear to part with you!" This speech Rânjha heard, but keeping silence he uttered not a word, but remained still, and by-and-bye she gave him some *chûri* and left him alone.

This woman used to parch quantities of corn and to leave much of it lying on the oven. One day a blind man groped his way in and coming to the stove began to pick up the grains and put them in his mouth. Presently Rânjha caught sight of him and cried, "O blind man, what are you doing?"



"I am eating parched grain," answered he.

"Come to me," said Rânjha. "If you come to me, I will put some healing medicine on your eyes, and then you will be able to see."

So the blind man rose up, and coming to Rânjha he began to feel his body, and, as he did so, he touched the stocks, and by feeling soon found out what they were. Then Rânjha took up a handful of *chûri* and crammed it into his mouth, and when the blind man found out how delicious it was, he stretched out his leg and tried to put it into one of the holes of the stocks. "What are you doing now?" said Rânjha.

"I think," answered the blind man, "you get *chûri* here, and if I sit in the stocks with you, of course I shall get *chûri* too."

"Blind man," said Rânjha, "do not waste your time to no purpose. You cannot put your foot into the stocks unless you first take out the peg."

Then the blind man felt for the peg, and when he had found it he seized it, and, applying his full force to it, drew it out at once. Then Rânjha lifted up the plank and put the blind man in the stocks instead of himself, after which he took up the wooden peg and drove it home with a stone. "O blind man," said he, "take this plate of *chûri* and eat it up! If you want more, call aloud—'O God, send me *chûri*, O God, send me *chûri*!' and *chûri* will come to you." So Rânjha left the blind man in the stocks, and escaped from the house.

Now the blind man was not long before he had finished the whole of his *chûri*, and as he still felt unsatisfied he began to cry out, "God, God, send me *chûri*, send me *chûri*! O God, send me a mouthfull!" And he made such a din in the darkness of the night that he roused Mirabân, who rose in wrath, crying, "Who are you? and what in the world are you saying?"



"I am a blind man," roared he of the stocks, "and I am doing nothing whatever but asking God to send me *chûri*."

Then thought the woman to herself, "Rânjha perhaps has gone mad!" So she got up, and came into the chamber to see him and to find out what had gone wrong with him. Great was her surprise to discover that it was not Rânjha at all, but the old blind beggar who passed her door every day. Her anger was beyond everything, and dragging him out of the stocks she threw him down, and seizing her *kûndi* she applied it well to the old fellow's shoulders, who struggled in vain and howled horribly. Louder and louder grew the noise of the fray, until at last it ended by rousing the husband, who came rushing into the room, and who laid hold of his wife by the throat. "O shameless hussy," cried he, "you have come out here to carry on your tricks with Rânjha, have you?" So saying, he punished her well.

Meanwhile, as they were thus contending, all three one with another, Rânjha came back, and standing beside the door, peeped in to watch the fun, and when he saw his chance he cried aloud, "O woman, so tall and so slender, whose name is Mirabân, get up, you sleep too long, Rânjha is leaving you!" These words said he, and then he ran away. But Mirabân and her husband Sowâri ran after him, and while one cried "Thief!" the other cried "Rogue!" until Rânjha lifted some stones and stoned them, saying "Neither my father's sister nor my mother's sister are you, Mirabân, that I should not put a knife to your throat. Love indeed! What can you know of love, you sorry jade?"

Now when Sowâri heard this speech, he left following Rânjha, and again turned on his wife in a fury. "Ah, faithless female dog!" cried he. "You told me the lad

was your village *pîr*, and behold now he speaks to you of love! Verily you have harboured him for tricks of your own and nought else!" And with these words he belaboured her front and rear with her own *kûndi* until she cried "Peccavi!"

Meanwhile Rânjha laughed, "Ha, ha!" quoth he, "How now, sly puss?—

"Sowâri suspects

Some things have been missed, Mîrabân—

Is it true?

Sowâri believes

A thief has been kissed, Mîrabân—

Was it you?

Sowâri declares

He will give you his fist, Mîrabân—

So, vixen, adieu!"

Leaving the contending couple to settle the difference between them, Rânjha went on his way, and coming to the river Chenâb which flows into the Râvi, he plunged in, and swam with the current many a mile, until at last he saw on the bank a beautiful garden. So he made for it, and, landing, entered it. The beauty of the place captivated him, because being only a simple countryman he had never seen the like of it before. It was dawn, and the worshippers of God were making preparations for their accustomed prayers. While sitting alone under a shady tree his mind went back to his native village, and he thought of his brothers and sisters and the fields and the cattle, and the nooks and corners of his father's house, and then he thought of his present miserable condition. All at once he raised his eyes, and perceived five venerable men standing before him. To see them there he was astonished and amazed, but they all spoke very kindly to him, saying, "O good young sir, give us some milk!" All five of them, standing together, joined in prayer to Rânjha, saying,—



MISUNDERSTANDING IN THE HOUSE OF SOWARI.



THE LOVE STORY OF HIR AND RÂNJHA

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“Who beg and implore, dost thou ken?
O we the Five *Pîrs* * beg of thee!
What name shalt thou bear among men?
Mîyân Rânjha for aye shalt thou be!
So buffalo's milk do thou bring us, for lo,
We have given thee Hîra for weal or for woe!”

But on Rânjha fell sorrow that he had no milk to offer them, which when the *Pîrs* perceived, they said, “Why are you troubled?”

“Alas, sirs,” answered he, “my buffaloes are far away in Takht-Hazâra. Here I have no animal at all. Where then can I find milk for you?”

“O son,” said they, “have you ever given anything away in the name of God?”

“No, never,” replied the lad. “I am a mere boy; but of course my brothers have.”

“Recollect well,” said they again. “Perhaps you may have given something at least!”

Then Rânjha considered, and after a while he again spoke and said, “Sirs, I remember that once, when a calf of mine was ill and about to die, I gave it to a beggar.”

“How old was your calf then?” enquired the *Pîrs*.

“She was but two months,” answered he.

“By this time she has grown up,” said they, “and you can call her, and when you call her we hope that she will come to you. What was her name—do you remember?”

“Yes,” said he, “I used to call her Brownie!”

“Then call her,” said the *Pîrs*. “Call her by the same name.”

So Rânjha called out, “Brownie! Brownie!” and in a little time his buffalo came running towards him with her

* *Pîr*—a saint, a spiritual director. When a man is in sickness or peril, he supplicates God and his *Pîr*. For an account of *The Five Pîrs*, see Appendix.



tail cocked up over her back. Now as she approached, he saw plainly enough that she had no milk at all in her. "Now what shall I do?" thought he. "How am I going to milk a dry buffalo?" The Pirs perceiving the drift of his mind then said to him, "What is the matter now?"

"The buffalo has no milk," answered he.

"Never mind that, my son," said they. "Pat her and sit down to milk."

So he did as he was told, and sat down, but again he considered that he had no vessel for the milk, and he looked towards the Pirs, who, understanding at once the whole matter, brought him a little wooden begging-bowl which they gave him for the milk, and he began to milk the creature, thinking all the time if she let down any milk at all, how soon that small vessel would be filled. But, to his great surprise, when the milk began to flow, neither did the milk stop nor did the vessel fill. At last he got very tired, and looked once more towards the Five Pirs, who came near, and one said, "Do not be distressed, my son. Get up now, you have milk enough."

Then Rânjha rose, and presented the bowl to the Pirs who drank of the milk turn by turn, and who gave the remainder to Rânjha himself. When all this was done, the Five Pirs ordered the boy to close his eyes, and he did so. "Shut your eyes," said they.—

"Now close thine eyes, O duteous son,
For, lo, she's thine, by virtue won,
Mahr Chûkak's daughter Hîr!
O close thine eyes, she's freely thine,
We cede her in the name divine,
The lovely and the dear!"

So Rânjha closed his eyes and waited for a long long time for orders to open them again, but, as no one ordered him to do so, at last he opened them himself, when to his



RANJHA AND THE FIVE PIRS.

great astonishment he no more saw Pirs or buffalo or garden, all had vanished away, but he found himself in another garden far more beautiful than the other, and he



THE GIRL HIR.

saw close at hand some couches decorated with all manner of handsome trappings, but no one to sit or to lie on them. At the same time he remembered that he had some cakes with him, so he took them out of his turban and sat down



and began to eat. All at once he noticed some lovely damsels, well dressed and adorned with rich jewels, coming towards him, and some of them were singing and dancing, and others walking sedately. Being so young he felt afraid, and ran away towards the bank of the river, intending to cross over to the other side. Now Hîr was chief among them all, and when she saw him she sent her damsels to persuade him not to enter the river, and they followed, but could prevail nothing. So Hîr herself went forward then, and gently reproved him, saying,—

“O tall of form, and fair of face,
O youth whose turban’s close embrace
Enfolds thy shapely brow—
Who but a fool, in haste to die,
A river’s fordless depths would try,
As thou art trying now?”

Then, as he was struggling on, the girl plunged in after him, and seizing him by the hand, she said, “Brother, do not kill yourself, the river here is too deep to be crossed.” Her words and her action gave him confidence, and he returned with her to the garden, where she put some questions to him, as to who he was, why he had left his home, and whether or not he could do anything. While she was thus speaking to him, it came into her heart that ~~this youth was the servant of God and endued with grace divine.~~ And in answer to her questions he told her that he had come from Takht-Hazâra, that injustice had driven him away, and that as for employment all he could do was to graze buffaloes. “Ah, then you are in luck,” said she, “for I can get you work to do. I will ask my father to-day!”

So they wandered about the garden together, spending the whole day there, she and he and her company of maidens, and in the evening she parted from him and returned home. Then when her father came in from the



MEETING OF RANJHA AND HIR.

fields, she went to him, and sat down by his side, and spoke to him, thus:—

“O father, I have engaged a servant for you. He grazes buffaloes and understands them. Well content will he be with a *pakka* ¹ of four yards and a *bhûra* ² of eight yards, nor during twelve years will he ever ask for more. No buffalo touched by his rod will ever bring you a bull-calf. He sits on a rock or he stands on a mound, and when he plays on his flute all the herd will follow him home.”

“Very well, daughter mine,” said her father. “All this is very good. What more need we ask from God? He is a good man you say. No buffalo touched by him but brings a she-calf, and, besides all this, you say that when he likes he plays on a flute, and that when he plays all the whole herd comes trooping home to the sound of his music. This is very good, my dear, and we will take him and keep him, so bring the lad hither to me.”

The next day, therefore, Hîr brought Rânjha home to her father's house and he was at once engaged. At first he had charge of the horses, but the work was irksome to him, and after a time he complained to Hîr and said, “You never promised to make me a horse-keeper, Hîr, and the work does not suit me at all. Ask your father therefore to give me charge of his herds of buffaloes, for that was the bargain.” And when she had spoken to her father, saying, “O Father, Rânjha is weary of keeping the horses, and he was promised only the buffaloes,” her father at once answered, “Hîr, my daughter, it was a mistake of the steward, and you can send him to our island of Bela ³ to take care of the buffaloes there.”

So to Bela Rânjha went, and there he became the sole

¹ *Pakka* is a sheet of cotton cloth.

² *Bhûra* is a coarse country blanket.

³ *Bela* is the term for any islet formed by a river.



master of a herd of three hundred buffaloes. Before his arrival at the place it took eight or nine herdsmen to manage so many, but Rânjha managed them all himself. The simple creatures loved him from the first. He would sit all day in the shade with his flute, and towards sunset he would mount a hillock or climb a tree, and there he would play a certain lively tune, and gradually the whole herd would respond to the call, and then follow him whithersoever he went. And so passed the jocund hours away.

One night Hîr dreamed that a man clothed in white garments came to her bedside and spoke to her: "Listen, O daughter," said the voice. "The Five Pîrs have met together and have married you with solemn rites to Rânjha." Hearing these words, Hîr trembled and awoke. As she was in the habit of honouring the prophet Christ every Sunday, and as it was then Sunday eve, she took the phantom which had appeared to her to be a vision of Christ himself, and she received his word with joy, believing that already she was the wife of Rânjha. So the next morning she went up to her father and said, "Father, you know the buffaloes never come to the village. They are kept at Bela and our messengers being very dishonest do not bring us all the milk nor yet the butter which comes from them. Will you then permit me, Father, to go for a few days, and look after these things myself?" And her father was glad, and said, "Go, my child, you have my full consent to do so."

So away went Hîr, and when she came to the island she found Rânjha there, but Rânjha was displeased. "Dearest one," said he, "I never enslaved myself to your father for a morsel of bread and a cup of butter-milk. One motive I had, and it was that I might see you day by day. Perhaps you are not aware that even now you are my wife, and that upon me the Five Pîrs have bestowed your hand.



RANJHA COLLECTING HIS BUFFALOES.



RANJHA IN THE STOCKS.

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But tell me, dear one, do you for your part accept me as your husband?"

Hearing these words she at once called to mind her dream, and she answered, and said, "I have dreamed a dream—this night I dreamt it.—

"I slept, and, lo, a dream I had—
Some heavenly One, in glory clad,
Came nigh me in the night!
'Rânjha,' cried he, 'hath wedded Hîr,
They, the great Five, each one a Pîr,
Performed the sacred rite!'"

So then, joyfully and peacefully, they began to live together one with the other on that little island in the midst of the river Chenâb. Rânjha had no work to do but to sit by the side of Hîr all day long playing his flute, and in the evening he had only to strike up his sunset-tune for all the buffaloes to come running home to the fold. Soon, however, prying people began to whisper about them, and by-and-bye some of them went to her father's house and told tales about them. Then there came a certain beggar-man who reported that whenever he went across to Bela to beg an alms he always found the herdsman sitting on a couch with a plate of *chûri* before him. Now when this was said, Mâhr Chûkak called his sons together, and, finding them very angry at the misfortune which had befallen the family, he strove to appease them, saying: "My sons, you know well that people are in the habit of spreading lies of this description. For my part I think the scandal is false, but let us sift the matter well and then take steps to stop people's tongues. And for this purpose I tell you there is a man—my brother—whose name is Kaido, who is lame of a leg, and who lives in a hut outside the village like a beggar, and keeps dogs and fowls and a goat or two. Call that man to me. I think



he will be the proper person to ascertain if these things are true or false."

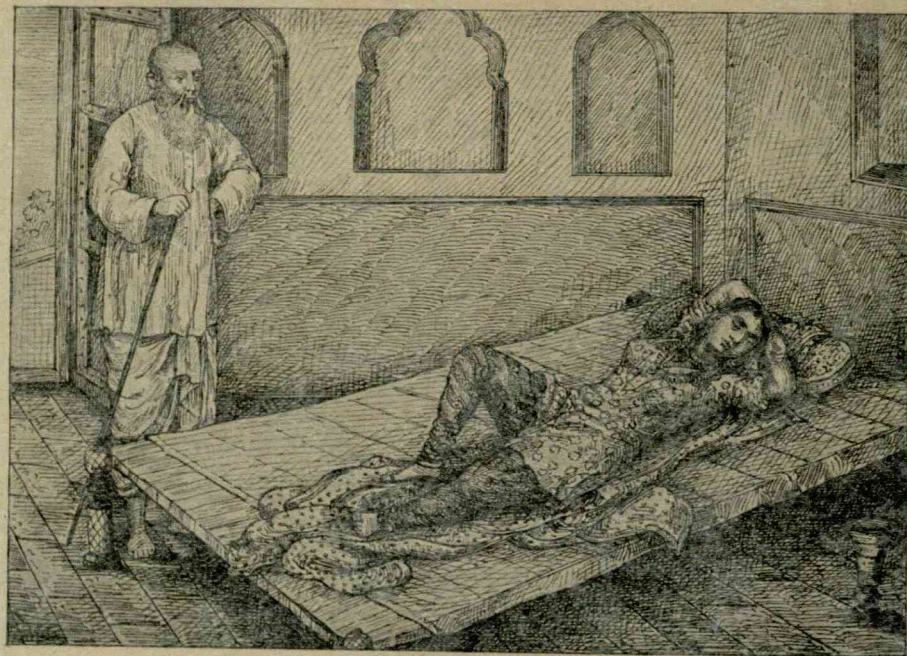
Kaido therefore was summoned, and Mâhr Chûkak asked him whether he would go over to Bela and bring back word what was right and what was wrong there. And Kaido said "Yes," and having so determined he prepared for his visit, for he got a bag made of a leopard's skin, and a staff and a begging bowl, and a brass *lotah* for water, and he put on him a turban of twisted ropes of goat's hair, and being so disguised as a poor wandering fakîr he went across to the island. Now Hîr was then absent, having gone to gather *bêr*¹ berries, but before going she had laid before Rânjha some freshly made *chûri*. And when Kaido arrived at the door of the hut in which they lived he cried in a feigned voice, "Give me some alms! O you resident in this noble mansion, give me some alms in the name of God!" Rânjha then began to consider what there was which he could offer the man, and after thinking awhile he said, "O beggar, come in! Take this platter of fresh *chûri* and begone, for it is all I have." So Kaido took the *chûri*, and right glad he was to get it, because in the *chûri* he had the proof of all the stories told by the town's folk. Therefore, putting the *chûri* in his bag of leopard-skin, he limped away with it as fast as he could.

He had scarcely left the house when Hîr, returning, missed the *chûri*, and addressing Rânjha, she said, "What has become of all the *chûri*?"

"I have eaten it all myself," answered he.

"No, dear," said she, "I do not think you have. You always kept some of it till the evening, and you could not have eaten the whole of it. You say that to-day you have eaten it all? Tell me the truth, please."

¹ A little wild plum.



HIR'S VISION.



Then said he, "It is true that I have not eaten the *chûri*, for I gave it to a poor fakîr."

Hîr felt alarmed when she heard him speak thus, and said, "What kind of man was he?"

"He was an old fellow," answered Rânjha, "and lame of a leg."

Then she understood the whole matter, and became exceedingly sorrowful, saying, "You have done very wrong, my dear. No beggar was that at all, but my uncle Kaido. He will now take the *chûri* to my father, and you, as well as I, will be brought into shame and disgrace." And then, without losing another moment, she took up a heavy stick and ran after the pretended fakîr. Going out of the door she espied him running away at a great distance, and he also, looking behind him, saw his niece in full pursuit, but as he was lame of a leg and she a fine active girl, he was soon overtaken. And when she reached him she gave him four or five good cracks over his head with her stick and knocked him down. Then she tore off his turban of goat's hair, and snatched away his begging-bowl, and seized his leopard-skin bag which she at once opened, and emptied of the *chûri*, while the old rascal lay flat on the ground crying and lamenting and saying, "O daughter, would you lift your hand against your uncle?"

"Yes, a thousand times yes," cried she, "because like a villain you are going to put me to shame."

So with a parting thrust she left him and betook herself back to Rânjha.

But Kaido, gathering himself up, collected all the crumbs of *chûri* he could find, and so went weeping and wailing to his brother, who was just then sitting in his courtyard in the midst of some of his neighbours. To him he presented himself, and, throwing down the



scraps of *chûri* before the whole company, he said,
"Listen to me, O ye Siyâls,

"O hear me speak, for sage advice I give,
No woman-child henceforth permit to live,
Soon as your teeming wives are brought to bed,
Be yours to strike their female children dead!
For know, my kinsmen, Hîr is Rânjha's slave,
His she is now, and his will be beyond the grave!"

Then Mâhr Chûkak rose up in wrath, and ordered his sons to go to the island, to put Rânjha to death, and to bring their sister home. So to Rânjha they went, and sitting down by his side began to seek for some excuse to slay him. "O Rânjha," said they, "the smell of musk comes from you. Whence got you the smell of musk?"

"There is a certain wood," said he, "and the name of that wood is sandal wood. Sandal wood came floating down the river, and the buffaloes drank of the water thereof, and they carry the smell of musk with them wherever they go. But as for me I have not robbed a caravan, still less have I embraced your sister Hîr."

"You utter a lie!" cried they. "You go with our sister Hîr, and out of her bosom comes the smell of the musk that comes from yourself."

Then the two men drew their swords, and they were in the act to cut the lad down, when he spoke again. "Brothers, look here," said he. "Go to the herd and smell the buffaloes' mouths—yea, the odour is in their very dung. You will find that the smell of the musk comes, not from me, but from them. I do not tell you a lie."

The brothers then lowered their weapons and went out, and when they found some buffaloes dung they smelled



HIRA CHASTISES HER UNCLE KAIDO.



THE LOVE STORY OF HIR AND RÂNJHA

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it, and, lo, the smell was as the smell of musk. But it availed not Rânjha, for their father's command was to kill and not to spare him. Going back to his hut, therefore, they again raised their swords to smite him, but in the very act their arms stiffened and remained uplifted, nor could any effort of theirs cause them to descend again. They tried to bring them down, working their bodies now this side, now that, but they tried in vain. Then they began to suspect that Rânjha was different from other men, and believing him to be a prophet of God, they all four fell down at his feet. "Pardon us," said they, "and we will return to our father, and commend you to him that he may give you our sister Hîr to wife. But do you pray for us that our arms may be restored, and for this favour we promise never to move foot or hand against you again." So Rânjha prayed, and the use of their arms came back to them as before.

Now, as they were conferring together, Hîr also came in, and began to taunt and upbraid her brothers for what they had done. "Dear sister," protested they, "we were only acting a part, nor had we any idea of killing Rânjha at all. But we have come to summon you home, for your father wishes to see you for a couple of days, while your mother also is far from well. Get leave, therefore, from Rânjha and go with us back." So she turned to Rânjha and said, "My dear, give me leave now to return with my brothers, and in two days we shall meet again."

On the way to the village she thought much of the treachery of her uncle Kaido in coming to Bela disguised as a poor fakîr, and she saw plainly that he alone could have betrayed her, and that all her troubles had their origin in him. So she said, "Brothers, take me round by the way of our uncle's hut as I have business with him

ROMANTIC TALES FROM THE PUNJAB

of great importance." And they turned aside out of their way, and it was so that when they were passing the hut, and when the two men had gone a little before her, Hîr took some fire and put it to the thatch, and the fire at once burst into a blaze and consumed the whole place, while the lame beggar began to dance and yell with rage. "Ah, Hîr," cried he, "you have done me a wrong in burning my hut! I jumped and danced and O you have burnt up my heart! You have burnt up Khairi, my little Beauty, which had twelve chickens, you have burnt Lohi, my little red bitch that barked at every door, my vessels are burnt, all my household stuffs are burnt, and the bag in which I stored my *bhang*. Countless were the things I had in my house. You have burnt them all—yea, in a word, I may say you have burnt up a very apothecary's shop!" Thus he complained, and then he said, "But I go to your father's house to denounce you."

"Go," said she. "You have burnt fire on my head, and I have burnt fire on yours."

With these words she hastened away and entered her mother's chamber, leaving her wretched uncle without, wringing his hands and bemoaning his hard fate.

That night Mâhr Chûkak and his wife talked only of their daughter Hîr, and the end of it was that her mother said, "Husband, to kill a human being would be the greatest sin, and how much more so when the victim would be your own daughter! No, we must send for the Kâzi and get him to persuade and correct her."

Early in the morning, therefore, a man was despatched to the mosque for the Kâzi, and he was asked to take her in hand, to admonish her with wise counsel, and to bring her to reason. And the Kâzi called her in, and when she came to him he said to her, "O Hîr, you are a good child, your mother is a good woman, and a good man is your father.



HIR GOES HOME WITH HER BROTHERS.



Listen then to good advice, for I have taught you from your childhood up, and I am your master. My dear daughter, do you think it is right or proper to bring trouble and disgrace on your father and mother? You know that long ago they betrothed you to the chief of the Khera tribe, and well you know that every child should obey its father."

"My Pîr is a spirit," answered she, "and he has married me to Rânjha. I have accepted Rânjha, and his shall I be as long as I live."

These words filled the Kâzi's soul with rage, and he said, "O Hîr, artful girl that thou art, listen to me and attend to the words of God! You will be expelled from Paradise to find your portion in Hell!"

"Kâzi," said she, "from my earliest years you have been my instructor, but never from you, O Kâzi, should I have looked for language like this! Rânjha is mine and I am his."

Then the priest opened his book, and showed Hîr some lines written therein, saying to her, "O child of disobedience, do you not see this? Do you dare to bandy words with your Kâzi? I tell you that you are on the straight road to Hell."

"O you consumer of bribes!" cried Hîr. "They have bribed you with five rupees and a betel leaf! A precious *Mûkwâna*^{*} are you! What are you doing, you cunning Kâzi, you deceiver of the people? Why make white the black letters of the Alkorân? May your children perish at home and your oxen abroad! What connection, tell me, is there between love and the doctrines of the Mahomedan Law?"

Then thought the Kâzi within himself "This girl is too infatuated to listen to a word spoken against Rânjha, since

* A priest.



she puts even me to disgrace." As he was thus considering, one of the people of the Kheras came to the door and made signs as though he had somewhat to tell him. But the priest dismissed him with a look, and turning again to Hîr, he said, "I have no power to write, I have not even ink for my pen to describe, the sin you are about to commit. A place will be found for you in the lowest pit of hell if you do not submit yourself to the Law. O Hîr, you will render yourself infamous, and an outcast from your parents, from me, and from all your kin, if you do not obey my order, and give Rânjha up. O believe what I tell you! If you will not accept the Khera as your husband, your father has fully determined to hand you over, body and soul, to the lowest scavenger in all the village."

But Hîr, like the foundations of the earth, remained unmoved. "Hear me, O Kâzi," said she. "To me you are a father, and you, too, have daughters at home in your house. I have begged you, I have prayed you, I have besought you with tears, and ever I call you Miyân.¹ For Rânjha I am going distracted,—

"He is my soldier lad, yea more,
My chosen knight is he!
Him madly, madly I adore,
His life is life of me!

If Rânjha seek the battle-field
To fight against the foe,
O I will be his sheltering shield,
On me shall fall the blow!

Could I in Mecca's sacred place
E'er hope to bow my head,
If I from Rânjha turned my face,
Or Khera loved instead?"

¹ *Miyân*, Master.



"O blasphemy!" cried the priest. "Listen to me and attend, O Hîr, thou crafty one! Fearlessly you utter words without sense, but may speedy death put an end to him, may that Rânjha of whom you are so proud be numbered with the lost!"

"Can prayer be made in vain?" said she.—

"When the sun breaks the power of night
I rub my nose-ring clean and bright;
When the sun halts in mid career,
A gem I choose to deck my ear;
When he marks half the western sky,
My burnished necklace then I try;
Soon as he sinks adown the west,
I don the robe that suits me best;
When bed-time comes my beads I take,
And all my faith's confessions make." *

"O Kâzi," continued she, "neither you nor my father can be judge between Rânjha and me. Let us go to the King and let him be my judge."

The Kâzi then ordered one of his pupils to call in her mother, and when the mother entered the room she looked at her daughter and said, "Hear me, my daughter! Doubtless the Kâzi has explained to you everything. Know then that you have been given in marriage to Sattar, the chief of the Kheras. Why do you bring so much trouble upon us?"

"Mother," answered she, "if you have a single particle of the true Faith in you, do not vex me. Otherwise I will thrust a dagger into my heart, and die here at your feet!"

Her mother then made signs to her younger daughter who went out and brought in her father, and all four sat down together. "O my daughter," said her father, "you

* In other words she observes the five fixed times of prayer in vogue among Mahommedans. See Appendix.



must simply be ruled by us, and obey the orders we give you. Why will you not accept the Khera? God will give you the true Faith."

"O Father," said she, "hear me!—

"One day I ran, urged by some secret power,
And to the ferry came, just as a boat
Came floating in. Within her lay a youth,
And from his face I lifted up the veil,
But when he raised his eyes to look at mine,
Straightway I, swooning, fell. The Khwâjâ Pîr¹
Betrothed me to him; angels whispering low
Performed the ceremony of *Mâyân*;²
To deck me out came jewels down from Heaven,
Pearls for my neck and bracelets for my arms,
And, O, to Rânjha, Father, was I wed!
The angel Jibrâil was there to speak
The solemn words, and Isrâfîl stood by
As witness to the rite, while in the train,
The wedding-train, walked the Five Holy Pîrs,
And God, yea, God Himself, was good to me!
All turned to Rânjha, and they gave him Hîr,
In this world now, and in the world to come."

Meanwhile the Kâzi was muttering to himself—"There are sixteen rubies and seventeen diamonds with five pearls. Five of the rubies are of excellent lustre—what a garland they would make! Who can read me the parable? The men, forsooth, are asses and the women she-asses!" He then addressed himself to Mâhr Chûkak, and said, "Very rich is the Khera. When he was betrothed to Hîr he sent her rubies, diamonds, and pearls of price. And yet notwithstanding all this and much besides, in spite of my precepts and her father's injunctions, she is going to marry a homeless beggarly wanderer, so that your only remedy now is to do away with her altogether."

¹ Khwâjâ Pîr—the deity of the river.

² *Mâyân*, the betrothal ceremony. See Appendix.



HIR'S FATHER SENDS A MISSION TO THE KHERAS.

But here her mother interposed and said: "God forbid—to kill the child must in any case be a sin! The whole world would point the finger of scorn and say we had killed her because she was worthless and bad, and our good name would be for ever lost. No, no, let us rather marry her off to the Khera at once!"

Her advice was approved, and the father Mâhr Chûkak at once proceeded to act upon it. He summoned his family bard as well as a barber and a Brahmin, and despatched them all three to Sattar, the chief of the Kheras, to give him notice that his wedding ceremony would be celebrated in eight days. So the tribe of the Kheras assembled together and held a council, and it was announced to them that Mâhr Chûkak had sent his messengers, saying, "Make your preparations of marriage!" And the news was very welcome to them, and they all began to get ready.

And now Hîr, considering within herself that her fate was inevitable, unless God himself could help her, decided to see Rânjha once more. So, taking with her a bevy of maidens, she set off for the island, and when she arrived there she found Rânjha sitting under a tree engaged in prayer. "Dear Rânjha," said she, "what about the buffaloes? Are they quite well?"

"What do I know about the buffaloes?" answered he.

She, supposing him to be angry, sat down by his side, and said, "It is not on the buffaloes' account I have come—let them go! I have come to tell you something." Then in a little while she spoke to him thus,—



M

y father's buffaloes are mine—whole herds
 He now has given me. Fairies are some,
 And some are lovelier than birds
 Of Paradise, that go and come,
 Or houris soft and fair.

ROMANTIC TALES FROM THE PUNJAB

Look at their dazzling teeth! No jasmine flower,
 No dainty bud, can boast so pure a white!
 And, O, their curving horns! What power,
 And what rare symmetry unite
 Magnificently there!

When they go forth, is there a pasture sweet
 But puts on warmer smiles for them?
 When they troop home, our tiny street
 Wears beauty like a diadem,
 Though mean enough before.

Perdition seize them! Yea, may they devour
 Their owners, Rânjha!—But, for me
 And you, O snatch this fleeting hour,
 And in my arms content yourself to be—
 Perchance you may embrace me nevermore!

Moreover, she told him of her approaching marriage with the Khera, and said, “I will send for you the day before the wedding, and then shall I see whether or not the power of God is upon you.”

“My dear heart,” said Rânjha. “I have no such power at all. I am a simple man and cannot pretend to favour or grace more than another. But let us trust in God, who only can make darkness light.”

When Hîr returned to her house, she found that the *mâhdi*¹ had been prepared for her, and as she entered her apartment a certain woman whose duty it was called her and said, “Dear child, come, stretch out your hand!” But, instead of giving her hand, she slapped the woman’s face, saying, “O mother, you have distilled the mâhdi, but whose hands would you redden therewith? I am betrothed to Rânjha, and would you give me to the Khera?”

At last the marriage procession arrived, and after the performance of all the preliminary rites, the ceremony itself

¹ Mâhdi, a red vegetable stain, similar to henna, for staining the nails, the palms of the hands, and soles of the feet.



RE-UNION OF HIR AND RANJHA



HIR BEATS THE PRIEST.



began to be solemnized. For the girl's mother had sent for the Kâzi and her father and several other persons. First of all came her father and the Kâzi, who addressed her and said, "Dear child, we hope you will consider us, and not put us to disgrace in the presence of so many people."

"O let me be," said she, "for well you know that I have already been married to Rânjha!"

Then was Sattar Khera made to sit down, and the Kâzi began the ceremony, but Hir sprang up from her place, and seizing a rod, smote the priest upon the head. "Ah," cried he, "the bridegroom sat down ready to begin, but she, the insolent and perverse, has plucked out my beard!"

"O Kâzi," said she, "listen to me,—

"The month of July has descended in flood,
And the barrier-sands have been carried away;
Deep, deep, and as fierce in my heart and my blood
Rolls the river of love—
Can you turn it with threats, or with menaces stay?"

Also she said,—“But for you, O stony priest, may God consign you to lamentable shame and disgrace without end, and may like disgrace befall your daughters as well!”

Then she went out of the house, her mind fixed wholly on Rânjha. But her mother, who was not willing that further forbearance should be shown her, now ordered that she should be taken by force and made over at once to the Khera. So the servants seized her, and with violence thrust her into the pâlki which was waiting ready to receive her.

That same morning Rânjha was lying asleep among the trees of Bela when the Five Pîrs appeared to him and said, "Sir, are you asleep? Know you not that your wife is going away with the Khera?" All five of them stood at



his head, saying, "Rise up, O wretched one,—the Kheras are about to bear her away!"

Then Rânjha sprang to his feet, and, by the power of the Pîrs, he at once found himself standing close to the pâlki in which Hîr had been seated. Now no one was able to lift that pâlki. The very strongest of the Kheras tried to raise it, but he tried in vain. In spite of all their struggles the pâlki remained immovable. And all the time Rânjha stood by, while the Five Pîrs stood behind him. And when the people, notwithstanding every endeavour, found themselves unable to lift the pâlki, then they called the Kâzi, and the Kâzi, coming to Hîr, spoke and said, "O daughter, you shall have all the wealth you desire. We will give you apparel and ornaments, rubies and diamonds; but for God's sake dismiss Rânjha from your mind, forget him for one moment, so that the pâlki may be raised and the honour of your family preserved." But Hîr answered him not, only she looked towards the Five Pîrs and towards Rânjha, and she said, "Let the Five Pîrs speak. If they do, another pâlki will descend from Heaven, and in one pâlki shall sit Hîr and in the other, Rânjha!"

So the Five Pîrs prayed before God, and immediately, to the surprise of all men, another pâlki descended from Heaven. But the Kheras, bewildered and astonished, turned towards Mâhr Chûkak and his wife, who, answering, said, "We were her parents, and truly we brought her into the world, but that Hîr was married to Rânjha is news indeed—we never understood it before."

And now Rânjha stepped forth and took his place, and the Five Pîrs ordered angels of God to come down and bear the pâlki away. And there appeared two angels, beautiful and strong, who, lifting the pâlki in their hands, bore them upwards, and carried them swiftly to Mecca.



HIR AND RANJHA BORNE AWAY BY *JINNS*.

THE LOVE STORY OF HIR AND RANJHA 67

And there, having paid their devotions, the two lovers lived happily together for many years, and if, as we believe, they never died, they are living still in one of the islands of Arabia.

Told by the bard, Sher, at Abbottabad. October, 1889.





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CSL

A STORY OF GUL BADSHAH

A STORY OF GUL BADSHAH

The true King is God; I tell of Kings who vanish away.



EAR a story of Gûl Bâdshâh, the name of whose queen was Manavûr. ¹ He was just and good, very jealous of his name, and all the world

spoke well of him. One day his vizier came to him and said,—

“O King, the Queen goes and comes just as she pleases. Let her go out, but only at stated times. It is not good for queens to go out so much.”

“But the Queen,” answered the King, “gets tired of the house, and she goes out and comes back refreshed. So best,—let the Queen be, vizier!”

Again, after some days, the vizier came to the King and mentioned the name of the Queen to him in such a way that he set the King a-thinking, and by-and-bye the King began to suspect something.

Now Queen Manavûr had a sister whose name was Senâh, and the two lived in the palace together. One day when

¹ From *Manavûr*, “heart-ravishing”.

these two went out walking as usual, the King took his bow and his quiver, and, with his dog at his heels, he followed them. On they went until they came to a garden



of trees, and the King having tracked them, stole up and saw both ladies sitting with two huge men called dhehs, that is to say, two demons or ogres. At that moment the



Then glanced back, and spied the King coming, and said to her dheh, "The King, the King, he is coming and will strike!" Then she shrank away as if in fear of the dheh, and so crouching, awaited events.

Now when the King came quite close up, the second dheh rose, and snatching up the Princess Senâh, flew off with her after the manner of dhehs; but the Queen's dheh rushed at the King and would have slain him, had not the King's dog seized him by the leg and held him fast until the King, fitting an arrow to his bow, took aim and laid the monster low. Thus, the dheh being dead, the Queen Manavûr ran away home for her life, and went trembling to her rooms. But the King entered moody and sullen and sat down in his hall of audience and awaited the coming of his vizier, who, when he saw him, said, "O King, you are upset, your mind is disturbed!"

At that time, however, the King did not answer, but remained silent, and soon he went in; and as he sat by himself he began to consider and to meditate, saying, "Surely nothing in the world is so faithful as a dog. O excellent hound, O faithful friend, but for you, your master would be lying cold and stiff in the garden of cypresses!" So the King sent for his vizier and told him the whole story,—how the Queen was false, how the Princess had vanished, and how one of the dhehs lay dead in the garden. "But I do not wish to kill her," said he, "for if I killed my Queen, the people would not understand, they would believe even worse things of her, and on me and on my house would fall trouble and disgrace, and everywhere in my kingdom men would give me a bad name. To save my honour, therefore, contrive something; invent what scheme you please, but whatever you do, let it be settled that the Queen shall eat day by day of the leavings of my dog, since, when she was false, my dog was true!"



So it came to pass that a house was built covered all over with bristling spear-heads so that the Queen could not possibly escape, or in any way be reached; and every day when the faithful dog had finished his daily meal the vizier carried his leavings to that dismal place and gave them to the Queen with his own hands. So passed many days. But the King was not satisfied, and sometimes he sent forth his vizier disguised into the city to listen to the speech of the people and to report their sayings. And when the vizier returned and the King enquired, "What are the people saying?" the vizier would answer, "No one suspects, for no one knows that the Queen is not in the palace." These reports, however, the King never believed, and for greater secrecy he ordered all his servants to live without the walls. "Let no one spend the night within the palace grounds," said he. But even that precaution did not ease the mind of the King, who, growing more and more suspicious, at last retired to the top of a certain mountain, where he had a strong castle, in which he took up his abode and in which the Queen languished miserably, feeding like a beast on the leavings of the old dog. And no guard or attendant or servant, once engaged, was allowed to leave the premises, under pain of sword or gibbet. Nor could anyone approach from without, for on one side were steep places, and on the other, at the foot of that mountain, flowed a river twelve miles broad, on which no boat was suffered to ply.

Now it had so happened, that it was in the very country which lay on the opposite side of the river that the second dheh had settled when he had flown away with the Princess Senâh. But he had died, leaving the Princess alone. And in the place where the dheh had died and the Princess was living, there were heard every Thursday night the most dismal wailings and moanings, nor could anyone find



PRINCE AHMED AND THE GHOSTS



A STORY OF GUL BADSHAH

CSL

out what they were. And when the Kings of that part came to see the Princess Senáh and to ask her to marry them she always imposed conditions, saying to them, "First I will only marry the man who will stop the wailing, and secondly, I will only marry the man who will bring me tidings of Gûl Bâdshah." Many were the Princes who essayed the tasks imposed on them, but none of them succeeded. No one was able to stop the wailings, and no one could bring her news of Gûl Badshah, for the Queen was too straitly confined; and as for the wailings, all the old men declared they had gone on for years time out of mind, so that the Kings had all to return to their homes as they came.

It chanced, however, that in those parts there was one King named Chand Bâdshah, who had seven sons by one Queen, and one son only by another Queen. All the seven elder brothers were married, but not so the half-brother. This young Prince, whose name was Ahmed, sometimes visited his brothers' wives, who never failed to taunt him, saying, "If you were worth anything at all, you would go and stop the wailing and marry the Princess." Stung by these reproaches, he at last answered them, "Now I go! If I stop the wailing, all's well; if not, I will return no more." So he left his home, and after wandering from place to place, he at last arrived at the palace of the Princess and asked her hand in marriage. But she answered him, "Stop the wailing noise and marry me, and bring me news of Gûl Bâdshah and marry me, but never shall man marry me until both my behests are fulfilled." Having received his answer, he repaired to the place of the wailings to observe, climbing the hills and going down to the valleys, sometimes by night, sometimes by day, and all to no purpose. But, when he enquired of the neighbours, he heard that in such a place lived a very old man who by trade



ROMANTIC TALES FROM THE PUNJAB

s a goldsmith. To him he went, and when he spoke him the old man answered, "Why have you come to e, and for what purpose do you ask such things? For is is a most difficult enterprise, and you are merely a d. Better go home again!"

"Nay," answered the Prince, "only tell me the story, for learn the secret I must!"

"Heed then my words," said the old man. "In former times that was a place where evil men were wont to rob and murder the innocent. In those days there once came a wedding party who implored the inhabitants to escort them through the dark defiles where the robbers used to lurk and where the murders took place, but, out of all the people, only ten men would venture to go. As soon as they got down to a certain place, as they were travelling along, out rushed the robbers and massacred every soul of the party. And, because those ten men had gone freely to their death, therefore the people reckon them as martyrs. Yet, out of the ten, nine only were good men. The tenth was a usurer. And every Thursday night, week by week, for the souls of the nine good men, rice comes down from heaven, but for the soul of the usurer come only stones, and ever as he gnaws his stones he keeps wailing and wailing. Hence the dismal noise which is heard in all the country side."

Having heard this story, the Prince set out for the mountain defile, and on Thursday night he sat down near the spot at which those men had fallen under the sword. And as he sat, the souls of those ten men gathered, and came to the place, and also sat down. And the nine good men said among themselves, "To-night we have a guest, let us spare a little for him from every mess." So they all gave, each of them dropping a little of his rice into a dish, which they then presented to the Prince. And when



PRINCE AHMED AND THE TIGERS.



the tenth saw that, he said, "As you have given of yours, I too must give of mine," and he gave the Prince a stone, and having so done, he went away and sat down by himself. Then said the Prince, "Food you have brought me, but wherefore this stone?" All that mystery they explained to him fully, and they also said, "In a little while you will hear the sound of the wailing."

"But what is the meaning of it?" asked the Prince.

Then the nine answered, "In life he was worth lacs and lacs of rupees, yet never gave a pice in charity. All his treasure he buried in the ground, while the poor starved, and that is why he is now so punished."

"But may I not speak to him," said the Prince, "if only to say to him 'God bless you!'"

So the nine good martyrs took him to their fellow-martyr, and when the Prince saw him he had pity on him, and begged him to tell him the reason of his misery.

"When I was in life," said the usurer, "and when my debtors came to me with their supplications, I used to say to them, 'First pay your interest and then take your principal, first pay your interest and then take your principal!' But, O sir, if you could only find my money, which is a vast sum, and distribute it all in charity, then God perhaps would release me! It lies buried in the village of the old goldsmith."

When morning came all the ghosts disappeared, and the Prince returned to the village. But he had forgotten to ask the bad man his name, so he went to the old goldsmith and said to him, "What were the names of the ten martyrs?" And the old man answered so and so. "But what was the name of the rich usurer?" asked Ahmed.

"That man," said he, "was named Din."

"Can you tell me anything about him?" said the Prince.

"I can tell you everything," said the goldsmith.

"Then has he any relations left still in this place?"

"None of his own descendants," answered the man, "but some of his daughter's descendants are here."

But when the Prince went to enquire, he found only one great-grand-daughter left, and she in the greatest poverty. At that very moment she was so poor that she was patching up her wretched hovel herself, with mud. So he addressed her and said, "Was not your great-grandfather named Dîn?"

"Yes," answered she. "Dîn was my grandfather's name."

"Alas," said he, "that ancestor of yours is now a cursed being. For the sake of his name, then, give something away in charity."

At this the woman got angry, and throwing some of her mud to one side, "Here—take this!" cried she, "This I will give, if you like,—it is all he ever left me."

"But had he never a house of his own, your great-grandfather Dîn?" asked the Prince.

"O yes, he had," said she, "but poverty compelled us to sell it to a grain-seller."

"Come, show me the place," said he.

So they both went together, and having reached the house, the Prince said to the bunniah, "Did you buy Dîn's property from this woman?"

"Yes," answered the man.

"But," said the Prince, "did you buy the house only, or did you buy the land as well?"

"I bought the house only," said he.

On hearing this, the Prince began digging. After some time he came upon three large jars full of money, which he lifted out, and then said to the woman, "All this money was your great-grandfather's."

"I have nothing to do with it," said she. "Give me but enough to live upon, and the rest take yourself."



Then said he to the bunniah, "If for twenty rupees you bought this house, take now thirty and quit."

"You speak so handsomely," said the bunniah, "and have behaved so well, why should I ask more than I paid?"

The Prince then took the money and divided it into three parts. One part with the house he gave to the woman, but with the other two parts he bought horses and goods and raiment and food, and began to distribute them day by day in charity, but always in the name of Din. Each Thursday the wailing sounded less and less dreadful, and it ceased completely to be heard as soon as the whole of the money had been given to the poor. Then went the Prince back to the Princess and said, "One of my tasks is done."

"I know it," said she, "but the other still remains. Bring me now news of Gûl Bâdshah, and my hand shall be yours."

So the Prince set out again, and coming to the old goldsmith, he stated the case to him and said, "What shall I do now?"

"Alas," said he, "this is a most difficult business, and you such a stripling! First of all you must pass through jungles full of tigers and monkeys and huge birds of prey."

"If I die," said the Prince, "go I must."

"Come," said the old man. "I will advise you, and if you will follow my counsels you will succeed."

"What do you advise?" asked the Prince.

"First of all," said the old man, "when you come to the country of the tigers, be not afraid, but go forward, and say unto them, 'In the name of God!' Then they will allow you to pass, and none will molest you. Again, when you get to the country of the great birds, say in like manner, 'For the sake of God!' and they too will let you pass. But the monkeys will not obey that charm. Therefore be careful to take with you some grain, as much



as you can carry, and when they begin to swarm about you, scatter it on the ground, for monkeys are greedy folk, and they will stop to fill their mouths, and meanwhile you can pass safely through."

So the Prince took with him a bag full of grain and started on the adventure. When he came to the tigers he cried, "In the name of God!" and so passed on. And when he came to the monkeys he threw at them handfuls of the grain which monkeys love. Grain by grain, the monkeys stopped to pick it up, while the Prince passed on in safety. Then he came to the huge birds, numbers of which came flying round him and spoke to him, and thanked God for his grace in sending them a human being for their dinner that day. And their words were so alarming that the Prince had need of all his courage.

"You speak of eating me," said he. "But see my bow and my arrows—I can shoot you down two at a time."

Then said the king of the birds to him, "Who then are you?"

"I am a king," answered he.

"You a king?" cried the bird. "And do you understand shooting?"

"Yes, I do," answered the Prince.

"Be it so," said the bird. "I will hold up my claw, and if you can hit my claw with one of your arrows, pass in peace in the name of God!"

So the bird held up a claw, but the Prince suspecting a trick, determined to aim at the leg, "for," said he, "I think that bird will lower his claw, and if he do, then I shall hit him fair."

As a matter of fact the bird did lower his claw, and the arrow hit it and pierced it through. And the Chief of the birds was so astonished at this exploit that at once he ordered an escort of birds to see the Prince safely out of



PRINCE AHMED AND THE BIRDS.



his territory. Nevertheless the wounded bird remained behind, but it was not to waylay the Prince, though the Prince thought it might have been so; and when they arrived at the boundary of the kingdom of the birds, their leader begged a token from the Prince, who gave him a ring as a pledge that his engagement had been faithfully kept, and then the escort returned, while the Prince continued his journey alone.

[At last he came to the banks of the river, but neither boat nor boatman, nor any person whatsoever, was to be seen anywhere, and how to cross no one could tell him. Now there grew there an enormous *sîsam* tree, and as he was very tired he sought the shade of it, and lying down commended himself to God and went to sleep. In his sleep he dreamed that he heard the loud cries of birds, and started up, but could see no one. But there the cries were just the same, and they seemed to come from a great nest high up in the tree. And as he looked he saw a huge snake crawling up from branch to branch, and the higher he went, the more loudly shrieked the young birds, and the more they fluttered. When the Prince understood the affair, he drew his bow and the snake fell dead, pierced by a sharp arrow, while he himself, weary with travel, lay down and went to sleep once more.

After a time the two old birds returned, bringing food for their young ones, and seeing a strange man lying there, they began to say to each other,—“For six years past, this fellow has been coming here stealing our young ones. Now, before feeding them, let us kill him!”

But the youngsters, overhearing their speech, cried, “The man has saved our lives in such sort that to the end of our days we can never be thankful enough.”]

“Nay,” said the old birds. “The rogue is an enemy, and an enemy he has been for six years past.”



"O no," said the young ones, "not he at all, but that monstrous snake. See where he lies!"

And when the old birds saw the snake, they were convinced, and straightway wetting their wings in the river, they spread them over the sleeping Prince to shade and refresh him. When, however, he at last awoke, he looked up, and began to think he was to be devoured, but the birds said, "Don't be afraid!"

"I am distressed," said the Prince, "because it would seem that God has only given me trouble on trouble."

But the birds reassured him by telling him their story, and by thanking him for his kindness, after which they said to him, "Can we do anything for you? Other people can work with their hands, but we will work with our eyes for you!"

"I wish to cross the river," said he, "to get news of Gûl Bâdshah and his *begam*."

Then said the male bird, "You rest awhile here, and I will cross and bring you all the news possible."

"O no," said the Prince, "my promise was that I should go myself and see with my own eyes."

"In any case it is now too late," said the bird. "Remain therefore with us and rest. We can give you food, we can catch you a deer. Shall we bring it alive or dead?"

"Bring it to me alive," said the Prince.

So it was said, and so it was done. The deer was brought in alive, and the Prince killed it, and, having made a fire, he roasted the flesh of it, and ate, and slept. And when the morning came the male bird descended from the tree and bade the Prince mount on his back and close his eyes. And swiftly he rose, and swiftly flying over the river set the Prince down close to the castle. "Now I am going," said he, "but, as you have done us a service so great that we can never repay it, take from me this feather, and if ever you are in danger or in need of



PRINCE AHMED KILLS THE SNAKE.



help, burn the end of it in a flame, and one or both of us will come to your aid."

Having so said, the bird took wing once more, and instantly disappeared. But the Prince entered first a neighbouring town, and the people took note of him, and when they asked him why he was there, he answered, "I have come to enter the service of the King." And they said, "Are you mad to think of such a thing? For neither will you have leave to go, nor will you even save your life if you attempt it."

"What does it matter," said the Prince, "since I have made up my mind to face the risk?"

At the castle gate, the sentry warned him too, and an old domestic said to him, "Ah fool, to come to a place like this," but still he persisted, until someone went and told the King, who came and said to him, "Whence come you?" And while the Prince answered something, the King said, "Why have you come?"

"I am merely one of the King's servants," said the Prince. "Let me be one of your bodyguard."

"My servants come, but they never go," said the King. "Neither absence nor leave is theirs, and death is the penalty of desertion. So come or else go at once."

"Try me," said the Prince; "these conditions I accept."

So Prince Ahmed entered the service of Gûl Bâdshah, who furnished him with arms and sent him to guard the Queen. She was confined in a tower by herself, and her cell was dark and narrow. There she languished from day to day, fed upon the leavings of a dog, though still she looked like a human being. All these things the Prince soon discovered, and when he had seen and learnt everything he determined to get away. So he went to the King and said, "I have made a great mistake, and as this service does not suit me I wish to go, or at least to take leave."



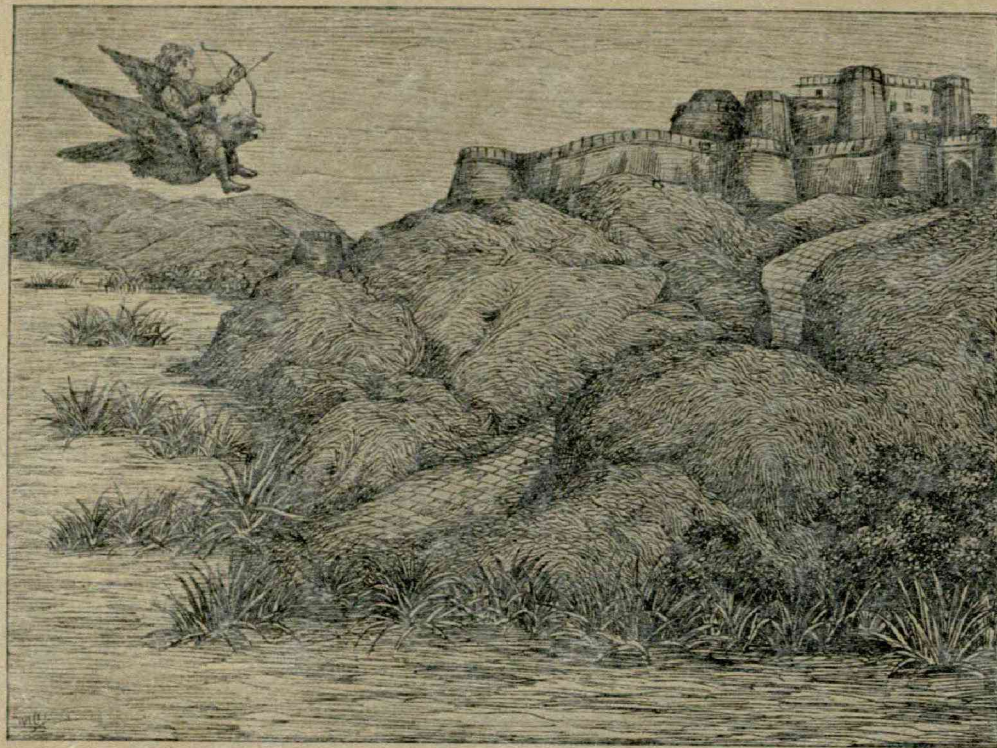
"One thing you may do," answered the King, "and one only. You can remain living or dead."

"Nay," answered the Prince. "I will not stay here either living or dead, but I will go."

So the King called for a sword, but Prince Ahmed said, "First let me have respite merely so much as to allow me to take my farewell of the world from the house-top."

The King consenting, the Prince took with him a little fire, and running up the steps to the top of the tower, he took out his feather and held it for a moment over the ember, and, when it flamed, at once both the birds appeared ready to do him service. Meanwhile the King had sent up some of his guards, saying, "If he refuse to descend, kill him on the spot." Hearing their approach, the birds advised despatch, saying, "Make your salaams and mount at once, lest you be overtaken by an arrow." So the Prince turned towards the palace, and with a respectful salaam he thanked the King for his hospitality, and exclaiming, "Now, I am off!" mounted the male bird, and in a moment was carried far away to the other side of the river. Thus when the slaves reached the top of the tower they found no one there, and at once returned to report the circumstance to the King, who, falling into a rage, seized a sword and ran up himself, but when he saw the place deserted, he cried, "Ah, the fellow was some traitor from another land! He has escaped me, and now my dishonour will be published to the world."

But the Prince had landed in safety under the great tree on which sat the young ones, now well able to fly. And he said to the male bird, "Carry me, I pray you, over the jungles." And the male bird said, "Take one of my young ones also to remain with you always and to be your attendant." At first the Prince refused this gift, but afterwards he consented. Then he mounted once more, and



PRINCE AHMED COMES TO THE CASTLE

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RESCUE OF PRINCE AHMED.

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away they flew over hills and plains of forest and jungle, where lived the monkeys and the tigers and the birds that devoured travellers, and at last they alighted not many marches from the house of the Princess Senâh. There the old bird made his salaams to him, and committed to him the young one, who promised to be faithful and bring news when trouble threatened, and after that he took his leave of them both, and returned to his mate. But the Prince continued his journey on foot, until he reached the village of the old goldsmith, who, when he had heard of all his adventures, said, "Now go boldly to the Princess and claim her." This the Prince did not fail to do, and when he saw her he said, "I have obeyed your orders. I have fulfilled both the conditions, do you believe it, or not?"

"Tell me," said she, "the whole story from first to last, and then I will tell you whether I believe it or not."

So she sat and listened, while the Prince related his adventures in wild places, in the countries of the tigers and the monkeys and the savage birds, and told her of the enormous snake, and how God had shown him kindness at the river, and brought him two great fowls to carry him over and to carry him back. "And your sister the Queen," said he, "is still alive; she lives in a barred chamber, and eats the leavings of the King's dogs, and yet in spite of it all, she has still something of the look of a woman."

"All this is true," cried the Princess when he had ended. "I knew beforehand that this would happen, and so now I accept you."

But by this time she had become very poor, and for that reason she would have put him off, he being a Prince, and she a Princess. "But see," said she, "I have left a ruby chain of great price—pledge it, and procure me suitable conveyance, and I will go with you to your country."

So after the wedding was over, a handsome doolie was brought, into which the Princess got in her loveliest robes, and they both started for the court of Chand Bādshah, the Prince's father. When within two marches of the capital, a herald was sent forward to announce their coming, and the news spread far and wide. His mother was over-joyed, and his father saddled his horse and rode out with a brilliant retinue to welcome his long-lost son, and, having met him on the road, he embraced him, and escorted them both with great ceremony into the town. But Princess Senâh delayed to visit her seven sisters, the wives of the other seven Princes, until she had new apparel provided to visit them in state. "I must put off my call," said she, "until my things are ready."

"Nay," answered her mother-in-law, "you shall not need to wait. You shall have all you require immediately. See, I have brought with me gold apparel and jewellery in abundance, trinkets and bangles, a mirror of pearls for your finger, pendants for your head, a ring for your nose, and slaves withal to attend you. What need you more?"

So then she began to adorn herself handsomely, and her ornaments jingled like bells the moment she moved. And when she was ready, her husband, Prince Ahmed, escorted her forth, and her doolie bore her to the palace of her new sisters, who already possessed her likeness, but who were forced to admit that the reality far surpassed the picture.

Now the seven Princes were of old envious of their youngest brother because he was the son of another woman, and they began to conspire. "We had got this fellow," said they, "out of the way, but here he is back again in greater glory than ever." Their hatred against him increased when Prince Ahmed demanded territory to maintain his dignity, and especially after he had said to them, "You are seven sons of one mother, I am the only



THE PRINCESS SENAH AT COURT.



son of another mother. By custom and law, therefore, half the kingdom should be yours, and the other half should be mine."

"No," said the brothers, "make eight parts of it and take one, and do not expect any more."

While these disputes were raging among his children, the old King Chand Bâdshah died and was buried. And when he was dead the wife of the eldest brother spoke and said to her husband, "Give him half the kingdom, and then fight him and take all his land from him, since you are seven to one." But the seven brothers scorned this advice as being the advice of a woman, and with Ahmed they agreed to call in a neighbouring king as umpire, who, when he had come and feasted for seven days, said to the seven, "Give your youngest brother one half of the kingdom, since it is his by right." This then accordingly they did, but when the land was divided, they soon picked a quarrel against him and began to make war upon him, and to take from him his towns and his castles. In his extremity Prince Ahmed summoned his favourite heron, but it was not to be found in its house or elsewhere, and search was made for it in vain. But the people heard say that the brothers had poisoned it with oil, because a wise man had informed them that it could fly one hundred miles in a single breath to bring news to its master and to fetch him assistance. Then in his trouble Prince Ahmed turned to his friend the umpire king, who promised speedy relief, which when the seven heard, they sent ambassadors to their brother desiring peace. "Let us agree to lay down our arms," said they, "and let us quarrel no more."

"I am the youngest," answered Ahmed, "and you are my elders. For that reason, if for no other, I desire to be on neighbourly terms with you."

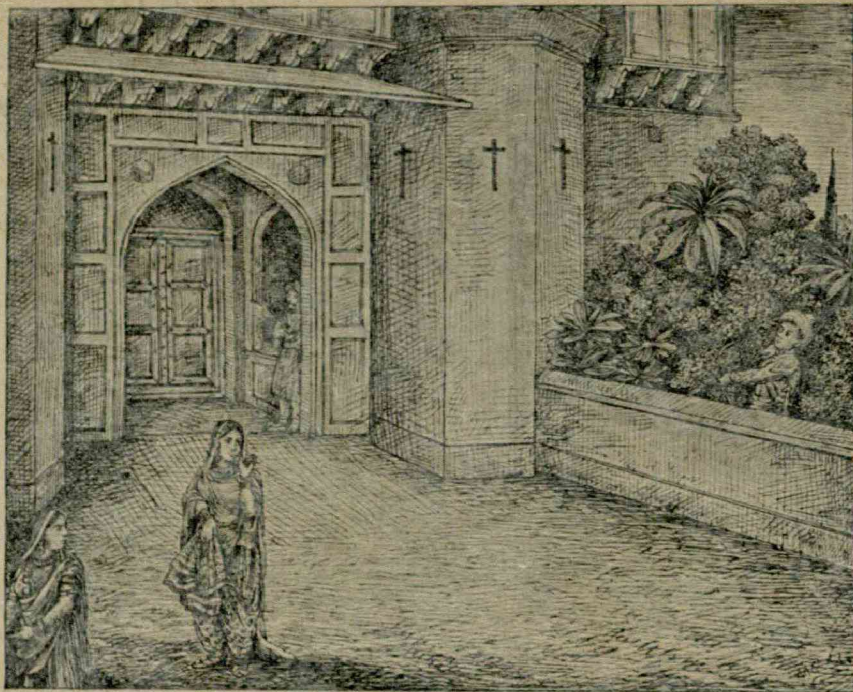
Now at that time there was living with the seven

Princesses an old woman whose name was Badnâmi. She, coming to the wicked Princes, as they sat together, said, "Give me the order, and I will contrive the death of Prince Ahmed at once." So they gave her leave.

There was then peace between the brothers, and they were all together at the capital of the seven, for Prince Ahmed and his wife had come on a visit to them. And Badnâmi went to the Princess Senâh and said, "Alas, Lady, your husband has accused you to me only this very day of freedoms with one of his brothers, but O do not repeat what I say, lest I fall into trouble." Then she went to the Prince and whispered to him privately under a similar promise of secrecy, "Alas, how men are always suspected! Only this very day your wife accused you to me of freedoms with one of her slave-girls."

Thus this wicked old woman sowed the seeds of jealousy between the husband and the wife, and one day when the Prince was away in the garden, she ran to him and said, "At this very moment one of your brothers is walking off with your wife."

Then she ran to the Princess and cried, "O haste, Lady, haste, your husband at this very moment is running off with your beautiful slave-girl!" Hearing these words, the young Queen rushed out into the garden, and Prince Ahmed seeing her as he approached the house, and believing as he did that she was hastening to meet her lover, shot her dead without a moment's delay, with the bow which he bore in his hand. But when he came up to her and looked at her quivering body, it smote him to the heart that he had never questioned her. The seven brothers of course rejoiced, and, as they sat together in the evening, they said among themselves, "Half the work is already done, half only now is left!" But as for Prince Ahmed he wandered forth, and sat him down in a lonely spot by



DEATH OF THE PRINCESS.

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himself. There his minister found him, and when he came to him he said, "What answer will you give before God in the next world for the murder of that poor Princess?" And as he thought of all the perils he had gone through in order to win her, his heart broke, and, falling backwards, he died.

Then was the whole realm seized by the seven brothers, and they enjoyed it; but their pride was not for long, for Prince Ahmed's mother went to the umpire king and to various other kings, and having brought an army, declared war against those unnatural brothers, two of whom were slain, and the rest banished, while the old Queen ascending the throne herself, had the obsequies of Prince Ahmed and Princess Senâh performed with suitable splendour, and their memories preserved in sumptuous tombs set in the midst of gardens of fountains and flowers.

*Told at Hâji Shâh, near Attock, by Gholâm, a Muham-
 madan villager, 1880.*





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THE RASALU LEGEND

STORY I

RASALU'S EARLY LIFE



A RAJPUT.

RAJA RASALU

RASALU'S EARLY LIFE *

"On a Tuesday he entered his narrow domain,
 A Saturday smiled when he left it again;
 O then was brought forth that monarch of might,
 And Rasâl on the day of his birth was he hight."



AJA SULWAHAN (SALIA-
 VAHAN) OF SIALKOT, a
 descendant of the great
 king famous in story,
 whose name was Vi-
 krâmâjît, of the empire

of Ujâin, had two queens, the elder of whom
 was Ichrân, and the younger Lûna, a tanner's
 daughter. By the former whom he had married
 first, he had a son Pûran, who by the advice of
 the astrologers was secluded from the sight of
 his father in a lonely palace from the moment
 of his birth until he was twelve years old. On his release
 from duress, he was permitted to appear at court, and his
 father on one occasion sent him to pay his respects to his
 newly married wife, Râni Lûna, who was about the same
 age as the young prince and exceedingly fair. Pûran also

* This introductory chapter is compiled from scattered fragments and traditions.



was remarkable for his great beauty, and Râni Lûna, when she saw him, fell deeply in love with him. But because he absolutely refused to listen to her, she procured his disgrace, and his deluded and incensed father condemned him to exile and death. The executioners to whom he was committed carried him far away into the wilds, where they cut off his hands and his feet and cast him into a ruined well, there to languish and die. In that dismal place he lingered for many a year until he was rescued by the great saint Gûrû Gorakhnâth, who restored his limbs to him sound and whole as before, and showed him kindness and protection.

Prince Pûran now determined to turn fakîr, and concealing his identity, he temporarily took up his abode, by his director's advice, in a certain abandoned garden close to the palace of his father in Siâlkôt. The fame of his sanctity spread far and wide, until it was reported to the King Sûlwâhân that the very trees of the garden, which had withered up to the roots and died, were miraculously beginning to bud and to put forth leaves. So the king and his younger queen, desiring the same favour, went to visit him. As they approached the spot, Pûran said to himself—"Here comes my father, and not only he, but my stepmother as well; if she should chance to recognise me, she will again plot to work me ill."

But being a good man he considered once more,—
"Never mind, I trust in God. Whatever she does she must account for hereafter; and so, whether she remember me or not, still out of respect I will rise and do obeisance to them."

When the king and his consort arrived at the place, Pûran stood up and bowed himself humbly, with his eyes fixed on the ground.

"Ah!" cried the king, "you have acted amiss; you

THE RASALU LEGEND

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are a fakîr, and it is I who should have humbled myself to you."

"O King," answered he, "I had a master once, but he



is dead, and, as I do remember, his face and form were not unlike those of your Highness: that is the reason I rose and salaamed at your approach."



Then the queen addressed him and said,—“I also have come to see you, for I have no children.”

“You shall certainly have a son,” replied the fakîr, “but your son's mother will always be crying, even as the mother of your step-son was always crying. And just as by reason of the fraud contrived by you the son of Râni Ichrân fell upon evil days, so, though, as a mighty hero vowed to solitude, your son shall conquer his foes, yet he shall at last perish through the guile of a woman.”

With these words Pûran handed to his father a single grain of rice, bidding him administer the same to Râni Lûna, in order that the promised son should come into the world.

In due time the event as foretold came to pass, and the king named the child Rasâl or Rasâlu. Sorrow and heaviness attended his birth, for the conjunction of his stars presaged a life of storm and strife, and the astrologers prophesied evil to the king on account of him. Scarcely had he opened his eyes on the world, therefore, when he was banished to a solitary place, and, like his half-brother Pûran before him, he was not permitted to see his father for twelve weary years. As he advanced in growth, however, he enjoyed a foretaste of his future glory in the stories of kings and heroes, which were recited or sung to him day by day by bards and minstrels, until the very name of war and the sound of arms tingled in his ears like music. All that was suitable to his position and agreeable to his destiny he practised and learnt; but most of all he excelled in magic, in archery, in riding, and in the use of the sword and lance, while the pleasures of chess-playing and deer-hunting filled up his lighter hours.

Thus passed the early boyhood of Prince Rasâlu, until he was free to approach the capital and to set foot over his father's threshold. He was remarkably strong and



agile for his years, more like a man than a boy; and he was skilled in every generous accomplishment, and in every warlike exercise. Yet there was then one pastime which, beyond all others, he was fond of indulging in, and that pastime was shooting marbles from the pellet-bow. He used to watch for the women of the city as they returned from the river, bearing on their heads full chat-ties or pitchers of water, and shooting his hard pellets with an unerring aim from the walls of the palace, he would break the pitchers into atoms, and laugh gaily when he saw the released water pouring down in floods over their shoulders.

At last his victims made complaint to the wazîr, and the wazîr complained to the king, and as the prince had been warned again and again, he proposed his banishment for a season. But the king answered,—“One son of mine I dismissed to exile and death before, for which I shall ever mourn. See, here is my treasury, take money sufficient for the purpose, and let the women of the city be provided with vessels of brass.” Moreover, he laid his commands on his son that he should cease to molest them.

But if the women imagined that their pitchers of brass would make the slightest difference, they were soon undeceived, for Rasālu fashioned a bow of steel, and cast him pellets of iron; and so great was his strength of arm that, with faultless aim, he drove his bullets right through the brazen pitchers even when full charged with water. In dismay the people turned their steps again to the palace, and in answer to their prayers the wazîr once more proposed the banishment of the prince.

“Nay,” answered the king, “this is my only son; he must not be sent away. I therefore order that in every enclosure in the city a well shall be sunk, so that the

women of each household may draw their abundance of water undisturbed."

So, in accordance with the king's directions, numerous wells were built throughout the city, and the people fondly reckoned on supplying their needs in freedom and quiet. But again they were disappointed, for the irrepressible prince ascended to the top of a high tower which



commanded every homestead and walled enclosure within the gates, and from that vantage-ground he continued to discharge his artillery at the brazen pitchers to the despair of the unfortunate owners.

Then was the king petitioned for the last time either to banish or to put to death his rebellious son; and his patience being at length exhausted, he answered,—“Would to God Rasâlu had never been born, or that even now he



were taken away! Let him leave my country, let him go wheresoever he pleases, but let me not look upon his face again." And to his mother Lûna he said,—“Tell that son of thine to quit my kingdom and never to trouble me more!”

Full of distress the queen sent for Rasâlu and said to him,—“Henceforth, my son, we shall be as strangers, for the king has pronounced your doom. You must leave your mother, your home, and your country, and go into exile.”

“But why,” asked the prince, “am I to leave you, mother, and why must I quit the country? What crime have I committed? Speak to the king, my father, and let him declare for what fault I am deserving of exile.”

That night the queen entreated the king for her son with repeated solicitations and tears, but he, when roused, being a man of implacable temper, steadily refused to listen to her prayers, saying,—“Rasâlu's crime admits of no excuse, he has plunged the people into distress in the matter of water, and his exile is the only remedy.”

When the prince heard that his fate was irrevocable, he sought his father's presence and said to him,—“I will obey you in all things if on your side you will accept my two conditions. The first is, that you make me a Mussulman; and the next is that you become a Mussulman yourself.”

Hearing these words, the king lost control of himself, and in a fury he ordered his son to instantly quit the palace. At the same time he sent for his ministers and said to them, “Set up a figure fashioned like a man with his hand behind his back, and let the face of the figure be blackened. By this symbol my son will understand that he is doomed to banishment.”

One day, as Rasâlu was returning from the chase, he caught sight of the figure standing without his mother's palace, and, turning to his followers he said:—“This figure

is a sign that I must quit the kingdom. Lo, the goodness of the king my father! We are the descendants of the great King Vikramâjit, who sold himself away in charity three hundred times; and for a mere trifle my father decrees my banishment. Nevertheless, I will obey."

So he gathered together a chosen band of valiant men,



the flower of the youth of Siâlkôt, and armed them with bows, lances and swords. He also provided himself with fleet horses and ample treasure, and when all was ready, he mounted his famous mare Folâdi,¹ which was born on the same day as himself, and passing under the windows of his mother's palace he bade her a long farewell, and

¹ *Folâdi* means *made of steel* (Persian). Sometimes Rasâlu's horse, like Rustem's, is named *Baurâki*, the Grey Mare.

THE RASALU LEGEND

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set out from the city at the head of his followers, all eagerly bent on foray and spoil.

But the Râni Lûna, weeping and beating her breast, loosed her ringlets and looked out from her lattice and watched the retreating figure of her son as he rode away into the wilds. There she remained straining her eyes, until a distant cloud of dust alone showed her the route which he had taken, and as she watched and wept she stretched out her hands and cried through her falling tears:

“O little, little can I see of you,
 My son Rasâlu!
 Your crest the rolling dust obscures from view,
 My own Rasâlu!
 With knives of hardened steel my heart is riven,
 It burns like flames within the furnace driven,
 O hear, Rasâlu!
 Whose son goes forth to exile, storm, and strife,
 How doubly, trebly vain that mother’s life!”





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THE RASALU LEGEND

STORY II

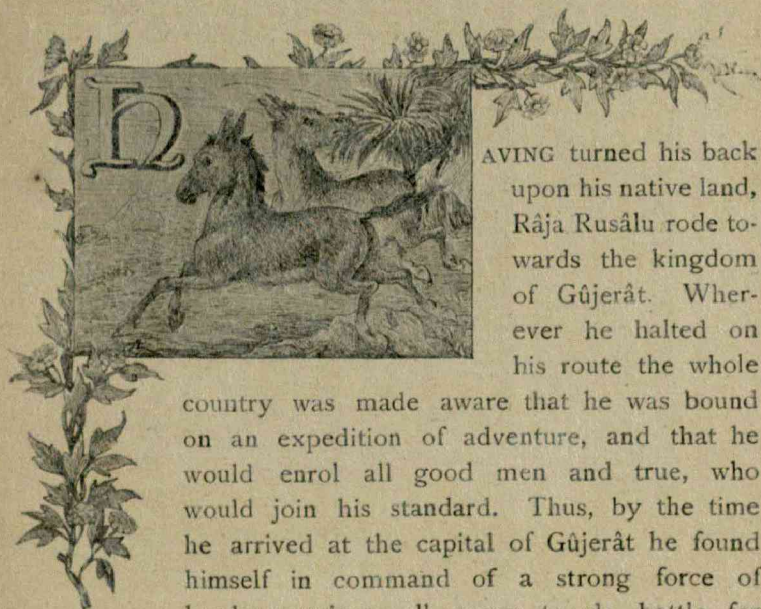
HE GOES TO GUJERAT



HE ARRIVES AT GUJERAT.

RAJA RASALU

HE GOES TO GUJERAT



HAVING turned his back upon his native land, Râja Rusâlu rode towards the kingdom of Gûjerât. Wherever he halted on his route the whole

country was made aware that he was bound on an expedition of adventure, and that he would enrol all good men and true, who would join his standard. Thus, by the time he arrived at the capital of Gûjerât he found himself in command of a strong force of hardy warriors, all eager to do battle for their youthful leader.

The King of Gûjerât was a Gûjar, the head of a race of Râjpûts in alliance with the house of Siâlkôt, and friendly to Râja Sulwâhân. Hearing that a foreign force had encamped within sight of his walls, he went forth to hold a parley with them, and, when he met Rasâlu, he addressed him courteously saying,—“Who are you?

“What Râja's son are you,
 And say what name you bear;
 Where lies your fatherland,
 What city owns you there?”



And to him Rasâlu made answer—

“Râja Sûlwâhan's son am I,
Rasâlu is my name;
Siâlkôt is my fatherland,
My city is the same.”¹

Then was Rasâlu received and welcomed with befitting honour, and festivities were held to celebrate his arrival at Gûjerât.

“But,” said the Gûjar king, “you are heir to a kingdom; why then do I see you at the head of an army so far away from your own dominions?”

“Near Jhîlam,” answered Rasâlu, “there is a territory containing numbers of giants who have been turned into stone,² but it is held by usurpers. Of that country my father claims a fourth share, as being near of kin to the former râjâs; and, as his rights are denied, I am now on my way to maintain them, and to recover my patrimony.”

Then the Gûjar king offered help to Rasâlu, saying, “Take with you a contingent of my troops, chosen marksmen, with arms and munitions of war, and go, and prosper against your enemies.” And to his own men, he said, “Go, fight for Râja Rasâlu, and do not return until you are dismissed.”

When the prince arrived at the land of the Petrified Ones he at once began his warlike operations, besieging forts, throwing up earthworks, and cutting off supplies.

¹ The reader will scarcely need to be reminded of the similar doggerel put into the mouth of Captain Cuttle—

Captain Cuttle is my name,
England is my nation,
London is my dwelling-place,
And blessèd be creation!—

a variant of a rhyme as old as Rasâlu!

² See Introduction.



RASALU AND THE FAKIR IN SEMBLANCE OF A TIGER.



Rasālu's strength was the strength of a giant; his bow, made out of steel, could be drawn by no one but himself, and he had three arrows, each of them weighing a hundred pounds, which never failed to hit, and which he never failed to recover.

After a short blockade the principal fortress was carried, and the city fell into the hands of Rasālu. Much spoil was taken, gold and silver and precious stones, and splendid raiment, and many a fair damsel, all of which was divided among his captains and men of war.

Then, while the petty princes fled away, or else submitted, and consented to acknowledge Rasālu as lord and master, the kingdom was reduced to order, laws were enforced, and under chosen governors prosperity once more smiled on the land.

It was during his halt at Jhīlam that Rāja Rasālu heard of a certain famous fakīr, or saint, whose abode was at the village of Tillāh, and as this man's reputation for miracles and signs was in everybody's mouth, he determined to pay him a visit. [The hermit's power was so great that he knew of the king's approach long before he came to the foot of the hill on which he lived, and addressing his disciples, he said, "Rāja Rasālu is at hand with purpose to put my knowledge to the test. But as he is the son of a Hindu, he ought to have known his duty better. However, I will forestall him, and test him first, and we shall see whether his own power is so great as rumour declares."

His pupils answered him, "True, O master; they say his arrow is so strong and swift that it will pierce a stone. Therefore devise something."

The hermit then turned himself into an immense hungry tiger, and when the king's followers saw the wild beast prowling round about the jungle, they were alarmed, and

said, "See, so great is the power of this hermit that even the tigers acknowledge his sway. Come, let us return!"

But Râja Rasâlu answered, "He is a wise man who will finish an enterprise; foolish are they who falter!"

Then the king challenged the tiger, and said, "You are indeed a mighty full-grown tiger, but I am a Râjpût. Come, let us do battle together!" }

In reply, the tiger uttered a terrific growl like the roar of a coming earthquake, and crouching down, he prepared to spring. But Rasâlu fitted two of his tremendous arrows to his bow of steel, when immediately the tiger was confounded with fright and vanished away.

The king now went forward to the house of this famous hermit, whom he found sitting calmly in the midst of his disciples, and who at once arose and made a respectful salutation to the man who was more powerful than himself.

"Pretty hermit this," cried the king, "to stand up to me or to anyone else!"

The saint, feeling irritated and ashamed, said,— "O king, this hill is only the abode of mendicants. It is not Gandgarh, which is the home of giants. If single-handed you engaged the famous giants of Gandgarh, and if you slew them, you would win glory and renown; but there can be no renown and no glory in lording it over poor fakirs."

✓ "O Sir," answered the King, "you taunt me! Now, as I am descendant of the great king Vikrâmâjît, I vow never to abide in my home in peace, until I have conquered the giants of Gandgarh."

"As for me," said the old prophet. "I can only pray for your success. Yet I know full well that you will prosper, and overcome them all—yea, every one—if you

THE RASALU LEGEND

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will but remember and do what I bid you:—First, draw not your sword against the innocent, and next, lift not your hand to shed the blood of fakirs.”

Then Rāja Rasālu, dismissing his retinue, left that place, and continued his journey alone.





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THE RASALU LEGEND

STORY III

HIS REVOLT



RASALU AND HIS FOSTER MOTHER.

RAJA RASALU

HIS REVOLT



ND now, having ended his labours in the borders of Jhîlum, Râja Rasâlu whose term of exile was drawing to a close, set out for other

parts, regardless of home and kindred. And wherever he went he took with him Shâdi, his parrot, and Folâdi, his grey mare. Thus he went on his way, and when his mother heard of it she sent forth a messenger, but the messenger returned, saying, "Rasâlu has gone off, and will not return." And when his father heard of it, he sent forth a messenger, but his messenger returned with the same story. And when his foster-mother heard of it, she also sent forth a messenger, and the messenger came, and Rasâlu inclined his ear, and went back to Siâlkôt. And when his foster-mother saw him in the courtyard, the milk simmered in her breasts, and she cried to him:—



ROMANTIC TALES FROM THE PUNJAB

"Hast come, my son, from lands afar?
Hast come, my son, from wounds and war?
Hast played a manly part?
I am thy mother, who but I?
And thou art the babe I travailed by,
The offspring of my heart!"

But Rasâlu did not regard her. Only as he passed he looked up and answered her thus:—

"In my hand I carry a mendicant's stick,
And my head is bound up with a clout,
Your son may be whole and your son may be sick,
I'm a beggar-man out and out!"

Thus came Rasâlu back to Siâlkôt. And his mother was glad and his father too.

Now Rasâlu had not been long at home before he yielded to counsel and began to incline his mind to marriage. So he sent his groom to his mother with this message,—
"If I did not tell you so before, it was only shame that held me back. But now choose me a wife, for I am willing to be guided."

Hearing these tidings, his mother became highly pleased, for she had often spoken to him on the same subject, but every time Rasâlu had turned away and put it off. Now, however, he himself had made the first advances, and she told the king, his father, who, delighted equally with herself, told the groom to hasten back to his son and say, "I will summon the great ones, I will order our family Brâhmin to open his tables, Motî Râm also shall be called, and the wedding ceremonies shall be put in train without delay."

Then the king, Râja Sûlwâhân, called together his council, especially his wazîr, Motî Râm, who was the father of the chosen bride, and he fixed the wedding for the fifth day of the month Assa.



RASALU MOCKED BY HIS BETROTHED.



The day after, early in the morning, at the time of the drawing of water, Rasālu went down to the river to bathe. On his way back he passed along the street in which stood the house of Motī Rām. There, loitering about the well, he saw a parcel of girls with their pitchers. They were laughing and talking together as women do. Foremost among them was the maiden who had been betrothed to him and whom he was shortly to marry. Being a girl of free spirit, always ready with a jibe or a jest, she called out in that public place to the man she was to wed:—

“Ho, rider of the dark grey mare,
Did you forget to bind your hair?
Like some young girl's, all loosely tied,
It flies about from side to side.
Take care, O Rāja; I implore,
Lest, as you pass some lady's door,
Her watchman flout you,
And jest about you!”

Rasālu was vexed to be put to shame, and he answered her:—

“Hear me, my wife not now but soon to be!—
For all your words of shame addressed to me
I swear, as I am Rāni Lûna's son,
Your insults I'll repay you every one!”

And, retorting, the girl cried:—

“You son of Lûna, do not be so proud,
Nor vent your anger thus before a crowd,
For men as good as you,
Not one, but quite a crew,
Lead forth by miry ways
My father's calves to graze!”

Then said Rasālu to her:—



"Oh, bride betrothed, Oh, wife to be,
Mark thou the words I speak to thee!
By the mother who bore me,
By the pangs she had o'er me,
My wife thou shalt be, but I swear to thy face,
I'll marry, and leave thee to shame and disgrace."

So he passed on his way. And when the marriage preparations were sufficiently advanced, his father and himself and all the guests, being a great company, went to the house of Motî Râm, and there the wedding feast was spread and the people all sat down. But Motî Râm, the bride's father, sat not down with the rest, but, girding up his loins, he went in and out among the guests, saying, "O friends, ye who have come in with the procession, welcome you are! And I pray you not to feel displeased or offended, for I am one of your slaves!" And when the meal was over and the men had retired to smoke and to recline, troops of girls came in and played *bero-ghôri*.¹ With singing and dancing came they in, all the maidens of the place in full tale, and they jested with the king and the prince, and made free with everything, and Rasâlu gave them largess, throwing among them fifty rupees, and one gold piece thrown in too. Then they took his hands, and brought him to the chamber in which he was to be married, all fun and laughter, and he went with them in company with his father and a great following of friends. But as he passed through the court, he made secret signs to his groom not to fail to have Folâdi, his grey mare, saddled and bridled and ready at hand.

Then entered the Brâhmin priests, who called in also the parents, and the two, the man and the woman, were made to sit down in the middle of that room, while the Brâhmins read to them words out of a book. And to the

¹ Scrambling for money or sweetmeats.



principal one said Rasālu, "O Sûndar Dâs, I, the Râja, speak to you! To cut the matter short, I pray you not to marry me at all!"

"O Râja Rasālu," answered he. "Hear me! You come of a noble stock. I pray you do not disgrace your name by conduct unworthy of your birth!"

This counsel Rasālu disdained, keeping silence all the time. And when the reading was over these men tied together the ends of the skirts of the bride and the bridegroom, and made them pass round and round the burning fire. And as Rasālu passed round, he glanced up, and, lo, in the court without, his horse stood ready. So all at once he drew his sword and severed the skirts at the knot, the one from the other, and he leapt forth, while his wife reproached him, saying,—“O Rasālu, you have done me a wrong to cut off marriage-knot of mine, and in the day of judgment I will call you to account for it!—

“Ah me! How foul a trick to play
Your wedded wife!
Before great God what will you say
To save your life?”

But he taunted her, and said, “Remember your words, O Râni, the words that you spoke that day at the well! Since you call me a beast, go marry someone else!”

In vain all the four parents, afflicted by so great a disgrace, besought him to return, standing with heads bare and imploring him. “I brought you up from a child,” said the King, “only to be a grief to me, and now you have degraded your father before all this assembly!”

Rasālu did not note the words spoken by his father, and on his way forth he bethought him that he should have answered him too, so he returned, and, while his whole body trembled, he said thus,—“Hear me, my father! Me have you ever embittered. But I go hence to Mecca, and



when I come again, it will be with a Muhammadan army at my back to pull down Siâlkôt."

Then he went off, riding day and night, until he came to a noble city having walls and towers all round, and, going to the gates, he enquired, "Who is the chief of this place?"

"This is the city of Mecca," said a watchman, "and the lord of Mecca is the Hazrat Imâm Ali Lâk."

So Rasâlu entered, and he went to the Imâm Ali, and addressed him, saying, "Receive me, I pray you!"

The Imâm, seeing that he was a Hindu, said to him, "Whence come you?"—

"What Râja's son are you?
What is the name you bear?
Where lies your fatherland?
What city owns you there?"

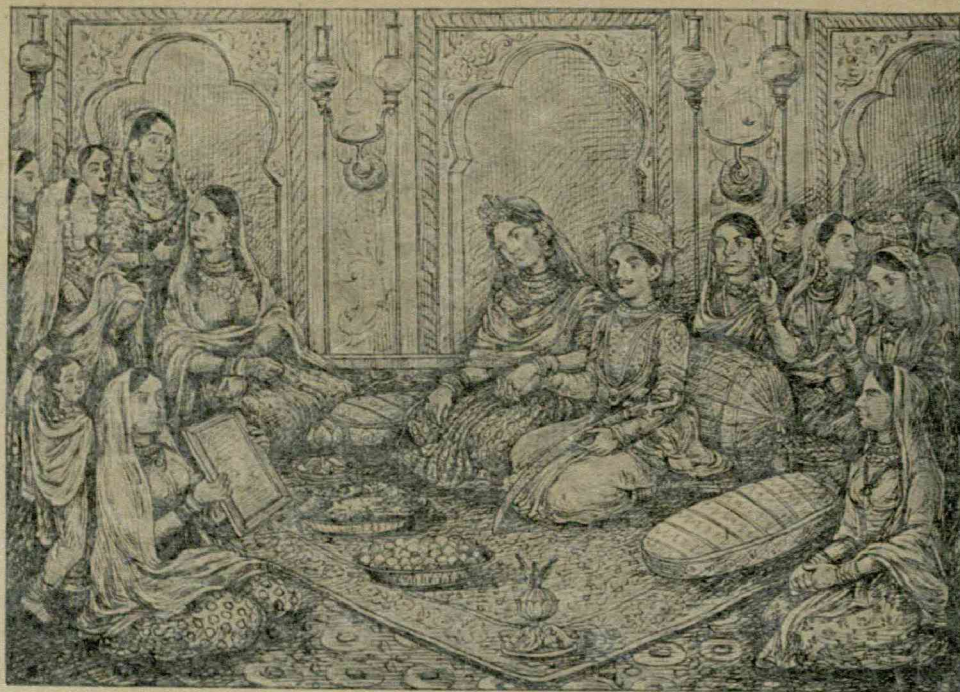
And Rasâlu made answer:—"I am a Râjpût"—

"Râja Sûlwâhân's son am I,
Rasâlu is my name,
My city is Siâlkôt,
My fatherland the same."

Then the Imâm Ali ordered the two prophets, the pîr Panjâbi and Sûrkru Sobâh, to embrace him, and they all three took him and all embraced him, and their embraces so purified his heart that the locks of infidelity were broken asunder. Also they taught him the prayers, and so Rasâlu ceased to be a Hindu and became a Muhammadan.

One day he said to the chief priest, "My father is a great infidel and a follower after evil customs. Give me help to enable me to return and overcome him."

"What evil customs do you speak of?" asked the priest.



RASALU'S WEDDING.



"First," answered Rasâlu, "he takes to himself a new guest every night, but early in the morning he takes his life, or sends him forth to perish in the jungles. Next, the robe he wears by day he burns at night, and that which he wears at night he burns in the morning. And lastly, he will not drink two days together from the same well. Every morning therefore a new well must be dug for him and lives are sacrificed in vain."

When they heard these things, the priests became convinced that Râja Sûlwâhân was a very great infidel indeed, but they answered, saying, "It would not be right for you, his son, to lead an army against your own father. Such behaviour would ill become you, for a son should respect his father!" Still, however, he continued to urge his petition, and so the Imâm told the rest of the priests not to refuse his request absolutely, but to put him off with promises, which when Rasâlu perceived he became more eager than ever to have his request complied with.

Meanwhile Râja Sûlwâhân had set to work to repair the walls of Siâlkôt, for the armies of Muhammad were over-running all the world. One of the great towers, however, repeatedly fell down at the moment of completion. Three times the builders laid stone upon stone and three times the work crumbled to the dust. Then the king consulted his astrologers, who said, "Never will the wall stand, until the head of a young Muhammadan, who must be also an only son, has been buried under the foundations!" So the king sent his officers, and they came to the house of the old woman Zabêro, and, seizing her son, they hauled him forth, saying, "Are you not a Muhammadan?" And boldly the lad answered, loving the truth, "I am a Muhammadan, I do not deny it, for in any case I must die at last and pass into the presence of God."

And the men who had him took him off to the king,



before whom he came, and on his arm he wore a wedding-bracelet and on his neck a garland of flowers. And when the king saw him he said, "For whose feast are you thus decked out, O son?"

"For my own feast am I thus decked out," answered he, "for to-day is the day of my marriage."

"It matters not," said the king. "Ho, fellows, off with this youngster's head, and down with it into the earth!"

So the lad was at once beheaded, even there, in the presence of his widowed mother, who wept at that sight, and who, snatching a dagger from a soldier, cried out, "I, too, am ready to die. O wicked Râja, may the lightnings of God fall upon you!"

Now as she spoke these words, meditating death, the head and the body of her lifeless son began moving towards her on the ground, which when she perceived, she dropped her weapon, and taking up those bloody tokens one by one, she pressed them to her bosom. Then addressing the king, she cried, "Now will I go to Mecca and bring back with me those that will avenge my cause!"

Rising at once, the old woman started on her journey, but, seeing that she was aged and feeble, she could not cover more than half a mile a day. With limbs fatigued and feet swollen, she prayed in her distress to God and said, "I am an old woman and cannot walk. May Pir Panjâbi come to my succour!" Then she lay down in the desert, and that same night, as she slept, she had a dream. In her dream she saw an old man with a white beard, who came to her and said to her, "Shut your eyes!" and she shut them and at once found herself in Mecca. That was her dream. Early in the morning when she woke, she looked about her, and her dream had come true, for she saw that she was standing on the steps of the Great



Mosque, and she saw also the priests of that mosque, and she addressed them, saying, "Behold in me a helpless old woman, having no protector. A Hindu Râja, the biggest infidel in Hindustân, has cruelly killed my son to build him a wall. If you are indeed followers of the Prophet, come and avenge me!"

"Mother, do not weep," answered they. "Our heads shall answer for your son's."

"I could wish not to weep," said she, "but my heart weeps, and I cannot restrain myself. I must weep and weep until you come and plough up the city."

"The son of our chief priest," answered they, "is to be married in three days. After that we shall set out for Siâlkôt."

"O Priest," replied she, "you are quite right! You are going to marry your son, and at home sits my daughter robbed of her husband, and in short I cannot wait any longer!"

Then they set out for the kingdom of Siâlkôt. But as they marched along, she looked and saw that they were only five horsemen all told, so she said to Rasâlu, "You are but a few. What will you do against all the hosts of Siâlkôt?" And the Hazrat took up the answer and said, "Mother, put your trust in us!"

"Of course," said she, "I put my trust in you. But I see also that you are only five in number."

"Close your eyes!" said the priest. So she closed her eyes forthwith, and when in a moment more she opened them again, she saw a large army, the numbers whereof were so vast, that the pommel of one horseman jostled against the pommel of the next, and the sound of their riding went up. So she was satisfied, and she counselled them to bring their army on in the same invisible manner.

At last they arrived at the city of Siâlkôt and invested



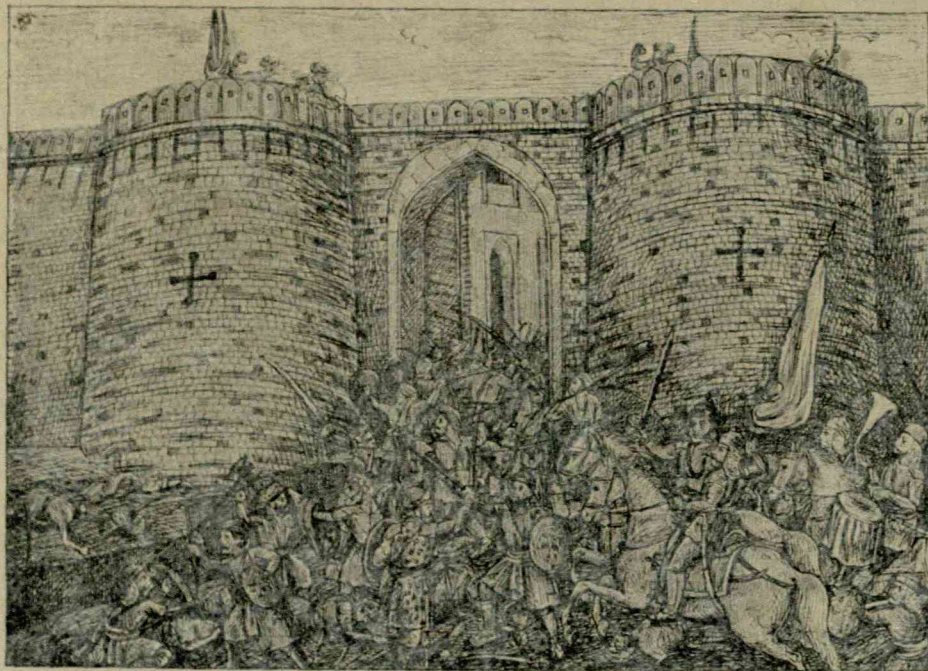
it, being encamped round about the walls. And early in the morning when the people came out they saw the whole place surrounded, and they went in and told Râja Sûlwâhân. And when the king looked out, he said, "It is only my son, Rasâlu, no one else, who has brought this evil upon me. He went to Mecca and now he has come back with a Muhammadan army to destroy me!"

Then began the great fight between Sûlwâhân on the one side and his son Rasâlu on the other. Long held out Siâlkôt, but it was taken at last, and when the enemy swarmed through the gates and over the walls, so great was the slaughter that the horses walked the streets fetlock deep in blood. But first, before that happened, the people of that city looked down and saw a man fighting sword in hand, but without his head, which he had hurled at the gates. That man was the Hazrat himself. And the people marvelled at it, expressing their astonishment each to the other. Then the body stopped fighting on hearing the remarks that were made, and, falling down from its horse, it was buried close to the gates of the city.

Meanwhile Sûndra Dâs, the Brâhmin priest, never ceased praying to God for peace. But he prayed in vain, for the Muhammadans fought on until they had gained the citadel and the palace of the king. And when they had entered therein, they saw the Râja Sûlwâhân sitting on his stool, smoking his hookah. Then the priests said to Rasâlu, "Go forward to your father and bid him become a Muhammadan!" So Rasâlu went in and bade his father either turn Muhammadan or die.

"My son," answered the king, "you whom I have brought up to manhood, spare your father's life!"

But Rasâlu seized him by his long hair, which he twisted, and throwing him on the ground, he put his foot on his breast and would have cut off his head. Then said his



SIEGE OF SIALKOT.

father unto him, "Neither your mother nor I have ever been unfaithful the one to the other. You are therefore my own undoubted son, and at the bar of Heaven, I, your father, will lay my hands upon you!" And when Rasâlu would have smitten, the priests held back his hand, forbidding the deed. Then came he away, and going forth, he buried the bodies of the Muhammadans who had fallen in the assault.

After a time it came to pass that father and son became reconciled, and that Motî Râm offered his second daughter, in lieu of his first, as a wife for Rasâlu. But the priests returned to Mecca, and by-and-bye Râsalu also left the city, and once more, mounted on Folâdi, went roaming over the world.





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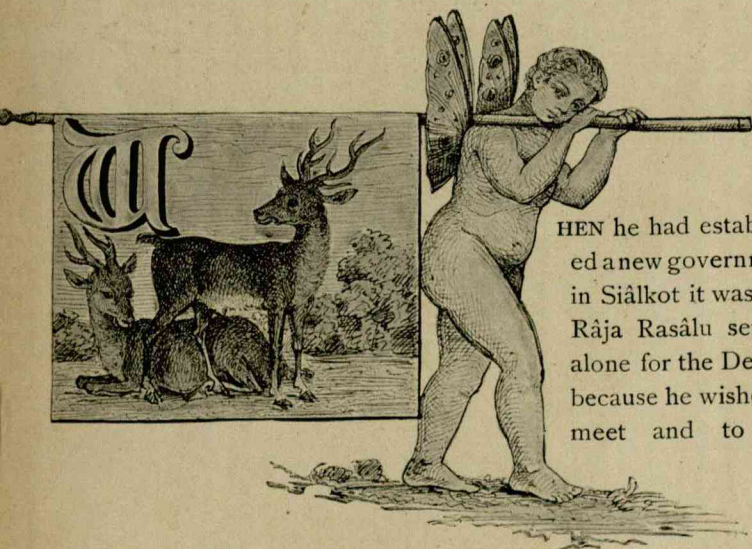
THE RASĀLU LEGEND

STORY IV

THE HUNTER KING

RAJA RASALU

RAJA RASALU AND MIRSHIKARI



HEN he had establish-
 ed a new government
 in Siâlkot it was that
 Râja Rasâlu set out
 alone for the Deccan
 because he wished to
 meet and to see
 Mîr-
 shi-
 kâri,

the renowned hunter.

As he was riding along, his horse suddenly heard the sweet strains of distant music proceeding from the depths of the forest. "Sir," said she to her master, "what is that sweet sound which I hear, and whence is it coming?"

"I have been told," answered Rasâlu, "that there is a certain king of the greenwood, named Mîrshikâri, who sits in the forest playing on a lute which was given to him by the Water-King, the immortal Khwâjah Khizar. ¹ All the animals when they hear the melodious music come and

¹ Khwâjah Khizar; see Appendix.



gather around him to listen. Then when he finds a chance, he shoots at them with his bow, and kills whatever game he favours."

Saying this, Râja Rasâlu with his horse and with Shâdi his parrot, followed the direction of the sound, and approached the glade in which Mîrshikâri was sitting.

Now Mîrshikâri had been informed by astrologers that in the course of time one Rasâlu would come, who should be his master in magic and fighting and in woodcraft. So he was always expecting him; and now, when he saw a mounted stranger approaching, he enquired of him,—“Who are you?”

“What Râja’s son are you?
And say what name you bear;
Where lies your fatherland?
What city owns you there?”

And Rasalu answered him:—

“Râja Sûlwâhân’s son am I,
Rasâlu is my name;
Siâlkôt is my fatherland,
My city is the same.”

Then asked Mîrshikâri: “Are you the Rasâlu that should come,”

“Yes,” answered the king.

“As I have heard about you,” said Mîrshikâri, “so now have I seen you.”

“What have you heard about me?” enquired Rasâlu.

“The real Rasâlu,” answered Mîrshikâri, “carries an arrow weighing one hundred pounds. By this token I know you are the real Rasâlu, and to-day, by the grace of God, I have met you in the forest, where I had scarcely hope of seeing you at all.”

Then said Rasâlu, “What are you doing? Why are you playing on a lute?”



"It is my usual custom," answered Mīrshikāri. "Every day of my life I play on my lute in order to entice the animals, because, when my lute is playing, all the animals of the forest gather round me to listen to it, and then, watching my chance, I choose my sport and shoot at them and kill them, since I cannot live without flesh-meat every day. But, O my Master, as you have come to the green-wood at last, I pray that you will make me your disciple."

"So let it be," said Rasālu, "but first, if you will be a follower of mine, there are three conditions which you will have to observe."

"Whatever shall be told me," said Mīrshikāri, "that shall I observe to do implicitly."

Then said Rasālu, "The first condition is this—Let no one know of my coming here, and tell no one that you have seen me. The second is this—You may go and shoot over three sides of the forest, the north, east and the west, but on the fourth side you shall not shoot. And the third condition is this—On the forbidden side of the forest there live two deer, a buck and a doe. On no account must you kill them."

"How shall I know," then asked Mīrshikāri, "which of all the deer of the forest the two reserved ones are?"

To him Rasālu returned answer—"On the south side of the forest those two deer live, and to that side alone they resort. You will never meet them and you will never see them unless you go there. But if you do go there, and if you shoot them, oh, remember, you will lose your own life!"

All these terms were accepted by Mīrshikāri, and Rasālu having shown him his mode of using weapons of war and of the chase, went away from that place, and tarried in another part of the forest.

So Mīrshikāri, after playing on his lute and killing some



deer, returned to the city, and when he had eaten his food he went to his chamber, and there he began to address sweet words to his wife. In the midst of their colloquy he broke the first condition imposed upon him by Râja Rasâlu, for he said to her: "To-day I have seen Rasâlu in the forest."

The woman turned round and said, "You are speaking a jest. What, is Rasâlu a madman to be wandering about in the woods? What a wise man are you!"

Feeling ashamed and abashed on account of his wife's words, he took an oath to God before her, and said: "I have verily seen Râja Rasâlu to-day with my own eyes."

But his wife believed not his words, and she said to him, "Hold your tongue and do not vex me so, seeing you cannot beguile me."

After a short time Mîrshikâri ordered his wife to prepare his breakfast over-night, "because," said he, "to-morrow I must be in the forest long before dawn."

Hearing this speech, his wife thought to herself: "It is useless to take so much trouble at so late an hour of the night. Everything can be got ready for him before he starts in the morning."

At the fixed time on the morrow, while it was yet dusk, she awoke, and having bathed, she went to the cook-room to prepare some food for Mîrshikâri, but she was astonished at finding that there was no meat of any description in the house. Then said she: "Mîrshikâri will not eat anything but meat. I must go into the street, to the stalls of the butchers, and bring home two pounds of goat's flesh."

So she went to a butcher and said to him: "Give me two pounds of goat's flesh, and to-morrow I will give you four pounds of venison instead of it."

"At this time of night," answered the butcher, "I cannot possibly open my door. I hear your voice, but what

you are God knows; some witch perhaps, or a giantess, or it may be an evil spirit."

"I am the wife of Râja Mîrshikâri," replied the woman.

Then said the butcher: "If you are the wife of Mîrshikâri, bring me the money, and I will give you the two pounds of meat."



In the meantime, while his wife was arguing with the butcher, Mîrshikâri woke up, and he called and looked, but in the palace his wife was nowhere to be found. For some time he waited, but he waited in vain, for she did not return. Then, as it was growing late and as he was tired of waiting, he took up his lute, his quiver, and his bow, and without any breakfast he went out to his shooting.



When he arrived at the ground he broke the second condition, for he chose for his sport the side of the forest which had been forbidden to him by his master Rasâlu.

Having fixed on a place, he sat himself down, tuned the strings of his lute, and began to play. The beautiful strains floated on the morning air, and penetrated into the depths of the forest, so that, as Râja Rasâlu was wandering about, his mare again heard the sweet woodland notes, and said to the King: "Sir, it is the sound of the lute we heard in the woods yesterday."

"You are right," answered Rasâlu, "but my man has not fulfilled my behest, nor has he regarded my word, and now we shall witness the turning of his fate."

Meanwhile, as Mîrshikâri was playing his lute, the two deer, a buck and a doe, came out of the forest into the open glade, and there stood still to listen. As they felt themselves drawn towards the spot where the lute was playing, the doe said to the buck: "Let us wait here and see. Perhaps it is Râja Mîrshikâri playing on his lute. I am afraid lest, seeing us, he will kill us dead, because by means of his treacherous lute he has already done much to empty the woods."

On hearing these unexpected words, Mîrshikâri stopped his music, and glancing all round him, he saw a *chachra* tree covered with large green leaves. Then moving softly to it, he plucked some of the foliage, and having fastened it all over his body, he made himself leafy and green like the tree, and taking up his lute, he began to play on it once more, and as he played he slowly advanced towards the buck and the doe.

When the two deer saw him approaching, the buck said to the doe, "See, he is coming towards us for something, let us go and meet him."

But the doe said: "Do not move a step further," to which the buck made answer:—



THE RASALU LEGEND

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"In the forest I was bred,
In the forest I was fed,
And the forest is my home;
Some little leafy tree,
To discover you and me,
In perplexity doth roam."

Then said the doe to her simple husband:—

"In the forest I was bred,
In the forest I was fed,
And the forest is my home;
Such a thing could never be
For a little leafy tree
On two little feet to roam."

But the buck, being resolved to go forward, said:—

"In the forest I was bred,
In the forest I was fed,
In the forest I abide;
And if hunger be his plea,
Or if forced by fate he be,
We may venture to his side."

"No, no," cried the doe; "be well advised:—

"In the forest I was bred,
In the forest I was fed,
In the forest I abide;
By his acting I can see
He would capture you and me,
And our flesh he would divide."

"Oh, my husband," continued she, "you should not go nearer."

Saying this, she stopped; but the wilful buck went nearer and nearer, listening to the dulcet music, and when Mîr-shikâri saw him well within flight of his arrow, he took his lute between his teeth and, drawing his bow, he shot at him, and the foolish deer, being pierced by the sharp weapon in the shoulder, fell to the ground. Then ran



Mīrshikāri swiftly forward, and drawing his knife, he prepared to cut the throat of his quarry according to custom.

But all the time Rāja Rasālu was watching his proceedings, saying to his horse: "He has disregarded my counsel; look and you will see the trouble which shall shortly fall upon him."

Mīrshikāri now lifted his knife to despatch his victim, when the deer addressed him in reproachful words, and said:

"Thou tyrant-thrower of the pointed dart,
Thine edgeless knife, O lay it by;
But take the lute, the lute that pierced my heart,
And strike some chords before I die;
O tyrant, sweep the trembling strings again,
I fain would hear one fleeting dying strain!"

Then said Mīrshikāri: "His death has been caused by my lute, and I must therefore play for him something more. Yet I am in fear lest, as I play, he may suddenly turn his head and gore me with his horns."

So he sat upon him astride, pressing him down with the weight of his body, and thus seated he began to play upon his lute once more, while the dying buck, as his life ebbed away, listened to the ravishing sounds.

When he had finished playing, Mīrshikāri laid aside his lute again, and lifting his knife, he passed it over the throat of the buck, and let out his life-blood.

After this he looked about him for some water, "For," said he, "if the knife be not washed, my game will not be fit for eating." But no water was to be seen, excepting the heavy dew which lay all round about upon the earth. So he wiped his bloodstained knife in the grass, and when it was cleansed he held it between his teeth in order that he might also wipe the blood from his hands in the same manner. But it so happened that no sooner had he put his hands into the wet grass than he was stung by a viper.



MIRSHIKARI AND THE DYING DEER.

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Uttering a loud cry, he dropped the knife from his mouth, which, falling upon the serpent, cut it into two pieces so that it died, and presently Mīrshikāri himself, as the poison pervaded his system, gave up the ghost and expired as well. ✓

Seeing this, Rāja Rasālu, who was watching all these fatal consequences, said to his mare: "Now see what will come to pass next."

After a little while the doe stole out from the jungle to look for her husband, and she found him dead. She also saw Mīrshikāri lying still upon the ground. Then thought she to herself: "The hunter-king has been shooting for a long time, and now, being tired, he is taking his rest." But, venturing nearer, she espied the dead snake cut into two pieces, and the knife resting close by. Then understood she that her husband had been killed by Mīrshikāri, that Mīrshikāri had been killed by the snake, and that the snake had been killed by the knife.

✓ Having looked upon this dismal spectacle, she said to herself:—"Now for me to live longer in the world is useless, for God knows who may not kill me, or what suffering it may not be my lot to endure." And she began to wonder how she should destroy herself. After thinking and considering, she said: "O my husband's horns, they are sharp as spears! I shall put straight his head and jump upon them, and their points will pierce through my body and kill me."

So saying, she set the buck's head upright, and going to a little distance she leaped upon his sharp, tapering horns which, penetrating her body, ripped her open and killed her. In her dying struggles she gave birth to two little kids, a male and a female; but they, after breathing the air for a few short moments, expired likewise by the side of their dam.

And all the time Rāja Rasālu was gazing at the scene,



watching every hapless circumstance, and he now said to his mare: "Let us see what will come to pass next."

In a few minutes a jackal came out of the forest, and finding so many dead bodies lying prone upon the ground, he began to trim his moustachios, and to leap and frisk for joy, saying to himself: "God has given me lots of good things to-day! I shall eat my fill, and sleep, and eat again. But Mīrshikâri is a strong man and a famous hunter, and if he wakes up he will certainly kill me. So my best plan will be to steal his bowstring and throw it away, because then, if he awakes, he will never without it be able to harm me, and meanwhile I shall have time to escape."

Saying this, the jackal came silently towards Mīrshikâri, and, taking away his bow and skipping into the jungle, he endeavoured to break it. But the string was made of twisted wire which proved too tough for his teeth. At last, putting the side of the bow on his hind legs and one end of it under his chin, he succeeded in slipping the wire, but the rebound of the weapon was so sharp and so sudden that it tore him in two, and the upper part of his body went flying towards the sky.

When Râja Rasâlu saw the jackal's fate he laughed and said:—"Let us go and look at them now." Coming to the spot, he said to his mare, "What shall we do? What arrangements shall we make for conveying the body of Mīrshikâri?"

"Lay it on his own horse," answered she, "and she will carry it straight to his house."

Then Rasâlu lifted the body and was going to lay it on Mīrshikâri's horse, but the animal refused, saying: "As he failed to obey your orders, I will never carry him more."

"At least," said Rasâlu, "guide me to your master's palace," and taking from the fatal spot Mīrshikâri's turban, his quiver, his bow, and his lute, he followed the dead



hunter's horse, which led them on through the grassy glades and the leafy alleys of the forest.

As they entered the city, Râja Rasâlu caught sight of a woman standing at the stall of a butcher who was weighing out some meat, and he overheard her saying: "Do not longer delay. My husband Mîrshikâri is waiting."

Then Rasâlu stopped and said to her: "O woman! what are you doing there?—

"You weigh the flesh within the scale,
But say for whom the flesh you weigh;
The flesh you weigh will ne'er avail,
The man who looked his last to-day."

Hearing these words, the woman hastily turned and said: "Who are you thus cursing my husband?"

"I am Rasâlu," answered he. But the woman did not believe him.

"A wise Rasâlu too," replied she, "to curse another man needlessly. It is no good thing which you do."

"But," said Rasâlu, "would you recognise your husband's things if they were shown to you?"

"Yes," answered she, "wherefore not?"

Then he laid down before her Mîrshikâri's turban, his lute, and his weapons, and said: "Examine and see if these things are your husband's."

As soon as she looked upon them, the woman swooned and fell senseless to the ground.

When she came to herself she arose and ran to the palace of the king who was the lord of all that country, weeping and beating her breast, and Rasâlu followed her. There she cried aloud: "Sir, this man has killed my husband Mîrshikâri!"

The king, hearing her distressful cries, ordered a trial, and at the hour appointed one hundred men were de-



spatched to bring Râja Rasâlu into the court. But Rasâlu, collecting them all in one place, covered them under the broad expanse of his shield, and then sent a message to the king, saying: "Come if you can, and take your men from under my shield."

When the king understood what a wonderful master of magic he was, and how great was his might to cover one hundred men with his shield, he sent other messengers, saying to them: "Do not use force with him. Bring him by solicitations and prayers." And they, as soon as they arrived, humbly requested Rasâlu to come before their lord, beseeching him with courteous words.

"I come," answered he, and so, lance in hand, and with the king's messengers behind him, rode to the city and so to the palace. When he entered the king's presence, he said: "Wherefore have you sent for me?"

"Why have you slain Mîrshikâri?" enquired the king.

"I will also ask you a riddle," replied Rasâlu, "and if you can answer it, you will know of the death of Mîrshikâri:

One was killed and two died;
Two were killed and four died;
Four were killed and six died;
Four were males and two were females."

But the king was unable to guess the answer. Therefore said he to his ministers:—"Go with this stranger, whoever he is, and see if he tells the truth, and let us beware lest he be the real Rasâlu."

So Rasâlu conducted them to the forest, where they came and saw all the six bodies lying lifeless together on the ground. Taking up the corpse of Mîrshikâri, they took it into the presence of the king, who, having heard their tale, looked upon it and said of Rasâlu:—"This man has indeed spoken the word of truth."



Then Râja Rasâlu carried the body of his disciple, Mîrshikâri, back into the forest, and there he laid it down, and he dug a grave for it, both long and deep, with his own hands, and buried it under the shade of the trees. And over the spot he erected an enduring tomb, and proclaimed to the whole city and to all the country round :—"Whosoever would go hunting, let him first go visit the tomb, and do homage at his grave, of Mîrshikâri!"

Having performed this last act of piety to the remains of the hunter-king, he engraved on his tomb the following epitaph, and then went his way —

"King Dhartli, peerless he for deeds of might,
Abandoned all his pomp to die:
And this fair world shall sink in endless night,
As fades a star-bespangled sky."



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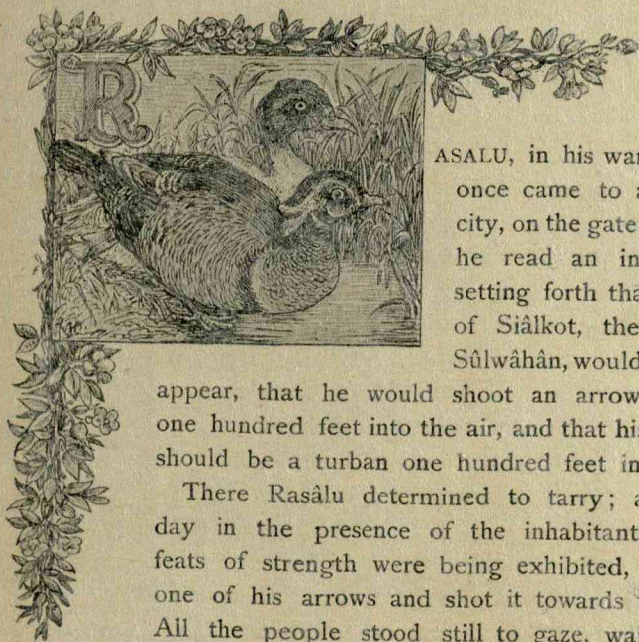
THE RASALU LEGEND

STORY V

RASALU AND THE SWANS

RAJA RASALU

RAJA RASALU AND THE SWANS



RASALU, in his wanderings, once came to a certain city, on the gate of which he read an inscription setting forth that Rasâlu of Siâlkot, the son of Sûlwâhân, would one day

appear, that he would shoot an arrow of iron one hundred feet into the air, and that his reward should be a turban one hundred feet in length.

There Rasâlu determined to tarry; and one day in the presence of the inhabitants, when feats of strength were being exhibited, he took one of his arrows and shot it towards the sky.

All the people stood still to gaze, waiting for the return of the arrow, but as it never came back, they said, "This must be the real Rasâlu!"

Then they wove for him a turban one hundred feet in length and proclaimed him as the real Rasâlu throughout the city, and for his great strength he was held in honour of all men.

The next day he entered on his travels again, and as he was walking by a river-side he saw a crow and his



mate sitting fondly together, and he heard the female bird saying—"Please take me up to the sky."

"No one can go up to the sky," answered the male bird.

But she insisted and said:—"Take me up as high into the air, then, as you can."

Saying this, she mounted up and the male bird followed her, and both went flying skywards until they were out of sight, and Rasâlu wondering what would come of this adventure continued his wanderings.

Now the two birds flew up so high that at last they came to a region of rain, hail, and snow, which kept falling continually, and the female bird, drenched and terrified, cried:—"For God's sake, save my life and take me to some place of shelter."

"What can be done now?" said her companion. "It is your own fault, why did you not listen to good advice?"

With these words they began to descend, and, worn out with fatigue, they at last fell on to a certain island in the middle of the sea. Then said the female crow:—"Let us go and look for some place of shelter."

Searching here and there, at last they saw a swan with his mate, sitting in a nest in the midst of a tree. So the crow approached, and offered his salaams. "What do you want, O crow?" said the swan to his unwelcome guest.

"For the sake of God," answered the crow, "be good enough to give us a corner to shelter in to save our lives."

"Although between you and me," said the swan, "there is no relationship, come in and take your rest."

On hearing this, the female swan protested vehemently. "I cannot allow the creature to come into any house of mine," cried she. "He is a mean fellow, and our kinspeople will reproach us, not to speak of our good name."

"He is asking for shelter in the name of God," said her



husband, "and I am therefore bound to allow him to enter and rest."

The crow and his mate then crawled into the nest, and the swan gave them pearls to eat, and whatsoever else his house afforded. *

The next morning, the rain being over, the crows stepped forth and the male bird said to the swan,—“Dear friend, against the wicked you should always be on your guard.”

“He who will do evil shall suffer evil,” answered the swan.

“True,” said the crow, “but whether a man do evil or not, he should always keep the base and the unworthy at a distance.”

“What do you mean by saying that?” enquired the swan.

“Do you not know,” said the crow, “that in a single night you have robbed me of my swan-wife whom I have tenderly reared for twelve years? You had better give her back to me.”

“Is this your return for all my kindness?” asked the swan.

“I do not know the meaning of kindness,” replied the insolent crow; “give me back my wife! Otherwise, you must either fight with me, or go to the king’s court for judgment.”

“I have no desire to fight with you,” answered the swan meekly. “Come, let us go to the court of the king!”

All the birds at once set out and came to the palace of Râja Bhôj. When they entered the court the king enquired:—“Why have those four birds come here to-day? Bring them before me first!”

Then were they marshalled by officers before the judgment seat, and they said:—“Sire, we have come to you for a decision; condescend to listen!”

“What is it that you want?” asked the king.

“Enquire from the crow,” said the swan.

* Swans are said to feed on pearls.



"Nay," replied the crow, "I do not wish to say anything whatever—please ask the swan."

Then the swan stated his case:—

"Struck down by storm, and rain, and driving snow,
With cries for shelter came this crafty crow;
In God's great name he proffered his request,
We gave him all we had—our place of rest;
But lo! when morning dawned, good turned to ill,
He sat and mocked us, and he mocks us still."

Then the crow stood forward, and stated his own side of the question thus:—

"One day upon the river-side
I chanced to take a stroll,
And there I found some creature's egg
Within a sandy hole.

This egg I carried in my bill,
And cherished it with care,
I hatched it underneath my breast,
Till all my breast was bare.

At last, the young one burst the shell,
No useless cock was he,
Or else he might have wandered forth,
And roamed the jungle free.

It was a female, and I said,
'I will preserve her life,
When twelve years old she'll doubtless prove
A most deserving wife.'

Then came this swan, struck down by rain,
By storm and driving snow,
And begged me for the love of God
Some pity to bestow.

I took him in without a word,
But lo! when morning came,
On score of caste he took my wife,
And vilified my name."



RAJA BHOJ SITTING IN JUDGMENT.



Râja Bhôj, having heard both stories, said to the swan:—
“This crow appears to me to be in the right, so hand him over his wife!”

The poor swan made no reply, but gave up his wife at once to the crow, and then he went crying and sobbing to a distant place, where he lived in a certain solitary garden,

The triumphant crow, leading out his prize, thought to himself—“As my new wife is so handsome, no doubt, if I go to my own house, my kinsfolk will come and snatch her away from me. It is better therefore to take her away to some distance.”

It chanced, however, that the spot which he chose was the very garden in which the male swan was already living, and so it came to pass that all the four birds once more found themselves together.

One day it happened to Râja Rasâlu that, in the course of his travels, he rode by that way, and that, as he went, he was saying to his mare—“To pass the time let us look for some friend and get him to talk.”

Just then he saw a jackal, and making for him he ran him down and caught him.

“Sir, why have you caught me?” said the jackal.

“Merely to make you talk,” answered Rasâlu, “and to pass the time.”

Then the jackal seated on Rasâlu's saddle-bow began to tickle them both with hundreds of lying stories which amused them excessively. While thus employed they approached the city of Râja Bhoj, when Rasâlu told the jackal to be off.

“But,” answered the jackal, “it would be cruel to leave me here, since all the dogs of the town would set on me and kill me. You had better take me with you.”

Rasâlu consenting entered the city, and the people seeing him, paid him salutations and said, “Who are you?”



"I am Rasâlu, the son of Sûlwâhân," answered he.

Hearing his name, all the inhabitants came and surrounded him, saying;—"This day God has fulfilled our desires."

Thence Rasâlu went to the court of Râja Bhôj, for whom he conceived a strong feeling of friendship, and dismounting from his horse, he entered and sat down. Then Râja Bhôj called for chess and invited his visitor to play. Rasâlu, who had taken a fancy for his amusing little friend the jackal, caused him to sit close to him whilst he began the game. First Râja Bhôj, on his side, laid a bet of one thousand rupees and threw the dice, but, his cast being spoilt by the jackal falling violently against his arm, Rasâlu won. Râja Bhôj became angry with the jackal, but the latter said: "Pray, sir, pardon my offence! I have been awake the whole night, and being sleepy, I touched your side quite by an accident."

Once more Râja Bhôj laid and began to play, but his cast of the dice was again spoilt by the jackal falling as before against his side. Then cried Râja Bhôj—"Is there anyone there? Hol some one cut this jackal to pieces!"

"I have been awake the whole night," said the jackal, excusing himself again, "forgive me, as I have not committed this fault wilfully."

"What is this talk about your being awake the whole night," enquired Rasâlu. "What do you mean by that?"

"I will tell the secret," said the jackal, "to Râja Bhôj only."

"Tell me then, O jackal," said Râja Bhôj, "what it was you were doing all the night through?"

"Sir," replied the jackal, "tormented with hunger I went to the river-side to look for food. But finding none I grew



THE JACKAL TELLS RASALU AND HIS MARE MERRY TALES.



desperate, and taking up a stone I threw it against another stone, and from the two stones came out fire."

Having said so much, the jackal came to a stop, and Râja Bhôj said, "Well, what else did you do?"

"Sir," said the jackal, "I caught the fire in some dry fuel, out of which a small cinder flew and fell into the river, when at once the whole river was in a blaze. Then I, being afraid of my life on account of you, endeavoured to quench the fire with dry grass, but though I tried my best I am sorry to say two-thirds of the river were burnt up and one-third only remained."

Listening to this tale everyone began to laugh, and to say "What a fib! Can water catch fire, and, even if it could, can dry grass quench it?"

"Sirs," said the jackal, "if water cannot catch fire, how can a crow possibly claim a female swan as his wife?"

Hearing this mysterious answer Râja Rasâlu said:—"Jackal, what in the world are you talking about?"

"Sir," answered the jackal, "Râja Bhôj pronounced a judgment in this court yesterday between a crow and a swan, and without due consideration he snatched away the swan's wife, and made her over to the crow. This judgment I listened to myself. And now the wretched swan is crying all round the jungle, while the crow is enjoying his triumph without let or fear."

"Can this be true?" asked Rasâlu, to which Bhôj replied: "Yes, this fellow tells the truth. I was undoubtedly wrong."

Then Râja Rasâlu sent for those four birds, and when they came he ordered them to sit in a row on the branch of a tree and to close their eyes. The birds did so, and Rasâlu taking a bow and pellets, shot at the crow and killed him dead on the spot, saying: "This is a just reward for fraud and treachery."

At the same time he restored the female swan to her proper mate, who, delighted with the judgment, extolled his wisdom thus:—

“All other kings are geese, but you
 The falcon wise and strong;
 A judgment just you gave, and true—
 O may your life be long!”





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THE RASALU LEGEND

STORY VI

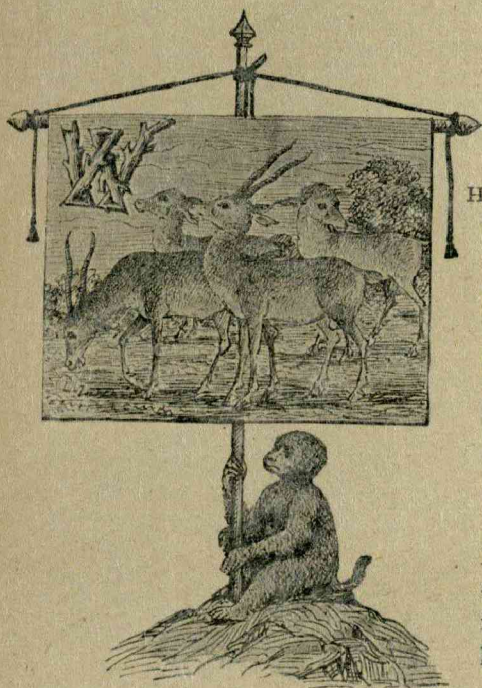
RAJA RASALU AND RAJA BHOJ

RAJA RASALU

RAJA RASALU

AND

RAJA BHOJ



HEN Rasâlu had spent a brief season of rest at the court of Râja Bhôj, he requested that king's permission to take his leave. But his host, unwilling to part with him, said—"As you have blest my palace with your presence, so you will confer on me a still greater favour, if you will abide here a little longer, and make me your disciple."

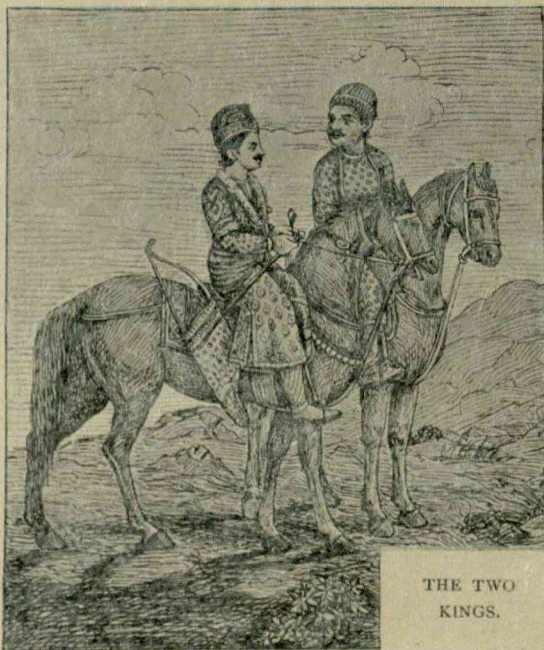
"In the same spot," answered Rasâlu, "my destiny forbids me to tarry long. Nevertheless I will accept your invitation and impart to you whatever I know myself."

So he remained in that city some time longer, dwelling in the house of his friend, and teaching him the art of fighting and wrestling.

At last Rasâlu set out once more on his travels, and many of the inhabitants, out of love and admiration for him, saw him out of their borders; but Râja Bhôj and his

wazîr, together with some few attendants, accompanied him several days' marches.

As they journeyed pleasantly along, Râja Bhôj said to Rasâlu, "Pray tell me, what in your opinion are the five most cursed things in the world."



THE TWO
KINGS.

Then Rasâlu answered him:—

"A thriftless wife who ruins house and home;
A daughter grown whose head is bare and bald;
A daughter-in-law of sour forbidding face;
A crooked axle to the garden-well;
A field that lies athwart the village path;
A man may search the world where'er he please,
And never find more cursèd things than these." ¹

¹ A string of favourite Panjâbî proverbs.



Hearing this answer, Râja Bhôj was pleased exceedingly, and praised Rasâlu's wisdom. And so the two kings, engaged in pleasant converse, continued their way.

At last they arrived one morning at a delightful garden which belonged to the Râni Sobhân, * and entering therein, the whole company dismounted, and laying aside their arms, they reclined along the margin of a fountain of cool delicious water.

Scarcely had they taken their places, when they saw approaching them from the midst of the shrubs and trees one hundred beautiful damsels, all armed with drawn swords. Rasâlu, with a smile, then said to Bhôj—"These fair ladies appear to be very formidable. Let us amuse ourselves a little at their expense."

Having thus spoken, he looked at the girls and said, "O ladies, why have you come out against us with drawn swords in your hands?"

"Whosoever," answered they, "trespasses within the bounds of this garden or comes hither to take water out of the fountain forfeits his ears and his hands, and is then expelled with ignominy."

"Alas," said Rasâlu, "what dire mishap has brought us here!"

Putting on sterner looks, the girls then said,—“Have any of you touched the water of the fountain?—If you have, confess it, in order that we may cut off your hands and your ears, for such is the order we have received from the queen, our mistress, who has bidden us cut off the hands and ears of all who dare to drink from her fountain.”

“O Fair Ones,” replied Rasâlu, “we have not yet presumed to drink. But, as we are merely poor wayfarers, do not hinder us. Suffer us to drink, and then let us depart in peace.”

“Who are you?” enquired the damsels.

“As for me,” said the king, “men call me Rasâlu.”

* *Sobhân*—Beauty, charm.

Hearing his name, all the girls fluttered together, and began to whisper among themselves: "If he be the real Rasâlu," said they, "he will catch us and kill us. We had better let him go, and seize only the others."

But Rasâlu divined their thoughts, and so he said:—

"If you let me go, O beauteous ones, will you not also release the others, seeing we are all wayfarers together?"

Then said one of the maidens:—

"Wayfarers number three, they say,—

The brook, the moon, the shining day;

Of all these three,

Pray tell to me,

Who is your father, and who is your mother?" *

"It is true we are wayfarers," replied Rasâlu, "but we are not so much wayfarers as world-travellers."

"Indeed," said the same lady—"but—

"Travellers o' the world are also three,

A sheep, a woman, a bullock they be;

With quibbling words no longer play,

But tell me your name without delay."

"It is evident," said Rasâlu, "that we poor fellows, whether wayfarers or world-travellers, shall have fain to implore your clemency."

"We have power, of course," observed the ladies, relenting, "to let you off. But what answer shall we make to our mistress?"

"Go to your hard-hearted mistress," answered Rasâlu, "and tell her this:—

"Beside your spring three men reclined,

Your father's family priests were they;

They saw our swords, and, vexed in mind,

They rose at once and walked away;

God knows their route—we greatly fear

They've gone to Kâbul or Kashmîr."

* Common children's rhymes.



IN THE RANI SOBHAN'S GARDEN.



Accordingly these simple damsels left Rasālu and his friends, and going to the palace, they reported to the Rāni Sobhān all that had been told them. "Alas," said the queen, beginning to grieve, "it is twelve long years since our family priests were here before! And now, when they had journeyed so great a distance to visit me, my foolishness has driven them away. Who knows whether they will ever return again to me or not?"

So speaking the queen began to sob, and rising from her seat, she prepared to descend into the garden with her train of belted maidens.

Meanwhile, however, Rasālu and his companions, having rested sufficiently, had left the fountain and gone on their way. Towards evening they halted at a pleasant spot in the open wilderness, where there were some beautiful well-laden mango-trees, and a fair babbling brook. Here they determined to tarry for the night, and having dismounted, they sat down under the cool shady boughs.

Just then a deer appeared in the distance, and Rasālu drawing his bow, brought it down, after which, a fire having been kindled, the game was dressed and served, and every one with glad contented mind partook of the feast.

Now it happened that about the same time Rāja Hōm of Delhi had been routed in a great battle by another Rāja. Great was the slaughter, and Rāja Hōm, abandoning his capital, fled away with only a few of his attendants. Coming to the mango-trees under which Rasālu and his friends were sleeping, the fugitives there pitched their camp, and having eaten a frugal supper, they all retired to rest. The night was very lovely, and Rāja Hōm's queen was lying asleep in her litter next to her husband's tent, while the Rāja sat by her side. As he was unwilling or unable to sleep himself, he began to gaze with a certain tender melancholy, now at the slumbering lady, and now at the

shining moon. When some time had thus elapsed, he called up his wazîr and said to him:—"I have just made some verses."

"Pray, Sir, tell them to me," said the wazîr.

Then Râja Hôm repeated the following lines:—

"No water's like the Ganges, river dear;
 No light is like the moon, serenely clear;
 No sleep is like the sleep that fondly lies,
 So calm and still, upon a woman's eyes;
 Of every fruit that hangs upon the tree,
 The luscious mango is the fruit for me."

"Bravo!" cried the wazîr, applauding vehemently. "Excellent good, Sir, and right nobly expressed!"

Suddenly the silence was broken by the voice of Râja Rasâlu who, with his friend Bhôj, had not been as soundly asleep but that he had heard every word of this pretty interlude, and who now interrupted the conversation with these words:—

"In lonely woods I walk, Râja,
 I walk, a poor recluse;
 However wise your talk, Râja,
 Your friend's a learned goose."

"Who is that?" cried Râja Hôm with sudden anger. "What means this intrusion on our privacy? Ho! catch the fellow, and bring him here!"

One of the attendants approached Rasâlu, and said with some insolence—"Get up, Sir; how dare you interfere with our Râja's talk?"

"If you value your life," answered Rasâlu, "return to your master at once."

"Why?" said the man. "Who are you and whence come you?"

"I am Rasâlu the son of Sûlwahân," replied he, "and

* These lines consist of common sayings of the people.



my home is the blessed Siālkôt. If you are not a stranger to courtesy and to the customs of kings, and if you will request me civilly to visit your Râja, I may go to him. But I never yield to force."

The servant was astonished, and returning to his master he reported to him all his adventure.

"Go to him again," said Râjâ Hôm, "and entreat him courteously to come to me. I wish to speak with him."

Then went the attendant back to Rasâlu, and delivered his message, saying—"Sir, Râja Hôm of Delhi sends you his compliments and would speak to you."

So Rasâlu arose and approaching the tent he saluted the king of Delhi with grave politeness.

"Are you really Rasâlu?" enquired the latter. "Why did not my verses commend themselves to you?"

"However well expressed," answered Rasâlu, "the sentiment was scarcely true. So I ventured to interrupt you."

"I may of course be wrong," said Râja Hôm; "but if so, you will doubtless correct me."

"Willingly," replied Rasâlu; "the idea, in my judgment, should be this:—

"No water like the limpid stream
That ripples idly by; ¹
No light so glorious as the beam
That sparkles from the eye;
Of all the sleep that mortals know,
The sleep of health's the best;
Of all the fruit the gods bestow,
A son exceeds the rest."

"How is that?" said Râja Hôm. "Let me hear your explanation."

"When you were born into the world," answered

¹ Literally, "No water like the water at your arm-pit"—a proverb referring to the flask always borne under the arm by travellers and shepherds in the East.

Rasâlu, "who gave you Ganges water then? And when a thirsty fugitive you fled away before your foes, what good was Ganges water to you then? If you had not eyes you might look for the moonlight in vain; if health forsook you, sleep would forsake you too; and if you were to die fruitless, you would die a barren stock, with never a son to succeed or to perpetuate you."

Having heard this answer, Râja Hôm, admiring Rasâlu's wisdom, praised him greatly, and said to him:—"Sir, you are undoubtedly right, and I was wrong."

The next morning Râja Rasâlu embraced his friend Râja Bhôj and bade him adieu, after which he continued his journey alone, ever seeking for fresh adventures.





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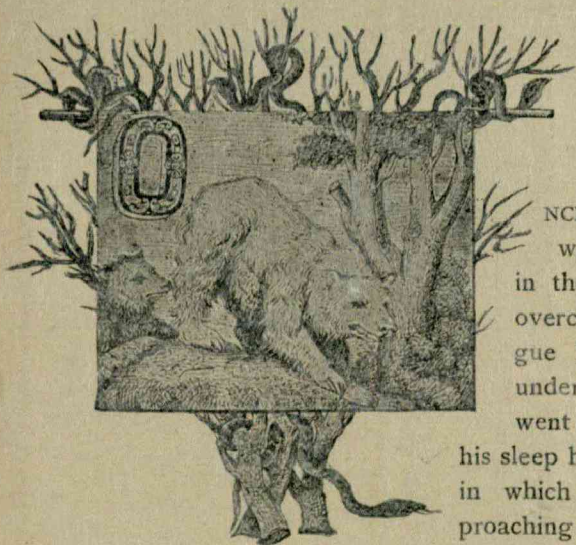
THE RASALU LEGEND

STORY VII

RASALU AND THE GIANTS

THE RASALU LEGEND

RAJA RASALU AND THE GIANTS OF GANDGARH



ONCE Râja Rasâlu was out hunting in the forest when overcome with fatigue he lay down under a tree and went to sleep. In

his sleep he had a vision in which he saw approaching him the Five

Holy Men who addressed him, saying, "Get up, Râja, and root out the race of the giants!"¹ Disturbed in mind, he arose and instantly set off on the expedition, having determined without delay to achieve the exploit. Many a league rode the hardy king on his renowned war-horse Folâdi, now over hills, now over moors, and now through gloomy forests, intent on his arduous quest. One day in the depths of a lonely wood he reached a large city which was as silent as the grave. He entered the streets, but they were deserted; he gazed in at the open shops, but they were all tenantless. Amazed at the solitude, he stood in an open space and

¹ "Five Holy Men"—See Appendix.



surveyed the scene. Just then he caught sight of some smoke issuing from a distant corner, and making his way to it he saw there a miserable old woman kneading and baking quantities of bread and preparing abundance of sweetmeats, but all the time she was either weeping or laughing. Surprised at a spectacle so extraordinary, Rasâlu halted and said, "Mother, in this solitary place who is to eat all that food, and why are you both weeping and laughing?"

"My son, where have you come from?" answered the woman, "from the skies or out of the earth? Do you know this country belongs to giants and man-eaters? You are a stranger; it is better for you to pursue your way and not to question me."

"Nay," said Rasâlu, "I cannot bear to see you in such trouble, and I would fain know the cause of it."

"The king of this place," said the woman, "is Kashudêo,¹ and he has ordered that a human being, a buffalo and four hundred pounds of bread, shall be sent daily to a certain place for the giants. Once I had seven sons of whom six have been devoured, and to-day it is the turn of the seventh, and to-morrow it will be the turn of myself. This is my trouble and it makes me cry. But I am laughing because also to-day my seventh son was to have been married, and because his bride—ha! ha!—will have now to do without him."

With these words the woman fell to laughing and crying more bitterly than ever.

"Weep not," said Râja Rasâlu.—

"Good wife, your tears no longer shed,
If God will keep the youngster's head,
I swear my own shall fall instead."

But the old woman had not so learnt her lessons of life, and replying through her tears, "Alas! what man was ever

¹ Kashu-Deo, a Hindu deity held in high honour in Kashmir.



known to give his head for another?" she went on with her dismal task. But Rasālu said, "I have come here for no other reason than to extirpate the kingdom of the giants."

"Who are you then?" enquired the woman. "What is your father's name and where is your birthplace?"

"The blessed Siālkot is my birth-place," replied he. "I am the son of Sūlwahān, and my name is Rasālu."

Then the woman began considering, and she thought to herself—"Whether he be the real Rasālu, I know not; yet he may be, because it is written, 'One Rasālu shall be born, and he will destroy the kingdom of the giants.'"

Then Rasālu, gazing round, enquired, "Why is there no one in the city?—

"Here temple domes and palace towers,
Bazaars and lowly shops abound,
But silent as the passing hours,
Idly they lift themselves around;
What luckless hap hath chanced the world, that all
Deserted are the doors of house and mart and hall?"

"Let not this surprise you," answered the old woman, "the people have all been eaten up by the giants."

Rasālu now dismounted from his horse, and having tied him under shelter, he stretched himself on a small low bedstead and at once fell into a deep slumber. Meanwhile the young lad arrived with the buffalo which was laden with the bread and the sweetmeats, and when all was ready he drove it before him through the empty streets and went out into the forest. After a time the old woman came close to the sleeping king and began to cry piteously, so that the king started up from his sleep and enquired the reason of her distress. She answered him:—

"Thou rider of the dark-grey mare,
Rasâlu, bearded, turbaned stranger,
O for some saviour to repair,
A champion, to the field of danger!
I weep because those tyrants come to-day,
To lead my one surviving son away."

Then Rasâlu arose, and with a word of comfort to the mother, he mounted and rode off in pursuit of her son. Having overtaken him he said, "How shall we know, boy, when the giants are coming?"

"First," answered the boy, "there will be a strong wind with rain, and when that is over the giants will come."

Continuing their journey, they arrived at the banks of a river where the boy halted, while Rasâlu rambled about, hunting. In his absence one of the giants named Thirya¹ came down to fetch some water. So huge of body and mighty of limb was he, that his water-skin was composed of the hides of twenty-seven buffaloes all sewn together so as to form one vast receptacle, and he carried a bucket made up of the hides of seven buffaloes. When he filled his water-skin the river absolutely groaned so that Rasâlu, hearing, gazed at it in wonder.

Thirya, seeing the lad and the buffalo, and the full load of bread, grinned with greedy delight, saying, "Glad am I to see all these good things."

Then seizing some of the loaves, he shuffled away into a thicket and began to munch. But by-and-bye Rasâlu returned, and then the boy said to him—"One of the giants has already come and has taken away his toll of the loaves, and others will soon come and eat me together with the buffalo. What is the use of your advancing further?"

"Who is he that has taken away the loaves?" asked Rasâlu.

"He is the water-carrier," answered the lad. "His name

¹ *Thirya*—Unprincipled one.



FOOD FOR THE GIANTS.



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is Thirya, and he generally comes first and takes his bread beforehand as a tax which is allowed him."

"Where is he?" asked Rasālu.

"There he is," said the boy, "in the thicket, eating the loaves."

Rasālu, sword in hand, rode into the thicket, and going up to the giant he smote him with his iron whip and cut off his right hand, and recovered the loaves.

Then, with a howl which was so loud and dreadful that it roused his companions the other giants from their sleep or from their labours and brought them out from their dens in the mountain, the giant cried, as he gazed at the hero's enormous quiver, and his threatening aspect, "What man, what demon, are you?"

"I am Rasālu," answered the King.

And when he heard the name, the disabled monster, crying and weeping, ran back to his brothers, traversing the distance in two or three strides. His brothers were surprised, and said, "What has come over you? You look quite perplexed. Where is the skin and where the pitcher?" And Thirya answered, "The leathern pitcher I left with the buffalo, the skin I hung on the pommel of the horse. Run, Brothers, run!—

"Here comes Rasālu, the champion brave,
Let us haste and hide in the mountain cave;
Whether prophet of God or Beelzebub,
Upon his shoulders he carries a club!"

Saying these words, Thirya cried out and ran in terror.

But the eldest of the crew, whose name was Kabîr, ¹ and who was bald-pated, offered to go and see what was the matter and who the person was who had cut off Thirya's arm. Now this Kabîr was very bold. He advanced confidently, running along to the side by which Rasālu was coming.

¹ A certain Hindu philosopher.



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¹ A certain Hindu philosopher.



Scarcely had he gone far, when he saw a buffalo, a boy, and a horseman moving up towards him. So at once he understood the whole matter, and he said to himself, "Here will I stay, for the things to be divided are the buffalo, the boy, and the loaves. But the horse and his rider are things over and above all that, and these shall be mine. I will have them at once, and tell my brothers I have devoured them in vengeance for my brother's arm. So they won't be angry with me!"

While he was planning all this out, Râja Rasâlu saw him, but he was so tall in stature and so awful in aspect, that the Râja could not take him for a man at all, but, as the head was moving, he asked the boy; "O Boy, Boy," said he, "let me know what that mountain is in front of me with the moving top! Are the hills of this country moving?"

"No, sir," answered the boy. "That is not a hill. It is a sturdy giant. His name is Kabîr. He is waiting for us. He will undoubtedly devour us all!"

"All right!" said Rasâlu. "Let us go forward!"

Meanwhile the Râja took his bow, and placing an arrow in it, he drew and shot it with such force, that it went straight into the upper part of Kabîr's skull. So the giant cried out with a bitter cry and went running in terror to his brothers, who were more astonished than ever. And they asked him, saying, "What is the matter with you? Why are you running so wildly? Perhaps you have eaten something!" He was just going to answer them, when his brains came oozing out from his wound, and he fell prone upon the earth right in front of his brothers, saying, as he fell,—

"Hear me, Brothers, though we live long enough, still we must die! But be advised by me, and beware of the horseman coming up the hill!"

Then fell rage on them all for the loss of their two



brothers, and they all began to boast, and to utter foul words. "Who is the man," said they, "who has treated our brothers thus?" Tûndia and Mûndia declared they would go at once, and devour him there where he stood. But Akâldêo¹ told them to calm themselves, and not be too hasty. "Let him come, Brothers," said he, "and we will see how we can avenge ourselves for our loss!" So they began to make preparations.

Meanwhile Rasâlu, the boy, and the buffalo, came within sight of them, and the Râja said, "Hail, Giants, Hail!" And Akâldêo returned answer, saying,—

"Hail to you, and hail to your father and mother! But stop there, whoever you are, and let me first know your name. Are you Râja Rasâlu? Our fathers told us we should be killed by one Râja Rasâlu, but it does not matter whether you are he or not, as we are quite prepared to have a fight with you. So what is your name anyhow?"

At first Rasâlu hesitated to say, but the giant insisted, and when he saw that he was growing angry he spoke and said,—*"Siâlkot is my country and Siâlkot is my town. My father's name is Sâribân (Sûlwahân) and my mother was Râni Lûna"* Now his mother's name he gave them because she was of the race of the fairies; and when the younger brothers heard it they would have fled at once. But Tûndia and Mûndia said,—*"Flee who will, we will stand by Akâldêo!"*

And Akâldêo counselled them, saying,—*"Brothers, do not run! My parents taught me a charm, and we shall soon see if this horseman stands or runs. If he stands, then no doubt he is Râja Rasâlu."* Then turning to the Râja, he said, *"One snort of mine will sweep you away!"*

At once the monster laid his forefinger on his right nostril and blew with his left. Instantly there passed over

¹ Akâldêo—Immortal God.



the land a sudden and thick darkness, the atmosphere was filled with lurid dust, and by means of magic and enchantment the winds and the clouds rushed up from afar. Then beat the rain for forty days and forty nights, and the hail-stones smote, the thunders roared, and the lightnings flashed, and the very earth was shaken.

"Now keep your feet, good steed," cried Râja Rasâlu; and to the lad he said, "Here, boy, grip well my stirrup and fear them not!"

And while the wind swept by with the force of a hurricane so that the trees were uprooted, the king sat firm and undaunted in the midst of the tempest and never flinched or cowered a jot. Nay, so firm was his seat, that his horse sank up to his knees in the earth.

When the storm had driven by and the darkness had sped, Akâldêo boastfully cried, "Now see if Rasâlu is there!"

And as the light dawned they saw him in the same spot. Then Akâldêo, bursting with rage, snorted with both his nostrils, and it continued raining and hailing with two-fold violence, and the storm raged furiously for eighty days and eighty nights, so that no stone, or tree, or animal, or bird, was left within a radius of a hundred miles. And when this was over, Akâldêo cried once more, "Now see if Rasâlu is there!" And they looked and still they saw him standing in the same position, calm and unmoved as the Angel of Death. Then fear and consternation filled their hearts and they were in a mind to flee, when one of them said, "But if you are indeed Rasâlu, you will pierce with your arrow seven iron griddles, for so it is written in our sacred books."

"Bring them forth!" said Rasâlu.

And the giants brought out the seven griddles, each of which weighed thirty-five tons, and setting them up in a row one behind another, they challenged Rasâlu to pierce

them. Drawing his bow Rasālu launched one of his shafts of iron, weighing a hundred pounds, and drove it at the seven griddles, so that it pierced them through and through and fixed itself immovably in the earth beyond.

"You have missed!" cried all the giants in a breath.

"I never missed in my life," returned Rasālu. "Go, look at the griddles and see!"



They went to the spot, and saw the griddles really pierced, and the arrow stuck in the ground beyond.

Then said Rasālu, "Pull out the arrow!"

They all pulled and tugged, but not one of them could stir it, so, at that, Rasālu drew it forth himself.

"Of a truth this man is a giant," said one. "Let us try him with some iron gram. If he will eat it, we shall know that he comes of the blood of the demons."



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Then the giants brought ten pounds of iron gram and gave it into his hands; but Rasâlu, deftly changing it for the gram which he had in his horse's nose-bag, began to eat before them, and when he had so done, he cried, "Now look out for yourselves!"

Then they all got really alarmed. "No doubt," thought they, "it is the real Râja Rasâlu: no doubt our destruction is certain." But Akâldêo chanted a charm and turned himself into a stone. Two others, Thirya and Wazîr, fled for their lives; but Tûndia and Mûndia, feeling ill, stayed where they were. Then said Rasâlu to Folâdi, his horse, "Now what shall we do?"

"Their chief has turned himself into a stone," answered the horse, "by virtue of his magic. You cannot therefore do anything with him. Much better that you should fight the two who are remaining behind."

So Rasâlu advanced to them and bade them strike the first blow.

"No strength is left to us at all!" answered they.

"Râja," said the parrot, "kill them at once!"

"O, Rasâlu," said they, "evil is the deed you have done us this day! O tyrant, two of our brothers you have killed! What poison have you served out to us? In the name of God, take our lives soon!"

Then Rasâlu, drawing his bow, struck first at Tûndia, and the arrow sent him flying to Maksûdabâgh. Then with another arrow he smote Mûndia who, with the arrow, went flying away to Alikhân. Down they fell, both of them, Tûndia and Mûndia. They fell like mountains, and their blood gushed out like rivers of water in the hills.

After that he advanced to Akâldêo, and smote him two or three times, but, finding his efforts useless, he asked his parrot and his horse to advise him. "Râja," said the parrot, "it is useless to break your arm over this stone.



Three of them have been killed, and of the two who have fled one has lost his arm. You can't do any harm to this figure of stone. Let us then go to the place where the smoke is rising; perhaps some of their women are there. Make them tell you what to do with this figure, and then despatch them as well!"

Then went Rasālu forward to that place from which the smoke was issuing, and there he found a large building with a wild garden round it. At the same time he spied a woman coming out, whose features were most repulsive, who was covered with hair to her ankles, and whose teeth were just like the iron points of ploughshares. She was coming forward as if to meet her husband, and she bore in her hand an iron bar, from one end of which was hanging a whole roasted camel. The sight of her scared even Rasālu, for he had never seen anything so hideous in his life, and he cried out to his parrot, "O Shādi, woe to you, and woe to me, and woe to us all! Our lives were preserved from those monsters, but now you have led your master to a most awful thing. No doubt we shall here be eaten alive!"

"Be careful, Rājā!" answered the parrot. "Don't lose your presence of mind! It is a woman, and it cannot be so courageous as the men. Frighten her, and you will see that she will give way!"

Then Rasālu, drawing his sword, spoke, "O Bhagalbatt, in a towering rage I draw my sword! Tell the secret at once, and show me your husband's magic art!"

At the same time he flashed his sword in front of her as if to cut her in pieces. The woman stood aghast; and, folding her hands, she said: "I will obey all your orders."

"Tell me the secret, then, at once!" said Rasālu, "Your husband is a stone. Can you make him alive again?"

"Yes, I can," answered she, "and I will go with you to the place."

And so she did. But no sooner had she approached the figure of her husband than she ran back again, and would have escaped, if Rasâlu had not caught her, refusing to let her go. Then said she, "I will not bring my husband back to life unless you promise to marry me after you have put him to death. Oh, I do not want to become a widow! If you kill me it does not matter, because in that case my husband will save himself and remain alive. But give me your promise, and I will call him back to life, and then you can kill him, and marry me!"

At this speech Rasâlu laughed. But Shâdi said, "Râja, why hesitate? Give her your promise! You will never have such a chance again! You will certainly have to buy up all the cotton in the country to dress her, but then see what a beauty she is! She is indeed most lovely, and well worthy of your highness!"

Rasâlu, however, was much perplexed, not wishing to make a false promise, and besides he did not want her as a wife. Yet, after all, he promised; and when he had done so, the giantess said,—

"O Râja, make haste, make no delay! The whole body of the giant has become rigid as stone, but not so his heart. Up, Râja, and strike him through the heart!"

Then Rasâlu went up at a bound, his horse leaping a leap of one hundred yards, and passing round the figure, he saw that the heart was indeed beating very heavily. So he stabbed him there, right through the heart, and his sword came out on the other side of the body. And as the sword drove in, that one-eyed monster began to tremble like a quaking mountain, and in a short time he grew cold.

Then said his horse to Rasâlu, "Râja, now is the time



for you to marry this woman, that is, to strike her dead, lest she play us a trick!"

"No, Horse," answered Rasālu, "she cannot do harm, and besides she is only a woman, so let her live till we come back. First and foremost we must think of the giants who have run away, and who are far more dangerous than she. One of them is without an arm, so I don't care for him; but the other is sound and stout, and we must settle him at once!"

So Rasālu set off in pursuit of Thirya and Wazîr. These both ran together for a little while, but afterwards Thirya, who was wounded and bleeding, said to Wazîr, "Brother, my blood is flowing apace, and will, I think, get us into trouble, because Rasālu can follow us upon the track of the blood. But you, being in sound health, had better get away to some safe place and leave me alone." Wazîr, thinking Thirya meant him to return to Akâldêo, went back, because he hoped to escape to Mount Sarbân, but on the way he saw Rasālu galloping his horse. Puzzled and perplexed what to do, he tore up thick bushes and large trees and made a pile of them and hid himself under them. Thirya, happening to look back, was quite astonished at his sudden disappearance, and he said,—

"He left me only just now, and what's become of him I do not know!" And, being quite confounded by grief and sorrow, he spoke and said,— "The fire of pain burns in my breast, on our family has fallen calamity. O Brother, escape while yet you can, run anywhere, to this side or to that side, if only you are still alive!"

Then Rasālu again conferred with his horse and his parrot, and ordered them to advise him, whether first to go in pursuit of Thirya, or to kill the giant concealed under the trees. Both of them advised him to kill Wazîr first. So the King came to the pile of trees and brushwood, and

they saw that underneath lay a large flat slab of heavy stone, which was moving up and down as the giant breathed beneath. Now the Râja had learnt some magic from his mother Lûna, so he chanted some words, by virtue of which the stone rolled away, and the giant beneath became visible. Then the Râja began to pull away the trees and the bushes, but the horse and the parrot stopped him, saying, "O Râja, what a foolish thing to do! If you are going to tear away those trees one by one, it will take ages, and, besides, the giant will suddenly jump up all at once and catch you in his arms, and you will not be able to kill him, but get killed by him yourself instead. You have killed four of them, and now we think the fifth will kill you. You had better cut him through with your sword, together with the trees." And right glad was Rasâlu that he did so. He drew his sword, making it flash like lightning, and, taking God's name on his lips, he struck with his sword, which was so sharp, that it passed through the trees and the bushes, and cut the giant in two. Then, setting a light to it, he made a bonfire of the whole mass.

When all this was being done, Thîrya again looked back, and saw that his brother Wazîr was dead. He also saw Rasâlu preparing to pursue him with all his strength, and he cried, "You have cut off my arm and killed my brothers. Why still pursue me? I feel an arrow piercing my heart!" Then he hurried on up the mountain, moaning, "O God, you alone are my saviour! He won't let me alone!" And when he got to the cliff, all at once the rock before him began to split open, and taking advantage of it, he climbed up and ran into the cleft. So Rasâlu lost him, to his great surprise, and he spoke to his parrot and his horse, saying,—

"I am astonished! You see the state of affairs. No sooner had I begun to overtake him, than he disappeared. What's to be done now?"

"Sāhib," answered Shādi, "you did not see what I did. I was higher than you, and I think that the rock must have opened for the giant to go in. Let me go and see where he is!" So the parrot flew to the hill and found him hidden in the Cave of Gandghar. Then, flying back to his master, he said, "The giant is hidden in the cave of the mountain."

Going to the place, Rasālu saw Thirya crouching in the gloom of Gandgharri-ki-ghâr,¹ and he cried,—“Are you inside, Thirya?”

“Yes,” answered he.

“Why are you here?” asked Rasālu.

“Because, Sir,” said Thirya, “you cut off my hand, and I was afraid of you, and I have come in hither to hide.”

Then, as he heard the approaching tramp of Folādi, he ran further in, and lifting up his voice in a lament, cried aloud and said:—

“Strange is Thy nature always, God most dread,
 To Thee the poor and needy cry for bread;
 Thou givest life where life lived not before,
 And those who live Thou biddest live no more.
 My bark is drifting o’er the stormy deep,
 While all her crew are wrapt in deadly sleep;
 Dark Asrâîl grips fast the guiding oar,
 And, through the waves that hoarsely round her roar,
 His shuddering freight he hurries to the shore.
 O how can I foreknow what words of doom
 Against my soul proclaim beyond the shadowy tomb!”

As he spoke thus, Rasālu alighted, and tying his horse to a stone, he took his shield and his sword and went into the cave. Then said the parrot, “Rāja, Rāja, what are you doing? We advise you not to go alone into that cave, lest in the darkness the giant catch you in his arms

¹ That is, *The Cave of Gandghar*.

and eat you up!" But the Râja insisted, and went in, but as he found no limit to the length of that cave, and as Thîrya continued to evade him, and as it was getting darker and darker at every step, he cried out, "Thîrya, it is unmanly to flee away to such a place! Come out if you are brave, and you shall have the first blow!"

"No, no, no," roared the giant, "I won't come out, and I will never come out till the Day of Judgment!" And as he rushed further and further in, the echoes of his voice reverberating through the vast chambers resounded far and wide. But the darkness then became so black and so confusing that Rasâlu searched for him in vain. Therefore at last he gave up the hopeless task and came out. But having engraved a likeness of his stern face on the surface of the rock just within the cave, he rolled a great stone to the mouth of it, and fixed thereto his bow and arrow. At full stretch, with the arrow fitted to the string, hangs the bow, and from the arrow hangs a tuft of Rasâlu's hair. Then having closed up the entrance, he cried out to the imprisoned giant,— "Thîrya, remember if you dare to stir forth you will be killed on the spot!"

Thus he shut the monster in, and there he remains to this day. Sometimes, even now, he endeavours to escape, but when in the sombre twilight he catches sight of the awful look of King Rasâlu's pictured face, and sees the threatening arrow, and the nodding tuft of hair, he rushes back dismayed and baffled, and his bellowing fills the villages round with dread. ¹

Then said the son of the old woman to Rasâlu, "Râja, let us now go back!" And the Râja, listening to the words of the boy, turned to go home again. When they got near the castle of the giants, the boy again spoke.

¹ See Appendix—"Gandghar."



RASALU AND THE GIANTESS BHAGALBATT.



"Râja," said he, "let the giantess remain where she is. Go not nigh her gate, but let us go straight home!"

"No, child," said Rasâlu, "this plan will not work at all. The giantess will prove as great a plague to the world as the giants were. So we must kill her too!"

They went to the castle, and there saw the giantess sitting and waiting. She had dressed herself up in most splendid clothing, in the hope of becoming the wife of Rasâlu. She now stood up and began to catch the Râja by his skirt, but he ordered her to keep off and not to touch him.

"Râja," said she, "I am to be your wife, and do you order me not to touch you? What is the meaning of that?"

"When you are my wife, you can touch me," said the Raja, "of course!"

"Then make haste, Râja," cried she. "Be quick and marry me!"

"We must do the thing properly," said Rasâlu. "Hear me, you Bhagalbatt! Let us put the cauldron on the fire, and fill it full, and let us march round it seven times. Thus shall the wedding rite be accomplished!"

Then brought she out a huge iron cauldron, and the Râja bade her to fill it with oil, and set it in the midst, and light a large fire under it. All this she did, as she was told, saying to Rasâlu, "Is it a way of marrying, Râja!"

"Yes, my wife," answered he.

Now Rasâlu had determined to throw her into the burning oil, but she suspected him, and she had also made up her mind to throw him in, if she got the chance. Meanwhile he told her to compass the fire with him seven times, according to the custom of Hindus at their marriages, and she began to trip round and round. And as Rasâlu eyed her, he was thinking how best he could lift her

up, and he decided that the best plan would be to catch her by the neck with one hand, and by the lower part of her body with the other. So, in accordance with this plan, all of a sudden he thus caught her, as she was prancing round the fire, and, using the utmost force, he heaved her up, and cast her into the boiling cauldron, where she was burnt up. And when her skull split with the heat of the fire, so great was the shock thereof, that it brought on an earthquake which lasted for three hours. And Rasâlu said:—

“Forever cursèd be the wife,
 The wretch, who sells her husband’s life,—
 Burn, burn, O leaping flame!
 I’ve killed her dead, that famous slut,
 The cauldron reeks of Bhagalbutt,^{*}
 All open lies her shame!”

Then Rasâlu took the boy back to Uda-nâgiri, where the house of the old woman was, and there they saw her waiting for them outside the door. And when they drew near, alive and safe, joyfully she spoke and said:—

“I saw you coming on your way,
 As I stood beside the door,
 O sit and rest while now you may,
 And let me be, I humbly pray,
 Your slave for evermore!”

Thus the old woman entreated him to stop with her, but he was not willing to do so, for in three days he mounted his mare and rode away to other parts.

^{*} When the *a* is not accented it is pronounced like *u* in English *butt*. The giantess’s name therefore pronounce *Bhuggulbutt*.



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CSL

THE RASALU LEGEND

STORY VIII

TILYAR NAG AND SUNDAR KAG¹

(The Starling Snake and the Handsome Crow.)

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¹ Tilyâr Nâg, *i. e.* Tilyâr the Snake (Cobra). Sundar Kâg, *i. e.* Sundar the Raven or Crow.

THE RASALU LEGEND



TILYAR NAG
AND
SUNDAR KAG

HEN after many
days, Rasâlu came
by the way of
Nûrpûr Jehân to Mejât,
and so to Avellia, and
then to Maksûdâbâgh in
Hazâra At that time

there was a large dragon or serpent in that country
which was very destructive to every living thing.
The country was all uninhabited, and waste, on
account of the serpent. And it rained
and continued raining for seven days
and nights. And when the rain was
over, and the weather clear, Rasâlu happened to see
a hedgehog.

The hedgehog, trying to leap a stream, fell into it, and
became entangled in weeds, and got into trouble, and he
addressed Râja Rasâlu, saying thus:—

“O rider of the dark-gray mare,
Rasâlu, bearded, turbaned stranger,
A drowning hedgehog craves your care,
For God's sake save his life from danger!”

When Rasâlu heard these words he was surprised, and
began to look about him. And he said to his parrot,

"You are flying above me. Did you hear a voice? Who calls to me?" Instantly the parrot looked about, and seeing the black hedgehog, he said to Rasâlu, "It is the hedgehog. He begs you, in the name of God, to rescue him. So pray help him!"

Then Rasâlu looked at the hedgehog, and said, "You are a hedgehog, and I am a man. What connection there is between you and me I know not. But as you have challenged me with the name of God, I will help you!" He then dismounted, and stretched out his hand to help the hedgehog out. But the hedgehog struggled, and some of his spines ran into the Râja's hand. To get rid of the little beast, the Râja threw him back into the water, and he fell into the very same place whence he had been taken. And Rasâlu said to him, "Your body is very small and very insignificant, but you seem to have many arms. I do not touch you again, seeing that your sharp quills have pierced my hand!"

So the Râja left him where he found him, and went on his way. And when the hedgehog saw that, he put his hands together, and besought him, saying, "Neither touch me with your hand, nor keep me in your lap. Take me out of the stream and put me in your horse's feeding bag!" But Rasâlu was in doubt, so he said to the parrot, "Shâdi, the hedgehog wants me to put him in the nose-bag. What is your opinion about that?" And the parrot as well as the horse begged him to rescue the hedgehog from his miserable plight. So the Râja lowered the end of his bow, and so took him out of the water, and he set him on the ground and left him there a little while to dry. And when he was dry he put him in Fôlâdi's nose-bag, which hung from the saddle bow.

It was then mid-day, and Rasâlu made up his mind to go to Maksûdâbâgh, and there take rest from the heat of



the sun. So he set out. And as they journeyed the hedgehog began to think to himself,—“I have been exposed to storm and rain for seven days, and to-day there is a good sun shining. I wonder if I am any the worse. Better see!” So he swelled himself out, and stretched his spines. And the spines on the horse-side pierced through the nose-bag, and pricked Folâdi most terribly, so that she shuddered again. And Rasâlu was astonished and said to his horse, “O you Horse! you have been in many a battle, you have fought with giants and savages without number, and you never trembled. I think it must be either your last day or mine. Let me know the cause of this trembling!”

“My trembling,” answered the horse, “has been all caused by that wretched animal you took out of the water!”

Then Rasâlu dismounted to see, and found his horse's body pierced by the spines. So he said to the hedgehog—“I took you out of that horrible mess, and carried you with me. Why, pray, did you pierce [my Folâdi with your thorns?”

“It was a joke,” answered the hedgehog, “my first joke! It was not malice, it was not a bad heart! Indeed I may have to play some other jokes with Mr. Horse!”

So they all laughed and joked together, one with the other.

By-and-bye they began to draw nigh to Maksûdabâgh.

Now as they were riding along, Rasâlu observed a spacious castle, beautifully built, and surrounded on all sides with gardens, but it was entirely deserted. There Rasâlu dismounted and sat down under a *baherâ*¹ tree, close to a running fountain of pellucid water. At that moment the parrot began to say something, when the hedgehog exclaimed from the nose-bag—“Take me out, take me out!”

¹ A tree yielding a medicinal fruit.

ROMANTIC TALES FROM THE PUNJAB

The king lifted him out, and then addressing his parrot, he said, "Tell me, O Shâdi, what you were going to say."

"Sir," answered the parrot, "it seems to me that this house is enchanted. It must belong to some demons or giants, because I can see the carcasses of dead men lying all about close to the walls. It is better that we should leave this place and go pass the night elsewhere."

"I have no wish to do that," answered Rasâlu, "and in brief I intend to remain. But tell me, what monster is that which has killed all these men?"

"Sir," replied the parrot, "what do I know about them? Ask the hedgehog, since he has the look of one who belongs to these parts."

Then said the king to the hedgehog, "O Friend, what monster is it which has destroyed all these animals and all these men?"

"Sir," answered the hedgehog, folding his hands, "in this place live Tilyâr, the great flying serpent, and his friend Sundar Kâg, the sea-raven. They are villains in grain, and having come here they trouble and molest wretched wayfarers, and whosoever ventures this way, whether he be hunter or prince or king, they never permit him to quit the place alive."

"What do they do?" enquired Rasâlu.

Kneeling down before the King as if at his prayers, the hedgehog meekly replied,—“Sir, travellers who come to this fountain, being overcome with fatigue, lie down here and rest. Then this Tilyâr the serpent, in the middle of the night, steals out upon them and sucks away their breath as they lie asleep, after which he goes away and informs the sea-raven, who comes in his turn and pecks out their eyes from their sockets.”

"Is it true?" said Rasâlu.

"Yes, it is quite true," answered the hedgehog.



Then said the king, "I cannot now mount again, because I have already said that here I will certainly remain. But you shall all act as I bid you."

"We await your orders," said the hedgehog.

"God is master over all," said Rasālu. "He has power to kill and He has power to save. But one thing, in good sooth, you people should not omit to do. Altogether we number four persons. Let us therefore wake and sleep by turns, and thus let us pass the four watches of the night in safety."

Having so ordained, Rasālu again spoke, and said, "The first watch of the night shall be taken by me, the second by Folādi my horse, the third by Shādi my parrot, and the fourth by the hedgehog."

But, alas! all Rasālu's plans availed him not, for before night-fall that fiery serpent came. And thus it befell.

As it was still early in the day, he ordered the horse to go and graze in the meadows, and the parrot to go and pick fruits in the woods, and the hedgehog to have a ramble, and so they were scattered.

Now Tilyâr, the serpent, had made a vow twelve years before that he would suck away Rasālu's breath. And Tilliâr's friend, the raven, whose name was Sundar Kâg, knew it. It so happened that Rasālu, feeling weary with the heat, had fallen asleep, and Sundar Kâg, hopping round, saw him, and at once went to Tilyâr's hole, and woke him up with a loud croak. The serpent, feeling angry at being disturbed, said, "What business have you coming here at this hour?"

"Come out!" said the raven. "The man you have vowed to kill is to-day in this very garden, and I have come to tell you so."

The serpent at once came out of his den, and crawled softly to the spot where Râja Rasālu was sleeping. Taking the Râja at advantage he mounted on his breast, and putting

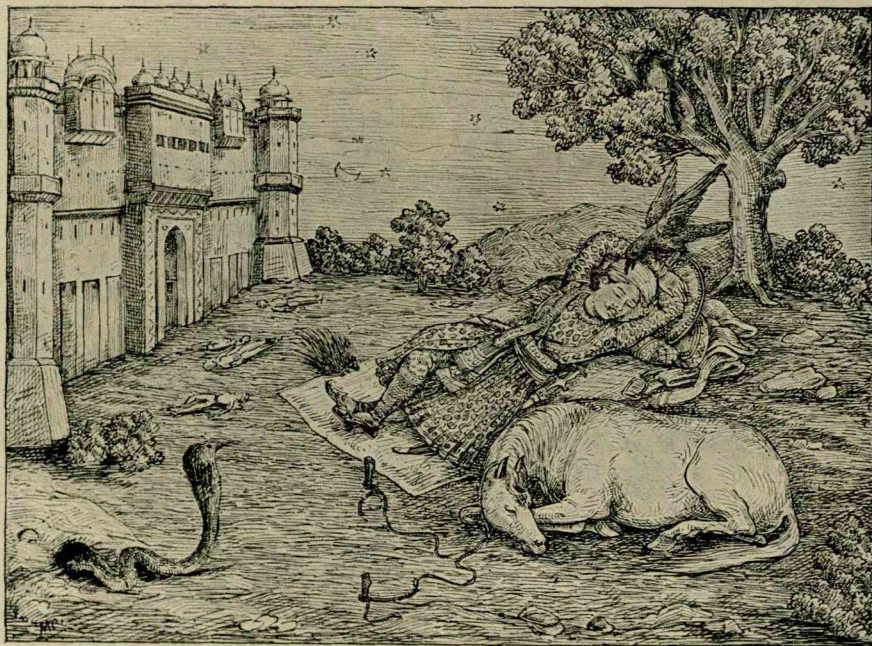


his mouth to Rasâlu's mouth, drew up all his breath, so that the Râja became lifeless. Just after this, Shâdi returned from the jungle, and, seeing the Râja lying asleep, he sat on the tree, waiting for him to wake and have a talk.

Meanwhile the serpent went back, and reported the whole adventure to his friend the raven, and ordered him to go and make a feast on the Râja's body. But the raven had a wife whose name was Shârak,¹ and she said to her husband, "O Sundar Kâg, bring me the Râja's eyes and tongue, and eat the rest yourself!" So the raven set off, and the first thing he did was to sit on the Râja's instep, which he began to peck, in order to find out if he was really dead or not. Finding that he did not stir, he hopped on to one of his knees, and the parrot, who was watching the whole thing, was quite surprised the Râja did not move, because he knew well that his master's aim never failed of its mark. After this, the raven hopped up and sat on the Râja's breast. Then the parrot concluded that Rasâlu was dead. So he pounced down on to the raven and broke his back, and when the raven saw that his back was broken, he flew away. But he was so amazed and bewildered, that he could not find his own house, but went blundering along elsewhere through streams and bushes.

The parrot now began to weep for his master. And he thought of the hedgehog, and longed for his friend the horse; but neither of them came. Indeed the poor hedgehog had himself got into trouble. For, when rambling in the jungle, he began to pursue a little grasshopper, and he was so eager in the pursuit that he never saw a pool of water right in his way, and fell flop into it. And very sorry he was when he found, as he quickly did, that he could not get out again. But what was his horror when

¹ The *Graculus religiosus*.



THE ENCHANTED CASTLE.



he overheard Tilyâr, the serpent, saying to his friend Sundar Kâg, "I have taken his breath, go along and feast away!"

"O God," said he, "what has happened? All this trouble has been caused by me!" He was just thinking about all this, when a rat, having got scent of him, began to throw mud at him, because rats and serpents naturally are the enemies of hedgehogs. The poor hedgehog begged him to leave off, and help him out. But the rat refused, saying, "Shall I help one that is my enemy? No, never!" and, to show his malice, he got on the hedgehog's back, and kept pushing him down into the water. Then the hedgehog prayed him again. "In the name of God," said he, "take me out, and I promise never to do anything to injure you. O Rat, it is a time of trial, if you will do me this little kindness, you shall be repaid!"

At last the rat relented. But he said, "O Hedgehog, please hide your snout, I am afraid of your snout! And oh, please hide your teeth, as I am also afraid of your teeth! Consent to this, and I will help you!" So the hedgehog did so, and the rat laid hold of one of his spines, and, snatching him out of the water, landed him safely on dry ground. Then ran the hedgehog back with all speed, and was surprised to find the Râja sleeping, and the parrot weeping copiously. "O Parrot," said he, "what is the cause of your trouble?" Then answered the parrot as he sobbed,—

"Of the fruits of the garden we feasted at will,
By the waters we wandered and drank to our fill,
But, ah, for the weeping,
Our Râjâ is sleeping,
Our Râja is sleeping forever in death,
For Tilyâr the serpent has drawn up his breath!"

"O Shâdi, parrot Shâdi," answered the hedgehog, "the Râja is not dead, though his breath has been drawn up



by the snake. Within twenty-one days he can be restored to life. Please get some milk and two *chûpâtties* and some rice cooked in the milk. Get them soon!" And the hedgehog continued,—“I am a very weak little body, and cannot speak to any one. I cannot persuade anyone to bring them. The horse also is a thing to be coveted, and, if he goes, people will catch him and tie him up. Neither he nor I can help. Only you, who are a bird and who can fly far away in a little time, can bring those things!”

So Shâdi went, and going he said, “I, Shâdi, leave this place trusting in God, and saying that I will come back in eight days. O Hedgehog, carefully watch the Râja's eyes, that they be not destroyed!”

Then flew the parrot away to the village of Kabbal and perched on the roof of the house of a widow, who was a Hindu. And the parrot cried, “O God most merciful, O most bounteous God!” The woman was going down to the Indus with a little vessel in her hand, but hearing the voice of the bird she stopped, and said,—

“O Parrot, where is your home,
And where is the place of your dwelling?
What Râja sent you to roam?
O speak to me, truthfully telling!”

And the parrot made answer,—

“Siâlkôt is my Râja's court,
His mother comes from Indra Fort;
In beauty, theme of endless praise,
He shames the moon of fifteen days;
But Tilyâr Nâg has sucked his breath,
And now my Râja lies in death!
For love of God, behold this tear,
And make for me a little *khîr*!”

Now the woman made up her mind to catch the parrot, because, as it was a Râja's, his master would come and



pay high ransom for it. So she prepared the *khîr*—the milk, the rice, and the sugar—and invited the parrot to come and eat. But the parrot was too clever to be taken in, and refused. "I belong to a great Râja," said he. "I am not accustomed to eat of one dish, but of two. Make me also some *chûpâtties*!" And this he said then, because he wanted to engage both her hands, so that he might not be caught. So she baked the cakes which she held in one hand, while she held the *khîr* on the other, and she invited Shâdi to the feast. So the parrot flew down straight on to her head, with his face over her face, and glad beyond measure she was when she noticed that every feather in his body was set in gold. "No doubt," thought she, "he belongs to some great Râja!" And now the parrot, in order to engage her attention, began to peck up *khîr*, grain by grain, but afterwards, getting a chance, he flew away with two *chûpâtties*, and, wrapped in the *chûpâtties*, a little *khîr*. Seeing this, the woman stood surprised, and cried,—

"Around my lattice, gaily nested,
Bulbuls trill by night and day;
Upon my house-top, golden crested,
Peacocks sing melodious lay;
O Parrot, you alone have rested,
Only rested to betray!"

By-and-bye the parrot came to the hedgehog, and saluted him, and he took note that the hedgehog was sitting close by the ear of the Râja. And the hedgehog said, "I have been watching the Râja all this time; so much I have done. Have you also done something?" And the hedgehog taking from the parrot one of the *chûpâtties*, wrapped it well round his own body, and keeping a little *khîr* in front of his mouth, he again sat close to the ear of the Râja.

But how about the raven? When the raven flew away



from the garden, having his backbone broken, he stayed away for several days, but when his back got well, he returned to his own house, thinking that by that time his friends would have forgotten the story. But his wife Shârak received him with anger, and spoke roughly to him. "What have you done?" cried she to him. "Where have you been? Have you brought the Râja's eyes and tongue for me? If not, you are no good!" The raven, at these reproaches, felt sad, saying to himself, "Wives are always nagging their husbands!" To satisfy her, he spoke, saying, "Keep quiet! I am again going to the place, and will fetch you the things as soon as possible!"

"Then go at once," said she, "and bring them!"

So early in the morning the raven flew to the garden once more, and there he saw some white *khîr* close to Râja Rasâlu's ear. At first he stood at some distance, fearful that the parrot might pounce on him again, and break his backbone. But soon he drew nearer, and at last came right up to the *khîr*, and began to peck at it, because it was delicious and he was not accustomed to nice things. When he had eaten up all the *khîr*, the greedy raven then began to dig his beak into the *chûpâtty*, minded to devour that as well, but at once the hedgehog seized his head with his jaws. Alarmed at this, the raven spread his wings and flew away, carrying the hedgehog with him. But the hedgehog was very clever. He at once sent his teeth well into the raven's neck, and bit him hard, and so the fight went on, until the raven, helpless and exhausted, came fluttering down to the ground in the maw of his enemy. Then thought the raven to himself, "I will converse with the hedgehog, and induce him to open his mouth!" So he spoke, saying, "Well, Hedgehog, did you take hold of me knowingly, or unknowingly? Did you want to catch me, or somebody else?" But the hedgehog being very



cunning, spoke not a word. Then began the raven to cry out with a great outcry, and his friend the serpent, hearing his voice, was surprised, wondering what had happened to his old chum, the raven. To find out, he thrust his head out of his hole, and said, "Who is there? Let my friend go!"

Then said the hedgehog, "First go and restore *my* friend, and then I will leave yours!"

"Leave my friend first," said the serpent. "I have done yours no harm—only drawn up his breath. And promise me peace as well. I will then go and pour his breath back into him, and take out all the poison."

So the hedgehog vowed him peace, and the snake went to Rasâlu and took out the poison, and poured life into his body again. But Shâdi, who was watching, said, "Take care, Bâshâ[†] Nâg! My Râja was as powerful as twenty-two champions. Do not keep back even a little of that power!" Then the snake moved aside, and Shâdi said, "What is the reason my Râja does not rise? He is lying as senseless as before!"

"Shâdi," answered the serpent, "take two or three leaves of the *shere*[†] tree, and put them into Rasâlu's mouth with a few drops of water, and you will see his power will come back, and he will rise!"

This therefore the parrot proceeded to do.

Now when the snake was thus engaged, the hedgehog, getting a chance, took the lifeless raven in his mouth to the snake's den, where, releasing him, he laid his head under one of his wings, and set him up at the entrance. When the snake returned, he found the smell of hedgehog coming from the hole of his den, and he said, "You hedgehog, you! Why have you gone into my den?"

"I have set your friend sitting at the entrance," said the hedgehog, "and that is the only reason I entered your den!"

[†] Artful one.

[†] A small fruit-bearing shrub, the *Coriaria Nepalensis*.



"Make haste, then," said the serpent. "Get out that I may go in! It is hot weather, and some ant will be coming and creeping on my body!"

"I have made your friend sit here," said the hedgehog. "Look at him, here he is, right before your eyes. He does not speak because he is so angry with you for delaying."

But the hedgehog was watching his chance, being afraid of being devoured by the serpent, and all of a sudden he made a leap and, springing on to the serpent's head, began to thrust all his thorns into the serpent's brain, and there was a great fight between them.

"O unworthy one," then cried his victim, "do not break your vow!"

"I am a hedgehog," answered he. "What have I to do with vows? My business is to kill my enemy!"

Then said the serpent:—

"In former ages, write the sages,
Snakes and hedgehogs were akin;
Then cease your strife and spare my life,
And you shall God's approval win!"

But the hedgehog answered him:—

"In former ages, write still wiser sages,
We tore each other more than tongue can tell;
O fool and daft, where was your wonted craft?
On your own foot the axe uplifted fell!"¹

Meanwhile Râja Rasâlu rose up, and found the parrot sitting close by, but he was very angry to have been wakened from such a sweet sleep, and had a mind to take hold of the parrot and punish him for it. But the parrot said, "My Liege, let us go to the serpent's den that I

¹ "Kohârâ mâriâ tudh âpon âpen pair"—"The axe you have struck on your own foot." A proverb very common in a country where everyone cuts his own fire-wood. So, in English, "The biter bit." "Hoist on his own petard," etc.



may show you the wonderful kindness done you by the hedgehog. You indeed had done a little service to that creature, but now I will inform you of the great service he has done to you!"

So the rāja went, and there he saw the hedgehog fastened to the head of the serpent, and the serpent struggling, and trying to get rid of him. So the rāja drew his sword and cut the snake to pieces, and from his fragments he made great heaps. Then understood he all the greatness of the service which had been done for him, and he was glad, and said to the hedgehog, "O Hedgehog, this favour which you have done me is past recompense since you have saved my life, but you will be rewarded of God!" At the same time the hedgehog advanced to the rāja's feet and spoke thus:—

"A dish was filled with pearls and in it was poured size. Having now done you a service, I am your son and you are my father!"

Then Rasālu took off his turban, and threw it at the hedgehog's feet, and the hedgehog said—"The dish is filled with pearls and the pearls had black lines upon them. If you talk sweetly, I am only as the dust of your feet." Then the hedgehog folded his hands, and begged the rāja to take up his turban and put it on his head, saying, "I am as one of your sons, and you are my father. As a son should serve a father, so will I serve you!"

"I will keep you always with me," said the rāja, "yea, I will set you in gold and make a locket of you."

"Let me remain here," answered the hedgehog. "I do not wish to go with you for the great trouble I should be to you. I want to remain in the hole of the snake so that no other serpent may venture to come and trouble this place again."

The parrot and the horse also commended him highly,

saying, "O friend, you have saved our master's life. May God preserve you in happiness!"

"Sir Horse and Sir Parrot," said the hedgehog, "I have merely returned the favour which the râja did to me."

Very unwillingly Râja Rasâlu consented to part with him, but at last leaving him at that spot, he mounted and rode off. Hardly had he turned his back when the hedgehog looked after him and said,—“Where are you going to now, O king?”

"I am going," answered the king, "to see Râja Sirikap."

"O Sir," said the hedgehog, "be warned by me! Go not to Râja Sirikap, for he is a magician, and he will surely bring you into trouble."

"Nevertheless to Râja Sirikap I shall go," replied Rasâlu.

"If you are really fixed to go," said the hedgehog, "take advice and act as I beg you. Lying on the road halfway to Sirikap's capital you will find the body of Râja Sirisûk his brother. Go to him, speak to him, and mark well his words."

Then the king left that place, and rode away to look for the body of Sirisûk, the brother of Sirikap the Beheader, while the hedgehog remained still in that garden





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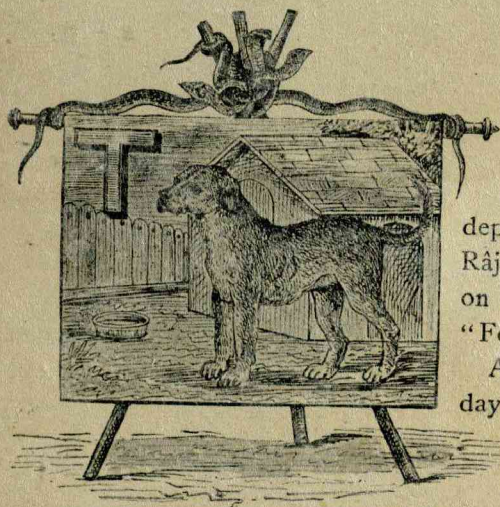
THE RASALU LEGEND

STORY IX

RAJA RASALU AND RAJA SIRIKAP

THE RASALU LEGEND

RAJA RASALU
 AND
 RAJA SIRIKAP



THAT very day, having departed from thence, Râja Rasâlu journeyed on towards Sirîkot, the "Fort of Skulls."¹

At the close of the day he halted, and having pitched his tent and eaten his supper, he

walked forth to look for the body of Sirisûk, the brother of Râja Sirikap, who, as his name implies, was surnamed "The Beheader." He found the corpse lying stiff and cold on the ground, and turning to his parrot, he said, "This man is dead. Who now will advise us about Râja Sirikap?"

"Offer up your prayers to God," answered the parrot, "and I think the body will sit up, because it is not really dead, but it lies here under the spell of Sirikap's magic."

Then Rasâlu, when he had first washed his face, his hands and his feet, stood and prayed in these words:

"God, within the forest lonely
 Night hath fallen o'er the dead;
 Grant him life a moment only,
 Light within his eyelids shed;
 Then this corpse that lieth prone,
 Four words to speak will lift his head."

¹ The popular notion. Really *The Head Fort*.



The king's prayer was heard and God granted Sirisûk his life, for at once the dead man trembled, and, raising himself, he began to speak—"Who has disturbed me?" said he.

"Here you have been lying asleep for twelve years," answered Rasâlu. "What kind of sleep is this?"

"Who are you?" asked Sirisûk.

"I am Rasâlu," answered the King.

"Are you the real Rasâlu or another?" said Sirisûk. "Where are you going?"

"I journey towards the castle of your elder brother Sirikap in order to wage battle with him," said Rasâlu.

Then began Sirisûk to laugh a dead man's laugh.

"What are you laughing at?" enquired Rasâlu.

"I was his own brother," replied Sirisûk, "and yet he killed me without pity. We often played *chaupat* together and I was always the winner excepting once. Once only my brother won, and then he claimed my head; and when in joke—not thinking that, as he was my brother, he meant what he said—I bent my head, he took it off at a single blow, and then, fastening a rope to my feet, threw me out of the city. Do you think then he will spare you? Besides, you have not even an army, while his army is numerous. How do you intend to cope with him?"

"Assisted by your advice," answered Rasâlu, "I trust I shall be fully able to fight and to subdue him."

Then said Sirisûk, "When you begin to draw near the city he will raise his magical storm and blow you away to some other country. And if you evade that, he will bury you under a storm of magical snow. And if you escape that, then when you strike the gong which hangs before the castle-gate, and when the noise of the gong shall sound in your ears, you will lose your senses, and becoming crazed you will be driven out of the place. And if per-



adventure you avoid that peril, then when you pass under the swing of his daughter Chandeī who swings in the porch of the palace, which is fifty yards high, you will begin to rage with frenzy and you will become the sport of the inmates, because the effect of that swing is that whosoever passes beneath it goes raving mad. And if by good fortune and the favour of God you overcome that danger, Râja Sirikap will then play *chaupat*¹ with you, and his wife and daughters will sit before you to divert your eyes, and in the meantime you will lose the game and Sirikap will win it, after which he will cut off your head. But if he cannot prevail over you in that way, he will call forth his rats, Harbans and Harbansi,² who are kept for that very purpose, and who will come and take away the wick out of the lamp, and there will be confusion, and Sirikap will make you the loser and himself the winner, after which he will take your head from off your shoulders. It is better for you to turn back and not to go to Râja Sirikap."

"I will certainly go to him," answered Rasâlu.

"If you insist upon going," said Sirisûk, "you must endeavour to avoid all the perils of which I have warned you. Therefore do you now take out of me two of my ribs. On your way you will meet a cat which you must carry with you and which you must feed from time to time with my ribs. Then when you are playing *chaupat* and when the Râja cries out 'Harbans!' let loose your cat, so the cat will kill the rat, and the game will be yours."

Saying these words, Sirisûk drew out of his side two of his ribs and gave them to Râja Rasâlu, who took them and kept them carefully by him as he journeyed along.

Having started afresh, he came to a village where a cat was busy assisting an old weaver in his work. "O weaver,"

¹ *Chaupat*, See Appendix.

² *Harbans*. A person of many resources, a Jack of all trades.



said Rasâlu, "have you no son, nor any servant, that this wretched cat is helping you?"

"I am a poor man," answered the weaver, "and no other creature in the house have I excepting my cat."

Rasâlu, offering the man twenty rupees, bought the cat, and took her with him, and as they went along she sucked at the ribs of Sirisûk.

Rasâlu came next to a certain place where he saw two boys playing together. One of them made a small pool of water and called it the river "Râvi", and the other made a similar pool and called it the river "Chenâ." Just then up came a third boy, who stooped down and drank up the water out of both the pools.

Resuming his journey, Rasâlu next saw an old soldier washing clothes on the bank of a river. He was a discharged pensioner who had done good service, and who had received as his reward the grant of a horse and sixty villages. His vouchers or pension-papers were tied up in his turban which was lying at some distance from him upon the ground. When his back was turned a stray goat came by and ate up both his turban and his vouchers, and on discovering his loss the poor soldier, who was on his way to claim his recompense, began to lament most bitterly,

Having observed these things, Rasâlu continued his march, and at last approaching the city of Sirîkot, the capital of Râja Sirikap, he pitched within a mile of the fortress, and there he tarried.

When the king of that place heard of the arrival of this redoubtable champion, he raised his magic storms in which many trees and houses were swept away. The next morning he enquired of his wife Ichardei,¹ saying, "See if that man is still there!"

¹ *Ichardei*, i.e. *A woman of God*. It was also the name of the mother of Puran Bhaghat, the prince-saint, the immaculate "Joseph" of the Panjâb. See *Appendix*.



The queen looked out of the window and said, "He and his horse are there still."

Then Sirikap proclaimed in the city—"To-night there will be a heavy fall of snow. Take care of yourselves!"

As the evening approached the snow began to come down, and it continued falling all night until every place in the city was buried many a yard deep. When morning broke the king again addressed his wife, saying—"See if the man is still there!"

"Sir," answered she, looking out, "he is standing there still, and the snow has not touched him."

When the storm was over, Râja Rasâlu entered the city, and going to the castle-gate, he took up the mallet and smote the gong such a terrific blow that mallet and gong were both smashed into pieces. Then said he to his horse, "If I venture to pass beneath the lady's swing my senses will leave me."

"Sit firmly in your seat," answered the horse; "I will reach her at a single bound, and the moment I reach her do you sever the swing with your sword."

With these words the horse leaped into the air and carried her rider to the lofty archway under which the Princess Chandei with her two sisters was then swinging in their cradle-swing, when Rasâlu with one stroke cut through the silken cords, and down fell the three to the ground. Alarmed and indignant, they went running to their father, and Chandêi spoke, crying out and saying—

"Someone has come to-day, O King,
Who kills and kills throughout the town;
He smote my ropes, and spoilt my swing,
And I, Chandêi, came tumbling down;
The mallet flew in fragments eight,
In fragments nine down fell the gong;
O flee, my sire, and baffle fate,
Your final hour cannot be long!"



"Daughter," said Râja Sirikap, "do not distress yourself and do not fear. Soon I shall kill him, and you shall see his head upon the bloody walls which I have built of the heads of others despatched before him."

Then, inflamed with anger, he placed guards in the different corridors of the palace with orders not to allow Rasâlu to pass them, but to lead him in by the gateway which was built of men's skulls. This then the guards did. Rasâlu was led in by the Gate of Skulls, where he saw piles of heads, grim and ghastly, which first laughed and then wept at him as he passed them by, and Rasâlu addressed them and said:—"O Heads, pray that I may have luck—

"Since I must try my fortunes too,
O Heads dissevered, pray
That God will grant me victory,
When I sit down to play.
For then one yard of cloth I'll bring
For every head in turn,
And on a pyre of sandal-wood
Each one of you shall burn!"

So Rasâlu entered the palace, and Sirikap rose, and salaamed him. Then he said to him, "O stripling, wherefore have you come? You have come to the city of Gangû to burn coals of fire on your head. But come on, Rasâlu! Tell me if you can, how many glories there are in the world?"

Now Rasâlu was always helped in secret by the Five *Pirs*, and they now came to his aid, and he at once answered, "O fool, void of understanding not to know yourself! The glory of the house is the house-wife, the glory of the body is dress, the glory of the land is the falling rain, and the glory of the battle-field is verily a goodly son!"

Then Sirikap offered him a couch covered with a green



SUCH AN ONE WAS SIRIKAP.

embroidered cloth, on which were cabalistic symbols, the work of women versed in magic and spells, and upon that he invited his visitor to sit and rest.

But Rasālu waved him aside, rejecting his advances. "Give me not coloured couches," said he; "give me a carpet all woven in white?"

"White shall it be," answered Sirikap, "but first you must answer another question and read me the riddle I shall set you, for that is the custom; and if you guess it aright, the white-woven couch shall be yours."

"Say on!" said Rasālu.

Then spoke Sirikap to him thus:—

"Who of four-fold beard is he,
Of azure foot and neck so ruddy?
I've told the chief as you may see,
My riddle well the wise will study."

Rasālu disdained to answer. "Let it go!" said he. "I do not care for riddles." But Sirikap insisted on the answer. Then Rasālu said, "What is that lying by your side?"

"It is my bow," answered Sirikap.

"And what do you do with your bow?" added Rasālu.

"I shoot arrows with it," said Sirikap.

Then said Rasālu, "Is not the thing you spoke of an arrow? See, here is one from my quiver; regard its four-feathered head, its blue steel foot, its ruddy shaft. And now, as you are answered, let me have the white-woven couch!"

But Sirikap was very wicked, and he continued to ask riddles, putting another, and saying:—"There is a certain water in which trees are drowned to their summits, and in which the rhinoceros may bathe perfectly well. But in the same tank neither can we fill a pitcher nor can sparrows quench their thirst. What is it?"



And Rasâlu answered, "O Uncle, no longer put me off, but let us play fair! Your riddle's answer is the dew, which is seen on the grass when the sun rises?"

But Sirikap was so wicked as not to be satisfied even yet, and he asked Rasâlu still another riddle, saying, "There are four husbands and sixteen wives, four wives to each husband, and all living under the same roof. I ask you, O Rasâlu, guess what it signifies?"

Then Rasâlu began to think Sirikap was not so clever as he was reported to be, and he answered, "Each thumb has four fingers, and your great toes have each four little toes, and that is your answer. A child might guess it. Had I a wager on this riddle, I should chop off your head. But I fear God! And now, as you are answered, give me the couch and let us get to business!"

"I cannot dispute your answers," said Sirikap. "Yet stay, it is now your turn, so put a riddle to me, and if I fail to give you the true answer, the white-woven couch shall be given you."

Then said Rasâlu, "Be it so—answer me this:—

"Within your city-boundary,
A wonder I did note:
A horse and sixty villages
Were swallowed by a goat;
Then came a bald-head urchin,
Of most capacious maw,
Who stooped him down and guzzled up
The Râvi and Chenâ?"

"O," cried Sirikap, "that is quite impossible! It is even irreligious! Do not utter such impiety! Are you not afraid? Let us get out of the house, lest the roof fall on our heads!"

Then said Rasâlu, "Your riddles are all right, it seems, and mine all wrong?" And he told him the answer which



THE TWO KINGS PLAY CHAUPAT.

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compelled him to give in—and Rasâlu said to him, "See, you have not discovered the answer: grant me therefore the white-covered couch,"—and without another word Sirikap gave it to him.

But the queen who had been watching and listening, began to tremble with fear, until her husband went up to her and cheered her, saying, "Do not grieve—I shall cut off this fellow's head in a minute and send it over to you, because many others have come in like manner, but none have escaped my hands at last."

Then said Sirikap to Rasâlu, "Wherefore have you come to me?"

"It is reported," answered he, "that you are a tyrant, a man of blood, delighting in the slaughter of thousands of innocent men. Therefore have I come to your castle to challenge you to combat."

"Be it so," replied Sirikap. "Everything shall of course be ordered as you desire." Then said he again, "For you and me to fight together in public would be anything but creditable. Far better is it that you should come and play *chaupat* with me, and that the conqueror should cut off the loser's head."

To this proposal Râja Rasâlu willingly agreed, so the chess-board was brought, the lamp was lighted, and the two kings sat down to play.

As the game began, Sirikap chanted for luck, saying—

"Beneath this lamp's uncertain ray
Two kings contend in rival play:¹
O changeful Game, change thou for me,
What Sirikap wills the same should be."

Hearing this charm, Rasâlu said, "That which you have now repeated is essentially wrong, since in your

¹ Literally, *Heads and houses are at stake*—a proverb.



verse you have not mentioned the sacred name of God. What you should have said was this:—

“Beneath this lamp’s uncertain ray
Two kings contend in rival play:
O changeful Game, change thou for me,
What God decrees the same shall be.”

With these words the game began. Râja Sirikap, repeating incantations over his dice, threw them, and Rasâlu lost Siâlkot. Then Rasâlu waxed wrath, and in his anger he wagered all his servants, his goods and his whole kingdom, all of which were also won by Sirikap. The third time he staked his mare, Folâdi, and his parrot Shâdi, which were also won by Sirikap: the fourth time he lost his arms: and the fifth and last time he lost his own life.

Then Sirikap sprang to his feet, and drawing his sword he prepared to cut off his rival’s head. But Rasâlu said, “It is true I have lost my head, and you have a right to act as you please. Nevertheless I would look towards my own kingdom once more. Suffer me therefore to ascend for that purpose to the roof of your palace.”

Sirikap consenting, Rasâlu went up to the palace-roof and began to gaze towards Siâlkot, and as he gazed in sorrow he smote his hands upon his thighs and uttered a sigh.

Now the cat, with the two ribs, was concealed in his clothing, and when Rasâlu smote himself she cried out, upon which the king remembered her and rejoiced. “O you luckless little beast,” said he, “you have not yet done me a service at all, but now let me try my fortune once more.”

Coming down into the palace, he said to Sirikap, “By whom were you created?”

“By Him who created you,” answered he.



"If you really believe this," said Rasalu, "permit me to try one more game in His name."

"Certainly," answered Sirikap, and the two kings again sat down to play.

Then Rasâlu exclaiming, "In the name of God," threw the dice, and won back Siâlkot. In the second game he won back his kingdom and all his subjects. In the third he recovered his horse and his parrot, in the fourth his arms, and in the fifth game he regained his own head.

The two kings were now quits, but Sirikap pressed for another trial and the play proceeded. Fortune, however, had deserted him, and in the first game he lost his capital Sirîkot, in the second all his kingdom, his furniture and army, and in the third his wife and children. Fiercely and warily he now contended for the fourth game upon which he had wagered his head, and finding that he made no way, he cried out, "Harbansa, Harbansa!" when at once his male rat appeared on the scene. He stole in, and ran towards his master in response to the summons, but meanwhile Râja Rasâlu had brought his cat from his sleeve and set her down in the shadow of the lamp. Then as the rat approached to meddle with the lamp, the cat pounced upon him and swallowed him up. Sirikap in his despair now cried out, "Harbansi, Harbansi, look sharp, Harbansi!"

But the female rat, which had witnessed the fate of her mate, replied from a safe distance:—

"A curse to your service, O king,
A curse to your handful of grain!
I am off to the hills, and my teeth
Shall nibble the herbage again."

The next moment the fourth game came to an end and Rasâlu was again the victor. Drawing his sword he approached Sirikap to smite off his head, but his opponent



besought him saying, "You begged my permission to look towards your country and I gave it. You will allow me then for the sake of God, to go and see my family, but first I would venture a game in the name of God as you did."

Rasâlu accepted his offer and the game was once more resumed, but again Sirikap lost. Then said he, "I would now, if you will permit me, go and bid adieu to my family, after which I will shortly return."

Rasâlu agreed, and the defeated king going to his three daughters said to them, "Put on your jewels, attire yourselves in royal array, and, presenting yourselves before Rasâlu, try to ensnare him with your beauty."

Now the names of his daughters were Chandei (Moon-like), Bhagdei (Fortunate) and Sûghrân (Wise), all three fair to look upon. Hastening to obey, they apparelled themselves gloriously in their best, adorning themselves with rich ornaments and bright jewels, and going to Râja Rasâlu they began to gaze on him and to parade their charms. But he heeded them not, neither did he gaze at them back, but he asked of them, "Where is Sirikap?"

"In fear of his life," answered they, "he has fled from the city."

"It does not matter," said Rasâlu. "Wherever he goes, I will search for him and find him out."

Going to the council of ministers he enquired where their master generally sat. Some said, "He may be in his chamber of mirrors." Others said, "He may be in his subterranean dwelling." But the rest said, "He is a king, and he must have gone whithersoever it pleased him."

Then Rasâlu began to search the court and the palace; from chamber to chamber he passed; in some places he found miserable captives, in others the bodies of dead men and women, and in others precious stones and valuable ornaments, but nowhere could he discover Sirikap. Leaving

the palace he went to the stables, and, as he looked and looked in every corner, his eye rested on a manger filled with litter which seemed to be alive.

"What is the matter," said he, "with this horse-litter that it swells and sinks and swells again?"

Going up to the manger he tossed out the litter, and there, crouching miserably beneath it, was found Râja Sirikap.

"Ah," said Rasâlu, "doubtless you are some mean fellow, since you have hidden yourself in this filthy place."

And he caught him by the neck and dragged him along to the chamber in which they had played, exclaiming as he went, "O villain, hundreds of heads you have smitten off in your time with your own hand and all for pastime, yet you never grieved or shed a tear. And now when the same fate is to be your own you sneak away and bury yourself in horse-dung!"

Now an event had occurred in the palace of which Rasâlu was not aware. Sirikap's wife, Ichardei, had given birth to a daughter, and the magicians and wizards had met Sirikap and told him, saying—"Sir, we have sought for the interpretation of this mystery, why ruin should have fallen on your house, and we find that all this calamity has been brought about by your infant daughter, whose destiny has crossed your own. She came in an evil hour. Let her now be sacrificed, and let her head be thrown into the river, and your crown and head will be secure."

And Sirikap had answered—"If my life depend on her, go, cut off her head, and mine may haply yet be saved." So a slave-girl was despatched to bring the infant to the magicians. And, as she carried it along from the apartments of its mother, she cried, while she caressed it, "O, what a pretty child, I should so like to save it!"

It was just at this moment, as she crossed the court,

that Râja Rasâlu appeared from the stable, dragging Sirikap, and he thus overheard her remark. "Where are you taking that child to?" said he.

"This is the king's child born twenty-one days ago," answered the slave-girl. "The Brâhmin soothsayers have declared that she is the cause of all her father's troubles, and now her head is to be taken off and thrown into the Indus to save further mischief."

When Rasâlu looked at the child he loved it, for it was very beautiful, so beautiful that the sun and moon felt ashamed in comparison, and he said to the girl, "Follow me!"

Having entered the chamber, he released his victim, who said, "Rasâlu, say now, what is your purpose?"

"I am going," answered he, "to cut off your head."

"For the sake of God," said Sirikap, "spare me and grant me my life, and in lieu of your wager take one of my daughters in marriage!"

"I want none of your daughters," replied Rasâlu. "I want only your head."

Sirikap then humbled himself more and more, pleading for his life and saying, "Sir, have mercy!" Also Ichardêi came running from her chamber and threw herself at the feet of Râja Râsalu in misery and distress, and begged him not to kill her husband.

"In the name of God, spare him!" cried she. At the same time the nurse came out, and taking the child, she laid her down also at Rasâlu's feet, and the child was shining in beauty like the moon. And Ichardêi, prostrate, with head bared, prayed him to accept the child, saying:—

"Oh, Rasâlu, take my daughter,
Take my loved one for your own,
Why, ah why commit this slaughter?
Leave the baby's sire alone!



RASALU CARRIES OFF THE LITTLE PRINCESS.



If you, pitying my complaining,
Look upon her mother's tears,
I will gold advance, maintaining
Nurse and babe for fifteen years!"

At last Rasālu, relenting, said to her husband, "You shall be spared on certain conditions. In the first place you will take an oath never to play villainous tricks at *chaupat* with anyone again. In the next you will free all your captives. And in the third place, you will draw five lines with your nose on a hot griddle."¹

All these terms were accepted by Sirikap, who took the oath and released his prisoners, but when the red-hot griddle was produced he began to excuse himself—not to make the lines. But Rasālu caught him by the back of the neck, and holding his nose to the griddle, he marked it with lines until his nose was singed to the bone, after which he loosed him and let him go. Then Sirikap, seeing himself in such a state of shame and disgrace, ran away into the wild woodlands, but by-and-by he returned once more, and lived for many years.

Meanwhile Rāja Rasālu, mounted on his grey mare, and, ever followed by Shâdi, rode proudly away. With him, in a palanquin, escorted some way by a guard of honour, and accompanied by her nurse, travelled the little girl, the infant daughter of Sirikap, whose name was Kokal, or Koklâ, that is, the Sweet-cooing Dove. She it was who in after years, when she grew to woman's estate, became his hapless little queen.

¹ Another version says that Sirikap was to "bare his head, and draw the five lines with his nose on the ground."



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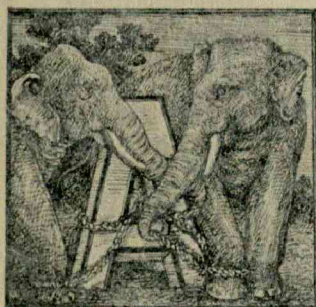
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THE RASALU LEGEND

STORY X

THE TREASON OF KOKLA

THE RASALU LEGEND



THE TREASON OF QUEEN KOKLA

AFTER leaving Sirikap, Rasâlu, having dismissed his escort, and having travelled thence for twelve days, at last arrived at the hills of Khêrimûrti near Bûrhân, where he saw upon the height a beautiful castle sur-

rounded by a fair garden which looked like the dwelling-place of a king.

"This," said Rasâlu, "is an abode worthy of living in, and here I resolve to remain."

"Sir," said his mare to him, "this a palace which looks to me like the house of a giant. It is not wise to take up your quarters here."

"Let us abide," answered Rasâlu, "at least for a night. If we are molested we can then abandon it, but if not, I mean to occupy it, because it is a place after my own heart and I have no desire to leave it."

So there they slept in security, and no man or demon or any other creature intruded upon them for twelve years, and Rasâlu said, "Here there is no one to cause us alarm."

And in that lofty stronghold he dwelt, having strengthened it with walls and bastions all round and having cut out a



flight of steps, eighty-six in number, from the garden beneath to the palace above.

When the child Koklâ was growing up, he ordered that the old custom of his people should be disregarded, and that the little princess should be, not reared on vegetable food, but nourished also with flesh-meat every day. Her education was entrusted to the ancient nurse who had accompanied her from Sirîkot, and who was quite devoted to her. No other woman but herself was allowed to attend her, and no other woman but herself was permitted to enter the walls of the fortress. When with increasing years she became ill and was likely to die, the King said to her: "I have as much respect and love for you as for my own mother, and wherever it is your wish that your body shall be burnt, there it shall be done."

"Do not burn my body," said she, "lay me in the Abbâ-Sîndh." ¹

And when the day of her death came, her wishes were duly observed, and reverently her body was committed to the river.

Raja Rasâlu was passionately fond of hunting. Leaving the child in the charge of the nurse to play with *mâina* and parrot, he was in the habit of visiting the woodland every day with bows and arrows to chase the wild deer. Rejoicing in his strength and in his skill as a marksman, he indulged in the sport either wholly alone or attended only by Shâdi his parrot. In the evening he returned with his spoil to the castle, when the feast was spread, and his minstrel-birds sang of his exploits and of the exploits of Vikramâjît, as he sat with his little princess on his divân, and fed her with venison. Her life was lonely with only a nurse to attend to her, but she had constant companions

¹ Abbâ-Sîndh—Father of Rivers, the Indus.



HUNTING THE WILD DEER.



in eighty parrots, eighty-six *mainas*, and eighty peacocks, who guarded her both night and day, and who, like all living things in those days, had the gift of speech. With them she used to converse, and to them she told all her little joys and sorrows. ¹

So passed the lives of king and princess, until the old nurse died, and the little girl had grown into a woman and had become Rasalu's queen. They were very happy together, for the king was always a "good" man (which means in the Panjâb that he was faithful to the one lady of his choice, and that he never desired the companionship of another).

One evening, when he was in a merry mood, an odd fancy came into the king's mind, which was, that his young wife should accompany him to the chase. "I have eaten so much venison in my life," said she, "that, if I did go with you, all the deer of the forest would follow me."

But the proposal delighted her, and her happy youthful spirits rose at the prospect of liberty, and of leaving the castle, if only for a day, to visit the wild trackless woodland.

"But," said she, "how do you kill the deer?"

"When I shoot my arrow at the deer," answered the king, "and, when the deer feels himself wounded, he runs back and falls dead before my horse's feet."

The queen was surprised to hear tell of this, and she said, "How can it be? I should like so much to see it."

"And so you shall," answered he, "for to-morrow, Sweetheart, you and I will go hunting together."

So in the morning they set out unattended, the queen riding on a pillion behind her husband, and they came

¹ 'Eighty-six *mainas*'—a clever little bird of the *corvus* tribe, with yellow feet and bill. It is larger than a starling, and can be made to utter words and phrases in the deepest of notes.



to the wooded hillocks and grassy ravines where the deer love to wander. Soon the king loosed an arrow from the string, which wounded a doe, but the animal, instead of approaching them, ran forward half a mile, when she was overtaken and slain.

The queen felt disappointed, for she had come to see a wonder, and she began to scoff. "You have not spoken the truth, Sir," cried she.

"Why so?" asked Rasâlu.

"If no horse had been with you," replied the queen, "you could not have caught this deer at all."

"The reason is this," said Rasâlu, "you have been sitting behind me the whole day, close to my body, and from touch of you one third of my power has left me."

Then the queen flouted him again, and with a mocking laugh she said, "I know not whether I am wife or daughter, but if touch has cost you one third of your strength, how will it fare with you for sons and daughters? Make way for me, and I will catch all these animals alive with my hands! You, O Râja, have killed a deer with an arrow from your bow, but, if you will allow me, I will bring a deer to your feet alive!"

"How can you do that?" said Rasâlu. "The thing is impossible. The deer will not come to you."

"No?" replied she. "But I can. You think yourself a hero, and I am a woman. Yet I am more than you!"

So the Râni dismounted and sat herself down among the rocks and the thickets, and lifting up her veil, she shook her *dâuni*, (the pendant jewels of her forehead,) and let them tinkle in the sun. Her eyes were filled with antimony, and her hands and feet were rosy with henna. So, when the deer saw her lovely face which was shining like gold, they all came shyly up to her. Then said she to Rasâlu, "Come now, Râja, and catch as many of them as you please!"



"I will catch none of them," answered he, "nor are they worth the catching. Are they lovers of yours?"

Then came to her a great blue buck, Laddan by name, who was the king of them all. Boldly he came forward, for he had become like one without sense, beholding her beauty, and, disregarding the words of his dam who entreated him not to venture, he ran and fell at her feet.

But Rasâlu waxed wroth, and catching the deer in both his arms, he raised him aloft, and hurled him to the earth, and made haste to kill him with his knife, laying the blade on his neck. But the Râni had compassion, and begged Rasâlu to let him go, and not to kill him, and she said:—

"A king art thou of kingly race,
Strong is thine arm and keen thy knife;
By the Korân, O grant me grace,
And give this trembling deer his life!"

The Râja, listening to her words, spared indeed the deer's life, but he cut off his ears and his tail, and so let him go. And the deer, seeing himself thus dishonoured, and dripping with blood, reproached him with fateful words.

"O Râja Rasâlu," said he, "you are a monarch among men, and I am only a poor creature of the jungle. With your sword you have lopt off my ears and my tail; but know this that one day you yourself will be so gashed and slashed that until the day of judgment you never will heal you of your wounds again:—

"O king, my ears and my tail you have lopt,
You have marred and insulted me sore;
But beware, for if ever by doe I was dropt,
The spoiler shall visit your door!"

The king-deer then departed leaving the pair to themselves, but the queen felt so vexed to think that her

husband's power in spells and magic was less than her own. Nor was he less angry at the circumstance which had marred the glory of his life, one moment reproaching his wife, and another moment reviling the blue buck, but failing to see that the blame was his and his alone. And so the two returned to Khêri-Mûrti.

Meanwhile the blue buck was planning a bitter revenge. At the town of Atak (Attock) on the banks of the Indus a certain king named Hôdi had built a border-fortress on the top of a cliff which rises from the very margin of the river. This chieftain was noted for his love of pleasure, as well as for his passion for the pastime of the chase. Calling these things to mind, the blue buck said to himself, "Now I will betake me to the palace of Râja Hôdi and I will graze in his garden, and, when the hue-and-cry is set up and he begins to follow me, I will run to the castle of Râja Rasâlu."

So he made his way to Râja Hôdi's, followed by all his friends, and entering the king's garden, he utterly destroyed it. These things the gardeners reported to their master, who, when he heard of the havoc which had been made, issued a notice, saying, "Whosoever shall kill *hîra haran*, (the blue buck), whose name is Laddan, I will give him rich presents, a horse to ride on, and jewels to wear, and I will make him the commander of my army."

This notice was published all over that country, and it so happened that the news of it reached the ears of two shepherd-boys named Bald-head and One-eye, who said to each other, "Let us go and find this *hîra haran*, the blue buck."

So they searched and searched everywhere until they found him. Then Bald-head went privately to Râja Hodi and made his report. "If you will come with me, O king," said he, "I will show you the blue buck." And the king



THE RANI KOKLA AND THE DEER.



loaded him with presents and accompanied him to the place.

Meanwhile, however, One-eye, who harboured a grudge against Bald-head, had hunted away the buck from that ravine into another. And when Rāja Hôdi came and could not find anything, he became angry. "Where is the blue buck?" cried he.

Then spoke One-eye and said to the king, "This boy is known to be an idiot, he knows nothing whatever about the matter. He has been deceiving you, O king; but if you will take away his presents and give them to me, I will show you Laddan the blue buck, and no mistake."

So the king transferred the presents from Bald-head to One-eye who took him to a distant ravine, and pointed out to him the game he was in search of.

As soon as Laddan perceived Rāja Hodi, he ran deliberately in front of him and led his pursuer in the direction of Khêri-Mûrti, all the time feigning a lameness in order to entice him more and more with the hope of eventual capture.

"Sir," said the *wazîr*, "do not pursue this deer, for I perceive there is some magic about him."

King Hôdi, however, refused to hear the voice of his *wazîr*, and galloping his horse he went straight for his quarry, leaving his attendants to shift for themselves. After a long run the blue buck sprang the river close to the palace of Râni Koklâ, and the horse of Rāja Hodi, roused by the chase, essayed and performed the same leap.

But the deer then disappeared into a cave and hid himself, and when the king came to the spot he was nowhere to be seen.

So Hôdi drew rein, and, finding himself in the midst of a garden of mangoes, he stretched forth his hand to pluck some of the fruit. But as he did so one of the sentinel-



mainas exclaimed, "Do not break the branches and do not eat the mangoes! This garden belongs to one who will punish intruders."

Râja Hodi then observed that the trees grew beneath a fortress, but he could not see any means of approach. Looking up, he saw the plumage of the parrots gleaming from the eaves, and Râni Koklâ pacing the roof in her royal array. Then said he to the *maina* :—

"The parrots perch themselves aloft,
They dwell within the eaves;
But O that splendid lustre, soft
And bright as golden leaves,
Say, *Maina*, say, what beauty passes there,
Perchance some man, or is it maiden fair?"

"She is the wife of the king," answered the *maina*, "and the king is away hunting the wild deer in the moors and woodlands."

Then one of the birds glanced down from above, and said to the queen, "See, a man has entered the garden, and he is spoiling the fruit!"

"What is a man?" asked the queen. "Is he a wild beast, or is he some other thing? Where is he? I want to see him—show me him! Heaven grant it is Râja Hôdi!"

The queen looked down from the roof of her palace, and saw that some handsome *râja* was sitting on horseback in her garden, and that he carried a bow, and an arrow which weighed three pounds. So she cried out to him :—

"Ho, Sir, beneath my palace walls,
Say who and what are you?
Some skulking robber, rife for brawls?
Or are you champion true?"

And to her Râja Hôdi returned answer :—



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“O Râni, thieves are clothed in rags,
True men are clean and white;
For love of you, o'er flats and crags,
I kept my game in sight;
And far from country and from kin,
He led me here fair lady's smile to win.”

Then said the queen:—

“What Râja's son are you,
And say what name you bear,
Where lies your fatherland,
What city claims you there?”

The king answered her:—

“Râja Bhatti's son am I,
Hôdi is the name I bear,
Udhè is my fatherland,
Atak is my city there.”

Then thought Hôdi to himself, “Who is this woman
in the midst of the wilderness? Is she a witch or some
goddess? I must find out.” So he addressed her and said:—

“Your father, who is he? your husband who?
Where has he gone, the fool to troth untrue,
To leave alone a lovely maid like you,
To pine from hour to hour
In lofty palace-tower?”

Hearing these words the Râni Koklâ, smitten with love,
began to think of many things, and she answered him:—

“Sirikap my sire, my lord's Rasâlu hight,
Rings not the welkin with Rasâlu's might?
In lofty palace-tower
I sit in lonely bower,
But he, who left his lovely maiden here,
Ranges afar to chase the fallow deer.”

Now when Hôdi heard the name of Rasâlu he began to
grow sick with fear, and would fain have turned back.

But love stronger than fear urged him on, and he said to the queen, "Do you know who I am?"

"Yes," answered she, "I know you well, and I have been waiting for you ever so long, here, in this airy turret."

Then, seeing her meaning, Hôdi said to her:—

"Running and walking in breathless haste,
From distant scenes I hied me,
Yet now the golden time I waste,
For I know no path to guide me;
O Râni, say, where lies your palace-road,
What steps will lead me to your bright abode?"

And to him the queen replied again:—

"Walking and running in breathless haste,
From scenes afar you hied you,
And now the golden time you waste,
For you know no road to guide you?—
Beneath the mangoes set your steed,
Your quiver to the pommel tie,
The steps that to my castle lead,
Among the mango-trees they lie;
Full eighty-six, nor less nor more,
Will bring you to my chamber door."

Râja Hôdi looked for the steps, and finding them he began to ascend. But, when he had gained the vestibule of the palace, one of the *mainas* on guard stopped him, saying:—

"Where have you lost your deer?
Where did your cattle go?
No right of road lies here—
You are now Rasâlu's foe!"

And turning to her companion, a parrot, she said: "The duty which is laid on us both by our dear master is to watch over the safety of the queen, and we shall be false to our salt if we do not report to him the coming of this stranger."



By this time Râni Koklâ was growing impatient, and she was saying to herself, "Why does he tarry, why linger the steps of my Râja?" So she passed out of her chamber to enquire, and seeing that her favourite *maina* was the cause of the delay she began to reprove her. But the *maina* bravely replied, "What are you doing, admitting a strange man to these walls? If the king hear of this wickedness, he will strike you dead where you stand."

The queen started and flushed with rage, but, restraining herself, she led Hôdi to the well which Râja Rasâlu had hewn out of the rock, [and which was furnished with wheels and ropes and pitchers for drawing up water into the trough]. There they sat, and she gave him food and drink, and they entertained one another with delicious words.

Then Koklâ led the way to the hall of the king's chamber, but as she gained the doorway the *maina* spoke again and said:—

"O hear me, Parrot, let us fly—
Far hence we'll fly away!
In this sad home can you and I
Remain another day?
The clustering grapes—ah! word of woe—
Are pecked at by a wretched crow!"

The queen instantly turned upon the *maina*, but the parrot eager to allay her anger said to his companion. "O you senseless one! What harm is done if the man merely eats and drinks and goes away? What is Râja Rasâlu to us? Does not the queen our mistress tend us and feed us with her own hands."

"She does indeed," answered the *maina*. "Still she has dishonoured her name, and done what she should not have done. And we are the servants of the Râja."

This speech of the *maina* enraged the queen still more,

so much so, indeed, that she ran to the cage, and seizing the poor bird, she wrung her neck and cast her away.

But the cunning parrot, gazing at his friend's quivering body, said, "Ah, you silly chatterer, you have just met your deserts!" Then addressing his mistress he continued,—



"If you would but take me out of my cage, I should like to give the *maina's* dead body a couple of kicks."

"Thank you, parrot," said the queen, "you are loyal and true." And she opened the cage and let him out, when the parrot flew to the *maina* and kicked her.

Meanwhile the queen had closed the door and taken Hôdi into Rasâlu's chamber, and there both he and she



sat down together on a beautiful couch. Then the king, admiring her delicate beauty, said to her:—

“A tiny mouth, a slender nose,
A figure graceful as the fawn,
Two eyes as soft as opening rose
When glistening with the dews of dawn—
O queen, how dainty thou—so slim, so slight,
One little touch would surely break you quite!”

But Râni Koklâ answered and said:—

“For joy the fletcher frames the arrowy dart,
For joy the blade is wrought by curious art,
And as in June the horn-tipt bow's unstrung,
And, all relaxed, within the chamber hung,
But, summer past, is pulled and pulled again,
Nor feels the force of unaccustomed strain,
So bounteous love, the more it takes and gives,
The more it charms us, and the more it lives.”¹

When night fell, they both slept on the one cot, and the Râni talked to the Râja and the Râja to the Râni, and all the sentinel birds, seeing this, began to weep, but none dared to utter a single word.

Now all this time the parrot was meditating an escape from the closed chamber, but he found no means of egress. At last, at dawn of day, he perceived a small aperture, and fluttering through it he flew on to the battlements.

“Alas! alas!” cried the frightened queen to Hôdi—
“What shall we do? The news has gone to Rasâlu!”

“Ah!” said Hôdi, with a deep breath. “But, O Râni,” continued he, “if you will coax the parrot to return I think he will not disregard you, but come back to your house, and then we shall have no room for alarm, no cause for sorrow.”

¹ During the summer-heat weapons of the chase are laid aside to be taken down again in the cold season.



So the queen looked out at a casement and cried through the lattice, in caressing tones:—

“Rice with my nails have I cleaned for you ever,
Boiled it in new milk and chided you never;
Come to me, Pretty, return to me, Dear,
You are my Rânjha, and I am your Hîr!”

But the parrot was deaf to her blandishments; and spreading his bright wings, he answered her:—

“You’ve killed my pretty *maina* dead,
All widowed now am I;
If e’er by parrots I was bred,
Away to the king I’ll fly.”

With these words the bird mounted and flew far away, and he began to search for Râja Rasâlu among forests and hills and deserts, but unable to find him he finally stopped exhausted in one place.

Meanwhile Hôdi was in a fright, for when he saw the tell-tale parrot on the wing, fear seized upon him, and caring only for his own safety, he hastened out of the doors of the palace. But the queen threw her arms about him and clipped him, and wept piteously, and Hôdi, to soothe her, wiped away her tears with his hands, and the black stain from her eyes discoloured his fingers. But though he wiped her eyes and embraced her again and again, he could not stop her weeping. Then, impatient to be gone, he tore himself away from her, and for his cowardice she regarded him with scorn, and cried, “What—you leave me?—

“Yes, yes, to me you leave the blame,
The taunt, the blow, the loss, the shame!
Methought some swan had fired my breast,
But out, thou crane, to run were best!
Oh hence! Had I thy spirit known,
Should craven lips have touched my own?”



RAJA HODI AND THE RANI KOKLA.



Vexed by her taunts, Hôdi jeered, and cried back at her :—

“The platter was laden with delicate fare—
My leavings are left, the table is bare:
The raiment so costly is tattered and old,
Scarce fit for a beggarman bitten with cold.”

With these words he ran away from the place and made his escape. Coming to the river-bank, he went down to drink water, for he was thirsty, and there, when he had put down his hands towards the water, he saw on his fingers the black stain of the collyrium, and he drew them back, saying, “This is the only memento of my love which I possess, and I must not wash it away.” Thus speaking, to himself he stooped down on his knees and drank like a goat.

Hard by there was an old washerman who, observing his action, said to his wife, “Who is that man drinking water like a beast?”

“Whether you know him or not,” answered she, “I know him well.”

“Tell me, then, who he is,” said her husband.

“He is Râja Hôdi,” answered the woman.

“O fool,” returned the washerman, “did you ever see a Râja drinking water like that?”

“I am afraid,” replied she, “to tell you the reason of it, lest, if I did, you should kill me.”

“What a strange thing to say,” said he; “as if I should kill you for telling me a good secret!”

“Take an oath!” said his wife.

“I take an oath of the God who created me,” answered he, “that I will not harm you, if you will tell me why the Râja is drinking water like that.”

Then his wife replied to him thus :—



“Last night, some wayward wife or daughter
Enrocked him in her soft embraces;
So, ox-like, stoops the king for water,
For love to save love's piteous traces;
She wept to part, he wiped her tears away,
The sable stains his finger-tips beray.”

The washerman hearing this horrid scandal became angry, and said to his wife, “No doubt you, woman, have been at the bottom of it; you have been the go-between; otherwise how could you know anything of the Râja's doings?” Thus saying, he took up his mallet and struck her on the back of the head, so that she fell senseless.

“A nice man you are,” said she when she came to herself, “I told you what you asked for and this was your return!”

Now Hôdi had stopped drinking to listen to their colloquy, and, feeling ashamed, he had risen, and was walking away without quenching his thirst. Then the washerman perceiving his anger, thought to himself,—“In the morning this Râja will surely kill me.” So he said to his wife, “Don't be offended; go to that Râja and bring him back to drink water; otherwise he will never leave me alone.”

“That I will not,” answered his wife. “By trusting you once I have already suffered enough, and if I bring the Râja back you will say I was his friend, as you have said already.”

“Call him back,” said her husband, “I will not touch you.”

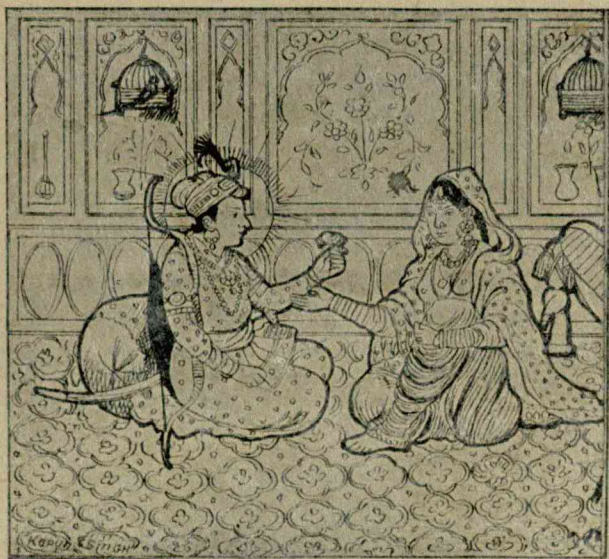
Then, yielding once more, she turned round to Hôdi and cried to him;—

“Ne'er cleanse thy teeth with *âkâ*, that blistering herb,
And feed not on the baneful flesh of snakes;
Caress not thou a stranger'sauteous boy,
For love will fill thy mouth with foul desire;
However needy, quaff no neighbour's curds,
Drink water rather—it is sweeter far:
Nor covet thou another's couch to win,
For know it never, never can be thine;
So wash away, O King—that stain is curst—
And come, in double handfuls slake thy thirst.”

Râja Hôdi seeing that she was a witch of infinite wisdom, took the woman's advice, and washing his hands he drank his fill. Then approaching the washerman, he said, "O washerman, this woman is not fitted for you, because she is wise, while you are a fool. You had better take a thousand gold pieces, and hand her over to me. I will cherish her like one of my children, and with my money you can marry another."

"Your pardon, sir," said the washerman, "this plan will never do."

So Râja Hôdi left them, and, passing on, he arrived at his own palace. There, choosing a solitary chamber in which stood an old couch, he laid himself down, and began with tears to remember and to lament for the Râni Koklâ.





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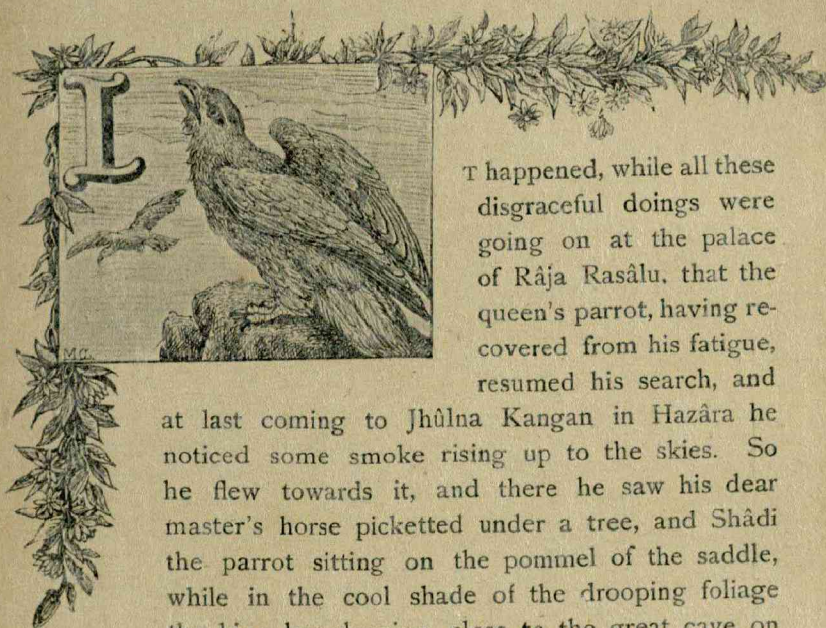
THE RASALU LEGEND

STORY XI

FATE OF RANI KOKLA

THE RASALU LEGEND

THE FATE OF RANI KOKLA



It happened, while all these disgraceful doings were going on at the palace of Râja Rasâlu, that the queen's parrot, having recovered from his fatigue, resumed his search, and

at last coming to Jhûlna Kangan in Hazâra he noticed some smoke rising up to the skies. So he flew towards it, and there he saw his dear master's horse picketted under a tree, and Shâdi the parrot sitting on the pommel of the saddle, while in the cool shade of the drooping foliage the king lay sleeping, close to the great cave on

Mount Sarbân, near the village of Sarbâd.

Said he to Shâdi, "Wake up your Râja!"

"I have no authority to do so," answered Shâdi, "wake him yourself, since you are the Râni's messenger."

Then the weary bird, dipping his wings in the flowing stream, fluttered them over Rasâlu's face, and the drops fell upon him like soft rain, and he awoke, and seeing his wife's favourite sitting above him on the tree, he said, "Why have you left the house alone?"



Weeping, the bird made answer:—

“The Râni killed my *maina*-birdie,
Cold it lies upon the floor,
And my reproaches unavailing,
Only vexed her more and more;
Arise, arise, O sleeping Râja,
Thieves have forced your palace door!”¹

Hearing these sorrowful tidings, the king said:—

“My *mainas* number eighty-six,
My peacocks tell fourscore;
Well guarded thus, what thievish tricks
Could force my palace door?”

“Alas!” answered the parrot, “What could the watchmen do?”—

“If goodmen rise at dead of night
And steal their own possessions,
Then basely tax some luckless wight
With guilt of their transgressions,
Or if the fence in evil hour
Perforce the barley-crop devour,
How can the guard
Keep watch and ward?”

Then Rasâlu arose, and said to his charger, “Now be wary and true, O Folâdi, and take me to my house in a moment.”

“I will do so,” answered the horse, “but never smite me with your heels.”

Mounting, the king rode away towards Kheri-mûrti; but in a fit of impatience he forgot his promise, and plunged his spurs into the horse's side, when at once the animal came to a halt and was turned into a stone.

“Ah, you unfaithful one,” cried Rasâlu as he leaped

¹ Among the Panjâbîs the term for a betrayer is “*thief*.”



from the saddle, "O you unworthy friend, is this a time for perfidy?"

"Touch me again," said the horse, "and I shall never be able to carry you more:—

"O spare your whip, your rowel spare,
Rasâlu, press me not at all;
If ever I was bred from mare,
I'll set you 'neath your castle-wall."

Saying these words, the gallant horse arose, and, taking her master on her back once more, in an instant she reached her destination.

The first act of Râja Rasâlu on dismounting beneath the mangoes was to ascend to his wife's chamber, where he found her lying fast asleep. Leaving her undisturbed, he went down again to the garden and said to Shâdi, his parrot, "Go silently and tenderly and bring me here the ring from off the Râni's hand"—and the bird at once went away and brought it.

Then the king, having tied it round his faithful comrade's neck, commanded him, saying, "Away now to Râja Hôdi! Tell him that Rasâlu has been killed in the forest, and that Râni Koklâ has sent you with this token of love as a sign for him to come and bear her away."

"I go at once, Sir," answered the parrot, and taking wing, he flew towards Attock, and reaching the palace, he perched himself in one of the windows. There he was seen by certain of the servants, who said to each other, "See this parrot—it is tame—it looks like some royal pet!"

Overhearing their words, Shâdi answered them,—“You are right, I am the companion of a king.”

The servants went to the Râja and said to him, "There is a parrot sitting in one of the windows, who says that he has a message for you from the Râni Koklâ."



Râja Hôdi, hearing the name of Koklâ, sprang to his feet and came out instantly, and approaching the parrot, he said, "O faithful bird, what message have you brought for me?" Instead of answering, Shâdi began to shed tears.

"Why are you crying?" asked the king.

"Doubtless," replied the parrot, "you are an honourable man, to form a friendship and then to go away and discard it utterly!"

"What do you mean by that?" said Hôdi.

"This morning," answered the parrot, "the Râni on account of your absence was going to kill herself. I, seeing the dagger in her hand, implored her, saying, 'O wait until I return!' Then she gave me her ring, and bade me for dear life go quickly, and she is waiting for me. But if you do not go to her at once, she will destroy herself."

Hôdi, taking the love-token, said: "But where is your master Rasâlu?"

"God knows," answered Shâdi. "I have searched for him everywhere, but I was unable to find him. I think some demons or giants must have killed him and eaten him."

Râja Hôdi then called for his horse, and mounted, and rode away on the spot. And when they sighted the towers of Kheri-mûrti, the parrot addressed him and said. "Let me fly in advance of you to inform the queen of your arrival."

"Pray do so," answered Hôdi. And the parrot flew to the mango-trees and said to his master:—"Your rival is coming. Make ready to meet him!"

When Râja Hôdi drew nigh, the king advanced to meet him and said to him,—"Good-morrow, sir; will you walk up?"

Hôdi, on seeing him, became as still as a picture, and he began to make hundreds of excuses, saying, "I have come here by mistake. I did not know whose palace this might be, and I was coming to enquire. I hope you will excuse me."

"Nay," said Rasâlu, "your destiny has brought you



here. It is better to betake you to your arms and to use them first on me."

"Sir," answered Hôdi, "I am not your enemy. I was unaware whose fortress this might be, so I was coming to enquire about it. I do not think there is any harm in enquiring!"

"Let this senseless talk go," said Rasâlu, "and use your weapons first! Otherwise you will say—'Rasâlu smote me treacherously.'"

Hôdi, finding there was no escape from him, took an arrow from his quiver, and, putting it to his bow, he cried:—"Now look out, my poisoned dart is coming!"—and shot at Rasâlu.

But Rasâlu bent from his horse, and avoided the bolt, which, striking against the castle-walls, broke the stones into shivers. Then said the injured king:—

"O little, little bends the bow-string tight,
But grandly bends the bow that bends to might;
The wise man bends to shun the barbed bolt,
Who never bends at all is worse than dolt."

But King Hôdi, in fear and dismay, with his fate before him, groaned and said:—

"O little, little, can I see of you,
Rasâlu,
A gathering mist obscures your form from view,
Rasâlu!
With knives of hardened steel my heart is riven,
It burns like flames within the furnace driven,
O hear, Rasâlu!"

Deaf to words and deaf to prayers, Rasâlu fitted one of his iron arrows to his mighty bow, and prepared to launch it. At first, to test his adversary's nerve, he grimly made a feint of shooting, when at once the quaking coward slipped behind a mango-tree.



"Ha!" cried Rasâlu, "you are behind the mango-tree, are you? Look out, your final hour has come!"

Drawing the bow to its utmost tension, he let fly the arrow, which drove through the trunk of the tree and pierced through the body of his foe, and fell four hundred yards beyond. So swiftly flew the fatal shaft, that Râja Hôdi never so much as felt it, and he said to Râsalu, "You have missed!"

"I never missed in my life," answered he. "Shake yourself and see!"

And when Hôdi shook himself, he fell down senseless from his horse, and died beneath the mango-trees.

Then the king went forward sword in hand, and, dismounting, he smote off the traitor's head.

As the head rolled aside from the bleeding trunk, the lips of the dead parted, and the quivering tongue uttered the words—"Rasâlu, give me to drink!"

And Rasâlu, as in a dream, lifted his enemy's empty quiver from which the arrows had slipped, and filling it with water from a pool, he held it to the open mouth, and Hôdi drank, and when he had drunk he cried, "O birds, wheeling above me and cleaving the air with your pinions, go to the queen, my Loved One, and tell her that Hôdi has drunk water from the hands of Râja Rasâlu!"

Then the soul of Râja Rasâlu rejoiced as he said to himself:—"To-day I have brought my wife no venison. Yet she shall have venison daintier than ever she tasted before."

The headless corpse lay at his feet. Stripping it of its rich clothing and cutting open the body, he tore out the heart and took it with him into the castle, rolling aside the ponderous gate and closing it again with a giant's strength.

Having made his preparations, he went to the apartments of the queen, and found her still asleep. "Arise, arise," cried he, "the hour is late!"



THE TWO RAJAS IN THE MANGO GARDEN



Lifting herself up from her couch, she looked at him in amazement, for her conscience smote her, and she said to herself,—“Does he suspect anything?”

Turning from the threshold and looking into the court, the king noticed that water had been recently drawn in the suspended pitchers of the well by means of the treadle, which was too heavy for the slender strength of his wife to move. There, too, stood his favourite hookah, close to the platform, which was befouled with spittle. Regarding his Râni with a sorrowful air, he said:—

“Who has smoked my hookah, Râni,
Who his spittle here did throw;
Who the water lifted, Râni,
Wet's the trough with overflow?”

Then the queen hastened to answer her lord:—

“I have smoked your hookah, Râja,
I the spittle here bestowed;
I the pitchers lifted, Râja,
And the water overflowed.”

But in her mind she said—“Has the parrot betrayed me?”

Then the king looked about him and observed that both the favourite birds' cages were empty. “Ah!” said he, “I hear not the voice of your parrot, and the *maina* greets not her master! Where are your friends?”

“The voice of the parrot is still,” answered she, “and the *maina* greets not her master, because they are roving abroad. I let out my friends for a flight, and they flew to the mango-trees.”

But her mind misgave her, and she thought to herself, “Now the truth must come out!”

Then the king went to the walls and cried,—“Miâmittû!

Miâmittû!"—and the parrot heard and replied from the mango-trees.

"Here I am," said he, "but my body shakes with fear. I dare not enter the palace."

He held out his hand and the parrot flew on to it. "You and the *maina*-bird," said the king in reproachful tones, "were left by me to guard and protect the queen. My confidence has been abused. All this evil has been going on, and you did not tell me."

"I could tell you the whole truth," answered the parrot, "but these days are not the days for truth. One of us told the truth, and now his head lies here, and his body there."

When the king saw the *maina*-bird all ruffled and headless, he picked up the body and took it to the queen. "Look!" cried he, "I left the *maina* whole and well—what work is this?"

"He was killed by the parrot," answered she; "ask him—he dares not deny it." And as she spoke the words, she threw at the bird a threatening look.

But the parrot said: "Perhaps it was so; I may have killed the *maina*; but did the king ever hear of such a thing in the world?" At the same instant he secretly pointed one of his claws at his mistress to signify that the *maina* had been killed by herself.

After this the king entered his chamber, and as he gazed around him he noticed how the cushions and mats were disordered, and, here and there, scattered about, he saw the stones of his wife's broken necklace of rubies, which she had been vainly endeavouring to string. Then said he:—

"Strange footsteps mark my floor, Râni,
My couch is all dispread;
Who forced my chamber-door, Râni,
What thief abused my bed;
What hand the necklace tore, Râni,
Who broke the golden thread?"

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And again the queen made answer:—

“Soon as the *maina* died, Râja,
 My beads the parrot tore,
 All scared I stepped aside, Râja,
 And trod the polished floor;
 O never ask me why, Râja,
 Your couch is all dispread,
 For none came here but I, Râja,
 To rest upon your bed!”

But even as she uttered her excuses her heart sank within her, and she said to herself:—“Alas, what next!”

Then the king, curbing his rage and his grief, cried:—
 “Enough! Go, Râni, and see to the venison which is preparing in the cook-house, and bake me my bread.” And he went out and sat down alone by the well.

When the queen appeared with the smoking flesh and the cakes of bread, she laid them down on the floor, and the king looked at her and said:—“Come, let us eat together once more!”

Like a woman, quite forgetful of her faults, she accepted his feigned kindness and her spirits rose; but men are different—they nurse their thoughts and keep their suspicions warm.

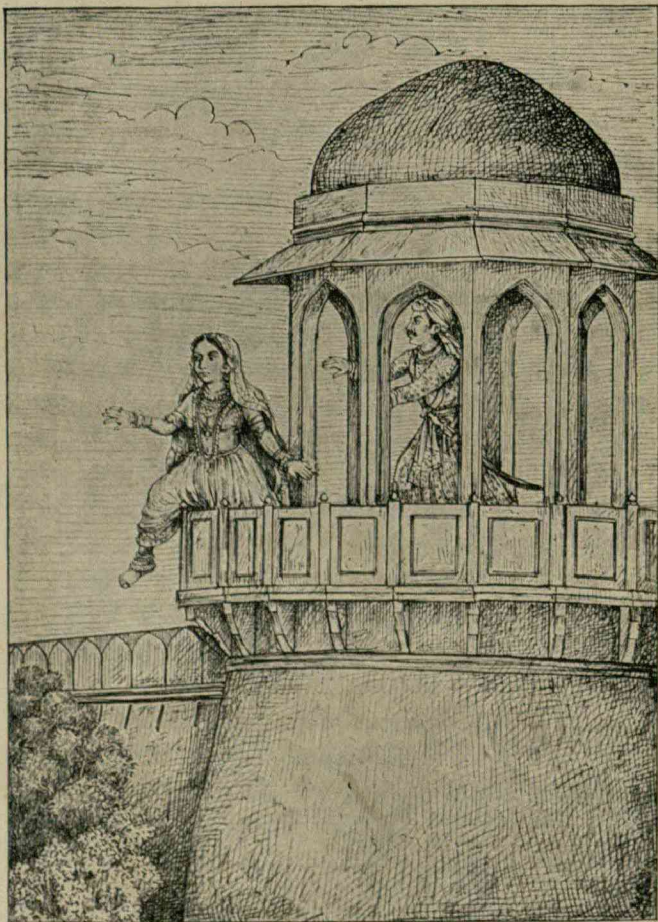
Then the king put some of the bread to his lips, and said:—“To-day my bread is tasteless!”

“Ah!” cried the queen. “What food, dear Heart, have you brought me here? Methinks no venison was ever so dainty and sweet at this.”

Pushing his bread away from him, and rising up on the platform, the king answered her thus:—

“What food is this so dainty sweet?
 Alive he languished at your feet;
 Now, dead and gone, he pleases still—
 You eat his flesh,—nay, eat your fill!
 But O! may she whose heart is proved untrue,
 Ascend the funeral pyre, and perish too!”

At that, the bit dropped from the poor Râni's mouth, as she said to herself. "Ah, I am betrayed, I am betrayed ;— he knows all! All is over!"



Then, with streaming eyes, she answered her lord:—

"I sit me down, and O you flout me sore,
I get me up, and still you mock me more;

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Since then my suffering gaze nor help nor hope can spy,
With him for whom you taunt me, Râja, will I die!"

Saying this, she sprang to her feet and ran quickly up the battlements, whence she beheld, lying far beneath her, the headless body of Râja Hôdi. Then, with a cry, she threw herself over; but before her body had reached the rocks below her breath had gone out of her, and so fell dead the Râni Koklâ.





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STORY XII

DEATH OF RASALU

THE RASALU LEGEND

THE DEATH OF RASALU



N witnessing the bloody and pitiful fate of his consort, Râja Rasalu hastened in his amazement to the gate of the fortress,

and passing swiftly out, he descended the rocky steps, and there, stretched by the very corse of Râja Hôdi whose charger was still champing his bit under the mango-trees, he found the shattered remains of the luckless Koklâ. Strange and wan was the smile which still lingered on her lips, and full of pain and reproach the eyes which seemed to burn into his. Stooping over the dead body of the only woman whom he had ever really, truly, loved, the king is said to have then felt what it was to have loved and for ever to have lost. Taking her up tenderly, he carried her into the palace and laid her down. Both the bodies, his wife's and her lover's, he laid down



side by side, say the bards, and he covered them over with the same cloth. Then he considered within himself,—“But if I burn them, the disgraceful secret will be known abroad. No! at midnight I will carry them both down and throw them into the river.”

Then, seeing the parrot, he said to him,—“Your partner is dead and gone, so also is mine. Poor parrot and hapless king! See how the world is passing away!”

After this the king being very weary lay down and slept, and forgetting the two bodies he did not wake until late in the night. It was almost dawn when he approached the river, bearing the dead on his shoulders. Just then he caught sight of the old washerman and his wife going down with a bundle of clothes. So he stepped aside to escape their notice, and dropped the two dead bodies into the river.

As he watched them drifting and sinking in the dark deep waters of the Indus, he overheard the woman saying to her husband,—“It is not yet morning. To pass the time tell me a story!”

“What is the use?” answered the husband. “We have to get through the world somehow. Part of our life is over, and part only remains. We have no time to waste over stories.”

“But,” replied she “it is not yet daylight, so tell me a tale while the night continues.”

Then said the washerman,—“Shall I tell you a true story, or some other one?”

“A true story,” answered she—“Something you have seen and known.”

So the man began:—

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ear me, O wife! Not long ago, before I married you, I had another wife. She used to say her prayers five times in the day, and I thought her a treasure. Yet every night she absented herself from my house for at

least an hour, until I began to wonder what was her motive. At last I determined to find out. The next time she went away, I followed her, because I said, 'Perhaps she goes out to her prayers, but I should like to see for myself.' I found she visited the grave of a *fakîr*, and that she prayed to him that I might become blind. When I heard this, I could not help feeling, 'Before my face she respects me, but how false she is behind my back! To-morrow I will be beforehand with her at the shrine, and she shall have her answer.'

"The next night I hid myself in the shrine, and when my wife came and prayed as usual I answered her,—'O woman, for a long time you have prayed to me, this time your prayer is answered. Go home and feed your husband with sweet pudding in the morning and with roast fowl in the evening, and in a week he will be blind.'

"I then got away home as fast as I could run, and when my wife returned I asked her, 'Where have you been?'

"'I have been in the village giving out the clothes,' answered she.

"The next morning my wife said to me, 'Husband, see, I have here some buttermilk and oil, let me wash your head.'

"I accordingly undressed. But when my wife saw my body, she cried, 'Why, husband, how thin you have

become! you are all skin and bone. I must feed you up.' To this I answered 'Good'. So my wife went and made me sweet pudding which I enjoyed. And in the evening she gave me roast fowl which I enjoyed too.

"After three or four days I said to her, 'Wife, I don't know what has happened, my eyes are getting quite dim.' Though she affected to console me, I could easily perceive that she was glad. After the seventh day I said to her— 'Wife, I am stone blind, I can't see a thing.' She, hearing this, set up a hypocritical howl, and going out she visited this saint and that, and offered up counterfeit prayers for my recovery.

"I now took to a stick and acted the blind man to the life. But one day my wife said to herself, 'This may be all a deceit; I must put his blindness to the test.' So she said to me, 'I am going out a-visiting; if I put some barley to dry, will you take care of it?'

"'How can I?' replied I. 'Still, if you will put it on some matting within my reach so that I can feel it from time to time, I will try.'

"This then she did, and I sat by it with my stick in my hand. In a short time I saw my wife slyly creeping towards the grain, and when she got near she felt it. Lifting my stick I gave her such a violent blow on the head that she fell almost senseless, crying out, 'Ah, you have killed me!'

"'Wife, wife,' protested I, 'how could I tell it was you? Did I not say I was blind? I thought there was a bullock or a goat here.'

"This quite convinced my wife that I must be entirely blind, and she continued to feed me as before.

"Now the truth was that she was intriguing with another man whom she used to visit, though at great risk, whenever she found the opportunity. This man she now introduced

from time to time into my house. One day, when he was expected, she sought a quarrel with me to get me out of the way. 'Why don't you do something?' said she; 'you are always indoors. Get out, man, and stack some wood!'

"I abused her heartily for her speech and went out. When I returned I spied the man sitting in my chamber and said to myself, 'Aha, my friend is here!' My wife when she saw me coming told him to get into the great mat which was lying rolled up against the wall, and he did so. Going to the cow-house, where I knew there was some rope handy, I returned, groping all the way with my stick.

"What do you want with that rope?' said my wife.

"Without answering I felt my way to the mat, and tying it up first at one end and then at the other I shouldered it, and said to my wife:—'This trouble which has fallen upon me is more than I can bear. I am now going as a pilgrim to Mecca, and this will serve me as a kneeling mat.'

"I then went out, but she followed me, entreating me to alter my mind.—'Don't go; don't leave your poor little wife!' implored she.

"But the neighbours said, 'Let the poor man alone. What use is he to you now?' So I got away from her.

"After I had gone two or three miles, the man inside the mat began to struggle and shake.

"Shake away,' said I, 'you will have reason to shake soon. You think I am blind, but I am not.'

"I now approached a village, and the first thing I observed was a woman baking some bread of fine flour. When the cake was ready she took it inside to the corn-bin where her lover was hiding, and she gave it to him. Then she came out and began baking bread of coarse

barley meal. Pretending to be a *fakîr*, I went up to her and said,—‘Mother, make me some wheaten bread with a little butter.’

“‘Where am I to get wheaten flour?’ answered she. ‘Do you not see how poor I am?’

“‘Nay, but bake me some,’ replied I.

“As we were disputing, her husband came up and said, ‘Don’t quarrel, woman, with *fakîrs*!’

“‘I am not quarrelling,’ said she, ‘but this man is begging for fine bread and butter. Did you ever get such a luxury?’

“When the husband heard this he was angry with me, and said,—‘If a barley cake will suit you, take it. But if not, begone!’

“Then said I, pointing to the door, ‘They who sit in corn-bins eat fine bread, but beggars mustn’t be choosers.’

“‘What’s this about corn-bins?’ cried he. ‘This must be looked into.’

“So he went into the corn-bin and there he found his wife’s lover squatting among the grain and eating fine bread and butter. ‘You are an honest man, O *fakîr*,’ he cried out to me.

“But he was in such a rage that he drew his knife and would most certainly have cut the fellow’s throat, if I had not caught him by the arm and checked him, and brought him out of the place.

“‘Look here,’ said I, opening my mat, and releasing my prisoner, ‘here is another of them. Your fate is not different from mine, nor mine from other men’s. Therefore do not kill, but let us both agree to make the best of a bad job, because you see, if Râja Rasâlu in his palace, great and mighty as he is, has the same misfortune as we, and yet bears it patiently, who are we that we should complain?’”



THE DECEITFUL WIFE.



illed with forebodings, Râja Rasâlu, who had overheard every word, now came forward and said, "I am Râjâ Rasâlu, the king of all this realm. Ask me for land and you shall have it, or if you want money take it, but tell me how knew you people that such wicked-

ness was being done in my house?"

"And are you not aware," answered the man, "that women are by nature witches and soothsayers? They know or they find out everything, and they have been talking of the doings at Kheri-mûrti for days."

Then the king took them both to the castle and gave them money, and to the husband he said, "You are a white-bearded man, old and venerable. Your years entitle you to respect. Therefore come and see me often, and let us converse together." And he sent them away.

He himself after this grew careless and morose, and he ceased to visit the field so often, leaving Folâdi to himself, his life being weary and his heart broken, thinking of his dead wife, of her black ingratitude, and of her dismal fate. Sometimes friends gathered about him in *darbâr* to counsel and to plan, and sometimes turn by turn they told him stories of kings of old, or passed the time in making up riddles. Frequently the old washerman visited him and brought him in news from without, and his favourite parrot strove to console him. But his kingdom was neglected, his conquests forgotten, many of his distant vassals forswore his service, his guards of parrots, peacocks, and *mainas* mostly abandoned the palace, and in his vast fortress he lived, at least for a king, solitary and alone.

Meanwhile there were wise women at the town of Râja



Hôdi who had guessed or divined the secret of Kheri-mûrti. One day Hôdi's brothers were riding past the village well when the women were drawing water for their households, and they overheard one of them saying,—“Men value their darling vices more than life.”

“What is that which you say?” cried one of the princes.

“I said,” answered the speaker, “that men for a woman's love will sacrifice even life itself to gain their ends.”

“But what do your words really signify?” said he.

“If the brothers of Râja Hôdi have any sense of their own,” replied she, “they have no need to ask.”

On hearing this, they galloped up to the palace of Râja Hôdi, and entering the court, they cried,—“Where is Râja Hôdi?”

“Ever since the day on which he left the castle to pursue the blue buck,” answered one of the attendants, “he has been paying visits across the river in the direction of the castle of Râja Rasâlu. Some days ago, he went out as usual, but he has not yet returned, and we know not what has become of him.”

When the brothers heard these tidings they assembled their vassals from all parts, and addressing them, they said, “The king is a prisoner or else he has been killed in the country of Râja Rasâlu. We must rescue or avenge him. Will you stand by us when we cross the river, or will you go back to your houses?”

Then answered they all with one voice,—“Our heads be yours if we do not stand by you to a man.”

Now the old washerman used to visit Râja Rasâlu day by day, because the king delighted in his quaint stories and good sense. About this time he went up to the palace as usual, and received his customary welcome. Said the king to him, “What news to-day?”



RASALU FALLS IN BATTLE.

not prepared for a
 returned upon him
 gallop out into the
 gather in strength and
 of his castle at Kheri
 his own hands to repair the
 up the breaches. Hardly
 the hostile force appeared
 by the brothers of Raja Hodi,
 every weapon of war. They
 it on skins, and like bees

THE RASALU LEGEND

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"Among the women of the village," answered the washerman, "there is a strange rumour, but it may not be true."

"Let me have it," said the king.

"I overheard them talking among themselves," replied he, "and they were saying that as Râja Rasâlu had cut off the head of Râja Hôdi, so his own head would also fall in three days."

When the king understood this he was greatly put out, and rising and pacing the floor, he said,—“Have you really heard this?”

"Yes," answered the washerman, "the women have it so, but I know nothing about it."

"I have seen the day when I could singly and alone laugh my foes to scorn," said the king; "and still I have troops, if I can only assemble them in time."

Then he summoned his warder and bade him call out all his followers in the castle. But when they were drawn up, there were not a dozen men left to man the walls.

"Winning or losing a battle is in the hands of God," said he to the old washerman. "But what is one to do with a handful of men like this?"

Vigorously, however, the old warrior prepared for a siege. Something of his former spirit returned upon him as he directed one of his men to gallop out into the country to order his people to gather in strength and to bring in supplies for the defence of his castle at Kherimûrti, and as he assisted with his own hands to repair the broken battlements and to close up the breaches. Hardly had he completed his task, when the hostile force appeared in sight. They were led by the brothers of Râja Hôdi, and were fully armed with every weapon of war. They swam the river or crossed it on skins; and like bees



they swarmed round the hill and sat down beneath the walls of Kheri-mûrti. Then passed mutual defiances between the opposing leaders, and the siege began in form. But Râja Rasâlu, though reinforced by fresh supplies of men, soon began to perceive that the struggle was a hopeless one, and that the end could not be far off. Resolving therefore not to be caught like a rat in a trap, but to sell his life as dearly as possible, he ordered his men to prepare for a sally. That night he piled up faggots in the chambers of Râni Koklâ, and with his own hand set the palace on fire, and, when the flames leaped up into the darkness of the midnight sky, the besiegers saw them and wondered.

The next morning he led his followers down the rocky steps, and, as he passed through the queen's garden, he looked at the mango-trees, and cried:—

“O flushed with fruit, or bare of bough,
Fruit may ye never form again,
Dead is Koklâ, her place is void,
And flaming red the fires remain!”

Then with a rush he descended to the plains and met his enemies hand to hand. There the battle raged with fury on both sides for seven days and seven nights. King Rasâlu fought like a lion, and many a foe went down beneath his mighty arm, never to rise again. At last his men were all of them killed, and the king himself, wearied out with the long fight, covered with wounds, and hemmed in by increasing numbers, was slain by an arrow nine yards long, which pierced his neck. And when the fight was over, his enemies smote off his head and carried it back with them in triumph to the castle of Râja Hôdi.

And thus, according to most of the story-tellers of the Upper Panjâb, perished their national hero Râja Rasâlu, having survived his might and outlived the fame and glory of his great exploits.¹



A RAJPUT FORTRESS.

¹ Some say that Rasâlu never died at all, but that he passed over or descended into the Indus, and that, like Arthur and other mythical characters, he is to come again.

[This concluding chapter, like the first of the series of the Rasâlu Legend, is partly made up from fragments collected from different villages.]



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THE STORY OF NEK BAKHT

THE STORY OF NEK BAKHT



ANY years ago, when Nek Bakht was a boy, his father died, and he became king in his place. This lad took to hunting as his constant amusement, spending many days away from home. Now it was customary in that country for each courtier to follow singly his own game until he had brought it down. It was also the custom at the close of the day when all had returned from the field for the king to say:—"Is there any king greater than I?" and for the ministers to answer: "None." The young king's daily pride, however, was one day brought low. He was following a deer, and he rode and rode till he was out of sight, when God ordered an angel to abolish space in such a way that in one moment the king found himself five hundred miles away in the territory of another king. He was now merely an ordinary mortal like anyone else, but in a worse plight than most, for he was seized as a criminal. All that country indeed was in terror on account of a notorious robber, so that the gates of the city were closed at sunset and kept closed all night. Therefore when just before the time of closing Nek Bakht entered the city armed as he was, all the people cried: "Here is the robber!" and banging the gates behind him, they unhorsed

* Nek Bakht—Good Luck.

him, bound him, and carried him off to the king. And when the king heard what they had to say, he said, "Cut off his hands, and let him sit in the market-place." But some said, "What is the use of that?" Others said, "Better to hang him at once." So the king ordered him to be cast into prison, and he was taken to a cell. There he devoted himself to the study of the Korân, and one day he came to the passage—"God is almighty. He can set up and put down." This passage he used to deride whenever his vizier reminded him of it, but now it comes home to him, and he begins to weep bitterly. And when the jailor saw him thus he said, "O young man, you were just now reading and now you are crying. Why are you crying?"

"I am crying," answered he, "at my hard lot, and at the difference in my estate, comparing myself now with what I used to be."

"If you will tell me what you mean by that saying," said the jailor, "I will tell the king for you."

"If I do tell you," said Nek Bakht, "what good will it do? God has not sent me help, and how can you?" Then he said, "This part of the Korân I used to scorn when I was a king, for I said, 'Who can bring me down?' And did not my ministers tell me day after day that there was no king greater than I? Yet here are you, a poor man, earning a few pence daily, and here am I, and if you gave me two kicks, what could I do? Is it strange therefore to find me crying?"

Then the jailor went and told the king that his prisoner was not the robber at all, but Nek Bakht the great king. And the king began to feel afraid, because he used to be subject to the prince's father, and he hastened to the prison with all his ministers, and begged pardon for his mistake.

"You are not to blame," answered the prince, "but my own pride only. I have learnt a lesson."



NEK BAKHT IN PRISON.



"I am your vassal, as I was your father's," said the king, putting his hands together. "Be not therefore angry, nor bring armies to punish me."

"That I shall never do," said he. "But now, as I have been long absent from my people, give me an aid in men and horses to enable me to return, lest meanwhile someone may have seized my kingdom."

So troops and treasure were freely given, and Nek Bakht rode out at their head, and when he got nigh the border he began enquiring, "Who is the king?" and the people said, "The king was devoured by a wild beast;" others answered, "He has gone away, no one knows where;" while some others again said, "Wherever he is, he is chasing a deer." Thus he came, he and his army, close up to the capital, and his old *wazîr* rode forth to meet him, and recognised him as the lost king as soon as ever he saw him. "And how has my kingdom fared, since I went?" asked the prince.

"As it was when you left it," answered the *wazîr*, "so is it now."

After that he entered his house, giving order that his own troops should receive those of his vassal and entreat them well. Then one day, when he sat on his throne, his *wazîr* said to him, "O king, you remember the day I used to say to you, 'God is Almighty, He can raise and He can abase?'"

"Yes," said the king, "I have experienced the full force of those words." The king also said, "Hunting I give up for ever. I will apply myself to other matters, and I will merely ride out day by day for exercise."

One day, as he was riding along the bank of the river, he observed an old woman stooping down by the edge of the stream, and going near, he saw that she was engaged in picking up bits of grass, tying them in small loose



bundles, and throwing them on to the water, and he noticed that she kept watching them as they floated away. So he drew nearer still and said to her, "What are you doing?"

"Hush!" answered the wise woman. "I am reading fortunes."

"And whose fortune is figured in the last bundle," asked the King.

"That bundle," said she, "carries the fortune of the king of this country, whose name is Nek Bakht."

Now it was seen that the handful of grass floated hither and thither among the currents, and that, after an uncertain course, it finally reached the opposite side. Then said the king, "That bundle has crossed to the further bank, but what is the meaning of it?"

"The king's life," answered the woman, "will be a long one, but full of troubles."

Then began the king to be sorrowful, and when he returned to the palace his countenance was altered, and his face downcast, so that the *wazir* asked him what was the matter.

"Do not seek to know," answered the king.

"You are but a youth," said the *wazir*. "Your father confided everything to me, much more should you."

"My life," said the king, "is to be like a bit of hay tossed about on troubled waters, no peace, no rest, but trial on trial."

"Nay," answered the *wazir*, "who can tell that but God only?"

Then the King told him of the old woman, whom he found telling fortunes to herself by the river-side, and of the little bundles of dry grass, and what she said to him, to which the *wazir* replied, "O king, all that is but fancy and illusion. If she could tell that, she would be a queen herself."

Some days after the king once more rode out, and as he



NEK BAKHT AND THE WITCH.

approached the same spot he saw the old woman engaged in the very same thing. Again he addressed her, as before, saying, "Mother, what are you doing?"

"Just wait a minute," answered she. "Two spirits have come to me just now, for they want me to decide a case for them. Their names are Fate and Chance. Fate is saying, 'I shall cause the King, and the Princess of the Kingdom of Flowers, to meet.' And Chance says, 'But what if I shall not allow you to do so?' 'I shall manage it!' cries Fate. 'Nay,' replies Chance, 'you shall not, for when she comes to bathe in the river, I shall drown her there and so break your power.' Therefore," continued the old woman, "do you retire, until I have settled the business, which will take time."

So spake she to the king, who left her watching her wisps of straw, and went back moodier than ever to the palace. And the *wazîr* remarking his looks, said to himself, "Whenever the king rides towards the river now, he returns melancholy." And he said, "What is the matter?"

Then the king began again to relate to the *wazîr* his adventure of the day. "I found two voices, Fate and Chance, contending together," said he, "and Fate has fixed it that I am to marry the Princess of the Kingdom of Flowers. And I am troubled, for what perils may I not have to go through, what anguish to suffer, before that can be!"

"O foolish king," said the vizier, "can even Fate accomplish the impossible? The Princess spoken of lives millions of miles away, and do what you will you can never meet."

Some days after, the king again rode towards the river, and again found the old woman there. This time she spoke first, saying, "O son, who are you?"

"I am merely the son of a *khân*," answered he.

"You have often come here," said she, "and as you do

come so much, I now tell you that within fifteen days Nek Bakht will be married to the young Princess I told you about."

Then the king returned to the city more melancholy than ever, and calling his *wazir* he began to tell him the day's woeful news. "Within fifteen days it is written that I must marry her," said he. "Since hearing that, I have been tormented, for how is it possible for me even to see her? Is space to be again annihilated, is the very earth to disappear again under my feet, are there more imprisonments in store for me, or what?" And he went in, distressed beyond words, expecting he knew not what misfortune.

Now it had so happened that in the kingdom of the princess a decree had been in force for some time, ordering that all female children should be destroyed the moment they were born, and that any woman sparing her infant-daughter should be hanged. Only one woman had dared to disobey that cruel law, and only one little girl had been saved from death. For when she was born, her mother hid her so cunningly that she grew up to be eight or nine years old. One day she was playing about, when who should come in but the king. She tried to hide, but it was too late, and the king said to her mother, "Whose child is that?"

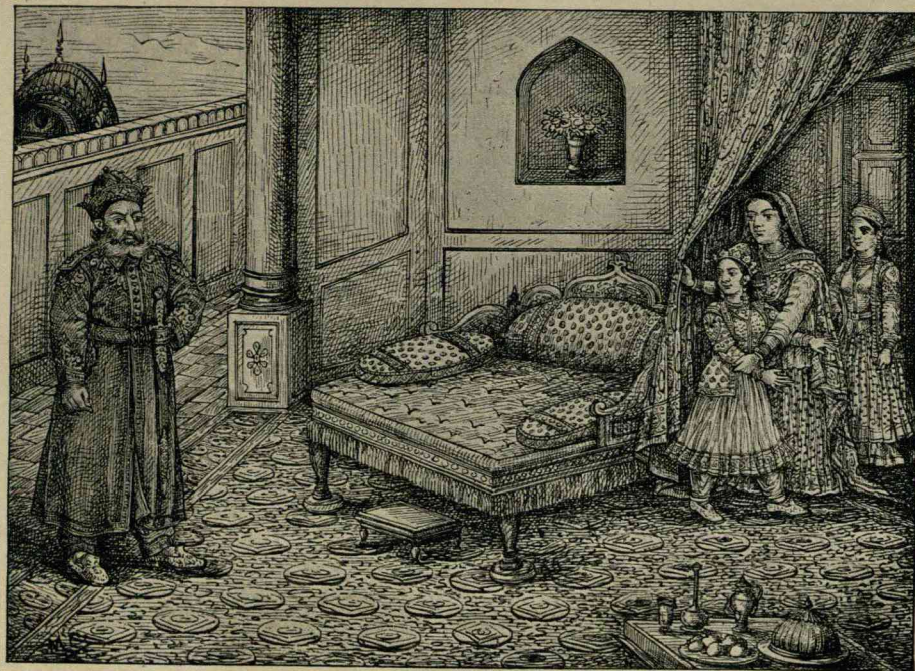
"If my life is spared," answered she, "I will tell."

"Take your life and answer," said he.

"Then I say," replied the woman, "this child is your own daughter."

"Ah!" cried the king. "So, after all, I have been disobeyed by you! But what to do now is more than I can say."

So he went off to his ministers and reported the matter to them. "Did I not order that all the little girls should be killed? How then do I find one of them living?"



THE KING DISCOVERS HIS LITTLE DAUGHTER.

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Then the ministers put their heads together and considered, and, after much time spent in argument, they unanimously agreed on a verdict. So they sought out the king and advised him, saying, "Have the princess shut up in a chest and thrown into the river." Then came the carpenter and made a box to fit the princess, and her mother did not forget to line it handsomely and put food in it. And the child gets inside, and a man takes the box on his head to carry it to the river, and as it leaves the palace the mother goes to the lattice and looks and looks! But the man, who was a slave, had pity, and instead of putting earth in the chest to sink it as he was ordered, he sealed it round with dough, so that when it was committed to the current and went floating away, a great fish came and swallowed it up. And the fish having swallowed the chest, headed down the river, and it swam and swam and swam, until it came close to the very place where lived the old woman. And it was by this trick that Fate had his own way. For at that spot there was a back-water into which the fish turned, and in which it made so great a splash that the villagers soon saw it, and coming down with sticks and clubs tried their best to kill it. But while they were still engaged in that work, Nek Bakht himself came riding by, and urging his horse into the water he speared the fish, which was then dragged up high and dry. "Carry the fish to my cooks," said the king, "let them cut off the head and the tail thereof for the people, but the midst of the fish let them keep for the king's table."

As it was the king himself who gave the order, his order was at once obeyed, and the fish was taken to the royal kitchen. But when the chief cook took his knife to cut the monster open, he heard a voice which said, "Take care, I am a human being!" The cook looked very puzzled, but, thinking his ears had deceived him, he raised the knife



again, when the same voice cried, "Take care, I am a human being!" Being more puzzled than ever, he called in one of his men and told him to listen, and again the same voice came from the inside of the fish. Then that man who had been called in said to the chief cook, "That fish must have eaten something!" So they went very carefully to work, and in the very centre of the fish they found no box at all, but a beautiful little lady. The wonderful news was at once despatched to the king, who ordered the girl to be brought to him, and who asked her, saying, "Who are you?" She, however, being a very wise girl, thought it best not to say too much, so she only told a little of her story, and the king sent her away, putting her under charge of some of his handmaidens. But within a few days the *wasîr* himself said to the king, "The girl is very handsome. Why not marry her?" And the king did so, and called her Dilârâm,¹ and the fifteen days were completed.

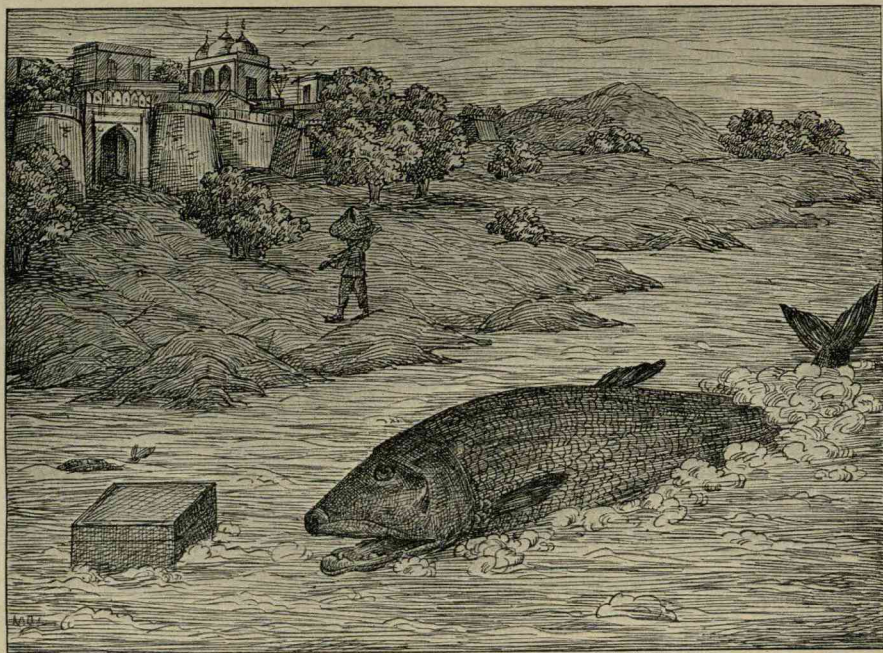
When the wedding was over, the king suddenly bethought himself and said, "This is the day I was to have married the Princess of the Kingdom of Flowers. But no, it has not been so, and it is not so, and now I must go and see the old woman."

So he rode down to the bank of the river and there the old woman was working her spells as usual. "What is your business now?" said he.

"Have patience, O Sir," she answered him. "Fate and Cnance have again come to me, and they are talking of the same thing. Listen and you will hear what they say!

And the king listened and heard voices. Fate said, "Those two I am going to marry together." "No, no," said Chance. Suddenly Fate cries, "But I have married them

¹ Dilârâm—Heart's-ease.



THE FISH AND THE CHEST.

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already!" Thereupon both voices addressed the old woman and said, "You stand umpire between us two! Go at once to the palace and see which of us is right!" And all the time the king was standing a little way off, listening to the dispute. Then said the woman, "Agreed! I will go, but first let Fate declare by what means he brought the marriage about."

"I managed it so," said Fate.—"I drove the king of that country to a fury when I led him to the chamber in which the Princess was, so she was shut up in a box, she was thrown into the river, and I caused a great fish to swallow her up, and to bring her to this very lake; and the fish was opened, and then the Princess stepped forth to marry the king, and she did marry the king. Go and see for yourself!"

At this moment the king advanced quite close and said, "What tidings to-day, O old woman!"

"Only what I have already told you," answered she. "I am now going to the palace to find out particulars."

"No need," said Nek Bakht. "Your prophecy has come true, it is all fulfilled, and the king has married the Princess."

"Really?" said she, "is it really true?"

"Yes," said the king, "all is finished and over this very day."

"Alas! alas!" then said the woman. "I am sorry for it."

"Sorry?" said he! "But where is the cause for sorrow?"

"Alas!" said she again, "I am sorry because the young king's mother is a sorceress and so also is that princess. Now that there are two of them, what will become of him?"

So the king turned back more miserable than ever. "I cannot kill my wife," said he to himself. "It would be no use, for my mother is also a witch." And as he drew nigh to the city the *wazîr* met him, and observing his

disturbed countenance, asked him the reason. So he tells him all his new trouble, and how not only his young wife is a witch, but his mother also. The *wazîr* was grieved. "O foolish king," said he, "this your mother lived with your father for many a year, and never was such a thing ever heard about, and as for your wife, she is yet but a child. What can she know of magic?"

Nevertheless the king believed the words of the old woman, and going into a chamber apart, he lay down. By-and-by his mother came to him and said, "O son, why are you so sorrowful? Cast your eye on your fair young queen, see how beautiful she is, and how truly she loves you!"

"Leave me," said he to his mother. "I am not well. To-morrow we shall see."

"God will make you well, my son," said his mother. And she left him there. But a little after he looked out, and saw his mother and his wife working spells at a *pipal* tree, and he felt afraid.

Some time passed away, until one day the King was minded to ride to the river again. He did so and found the old woman at her old occupation, watching her bundles of dry grass. Just then her two spirits, Fate and Chance, were again conversing one with the other. Says Fate, "In a kingdom beyond the sea lives another princess, and in four days Nek Bakht will go there and marry her." "Yes, that indeed will happen," replies Chance, "but in the meanwhile he will have trouble enough."

Having heard so much, the King came forward and said, "Old woman, what occupies you now?"

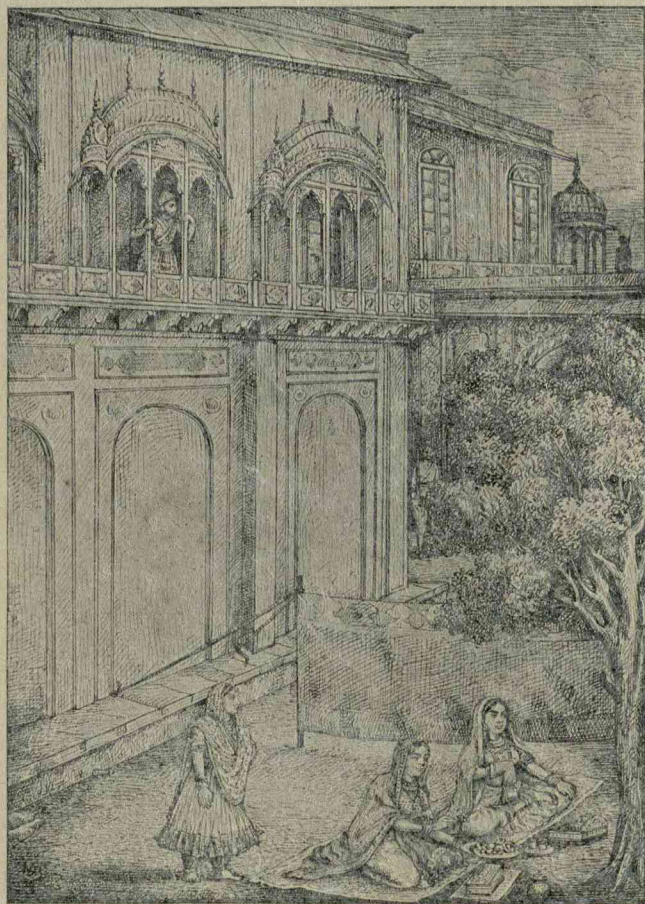
"The same old thing," answered she, "I am only acting the part of arbiter between the two powers, and sifting the true from the false. As for the king, poor man, for him I grieve, for in four days he will be far away and married again, and still he will be vexed by plaguing cares." ✓



THE FINDING OF THE LITTLE PRINCESS IN THE FISH.

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These words sounded in the ears of the King like a sentence of Death; and so beset him all the way home, that he took no heed of his mare, where or how she was



going. And when, in the bazaar, a certain woman bearing two water-pitchers on her head came by, he knocked against her, and as the shock over-balanced her, down fell the

pitchers and the water was wasted. As she was only a poor woman she lost her temper and cried out, "He is jumping his horse in the street, and he calls himself a king, and yet he does not know the tricks they play in his own house, fine as it is!"

On hearing these words the king woke up and touched bridle, but the woman had passed on. She entered a house and closed the door, but the king followed, and said to an attendant, "Set a mark on that house for me!" And a mark was set on it that the king might know it again. Then he went on, and the *wazîr* saw him and said, "O king, before, you used to look sorrowful, but to-day the very colour has left your face! What new trouble has come to pester you now?" The king beckons to the vizier to come near to him, and he tells him the story of the woman whose jars he had broken and whose water he had spilt. "Her words were strange," said he. "Who made her so hardy to seek to undo me thus?"

Presently the king again spoke and said, "Let us both disguise ourselves and sally out, let us go to her house!" So both dressed themselves up as *fakîrs*, in old garments of many colours, all shreds and patches, and with bowl and staff went forth. The woman took them for mendicants, and said to them, "Shall I give you flour, or would you like some cakes?"

"We will have neither," answered the *wazîr*, "but we'll just come in and have a smoke, and a talk about something we have in our minds."

So they entered, and as they squatted over the hookah, the woman looked at them and at once recognised the king, "I suppose you have come for explanations," said she.

"Some women are wiser than others," answered the king.

"In two days," said she, "the daughter of the king of a certain land is to be married, and her name is Azîz¹

¹ Azîz Begam—Beloved Lady.



NEK BAKHT RIDING THROUGH THE BAZAAR.



With the king of that land your wife and daughter intrigue, and in a moment they can be with him. They go and come the same day. How do they do it? They sit on a *pipal* tree, and the *pipal* tree carries them there and back."

"Can these things be?" said the *wazîr*, and the king remembered how he saw both the *rânis* doing magic to a *pipal* tree hard by the palace, and he said, "That *pipal* tree I know."

"Well," said she, "if you doubt my word, have a hole made in the tree, and sit in it, and you will go too."

Then they went away and no one knew them. And when Nek Bakht got back to the palace, he ordered his wife and mother to remain in their own apartments, and he shut them in. Then he called a cunning carpenter who made a chamber in the tree, and it had a door to it, and when the door was closed, no one could see the difference, for it looked the same as the rest.

Now as soon as the two days were up, he was lying on his bed, when he overheard his wife and mother talking. "The hour has come," said they, "let us start now!"

"Your husband the king is asleep," said the elder queen. "Here, take these magic mustard-seeds, and drop them on the king's breast. They will sprout, and the roots will fasten him down."

So Dilârâm Begam took the mustard-seeds and went into the chamber where the king was feigning sleep. And she said, "Alas, this is my dear, dear husband! I will not sprinkle his breast with them, but only drop them round the edges of his bed." When she returned, her mother said to her, "Have you done it?"

"Yes, it is done," answered the wife.

"Come along then," said her mother, "first let us bathe and dress, and then go to the *pipal* tree, when by the power of God and magic the *pipal* tree will fly."

Now, when they had gone to the bath, the king arose, and creeping through the branches of the mustard-trees



he got to the *pipal* tree first, and entering into the chamber, he closed the door and kept quiet. By-and-by came the ladies and got on the top of the tree. And they uttered



magic words over a red thread, and tied it round the tree. Then they addressed the tree, and said, "By order of God and magic, ascend!" And the tree, with leaf and branch, and with its roots attached, flew off to the city of the Kingdom over the sea, where it settled in a place outside the gates. Then both mother and wife got down and hastened away. Nek Bakht also opened the door of his chamber and came out and followed them, and he saw that they made for the king's palace which they entered by a wicket, and then the door was closed and they were lost to view.

As he stood there awhile, he heard the sound of music and tom-toms, and presently a marriage-procession swept by. "What wedding is this?" And someone told him it was the wedding of the king's daughter, the Princess Aziz. So he joined himself to the party and passed in with the rest.

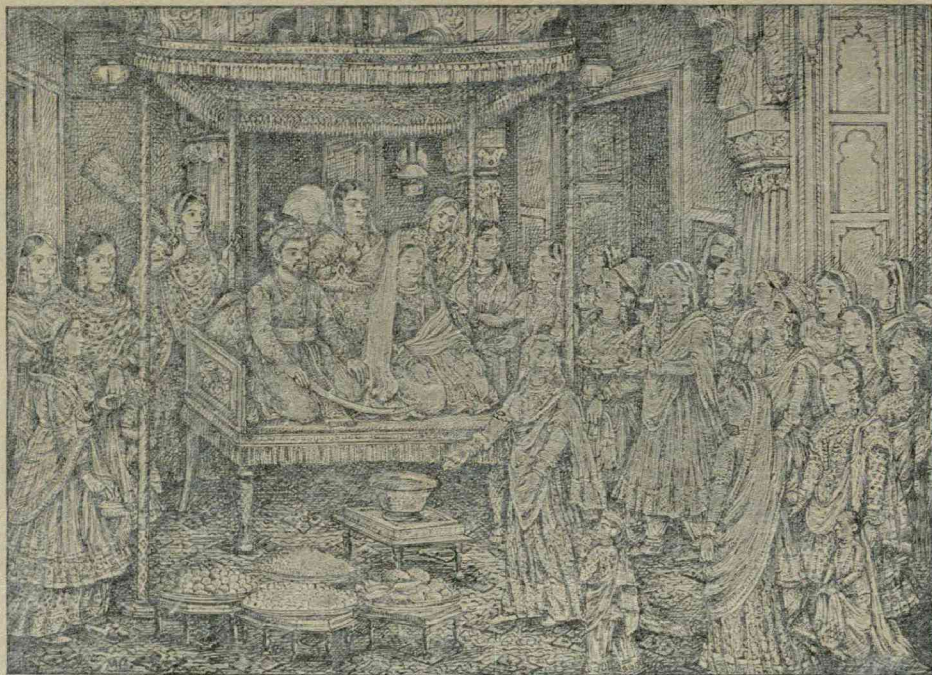
Now, it so happened that the bridegroom was the ugliest man in the whole world. His party knew well how ugly he was, and that the bride's party would tease him about his ugliness and give him no rest. So they all decided that he should be married by proxy, and that he should not appear at all. "Let us choose out some handsome youth," said they, "to represent him, and then he will escape the flouts and the jeers of the girls." And when they looked round and saw Nek Bakht, they all declared for him, and begged him to go through the ceremony, which after much persuasion he at last consented to do, and he looked most handsome, so that none of the courtiers could touch him. The people, too, were astonished, and they ran and said to the king, "So handsome is the bridegroom that no one can look at him, nay, when he showed himself to the bridesmaids, they all swooned away for very trouble."

This news heard also his mother and his wife, for they



were then with the king, and the mother said to the wife, "Go, child, and see him. Surely he cannot be more handsome than Nek Bakht!" And the girl went to have a peep, and she saw them both, the bride and the proxy bridegroom, going through the ceremony. And she gazed and gazed as they dropped their rings into a bowl of milk, and saw the bridegroom take out his ring and put it on the finger of the bride, and the bride take out her ring and put it on the finger of the bridegroom. And she went back and said, "So handsome is he that I can see no difference between him and Nek Bakht. The one is the very image of the other."

By this time the ceremony was over, and Nek Bakht, having played his part, walked out before king and courtiers and wife and mother, unrecognised, and, remembering the counsel of the old woman, determined to hasten to the *pipal* tree. So, turning to the wedding-party, "Here, take these trappings, I am off!" said he, and leaving with them his wedding garment, he ran to the tree first, shut himself in, and bided events. Towards evening came his mother and the Princess Dilârâm his wife. Nor did they suspect anything, but they got on the top of the tree as before, and pronounced the magic words, "By the order of God and magic, ascend!" when at once the tree rose and in a single breath it reached their home and sank into its own place. Entering the palace, the ladies went to the bath, while the king escaped to his own room, and forcing his way through the mustard-trees, lay down on his bed and feigned sleep. The first thing the queen-mother did, when she returned from the bath, was to light a candle, and then she went into the king's room, where she saw with horror that the mustard-seed had been sown on the edges of the bed, and she noticed the opening in the mustard-trees through which the king had crept. Going to her daughter, she cried, "All's up! You have



THE WEDDING OF THE PRINCESS AZIZ.



worked foolishness. O how wrong you have been! It was Nek Bakht himself and none other, who was with us at the wedding, for who else in the whole world could face Nek Bakht for beauty?" Then she hastened back again to the king's chamber and peeped through the leaves, scanning her son's appearance and the colour of his hands. "It is only too true," said she when she got back. "All his fingers are red with the stain of the henna. Now, if we do not contrive something, he will kill us both."

"O what shall we do?" said the wife.

"There is one way and one only," answered she. "Leave it to me and you will see!"

So she takes water of magic, and throws it over the face of her son, and at once he becomes unconscious. And all the time she keeps upbraiding her daughter and saying, "It is all your doing, disobedient one. Why did you not sow the mustard-seed on his chest as I ordered?" She then takes a silk thread from her hair, and, with mutterings, ties it round her son's ankle, and he turns into a peacock, and they take the peacock and set it loose in the garden.

Some time after this the Queen-mother went to the old *wazîr* and said, "Where is the king? He must have disappeared again." Search was made for him, but he was not to be found, and the *wazîr* governed, thinking he would again return as at the former time.

Now in the kingdom over the sea there was commotion as soon as it was discovered in the morning that the mock bridegroom was not the real bridegroom after all. The ugly prince had not a chance, as the princess spurned him from her, and bade him begone. Then she looked at the ring on her finger, and saw it was a signet ring engraved with the name of Nek Bakht, and she told the king, who got into a rage and sent messengers everywhere through the world to look for the kingdom of Nek Bakht.



And the messengers set out. But the princess built a large caravanserai and invited merchants from every part to put up there. And over the gateway she built herself a bower in which she dwelt, for she hoped by that means to hear all the foreign gossip and to get tidings of the runaway bridegroom. It so happened about that time that a company of merchants visited the capital of Nek Bakht. Before leaving, these people stole the peacock from the king's garden, and brought it back with them to the very *serai* in which lived the Princess Azîz, who, when she saw the peacock, gave them their price and bought it, and the bird became her companion. One day when the rain was falling, she called the peacock to her, and laid it in her lap. As she was caressing it, she caught sight of the red thread which bound its foot, and taking a knife she severed it, when in a moment the peacock disappeared and she saw Nek Bakht standing before her, no longer a bird, but a man. Then was she glad; and her father ordered general rejoicings and gave Nek Bakht an army and sent him back to his own country. So Nek Bakht set out, taking the bride with him, and so journeyed home.

One evening, as the party was approaching a certain tree, two large white kites were seen wheeling round about them. At last they flew to the tree on which they settled. Then said the princess, "Do you see those kites? They are your mother and your wife, who by the power of magic have learnt everything that has happened. Give me the order and I will destroy them."

"How can you destroy them?" said the king.

"Nay, speak the word and I will do it," answered she.

"You will see how, and it will save trouble in the end."

So Nek Bakht gave her leave, and she at once changed herself into a black kite, and flew off. Then ensued a fierce encounter between the black kite and the two white



THE THREE KITES.

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ones, and in the struggle they came tumbling to the ground, when the king ordered them, all three, to be killed on the spot, which was at once done by a soldier.

Then the king went home and lived a still more melancholy life than ever. Finding no rest, he again consulted the old witch of the river side, and found Fate and Chance wrangling together as usual. Says Chance, "He will live long." "Not so," replies Fate, "and moreover he is doomed to die a violent death," which came to pass in an earthquake which swallowed up king, *wazîr*, and palace, and so ends the story.

Told by Mullâh, of the caste Pâveh, at Hazro, in the Râwâl Pindî District, Jan. 1881.



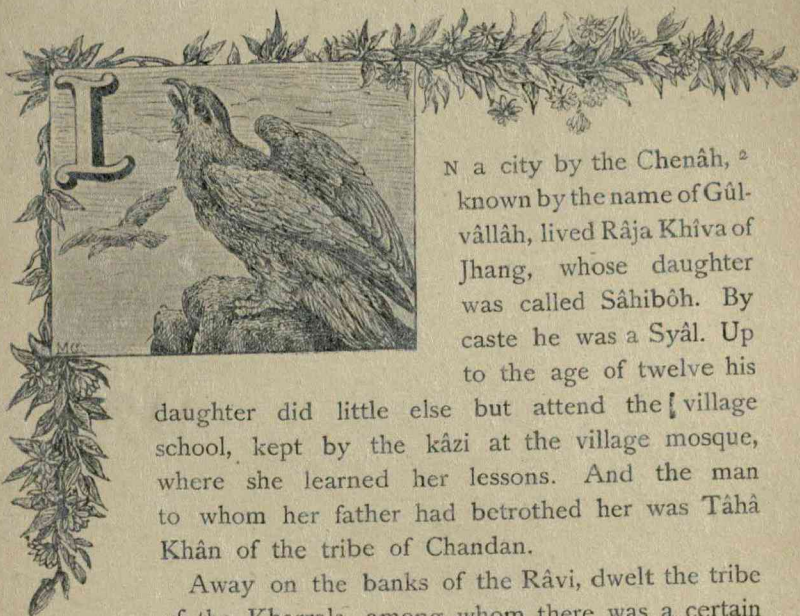


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THE LOVE STORY OF MIRZA AND SAHIBANHI

THE LOVE STORY OF MIRZA AND SAHIBANĦ¹



IN a city by the Chenâh,² known by the name of Gûlvâllâh, lived Râja Khîva of Jhang, whose daughter was called Sâhibôh. By caste he was a Syâl. Up to the age of twelve his

daughter did little else but attend the village school, kept by the kâzi at the village mosque, where she learned her lessons. And the man to whom her father had betrothed her was Tâhâ Khân of the tribe of Chandan.

Away on the banks of the Râvi, dwelt the tribe of the Kharrals, among whom there was a certain man of the name of Dâdû Khân, who had a son named Mîrza. And of all that tribe Mîrza's uncle, Ibrâhîm Khân, was the ruler and chief.

Now Mîrza was passionately fond of sport, being reckoned a mighty hunter. He was a roving blade, always on foot or in the saddle, but he was wild and eccentric, and said by the people to be half mad. One day he was away hunting, and exactly at noon he reached the outskirts of

¹ Throughout this story, in deference to my village story-teller, I spell the heroine's name exactly as he pronounced it—*Sâhibôh*.

² Otherwise the Chenâb.



the town of Jhang Syâl. The girl, Sâhibôh, was then bathing in the river, attended by her sixty maidens, and she said, "How is it that at this hour of the day a horseman comes riding here?" Then she called out to him, saying,—

"Oh, rider of the dark-grey mare,
Why stand you burning there
Beneath the noon-tide glare?"

And he made answer, saying,—

"The sun is the sun of my country too,
Never shade in my fate can exist;
My business, O Maiden, to-day is with you,
But the rest—let them live as they list!"

After this, Mîrza said, "I have come far in the sun, give me some water."

The first time he asked her, she answered, "This water is the water of Jhang Syâl, it is the water of love, and you will not like it."

He spoke to her a second time, "Give me some water to drink!"

And the second time she answered, "This water is the water of Jhang Syâl, it is the water of love, and you will not like it!"

Then said he,—

"What brings twin spirits face to face?
Sure, Fate alone can bring;
We eat and drink, just as we please,
But God controls the string,
By Râvi's banks I drew my breath.
O womens' hearts beware!
No lover dreads the dart of death,
Though his grave be yawning there!"

Then said Sâhibôh to one of her companions, "Go you and take him some water!" The girl filled a brass vessel and took it; but her thumb was in the water as she carried



FIRST MEETING OF MIRZA AND SAHIBOH.

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it, and when he saw that, Mîrza said, "Your thumb is in the water, I cannot drink it!"

The girl went back and repeated that speech to Sâhibôh. Then said Sâhibôh to another girl, "You take him some water, but hold the lotah on your palm!" The girl took it, but a whirlwind swept along, and threw dust and shreds of grass into the vessel. And Mîrza said, "I cannot drink it. This water is full of dust and shreds of grass"

The girl went back to Sâhibôh and threw down the vessel, saying, "The man says that, unless Sâhibôh herself gives him to drink, he will die standing where he is!"

Then said Sâhibôh,—

"O you, with your mare so glossy and grey,
And your necklet of amber flowers,
With your quiver of arrows so green and so gay,
And the pearls dropping from you in showers!
Have you heard of our khâns?—men mighty are they!
And I bid you beware,
Lest they come for your mare!
Better drink, if you're wise, and go on your way!"

And Mîrza answered thus,—

"My camels I've lost, from Râvi's banks they strayed,
And for your own Chenâb methinks they made!
I looked both east and west, but, still bereft,
To Khîva's town I come, for that alone is left!
Of Dâdû Khân I am both son and heir,
And Mîrza is the name they call me there.
But what my crime, O matchless Maiden say,
That Khîva's khâns should take my mare away?"

Then Sâhibôh carried the water and gave it to him herself. And when he had drunk, she took the bridle, and she said to her friends, "You go on with your bathing, and I will show the traveller the road." So she went along with him through the jungle, and taking him to a *jhand* tree,¹

¹ An acacia (*Prosopis Spicigera*) sacred to marriage, before which a sprig from it is ceremonially cut off by the bridegroom. This *jhand*-tree incident, therefore, constituted an informal marriage betwixt the twain, Mîrza and Sâhibân.



she said, "Get down from your horse, please!" And, when he had dismounted, they both sat down in the deep shadow, and they were talking and talking and talking, until at last evening surprised them, and Mirza said to himself, "It is dusk, and I have far to get back to my home." She tried to detain him, saying, "It is now too late, stay, be my guest!" But he said to her, "Within ten days I will come again," and so he mounted his mare, and galloped away.

Ten days had well-nigh passed when, starting once more, he came to Jhang Syâl, and round the town he went, looking for his beloved. But he looked in vain. So he went to the house of an old woman, and, tying up his horse, there he rested. Then said he to the woman, "Come and show me the place where Sâhibôh lives."

"No," answered the woman, "stay you here! First I will go to Sâhibôh, and tell her you have come, and ask her if I may bring you there or not?"

"If she ask you who has come," said Mirza, "say it is her cousin, the son of her mother's sister."

So the old woman started off, going to the house of Sâhibôh, to whom she gave the message, and Sâhibôh said, "Where has he come from?"

"He says he comes from the Râvi," answered the woman, "and he says he is son to your mother's sister."

Then said the girl, "Go back and find out if that is really so, and bring him,—bring him quietly—bring him quietly here!"

So back the old woman went to Mirza, and she led him forth. But said he to her, "What about my arms and my horse?"

"Bring all!" answered she, and so he did. But Sâhibôh had ordered that he was to be kept outside for a while, and to her mother she spoke, disclosing her mind,—



"Friendship, O Mother, with men,
And close to the heart a throe!
Sad lovers bear their love,
As trees bear the rending snow!
What does the earth want most?
It cries for the showers of heaven;
And the kneaded bread cries 'salt,'
To season and sweeten the leaven!
As the holes in a sieve, as the stars above,
So many in number the pangs of love!"

"O daughter!" answered her mother, "for twelve years you have been learning from the priest! You have been promised to the tribe of Chandan, who number twelve thousand men, and what strange thing is this you are prating about? It is a bad word and nothing less, that you are saying, my child. God forbid that it should be so!"

Now all the time Mirza was standing in the street, watching her through some stacks of fuel, as she sat winding her thread on the top of the house. In the enclosure below the mother was sweeping up the dust, and, suddenly looking up, she caught sight of him peeping, and it seemed to her that his eyes burned like coals of fire. So she put down her broom and came out to the street, and at once she recognised him as her sister's son, for she had heard tell of his beauty and his famous grey mare. Now Mirza's mother, like herself, had been a girl of Jhang Syâl, so she said to him,—“Why should the son hide in the village of his mother's father? What, peeping are you? But your eyes are peering eyes—eyes that are bloody eyes—and covetous eyes—eyes quick to pounce; inwardly calculating, outwardly too cunning to betray the secrets behind them. What, the old murder have you forgotten?” Then she bade him enter.

Now in the courtyard there was a mango-tree, and under it she set a cot, and told him to sit down. Then she went away, and Sâhibôh came down and sat with him and talked. In the afternoon the mother came back, and with



her eyes she made signs to her daughter to bid him begone, since her father and brothers would be coming in from the fields. All this Mîrzâ saw and understood, and rose at once. As he was mounting, Sâhibôh caught hold of him, saying, "You are my guest. I will hide you somewhere, but stay you must!"

But he, supposing that already the girls of the town must be talking about them, saïd, "For your own sake I go, but within ten days I will come again!" So, though she pulled and strove, he mounted and rode off. And from the house-top she watched him as long as he was in sight. Then she folded up her mat and down she went into the court, taking her spinning with her, and saying,—

"O Mîrza Khân, have I sent you away?
And what in the world is left for me,
What is now left me to hope or to see?
With my coloured bobbins I idly play,
As I sit-alone, 'neath a shady tree,
In the shade of my father's mango-tree!"

My little brother, he ran to my side,
'Come sing me a nursery song!' he cried;
So I sang him a song, but all the time
The name of Mîrza slipt into the rhyme.

O Mîrza Khân, O Mîrza Khân,
Ease to the smart,
Peace to the heart,
Comes with the name of Mîrza Khân!"

Then, overpowered with grief, she fainted away. Many were the doctors who were summoned, but none could understand her complaint. Lastly came the priest, who taught her her lessons, and he felt her pulse. Never before could he take this liberty, much as he wished, being in love with her himself, but now he could and did, and he said to her mother, "An evil spirit has frightened her, yea, one of the great demons!"



"Spend what you please on medicine," said the mother.

"This kind cannot be driven out under four hundred rupees," said the priest.

"Spend anything you like," said she, "only cure her!"

"Well," said the priest, "the hour is past for a cure to-day. It is too late! But to-morrow something may be done!"

But to himself he was saying, "To-day she was ready with her four hundred rupees. To-morrow she may give eight hundred." And he went away home. But he was unable to sleep, vexed that he had not taken the four hundred rupees. The night was as long as a year to him. In his concern he rose at midnight instead of at dawn, and cried the *bhang*,¹ and the good men of the place all got up and came to the mosque for their matin-prayers. A long time kept he them waiting, and even, when at last he came, it was still too early. And when he opened school, his mind was in such a state, thinking of the four hundred rupees, that he taught the wrong lessons, and always his eyes kept wandering to the door, and he was saying to himself, "Now someone will come!" and ever and again—"Surely now someone will come to call me to Sâhibôh's house!"

Now, by the morning, Sâhibôh had recovered, and she got ready to go to the mosque for her lessons, and as she was washing her hands she said to her mother,—

"In the river Chenâh I was bathing, mother,

And O how my heart was quaking!

Then came to me Mîrza and showed himself, mother,

A veil from before him taking!—

If you are my mother, O keep my *pardah*!"²

So saying, she went to the mosque. But when the priest saw her coming, he got frantic with rage, thinking,

¹ The Muezzin.

² Keep my secret. The *parda* is the curtain fencing off the secret, or women's quarters of the house. It is also the mantle which hides the face.



"What was the matter with the vixen yesterday that she should be so well to-day? I have lost my four hundred rupees!" Then said he to the children. "Cut rose-slips, and beat Sâhibôh well, whether she knows her lessons or not!" Hardly had she entered when she noticed his anger, and expected her beating. But, thought she to herself, "I can save myself, if I can but give him a hint that Mîrza Khân is my friend." So she said to him,—

"With switches beat me not, O Master mine,
Nor yet with cruel blows inflame my blood—
All learning, and the power to learn are gone!
I am enflamed with love! I slept and slept,
And, love, yea, love awoke within my breast!
To praises ever listening, love arose!
In that dark cloud that darts the fiery flash,
'Tis there, yea, there resides my Mîrza Khân!"

Then the Kâzi jumps up in a flurry, he is tying and tying his turban on, he is going to Sâhibôh's! So off he hastens, and he says to her mother, "O Mother of Sâhibôh, Sâhibôh will not learn!"

"O priest," answered she, "wherefore not? why will she not learn?"

"She is in love with Mîrza Khân," said he. "Some day you will be thinking this love has been brought about by me, for, mark my words, she will not remain in your house. To-day, or to-morrow, she will be off with him!"

"O Kâzi," said her mother, "leave me now and go! When she comes home, I'll give her a good dressing."

So the priest went away, and when Sâhibôh came in, her mother was heating the oven, and having the oven-stick in her hand, she gave her daughter several strokes on the back, and the girl answered—"I have checked Mîrza Khân from coming to our street, and yet you, my own mother, even you must taunt me! Two have been learning



the same lesson, and into the very marrow the lesson has sunk. But if you are my mother, O keep my purdah!"

Time passed, and Mîrza came riding over again, but, fearing scandal, he thinks to himself, "It is best not to go to the house." So he rides on to the shop of an apothecary, near which were assembled a number of people, and he stands looking on.

Now that very day Sâhibôh had opened out her hair, and she said to her mother, "Go please, Mother, and bring me some oil for my hair, for I feel ashamed to go out like this!"

"I am old," answered her mother. "Go, bring it yourself!"

So she took a little vessel, and, with her hair all loose, she went for the oil herself. There, at the shop of the apothecary, stood Mîrza Khân on his mare, and she saw him; and when Mîrza saw her, he said to the apothecary, "What do you make by your sales?"

"Four or five rupees a day," answered the man.

"Take ten rupees," said Mîrza, "and give me up the shop to myself, and let me bargain with this girl!" So he sat in the shop and received her there, and the apothecary locked the door and went away. Towards evening the man came back, and he opened the door and said, "It is late now; therefore get away home!" So Sâhibôh went home, and home also went Mîrza. But when Sâhibôh reached her house, her mother beat her again, saying, "It was morning when you went for the oil—where have you been all these hours?"

"You sent me out for oil," answered she, "and I went to the shop of the apothecary. Three men were there, one a Brahmin, and the other two Jats.¹ But they knew not

¹ *Jat*, a tribe among the Hindus. All these dark figures of speech are in verse. Though commonly current, and well understood by the people, they are not explainable in English.

how to balance the scales, or to weigh out the silk, and so I made bargains for them. After this, I saw Mírza



SCENE AT SAHIBOH'S GARDEN LODGE.

Khán playing. Oil I bought not, but love was there, and there in abundance!"



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Now Mîrzâ had promised to come again after three or four days to a certain private place outside of the town, where Sâhibôh had a garden-lodge. And Sâhibôh being an only daughter, her father was fond of her, and he let her go there, only saying to her, "The place is outside the town, and not over safe. Take therefore with you your sixty playmates for company!" So away they all went, and the time came, and Mîrza did not appear. Now she had slung swings from the boughs of the trees, and so at first she was glad, expecting him, but now she was sorry, seeing that he was some days behind his time. At last, on the fifth day, he came, and she saw him coming and turned her back. Mîrza Khân, supposing she had not seen him, came in front of her, but again she turned her back. He was puzzled, but thinking again to himself, "Perhaps she has not seen me," he came in front of her again, and again she turned her back to him. Then said he to himself, "O, she is angry with me!" and, so thinking, he turned his horse's head as if for home. When he had gone some way, however, he said to himself, "But I never asked her why she is angry!" So he retraced his steps, but she turned her back on him again. Then spoke he to her and said.—

"In Khîva's town the *tâli* * trees are grown
A forest vast and deep; and in the shade
Are tied his countless mares, to tighten up
Whose silken girths press on as many grooms;
But Khîva's matchless daughter decks herself
With amulets, careless of aught beside.—

O Sâhibôh, deign from the folds of your *chaddû*
One glance to throw me!
Look at me patiently standing before you,
Do you not know me?"

* *Tâli*, in Hindostan proper called *sîsam*—an acacia producing an excellent timber, very handsome and hard, sometimes called the Indian mahogany.



Saying this, he turned his horse's head away once more. Then thought Sâhibôh to herself, "Now he is going in earnest!" and she made a bound and caught hold of his horse's bridle, "for," thought she, "he will never come back any more!" And she said to him,—

"I bore in my hand a basin of curds,^{*}
And went to the river;
My tresses I washed in the rush of the river,
Framing the words,
Using the curds;

Then the river rolled on and the curds were all gone;—
But love lives forever and ever.

O take your knife and cut my arm,
Nor deem that I shall feel the pain,
Then will you know no blood can flow,
So full of love's my every vein!"

"And now come in," said she, "and see my house!" and she took him through the garden and into the pavilion, which they entered, and he thought, "It will be wonderful if I escape the eyes of so many girls!" Thinking of the danger of discovery, and fearing to stay too long, he said to her, "Now show me over the house!"

And Sâhibôh took him by the hand, and she led him in saying, "Come, I will go with you myself!" But soon one of the maids met them, and, addressing Mîrza, she said,—

"Thou stranger Youth, so tall, so slim, so straight,
What business brings you to my lady's gate?
Look elsewhere thou—this darling is bespoken!—
Would'st thou an anguished mind, and a heart broken?"

Mîrza Khân felt vexed at the words of the girl, and he answered her,—

^{*} Curds are used by the Panjâbî women for washing the hair.



SAHIBOH AND HER MAIDS ADMIRING MIRZA.

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"No one can cross another's path unless
 By *kismet* driven. Ours is the bread and ours
 The limpid draught, to leave or take at will,
 But only God Himself can hold the string—
 Does trouble ask before it deigns to come?
 Or Love request before it pierce the heart?
 And, if my love has bound me wrist to wrist,
 Will Love consent to force, and set me free?"

Then said he to Sâhibôh, "Now let me go!"

"You told me to have the house made ready," said she.
 "For you I have had it prepared, but for you to stay, not
 that you should come and leave again so soon!"

Then Mirza thinking to himself "What is best to be
 done?" sat down again, and all the maidens in the place
 flocked round about him; and Sâhibôh said to them: "Is
 there anyone in the whole world to compare with this
 man?"

"He is so fair," answered they, "he is so delicately made,
 that you can see the water as it trickles down his throat."

And they were all delighted at his coming, and begged
 him to remain. And he looked round on them all, but,
 wherever he looked, his eyes always came back to Sâhibôh.

That night Sâhibôh kept him with her, and all the night
 long she and her handmaids sat up to admire him.

Now in the morning Sâhibôh's mother went to him, and
 warned him, saying, "O Mirza Khân, be it known to you
 that my daughter has been promised and betrothed in a
 very great tribe! Stay nigh, if you like, for eight days, but
 after that be gone, and take care never to come after Sâhibôh
 again, lest the tribe come down and sack the town!" And
 to her daughter she said, "Now, go you to your books!"

And Mirza said to Sâhibôh's mother, "For fifteen days
 I have learnt nothing. Let me go to the mosque and
 learn too!"

Now the priest kept his boys outside the mosque, while

the girls sat within. So the woman answered, "Yes, you go too, but sit with the boys, don't go in with the girls!"

So Mîrza went to the school, and sat outside among the boys, and he said to the priest, "You teach all the boys of your own town. I am a stranger. Why do you not teach me too?"

Then the priest came to him and said, "What stranger are you?"

"I come from the Râvi," answered he, "I am a nephew of Khîva Râja. Teach me quickly, I pray you!"

And the priest said to Mîrza Khân, "Look over all you have learnt before, and when you can say it by heart, I will give you something else?" So, first uttering the name of God, Mîrza began, and kept on repeating, "Sâhibôh Syâl! Sâhibôh Syâl!" The priest, hearing him uttering these words, was astounded, and he said to himself, "What gibberish has this fellow got hold of!"

While all this was going on, the girls within the school were calling out, "Priest, priest, come and give us our lessons!" But Mîrza said to him, "No, no, give me my lesson first, before you go!" And when the priest went in, thinking some madman had come to his school, he first called up Sâhibôh, and to her he said, "Now let me have your lesson!"

Now this priest had a stick for the boys, but for the girls he kept a whip. So when Sâhibôh answered him, "In the name of God, Mîrza Khân, Kharral of the Râvi! Mîrza Khân, Kharral of the Râvi!" the priest cried out, "What are you doing, you madcap? For twelve years I have taught you, and what stuff is this you are jabbering?"

"Am I not saying my lesson?" said the girl. "Only that I remember, and that only I repeat. I am not saying anything strange, am I?"



MIRZA COMES TO SAHIBOH'S RESCUE.



Then the priest caught her one crack with his whip, and he hit her again, and then he hit her a third time, when, with a bound, in sprang Mirza, and, seizing him, hurled him out of the door. All the pupils were astonished and they wondered, saying among themselves, "What has this farmer of a fellow done to our priest? He has thrown him out, and so belaboured him, that half his breath is out of his body." Then they tried a rescue, but Mirza said, "No, no, why should I loose him? He has been beating one of the girls as if she had been his wife!"

"She is not my wife," answered the priest, "no, but she is my pupil, and has been so for twelve long years!"

"True," said Mirza, "you have beaten your pupil. But is that any reason for beating me too?"

"Liar!" cried the children. "Who has beaten you?"

"I am telling lies, am I?" said Mirza, and drawing up his jacket he showed them the three livid marks of the whip along his bare back. So all began to say, "This priest has beaten the girl, but the lad has the marks. How is this? Ah, it is some love-affair!"

After these things, the priest made up his mind what to do, and writing a letter he sent it secretly to Tâha Khân, and the words of the letter were, "Mirza Khân is in love with your betrothed, and will take her away. Get ready your wedding-party, and in eight days come and marry her. Take heed to yourselves! Otherwise he will carry her off." Then he went to the girl's father, Khîva Khân, and told him too, saying, "Such is the state of affairs; all these things occurred at the mosque."

Then Khîva and the girl's mother took Mirza, and said to him, "You are a Kharral, we are Syâls. We cannot mate ourselves with you, and besides the girl is already promised. So go away home, and do not come any more!" Thus Mirza was dismissed from Jhang Syâl, and mounting his

horse, he rode rapidly away. But Sâhibôh was at her place on the house-top, and she saw him go, and thence she again watched him long, till he was no longer in sight. Still she watched, and at last her mother came up, crying, "Come down! Come down from the house-top! Wouldest go and kill thyself?"

The girl gazed at her mother and answered her thus:—

"And come you now to me, and Mîrza Khân
 Sent forth? But what is left for me in all
 This house to look upon? Ah me, ah me,
 The spine of the black snake is snapt in twain!
 My little cot I press to my embrace
 And weep the while. The roof-post of the house
 I strain unto my aching breast, and cry—
 'Oh Mîrza, spring like a tiger, swoop like a hawk,
 Come back, come back to Jhang Syâl!'"

But Mîrza Khân rode on, and reaching his home, he threw himself on his bed, nor thought of house, or horse, or arms any more, being weary of heart.

Now the priest's letter reached the Chandan tribe in safety, and they called together their twelve thousand armed men, and prepared for the start on the eighth day. This news one of her companions gave to Sâhibôh, who was lying, dry-eyed with sorrow, but in fear of her father. And she thought to herself, "If I could only get a runner to go and tell Mîrza!" (She became so ill that her mother was minded to send for the priest again, but her daughter said to her, "Why ask the priest about me? Do you not know my illness that you should ask the priest? Are you so simple as all that?"

When the priest came, he brought with him his books. ✓ And he made pretence of opening his books to consult them, but all the time reading out verses of his own. "In the book," said he, "I read sweet food; all will come right at last; five hundred-weight of vermicelli, with ten ✓ fowls, and she will recover."



And Sâhibôh thought to herself, "My love is away at the Râvi, and the priest is plundering like this!"

Then the priest turned another leaf, and said, "From death Sâhibôh is set free. She has been stung by a bitter sting. Five tons of flour with five buffaloes, in the name of God give to the priest!"¹

Again Sâhibôh thought within herself, "My love is away at the Râvi. I will go tell my mother myself, and she shall know my complaint." And to her mother she said, "When you sent me to the bazaar for oil, did I not tell you they knew not how to hold the scales, or to weigh out the silk? Instead of selling honey, they measured out love. Generally people, when they cry, cry tears, but lovers cry blood. With what a lance has Mîrza struck me through, that in my veins no blood is left remaining! Either let Mîrza come and see me, or to-day I die!"

Then her mother grew very angry. "Deceitful girl," said she, "when will you learn your duty?" And she also wrote a note to the tribe of the Chandans, bidding them come at once and take her daughter away. And in these words it was she wrote to them—"The daughter of Khîva, Sâhibôh, Tâha Khân's betrothed. Come and take your dhoolie. Ask peace from God!"

Then Sâhibôh also wrote a letter, and she put it in a little box, and she launched the box on the river, so that it might float away to her lover. And thus she wrote to him,—“A letter Sâhibôh has written to Mîrza Khân. If you are sitting, rise; if you are standing, come quickly. Tâha Khân's wedding-party is coming with numbers of men. No footmen are to be seen—all are riding on horses. I shall have to go to the Chandan, and then what will you do?”

Now Mîrza Khân was so stricken as to be ill, and in grief

¹ The part between brackets probably belongs to a variant.



of heart he had gone walking to the river. "I will go to the river," said he, "I will drink of the water of the stream which flows down from Sâhibôh, and that will console me!"

So he had his cot laid by the river-side, and there he lay, and one day, as he lay, he saw a casket coming floating down the stream. In wonder about it, he sent out a servant to fetch it, and when it was brought in to him, he saw there a lock, and in the lock a key. So he opened the box, and found the letter within. "What is this?" cried he, and he read the words. Then went he to the khân, his uncle, and threw the letter and his turban down on the earth before him. The letter his uncle read, and to the people he said, "Take up my nephew's turban, and put it again on his head!"

"Nay," said Mîrza, "not until you promise me your aid against the Syâls!"

"They are stronger than I, those people," answered his uncle, "Take from me money, as much as you please,—take, if you like, the weight of the girl in gold, but I cannot go fight against the Syâls."

Still he pleaded, Mîrza Khân refusing to don his turban, until the khân became sorrowful, and going up to him, he put on him his turban himself, saying to him,—

"O nephew, brave men are always at hand,
They muster in swarms on the banks of the Râvi.
The river Râvi is a river of love,
And ever it fills you with the odour thereof.
Sâhibôh Syâl is a turtle of gold,
And you, my nephew, are a golden peacock!
The people of the Râvi shall meet the Syâls,
They shall fight and overcome them, so great is their strength.
So long as I, Ibrâhîm Khân, am alive,
Who shall dare to take Sâhibôh away?"

But when the mother of Mîrza heard of this arrangement, she took away her son's horse and his arms, and laid orders on him not to stir abroad, but to remain at home.

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And to Ibrâhîm Khân she said, "For mercy's sake, do not give him this help! Give him the prettiest girl of the tribe, but never go to Jhang Syâl."

Then were numbers of damsels, the loveliest of the tribe, brought before Mîrza, with a dancing girl or two to divert him, but he could not be induced to regard them, or even to look at them, but he turned to his friends, and said, "Sâhibôh only do I praise, Sâhibôh alone will I marry, nor shall I marry anyone else who is not her very counterpart. Sâhibôh is daughter to Khîva Râja. She was born on a Tuesday; one year old was she and she drank her mother's milk (for the last time); when two years old she was clad in lovely garments; when four years old she wore her bangles; when six years old she went running among her girl-companions; when eight years old she began to step on her toes; when ten years old she walked so as to be heard; when eleven she began to develop strength as a young buffalo runs up a hill; at twelve she was the complete woman, and looked bright as a polished keen-edged sword. And when she was a woman, all the young khâns began to take note of her beauty and made haste to win her.—

"In plaits, like twisted snakes, low hangs her hair;
 Her brow is like the moon; curved as the point
 Of Hosain's scimitar her well-cut nose!
 How black her eyebrows!—lo, they terrify
 Like serpents, and her lashes pierce the heart!
 (O, beautiful is Sâhibôh!)"¹

Handfuls of rings adorn her ears, they fight
 Like pairs of rival starlings! Daintiest buds
 Of jasmine are her dazzling teeth—what hand,
 What master's cunning fingers, fashioned them?
 (O, beautiful is Sâhibôh!)

¹ *Sâhibânâh*—a noble (gentlewoman's) bride.



Thin is the fragrant betel-leaf, and thin
Her fragrant lips, distilling sherbet meet
For lovers,—oh, stoop down, stoop down and sip!
(So beautiful is Sâhibôh!)

What wonderful apple, praised of all the world,
With Sâhibôh's chin may men compare? Her breasts,
Two round *surâhîs*,^{*} like ruddy rubies shine!
(O, beautiful is Sâhibôh!)

A goblet is her navel-pit—behold
Where pass her thronging lovers round and round!
(O, beautiful is Sâhibôh!)

In velvet slippers hide her tiny toes,
And, as she moves along, with measured steps
And dainty tread, more dainty far than tread
Of snow-white pard, how gracefully she goes!
(So beautiful is Sâhibôh!)

Stained are her heels with henna rosy red,
So that, where'er she goes, she colours red
The very ground she walks on! Who of all
Her maiden-friends can rival her in charm?
(O, beautiful is Sâhibôh!)

“Call you these girls beautiful? They cannot compare
even with her handmaidens—How can I marry them?—
You are all in league to deceive me!”²

Then said all his brethren, “We have done for Mîrza
Khân the best we can. If he will die, die he must!”

And all the girls, when they saw them forsake him, lifted
up their hands and prayed for him. “Mîrza Khân,” said
they, “by all means go to Jhang Syâl, and may God be

^{*} Spherical water-bottles of terra cotta.

² Compare with this the Song of Songs IV. 1—6; V. 10—16; and VII. 1—10; and especially VII. 2—, “Thy navel is like a round goblet that wanteth not liquor.” The wine-cups of the old world were often shallow saucer-like vessels, and it should be noted that, among oriental women, whether trousers or skirt be worn, the garment is tightly bound round *below* the navel.



with you! On your shoulders sling your green bow! There is no man like you, no one so brave, and no one so handsome there!"

Then they went their ways, and he sought out his mother, saying, "Give me my horse and my arms!"

"Your arms," said she, "I cannot give—keep still!"

"Why can you not give me my arms?" said he. "Is it not better for me to die there than here? Do you want me to die at your gate?"

"Oh, my son," said his mother, "it is madness for you to go there! They are a most mighty tribe. Yet hear me! If go you must, never shall I regard you as son of mine unless you bear away Sâhibôh five *kos*^{*} before you are killed yourself."

So his mother handed over to him his arms, and Lakhi his mare. Then thought Mîrza of God, and having commended himself to Him, he mounted and galloped away, and at once arrived at Jhang Syâl. There he saw the twelve thousand Chandans. But, he being alone, the people said, "Who is this coming alone?" So he passed to the house of the old woman, who said to him, "Why do you not join the wedding party?" And he answered her, "Let me stay here, I pray you!" But she would not, so he handed her money, five and twenty rupees, and then she gave in, saying, "By all means, but are you that same Mîrza Khân? Why, O foolish one, have you come to your death? If your body were in tiny bits, and every bit a body, you would not be a match for all the people here."

"Old woman," said he, "I have come and I am here. Only do something for me, if you will. Go tell Sâhibôh that Mîrza has come!"

So away she went, and Sâhibôh gave her a hundred

^{*} Five *kos*—About eight miles.



rupees, and said to her, "Now manage to bring him to-night. To-morrow he will be cut to pieces; only let me see him to-night!"

"But how contrive?" said the old woman. "Now look you! Give me some of your beautiful robes, something in which to disguise him, and I will bring him dressed up. Let me have ample—enough to cover himself, his horse and his arms!"

So Sâhibôh handed her an immense cloak, fifty or sixty yards of cloth, which same cloak receiving she went her way. And first she set before Mîrza some food, for he was in need of it. Then she bade him mount Lakhi, his grey mare. His sword and his bow were slung over his shoulder, and he bent low in the saddle, leaving exposed to gaze only the ears and the tail of his horse. Hundreds of steeds were hitched about, which began to neigh, and to break from their ropes, and the old woman made pretence, crying, "O you grooms, take care, the daughter of the *wazîr* is coming to visit Sâhibôh!" So she led him safely through the gateway of the Lodge of Mirrors, telling an attendant to tie up his mare somewhere close by, and thus, having seen him well into the house, she went her way home.

Now all Sâhibôh's maidens took him for some princess, and Sâhibôh said to him, "How is it you come so late? All these people are now here, and what can you do alone? You will be killed, Mîrza Khân! The remedy for one is two, and the remedy for two is four, but here we have thousands!"

Mîrza laid his hands on his moustache, saying to her, "Only listen to me! Keep cool! Do not lose your presence of mind!"

"You tell me to keep cool," answered the girl. "Ah—

"For you I am risking my life,
For you I am beckoned away,
Only be mine, Mîrza Khân,
Only be mine this day!"



Drink, drink, O my Heart, of the cup,
By the side of your hand as it lies—
Let us drink the sweet poison of love,
The moment of destiny flies.

Long e'er we met you were kin,
Soon as I saw you, how dear!
Too far have we gone for regret,
The sugar is mixed with the *khîr*!¹

O, beware, Mîrza Khân, it is I,
Khîva's daughter, who's stolen your heart!
If you die, so will I, Mîrza Khân,
Even Death shall not tear us apart!

Yet, O but to live till to-morrow,
And O to watch o'er you till then!
This night is our last, my Beloved,
We shall never be happy again!"

"All this you have been saying," answered Mîrza, "but hear also me:—

"Now has the lover his bundle of perils tied up,
His destiny daring!
The flesh on my body has shrunk and dried up,
My bones are all staring!
If my head is to fall, fall it must,
Can Fate be evaded?
But forever with thee are my love and my trust,
Till life shall have faded!—

"O Sâhibôh, all can be arranged if your maidens can only be made to sleep. Give them some wine!"

Then Sâhibôh called out to her companions, "Now, O Girls, make merry, since to-morrow I go!" and she served out beakers of wine, saying, "Give them wine and call it sherbet!" And so tiny cups were passed round, and all the girls grew drowsy. But one of them, suspecting a trick, smelled something in it, and, instead of draining her goblet, she poured it into her bosom. Now this girl was loved of Sâhibôh the most.

¹ *Khîr*—rice boiled in milk, and sweetened with sugar, a favourite dish, especially at *weddings*. Here a proverb—The deed is done, the die is cast!



When midnight came, Sâhibôh got up to see, and found them all asleep excepting the one, who said to her, "The wine was drugged by me, but surely I am your friend. Why should I drink, seeing that I wish you well?" And to Mîrza Sâhibôh spoke, saying, "Rise, it is time for us to go!"

Then Mîrza got up, and answered her,—“Before Tâha Khân and all the chiefs, women are dancing and lanterns are gleaming. All are engaged in revelry. Yes, now is the time!”

So he saddled his mare, but he pulled so hard that the girth-strap broke, and Sâhibôh said, “Mîrzâ, I sneezed, and the girth of Lakhi¹ has broken! Either a king will lose his crown, or a prince will be killed!”

“You speak as a woman,” answered he. “Leave all to God, and come, mount behind me!”

So she got on the mare, and when she was seated, the girl who had drunk no wine, rose and took the bridle, saying, “Long have I eaten your salt, nor will I leave you now, until I have seen you safely out of the place.” Then the great cloak was thrown over both the lovers, and the girl led them forth in their disguise.

As they passed along, Mîrza said, “Hear me, Sâhibôh! I want, before leaving, to see your betrothed, Tâha Khân.”

“O, for mercy’s sake, don’t!” cried she. “Are you mad? Let us get on!”

But Mîrza persisted, riding by the place where music and dancing were being kept up all the night through, and he cried aloud, “Look out, and hear me! I am Mîrza Khân, and I am taking away Sâhibôh!”

At once the whole company rushed for their swords, but the girl at the bridle called out, “Nay, listen, ye people! This is merely a mad *fakîr*. He is mad, and always he repeats the same thing. You are a forest of men, innumerable, and the man has received presents accordingly, this horse and a

¹ *Lakhi*—beautiful.



cloak to cover him. How should Mîrza be here?" Then was heard the voice of another woman, "O yes, he is a madman. Let the mad *fakîr* go!" So all the men sat down again.

Then came Mîrza to another party of revellers, while Sâhibôh was protesting, saying, "O fool, to say such things! You will ruin all!"

"Look at Tâha Khân!" said Mîrza.

"Come along, Mîrza Khân!" answered she. "I have looked at him enough. Tâha Khân is thinner than a buffalo and blacker than a griddle. A basketful of bread he devours, and he gobbles a whole chatty of *dâl*.¹ Yea, he is bald, and has large feet! Is that a fellow to look at? Let us haste a way!"

Then cried Mîrza, "O you people, whether awake or asleep, here am I, Mîrza Khân, taking away Sâhibôh!"

At once the men rushed to their arms, and again the girl cried aloud, and said, "O you people, hear me! This is only the mad *fakîr*. He spake the same words to the other party, and he speaks them again to you. Regard him not!"

So the men sat down again, keeping quiet, and Mîrza passed on, while the girl returned to the house.

Now it so happened that as the lovers were passing along the village street, a certain Brahmin pundit was sitting in his house reading a book. This man, glancing up, saw Mîrza's leg gleaming from beneath the long cloak, so at once he made his way to Khîva Khân, and said to him, "I have just seen something like magic."

"Keep still, keep still!" said Khîva.

"I will tell you what that was," said the Brahmin, and opening his book, he read:—

"In the town of Khîva Khân there's a great to-do,
In the house of Dame Jimiâb² a mighty stir;
Sâhibôh is kidnapt by Mîrza, the Kharral of the Râvi,
Kidnapt by Mîrza Khân, the bastard and the thief!"

¹ *Dâl*—peas, food, victuals. ² *Jimiâb*—Glory of the Land.

Now at the distance of five *kô*s from Jhang Syâl there was a certain shrine before which Mîrza Khân used to halt and pray, saying, "O Panj-pîr,¹ if ever I succeed in



THE FLIGHT.

bringing away Sâhibôh, passing here will I tarry and rest!" To that spot the two lovers now came in their flight, and Mîrza spake, saying, "O Sâhibôh, this is the place of my vow!"

¹ *Panj-pîr*. Five Pîrs—See Appendix.



"There are twelve thousand of the Chandans in pursuit," said she. "Do you want to die? Let us get on!"

"I have an oath," answered he. "Come down, lay your knee beneath my head, and here let me rest for one half-hour!"

It was then close to dawn, and Sâhibôh said, "In half an hour the morning will be on us. What are you thinking of?"

But Mîrza dismounted, and lifted her down, and he laid his head in her lap, and so fell asleep.

Meanwhile Khîva Râja, with Tâha Khân, and some maids, had betaken themselves to the house of Sâhibôh, and there they saw her sixty companions lying heavy with drunken sleep, and they wondered where Sâhibôh could be. "All these are her maidens," said they, "but where is herself?" So forthwith arose a great tumult, and many more came running up, crying, "Say, what is the matter?" Then a rumour went round, and all began to say, "Mîrza has carried Sâhibôh away!" And the news flew through the town, and the Syâls and the Chandans began saddling their horses, and there was a great stir.

But all this time Sâhibôh was on the watch in the place of the shrine, and soon she began to hear the noise of the pursuit, so she tried to rouse Mîrza, crying, "Get up! get up! for God's sake get up!"

But the only answer given by Mîrza was, "Let me sleep!"

Then she looked at his arms. "He has only one hundred and forty arrows," said she to herself, "only that at the utmost, and what good is that? One arrow of his can kill but three or four, while his horse is good for a hundred *kôls*. No resistance, therefore, but flight alone will serve us." Then again she thought within herself,—“All these horsemen are coming, and the foremost among them will be my own two brothers, they will be the first to be killed, and all the people will curse me, and say, ‘Not only has this woman gone off

ROMANTIC TALES FROM THE PUNJAB

with her lover, but she has killed her brothers as well.' Now, if I could do anything by which I could get at his arrows and throw them away, that would be best!" So she rolled up her *chadda* (mantle) and gently transferred Mîrza's head to it. Then, taking the arrows, she threw them all out, and, having put back the empty quiver, she laid his head in her lap once more.

By this time the pursuit was close, the Brahmin having betrayed them, and as Sâhibôh saw them rushing onward she woke up Mîrza. Then Mîrza rose and looked back, and, lo, his foes were at hand. So he threw his quiver over his shoulder, not missing the arrows, and, with his sword girded on his thigh, he mounted Sâhibôh and himself, and prepared to start. And of his foes Dârâbâdshâh refused to follow, but Khîva Râja and Tâha Khân pressed him sore. Then said Mîrza to Sâhibôh, "Shake yourself, Sâhibôh!" and Sâhibôh shook herself, and it came to pass when Lakhi heard the jingling of Sâhibôh's jewels of silver and gold, the good mare leaped the wall of the shrine, and got away from them all. But Tâha Khân taunted him, crying out, "Now, Sir, be brave, and quit you like a man, nor turn a woman's back to your foes!"

Then Mîrza drew rein, and looked at his quiver, and he saw no arrows there, but one only. And he said to Sâhibôh, "You have done wrong, O Sâhibôh, to empty my quiver! But for you I might with this have killed Hanîshamîr and Lakmîr, and your father's grey horse, and the others I could have sent among the rest of the Syâls. But now, though the mare is eager to close and my enemies taunt me, I am all unarmed." Nevertheless, he took the single arrow, and, fitting it to his bow, let loose, crying, "Come on, O ye Syâls!" and the arrow found out the two brothers, Hanîshamîr and Lakmîr, who were galloping well in advance with lance and sword, and it brought them down, having



MIRZA ATTACKS THE SYALS.



pierced the breast of the one and lodged in the thigh of the other. By this time the host was closing in upon him, and the air was rent with the sound of their music. And Mîrza said, "Mîrza is but one, he is alone! If I fall, I fall alone, one against many." Now Lakhi, his mare, was accustomed of old to rush into the midst of battle, and as now she rushed among the advancing warriors, Mîrza Khân drew his sword, and fought for four hours, cutting down every man whom he encountered, until his hand swelled and stuck to the hilt. At last, after five hundred and fifty of the party of the Syâls had been killed or disabled, came Khîva Khân himself, crying "Truce!"—and he said to Mîrza, "Why have you killed my troops, O Mîrza Khân? Why have you slain my sons? Let us now have peace!" But he spake deceitfully, for even then, while they were parleying, Tâha Khân rode up, and hit Mîrza with his lance on the back of his head, so that his turban rolled off and fell to the ground. And Mîrza, turning to Sâhibôh, said, "A curse to the love of women, whose wisdom is in their heels! They profess friendship; anon they betray! My turban has fallen, my head is bare. Mîrza alone, unaided, dies here, and no brother or friend beside him!"

Then Khîva, who was hiding a dagger in his hand, said—"Surely you have killed enough, and why now kill yourself? I will give the Chandans another girl, and you can take Sâhibôh away. Give me then, O Mîrza Khân, the right hand of peace!" And when Mîrza stretched forth his right hand, the old man smote him through the body, so that he fell dead. Then, seeing his daughter, he at once took her up behind himself, and starting for home, left Mîrza's bleeding body on the ground.

Now when the Syâls, returning with Khîva to Jhang, arrived at a spot within three *kôs* of the town, Sâhibôh looked back, and she saw the crows gathering round the

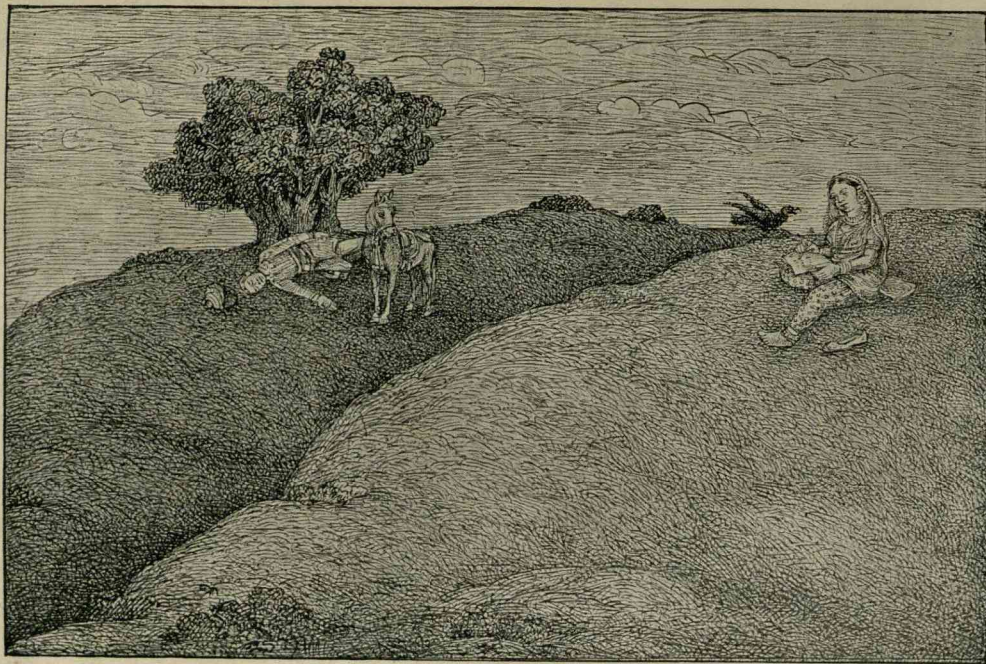
body of Mîrza Khân. Then, seeing a dagger hanging from her father's saddle, she drew it, and plunging it into her side, she fell. And when Khîva looked round and saw the blood, he said to the chiefs of the Chandan tribe, "Now see, Friends, and do not say I kept not faith! This girl has killed herself!" So the party rode on, leaving her lying there. On opposite sides of the vale lay the bodies of these two hapless ones, and the blood of Mîrza from the one side, and the blood of Sâhibôh from the other, flowed down the slopes, and mingled in the hollow between. And all the people, when they saw it, said, "Oh, we did wrong to kill two such lovers as these!"

But Sâhibôh, before dying, laid her hand on her wound, and a raven came and sat hard by. And she took out pen and some paper, and dipping the pen in the blood, she wrote on the paper and said, "O Raven, take this letter to Ibrâhîm Khân, Kharral of the Râvi!" And the writing was this—"Mîrza and Sâhibôh have been killed at the crooked *tâlî* tree. Tell Pîlo, the poet, to make such verses on this mishap, that the story will last till the day of judgment!"

So the raven went and took the letter, and Ibrâhîm Khân read it, and he told Mîrza's mother, saying, "Your son lies dead five *kô*s out of Jhâng Syâl. Do you want the body brought in?"

"If he has really fallen there," answered she, "yes—certainly—send for the body!"

Then the chief of the Kharrals summoned his men to the number of twenty-four thousand sabres, with their twelve thousand horses, and twelve thousand buffaloes with pierced noses. Having all mounted, they set forth, and by-and-by reached the crooked *tâlî* tree, and there they found the mare standing by the body of Mîrza, and his body was shining like the body of a martyr. And all that multitude



THE DEATH OF SAHIBOH.



grew sorrowful, and taking the bodies of Mîrza and Sâhibôh, they laid them together in the one dhoolie which they left at the *tâlî* tree under a strong guard, and so continued their march to Jhang to fight the Syâls. As for the Chandans, they still abode in Jhang, for they claimed the body of Sâhibôh, saying to Khîva, "Where have you left her body? Give us her body that we may bury it among our own people?"

To whom Khîva replied, "When she was alive I gave her to you. Now, dead, she lies out there. Go fetch her yourselves!" But they feared to go, knowing the Kharrales were there.

Then met the opposing forces, and, in the fight which ensued, seven hundred more of the Syâls and Chandans fell on the field, until, pressed beyond measure, Khîva Râja craved a peace. "Take my town," said he, "take what you please for the life of Mîrza Khân!"

But the Kharrales answered, "For you no peace! Our sorrow for Mîrza will never abate, until we have burnt your town about you!" So the fight went on, until, in the town of the Syâls, not one stone was left upon another. In the end, Khîva and his wife Jimiâb were taken, and sent away to the Kharral country, and the victors put a man of their own in Jhang.

So Khîva and his wife were led away, and when they reached the crooked *tâlî* tree, they halted there, and said to the guard, "Now tell us true, are these indeed the bodies of Mîrza and Sâhibôh?"

"Yes," answered the men, "these are really they."

"Then," said Khîva and Jimiâb Mâi, "it would be well for both our tribes to build their tombs here at the crooked *tâlî* tree, since that tree is the boundary between us. So shall we be friends for all the time to come!"

But Ibrâhîm Khân said, "No, their shrines shall be made in the Kharral country, and there only shall they rest!"

So they took the two bodies home, and there they made their shrine, and there, in the same tomb, they lie unto this day.

After this, Ibrâhîm Khân said to Khîva and Jimiâb, "You are now alone, you have no children, and at Jhang there is always trouble. Abide you here!"

"O son," answered Khîva, "let us go back! Give me but bread to eat and clothing to put on, and let me die at Jhang!"

"Very well!" said Ibrâhîm Khân. So he gave them horses, and sent them back, and made them tributary.

*Told at Ghâzi on the Upper Indus, on the night of
 3rd September, 1883, by Sharaf, son of Kesar,
 of the village of Kûri, District of
 Râwâl Pîndi.*





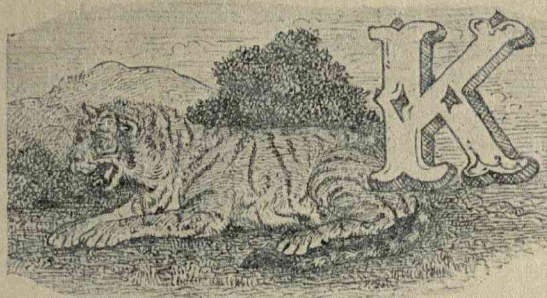
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THE STORY OF PURAN BHAGAT¹

¹ *Bhagat*—a devotee, a saint.

THE STORY OF PURAN BHAGAT



ING SUL-
 WAHAN
 (Sâlivahân)
 reigned in
 Siâlkot in
 the Panjâb.
 In course of
 time he had
 a son nam-

ed Pûran, whose mother's name was Ichrân. When Pûran was born the king sent, as usual, for the astrologers and the family priest to make his horoscope, and as it was written in his forehead, so was it read by them, for they told the king that he was not to see his son for twelve years. Therefore poor Pûran, as soon as he was born, was confined in a tower. Having come out of one solitary cell he was sent into another, with attendants both male and female and provisions of all kinds, for twelve years. There he had governors to train him, professors to teach him the use of the bow, and learned men to instruct him in affairs both civil and military. When he was six years old the pundits gave him lessons in the sacred books. By the time he was twelve he was fully equipped in every kind of knowledge and equal to the discharge of all worldly affairs. Then the order came that he might leave his tower and visit his father. And when Pûran heard it he was much pleased, and, getting together innumerable presents, he set out to see his father who was waiting impatiently to

receive him. Well pleased was the king to see his son Pûran at last; and he distributed largess and alms, and gave presents to the pundits and Brahmins, as cows, buffaloes, horses and elephants. And to Pûran was given a seat near to the throne on the right side, where he sat and ruled the court.

Now the king beholding his son, and observing that he was now nearly grown, issued strict orders to his servants and courtiers to look out for a wife for him. "As God has granted to me this jewel," said he, "I should see that he is married." But Pûran refused that honour, saying, "I do not care for marriage, neither do I value it. I desire to see the world, and devote myself only to the service of God. Of your grace, please do not lay trouble upon me, nor chain and shackle me with your own hands. O sir, hold me not back from the ways of virtue!"

The king, hearing these words from Pûran's own mouth, became displeased, and said, "So, you are my son, and you have the power to disobey me?"

But the *wazîr*, observing his state of anger, said, "Sir, you will please excuse him; he is only a boy; what can he know about marriage? When he comes of age, he will not want telling, he will then go wooing himself. You need not feel concerned about his marriage."

Then the king's anger was appeased, and he said no more.

Now the king himself had not long before married a new wife, a girl named Lûna, of the caste of the leather-dressers, who was very handsome, and who, when adorned, looked like the moon. And it came about at this time that the king said to Pûran, "Go now and pay your respects to your mother and the other queen, your step-mother, for they are also anxious to see you, and be careful that you disobey not this order!"

So Pûran rose accordingly, and taking with him all his



servants male and female, he went to the king's palace to pay his respects to the two queens. Many were the presents which were borne by his attendants, and many the jewels and the ornaments which he wore on his own person, and which doubled and trebled his beauty. His earrings were shining like stars in the sky, the diamonds in his necklet were glittering brilliantly, his hand-rings were right noble, and it cannot be expressed how greatly his looks were enhanced by their display.

Having arrived at the place, Pûran made enquiry from the attendants where the palace of his mother stood, and where the palace of his step-mother, and each was pointed out to him. And he said, "It is better that I should pay respect to my step-mother first, because my real mother knows that I am her son, and that to her I am always bound in honour and obedience."

Having so said to his attendants, he went towards the palace of the Râni Lûna, passing in without difficulty and having confidence that a kind and tender reception awaited him. But scarcely had he entered the chamber, when this lady, having looked on his youth and beauty, became suddenly fascinated, the fires of love were kindled into flames which issued from her body, and losing all sense of modesty, she fixed eyes of eager desire upon him. Pûran, unwitting of danger, meanwhile advanced towards her, and, having reached the place where the *râni* was seated, he folded his hands together, and, prostrating himself, made his salutations. But instead of returning a dignified answer, she also humbled herself, paying him the respect of an inferior, which when Pûran saw, he was astounded, and he thought within himself, "Alas, it was fated that I should be brought in here!" Râni Lûna, on the other hand, was thinking that to be with him would be to bathe in the sacred waters of the Ganges, and that to

be loved by him would be Paradise itself, and she promised herself that she would be one of the lucky women of the world if Pûran would comply with her wishes. In short such was her state of melancholy and distress that she could no longer control herself, but broke out openly into speech.

"Why say 'Mother, Mother!' to me?" cried she, "I am not your mother! Never were you born of womb of mine, then why call you me 'Mother'? You are my equal in age, and in person we are worthy each of the other; your love-darts pierce my heart, and words cannot tell all that I suffer for love of you!"

Then in his shame Pûran said to her, "Never must you use any such words to me! Was such friendship between mother and son ever yet heard of? And how will the world speak ill of us if we meditate this thing! I am your son! As a mother you must embrace me and think of me!"

But Râni Lûna, throwing away the wheel of shame, caught hold of him by his coat, and pulled him towards her, saying, "Come, sit with me on this royal couch! Behold in me, not a woman, but some fairy, entitled to make offers to you, and begging you to accept them. But you, whether you are man or eunuch I know not, seeing you display no manly attribute. O dear friend, come and sit down to please me!"

Then Pûran regarded her sternly, and with rough language spoke—"Mother, you are mad! Your husband is my father! Me you should think of as a son born of your own bosom. If we were to commit this folly, earth and sky would vanish away! O, come to your senses! In the name of God, do not be mad!"

"I shall kill you!" cried Lûna. "Yea, I will cause you to be killed by your own father, if you deny me again! Here am I standing before you, like a poor beggar for an



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PURAN VISITS THE RANI LUNA



alms, and you, because you are stern and stout-hearted, care not a jot for my prayers, which in fact you disdain. Were you born of me? Have I given you milk out of my breasts! By what law, by what reason do you call me 'mother'? Why will you slay yourself? why lose your own life?"

"Please take note and be careful to remember," said Pûran, "that I will not touch your couch, nor put a foot on it, and that from this moment I will not allow even my eyes to turn towards you! And now, I care not if I am killed or not!"

So saying, he wrested his clothing out of her hand, and fled the place, saying, "At least I will not die laden with sin so unnatural and so dreadful!" But Lûna, when she saw him going, cried out, "Very well—look out!—This day I will drink your blood!"

That evening, before the arrival of Râja Sûlwahân, Râni Lûna, taking off all her jewels and ornaments, some of them breaking, some of them twisting, laid them aside, and lighted no candles in her palace, but went into a solitary room, and there, wrapping herself in an old torn dress, sat in grief. And when the râja entered the palace she instantly came to him crying bitterly, and sat down with him. The king asked her of her trouble, to which she replied, "Ah, do not ask me! Ask rather your son who has been fed like a stallion from the stall, and has burnt up my heart. Keep him by you—you had better—but let me go away!"

The king, hearing this, was enraged, and ordered Lûna to explain herself, and to disclose everything whatsoever he had done to her. "If he has spoken unbecomingly to you," said he, "if he has used harsh language to you, tell me of it! Verily I will hang him. What value is such a son to me? If he has done evil to you to-day, will he do less to me when he comes to manhood?"

"See my body, see my jewels," cried the Râni, "look at my couch, these are the signs of his violence! I spoke to him as a son, but he did not treat me as a mother!"

Then she brought out her jewels. "This was broken, when he twisted my arm," said she, "and when I withstood him, he rushed from the palace!"

At these tidings the king's heart was aflame with rage, he was weltering in troubles caused by his own son. The whole night he passed counting the stars and thinking about him. But when morning broke, he rose and, after taking his bath, he ordered his door-keepers and his other attendants to summon his *wazîr* and to bring Pûran before him, "If they ask the reason," said he, "say there is work for them." Then those servants went to the *wazîr*, and told him, and afterwards sought out Pûran, to whom with folded hands they spoke,—*"Your father calls you!"* But Pûran, at the rehearsal of their message, understood well enough the reason of the summons, and he said to himself, "I know all about this affair. But I do not care; let me see what comes of it!"

When Pûran came into his presence, the Râja said to him, "You have plunged me into rivers of trouble! Would God you had been killed at your birth! Behold what you have done in the house! Get out of my sight, lest I cut you to pieces! When I asked you to marry you refused, and now you would choose your mother for wife, would you?"

Pûran wept bitterly. And he said, "Father, it is not in my power to tell you, still less to make you believe, what has come to pass. Do not lose your senses, I pray, that you should blame me for such a crime. If you would judge me truly, and see whether I am guilty or innocent, take a chaldron of oil and heat it well, and when the oil is hot like unto fire, put my hand into it, and if my hand



burn, let punishment light on me, but if not, then you still can act as you please!"

On hearing these words, the king was the more incensed, and said, "Instead of asking pardon, instead of atoning for your crime, you contradict me! I have seen every sign and every proof of what you have done!"

Then the king ordered the executioners to take him and to kill him. And that order, when it passed, caused a great disturbance in the palace and in the city all round. All was disorder, and the king began to reprimand his *wazîr*, too, saying, "It is you who are at the root of all my troubles!" But when Ichrân, Pûran's real mother, heard of it, she came running to the râja, breaking her jewels and throwing dust on her head, and crying, "What anger have you against my son Pûran? You are in the power of Râni Lûna, and therefore must you kill the innocent boy!"

"Away with him!" said the king. "And you, you wretched woman, be off! Otherwise you shall go with him! Your son is an unlucky son, born on some luckless day, who, having come into the world, has caused me all this disgrace. He is no shame to yourself, nay, he is no good at all. I know perfectly well the mischief he has wrought!"

"Sir," answered the Râni Ichrân, "it is not true. You should consider well. Why have you taken leave of your senses? How do you know that the Râni Lûna has spoken the truth? For her only you are losing the faith!"

The king, however, would hear no more, but ordered the executioners to obey his command forthwith, saying, "Go out into the jungle with him, and cut off his hands and his feet!"

Hearing the sentence, Puran paid him his last farewell with respect, and started under charge of the executioners.

And Puran said, "I am as one without strength, with



no power to explain what I am suffering, and there is no friend of mine who can tell me what fault I have done that I should suffer so much. All I can think is that it was written in my forehead that I should be judged a thief through Râni Lûna my step-mother!" And though Râni Ichrân interceded for him again, pleading for his life, and saying, "Do not kill your son! Who now will call you father!" the Râja closed his ears, refusing to be entreated; nay, in his fury he again charged the executioners, saying to them—"Go at once and obey my orders! You will cut off his hands and his feet, and then kill him like a goat!" And so the executioners caught Pûran, and away they went with him.

Now it came to pass, as they were taking him out of the city, that Râni Lûna sent a letter to him secretly, saying, "If you will agree to my request, I will stand security for you, and lay the blame on another servant. Think of it! There is still time. Why lose your life for nothing?"

But Pûran spat on the letter and told her, "I do not wish to save my life weighed down by the burden of such a crime. Even if I live thousands of years, it is still appointed unto me once to die!" Then, with a deep sigh, he said, "May God visit you, as you have dealt by me! Unnatural is the crime which you have fastened on me. Whatever has come upon my head, that I will bear, but my mother will die with the sorrow of it!"

Then Pûran besought his executioners to stop for a moment at his mother's palace, and his request was allowed, and Pûran and his mother Ichrân met once more, and bade each other their last farewells, resigning all hope of ever meeting again. Then she returned, crying and beating her breast, and saying, "For a slight offence, Pûran Baghat, my son, is going to be killed innocently!"



THEY CUT OFF PURAN'S HANDS AND FEET.

And the executioners, having taken him some distance into the jungle, cut off his hands and his feet, and, throwing him into an old ruined well, came back with a cup full of his blood to the palace of the Râni Lûna, who rejoiced to see it.

Twelve years passed over, when the Gurû Gôrah Nâth was pleased to order his disciples to go on a tour with him, and, having started, they reached Siâlkot, and pitched their tents not far from the ruined well into which Pûran had been cast by the king's executioners. Halting there, he ordered one of his disciples to go and fetch some water, but when the man had thrown his line and *lotah* (brass vessel) in hopes to reach water, he peered down and saw a man in the well. The disciple was frightened at the sight, supposing it was a spirit or a demon, and ran back to his *gurû*, and explained what he had seen, saying, "Gurû Sâhib, as soon as I had reached the well, and was about to draw up water, I saw to my great surprise a man sitting in the well. If you will please come yourself, you will be satisfied that this is so. I cannot tell if it is a man, or a spirit, or some evil ghost!"

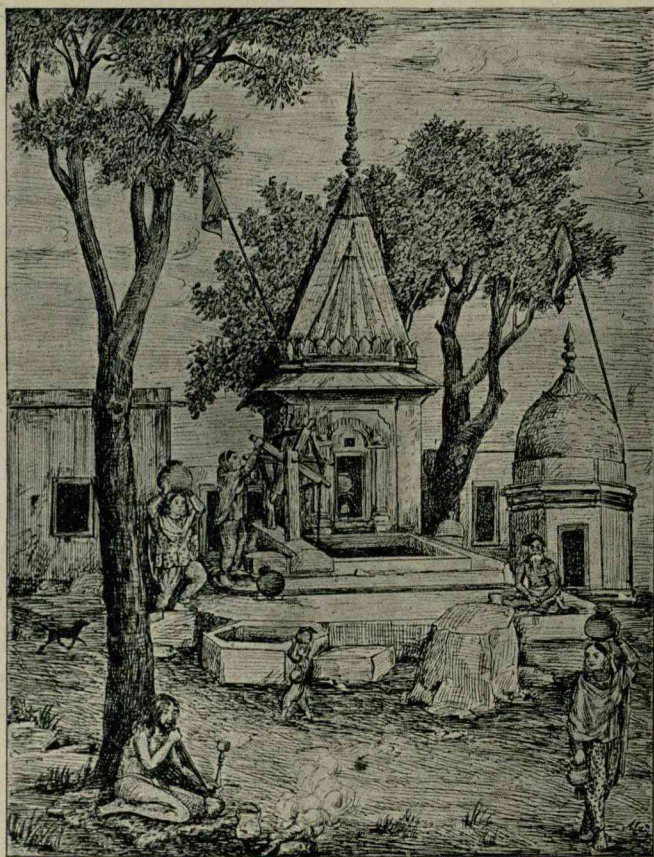
The *gurû*, hearing these words, went to the well, and with him went all his followers. And when they reached the well, all the rest kept silence, while the *gurû* spoke and asked, "Who are you? What is your name? How came you in here?"

Then Pûran, crying bitterly, answered and said, "After lapse of twelve years I have seen a human face again! I also am a man, you can see that for yourself, if you like! But if you feel any pity for me, you will kindly take me out, and then I will tell you my history."

The *gurû* therefore ordered his disciples to take Pûran out, which was accordingly done. And when Pûran came to the surface, the *gurû* was greatly pleased when he beheld his beautiful shape, and he said, "O God, have mercy on

him!" Then ordered he his disciples to carry him tenderly to his tent and to set him down.

And he asked him, saying, "Where is your home, O



PURAN BHAGAT'S WELL AS AT PRESENT EXISTING.

Child? What is your name and your father's name? How comes it that your hands and feet are cut off? Explain to me everything."



And Pûran answered, "Our real country is Ujjain, the land of the Râja Bikramâjît, and to this side came our ancestors and settled in Siâlkot. My name is Pûran, son of Sûlwahân, and Râja Sûlwahân having cut off my hands and my feet, threw me in here. So far I tell you, but I can tell you no more, unless you lay your injunctions on me, and then, if you do, I will explain further to you!"

The disciples, hearing this, said to him, "Happy should you be, and well content, that you have met Gurû Gôrakh Nâth! He is the beloved of God, and his worship has been accepted by the Almighty. You can ask what you please of him!"

Then Pûran began his hapless story, not forgetting his father's kindness, and the *gurû* heard him attentively. And Pûran said, "When I was born everyone loved me, and my father fed me with love and caresses. After twelve years I came forth from my tower, and my father, when he saw me, ordered his minister to arrange a marriage for me, but I refused the favour designed me. Then, in a short time, he ordered me to go and pay my dutiful respects to my mother and stepmother. But when I entered the palace of Lûna you may think what she was about to do, for, losing the wheel of shame, she tried to subdue me with love, but I, drawing my clothes forcibly away from her, ran out of the palace. Then, in the night, she made my father believe what she pleased. And when the râja heard it, without further consideration he ordered the executioners to take me and kill me, and so, having brought me here, they cut off my hands and my feet, and left me in this old well."

Then Gurû Gôrakh Nâth was pleased exceedingly to hear the history of Pûran, and taking a vessel, he threw handfuls of water over him, and remembered God, and prayed for him, that He would see fit to grant him his lost limbs,



and lo, his prayers were heard, and Pûran was made whole again.

Then Pûran seeing that he was restored, offered his thanks to the *gurû*, and begged him to make him one of his disciples; but the *gurû* answered, saying, "Rather you must now return to your own home, and see your father again."

"Much I may not say," said Pûran. "Only do you please accept my petition and grant me *jog*. Having pierced my ears, O sir, insert the stone ear-rings with your own hand!"

"*Jog* you must not think of," answered the *gurû*. "The performance of *jog* is beyond you. You will have to suffer hunger and thirst, to bear trials with patience, and to renounce the world. You will have to leave behind all the pleasures of sense, and to enter upon a life most difficult to pursue."

But Pûran, folding his hands, persisted, saying, "I will obey your orders, I will accept all your directions. Show me kindness, then, and make me one of your slaves. I will strive my utmost, and do whatever service you impose."

At last the *gurû* granted his prayer, and having shorn off some of his hair, he pierced his ears with his own hands, and put the *munḍrâ* (stone ear-rings) in them, and so Pûran became a *jogî* or *fakîr*.

Two days passed, and the *gurû* then ordered Pûran to go to the palace of the Râni Sundra,¹ and bring thence food for the brotherhood. As he was going, the other disciples said among themselves, "Let us see now of what sort he will be when he returns!"

But Pûran took no notice, but having asked the *gurû* to lay his hand upon him, and having uttered the name of God, he started for the house of Sundra. The *gurû* also said to him, "Take care, you must treat everyone,

¹ *Sundar*—beautiful.



THE GURU GORAKH NATH RESTORES PURAN.

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man and woman alike, as brother and sister. This alone is the way to win the world!"

"Sir," answered Pûran, "if it had been my desire to enjoy the world, I should have listened to Lûna, or I should have followed my father's direction to marry; or again, when you bade me return to my house, I should have gone, if I had hankered after pleasure. Be assured, therefore—I have no worldly desire at all!"

With these words he went on his way, and came to the palace of Râni Sundra, and there, speaking with a loud voice, he begged for alms, which were sent out to him by a female slave. But Pûran said, "My business to-day is not with slaves, nor from them have I come to take alms. You will please go and tell the Râni to come herself, and give me the alms."

The slave fell in love with him the moment she saw him, and, without a word in answer, she went in and told the Râni all he had said, adding other words of her own. "Râni," said she, "you are always admiring your own beauty. Look at this *fakîr* who is sitting before your house, he is a thousand times handsomer! You can come and see for yourself!"

The Râni went to one of her palace-windows and looked out. And when she saw his beautiful face, instantly she too fell in love with him, and she said to the slave-girl, "Go and call the *fakîr* in!" So the girl came once more to Pûran and gave her message, saying, "Please come in, the Râni wants you!"

But Pûran answered, "It is not the custom of *fakîrs* to enter houses. Go tell the Râni to come out and give me whatever alms she has to give herself!"

When the Râni heard that, she opened her caskets, and filling a tray with rich jewels, she took them out herself to the *fakîr*, and said, "Please accept them, so shall I



esteem it a favour! Yea, I should be fortunate if you would accept myself and my house as well!"

Pûran, however, did not consent, but, taking from her all the jewels, he returned to the *gurû*, and told him the things which had befallen him.

Now the *gurû* was astonished to see him again, and he asked him, saying, "Who gave you all these precious stones?"

"The Râni Sundra herself gave them to me," answered Pûran.

"These stones," said the *gurû*, "are of no use to *fakîrs*. You must look upon them as common pebbles of the public road. Better go and return them!"

So the next day Pûran set out again for the house of the Râni Sundra, who was eagerly waiting for him, and who, when he arrived, received him with pleasure. Pûran paid his compliments to her, and said, "You will please take back the jewels. My *gurû* is not pleased. But if you have bread, or any other victuals in the house, pray bring them!" The Râni then set to work and prepared various cakes and sweetmeats with her own hand, and, laying them in dishes and trays, she ordered her servants to carry them to Gurû Gôrakh Nâth. Then said she to Pûran, "Come, I will go see the *gurû* myself!" So she went with him, and her servants bearing loads of food followed after, and so came to the *gurû*, to whom she offered her respects, laying all her offerings at his feet. Round about stood the whole band of the disciples who came together at that sight, and she threw looks at them all, and no one of that company persevered in virtue saving and except the *gurû* and Pûran only.

Now her coming pleased the *gurû* greatly, and he said to her, "What boon do you wish?"

"By your kindness and grace," answered she, "I have



in my house all I desire—servants, horses, elephants, female attendants—nothing is wanting but your goodwill and the grace of God.”

Then said the *gurû* to her again, “What boon do you wish? Ask without fear!”

Then the Râni, standing in the midst of them, looked round on all his disciples, and she chose Pûran as worthy to be the boon she desired. And the *gurû* consented, accepting her request, and laid his orders on Pûran to go with her. Pûran kept silence, not wishing to gainsay his *gurû*, but, rising, he went with the Râni Sundra, and accompanied her home. And when they came to the palace, the Râni said, “I am one of the fortunate women in the world, and blessed is my lot. To-day I have obtained my desire through the kindness of the Gurû Gôrakh Nâth, yea, such a bargain have I made this day, that no one else in the world will ever make the like of it again!”

Pûran, however, was not so happy, for as they drew nigh the house, he was in mind to run away, and ere they reached the door he begged the Râni to allow him to go into the jungle for a space. And the Râni, consenting, ordered two of her female slaves to attend him. But having gone some distance from the city, he ran for his life, saying to the slaves, “Go tell your Râni that Pûran has gone away!” Those attendants therefore went back to the Râni, and explained to her all that had happened in the jungle. The Râni, hearing the news, fell senseless, and began to cry and to beat her breast, saying, “If I had known you would have played me this trick, never would I have allowed you to go to the jungle. Hardly had I known the bliss of looking at your face, when, like an enemy, you left me in all this woe. Ah, dear one, I have no power over you at all, and for you alone I go to my death this day!” Then she went up to the top of the palace, and looked long into

the jungle, but no sign of Pûran was to be seen anywhere round. Failing to find him and despairing of his return,



THE RANI SUNDRA KILLS HERSELF.

she threw herself over and killed herself, and her death was mourned by the whole city.



Pûran, on the other side, leaving that place, came to Tillah where his gurû was then abiding, who, when he saw him approaching, straightway understood that he had left the Râni Sundra. And he spoke angrily to him, saying, "You have not acted in accordance with my wishes!" But Pûran wept before him, and said, "I told you, Gurû Sâhib, that I have no desire for worldly pleasures, and yet, notwithstanding my words, you bade me marry a wife."

Then, understanding it all, the *gurû* felt pleased, and took him into favour.

The next day the *gurû* said to Pûran, "Now go to Siâlkot and see your father!" Instantly Pûran obeyed, and coming to Siâlkot, he entered an old garden of his own, which for want of water and care had dried up, and in that garden he tarried, and the moment he entered the garden, all the trees and the flowers, which had died down to the earth, instantly revived and put forth blossom and leaf, and all over the city went the news, that the garden that had been dry for many years, was now as green as before. And people wondered and said, "Who has come here that the garden is so green again?" And multitudes came to see him, and whosoever came received whatever he needed.

And it came to pass that someone made report of the miracle to Râja Sûlwahân and Râni Lûna, who, when they heard of it, also went to see the strange *fakîr*. And the people cleared the way and told him, saying, "Here are the Râja and Râni come to see you!" When Pûran heard that, he got up, and offered his respects to them both, receiving them humbly.

And the king said to him, "Sir, I have come to see you, but you have laid weight of obligation on my head to receive me with ceremony thus!"

"How came you here, and why do you visit me?" said Pûran. "Please say!"



"You seem to be a sage and a friend of God," answered the king. "All I need is a son, if, in your kindness, you will grant the boon."

"I think," said Pûran, "that you had a son, and that somebody, taking him into the jungle, killed him like a goat. Will you tell me how he died?"

Hearing these words, the râja wept bitterly, and answering, said, "Yes, sir, there was once a son in my house, born of the Râni Ichrân. When he was young, I ordered him to go and visit his mothers, and he, seeing his step-mother, Râni Lûna, and throwing all shame and virtue aside, wanted to deal injuriously with her."

"O Sir," said Pûran, "beware how you speak! Your son was innocent, but not so his mother!"

Then turning to Râni Lûna he said, "Râni, will you explain now how it all happened? God will give you a son, but first you must truly confess your fault. Only beware and do not prevaricate!"

"Alas," said the Râni, "mine alone was the fault and not Pûran's! Not he, but I, I only was to blame! When he came to my palace, I, at sight of his lovely face, begged him to be my friend. But Pûran refused, and I then said to him, 'If you will not be mine, something worse shall happen to you.' So, after that, beguiling the râja, I caused him to be made away with."

Great was the astonishment of the Râja on hearing these words, "O wretched woman," cried he, "then it was your deed that lost me my son, and you it was who wrought the mischief, by which Pûran, my son, went out of my hands!"

When Pûran saw them both crying, he could not restrain himself, but, weeping too, he said to the Râni, "Lûna, let the past go! That which was written in his destiny has come to pass!" Then giving a grain of rice to the Râja,



PURAN IN THE GARDEN WITH HIS FATHER, MOTHER AND STEP-MOTHER.

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he ordered him to give it to his Râni, "for then," said he, "by the grace of God, there shall be a son in your house again; but trouble shall be his portion such as that which Râni Lûna brought on Pûran, and through trouble like his shall he die."

In the meantime, Râni Ichrân, Pûran's real mother, heard of the wonders that were being wrought, and she said to herself, "Let me also go there, and beg healing for my eyes!" So she started for the place, but her eyes were dim from much weeping, and scarcely could she see where she was going. And as she was stumbling, Pûran turned, and saw his mother coming to him in her trouble, so he got up, and ran to her, and bringing her to his shed, he questioned her, saying, "Mother, what has happened to your eyes?"

"Ah, sir," said she, "the loss of my son Pûran has blinded me."

"You should not weep for him," said Pûran, "neither should you lament him. He who has once died can never again come back. Rather pray to God, and He will give you your sight!"

She, having recognised his voice, then said, "Son, from what side have you come? Where was your birthplace, who was your father, what fortunate mother brought you into the world? If I could see, soon should I find out who you are. But your voice tells me you are Pûran. Am I right or not?"

"I am disciple of the *gurû*, Gôrakh Nâth," answered he, "and *jogî* by profession. My ancestors were men of renown in Ujjain. I am a son of the Râjâ Sûlwahân, my name is Pûran, and *Pwâr* (Râjpût) is my caste!"

His mother, hearing these words, became happy, light once more visited her eyes, she embraced her son, and all her trouble and sorrow vanished away.



Now the Râja, when he saw and heard all these things, became ashamed, and he began to mourn over his own folly. But Pûran looked at him, and said, "Sir, let it go, for, as it was fated to be, so has my destiny brought it to pass." And as Lûna was also thinking and lamenting over all she had said to him, he spoke to her as well, saying, "Think no more of the past! Regard me as your own son and forgive me! Not so much your fault is it, as the fault of my father, seeing he did not enquire into the matter." Then the Râja, with folded hands, cried, "O God, forgive me, for I alone am the root of all my son's misfortunes! What answer shall I make to Thee, O God, hereafter?"

After these things, Pûran said to them all, "Now go back to your house! There live happily, and let me return from whence I have come!"

"Sir," said the king, "go not away again! Come home with me, take the keys of all my palaces, and of all my treasures, and be king of the land instead of me, for, if you leave me now, the parting will surely kill me!"

But Pûran refused his father's request, and then his mother Ichrân begged him to come and live for a time near her. But that too he refused, saying, "From this place, when a child, I was taken away into exile. How then shall I show my face now before the people! But I give you my *gurû* as a surety, that I will come and see you again. Do not therefore urge me with speech, but allow me to go!"

Having so spoken, Pûran got up to leave them there, both the Râja and his mother, and to his father he said, "Treat Lûna as your queen, and also take care of my mother!" So having started from that place he came once more to Tillah, and there paid his compliments and his



PURAN'S DEPARTURE.

respects to the Gurû Gôrakh Nâth, as also to all the brethren of the order, explaining the strange events which had passed between his parents and himself. And the Gurû was greatly pleased to hear it, and to see him again, and he blessed him, saying, "May God guard you and keep you happy!"

Told at Murree, July 1881, by Gharal, a story-teller.





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CSL

SHORTER TALES

OF THE MAN WHO MISSED THE MARE

HE WAS

RIDING



It happened
one dark
night, that
a certain

wise man, on a journey, was riding his mare through a gloomy forest, in which highwaymen and thieves sometimes lay in wait. Suddenly he cried out with a loud voice, "Nafr, Nafr,¹ where on earth is my mare?"

"Your mare?" answered his man. "You are riding your mare, are you not?"

"Am I?" said his master. "Well, so I am. But all the same we should be very careful going through a place like this."

Told by the bard, Sher, at Abbottâbâd, Nov. 1889.

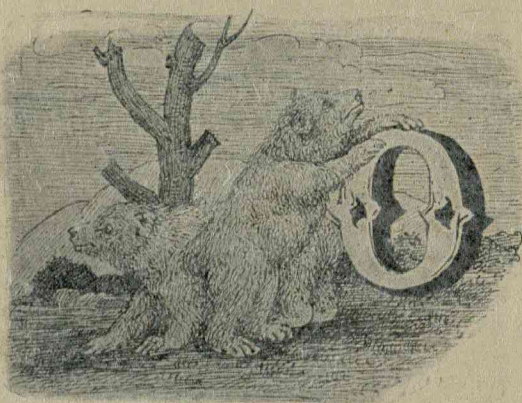


¹ A servant.

OF THE BLIND BEGGAR WHO WISHED TO FEEL

ONE HUNDRED

GOLD COINS



ONCE upon a time there was a blind fakîr who used to sit day by day begging at the gate of a city. As he

was accounted a saint, his simple neighbours called him Hâfiz.^{*} It was the custom of Hâfiz to cry out at intervals in a loud voice, "Who is the beloved of God, who will let me feel, only feel, one hundred gold mohurs?"

It happened one day that a certain soldier, returning from the wars, passed by the spot where Hâfiz was sitting and heard his doleful cry. Said the soldier to himself, "I vow before God that if ever I have a hundred gold mohurs, I will carry them to this good old man and let him feel them!"

He had not gone far on his way, when, as if in answer to his prayer, he picked up a bag of money which had been dropt in his path, and which contained a hundred gold mohurs, neither more nor less. So the good man retraced his steps, and going up to Hâfiz, he said, "Sir, by the kindness of God and yourself I have found a hundred gold mohurs. Be good enough to feel them, O good old man!"

^{*} Hâfiz, a title of honour bestowed upon anyone who can say the Korân by heart.



Blind Hâfiz took the soldier's bag, untied the string, picked out the coins one by one, counting them carefully as he passed them from hand to hand, then restored them, tied up the precious treasure again, and gave the soldier hundreds of benedictions.

"But," said the soldier, "I also want my money, good Hâfiz!" At once the blind beggar set up a dismal cry, "Friends, neighbours, help! Thieves! All my wretched life I have been scraping together a little money, here a pice, there a cowrie, and now this son of a thief would rob me of all!" The people who came rushing together with great tumult instantly seized the unfortunate soldier, tore his clothes to rags, beat him to a jelly, and finally hustled him out of the town.

But the soldier, determined to have his revenge, still waited about. A cat watches a mouse, and so in like sort the soldier watched the blind *fakîr*. By-and-bye Hâfiz takes up his *hamzah*,¹ and begins to feel his way home, passing down into the street of the blind beggars. His house was the last in the row near to the open country, and having undone the clasp, he entered and sat down on the floor, thanking God for all his mercies. But he was not aware that the soldier had dogged his steps, and that, at that very moment, he was standing behind him with drawn sword ready to cut off his head.

"Four hundred gold pieces before," muttered old Hâfiz, "and one hundred now. Four hundred and one hundred make five hundred!" And Hâfiz laughed long and merrily.

The blind man now rose up and groped his way to a corner where he turned up the earth, revealing a flat stone, which he lifted, and, lo, beneath it a brass pot! Divesting himself of his broad belt, which was heavy with treasure,

¹ *Hamzah*—here, a stick with a crescent top.



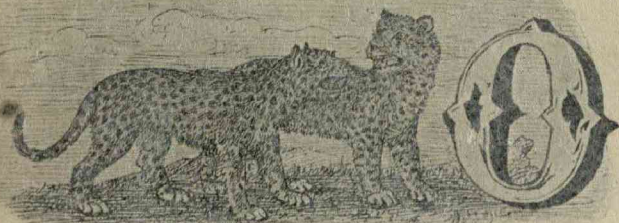
he deposited that, and the gold he had just acquired, in the brass pot aforesaid, and restoring everything to its proper place, returned to his cot.

Now came the turn of the soldier. Stooping down he slyly uncovered the brass pot, which he lifted out with the utmost care; but, as ill luck would have it, in the act of rising, he knocked his head against a shelf. Instantly the old man bounded from his seat, and, seizing his stick, began to career madly round the centre of the room, revolving like a wheel, and uttering the most frightful cries. Round and round he danced like a madman, striking out right and left with his stick, breaking his waterpots to shivers and flooding his room with water. His cries were so frantic as to be heard by another blind man who lived hard by, and who now came running over to see what was the matter. But scarcely had he entered the room when Hâfiz closed with him, believing him to be the robber, and over the two blind men went on to the floor, fast locked in each other's arms, rolling here and rolling there in the mud, and with cries and yells tearing each other to pieces.

Taking advantage of the noise, and bursting with laughter, the soldier now slipped out of the house with all his booty, and got away as fast as his legs would carry him.

*Told at Ghâzi on the Indus, by Sher Khân, a blind man,
September 1893.*

THE CRAFTY FAKIR AND THE FOOLISH KING



ONCE upon a time some sturdy *fakirs* came to a certain town

in which every commodity was sold at precisely the same rate. Gold was as cheap as iron, and wheaten bread could be bought for the same price as barley cakes. "This must be a fine place to live in," said one of the *fakirs*, "Let us rest a bit here!" But the chief of the band answered, "No, no, for if everything is sold at the same rate, justice is probably sold too. We are too poor. So I, for one, shall move on." The first speaker, however, who was a great lazy fellow, caring only for his ease, determined to remain, in order to eat and drink and live his life. His comrades therefore left him behind.

As ill-luck would have it, that night there was a great robbery with murder, and the people set upon the strange *fakir* and charged him with the crime. In vain he protested innocence, and the upshot of the matter was that the king condemned him to be hanged. So he found himself in a fix, but somehow he managed to send word to his chief, who arrived on the scene just as the gallows had been set up, and the people were only waiting for the king to come and give the word of command.

"Save me, O my *Pir*, save me!" was the petition of the doomed *fakir*.



"Listen," said his master. "I shall speak to the king and beg to be hanged in your place, but do you keep saying all the time, 'No, no, I want to be hanged myself!' and then we shall see what we shall see!"

When the king arrived the old *fakîr* approached him and said, "O king, this unfortunate one is active and young with an old mother to maintain, whereas I am old and useless. Be pleased, therefore, to hang me instead of him!"

"Nay, nay," cried the other *fakîr*, "I want to be hanged myself, I want to be hanged myself!"

This farce was repeated several times over, which so astonished the king that he called the old *fakîr* aside and said to him, "What's the meaning of this, that you two gentlemen are both so eager to be hanged?"

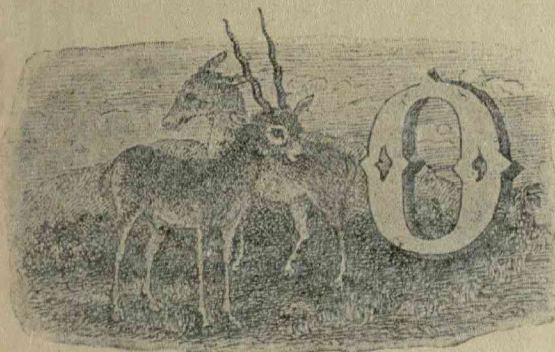
"Sir," answered that deceitful one, "the sacred books and in short all the writings of the *fakîrs* pronounce this day to be the most fortunate day for death in the whole history of Islâm. He who dies to-day is in luck, for he will go on angels' wings straight away to Paradise!"

"Ah, then," cried the king, "that being so, hang me, O good people, hang me!"

So the king was hanged instead of the *fakîr*, who, rejoicing in his luck, went off with his master, and both instantly cleared away.

*Told at Attock on the Indus, December 10, 1879,
by Karan Khàn, a villager.*

OF THE PATHÂN WHO WANTED HIS ASS TURNED INTO A MAN



NCE upon a time
a priest was
teaching the
village children
at a mosque,
when a Pathân
came by.

Hearing the babbling, he halted outside the wall and looked over. There he saw the priest flogging one of the boys and exclaiming, as he flogged him, "From an ass I have made a man of you, yea, made a man of you out of a jackass, and yet you will not understand!"

Hearing these extraordinary words, the Pathân pricked up his ears and said to himself, "What power this priest must possess to turn asses into men!" So, taking fifty rupees out of his waist-cloth, he stepped into the court and laid them down before the priest. "I am going," said he, "to bring you my old donkey and I give you in advance these fifty rupees on condition that you make a man of him."

"Well," said the priest, "I shall want the money if only for the feed of the ass; but do you call again some other day!"

The priest, therefore, took the man's money and put it by, and when the donkey came he handed it over to his wife, who used it day by day to fetch and carry.

At the end of six months, the Pathân came back and said to the priest, "Now, if you have finished the job, hand me over my man!"

"You have come too late," answered the priest. "The truth is I spiced your ass so highly that it was not long before he turned into the *nawâb* of the next village. Go to the *nawâb* of the next village and tell him so!"

For the next village, therefore, the Pathân set off, and going to the house of the *nawâb*, he explained the matter, saying, "My fifty rupees I gave to the priest, and now come along—you are my man!"

Thereupon the *nawâb* waxed wrath and turned him out, and the Pathân had to return empty-handed to the priest to whom he made his complaint, "I went to the *nawâb*," said he, "but he got angry and refused to give himself up!" Then said the priest, "That *nawâb* was once a pupil of mine, and you must therefore go to him again, and remind him that he was taught by me from a child, tell him I put too much spice in him, and that, *nawâb* or no *nawâb*, he is most certainly your old donkey!"

So the Pathân did as he was told, and when the *nawâb* had heard his story again, he began to think within himself, "It would appear that my old teacher must have said something to this stupid ass, which he has not understood. So I had better go with him to the priest myself."

Coming to the mosque, the *nawâb*, inasmuch as the priest was his old master, paid him great respect, and begged to be enlightened as to the capers of the blockhead of a Pathân. "He is certainly a blockhead, but not more so than other Pathâns," said the priest. "The fact is he was passing when I was administering the rod to a dunce, and hearing me using my accustomed phrase, 'From an ass I have made a man of you,' he gave me fifty rupees to make a man out of his own ass. Then I sent



him on to you, but even now, as you see, he does not understand."

"I have an idea," said the *nawâb*. "Do you tell him that his ass has now become the village *fakîr*, and send him there, and I'll warrant that, by the exercise of some miracle or other, that holy man will be able somehow to knock sense into his head."

No sooner was it said than it was done, and presently the Pathân was seen standing by the lowly shed of the village *fakîr*, to whom he told his message, saying, "The priest informs me that you are my old donkey, and I want you to come home with me at once." On hearing these words, the *fakîr* thought to himself, "This man is daft!" Then he said, "Yes, it is all right! I was once your old donkey true enough, my master. But first I want you to do something for me, and then you must come back for me. I have a friend, another *fakîr*, who lives across the river. Take him these cakes, and having given them to him, with my salaams, fail not to return." Taking the cakes, the Pathân went to the river, but he had forgotten to ask for a boat in which to cross over, so he had fain to retrace his steps. "Return to the river," said the *fakîr*, "make respectful salaams to it, and say I have sent you, and then you will be able to cross." So he went again, and made obeisance, and received an answer, and then he was permitted to cross over the water to the other side. There he saw the second *fakîr*, to whom he handed the cakes, saying, "Such and such a *fakîr* has sent you this bread." By this time the Pathân had begun to experience some faint glimmerings of reason, and he now considered within himself, "How am I to get back? I will ask the *fakîr*!" This therefore he did, saying, "How am I to cross the river again?"

"Go to the bank," answered the holy man, "and say to

the river, 'He who needs not food sends you a salaam, and begs you to suffer this Pathân to cross.'"

The Pathân obeyed him, and coming to the river he spoke as directed, and, as before, the same voice said "Cross!" and he crossed over in safety. And all the time he was puzzling his brains as to what things meant, seeing that the *fakîr* had eaten up all the cakes. So he said he would go back to the first *fakîr* and ask him to explain.

To him therefore he went again, and, reporting to him all that had hapt, he begged for some explanation. And the *fakîr*, seeing he was ripe, took him in hand. "Ah!" said he to him, "you are a Pathân, and therefore I suppose a foolish fellow, void of understanding. If you had had any wit at all, you would have seen for yourself. That man, being a *fakîr*, does not need food, but as I sent it, and as you took it, he ate it out of civility!" Furthermore he said to him, "O son, we are *fakîrs*. If anyone could turn donkeys into men, it would be ourselves, of course, but that schoolmaster merely meant to say that he had turned a stupid lad into a wise one, a fool into a reasonable being."

So, having been enlightened, and understanding at last what a fool he was, the Pathân went back to the mosque, and, stooping low, he touched the feet of the priest and said, "An ass I came and an ass I went. Take me, I pray you, in hand yourself, and make a man of me!"

Hearing these words, the priest commended him, and, restoring his money and his ass, bade him enter his school, which he did, and there in time he acquired some knowledge and even some sense, saving the fact that he was still a Pathân.

*Told at Ghâzi, Feb. 14, 1883, by Nazâm Dîn,
a villager of Ghargûshti.*

A JUNGLE TALE



ONCE upon a time there was a donkey, and also a bullock, and neither the one nor the other had any regular

master, but anyone who wished used to catch them, and load them with stones or with timber, and work them to death. So one day the bullock said to the donkey, "Look here, we have no master and both our backs are sore. Every one puts upon us. Let us then go to the hills together and shift for ourselves!"

"All right," said the donkey, "let us!" and they started off. After living freely in the jungle for some time, they got into good condition, and the donkey said to the bullock, "O Bullock, Bullock, I feel to-day as if I should like to bray!"

"Hold!" said the bullock, "and don't be an ass! Have you forgotten the time when your back was so sore, and now do you want to bray, merely because you have been living at your ease for a day or two? Here we are in the jungle, and, if you bray, a tiger will assuredly come, and kill either you or me! What then, O Donkey?"

"Let him come," said the donkey, "let as many tigers



come as like. I feel I should like to bray, and therefore bray I must."

So the donkey began braying terribly, until the earth seemed to shake, and the bullock said to him, "So, you are braying, are you? Well, now I must shift for myself."

So the two friends separated. But the bullock had gone only a few steps, when a famished tiger began to wag his head and say, "I am hungry, very hungry, and God has brought into these jungles a donkey for me!"

The bullock also, as he moved away, was saying to himself, "Now something unpleasant is sure to happen, or I am not the true son of a bullock."

And the tiger was also saying, "I will set on the bullock first, and then settle with the donkey."

And the donkey, seeing how things were going, was saying, "The tiger has made for the bullock, and then I suppose he will come and devour me!"

Presently the tiger sprang on the bullock, so the donkey flew to the rescue, kicking and biting savagely. At last he fixed his teeth in the tiger's flesh, right between the shoulders, which forced him to let go, and the bullock set free, ran away to a place of safety.

At this moment a ploughman came strolling by, and he said, "What a thing—a donkey has laid hold of a tiger!" The tiger seeing him, called out, "O you ploughman, come to my aid, save me from this wretched donkey!"

"Nay," answered he, "I save you not, you deserve all you will get!"

"For the sake of God, and in the name of the Prophet," cried the tiger, "I beseech you, take me out of the jaws of this wretched donkey!"

Thus adjured, the ploughman went up, and smote the donkey with his staff. But this only made the donkey rear and kick and struggle all the more, until the tiger

said, "O he bites me harder than ever, his very teeth meet in me! For mercy's sake don't hit him any more, or I am a dead tiger this day! O Ploughman, take your plough-rope, and passing it round the villain's teeth, saw his very jaws off!"

Thus assailed, the donkey was fain to let go his hold, and seeing that he had now two foes to fight instead of one, he scampered off, and joined his friend the bullock in a place of safety, leaving the miserable tiger lying exhausted on the ground. Then thought the tiger to himself, "Far better to have died at once than to have suffered such dishonour from a donkey! This ploughman, too, will talk of it everywhere, and all the tigers will come to hear of it. I had therefore better kill him out of the way." So he glared at the ploughman, and said, "O Ploughman, I am going to kill you!"

"But why kill *me*?" said the ploughman.

"I am going to kill you," answered the beast, "because you will go and tell everybody about this infamy, and then all the whole tribe of tigers will be disgraced for ever. But dead men tell no tales, and once I kill you, my story is safe!"

"O you ungrateful beast!" said the ploughman. "I released you from death, and is this all the thanks I get? Not a word will I speak, nor mention a thing about it." And he solemnly promised to hold his tongue.

After this the ploughman went his way home, followed by the dejected tiger. And the man said to his wife, "I have seen a wonderful thing this day, but I won't tell you what it was."

Now, in this family, the gray mare was the better horse, so she said to her husband, "If you don't tell me, I'll thrash you!"

"Well," said her husband, "I *will* tell you, but remember, if I do, I shall be killed."

"Don't be a fool!" said she, "but tell me at once!"

So he told his wife the whole story which he had promised to keep secret, and the tiger, listening outside, heard every word, and he cried out, "You wait till I catch you!" And the man said to his wife, "Now, you see!"

Next day the ploughman would have kept to the house, being afraid to go out to till the land, but his wife hustled him, saying, "Off with you! Snakes and tigers never come to the same place twice! Get along!" and she took up a stick and gave him a drubbing. Then thought the man to himself, "Better for me to be killed by a tiger than struck by a woman!" So out he went, but presently came across the tiger, who began to upbraid him for his perfidy, and would have eaten him, if the wife, hearing the noise, had not issued forth, armed with her bludgeon. The tiger, seeing her fury, took fright and ran away, leaving the man to his plough. And so the wife returned triumphant to the cottage. Who then will say that a woman is not as good as a donkey, seeing that if a donkey routed a tiger, a woman was more than a match for man and tiger too?

*Told by Nûr Khân, a farmer, at Torbêla, Upper Indus.
 November 21, 1880.*



STORY OF A RUBY

“OF A REALLY DESERVING MAN NO ONE KNOWS THE VALUE”



ONCE upon a time there was a potter, who owned thirty or forty donkeys. Having loaded them up with pots one day, he was going his rounds, when he found a precious stone, which he tied round his largest donkey's neck. After a time he came to a ferry, and as he was crossing over, the

ferryman saw the stone and admired it. “What a pretty stone,” said he. “Give it to me, and your donkey may go over free!”

“All right,” said the potter, and he handed over the stone to the ferryman, who tied it to his stern oar.

After a time, a traveller wanted to cross. He was by trade a lapidary, and seeing the stone he said to himself, “That stone is simply a priceless ruby!” So he said to the boatman, “Will you take five rupees for your stone?”

“You can have it for ten,” answered the boatman, having no idea of its value; and so the lapidary became the possessor of the ruby.

Having paid the money, and received the stone, he wrapped it most carefully in several soft napkins, and then laid it within several jewel cases, which he placed under lock and key in the safest place in his shop.

Some time after, the king, wanting a ruby, sent his minister



to look for one. Without delay they went straight to the lapidary, who at first denied having any such stone as the king would care to possess.) "If I had," said he, "you would seize it, and give me but a small sum for it."

"Never fear," said the minister. "As you have such a ruby, show it to us! But first, how much do you ask for it?"

"Not less than twenty thousand rupees," answered the lapidary.

"Well, bring it, and show it!" said the minister.

So he brought out his boxes, which he proceeded to open. But, alas, he found his precious ruby shivered to atoms! "Ah my kismet, my kismet, my ruby, my ruby!" cried he.

So the minister went away. And the lapidary, looking at the shattered ruby, began to upbraid it. But the ruby murmured, "Can you wonder that I am broken? First I was found by a potter and tied round the neck of a donkey, but he, poor man, was a simple villager. Then I was owned by a boatman who bound me to an oar, but he too was ignorant, and knew no better. But you!—you offered five rupees for me, and gave ten! And even now, when you had the chance of proclaiming my true value, what did you do? You asked a wretched twenty thousand rupees for me! These slights were too much—my heart broke, and now I am worthless!"

So with people really worthy of honour. They are never appreciated by their fellow men, until, with broken hearts, they lie in their graves!

Told by Sher Khân, the blind Khan of Hazro. Dec. 27, 1881.

L'Envoy

Sadâ nâ bâgîn bûlbûl bole,
Sadâ nâ bâg bâhârân;
Sadâ nâ râj khûshi de honde,
Sadâ nâ majlis yârân! *

Freely rendered thus:—

For evermore, within the bower's recesses,
No bulbul sits and sings melodious lore;
No verdant April leaf the garden blesses
For evermore!

A monarch, robed in might and wrapt in splendour,
Reigns not for aye from sounding shore to shore;
And friends companionship must fain surrender
For evermore!

* There is scarcely a Panjâbî who has not this stanza by heart. It expresses the resigned philosophy which suits him best, the philosophy of Solomon—Vanity of Vanities!!—

The bulbul is not always singing in the garden,
The garden is not always in bloom,
Kings are not always reigning in happiness,
Friends (lovers) are not always together.



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Vikramâjît, Bikramâjît, Vikramâditya, a great Hindu warrior, saint, and legislator. His original capital was Uggayini (Ujain) in the Dakkan (Deccan), but he extended his arms as far west as Kâbûl (Wilson's *Ariana Antiqua*). He is identical with Harsha, who finally defeated the Mlekkas in 544 A.D. The Vikramâditya of the Vikrama era, which begins 56 B.C., is therefore merely nominal. Among his successors were Pûshpabhâti, Prahhâkara said to have been killed by the king of Malwa, Râgyavardhana, his elder brother, killed by Sasânka, an enemy of the Buddhists, and Sîlâditya (550—600), who in six years conquered the "Five Indies", though peace was not restored during thirty years. Hew as a strict Buddhist, and forbade the eating of meat.

Shâlivhân of Sâlivahâna.—I think this must be the king celebrated by the Panjâbi bards under the name "Sulwân," "Siriwân," and "Saribân." He is said to have overthrown the empire of Vikramâditya, but if that was so, the Sâlivahân of the era beginning A.D. 77 must also be merely nominal, and that exploit will have occurred (56 + 77) one hundred and thirty-three years after the true era of Vikramâdit, that is A.D. 677. It must be remembered that though Greek rule in the Kâbûl Valley and on the Indus ended about 120 B.C., the most flourishing period of Indo-Scythian rule ranged from *circa* 40 B.C. to 100 A.D., if not later: and that Indo-Scythians ruled east of the Indus as well as west is certain, as it has been shown that Mânikyâla, the great Buddhist *stûpa* and monastery, which stood between Jhîlam and Râwâl Pindî, was founded, or at least restored, by Hûvîshka of the Tocharî tribe of the Indo-Scythians, who is believed to have reigned some time between B.C. 57 and A.D. 27.

Sirîkap Râja.—Ghûlâm, an intelligent villager of Kûndt in Mount Gandgarh, about five miles from Sirîkot, told me that Râja Sirîkap was a son of the famous Râja Bhakhiri, a brother of Râja Dhartilî, whose memory is preserved in a traditional stanza (*v.* p. 173), and

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that he used to live in Sangât-thî-Gharî, or the Fort of Sangât, half a mile from Sirîkot, on the top of the ridge of Gandgarh, and that he built Sirîkot of men's skulls, as the name, according to him, really implies, though he admits that it may also mean the Chief Fort. Traces of Sirîkap râja, however, exist all over the country. There is a "Sirîkap's Fort" under the hill two and a half miles from Shinkiârî in Hazâra, where coins are found; there is another far away in Kashmîr, another at Bâlar near Lahore, and still another on the site of ancient Taxila near Pindi, the great city, now almost obliterated, where Alexander the Great was sumptuously entertained and where also the ancient Bûddhist *stûpa* is locally known as the tower of Râni Koklân.

The traditions near Shekolhûra, to the west of Lahore, are very interesting, as well as perplexing. There we find:—

- (1) A Fort of Sirîkap at the village of Balar.
- (2) A Fort of Sirisûk.
- (3) The village and Fort of Amha, near Ransi.
- (4) The villages or (a) Kâpi, (b) Kâlpi, (c) Mûnda, and (d) Mândehi.

At all these, which are locally known as the Bagh-Bacha, or Tiger-Cubs, there are mounds said to commemorate Râja Sirîkap and his two brothers and four sisters—namely, Sirisûk and Amba, his brothers; and Kâpi, Kâlpi, Mûnda, and Mandeshi, his sisters.

Rasâlu's Grey Mare.—She bears various names. Folâdi, or more exactly Fûlâdî, the name given in the text, means "made of steel." Baurâki, another name of this famous horse, is simply the "Grey Mare." Sharaf, the bard, said her name was rather Bhaunra-Irâki. Bhaunra is the name of the large black bee, said to be enamoured of the lotus. Irâki is a term which distinguished a famous breed of horses from Central Asia, probably Parthia. Irâq-Arabi is strictly the country lying between the Tigris and the Euphrates. A grey mare seems to be held in high favour among the tribes. I remember that the leader of the Khûgiânîs, who opposed the British advance at Fatiâbâd, near Jalâlâbâd, in 1879, was seen mounted on a fine grey mare. So the famous steed of Rustem was also a grey mare.

Râni Koklâ.^{*}—According to the "Ghâzi" version, and also to the bard Jûma's version, queen Koklâ, when she fell from the castle-

^{*} *Koklân*, and *Koklâ*.



walls, was killed on the spot. The bard Sharaf, however, related an entirely different story, for, according to him, the queen, though bruised and broken, still survived, and Rasâlu, her husband, threw her into a sack and her lover's body into another, and slung them over Hôdi's horse, saying:—"Go! tell Râja Bhatti that his son is coming home to him married!"—and so started the horse for Atak (Attock). Naturally the horse took the straight road for home. On the way thither he was stopped by a *mehtar*, or common scavenger, who, observing Koklâ's beauty, and perceiving that she was not quite dead, took her and cured her of her wounds, after which he married her. She bore her scavenger-husband four sons, Tehû, Kehû, Karehû, and Sehû, and from these four descend four clans or tribes, still dwelling in the hills of the Upper Panjâb, namely, the Tiwâna of the Shârpûr District, the Gheba of the Pindi District, the Kharâls of Hazâra, and the Syâls of Jhang, all of whom claim the honorific title of *Sardâr* on account of their royal descent from Koklâ. And, say the people of Hazâra, speaking of the Kharâls, you can easily see they are of a royal race, because they display certain royal characteristics, as arrogance and pride, while at the same time they possess qualities of an ignoble sort, as cowardice, meanness, and greed, being evidences still existing to show that their origin was exalted on the one side, and villainous on the other.

The Roaring of Gandgarh.—Mount Gandgarh, under which Rasâlu imprisoned the giant Thirya, is subject to frequent earthquakes. Even when there is no perceptible quaking, the internal roaring of the earth can be heard, and this certainly is the noise which is ascribed to the imprisoned monster. The villagers, however, sometimes assert that the bellowing of the giant is quite a distinct sound from the roar of earthquake, and that, as this peculiar bellowing has not been heard of late, the giant Thirya must have succumbed to his miseries at last!

Rasâlu's Arrows.—These objects, often seen in various places by the writer, are megaliths of granite, most of them standing eight or ten feet of the ground. They must have been floated down the Indus originally, as no granite exists within fifty or sixty miles of the places which they now occupy. According to one tradition, Muhammad intended once to make Kashmîr the paradise of Islâm, and employed "genii" to carry these great monoliths thither for



the building of mansions. But he changed his mind, and the "genii" dropped them in their flight, and they fell to the earth as they stand to this day.

Another local tradition ascribes them to the time of Solomon. The story is so curious that I give it here.—In former times, say the people, there was a princess named Bilkis, who was queen of Sheba, and who was a worshipper of the sun. But when she began to worship the true God, then God said to Solomon, "This woman has turned to me. Build therefore a beautiful temple, so that all her troops may come and worship before me." The giants (they are both winged and horned), who were under Solomon's orders, were at once summoned and told to hew out immense stones, and to fashion them, and to bring them for the building of the temple. This then the giants began to do, but meanwhile Solomon died, and his vizier said: "The temple is not yet finished, and none but the giants can bring these stones. We must manage to keep them working!" So he got a large room and glazed it all round, and put Solomon therein, standing, with wooden posts under his arms to prop him up, and he told the giants that the king was still alive. There the king stood for a year, but by the end of that time the white ants had got to the wooden supports and consumed them, so that king Solomon fell forward on his face. The giants, seeing this, said: "Solomon is dead!" and they went and told all the other giants, as they were bringing their stones through the air. And wherever the news reached them, there they dropped the stones, which fell to the earth, where they still remain to testify the truth of the story.

Near Jehângîr, a village at the junction of the Kâbûl and Indus rivers, may be seen about sixteen of these great stones close together, and a curious coincidence attaches to them, namely, that there, as at Stonehenge, it is said no one can correctly number them. They are apparently prehistoric, and probably phallic in origin.

Gurû Gorakhnath, the great saint of Tilhar, founded a sect in the Panjâb, it is said about A.D. 1400. He maintained the equalizing effects of religious penances, but chose Siva as the manifestation of Deity, and so, in the tiny temple which adorns the old well of his supposed most famous disciple, Pûran Bhagat, near Sialkot, only a simple "Shiv" or *lingam* is to be seen. It is a curious fact that, to this shrine of the chaste and celibate Pûran, hundreds of barren women, desirous of offspring, come on pilgrimage, which



reminds me of a strange superstition prevalent among the villagers of the Upper Indus—namely, that if a pregnant woman can procure the pyjama-cord of a man of known *chastity* or of known fidelity to his own wife, and wear it, she will have an easy labour.

Akaldêo.—The one-eyed chief of the giants. According to the bard Jûma, his name was Baikalbath. The bard Sharaf named him Bhagarbhatth. All accounts agree in ascribing to this monster only one eye.

Gandgarh is a mountainous mass of schist lying between the Indus and the Chach Plain on the one side, and the sub-district of Haripûr on the other. On the top of it, at an elevation of 5000 feet above sea-level, there is a hollow, which is well watered from springs and well cultivated. Here is the village of Sirikôt. But Gandgarh includes several other villages. The people are nearly all descendants of Afghân intruders from the other side of the Indus, and are fine, tall, active, and handsome men.

The highest summit is named Pîr Thân, and somewhere there, near the village of Bidiân, is the famous cave called Manghar Kallanh, which might repay the expense of excavating. There are other caves, as the cave of the Infidels' Fort, and the cave of Gandgarhi, the latter being Rasâlu's.

The Infidels' Fort possesses an interest of its own. It is situated high up, midway between Pîr Thân and the lofty village of Chenâr Kôt, beneath the principices of which, over a friendly gap, runs the rough mountain road from the broad Indus Valley on the west to the beautiful vale in Hazâra on the east, where Haripûr, famous for its flowers and fruits, reposes among the cool groves.

At Kâfir Kot (Fort of the Infidels), says Tradition, the last stand was made by the "infidel" Hindus of the Chach Plain, when they succumbed to the Muhammadans about nine hundred years ago. The walls comprise within their area the summit of the hill, resting on the south-eastern side upon the edge of a deep inaccessible cliff, which descends for hundreds of feet into the peaceful valley beneath. Over the verge of the cliff, without the south-eastern angle of the fort, just where the wall retires, exists the famous cave, masked by a hardy jujube tree, and so cunningly contrived by nature that only by accident could its existence be suspected at all. It runs in a downward sloping direction, about forty feet into the limestone rock, and it terminates in two small natural chambers very difficult of

access. When the devoted garrison found their retreat cut off on all sides, it is said they threw their arms into the bottom of the cave, and that then, in the character of unarmed fugitives, they came forth and made an unavailing appeal for quarter to their terrible invaders.

I once spent a bright winter's day inspecting the old walls of the fort and clambering down into the depths of the cave, where ashes and potsherds in abundance attested former occupation, and well I remember my walk back to Ghâzi in the evening. The sun was rapidly declining when we started, I on foot, and my little boy of five, well armed with a bow and arrow for possible tigers, in a small native doolie, which was borne on the shoulders of a couple of stout villagers. Through rough rocks of schist or limestone, and by many a rugged track, our path conducted us down the steep declivities of Gandghar, affording us near at hand beautiful sunny views of valley and precipice and lofty Sikh fortress, and revealing far away the stately Indus, the spacious Peshâwur Valley, the mountains of Swât, and the still more distant hills of Kâbul and Bâjâur, where human life is cheap and men go armed to the teeth. High over our heads, in the blue ether, wheeled a golden-crested eagle, and in the lower atmosphere floated kites and hawks. Sometimes a brace of black partridges, startled by our approach, went whirring noisily into the lower copses, or a painted jay flew by, or a pair of doves spotted and rose-coloured, or some blue pigeons, lingered to gaze at us, or a chatterbox peered from the gloom of a thicket, or a flight of excited starlings swept through the radiant air. Among those wild upland glens, where homesteads are few, solitary and scattered, dwell too the leopard, the wolf, and the red and grey hyæna, the fox and the jackal, the pole-cat and the mongoose, the grey squirrel and "fretful" porcupine, together with a species of deer named there the *râinik*, but lower down the *gûral*, being in fact the common ravine-deer. At one time we found ourselves in a deep dark dell, all enclosed by precipices, a fit abode for the oracle of a god, in which flowed from perennial springs cold pellucid water, and where flourished an abundance of vegetable life, — as the *kamila*,¹ adorned profusely with lovely red flowers and berries; the graceful drooping dark-green creeper *veyri*,² renowned as a remedy for dyspepsia; the *gûngeyr*, of which the dull red berries are said to be purgative;

¹ *Kamila*, from which the vermifuge *Rotifera Tinctoria* is extracted.

² *Veyri* or *Weri* (*Pentatropis Spiralis*, Nat. Ord. *Asclepiadiæ*).



such specimens of acacia as the *phulāh* or gum acacia, and the *kikkar* or *acacia arabica*, and the jujube tree, called *ber*, together with the *dhaman*,¹ glorious for its grand foliage and lovely white flowers, and valuable for its fine elastic wood, which is highly prized by the country bowyers. We arrived late, the evening was bitterly cold, and we were glad to draw round a blazing log fire in the hospitable house of a lonely Indus Customs' Officer, T. L. Barlow by name, whose aid was of much value to me in the collection of some of these tales.

The origin of the name Gandghar is quite uncertain. I may mention, however, that *gand* in *Gurmukhi* means anything foul and abominable, as filth. But on the banks of the Upper Indus it appears to possess an extended meaning, and it may be applied to what is monstrous, horrible, and obscene, as demons, ogres, and giants,—such a monster, for instance, as Shakespeare's Caliban. Gandgarh then may mean the Fort or Home of the Giants, a very appropriate name for a place so fraught with traditional stories of those foul races which appear to have succumbed to the superior cunning of the smaller folk of the world.

Chapat.—A game of very high antiquity in India. As in chess, it is played on squares, but the men, which are sixteen in number, in sets of four, each distinguished by its own colour, are all pawns, just as in draughts, and in the favourite game of the Japanese, while the men are of one value each. The board, which is usually composed of embroidered or stamped cloth, is however, not square, but in the form of a plain cross. The dice are thrown before each move. One Rāja Nal is traditionally said to have been the inventor of it.

The game played by Rasālu and Sirikap, with the stakes involved, has many points in common with the famous gambling match between Duryodhana and Yudishthira in the great epic of the Mahabhārat (*circa* B.C. 1500).

The foregoing rude cut is from a little chap-book version of the Rasālu Legend, published in Gurmukhi in Lahore. It represents the two kings at the moment when Rasālu is finally victorious. The action of the players is fine, while the calm attitude of the woeful queen and the evident concern of the infant princess, Koklā, as I take her to be, together with the complacency of the spotted, black-whiskered cat as she mumbles the accommodating rat,

¹ *Dhaman* (*Grewia Elastica*).

are equally fine. The game is excellently portrayed; it is clear and unmistakable. But the most triumphant stroke of the artist is the introduction of the wall of human heads, all of which, it is quite evident, are deeply interested in the issue of the contest. The whole conception is charmingly realistic, while the method of representing the crowded events of the episode in a single scene, after the manner of the cunning artists of Anglo-Saxon and mediæval times, is well calculated to arrest the stray fancy, and to arouse the sluggish interest of the bucolic Panjâbî.



Râja Hôdi.—According to the authority of Ghulâm, a villager of Mount Gandgarh, representing probably a prevailing local tradition, Hodi's capital was at Ond, on the western bank of the Indus, the very spot where, according to General Cunningham, Alexander the Great crossed the river. But Hôdi also had a seat at Atak (Attock), and his territory, as already remarked in the Introduction, was named Udi-nâgra. The name Udi still survives in more than one spot in the neighbourhood of Atak.

But Hôdi appears to have been something more than a petty chieftain, for we find his memory, as also already noted, largely preserved as far east as Lahore, and as far west as Jalâlâbâd in Afghânistân. When encamped at the latter place during Sir Sam Browne's occupation of the valley in 1878, I learned from certain

of the country-folk that he was one of three brothers, all sons of Râja Afrâssa, evidently the Afrâsiâh of Persian story. He is there called Hûdi or Ūdi, and his brothers are named Aianpôsh and Daranta, all three of them being associated traditionally with (1) Hada, five miles due south of Jalâlâbâd, which is named as Hôdi's capital, his summer palace consisting of vast halls extending under the adjoining conglomerate hills, which we partly excavated; with (2) the Aianpôsh *stûpa*, which we also opened, and in which was found a chamber containing a solid gold reliquary with relics,^{*} and a number of gold Bactrian, together with two gold Roman coins, one of Nero and the other of Domitian; and with (3) the charming spot Daranta, above five miles west of Jalâlâbâd, famous for its beautiful Bûddhist *stûpas*, all of which had been rifled by Masson, in 1839, and for its grand monastic caves. Afrâssa's kingdom, say the people, went east as far as Jamrûd, close to Peshâwur, and was known as Bakta-land, from the name of the *wazîr* of a preceding giant-king, the great Naushîrwân of Persia (*circa* 531—579 A.D.), who, they say, first built the border fortress of Jamrûd, but on the site of a former *vîhâra* there, since the central portion of the present fort occupies the area of an ancient *stûpa*, some of the lower courses of which still remain, exhibiting all the well-known characteristics of Buddhist masonry.

These meagre traditions are preserved by the villagers of Hâda, who also believe that the three brothers were slain by Amîhamzâ, (*i.e.* the Imâm Al Hamzâ, Muhammad's famous son-in-law,) that many of the *stûpas* were built by Râja Hûdi, that Aianpôsh was so called because of his iron coat-armour, and that Daranta ruled at Bârâbât.

In the Peshâwur Valley, the following tradition survives respecting Râja Hûdi and his brethren.

At the time of the settlement of the Pathân races in the Peshâwur Valley, a fort had been built at Rânigat by a Hindu queen, two of whose brothers also lived in the valley, the one at Chârsadda and the other at Peshâwur, while Udi Râja lived in his fort overlooking Khairâbâd, opposite Attock. It was arranged that when danger threatened any of them, a fire should be lighted as a signal, when the smoke curling up to the sky would bring the others to the rescue. The Hashtnaggar râja, to test his relations, lit a fire; they, seeing smoke, went to his assistance, only to find it was a false alarm. Some time after, the queen, being attacked by Pathâns,

* Now in the Gold Room in the British Museum.



lit the signal fire, but as a false alarm had been given before, her relations came not to her assistance, and she was defeated. It is said that during the fight she ascended a large rock to watch for the aid she expected; but being very fair, delicate and beautiful, she melted away in the sun's rays. The rock therefore is called Rânigat, or the Queen's Stone, to this day, and a red stain on it is pointed out as the mark of the ill-fated queen's blood. *

According to the Rasâlu Legend, Râja Hôdi was killed at Kherî Mûrtî in Râwâl Pindi District. But the Gandgarh people say he met his death at Mohat on the left bank of the Indus, five miles below Torbêla. Mohat is beautifully situated on cliffs opposite Garhî, above the blue waters of the Indus. The ruins of Garhi cover miles. Close by are the remains of an old fortress, called the Fort of Imrân, and, buried there, it is believed, is a vast treasure, which is guarded by a black snake furnished with a top-knot three yards long! A similar tradition exists concerning the Fort of Atak (Attock), which is always garrisoned now by British troops. This fort, as at present existing, was built by Akbâr. A huge snake guards the buried treasure, and over the place of its deposit lies a stone bearing the seal of Solomon. Whoever finds that treasure, or whoever bridges the Indus rolling below, is to have universal dominion! The English have bridged the river, but the treasure has still to be discovered.

THE FIVE PÎRS—See p. 476.

SOME OF THE ORIGINAL VERSES OF HIR AND RÂNJHA.
WITH LITERAL TRANSLATION AND NOTES *

1

Ral hhirâwân sothâ kîtâ
Lohâ mul mangâo.
Lohâ khâr dukânê útte
Kahyân phâl gharâo.
Ral bhira salâh karo
Te zimyân wand wand khâo.

* This tradition is preserved in the British Settlement Report.

* It would have been impossible within the limits of this book to quote in original the verses of all the stories given. These few from *Hir and Rânjha* are, therefore, given as examples of the rest.



Together the brothers took counsel
To buy some iron,
To take it to the smithy
Spades and ploughshares to make;
Together the brothers consulted
To divide also their lands and to eat.

NOTES.—*Ral*, adv. together, from *ralna* to join as company.
Ralâna = to mix, as wine and water.
Sothâ, an archaic word = counsel, consultation.
Wand, to divide. *Wand wand*, repeated, to fill up the measure of feet.

II

Mahyân chàren, mûrlî mâren,
Palie kujh nâ pâyâ,
Bharjayân âke rowan lagyân,
Hai, hai! bhayye-khâyâ.

You graze the buffaloes, play your pipe,
And earn nothing.
Your sisters-in-law came and began to weep,
(Crying) *Hai, hai!* you brother-devourer!

NOTES.—*Mahyân*, pl. s. from sing. *Manh*, buffaloes, an archaic word, the usual form being *majhin*, or *manjhîn*.

Mûrlî is a flute, such as that which the god Krishna plays.

Palle, a skirt. The line means literally, "You've got nothing in your skirt," and refers to the custom of tying up coin, or other small treasures, in the corner of the skirt or robe. Hence the saying. *Tere palle kê paiyâ?* What have you gained?

Hâi, hâi! the usual exclamation of distress. Cf. the Greek *âi, âi!*

Bhayye-khâyâ; another form being *Bhira khhâdâ*—Devourer of your brothers. Compare the English saying, "You'd devour me out of house and home," and the Bible-phrase, "They devour widows' houses."

III

Takht-Hazâreon Rânjha turyâ
Pahlî râf masâtî,
Mange tûkre is naddhe ânde,
Te kachchî lassî pîtî.

From Takht-Hazâra Rânjha started
 And the first night came to a mosque,
 He wanted bread, this boy brought it,
 And he drank milk-and-water.

NOTES.—*Takht-Hazâra*. *Takht* in Persian means a throne. In the Panjâb there are two Hazâra districts, of which Takht-Hazâra was the more important.

Turiyâ, an archaic word still lingering in the Hazâra and Râwâl Pindi Districts. It comes from *turnâ*, to start, to leave, being used for *chelnâ*.

Tukre—literally “pieces”—pieces of bread.

Kachchî lassî. *Lassî* is the word used for curds and water, a favourite beverage. *Kachchî lassî* is watered milk, the milk being raw (*kachcha*), that is, as yet unchanged by the action of fermentation or heat.

VI

Basantar sânun hath na ândî,
 Ghar-ghar dhûndân wattân,
 Pahli sat waddâne mârî
 Lahu chogayâ hathhân.

Fire I could not find,
 From house to house I wandered,
 The first blow I struck with the hammer
 And the blood flowed from my hands.

NOTES.—*Basantar*, a Sanscrit word still in local use (*Basantrâ*, to warm up), used here for the Panjâbi “agg.”

Ghar-ghar, house by house, a common idiomatic form. Thus *ek-ek*, one by one; *roz-roz*, day by day, etc.

Waddâne, a sledge-hammer; apparently local.

IX

Terâ kî kûjh gayâ
 Tainûn puchhe Sowârî,
 Terî ehdî yârî âhî,
 Tûn haiṇ kamzât bhârî.

What is the something you have lost,
 Sowari is asking you,
 Yours and his was the friendship,
 You are very low-caste.

NOTES.—*Ehāi*, his or hers, for *isāi*, (local word).

Ahī, was, for *sī*, (also local).

Kamzāt. *Kam*, little, and *sāt*, for *jāt*, caste.

Bhāri, great, heavy. *Kamzāt bhāri* means, therefore, a great rogue (fem).

X

Ralke Pîr dua karde
 Nân terâ Miyân Rânjhâ,
 Bachcha Hîr tudâhân dîtî
 Ge dûdh pilâen manjhâ.

All the Pîrs joined in prayers (and said)
 Your name is Miyân Rânjhâ,
 The girl Hîr is given to you,
 If you give us to drink some buffalo's milk.

NOTES.—*Pîr*. The Pîrs were the five chosen disciples of Muhammad, who (like the Twelve Apostles) followed their master everywhere. Their names were Abbâs, Ali, Ababakr-Sadîq, Usmân, and Umâr.

Of the two great divisions of Muhammadans, the Shîâhs and the Sûnnîs, the Shîâhs acknowledge Ali only. Of Ali's sons, Hassan and Hassain with their children were killed in a fight by Yazîd, Muhammad's great enemy, and every year at the Muharram (Holy time) the Shîâhs celebrate their deaths in processions, with much wailing and weeping.

Miyân, a title of honour like Mr. or Rev.—applied generally to Syûds and Mollahs, and the other holy men.

Tudâhân, an old word in local use for *tainûn*.

XI

Pîrân uhnûn hukam dîtâ
 Dôno akh mitâî,
 Allâ de nân dî tainûn Hîr dîtî
 Mâhr Chûchak dî jâî.

NOTES AND APPENDIX

The Pîrs ordered him
 To close both his eyes, (saying)
 In the name of God we have given you Hîr,
 Mâhr Chûhak's daughter.

NOTES.—*Mâhr*, a honorific word, meaning head, master or chief; from the Arabic *mâhir*.

Jât, f. from m. *jâîâ*, offspring, from the verb *jâma*, to bring forth.

XII

Uchyâ lamyân khûb jawânan
 Bâlân nâl dupattâ,
 Tûn ghâton chhor be ghate hoyon,
 Dûbsen kamliyâ gattâ.

O youth, tall and beautiful,
 With a turban on your head,
 You have left the ford for no ford.
 O fool, you will drown in the stream!

NOTES.—*Uchyâ*, high, tall, *lamyân*, long, *uchyâ-lamyân*, an intensive,—very tall.

Bâlân, literally, not head, but hair.

Tûn ghâton, etc. A proverb runs thus—*Kiyân ghhâton bê ghhât honâ hain?* Why leave the sand-banks for no sand-banks? Why are you going wrong?—referring to the fords in the rivers which lie over sand-banks.

Kamliyâ, O fool, from *Kamlâ*, a fool: so also *jhalliyâ*, O simpleton, from *jhallî*.

XVI

Sûno Siyâlo dhiyân wâliyo,
 Dhiyân na rakho koi,
 Jamdiyân î mâr satto,
 Tars na khâyo koî.
 Ethe othe duhîn jahânin,
 Hîr Rânjhe dî hoî.

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Hear, ye Siyâls, who have daughters!
 Do not keep your daughters,
 As soon as they are born kill and cast them out,
 Have no pity on them! (for)
 Here and there, in both the worlds,
 Hîr belongs to Rânjha!

NOTES.—*Siyâls*, a tribe of Panjâbis, grazing buffaloes.
Tars, pity, from the Sanscrit. In Persian it signifies fear.
Na khâyo tars. Do not eat pity—do not admit pity to the heart.
Hîr Rânjhe dî hoî.—Hîr is of Rânjha—an idiom similar to the familiar Latin one.

XIX

In the lament of the old uncle, rendered in prose in the translation, "*Khairî*", the name of his pet brown hen, here means "beauty". His little red bitch was named *Lohî*, a word which means red. The Panjâbis are fond of naming animals after some characteristic. Thus "*Bolû*", "Speak", for a good watch-dog; "*Dhabbû*", "Spot", for a spotted dog; "*Nîli*", "bluish-gray", for a cow of that colour, or for a grey mare, etc.

XXVI

Sîn we Kâzî bâbal jihâ
 Main jîhyân ghar dhiyân,
 Mintân kardî arzân kardî
 Jân bolawân Miyân.
 Rânjha merâ paik piyâdâ
 Mast mîrâkan thiyân.
 Rânjâ ja dalân wîch khalosî
 Main dhâl Rânjhan dî thiyân,
 Je main mukh Rânjhe thin morân
 Makke kiyon kar gayân?

Hear me, O Kâzi, you are like my father,
 You have daughters like me in your house,
 I am praying and beseeching you,
 And ever have called you Miyân.
 Rânjha is my brave soldier,
 I am mad after him.

NOTES AND APPENDIX

If Rânjha stand in the battle-field,
 I will stand as Rânjha's shield.
 If I turn my face from Rânjha,
 How can I go to Mecca?

NOTES.—*Bâbal*, a fondly-loved father, from *bâbâ*, used by daughters.
Paik, locally, "brave", a "brave man". In Persian it means a foot-messenger.

Piyâda, a foot-soldier, from *pad* (Sansk.) *pâun*, the foot.

Mirâkan, mad with love. An archaic word not generally used in this sense, though found in Hazâra and along the border. The corresponding verb is *mirâknâ*, to be melancholy, to be mad, literally to strike [from (?) *mirrikhan*, to strike, as when a bull is *mast* and strikes with "horn and hoof"].

Dalân, pl. of *dal*, a battle-field (from Sanc. *dalan* to split, to kill). There is a common proverb which runs—*jithe dal ãthe bâdal* (or *Dalân nâl sâthi bâdal*)—Where the battle-field is there are clouds.

Mukh, face. In Sanscrit also the mouth, a meaning preserved in the compound *Mukharbind*, "Holy Mouth", a title of the god Krishna. Compare "Chrysostom".

XXVIII

Fajrîn thîn main nath gharâwân,
 Peshîn thîn monôf,
 Dîgar dâ main hâr parowân,
 Shâm pâwân gal choli,
 Khuftân de main witr guzârân,
 Naf pae merî jholî,
 A Kâzî, bâdshâh de jullîe,
 Sharâ mukâwan rolî.

At morning hour I will make ready my nose-ring,
 At noon my ear-ring,
 In the afternoon I will prepare my necklace,
 At sunset I will put on my frock,
 At bedtime I will perform my *witr*,
 Having my rosary in my lap.
 Come, Kâzi, let us go to the king
 To settle our dispute.

NOTES.—This stanza refers to the five fixed times of daily prayer among the Muhammadans. Hîr contends that she does her duty as a faithful Moslem, and that the king will justify her.

Fajrîn. *Fajr*, morning. The morning prayer said at sunrise.

Peshîn, from *pesh*, before, or in front (Persian). The hour when the sun moves forward from the zenith. Up to one or two o'clock.

Digar, the second step (Persian), the hour from two to four.

Shâm (Hindî) the evening, the hour when the sun sets, evensong.

Witr (Arabic) the confession of faith repeated over and over again at bed-time, *khuftân*, between nine and twelve.

Nafl (Arabic) here refers to the string of beads, the rosary of immemorial use in the East, *pace* St. Dominic.

Mômoli is sometimes used for the bracelet, sometimes for all the jewellery. Really a Hindustâni word. The Panjâbi word is *bûlâk*.

Hâr is any necklace, equally a garland of flowers as a necklace of silver. Here it would be the latter.

Chôli; it is made like a long apron, hanging only in front and tied behind.

Khuftân, in Panjâbi, bed-time, from the Persian *khuftân*, to sleep.

Jhôtî is a skirt, and so the "lap."

Rôli, an unusual word, akin to *raulî*, also *raul*, a quarrel, a row.

XXXII

Bhannî bhannî mâin pattan gayyân,
 Aggon berî âi,
 Berî de wich gabhar dithâ,
 Bukkal usdî chât,
 Chishmân bhar asân wal dithâ,
 Lagyâ uttar sâhî,
 Hazrat Khwâje pîr ne,
 Merî kîttî kurmât,
 Hûrân pakar bahatî mâyan,
 Main Rânjhe nâl biyâhî,
 'Arshân ton mainûn gahne âe,
 Ik haslî ik bâhî,
 Jibrâîl nikâh parhâyâ,
 Isrâîl gawâhî

Panj Pîr merî janjje charhe,
Kitâ fazal Ilâhî,
Ethe, othe, dohîn jahâni,
Hîr Rânjhe nûn diwâî.

Running, running, I went to the ferry,
Before me came a boat,
In the boat I saw a youth,
I took hold of his skirt,
(or, I lifted his veil)
With full eyes he regarded me,
And my breath came quick.
The Hazrat Khwâjah Pîr
Did my betrothal,
Fairies caught and put me in Mâyân,
And I was married to Rânjhâ.
From the skies came my jewels,
One a necklace and one a bracelet,
Jibrâil solemnised my marriage,
And Isrâfîl was witness.
The Five Pîrs joined in the procession,
And God had blessing for me.
Here and there, in both the worlds
Hîr was given to Rânjha.

NOTES.—*Bhannâ*, from *bhajnâ* to run; another word is *dharûknâ*, and another *nasnâ*. The usual word for “to run” is *durnâ*.

Gabhar, a youth (provincial). Another form in more general use is *gabhrû*, also a bridegroom, or a husband.

Bukkal, a veil, a skirt, a sheet; a woman’s veil, a man’s skirt; but men frequently veil their faces from the sun too when travelling, or sitting, or lying.

Uttar sâhî, quick breathing, as from exertion or excitement, dying away, swooning. The term is also used for asthma and heart-disease.

Mâyân. *Mâyân* is a peculiar custom observed for about a week before marriage. The bride is put in some secluded place where no one may visit her but one or two of her girl friends called *sahbâhîyân*, or bridesmaids. She must neither wash nor change her clothes, the idea being that her beauty after her final bath will be all the more resplendent. On these occasions a feast is held and much



joy expressed. Dancing and singing take place, and the bride's body is anointed with fragrant unguents. Then follows the wedding.

I once witnessed a similar ceremony in Ceylon among the Tamils. A girl having come to the age of puberty was confined for some three or four days in a little conical wigwam made of reeds, and compelled to remain there in the utmost neglect, her food being handed in on a plank of wood. On her wedding day she was taken out, well washed in the stream, anointed, dressed up, and bejewelled. Feasting and loud music were kept up the whole night, and for several days and nights after.

Chishmân, a Panjâbi form of Persian *Chashmân*, sing. *chashm*.

Hûran, houris. *Parî* (our old friend the Peri) is a fairy. *Hûris* and *Parîs* are feminine, but *jîns* ("genii"), evil spirits, are masculine. The fairies are said, among the Hindus, to be under the rule of *Râjâ Indrâ* (the god of the Vedas), and they are believed to give good crops and bring luck generally.

Hasrat Khwâjâ. *Hasrat* (Arabic) is a title of honour among holy men. *Khwâjâ* also a term of honour refers to *Khwâjah Khizâr*, the green-robed deity, who among Muhammadans is the protector of travellers. The villagers of the Indus, Muhammadan as well as Hindu, believe that he is the river-god, able to preserve their fields and villages from the eroding action of the waters.

'*Ashân* pl. of '*arsh* (Arabic) the sky, the home of the angels, or rather the term used for the throne of God.

Ilâhî, for *Allâh*, an Arabic word in common use in the Panjâb.

Jibrâîl is the Archangel Gabriel, who brought the Old Testament to the Prophets, and the Korân to Mûhammad.

Isrâfîl is Raphael, who is regarded as a guardian angel, and who will blow the trumpet on the Judgment Day.

The other Archangels among Muhammadans are *Mikâîl* (Michael), who gives daily bread, and *Asrâîl* (Azrael), the Angel of Death, who bears away the soul.

These are the four *farishtâs*, or archangels of Islâm.

xxxv

Babal sânûn majhîn dityân,
Koî hûrân koî paryân,
Sing jinhânde wal wal kunhe,
Dand chambe dîân kalyân,

NOTES AND APPENDIX

Bahr jawan te jûh sohâme,
 Ghar âwan te galyân,
 Â, Rânjha gal-lag-lag milîye.
 Khân khasmân nûn khalgân.

My father has given me buffaloes,
 Some are houris, some fairies,
 Their horns are twisted curve on curve,
 Their teeth are white like jasmine-buds.
 When they go forth the pasture looks lovely,
 When they come home the lanes;
 Come, Rânjha, closely let us embrace,
 (And) let them devour their owners.

NOTES.—This pretty little pastoral I have rendered a little freely.

Wal, *wal*, very curved or crooked (*wal*, crooked).

Kalyân, jasmine buds, furnish the usual simile for small white teeth, and there is a common saying among Panjâbîs—*Dand chambe dî kaliyân*, teeth white as buds of jasmine, which, in point of fact, is the line in the stanza.

Jûh, green pasturage of any kind, as even a bush; *jûhî*, green.

Galyân, the little village streets, from *galî*, a passage. In the hills it means a pass.

Gal-lag-lag-milnâ, an idiom, to embrace as closely as possible. *Gal*, the neck, *lag* joining, *milnâ*, to mingle.

Khasmân, pl. from *khasm*, a master. A common retort is *Khasm khâv*—Eat your master—Get out—Go to Hell! And this is the expression which Hîr really uses. *Khân* is merely a prefix of honour. *Khân khasmân*, masters, or owners. *Khasm* also means among women a “husband”. So in England the term “master” is commonly used by country women for their husbands.

XXXVIII

Ayâ Sâwan mânḥ we Kâzî
 Rurh gâi ret nimânî
 Horyân hatkiyân rahindâ nâhîn
 Shaḥḥ daryâ dâ pânî.



O Kâzî, the month of Sâwan (July) came,
The wretched sand is swept away.
With scoldings and threatenings stop not
The waters of the deep river (of love).

NOTES.—The month of July is the rainy month, when floods take place all over the country, and the sandbanks in the broad beds of the Panjâb rivers are obliterated. The figure Hir employs is, that though in the winter when the river is low the banks are sufficient to keep it within its various channels, they are useless when the season of floods comes. So talking and correction may keep the feelings within the limits of conventional rule under ordinary conditions, but, when the heart is flooded with the river of love, those barriers are swept away.

Mâh, a month, in Persian *mâh*, in Sanscrit *Mâs*. In Persian the word *mâh* means also the "Moon".

Shâuh, deep or flooded, an old word only in local use. I have not been able to trace it, unless it is connected with *sâyâ* (Sansk. *khâyâ*), shadowy, and thus dark and deep.

FINIS



AN INTERIOR
Examples of costume