CHARAKA PUJA

AND OTHER STORIES

BY

CHOLA

THE ROXBURGHE PRESS

3, *Victoria Street*

Westminster

CONTENTS.

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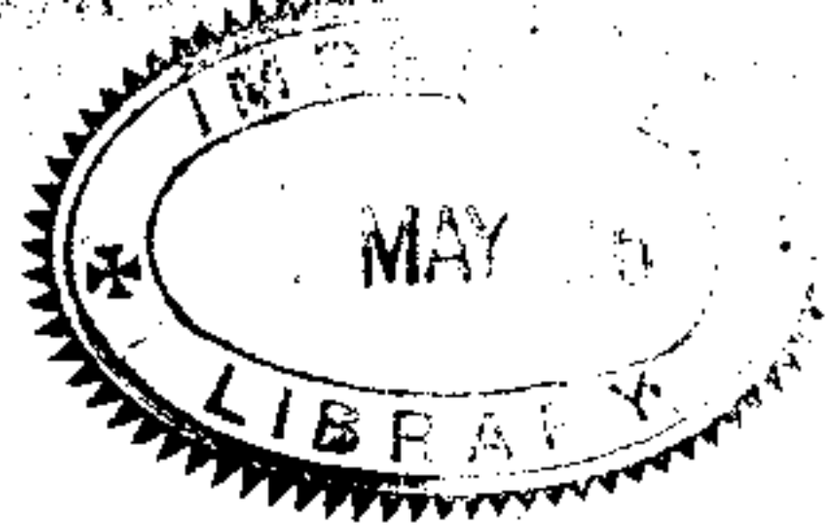

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PREFACE.

THOSE of my readers, if I am fortunate enough to secure any, who may be familiar with South Indian life, will, I doubt not, recognise the truth of these brief narratives. For the benefit of others less favoured I would remark that *Charaka Puja* was forbidden in 1894 by the Madras Government, owing to the fatal result which attended a recent example of that peculiar worship. Its strict performance will consequently be rarer in the future. The rites of *Sati*, which, as is well known, were forbidden at a comparatively early epoch in the present century, may be regarded now as almost extinct, at least in British India; but in the days when they yet flourished under British rule several cases of child wives being burnt have been recorded by credible witnesses. The spirit that prompted these cruelties still survives. *Fakirs*, *yogis*, *sanyāsis*, and the like, are mysterious Indian products, who have, in many cases, developed some of the obscurer powers and qualities of humanity to a degree that Westerns can hardly appreciate. An *ex-yogi*, who died a respected member of the native Christian community, assured me that when he attained to the fourth stage of *yoga* the devil entered into him. I quite believe that it was so.

CHOLA.

August 20th, 1895.

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CHARAKA PUJA.

SEATED in a long-armed chair in the verandah of a dāk bungalow, I was endeavouring, with the aid of an admirable cheroot, to digest a somewhat meagre dinner, of which the customary athletic fowl had been the chief constituent. For other occupation, I was admiring the moon as it rose in full-orbed splendour from behind a dark line of palmyra trees. The bare and unattractive stems of these gaunt palms were shrouded by other dense foliage in the foreground, so that I had the satisfaction of observing Diana emerging from the gloom below, until she appeared to be balancing herself upon the sharp point of a palmyra leaf. It was very kind of her to furnish me with this entertainment, for one does at times feel a bit depressed by the loneliness of a sojourn in some remote Indian bungalow, and welcomes any well-meant

effort to cheer the gloom. But, as the goddess of the night soared higher into the air, the entertainment grew less exciting, and I began to consider how else I might beguile the evening hours. Then I bethought me of my "boy," to converse with whom was ever a liberal education, and, accordingly on the instant, shouted, "Boy!" A brisk "Yessar," assured me that he would be with me in half a minute.

My boy was undoubtedly a treasure. I have often noticed that we poor Anglo-Indians, at any rate those of us who dwell in what the inhabitants of the other Presidencies call, for reasons known only to themselves, the benighted Presidency, always swear by our own particular boy. We regard with the most profound suspicion the inestimable domestic treasures of our friends, and reckon them a rascally thieving lot; but we always find a brilliant exception to the general rule of depravity in our own personal attendant. Each one of us esteems himself singularly fortunate in the possession of that unique being, a completely honest, almost truthful, and generally devoted servant, which marvel kindly fates have mys-

teriously reared for our private advantage. It always amuses me to hear Anglo-Indians indulging in promiscuous abuse of native servants, and at the same time contending with one another in fulsome adulation of the solitary specimen of the class with which they are severally well acquainted. However, I do not propose to suffer myself to fall into the grievous error of saying a good word for other people's boys; so I content myself with repeating emphatically that my boy—Rāmaswāmi by name—is a treasure. His religion is to serve me well; he is never tired when I want anything of him; he can provide me with a meal in a wilderness. His own wants never obtrude themselves. How he gets his own food I don't know. Once, when I called him, I saw him rush along with his fingers covered with rice and curry stuff to a pool of water, calling out, "Yessar," as he ran; but that is the nearest I have ever come to any acquaintance with the satisfaction of his personal necessities.

Rāmaswāmi, who, by the way, in spite of his appellative, is a Christian, and was named by his godfathers and godmother Elijah, stands

before me now, all attention, so I will cease these musings and recreate myself with improving conversation.

"Rāmaswāmi," I say, producing a letter from my pocket, "the Chokra has done write me a letter."

"Yessar," is Rāmaswāmi's non-committal rejoinder. There is no love lost between my boy and the Chokra, I know. The Chokra, who rejoices in the name of Murugasen, is not even distantly related to the boy, and is consequently regarded by him, in his capacity of head-boy and responsible family provider, in the light of an intruder. Murugasen, it so befell, came to me with a very strong recommendation from a friend, whom he had served for some years as dog-boy, and I have endeavoured to stick to him in spite of the difficulties of the situation.

"Chokra writing," I resume, "six rupees only getting, too little pay."

Rāmaswāmi in his inimitable manner looks volumes, but does not yet feel called upon for a remark. There is a sort of quiet twinkle in his eye, which shows how thoroughly he appreciates this little move on the Chokra's

part. Can it be that he inspired the letter himself? Perhaps, after all, the Chokra knows less about this epistle than either of us. If any other person's boy were concerned, I fear that I should consider this little affair of the letter a plant. Never mind. Whether the Chokra had anything to do with it or not, this is the letter purporting to come from him, which I perused, while Rāmaswāmi stood before me respectfully attentive.

"To Master Esquire.

"Respecting Sir,

"Master's honour's Chokra humbly making petition master's feet very poor boy plenty big family man consisting of fourteen souls including too old very no use female grandmother eating daily too much rice master giving very little pay Chokra how keeping all peoples. Every gentleman knowing one Chokra doing all proper business too nicely six rupees only getting pay not sufficient each day cooking rice how such a thing possible. Chokra never leaving master's honour's work, how getting such another good gentleman always making support for poor peoples. Begging plenty excuse too much trouble making for master's honour, please making answer for which act of charity always making pray master's long life and too much happiness, your honour's

"Very truly,

"Chokra."

The letter is certainly somewhat suggestive

of the kind of literary composition that one would expect from the industrious Murugasen. He does not appear to have employed a professional petition writer, as native clerks and servants usually do, but to have trusted to his own skill and memory. I incline to think that the virtuous Elijah has cunningly suggested ambitious thoughts to this simple child.

"Rāmaswāmi," I say, "what for Chokra saying he very big family man? He very little boy, fifteen years old at the most."

"Yessar, he little boy, but him family too big. Father, mother, brother, sisters, too much people. That true word only Chokra writing, Rāmaswāmi thinking."

"Dear me! Bad business, Chokra only fourteen years old having so many persons to feed."

"Yessar, that family plenty tricks family. What for father, elder brother, doing no work? That only Rāmaswāmi asking. Chokra's father that man one time getting it big employment, sometime making too big mistake, therefore getting dismiss that business."

"Quite so, Rāmaswāmi. But master thinking that Chokra good boy, doing work nicely."

"Master's honour very well know that boy

too clever boy. He knows every business; but Rāmaswāmi thinking that boy not honest boy. How many times I giving that boy good advice, he taking no notice."

As I have a pretty clear idea of Rāmaswāmi's opinion of the Chokrá, and almost suspect that in moments of excitement he gives "good advice" with a stick, I do not feel it expedient to pursue this subject further. My boy has, I feel sure, some deserving relative who is admirably qualified for the honourable post of *chokra* in my service, and will have the position, with all its emoluments, sooner or later. But I mean to do my possible to keep the aspirant out a little longer. I rather hope, by the way, that Rāmaswāmi doesn't mean to sell the post. I know he loves "*gumshun*," * as he calls it, very dearly. Still I am confident that it does not really matter. Whether he presents a relative to the office, or sells it to the highest bidder, he is certain to look after my interests, and secure a good servant. Some day I will ask him what he proposes to do in the matter—but not to-day. I will change the subject.

* *Anglicé*, "commission."

"Well, *boy*, this is a very quiet place. How am I to get through another day here?"

"Master like to see one *tamāsh* to-morrow? Plenty big *tamāsh* in next country to-morrow."

This sounds rather promising, for I gather from this remark that there is to be some festival in an adjacent village on the morrow. If this be so, I see my way to gaining a little further insight into the mysterious manners of my Indian fellow-subjects. I therefore accept the suggestion.

"What sort of a *tamāsh* is it?" I ask.

"Master done hear the hooks' business?" replies my boy somewhat evasively.

"You mean *Charaka Puja*, the hook-swinging *puja*?" I answer. "Yes, I have heard about that. But the Government giving order to stop that business. No little pleasures such as burning widows and crushing wretches under idol cars for the poor mild Hindu now. No hook-swinging business now, Rāmaswāmi."

"So master only thinking. This country too far country. European gentlemen not coming to this country, and black people

making plenty bad business, too much mistakes. If master giving order, Rāmaswāmi showing master hooks' business to-morrow."

After some further conversation in which Rāmaswāmi assured me that he was a Christian man, and had no part or parcel in the heathenish proceedings of the "black people," it was arranged that we should set out early on the next morning to see the *tamāsh*. I wanted to walk to the village, as it was only five miles distant, and it appeared to me that the exercise would be "good for master's body," as the natives express it; but Rāmaswāmi would not hear of such a proceeding, and with respectful firmness insisted that I must journey thither in a shut-up *bandy*, indicating that the sight of me might prove a hindrance to the ceremony. He expressed himself after this manner.

"Seeing European gentleman sometime making all peoples too much afraid. Rāmaswāmi doing that business very nicely. If Rāmaswāna telling one lie to-morrow, God giving excuse."

About five o'clock next morning my peerless boy called me, and pointed with justifiable

pride to the conveyance which he had, at considerable cost I am free to admit, secured for my accommodation. There was the cart, a really high-class prison-van sort of county chariot, and there were two fine bullocks standing gentle-eyed, meditative under the trees in the bungalow compound. The driving ruffian, wrapped up in his cloth, was there also, sleeping corpse-like on the ground.

Rāmaswāmi evidently meant business. Furthermore it was obvious that he intended to disguise my aristocratic person as much as possible, for he had gathered together and arranged for use some of my most disreputable white clothes which had already been laid aside to await the tender attentions of the gentle *dhobie*.

"Rāmaswāmi," I exclaimed, pointing to the selected garments, "you don't mean to pass me off as a Eurasian loafer, I hope, because one really must draw the line somewhere, and I object."

No answer was returned to this my despairing protest, for the boy anticipating some such carping criticism on his judicious conduct, had prudently hurried off to prepare me some

light refection. I believe that his original intention was to keep me in the cart all day, and to assert that I was some devout Māhārāni on a pilgrimage. Probably he was not very clear in his own mind as to how to do the business very nicely, but had a vague idea that it was at least desirable that I should not be much in evidence ; and, if seen, should not attract undue notice through excess of respectability. For the rest he was prepared, in what he reckoned a good cause, to burden his soul with such venial untruths as circumstances might suggest.

When I was fully equipped—according to Rāmaswāmi's arrangements—in my dirty white drill suit, and having partaken of a frugal *chota-hazri*, was standing on the verandah steps with a match to my cheroot, while the *boy* was with much eloquence urging the sleepy driver to put the cattle under the yoke, it occurred to me to ask whether the police authorities took note of the cruel performance that was, as Rāmaswāmi believed, about to be enacted. Neither the driver nor my *boy* pretended to know whether such was the case or not, but the latter improved the opportunity by

asking me what he called "one very b question." The connection is obvious.

"Master, please saying what for Governme giving plenty many very big employments native men now? All peoples saying th very foolish business. Black people all t much making 'umbug. Plenty Europe gent men having big employment that very blessi for poor native men."

"Ah, Rāmaswāmi! You are not a patri I see. You'll never be a Congress walla You don't believe in simultaneous examin tions, I fear."

Not understanding this remark and su pecting much evil therein, Rāmaswāmi wa obviously nettled, and resumed,—

"Rāmaswāmi plenty sorry master thinkin he not speaking one true word. Rāmaswām not that kind of feller. Master seeing to-da and good sense coming."

This was an uncommonly severe speech but, to tell the truth, I did not really believ that the hook-swinging of the good old day would survive in this last decade of the nine teenth century, even in so remote a spot a that where I now was. I thought it probab

that the hooks would be fastened, under police supervision, to ropes tied round the victim's body, as is done in several parts of the country. Still, as the *boy* was much hurt by my apparent want of confidence, I hastened to reassure him, and without further parley bundled into the cart.

The road along which we travelled was very much crowded both with carts and foot-passengers, so that we might fairly calculate on being at least two hours *en route*. My only view, as I gracefully reclined within, was of the backs of the driver and my *boy*. The driver's body was an interesting study, as he was clearly a past master in the art of driving. He abused his bullocks in the vilest terms, and treated them to the wildest gesticulations; he poked them with a stick in their tenderest parts; he twisted their tails; and generally did all such things as expert native drivers do. All these arts were employed rather to avoid collisions than to force the pace. From time to time we did get mixed up with other vehicles, and the language that assisted the process of disentanglement was truly blood-curdling. The mild Hindu seems to know no middle course

—he either says not a word, and sits perfectly passive in the midst of confusion, or indulges in the most violent gestures and the foulest language. Our driver, it chanced, was not of the quiet kind, and as he seemed to select persons of similar dispositions to his own for collisory purposes, our journey was enlivened with much vituperative talk, the major portion of which, I am thankful to reflect, was entirely unintelligible to me.

At last we approached the scene where the swinging was to take place, and, forcing our way through a dense throng, came to a halt under the shadow of a great banyan tree. Rāmaswāmi's cheerful countenance now appeared at the square hole in my temporary prison, which did duty for a window, and he proceeded to give me good advice.

"Master, please sitting quiet. Rāmaswāmi giving order driving man running quick, finding out this business all."

My *boy* thereupon despatches the driver to see how matters are progressing, while he mounts guard over me. Things being so, I am moved to peer through the window to get some clearer idea of the situation. All that I

am at present able to discover, is that we are close to the bank of what must be a large tank. The outer margin of this tank is fringed with a grand row of banyan trees, under which are collected innumerable *bandies* of all descriptions. The former occupants of these conveyances are swarming up the bank, laughing and chattering as they go. One family is passing close to me. In front walks the father, carrying on his shoulder a naked urchin, who gaily flourishes a windmill toy; holding on to his other hand is a little girl. Behind comes the mother, gorgeously clad in green and crimson silk, and loaded with jewels, bearing on her hip a "female infant," and dragging behind her a waddling boy whose whole attention is devoted to a native confection made of flour and sugar, which he is struggling to consume. His is somewhat a hopeless struggle, for as soon as the dainty approaches his mouth, a pull from the maternal arm shakes up his whole body, and compels a forward dash, which materially hinders all other bodily dispositions.

Having seen so much, I retire into my shell, and, pending further orders from my *boy*, devote myself to reading. After I have been

so occupied for a good hour, an animated conversation between .my *boy* and the driver announces the return of the latter. Refreshed by the sounds of their discourse, I summon Rāmaswāmi to untie the string with which the handle of my *bandy's* door is coerced into its closing posture, and release me.

Being set free I proceed, hotly pursued by my *boy*, to run up the bank, and stand there gazing on the thousands assembled in the dry bed of a vast tank. The centre of attraction is an upright pole about thirty feet high, on the top of which is fastened horizontally a lesser pole. So much of the apparatus for the ceremony is clearly visible from our present point of view; but we do not contemplate the scene long, for Rāmaswāmi, observing a sudden movement in the mob, throwing his customary caution to the winds, exclaims,—

"Master, please coming plenty quick. This way coming."

We hurry onwards, and are soon pushing our way through the crowd, until without much difficulty we reach its inner margin. The holiday makers are obviously too intent upon the business in hand to have leisure for in-

vestigating us. They are, for the most part, staring, open-mouthed, at the central pole, momentarily expecting to see the tortured wretch raised into view.

From our closer position I am able to note the apparatus more exactly. To either end of the horizontal pole, which I can now see is a short bamboo, are fastened ropes. The victim, who is apparently a *sanyāsi*, or religious devotee, is prostrate before the upright post, and is no doubt doing *puja* to it, as an emblem of the god Siva. As he rises from his devotions, and turns to approach the ministers of this degrading worship, I can see him plainly. His hair is long and matted, his nails are also hideously long, his whole body is emaciated, and his sunken eyes have a wild and unnatural brightness. His only clothing is the most diminutive of cloths. He now crouches before the attendants, one of whom marks on his back with sacred ashes—that is the ashes of the dung of Siva's sacred animal, the cow—the places through which the hooks should pass. Hereupon another attendant smartly slaps the ascetic's back, and pinches up the flesh, while a third person drives a hook through the

quivering flesh. The second hook is passed through the flesh in a similar manner, and they are both speedily attached to the rope which hangs from one end of the horizontal bamboo. Several men now seize the rope attached to the other end of the bamboo, and by pulling it down, raise the poor *sanyāsi* high in the air. Then, rope in hand, they run round, and cause the victim, whose whole weight is borne by his two great wounds, to swing round at the other extremity. The *sanyāsi*, rising and falling as he whirls round, describes a circle of some thirty feet in diameter.

Being fully convinced now as to the reality of the proceedings, I had no desire to remain any longer as a spectator of this unpleasant worship, so made my way back again through the delighted crowd. On the bank I paused a moment to look behind me, and saw the devout *sanyāsi* still gyrating. If his lacerated flesh did not give way, he would perhaps be kept swinging for half an hour.

Rāmaswāmi was, of course, close at my heels; but the driver, equally of course, had made off, so we two put in the mildly reluctant cattle, and my excellent *boy*, taking the

ribbons, or, I should rather say, the strings, drove us off in first-class style, without having undue recourse to articulate speech.

As it was now about midday, we halted at a shady spot in order that I might breakfast. Rāmaswāmi accordingly served me with an excellent cold collation, and I took the opportunity of learning his views concerning the ceremony we had just witnessed.

"Who was that man, boy," I inquire, "they putting on the hooks?"

"Some people saying too good man; some people saying plenty bad man. Some peoples saying that man one time doing plenty bad business, now making sorry and big shame. Sometime that man making kill some person."

"You mean he is probably a murderer," I suggest.

"Master, please not saying that word. How Rāmaswāmi saying such a kind (of) thing. Doing hooks' business that man plenty *prejents* getting. That only Rāmaswāmi thinking. Black people all too much liking *prejent*."

"I subscribe to those sentiments, *boy*. But I should want to make sure of a very big

present myself, before consenting to be chief performer in *Charaka Puja*."

About the time that my simple meal was concluded our driver arrived and proceeded to address some very forcible language to my imperturbable *boy*. He waxed, indeed, so voluble, that I was compelled to interfere, and take measures to dry up the stream of his eloquence. A few minutes later we were again jogging along the road, and as the perpendicular rays of the sun beating upon my *bandy* converted my temporary abode into an oven, I tried to keep myself cool by thinking about ice and punkahs, and resolving to spend the remainder of the day in my tub.

A MISSIONARY'S CRIME.

I.

THE good ship *Arethusa* had been safely piloted into the harbour of Madras, and was lying there comfortably moored, and surrounded by all the bustle and confusion appropriate to the occasion. Upon her upper deck stood Mr. Wilfrid Dawson, barrister-at-law, one of a group of passengers, who were admiringly gazing at the colossal concrete arms thrown out from shore by ingenious and persevering man to embrace a convenient portion of the treacherous deep and so form a harbour, when an obsequious native approached him, and with a humble salaam presented a letter.

Dawson was evidently expecting this attention, for bidding a cordial farewell to his companions of the voyage, he surrendered himself to the guidance of the bearer of the missive, and soon found himself and all his

effects on board a heaving masoola boat, which oarsmen, loud of tongue and light of attire, were rowing with weird paddles, apparently in no particular direction, but really, as the event proved in due time, towards the landing pier. While thus seated, our legal friend found leisure to examine the credentials of his sable attendant, and opening the letter, read as follows :—

"My dear Wilfrid,—

"Fear not to trust yourself to the excellent Joseph, the bearer of this epistle. You will find him a devoted servant, and, according to Oriental standards, exceedingly honest and veracious. If, with your customary legal caution, you would be assured whether the bearer be our very Joseph or no, you may refer to my previous description of him, and, after examining him in matters relating to me, judge accordingly. I am looking forward very much to seeing you, and reviving old school and college memories. Don't linger too long over the sights of Madras, but come with all speed to greet

"Your affectionate friend,

"Henry Talbot.

"P.S.—Do you remember meeting Tunstall's sister Ada at Cambridge? Curiously enough she is out here now engaged in Zenana work, and at the present moment in considerable trouble. But more of this anon."

This letter seemed to furnish the reader with much food for reflection ; but if there is one place on this earth which more than any

other is ill-suited for quiet thought, it is the Madras Harbour pier, when passengers are being landed from an ocean liner. Vainly does the distracted passenger endeavour to keep a roaming eye upon the various items of his luggage; vainly does he attempt to let his cries and threats be heard above the din of contending coolies. The new arrival finds himself powerless in the midst of a crowd of yelling maniacs who are fighting for his goods, and in despair he sees the victors carrying off the spoil. To a stranger this state of affairs may be positively alarming, but to the old Madrasee it has no terrors, for experience has taught him that he will meet his properties again in the Custom House, and he is able to disregard the tumult and leisurely betake himself to the customary rendezvous.

The excellent Joseph, observing that his new master did not understand Madras methods, encouraged him by remarking in a voice appropriate to the surroundings, but still more by gesture,—

"Master, please coming this way. All master's sāmān coming along nicely."

"All right, Joseph, you drive on," was the

reply, inaudible indeed to the party addressed, but none the less comprehended by the intelligent eye.

So the two proceeded, and when all dues, both public and private, had been faithfully discharged, Dawson was driven off in a *bandy*, pursued by numerous deformed persons, and eventually deposited in safety with all his effects in the verandah of one of those many hotels, for which the capital of the benighted Presidency is so justly renowned.

II.

Every school-boy knows that trite saying, "Eat a prawn curry at the Madras Club and die." But unfortunately, like so many proverbs, it is founded on imperfect observation, and is only partially true. Just as there are some persons who are so strong as to be able to survive even the sight and smells of Naples, so, too, there are those who can partake of a prawn curry with comparative impunity, and survive for many years to boast of the achievement.

Dawson happened to be one of such folk; and although he was laid up for a day or two

owing to eating prawn curry at the Madras Club or other just cause, being, as Joseph expressed it, "plenty bad sick," he did not experience any fatal effect. But the delay due to his brief indisposition was very vexatious to him, for somehow or other he felt most uneasy about that "considerable trouble," in which the girl whom he remembered extremely well was involved. Not wishing to cause unnecessary trouble or uneasiness to a busy man, he had wired to his mofussil friend, the Rev. Henry Talbot, that he must devote at least two days to doing Madras, and must not be expected until seen.

It was little, however, that he saw as he lay in the bare and comfortless room of the hotel, so that he had the ampler opportunity for exercising his ingenuity in trying to imagine into what sort of trouble a faultless being could have fallen. He reviewed in order all the manifold evils that assail the good. One by one he slew all the members of the Tunstall family whom he had seen during his last few days in England in the enjoyment of the robustest health. They were indeed the very last people he had seen at home, for it was

while staying in their house that he had formed his sudden plan of rushing out to India to have a talk with his old chum Talbot. He next pictured her a prey to all sorts of horrible diseases. Could it be cholera or smallpox? In fact, he inflicted upon her all the sufferings of Job; yet, never in the wildest flight of his imagination did it occur to him that she could have committed a crime, and brought herself within the clutches of the Indian penal code. Yet such was in fact the case. This gentle girl, whose every act breathed of kindness, who had, out of the pure goodness of her heart, devoted herself to lightening the sorrows of India's women, was about to undergo her trial on the serious charge of kidnapping.

Had Dawson known this he might have been dismayed, but he would never have doubted for a moment the goodness of the girl he loved. Had he known the whole story he would have welcomed it as another proof of the noble devotion which had already captivated him. Her crime rather became her than otherwise. We will unfold it.

One evening a poor Indian woman, to whose home Ada Tunstall had on one occasion paid

a sadly unwelcomed visit, came to her bungalow and poured out a tale of miserable domestic suffering. This woman was a recent widow, and was smarting under the lash of daily insults and petty persecutions of many kinds. The single visit paid to her home by the kind-hearted English lady, whose gentle sympathy had been so boorishly repelled, had inspired this poor woman with a sure conviction that she would find a loving friend in the time of trouble in this generous stranger. So to Ada she came for refuge and protection, when life among her own people seemed insupportable, bringing with her a melancholy dark-eyed little daughter. The little girl was too sad to smile or play when first she came to the Christian home, but in the sunshine of love she soon learnt to be bright and merry. Surrounded by kindness, mother and daughter had become quite other than they had been, and one of their chiefest pleasures was to sit and listen to the beautiful Gospel stories, told by one on whose heart its simple truth was written, and, as a natural result of this sympathetic teaching, the two had been baptized.

Then fell the thunderbolt. Infuriated

relatives of the young girl invaded one day the peaceful compound of the mission bungalow, uttering the vilest threats, and with insolent abuse demanding that the child should be immediately restored to them. From the confused babel of their cries it became at last intelligible that the child was married, and that consequently her husband and not her mother was her lawful guardian. This fact, for so it proved to be, poor Ada had not known before ; but now she found it impossible to surrender her trembling charge to this wild mob. With imploring tears the unhappy pair were clinging to the dress of their young protectress, as she stood in the verandah, confronting the bawling group below her, and she could not let them go to meet what fate she knew not. So boldly facing the angry crowd she told them in one brief sentence that she would not give up the two unfortunates who had fled to her for refuge, and then drawing them gently with her, she quitted the verandah and entered the house, leaving the disappointed relatives to vent their rage in noisy volumes on the empty air.

Thus it came to pass that criminal pro-

ceedings were instituted against Miss Ada Tunstall.

III.

The long railway journey from Madras to Sivapur seemed particularly tedious to Dawson. The fault was no doubt partly his own, for one does not acquire in a day that patience or apathy that is requisite for the enjoyment of Anglo-Indian life. Long experience of travelling in country bullock-carts at the rate of two miles an hour or thereabouts, naturally causes the accustomed exile to be magnificently content when he progresses at a pace of more miles per hour than he can reckon up with the fingers of both hands. But pace apart, Dawson had reason to be grateful to the railway authorities, who provided him with excellent meals at convenient intervals, and accommodated him with the means for enjoying a good night's sleep. Still as the sun rose higher and the day waxed warmer, he was growing very anxious to reach his destination. It occurred to him that the train lingered unnecessarily long periods at the roadside stations. But he was philosopher enough to employ these oppor-

tunities of studying the ways of his Indian fellow-subjects. He noted the lean bare arms thrust out from the carriage windows waving tin mugs in mute appeal for water, and was surprised at the agility displayed by the water brahman in quenching the thirst of men of all castes. No wonder that the appeals of the thirsty were mute; for gesticulation was obviously more effective than speech, in consideration of the horrid cries of the hawkers who abounded on the platform. Milk, plantains, oranges, cocoanuts, and mysterious confections of flour and sugar, were being carried about by boys possessed of that which the old Roman poet desiderated—namely, brazen voices. The sale transactions were wont to proceed slowly at first, but as soon as the train began to move, business became brisk. The starting signal seemed invariably to be the signal also for a general fall of prices. The wily purchaser seemed now immediately to gain the advantage, when the guard's whistle blew and cocoanuts and plantains became at once sympathetically "easier." Buyers now came forward in large numbers, and the vending boys as they ran along the platform gathered in a rich harvest

of coppers. After all the vendors seemed to have the pull at the last, for the buyer having parted with his money was fain to be content with such goods as he could get. It is melancholy to reflect how on these occasions the Hindu's dear delight of bargaining is ruthlessly curtailed by the Englishman's hurrying locomotive. Before he reached his journey's end Dawson had learnt to welcome these protracted halts as grateful incidents in the monotony of travel.

But all things, even journeys on a certain railway line that shall be nameless, come to an end at last, and so before sunset Dawson alighted on the platform of Sivapur station.

With his mind full of Ada Tunstall the hot and tired traveller was being driven slowly through the crowded and dusty streets of the mofussil town in a decrepit *bandy*, when his reverie was disturbed by the vehicle coming to a decided full-stop.

The impatient Dawson at once thrusts out his head and demands, "What's up now, Joseph?"

Bending over from the roof on which he is squatting, the cautious servant answers,—

"Plenty people making fight. Joseph quickly

finding out all business. Master please keeping *quite*."

But in prospect of a fight master had no intention whatever of keeping *quite*, and was out of the *bandy* in a moment, and forcing his way through a dense and noisy crowd of evil-smelling persons. The disturbance centred round a *bandy*, and it was obvious that some one inside the conveyance was being roughly handled. As Dawson came closer his stature enabled him to see a sight that made his blood course madly through his veins. There was no doubt about it. An European lady was being dragged out of the carriage by some vile ruffians, while others, equally destitute of shame, were pummelling her with their fists, and even beating her with sticks. Shouts of approval and encouragement from the spectators in the neighbouring houses added fresh horror to the scene.

Maddened by the sight, Dawson soon got over the intervening space, and as he reached the spot, the mob, partly alarmed, partly ashamed, and partly content, fell away from him. It was all very well to attack defenceless women, but there was nothing to be gained

by assailing a powerful man armed with a stout stick, and dexterous in wielding it. So, at any rate, thought the specimens of the mild Hindu, who were in the best position for judging.

Joseph had followed his master, and between them they raised and conducted the two ladies thus disgracefully mobbed to the *bandy*.

It was under these unusual circumstances that Wilfrid Dawson again met Ada Tunstall.

IV.

The two ladies, although not seriously injured, were considerably bruised and generally affected by the shock of the cowardly assault upon them; so that they were quite willing to accept the doctor's advice, and remain quietly in their own bungalow. Consequently, Dawson and his missionary friend Talbot were disappointed of their company that evening, and had abundant leisure for discoursing on many half-forgotten episodes of the past, and fighting the old battles over again.

It was comparatively cool in the verandah, as they two sat there in their long-armed chairs; and they had so much to talk about

that hour after hour slipped away, and the pile of cheroot-ashes in their respective trays grew to formidable proportions long ere they thought of separating for what remained of the night. Naturally, the incidents of the day came in for a large share of discussion, and Dawson received some enlightenment as to this extraordinary kidnapping charge. His astonishment at finding Ada in the hands of the mob had been, as can well be imagined, immense, and he was quite incapable of considering any other matter until the whole story had been minutely retailed to him. From time to time he interrupted the narrative with brief questions and interjected comments, which were for the most part extremely depreciatory of Hindu society, and evidential of a strong feeling within him that girls like Ada ought not to be brought into contact with such vileness. As the recital continued, he learnt that the criminal proceedings had come to nought, save that the judge had severely censured Ada for her "morally reprehensible" conduct. "Which censure, of course," said Talbot, "you may take for what it is worth."

"Worth about as much as the mutton-

headed idiot who presumed to pronounce it," was Dawson's indignant rejoinder.

The criminal charge having failed, a civil suit, likewise instituted, was coming on, and the matter now to the fore was the custody of the little girl pending these proceedings. As the complainants had insisted that the English ladies should be prohibited all access to the child, while she remained in neutral keeping, there had been some hitch in the arrangements. Matters being in this condition, Ada and her companion left the court with their two charges, and had scarcely started on their way home when an excited rabble of low-caste fanatics, instigated, no doubt, and remunerated by others of better position, had surrounded their *bandy*. These ruffians at once stopped the carriage, dragged the coachman off his seat, tore off the doors, and snatched away the poor little terrified girl and her mother with her, and bundling them into a *bandy*, which they had in readiness, drove them off.

As to the treatment of the English ladies, having witnessed it with his own eyes, Dawson needed no enlightenment.

"You have had a rather curious introduction to the mild Hindu," was Talbot's remark in conclusion.

"Well, Harry, my boy," said Dawson, "it strikes me that there isn't overmuch mildness in these feeble specimens of humanity where women and the weak are concerned. It riles me horribly to think that the best of our girls should deliberately waste all their goodness upon these despicable beasts."

"Don't be too hard upon them, my good fellow. I am myself more angry than I can well say about this outrage; but you mustn't judge all these people by one solitary instance. But," added Talbot, observing that Dawson was moving about uneasily in his chair, "I am not going to give you a lecture to-night on Hindu sentiment, judging you not to be ripe for it just yet. The thing that most annoys me about this disgraceful business, is that respectable Hindus should have looked on, and actually applauded this cowardly assault."

"Well, I'm heartily glad to hear that there is such a thing as a respectable Hindu. It sounds to me like a contradiction in terms. You had better be content with the 'mildness,'

I think, unless 'respectable' is synonymous with 'blackguardly' as 'mild' is with 'sneakingly cruel.'"

"Never mind, old man, you'll feel better to-morrow. We'll make an early call in the morning to see how the ladies are, and will exercise all lawful compulsion to induce them to dine with us in the evening. Perhaps," added Talbot, with a meaning look, "you will be able to convert Miss Tunstall."

Scorning to notice Talbot's pleasantry, Dawson again took up his parable.

"One word more, and I'm done; and I can assure you that it is my most serious conviction. I won't say another word about the ladies, but I do think that a man like you is utterly wasted out here, and——"

"For goodness' sake, shut up," interrupted Talbot.

"No, I won't shut up," continued Dawson. And removing his legs from the arms of the chair, and sitting bolt upright, he turned round and, fixing his eyes on his friend's, deliberately resumed. "You know very well, Harry, that you beat me in everything at school and at college, in work and in play; and here am I

a successful man in London, while you are toiling away out here in a third-rate mofussil town, in a vile climate, with nobody of your own set or social equal within several hundred miles of you. Here you insist on wearing yourself to death on a miserable pittance for the sake of a lot of ungrateful wretches who can't appreciate you in the remotest degree. It's arrant quixotism, Harry. Upon my word it is. You ought to be ashamed of yourself. I really mean it."

"It's awfully good of you, I'm sure, my dear fellow, to say all this, and I know you say it all with the most generous feeling; but perhaps, in a quiet way, Will, one can get along happily without success and without London, though I'm bound to say one does miss one's old friends terribly."

"Look here, Harry, you just chuck the missionary business and come home. I'll gather a crowd of old friends to meet you at Dover, and we'll bring you up to town in triumph in a special train, and you shall be settled down in a really comfortable and accessible living."

"You'd better charter a steamer, Will, and

bring the friends out here," said Talbot, smiling. "Now you haven't told me a word about any one of them yet. So let's set to work."

Hereupon Talbot proceeded to fire off question after question about all manner of people, and the pair of them were so completely absorbed in one another's talk, that it was not until 3.30 A.M. that they began to think of the time, and finding it getting late, decided to adjourn the meeting and retire.

V.

On the following day abundant opportunity was afforded to Dawson for the conversion of the lady criminal. The efforts to induce the Zenana workers to dine at the missionary's bungalow were crowned with complete success, and after the quartette had spent a most sociable evening together, when the hour arrived, all too soon, for the men to escort the ladies home, it fell to Dawson's share to conduct Miss Tunstall. It so happened that the other pair got the start of him, and he, being a stranger to the neighbourhood, was very uncertain as to the right path to the Zenana ladies' residence,

and being ashamed to confess his ignorance to his fair companion, got completely lost in Talbot's compound. When at length he did succeed in piloting his charge into port, it was clear to the beholders that he had found no little satisfaction in his prolonged wanderings. Ada's face bore some signs of recent tears, for though she was very happy now, she had been rather broken-hearted over the chilling reception of her devoted labour, and could not, brave little woman as she was, altogether restrain her tears as she poured out the story of her disappointments. Fortunately, however, Dawson had been able to bring her great comfort, and their little conference had ended very happily.

But Ada wouldn't hear of quitting her post for another two years at least. She had quite resolved to devote five years to her present labour of love. She assured Dawson that as he had managed to bear with his despair, as he called it, for three long years, he could surely endure with his hope for two.

She was, in fact, not entirely converted ; for, while she sorrowfully admitted that her own experiment had so far apparently failed, she

still strongly insisted that, according to her lights, she had really done the right thing when she refused his offer three years ago and gave herself up to the missionary work. Yet even this splendid insistence was rather spoilt by her adding at its conclusion,—

"But I don't think I knew then how much I loved you."

"Never mind, dearest, if you know now. Only, don't sin against your sex by attempting to be logical and to explain yourself. Early or late you are far too good for me."

VI.

Although the ladies were rather inclined to rejoice in their persecutions, and to discountenance proceedings in the matter, masculine ideas of justice were bound to prevail, and an attempt was made to punish the perpetrators of the outrage. Two or three of the assailants were eventually convicted and sentenced to pay small fines.

This small measure of justice was very displeasing to a certain section of Hindu society, and the native press for a time was bubbling

over with righteous indignation at the monstrous perversion of justice exhibited in the whole of this case. One of the leading Hindu journals, after characterising British justice as "all a farce and a sham," proceeded to remark that, "In any other country but India such an atrocious disregard of the feelings and sentiments of the surrounding population would lead to very serious consequences, and the offending missionary would have had to fly for his (*sic*) very life."

The Hindu sense of justice would perhaps have been satisfied if Ada had been hung, or, at the least, condemned to penal servitude for life; for if there is any one point of doctrine upon which orthodox Hindus are agreed, it is as touching the sanctity of infant marriage.

Of the poor little child-wife, of course, no more was seen by European eyes.

HIS HOLINESS.

I.

THERE is a Tamil proverb which somewhat pertinently asks, "What has a religious mendicant to do with a washerman?" Very little, forsooth, seeing that His Holiness wears no clothes. However, the good old days of Hinduism unalloyed are passing away, and there is now a distinct tendency on the part of intruding officialism to discourage the revelation of sanctity by means of insufficiency of apparel. Has not the over-scrupulousness of European policedom lately required that even ordinary sinful natives who desire to mix with the fashionable throng of Europeans at the evening promenade on the Madras marina, shall have at least the main portion of their bodies decently covered? If, then, semi-nudity is being thus unfriendly regarded, can absolute nakedness hope to escape entirely?

In consequence of this Western prejudice in

favour of clothes, a certain reverend *sanyāsi*, arriving one day at the Central Station, Madras, with nothing on, found himself in the hands of the police. What a melancholy meeting that was of East and West—the devotee and the policeman! The virtuous ascetic was, moreover, under a vow of silence, so that he was unable to offer any explanation of his apparently unseemly conduct. But the holy man's loss proved to be the gain of an enterprising young *vakeel*, Venkatarāma Iyer by name, who happened to be in court when the dumb ascetic was under examination. This youthful Brahman, much to his own secret satisfaction, was permitted by the magistrate to remove the *sanyāsi* to his home, having explained the nature of the saint's vow and promised to see to his future seemly behaviour. Rejoicing therefore in his good fortune, the young lawyer carried off his prize, whom, having safely housed, he proceeded to look up his English friend Thompson.

It rarely happens that there can be any friendship between a European and a native, the fault being for the most part on the native's side. It surely is unreasonable to expect that

a European can be very intimate with an Indian, when the latter, theoretically at least, regards him as an unclean animal, and cannot sit at meat with him. However, in this particular case, inasmuch as Venkatarāma Iyer, when away from his women-folk, was absolutely destitute of all caste prejudice, a certain friendship had sprung up between the Brahman *vakeel* and the English barrister, to their mutual advantage.

II.

On the evening following the saint's arrival the two legal friends, having met for the further discussion of plans consequent upon the possession of their saintly treasure, were seated in long-armed chairs in the centre of Thompson's compound. Not wishing to be overheard, they had selected this open space for greater privacy. What advantage they hoped to gain by means of the *sanyāsi* will perhaps appear from a fragment of their conversation.

Venkatarāma, who, like most Western-educated Indians, rejoiced to use long English words, having lit his cheroot, is just about to speak.

"A most fortunate concatenation of circumstances has placed us in possession of an invaluable ally. We must deliberate upon the most advantageous method of employing him."

"But how are we to be sure that he will help us? You are quite certain, by-the-bye, that the High Priest has removed the treasure, are you?" queried Thompson.

"I am absolutely convinced, on perfectly reliable testimony, that the treasure has been moved, and am further morally assured that a substitution has been effected."

"Copper for gold, no doubt," interjected the more laconic Thompson.

"My former class-mate, Rangaswāmi," resumed Venkatarāma, "who happens now to be residing in the capital, is indubitably the High Priest's confederate. We must elaborate a confession of his complicity in the criminal proceeding through the intervention of the ascetic."

Having thus delivered his soul, Venkatarāma illustrated his superiority to caste prejudice by indulging in a long drink from the whisky-and-soda by his elbow.

The general conclusion of the deliberation was, that they were to arrange a meeting

between the *sanyāsi* and Rangaswāmi, and induce the former to expose the latter's villainy. They both felt pretty sure that the *sanyāsi's* vow must be nearly expired, for why, otherwise, should he have travelled up to Madras?

Venkatarāma, having confidently undertaken to make all the necessary arrangements for the experiment, went home very late that night, remarking, as he left, that his females would conclude that the theosophical meeting had been unusually long and interesting.

"They regard my attachment to theosophy," he added, "as most heterodox, but if they conjectured that my theosophy was merely a pseudonym for social intercourse with a European Christian they would compel me to become involved in ceaseless purifications and eradicate all aspirations for domestic tranquillity."

III.

The *sanyāsi*, as the two friends had anticipated, very soon permitted himself again the use of speech; but he required very careful handling on the part of the *vakeel* before he consented to be any party to the examination

of Rangaswāmi. In like manner, Rangaswāmi having no particular desire to make the ascetic's acquaintance, showed no special enthusiasm about coming to meet him. Eventually, however, after various disappointments, Venkatarāma succeeded in gathering the *sanyāsi* and the High Priest's supposed confederate in crime into one room, he himself being in the adjoining apartment. That meeting having been effected the rest was all plain sailing. In an incredibly short space of time Rangaswāmi was describing all manner of scenes to the ascetic. Venkatarāma, who came in to listen, was, however, much disappointed at first by what he heard. It was obvious that his old class-mate was exceedingly indisposed to speak the truth.

"Do you see the jars full of gold?" asked the *sanyāsi.*

"I see jars. Sixteen jars. I count them. They are all sealed with the High Priest's seal. They are all full of best gold. They are lying secure under the great image, in the central shrine of the vast temple."

"Lies, lies, lies," said the *sanyāsi.* Then turning to Venkatarāma, he remarked, "This man was undoubtedly a jackal in the former

birth. He digs holes to conceal treasure. He will surely be a cat in the next birth. He is a thief."

"But surely, my lord, he does not dare to speak untruths to you?" said Venkatarāma.

"He is as shameless as a dog. His tongue cannot express the truth. But," added the *sanyāsi*, to his auditor's intense relief, "what he will not say I can read. I can see the scene which he refuses to describe."

Hereupon the ascetic, with his piercing glance fixed keenly on Rangaswāmi's viewless eyes, began to describe slowly, as if reading from a partly illegible manuscript, a most interesting scene.

Not a word of what he said was lost upon the listener; but he was especially careful to note the exact description of the spot to which the treasure had been removed, and the precise position in which it was buried.

Having acquired the information which he needed, Venkatarāma withdrew, only to return in a few minutes' time, when he discovered that the other two were conversing in an ordinary manner. He at once apologised to his friend for being late, and joined in the talk;

but he was rather relieved when the *sanyāsi* retired, for it was obvious that the saint had conceived a strong dislike of Rangaswāmi, and took little pains to conceal it. Rangaswāmi was also very much more at ease when the *sanyāsi* had left the house. He was, moreover, anxious to know why Venkatarāma had made such a point of his meeting with the saint, because, he said, he had derived no pleasure whatever from conversing with him.

"You told me he was a most entertaining companion, and delighted you with most curious narratives, but he has talked nothing but nonsense to me, and given me quite a headache into the bargain."

"That is because you are not well and cannot follow his line of thought. You have been working too hard lately and need a rest, I expect. Let me tell them to make you some coffee."

Nevertheless Rangaswāmi went home with a vague sort of feeling that he and the ascetic had been talking all sorts of folly to one another, and that, somehow or other, the saint had done him some mischief.

"I can generally understand what a man is

talking about," he mused, "but that fellow has an evil eye, and he altogether confused me, and will certainly bring me ill luck. I might have known it would be so, since I set eyes upon a vile widow the first thing in the morning. It is no use disregarding omens."

Rangaswāmi's wife found her lord very hard to please that evening. She had prepared a most charming curry, but he only slapped her for not cooking the rice properly, and threw it all away, so that she also had no evening meal. But she did not presume to expostulate with him.

IV.

Venkatarāma Iyer had little difficulty in identifying the spot to which the worthy High Priest and his admirable companion, the blameless Rangaswāmi, had removed the temple treasure, of which the former was trustee. He paid a visit to the locality, and having carefully examined every inch of ground in the neighbourhood of the little Pillayar shrine indicated by the *sanyāsi*, formed his plan for discovering and examining the buried hoard.

On his return to Madras he urged his friend

Thompson to improve the present opportunity, and set out at once with him upon the quest. So the two started that evening on their adventure by the evening mail train. Having the compartment to themselves, they were able to talk freely about the course to be pursued. Venkatarāma assured the other that he little knew the character of his compatriots, if he supposed that two Indians could share a guilty secret. He was quite convinced that if the gold had been made away with, one man only had done it, and that therefore it would be a comparatively easy task to get at the buried jars. Rangaswāmi had helped to remove the treasure from the temple to some more accessible spot, and had been merely a simple tool in the hand of the crafty priest, who had alone benefited by the lucrative transaction of replacing gold by copper. Such was Venkatarāma's theory.

A few hours later the two legal luminaries were carefully picking their way in silence and darkness along the little ridges separating the paddy fields. Their path led them near to a small village which they would gladly have passed unobserved ; but, as a too vigilant dog

heralded their approach by loud and persistent barking, they thought it better to make a merit of necessity, and pass through the village street. Several forms shrouded in white cloths sat up to watch them as they passed, for all the dogs of the village were on the alert, and had made sleep impossible to the majority of the villagers. Occasionally a sleepy form would stretch out an arm in hopes of securing a missile to hurl at some noisy dog, but there were few who obtained, for does not the proverb say, "When there is a stone, there is no dog: when there is a dog there is no stone"? But no one accosted the nocturnal strangers.

Leaving the village behind, the travellers were soon enveloped once more in the silence of night. As they approached their destination the kindly moon rose upon them—a welcome ally. They had been counting on his beams to illuminate the stones which abounded in the rocky river's bed into which they now descended.

The *sanyāsi* had plainly declared that the jars were placed in a small vault beneath the little shrine. There would be of course a

regular entrance to this vault by means of a staircase, above the opening of which would be laid a large slab of stone on which the idol rested. To remove the slab, and the great idol who reposed thereon, was a feat beyond the power of an ordinary man, and Venkatarāma had consequently decided that the High Priest had hit upon some unorthodox entrance to the vault.

The little shrine was built upon a slight eminence close to the river's bank, so that it had seemed probable that there might be some secret entrance into the vault from the river side. Acting on this belief, the *vakeel* had previously examined with care the stones in the river's bed, and had decided in his own mind which was the one to move ; but, fearing unseen eyes, he had not ventured to experiment with it in open daylight. Now, however, he experienced no difficulty in picking his way to the stone ; but there was no longer occasion to experiment with it, for some one had already proved that it was an appropriate stone to move, by having moved it. This new turn of events staggered the explorers not a little, and they reverently withdrew a few paces to consider the situation.

V.

The more Rangaswāmi pondered over his interview with the *sanyāsi*, the more uneasy he grew. Before he at length fell asleep that night, he had worked himself up into a settled conviction that he had told the ascetic where the hidden treasure lay, and that the venerable hypocrite, as he assumed him to be, would take the earliest opportunity of enriching himself. Herein, however, he did the *sanyāsi* great injustice; for, truth to tell, the Hindu saint was no hypocrite, and not in the least prone to avarice, and would not have revealed the secret at all, had he not been certain that he was ministering to no man's greed.

After passing a very restless night Rangaswāmi arose betimes, and took the early morning train, with a view to setting his mind at rest by visiting the place where the treasure was concealed, and assuring himself that all was safe.

All unknown to him, Venkatarāma was travelling at the same time on a similar errand. That the two friends, neither on their departure nor arrival at their common destination, saw

one another was a happy accident. Venkatarāma being in a hurry and anxious to catch a returning train to Madras, hastened to the spot at once, and had made his inspection and gone away before Rangaswāmi had arrived. Rangaswāmi, indeed, did not prosecute his investigations until the afternoon, and then continued to haunt the neighbourhood of the treasure, waiting for darkness to descend and permit him to make a closer examination.

Rangaswāmi knew of course the legitimate entrance to the vault, but being well assured that a thief could not avail himself of that, he spent a long time in searching for some other means of access. Eventually, he hit upon the same stone as had attracted Venkatarāma's notice, and on removing it, found a narrow passage large enough to admit his body. Working his way, legs foremost, along this passage, he soon found his feet without support, and so ventured cautiously to descend into the vault. Here he struck a light, and looked around him for the jars.

There they all were; the whole sixteen of them, sealed with the seal of His Holiness, apparently intact. This was indeed a reassur-

ing sight, but somehow or other he felt an irresistible impulse to have a closer view. The jars were common earthen *chatties* as fragile as any vessel well can be. It seemed to Rangaswāmi, in his momentary insanity, a futile method of procedure to tamper with the seal. It was but the work of a moment to seize a stone and smash one of the *chatties.* But what an appalling report this simple action seemed to make. The jar was shattered, and the gold coins were gently streaming on to the floor. He picked up a handful. Nothing but copper. In his utter dismay Rangaswāmi continued to squat there on his heels staring foolishly at a handful of miscellaneous bronze coinage. It was maddening to reflect how he had been duped. But second thoughts reminded him that there were the jars unbroken, and the seals intact. None but His Holiness could have done this deed. "I at least am guiltless," was his consoling reflection, "and the sooner I am out of this the better."

So he rose to seek the aperture whereby he had gained admittance. Having extinguished his light he contrived to wriggle his body into the narrow passage. Then to his horror he

observed that he was in total darkness. The entrance was closed again. Was he to be entombed with that cursed treasure? Not, at least, without a struggle. He had been working his way along with his arms beneath his body. There was surely room to work them to the front. Yes, he could do it, for the soil was sandy and easy to displace. First one arm, then the other, with elbows scratched and bleeding, came to the fore. Now for a desperate push, while he could still breathe. So he pushed with all his strength, and the stone rose at once, as if by magic. There was no time to reflect on this fresh portent, for strong arms had seized him and were dragging him forth. Rangaswāmi was prepared for anything now He seemed to recognise a white face, and a rapid thought of English police inspectors flashed through his mind. Then all things faded from view. When he came to himself again, Venkatarāma was sitting by his side. He was too bewildered to speak, but he dimly understood his companion's remark, as the latter exclaimed: "So His Holiness has anticipated you in working numismatic miracles?"

Venkatarāma was proud of this sentence, and

had uttered it in English for Thompson's benefit.

The remark had at any rate some effect, for it loosened Rangaswāmi's tongue, and urged him to voluble protestations of innocence. These were, however, quite superfluous, as no one had seriously suspected him of crime.

VI.

The trio returned to Madras in company. They were quite content at having established, to their own satisfaction, the High Priest's guilt. The only question was, whether they should endeavour to bring His Holiness to justice, or, as Thompson expressed it, "be satisfied with our little pleasurable excitement, and suffer it to be an end in itself."

It is doubtful perhaps whether Rangaswāmi, in calmer moments, would endorse that particular epithet of "pleasurable." But at the same time, seeing that the *sanyāsi*, who had a wide knowledge of human nature, wrote him down a thief, he may have had reason to congratulate himself that he lacked opportunity of qualifying for jail.

Subsequently it did somehow leak out that His Holiness had made away, for private ends, with the treasure committed to his charge; but as Hindu public opinion contended that the High Priest, being divine, could do no wrong, it was doubtless more seemly to place his crimes in the same category as those of the gods, and rather esteem them virtues.

KÁMINI SATI.

AN INDIAN TALE OF THE EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY.

I.

ON the outskirts of the Indian village of Krishnapuram, in the midst of a grove of mango trees, was a well, the favourite resort of the female population of the village. Here, in the cool of the evening, the women of the place were gathered to enjoy their customary evening gossip, while drawing water for domestic uses.

Grouped round the well in their bright clothing, they formed a pretty picture under the dark shadow of the trees. The most striking feature in the scene was the graceful figure of a young girl, who was standing upon the parapet of the well and good-naturedly drawing water for the whole party. It was a lovely sight to observe the natural grace and

careless ease with which she performed her task. The cord, which was fastened round the neck of the common earthen *chatty*, seemed to shoot through her fingers in its straight and rapid flight, until it touched the water; when, by a dexterous turn of her wrist, she compelled the mouth of the vessel to dip below the surface. Then, the *chatty* being filled, bending gracefully over the water, she drew it up again, in two or three long pulls, with a practised skill which seemed to defy all accident. Another woman received the brimming vessel and poured its contents into one of the larger *chatties* waiting to be filled, which willing hands were ready to place, when full, upon their owners' heads for conveyance to the village homes.

Some little way off from this well, gazing timidly yet admiringly at the chief actress in this evening drama, stood a little girl. Half leaning, with her head supported on her arm against the trunk of a great tree, she seemed anxious to escape all notice, and to claim the protection of its friendly shelter. Unfortunately, however, for her, the priestess of the well, resting for a moment from her labours,

had drawn up her figure to its full height and was taking a rapid glance around. Her eyes fell upon the shrinking form of the little maiden, and at once the brightest of smiles went forth to greet the solitary child.

Observing this expressive salutation, some of the women at once looked round to note its cause, and, while the rest were satisfied with a hasty glance, one woman, gazing fiercely on the young girl, screamed aloud,—

"Out of my sight, you bald-head!"

Now the head of little Kámini was by no means wanting in the adornment of hair; neither was she a widow, as the angry woman's term of reproach was meant to signify. No; she was, on the contrary, a wife, married a few months before to a husband well on in years. True, she was only nine years old, and more of an age for childish play, and had not seen her husband since the conclusion of the marriage ceremony, yet beyond all doubt she was a married woman.

On this occasion the little wife did not wait to hear the torrent of foul language which streamed from the lips of the enraged woman; but, deaf alike to the curses of her enemy and

the loud laughter of the other women, she slipped behind her tree and ran out of the grove and away from the village, not staying her flight until she reached the margin of the wide and sandy river, which lay upon the confines of the village. Here, under a thick thornbush, she threw herself down, and burying her face in her hands, wept silently. Presently, raising her eyes, she fastened them with a look of eager intensity upon a woman who, some two hundred yards away, was engaged in simple devotions. The object of this woman's worship was Kámini's own mother, who having, now five years ago, elected to be burnt with her dead husband, was the favourite deity of the simple village maids and matrons. Kámini had herself been brought up in the belief that her mother was a veritable goddess, and a pattern of virtuous living. Her childish lips, as soon as they could fashion words, had learnt to pray to her sainted mother for a good husband and a like spirit of devotion. To her mother her childish hopes and fears, as touching the desire for a son and the dread of a rival wife, and such other matters as fill the minds of little Hindu girls, had been laid bare.

Now, as she saw this woman burning her camphor before the rude heap of stones which marked the spot where her mother had so cruelly perished, her eyes glowed with enthusiasm and pride, and she resolved that she would prove herself the worthy daughter of so heroic a mother.

Old Lakshmi had perhaps just cause for anger against poor Kámini, for the little girl had stolen away the heart of her brave boy Rama. It seldom happens that a Hindu boy becomes inspired by a true passion, but such had happened in Rama's case. He was but fourteen years old; yet, having seen and loved Kámini, he had vowed that he would marry none but her. Promises and threats alike had failed to induce him to surrender his determination. The boy's obstinacy had so greatly impressed the elder members of the two families, that to avoid all scandal, Kámini's relatives had consented to marry her at once. Their choice had fallen upon an elderly widower of dissolute habits, who, being on the look out for some one to replace the wife whom he had lost a few days previously, readily fell in with their plans, and having

gone through the marriage ceremony with Kámini, had settled down in his own village, leaving his little wife for the present in the care of her uncles. As for poor Rama, a marriage had been speedily arranged for him also, but to the intense consternation of the whole village, he, after protesting that no consideration whatever would induce him to marry any one but Kámini, had mysteriously disappeared from home, before his parents had been able to bring the matter to a satisfactory issue. Therefore the bereaved mother cursed Kámini from the bottom of her heart, as a devil who had bewitched her boy and stolen him away; perhaps done him to death. Rama, her only son, the light of her eyes, had, she believed, been ruined body and soul by the innocent child; so that if curses could kill or fervent prayers to devils accomplish anything, Kámini was a doomed child.

II.

While Kámini, her sorrows forgotten, was sitting by the river's edge, absorbed in contemplation of her mother's virtues, and nursing in her own loving heart the same flame of devotion,

her boy-lover, the adventurous Rama, who had for some hours been haunting the neighbourhood of Krishnapuram in the faint hope of catching some sight of his heart's idol, was drawing near the spot.

The sun having now set, the little wife awoke from her dream to reflect that she had been guilty of a great crime in being away from home and at such an hour, and hastily rose, hoping to reach her uncle's house as secretly as she had left it. As she quitted the shelter of her hiding-place, she was confronted by Rama. Instantly perceiving who was before her, she lowered her eyes to the ground, after suffering one brief look of entreaty to be expressed in them, and proceeded on her way.

"Oh, my sun! My goddess! My prayers have been answered and I have found him!" exclaimed the delighted boy.

Kámini made no answer. She was far too modest, and too full of Hindu religious feeling at the moment, to address or look at a strange man.

"The vile reprobate will not live long," continued the ardent Rama; "but, whatever happens, you will always be my goddess."

Still no word from Kámini, but she was compelled now to halt.

"Can't you, my precious jewel, give me one word, one look? I can't tell you what I have suffered; but the gods were good to me, and I have found him," continued the impetuous youth, adding after a short interval in the softer language of entreaty, "Can't you speak to me just one word?"

Kámini guessed full well the meaning of the boy's strange words, but felt bound in duty to ignore them. However, being thus appealed to, she was constrained to say something, and replied, still without raising her eyes,—

"The gods forgive me if I speak to one who is not my *guru*, nor my husband. I implore you, my lord, let me go home. They will kill me if they find that I have run out."

"No," said Rama. "No one shall harm you. But," persisted the lad under the provocation of the mention of the lawful husband, "that old man is not your lord. He is nothing to you. Do you care for him or he for you? Besides," he added, after a moment's pause,

"he will soon be dead. I am a warrior, and before he comes to claim you, I shall marry you by seizure. My priceless pearl, you shall go home now! I am not cruel; only I love you. The sight of you will give me life for some days more. For you know you are my life."

Rama did not attempt to touch her, or even ask her again to look at him, but stepped aside at once to let her pass. So Kámini went home, and in her childish heart, pondering on the probabilities suggested by Rama's words, she said,—

"If my lord dies, then I die too. Yes, I will go with him. Only the dead are blessed. I will be a virtuous woman as my dear, dear mother. I will be *sati* too."

III.

On reaching home that evening, Kámini stole into the dark little chamber where she knew that she would find her grandmother. Treading quietly with her bare feet, she approached the corner where the old woman was seated on the floor, and then, overcome by

her feelings, she threw her soft brown arms round her neck and burst into tears.

"Tell me my mother's story; tell it me once again," she broke out amidst her sobs.

"Do not cry, my heart's darling. You are your sainted mother's precious jewel. No harm can touch you, my sweet one. You shall hear the story, for I can never grow tired of telling it. I loved your mother very dearly. I loved her from the first, though she was my daughter-in-law."

So, while the little wife nestled close to her, the old woman fondly told the story of the wife's immolation on the husband's funeral pile. As she heard the oft-repeated tale the young girl's eyes sparkled with excitement. She uttered not a sound, nor moved once, but drank in every word. When the tale was ended Kamini exclaimed, "And she was not at all afraid! She uttered no cry, did she?"

"No," replied the aged narrator, "she was the most devoted of women, the noblest of wives. All the people worshipped her. Ah! I see her now as she laid herself by the side of my dead boy, and put her arm beneath his head smiling a last smile at me. My heart

was scorched and withered by the flames that burnt those two, but the fire joined their two souls in indissoluble union, and it is better so. She said that she died for me, also, and that all my sins would be purged away by her virtue. Oh, what have I endured, my little one? Oh, this burden of widowhood! Better die ten thousand deaths than live long years as a curse and a reproach. It is a shameful thing, my darling, to be a widow. I was a coward when my lord died. I thought the flames would torture me, and I could not bear it. I have seen awful sights. I have seen them drag poor women to the flames. I have known the wife's courage fail at the last moment, and she has tried to escape, and the priests have forced her back and thrown her on the fire tied hand and foot. I have seen the son compelling his reluctant mother to fulfil her vow. I have known the frightened mother appealing to her son for mercy, and finding none. How could she find it? Cowards! Must we bring shame on all our families? Oh, but I have seen the heavy poles brought down upon them, while their screams were drowned by the crashing of the drums

and the shouts of the people. Oh, why should we fear?"

"But my noble mother never cried. She was too good. She knew her duty to her lord, didn't she, grandmother?" said little Kámini.

"Yes, my pretty flower. A good woman knows no fear. She was a princess, a goddess. Through all the ceremonies she walked with a stately mien and unwavering step. When my son died, I told her to be brave, and she only answered, 'He is my lord, and I am his wife. I have no life apart from him. We shall be blessed together for ever. He needs me, and I cannot let him go alone.' Her last words to me were, 'You must be very good to my little Kámini.'"

"Oh, grandmother, I will be *sati* too! I am not afraid. I am only a little girl, but my mother has given me a lion's heart. I do not want to live. I shall be very happy in heaven if I am *sati*. Will my mother come and kiss me?"

"Hush, my pearl! You must not speak so. Your lord is living."

In the weary watches of that night, as little

Kámini lay sleepless on her mat she was praying, "Mother, dearest mother, let me be *sati* too. Make me a good wife like you were. I am not too young to die. Save me from widowhood."

IV.

A few days after Rama's stolen interview with the object of his young affections, news was brought to Krishnapuram that Kámini's husband was dead. He had been journeying to Krishnapuram, and being somewhat indisposed, had halted at a small village *choultry* about five miles from his destination, and had there suddenly died.

It was early in the morning that the sad report was conveyed to Kámini's uncle. At the time when the messenger arrived the little wife was playing in the inner court of the house with her little brother and some of her young cousins. They were playing at a marriage which had for some time past been one of the children's most fascinating games. Kámini herself was acting as directress of the ceremonies, and prompting the baby bridegroom and bride in their respective parts.

While the younger members of the household were thus innocently engaged, some of the elder women entering the court stood together conversing in low but animated tones. Kámini's quick wit soon learnt from the glances occasionally cast in her direction, that she was somehow connected with the subject of their talk. She did not, however, dare to address a word to any of these women, so she quietly left her play and went to seek her grandmother, who was the only elder member of the household to whom she ever ventured to address a remark, and who was always ready to give her private audience. She found the aged woman buried in deep thought, but still, though her reverie was broken, ready to greet her grandchild with a strange sad smile.

"Grandmother, something has happened. Something about me, I am sure. May I know it?" said the unconscious little child-widow in appealing accents. The elder widow, thus accosted, did not attempt to withhold the dreadful news, but answered simply,—

"Your lord is gone, my little one."

"Then I will attend my lord," was the child's unhesitating reply.

Strange that one so young should have uttered so readily these irrevocable words. None but one old woman had as yet heard them, it is true, and she might be trusted to keep silence; but this speech had during the past few days been ever present in the child's mind, and her resolution to be her mother's own daughter was firmly fixed, so that she cared not who might hear her speak.

"Never, my darling," said the old woman, while tears filled her eyes and she folded the little one in a close embrace. But soon the aged widow experienced a revulsion of feeling, as she pictured to herself the long years of misery which would be the lot of the child-widow, should she prefer a living grave to the sharp agony of a glorious death. So, still folding the child close to her, she kissed her fondly, saying,—

"You are right, my jewel. Oh, would that I might perish too!"

When Kámini's determination to be burnt with her husband became known to the household, no one attempted to dissuade her. The family had long been honoured for the devotion of its women, and each new instance of

wifely fortitude added fresh lustre to the family renown. The first care of the child's relations was to let it be known far and wide that a widow was about to be burnt with her husband. Soon a peculiar beating of the drums announced to the whole village this welcome news, which was rapidly diffused throughout the entire neighbourhood. Crowds flocked to the house; each one of the multitude being eager to catch a glimpse of the heroine of the hour. Amongst the first to gain admission to the house was the family priest, who conceived it to be his duty on this auspicious occasion to inspire courage in the little victim of this cruel rite. Other Brahmans followed, and little Kámini soon found herself the centre of a group of adoring women and exhorting priests. The priests were reciting passages from the sacred Hindu books, telling of the blessedness of becoming *sati*, while the women were entreating blessings on themselves and their children from the sainted child.

"There are thirty-five million hairs on the human body; so many years will the woman who ascends the pile with her husband remain in heaven."

So chanted one Brahman, while another added,—

"Such, O jewel among women, will be thy lot."

One corpulent Brahman, whose fat form, clothed chiefly with his sacred cord, shook as he walked, drew near to the bewildered girl to tell her that as her husband had died away from home, alone, and in a strange place, it was particularly incumbent upon her to go with him to rescue him from hell.

It was impossible for a child of Kámini's age to endure such a scene for long unmoved, so after seeking vainly with wistful eyes for one kind face in that cold, admiring crowd, she burst into a flood of tears. Hereupon the exhortations of the priests were redoubled, for they dreaded the prospect of having to deal with a reluctant victim.

One of the women also, misinterpreting the child's tears, now approached her with a pan of burning charcoal, which she fanned, and placed before the young Kámini. With quick intelligence the little widow caught the meaning of this act, and smiling through her tears, put her little hand upon the fire, and held it there some time, unflinching.

"I do not fear the fire," she murmured softly, as if speaking to herself. "I am my mother's daughter. I am good and brave as she was."

A chorus of praise greeted the act and words, and all doubts as to the child-wife's courage being now set at rest, the preparations for the horrid ceremony were eagerly hastened.

V.

Early in the afternoon the procession started from Krishnapuram for the village where the corpse of Kámini's husband lay.

Before midday one of the uncles had visited the spot where the dead and the living were to be burnt together, and had made the necessary arrangements. Moreover, about an hour in advance of the young widow's procession, a number of armed villagers had been sent forward. The services of these men were required both in order to keep back the crowd during the sacrifice, and to prevent any disturbance or attempt to rescue the victim; but on this occasion at least such a display of force was not required to coerce a rebellious widow.

The whole population of the village turned

out, full of pride and enthusiasm, to do honour to the great event which reflected glory on each one of them. Kámini was carried in a gorgeous palanquin borne aloft on the shoulders of sixteen men. Her face, and indeed her whole body, was coloured with sandal and saffron. Her forehead was adorned with the sacred symbol of her religion and caste. She was clad in her most splendid apparel, the same that she had been wed in, and loaded with ornaments and jewels. Her progress throughout was as a triumphal procession. She was the idol of the hour, and arms were stretched out towards her in adoration as she passed.

In the midst of it all the little child-widow sat unmoved, with eyes fixed. She saw nothing, heard nothing, felt nothing; though the pain from her poor burnt hand must have been excessive. Once only, during the long two hours of this awful journey, did she show any consciousness of what was passing. It was her enemy Lakshmi, who, having been unable to escape the contagion of the general enthusiasm, had joined the pressing throng, who thus prevailed to draw the young child back to earth.

"He will come back to you when I am gone," were the words Kámini addressed to Rama's mother, and which the fond parent accepted as a certain prophecy.

The pressing throng soon carried the elder woman away from the side of the palanquin; but the words, the last the young girl ever spoke of her own accord, remained always with her as a precious heritage.

VI.

It had not entered into Rama's calculations that one so young as Kámini would have resolved to perish with her husband. She could not, he argued, have anything in common with the aged reprobate to whom she had been wedded; moreover, he would not have imagined that her responsible relatives would permit such a hideous sacrifice of that young life.

After he had watched the disappearance of Kámini's retreating figure on that evening of their last brief interview, he had returned to dog the footsteps of her husband, and had eventually found means to hasten his decease —only to learn that he had dared for nought.

Whatever share Rama may have had in the

sudden expiry of Kámini's husband, as it was no one's business to inquire particularly into the cause of the wretched man's death, he ran no serious risk of detection. It was written on the dead man's forehead that he should die, and he having done so, it would have been almost impious to investigate the manner of his dying too curiously. Such was the general opinion of those in whose midst this event had occurred, and inasmuch as this convenient death had given occasion for a sensational festival for the whole neighbourhood, it would have been ungrateful, as well as impious, to quarrel with the occurrence, and to pry inquisitively into the mysterious ways of destiny.

The unhappy boy, when he realised too late the evil he had wrought, found himself quite unable to keep away from the scene where the cruel tragedy was to be enacted. Consequently some of the advance guard of the funeral procession came upon the lad, and having recognised him to be Lakshmi's runaway son, promptly seized him, and having carried him off to a safe distance, bound him hand and foot and tied him to a tree, with a view to keeping him out of mischief for the present,

and of releasing him and restoring him to his parents hereafter at their leisure.

It was an ignominious fate for the gallant lover, and an ill-reward for the service that he had rendered to the community, and in his mingled rage and grief, Rama uttered words that would certainly have commanded some attention on the part of any human being, save the apathetic fatalist Hindu. But with a definite end in view, Rama's captors were not the men to be distracted by any side issues, so that they lent no ear to his incautious utterances, but having made him secure, proceeded to the performance of their more exciting duties.

VII.

The double funeral procession had already reached the scene where the burning was to be held, when Rama's captors arrived. Using considerable violence, therefore, they forced their way through the dense crowd assembled round the funeral pile, and took up their positions in front of the eager ring of onlookers. The husband's body had been already placed upon the pile, and the little widow, divested of her ornaments, was walking round

it, sprinkling rice and kowries as she went. Kámini was walking in a half-conscious state, while two of her female relatives supported her tottering steps. Seven times she made the dreadful circuit, and then, in response to a whispered word from one of the officiating priests, kissed her dead husband's feet; which being done, aided by her two aunts, she mounted the pile, and laid herself down beside the corpse. One little arm was placed beneath his head, and the other upon his breast. In this position she remained motionless, while the attendant Brahmans rapidly tied the living to the dead.

Piles of dry wood and other combustibles were now heaped upon them, and the whole mass held down by heavy bamboo poles. The Brahmans now advanced from all sides, holding torches in one hand and clarified butter in the other, and threw the butter over the pile, at the same time firing it with their torches. Instantly the whole was in a blaze. A deafening din rose at the same moment, the excited yells of the vast concourse of spectators mingling with the crash of the drums and the invocations of many women.

One woman, endowed by her excitement with the strength of a maniac, burst through into the open space around the pile, attempting to throw herself into the flames. Before, however, she reached the spot, she was felled to the ground by a blow from the heavy staff of one of the attendants. She never rose. She, poor woman, was a thing accursed—a widow. It was profanation for her to approach that sacred fire. Thus two widows died that day—the child and her grandmother—the one a blessing, the other accursed.

VIII.

In fulfilment of Kámini's prophecy the truant Rama returned to his home, and having married in orthodox Hindu fashion, according to the orders of his parents, became a respected member of society. In due course he had a child, and round this infant's neck Lakshmi hung, as a charm, some of the kowries which fell from the hand of little Kámini on the day of her self-immolation.

RASU'S BEWITCHMENT.

ANXIOUS thoughts were clouding the brow of the coachman Mathurai, as he drove his mistress home from the Madras beach. There are at all times many annoyances to vex the soul of an upright coachman. To take one example only, the disorderly proceedings of young and irresponsible syces must always be a perpetual source of sorrow to their careful superior. But it was not that he was unable to prevent the syces from stealing the horses' gram, and from sleeping at night in the horses' jhools, that was now troubling Mathurai's honest soul. No; it was a purely domestic matter, belonging to his other existence.

For Mathurai lived two widely separated lives. In his official capacity he lived surrounded by the enlightened civilisation of the last decade of the nineteenth century; but he had another

life—his home life—which belonged entirely to the dark ages, and was absolutely uninfluenced by Western ideas. When the coachman laid aside his official dress, he resumed the old pariah habit, and returned to the same ideas and manners that had distinguished his ancestors for thousands of years. Mathurai's employment in European service had compelled him to become acquainted in a certain sense with the marvels wrought by steam and electricity, but his natural man had no desire to have any private dealings with such uncanny forms of magic as his employers revelled in. Once in his life, it is true, he had written a letter; that is to say, he had paid a man in the bazaar four annas for committing his words to writing, and had himself conveyed the epistle to the pillar-box, and reverently dropped it therein, with a humble prayer that the red idol would return him an answer.

Mathurai's prayer to the idol was heard, for in due course he had received a reply, in consequence of which he had, as in duty bound, done *puja* to the pillar-box for its gracious condescension. European ways were very puzzling to poor Mathurai. He could not,

for example, understand what pleasure his mistress could find in listening to the confused noise produced by the many instruments of the military band, which performed on the beach in the evenings. And yet he was a musical man, for he could thoroughly enjoy the delicious sound of the tom-tom, and would have been thoroughly content if all the other instruments of the band could have been silenced for a space, and the performer of the big drum been permitted to continue alone. He had continually hoped that this might some day happen, but his hope grew fainter as he sat day after day in patient gravity on the box of the carriage, while his mistress scandalised him by walking about and talking with strange gentlemen in a manner that occurred to Mathurai as exceedingly immodest. But he knew of worse behaviour than that, for he had many times driven his mistress to a ball, and was perfectly well aware that on such occasions she permitted many strange men to put their arms round her waist, and whirl her about in a dance. This conduct he regarded as downright indecent; but as they all did it, and her husband did not appear

to object, he supposed it must be somehow right. As a simple Pariah he did not presume to judge his master and mistress according to his own standard of the proprieties. They were, after all, a sort of divine beings, mysteriously descended from some other sphere, and not in the least degree bound to conform to Mathurai's ideas of decency and order.

But Mathurai's thoughts on this occasion, as he drove along, were not concerned with the affairs of his employers, but were wandering to his own poor home, and his unhappy daughter Rasu. Yet let it not be supposed he was a careless driver, for he was completely on the alert as his horses trotted gaily along the Mount Road, while the syces standing behind the carriage were shouting out, "Hai! Hai!" in strident tones. He knew well that that apparently heedless crowd would dissipate before his horses in good time. In admirable style he swept into the compound of the Madras Club, and having collected his master thence, drove both his divinities home to their palatial residence on the banks of the River Adyar.

A few minutes later, having doffed his official apparel, committed his steeds to the

syces, and housed the carriage, Mathurai was walking homewards to eat his rice.

Mathurai lived in one of those curious little villages of tumble-down mud huts that adorn the city of Madras. This—his native hamlet—lay some little distance back from the main road, and was so screened by trees, that probably none of the Europeans who drove along the road were aware of its existence. To reach his home the coachman quitted the main road, and, journeying along a sandy footpath, compassed about with much prickly pear, was soon bowing his head to enter his dismal hovel. The good wife was ready for him, and without delay placed his food before him. Mathurai, being in easy circumstances, was always able to reckon with confidence on having curry with his rice. No sooner was the rice piled up in his cup, and the savoury curry poured over it, than he dived his hand into the food, and set to work to convey it to his mouth in satisfactory handfuls. During this process his wife stood by him to minister to his needs, but neither of them spoke a word.

After the meal was happily concluded, and the good wife and Rasu, too, had had their

share in disposing of the remains, the domestic trouble came under discussion in the family council. The whole party—father, mother, sons, daughter, and daughters-in-law—were assembled, sitting out of doors in the moonlight. The male members of the party having lit their dark cheroots, the family gathering listened to the mother as she narrated the latest development of the family trouble.

Let us now explain what this trouble was. Rasu, Mathurai's only daughter, was now a full-grown girl of fourteen years old, and amply possessed of all those charms of figure and face which so often characterise Pariah women. Several members of Mathurai's clan, who had grown-up sons to settle in life, had been seeking for Rasu as a daughter-in-law. Two mothers, in particular, had lately been so urgent in pressing the claims of their respective sons, that Rasu's parents, seeing that they could no longer with propriety retain their daughter, had been compelled to come to some decision. Having made their choice they were now in mortal dread of the vengeance of the enraged mother of the rejected suitor. Words exceedingly forcible had been exchanged that very

afternoon between this woman and Rasu's mother, and the latter was now assuring the family council that the furious dame had sworn the direst vengeance, and had already, to her certain knowledge, gone to consult an eminent Mohammedan magician, with a view to Rasu's bewitchment. None of the party, as they listened to this announcement, for a moment doubted the wizard's power to afflict the poor girl devil possession, least of all did Rasu herself. As the mother spoke they sat in gloomy silence, glancing occasionally at the doomed girl, who, for her part, began to cry piteously. Then, one by one, the various members of the party quitted the council chamber, and within a short space the women had all retired within the hut to sleep, while the men, wrapped up in their cloths, shining white in the moonlight, lay about in the open under the starry sky.

Early the next morning, Chinnathambu, the youngest son of the house, a boy about eleven years of age, who went out daily to pasture cows in a neighbouring compound, came into the hut, with terror depicted in his countenance, and holding in his trembling hands a dirty rag

doll. This dreadful object he had discovered lying just outside the house, as he was starting out to his work. It had required no small courage on his part to pick up this dread image, and carry it into the house, and as soon as he had brought it well into the room, he let it fall upon the mud floor, and sighed out his relief.

The frightened household were soon assembled, and with anxious, troubled faces were bending over this indubitable proof of dire enchantment. Three holes had been burnt through the doll's body, and they all knew, as they noted these burns, that the wizard had begun his work, and had already touched his victim.

As Rasu herself came into the room, they all stood aside, and allowed her a full view of the hideous image.

The poor girl rushed to where it lay, and as her eyes fell upon it she uttered a wild scream, and madly tossed her head and waved her arms.

"Ah!" she cried, "I knew it. Three great devils—three white devils—have come into me. They are burning me inside; tearing me

devouring me. Oh, mother, mother, it pains me so! Help me, mother. Drive them out."

Screaming so, she flung herself upon her mother; but the wretched woman pushed her off, saying,—

"Get away, you bad girl! Lie down. Be still."

Whereupon father and mother alike began to pummel her, and laid her down, quite exhausted, upon the floor.

In this state Mathurai had to leave his daughter, for it was now time for him to be going to his work. No casual passer-by, as he saw Mathurai sitting brave and erect upon the box of his master's office *bandy*, could have guessed that the poor coachman's heart was bleeding for his only daughter. He had no spirit that morning for playing cards with the other Jehus; but sadly left his comrades gambling, and went in search of a *sowcar*, to secure funds for a desperate effort to remedy his domestic woe. Of course he had no ready money for an emergency. What poor native ever has? But he had plenty of credit, and could borrow as much as he pleased, paying interest at the modest rate of two annas a

rupee per month. When, therefore, Mathurai left his work that evening, he was amply provided with the sinews of war, and, forgetful even of his customary rice, he went to seek out some powerful devil-dancers, to enlist their aid in driving out the devils that possessed his daughter.

Late at night Mathurai returned home, having succeeded in his quest, and paid his allies in advance for their desired services.

Rasu was still lying on the floor, where her father had left her in the morning, having tasted no food, nor moved all day. The whole family was assembled in the room with her. Mathurai told them to expect the devil-dancers in the course of the night, and then, having partaken of his rice, sat silent with the rest, waiting for his strange physicians to arrive.

At last they came, and with them a great crowd of followers, who pressed into the room till it could hold no more. The leader of the party, a tall man and strongly built, was clearly in a state of semi-intoxication already. He was dressed in all the gay trappings of his calling. From his tall, mitre-like cap depended many strings of bead-like nuts, his whole dress

being freely covered with the same. This man was to be chief actor in the night's tragedy, the others being merely attendants and tom-tom beaters. He took up his position in front of the poor girl, who seemed to be compelled to raise her trembling eyes to his. She was fascinated by the horror of him, but just once, before he began his dance, she was able to remove her eyes for a moment and cast one look at her father, as if imploring that she might be spared this torment and be allowed to die in peace. But the dance was commencing amid the din of the tom-toms, and she was compelled to fasten her eyes again upon the tormentor, whom others supposed to be her deliverer.

The dancer began to move slowly at first, swaying his body from side to side; but gradually he worked himself up into a frenzy, until at last he seized poor Rasu by the hair, and dragged her up on to her feet. The spectators were all now themselves wildly excited, and their eyes were watching eagerly for the slightest movement of the devil-dancer, as he and the poor girl now stood perfectly rigid, face to face, glaring madly at each other.

"Devils, come out!" roared the dancer, and again swayed his body from above the hips from side to side, then round and round.

"One devil come; two devils come!" shouted again the dancer, as he stood still once more.

"Third devil won't come out!" he yelled again like a maniac, and, seizing a *rattan* from the hand of one of the attendants, he proceeded to beat the girl. Failing to drive out this third devil by his dance, he hoped, no doubt, to exorcise it by flogging the victim.

But poor Mathurai could not endure this, and flung himself upon the frenzied dancer, and, aided by his sons, managed to force him away.

Rasu, released from her torture, shrieked and fell insensible upon the floor, while a scene of wild confusion reigned around her.

At length the house was emptied, and the stricken parents were left alone with their daughter. The room was lighted only by the feeble flame of one poor lamp fed by cocoanut oil, as the two bent over their child in the still silence preceding the dawn of day. Rasu, before she died, rewarded their loving watch

by one last look, then turned her head away and sighed out her last breath. The mother's cry of anguish soon brought others in, and the women of the house joined with her in the uncontrolled expression of their grief. With these loud lamentations and wailings still ringing in his ears, Mathurai went forth, not having enjoyed one minute's rest or sleep, to resume his other life.

In the afternoon Mathurai presented himself, in the company of the butler, before his mistress, to ask for half a day's leave off his work. He stood rather behind the head servant in an uneasy attitude, deeply distressed to intrude his private affairs upon his official duties, and fearful of vexing his employers, as the butler made request for him.

"Well, butler," said his mistress, "what does the coachman want now?"

"His daughter done die, Missis, and he asking half-day leave. He getting cooly man to do Missis' business this evening," replied the butler.

"Ah, well. I suppose he must have leave; but tell him, butler, that his daughter mustn't die again for at least another year. All you

natives have far too many deaths in your families."

But the butler, being a good-natured body, did not translate this thoughtless speech at all literally, but after he had withdrawn, followed by the coachman, who made a grateful salaam to his mistress before retiring, he assured Mathurai that *doraisani* was very sorry for him, and hoped that all the other members of his family would enjoy long life and prosperity.

So poor Rasu was laid to rest that evening, and Mathurai, when asked the cause of her death, said simply "Fever."

He had done his best—good, honest soul,—for his daughter; but how could he hope to withstand the tyranny of the cruel powers, which mercilessly torment him and all his kind?

THE YOGI'S REVENGE.

I.

RĀMANĀTHAN was a Hindu ascetic of great reputed sanctity, and was held in the highest veneration by many thousands of his fellow-countrymen. His more immediate neighbours, the townspeople of Ranganur in particular, regarded him with an awe that in many cases degenerated into abject fear. In his earlier days he had been known amongst them as a very clever lad, and many flattering prognostications as to the honours he would attain to in the service of the British Government, had been current in the little town. But Rāmanāthan had chosen to achieve greatness by other and more orthodox means, and had acquired fame without submitting to the bondage of Western educational ideas. He had, in fact, at a comparatively early age renounced the world, and all its ordinary desires, and engaged in the

practice of many painful austerities, so that he already, while yet in his prime, enjoyed an extended reputation as a saint and a magician. There were numerous stories circulating for many miles around his dwelling, concerning his marvellous divinations, his miracles of healing and of destruction, which none of his neighbours ever dared to doubt. The inhabitants of Ranganur were proud of their holy man, and even those who attributed their calamities to him, forbore to entertain any evil thought about him. In this they were no doubt actuated by prudence, being convinced that he knew all their thoughts, and judging it rather expedient to harbour no malice, but to seek the favour of the saint for the future by assiduous worship.

Rāmanāthan did not, of course, associate with his fellow-townsmen, but resided on a rocky eminence without the town. In the earlier days of his seclusion he had lived near the river's bank, because in the incipient stages of his ascetic development he had been compelled to resort to frequent ablutions. Now, however, he had advanced far beyond all such, and was generally believed not to have washed

himself for a considerable number of years past. Popular opinion was probably in error in this belief, but he was at least not aggressively clean at the time of which we are speaking. At that former period his adorers used to troop out from the town and observe their hero sitting carefully and closely on one heel, blocking with his thumb and fingers his ears and eyes and mouth. With imperturbable and respectful gravity they would regard him thus seated, and watch him as he removed his middle finger alternately from one nostril and from the other, as he laboriously practised the orthodox manner of breathing. One nostril he was taught to consecrate to inhalation, and the other to exhalation. In his present advanced stage, needless to say, he was able to close all the orifices of the body, and respire correctly without mechanical assistance; but it had needed many years' hard discipline to arrive at his matured powers. He was barely sixteen when he first withdrew from the world, and was now full forty years old.

There was one man in Ranganur—Govinda by name—who yielded to none in his fear of Rāmanāthan. Govinda had, in fact, been the

cause of Rāmanāthan's relinquishment of worldly vanities; for in his sixteenth year Rāmanāthan had been offered by his parents as a suitable husband for Govinda's daughter; whereas Govinda had judged otherwise, and rejected the suit. Since that day Govinda's affairs had never prospered. All the youthful Rāmanāthan's prayers and penances, which commenced from the time of his rejected suit, seemed to fall in curses on Govinda's household. It was in this light, at least, that Govinda himself regarded his successive losses. It were impious, no doubt, to hold a virtuous ascetic to be capable of passions; yet Govinda was not alone in his dread consciousness that Rāmanāthan hated him, and was slowly and surely torturing him to death in revenge for that ancient slight.

II.

The constant tread of feet had worn a path up the rocky steep to the ascetic's home. Worshippers from Ranganur daily ascended the sacred mount and presented themselves before the holy man. His customary throne was a flat, projecting rock, and all day long

the dwellers in the town below might see their saint there seated motionless. From some points of view his dark figure could be seen in clear outline against the sky. To all appearance he had sat there absolutely still for years, so that it was no marvel that pious Hindus regarded him as a veritable god, and the guardian deity and presiding genius of Ranganur. His visitors, as they approached the holy presence, beheld the *yogi* seated on the bare rock with head bent forward and eyes cast down. Often it would happen that some solitary worshipper remained to consult the oracle. Whether one or many were present, the *yogi* was alike unmoved, and showed no sign that he was aware of what was passing, except on those occasions when he uttered a response. Yet even when he spoke his voice had a far-away and unearthly sound, and he betrayed not the slightest interest in what he said. His utterance, indeed, conveyed the impression that some spring had been accidentally touched, and the machinery within him set in motion. Though he was consulted often, no inquirer could be sure of a reply, and some prayers repeated day after day had met with

no response. Such an event was generally considered as indicative of latent evil in the worshipper, and of impending disaster.

There was one visitor, however, whose presence was always noted by Rāmanāthan and that favoured individual was his nephew Gopāla. This youth was a somewhat favourable specimen of "young India," an intelligent lad, pursuing the ordinary course of scholastic "cram" at a Government college with a view to obtaining a University degree. Between the *ultra* Hindu ascetic and the young student of Western learning a curious friendship had sprung up. Gopāla could always reduce the *yogi* to earth. Even when Rāmanāthan had for months together been deaf and dumb to all the world beside, he would converse with Gopāla.

Thus it happened that on a certain night the venerable ascetic and his schoolboy friend were seated together by the hermit's rocky home, engaged in quiet conversation. Beneath them lay the little town, every roof of which was clearly visible in the bright moonlight. From amongst the many roofs rose dark palmyras and cocoanut trees, while, most conspicuous of all, the tall gopurams of the Hindu

temple, with their curious sculptures, stood out white and clear.

Neither of this curiously assorted couple took notice of the moonlit landscape. The younger was gazing fixedly at his queer companion, while the elder seemed to be looking nowhere, unless, perhaps, his eyes were marking the silent river, where a great banyan tree, inhabited, according to popular opinion, by a mighty demon, stood sentinel over the burning ground.

"Why are you, my son, so enamoured of this progress?" the dreamy sage was asking. "What is your progress? Movement, no doubt, in some direction; but do not be sure, my son, that it is in a right direction. Your progress is mere delusion in my eyes. The vaunted discoveries of your Western friends only promote unrest. Your railways, telegraphs, and telephones are a hard slavery of grinding labour. They allow no pause, no contemplation. Haste and confusion is your progress, and the end is whirling madness—the end, my son, is madness."

"Ah, my father! we are not all fitted for the contemplative life. We are, I confess it, in a hurry to be wise."

"You talk of wisdom, my son, but you won't acquire wisdom from the West. The Western sages have no capacity for real knowledge. They have no patience. Emancipation and power, such as I have won, are the only genuine fruits of knowledge; and they are hard to win. Victory crowns the long and bitter struggle. Do your Western friends possess the powers I possess? Do they despise all the vanities of this illusory world as I despise them? Have they conquered all desires and passions as I have conquered? Can they control the destinies of men? Can they direct the will? All men around me are but playthings in my hand. I know them all—their secrets, their hopes and fears—and I laugh at them, and turn them as I please. Wisdom is not the possession of dry facts, my son. Wisdom is that penetrative power that enters into all the secrets of human life, and its possessor drives the common herd according as he wills."

"Emancipation, my father, is no doubt a glorious end. I recognise in you a man far other and far more powerful than those who are commonly reputed to be wise. But I do

not find perfection, even in you. Are you sure, my father, that you have utterly cast off all the five faults? Are you entirely free from wrath?"

"Quite free, my son. But oh! I am not perfectly emancipated yet. I am very near the end. Ashes, ashes, the ashes of a man are needed yet."

After so saying the *yogi* relapsed for a time into silence, though an occasional sound of "Ashes, ashes," broke through his lips.

As it was now past midnight, Gopāla might have availed himself of this opportunity to withdraw from this nocturnal conference, had he not come to it with a view to broaching a particular subject which he had not as yet been able to approach. He had, indeed, rather a delicate matter to handle, inasmuch as a marriage had been arranged between himself and a daughter of Govinda's house, and he was much afraid that this alliance would not be favourably regarded by his powerful relative. While he was pondering as to how he was to communicate this difficult intelligence to his mysterious uncle, Rāmanāthan came to his rescue, and relieved him of the necessity of

breaking the news by advancing the conversation to a further stage.

"You will marry, my son, and prosper. You are, I know, the slave of desire; but success was written on your forehead at your birth; and success, as you esteem it, you will achieve. I, too, succeed, but on a higher plane than you. Yes, you will prosper; but that house will see a marriage and a funeral in one week. I prosper also. They have thought, and have even said to one another, that I shall be pleased because you marry one of their females. They think I love you. Fools. They think I hate him. Fools. What have I to do with love or hate? I am passionless. Once, I seem to remember, I, too, was the victim of desire. It is no longer intelligible to me. Human interests concern me not. Human ashes alone serve me. That I know. He knows it too, and he is horribly afraid. His fear accomplishes my purpose."

"Are not these strange words, my father, for one who neither loves nor hates? Does not the proverb say, that it is the duty of the great to forgive the faults of inferiors? Do you think it possible that you may uncon-

sciously be harbouring a feeling of revenge for some old injury?"

"You speak foolishly, my son. Proverbs are the invention of petty men, entangled in the net of mundane life and fettered by the bonds of action. I have nought to do with them; but did not men say, when I was in the world, that even a small fibre may serve as a tooth-pick? Even the meanest substance may be useful to the wise. Is that a true proverb, my son?"

After he had thus delivered himself, the ascetic's face completely changed, and he fell into profound contemplation, so that Gopāla, knowing well that further speech was out of the question, left him there seated on his solitary rock, looking with hungry, viewless stare towards the distant burning-ground.

III.

In due course the marriage of Gopāla with Govinda's grand-daughter was celebrated with all appropriate ceremony. The front verandah of Govinda's dwelling was adorned with the customary splendour of blue, red, and white cloth, while the pillars were concealed by

abundance of massive plantain stems and leaves. Within this shelter for days together the sound of music scarcely ceased. The incessant din of tom-toms and droning of pipes served as a continual reminder to the good people of Ranganur that a festivity was in progress. In the midst of all this rejoicing, on the fifth day of the marriage ceremonies, the little town was thrown into consternation by a visit from the venerable *yogi*. Never before, since the first day of his retirement, had he been known to enter into the haunts of men. As the gaunt, nude form of the ascetic was seen passing along the central street of the town, the people fell away from him on either side, and placing their joined hands to their foreheads did him humble obeisance. Many anxious glances followed him as he slowly walked on, all unmindful of the general notice. All sounds of life, even the voices of quarrelling women, were hushed as he approached. The silence went before him, until it seized upon the musicians and the wedding guests in Govinda's house, as the awful *yogi* drew near to the scene of the marriage rejoicings. Affrighted women looking out into the street

to learn the cause of this oppressive stillness, saw the dreaded saint standing in the middle of the street before them. His lean, bare figure, surmounted by the dense tangle of his hair, out of the midst of which his wild eyes seemed to flash with the fire of another world, chilled them as a fearful apparition of horrid omen. As his penetrative glance seemed to pass through them, and his thin arms raised and extended towards the house seemed to curse its inmates and doom the home, wild cries of fear pierced the still silence. But the *yogi* heard them not. For five long minutes he stood thus while not a quiver nor the faintest movement could be detected in his naked body; then he returned, as he had come, amid the respectful homage of the crowd.

Relieved from the weight of his dread presence, the tongues of his neighbours began to move in cautious whispers. They formed themselves into little groups to discuss the meaning of this portent. They were content, for the most part, to suppose that he had come to bless the wedding, because he was thought to love Gopāla, seeing in the bright boy a sort of resurrection of his old self; but it was

impossible to avoid the feeling that this unprecedented visit boded disaster to one townsman at least. It was therefore no surprise to the people of Ranganur when they heard on the morrow that Govinda was dead.

IV.

All through the day that followed Govinda's decease Rāmanāthan had been sitting perfectly calm and motionless. Throughout the long hours not a muscle of his body had stirred, but, just as the sun was setting, a quiver ran through his whole frame, and he was, as it were, shaken back into ordinary life. His food, conveyed to his rock by pious hands, lay beside him. There was milk there, too, in a small brass vessel, and a somewhat larger vessel containing water. Each day towards sunset his worshippers brought him fresh provisions, though he frequently fasted for many days together, and rarely drank more than once in a month. To-day he tasted nothing.

As he slowly rose to his feet, he was muttering words,—

"I see the flames. I have the ashes. My

ashes are they? His ashes? Mine! mine! I am emancipated!"

Thus muttering, he left his solitary perch, and descended the hill. Again the *yogi* was about to visit the scenes of human strife; but he did not, as yesterday, turn towards the town. His walk was rapid, as, shunning the dwellings of men, he sped swiftly, with the elasticity as of youth, through field and thicket, towards the river's brink. Down the bank he hastened, and, hurrying along by the water's edge, pursued his course to the spot he had gazed on from a distance for so many years. When he had reached the burning-ground, emerging from the river's bed, he strode towards the sacred tree. With the agility of an ape he climbed it, and was soon sitting cross-legged on a branch. There he sat, still as an image, apparently as much at home as on his customary rock. He had become the demon of the tree.

In the distance could now be heard the melancholy music of the two trumpets, answering one another in mournful cadence. The funeral was approaching. Through the leafy screen which hid him the *yogi* might have seen the sad procession. In front were men scatter-

ing coppers to a crowd of naked urchins who scrambled and fought for them. Round about the litter on which lay the corpse were gathered men, friends and relatives of the deceased. The body, except the face, was covered with masses of flowers. That face the *yogi* had not seen for many years, but he needed none to tell him that Govinda was dead, and that this was what was left of him.

Motionless the *yogi* sat while the cremation rites were being performed.

Poor Govinda had had a son, but he had died some years ago. His hard fortune had deprived him, when dead, of the services of his legitimate deliverer from hell. The duty of kindling the fire had devolved upon a little boy of six, the sole male descendant of the departed. The little fellow, after counterfeiting the sorrow, which he should have felt, in divers ways, by rolling on the ground and beating his breast with tiny hands, at last, as if reluctant, applied the torch, and the pile burst into flames.

The mourners soon departed, leaving the corpse to the tender mercies of the burning-ground attendants. The bearers lingered at a

short distance. Then, had he been looking, the *yogi* might have seen the attendant batter the corpse, as it rose to a sitting posture, with his heavy pole. Had he been listening he might have heard the foul epithets which the coarse creature showered upon the corpse, as he charged it to lie still. Whether the *yogi* saw and heard, or not, his body at least betrayed no sign.

For hours the patient ascetic sat, while the body was being slowly consumed. At length, when he deemed that the fitting moment was come, he terrified the lonely night-watchers by a piercing cry, "*Aiyo! Aiyo!*" uttered from the mysterious depths of the sacred tree. The scared attendants fled in terror. They did not turn to see whether devil or *yogi* was in pursuit, but ran precipitately from the spot.

So the *yogi* slid down from his arboreal seat and gathered together the ashes which he needed for his final rite.

V.

On the next morning devout visitors found the *yogi* seated, immovable as usual, with his eyes fixed on certain mystic characters de-

scribed in ashes that lay on the ground before him. Something caused them to feel that the saint was somehow different; but it was long before any dared to touch him. At length it was discovered that he was dead.

So the *yogi* was emancipated.

There was much talk in Ranganur about the strange events of the three days. On the whole a sense of relief prevailed, now that the town's too holy and too potent neighbour was removed. People felt that they could now think and speak and act with greater freedom. Their reverence for the *yogi* had, after all, been mainly fear.

Amongst the common people it was freely reported, and even believed, that the saint, having profaned the sanctuary of the devil of the burning-ground, had been slain by the angry demon; but other Hindus, being wiser, and knowing that there was not a god in the Hindu Pantheon who could have the least power against so holy an ascetic, naturally ridiculed the idea of an ordinary demon being able to harm the mighty *yogi*, and attributed the saint's decease to his own success in the path of emancipation.

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सन्तप्तायसि संस्थितस्य पयसो नामापि न श्रूयते
मुक्ताकारतया तदेव नलिनीपत्रस्थितं जायते।
स्वात्यां सागरशुक्तिमध्यपतितं तन्मौक्तिकं जायते
प्रायेणाधममध्यमोत्तमगुणः संसर्गतो भूयते॥

'If a drop of water fall on heated iron it is utterly destroyed, not even its name remains, and yet the same drop on a lotus leaf takes the resemblance of a pearl, while if it fall during the asterism of Arcturus, into a pearl oyster, it becomes a pearl itself. Always a man's qualities, whether bad, medium, or excellent, arise from his associations.'

Compare, 'Evil communications corrupt good manners' and the Irish proverb, 'Tell me whom you're with, and I'll tell you who you are.'

The Four Questions.

When king Yudhishṭhira was in exile, he came to a tank inhabited by a ferocious *Grâha* or water demon. It was the habit of this beast to put the following questions to all who came to drink at the tank:—

को मोदते किमाश्चर्यं का वार्त्ता कः पथः स्मृतः।
इति मे चतुरः प्रश्नान् पूरयित्वा जलं पिब॥

'What is happy? What is wonderful? What is the news? What is the path? First answer me these four questions, and then drink.' As no one was ever able to answer these questions, he used to kill and devour them. Yudhishṭhira, however, was equal to the occasion, and, when challenged, replied as follows:—

दिवसस्याष्टमे भागे शाकं पचति यो गृहे ।
अनृणी चाप्रवासी च स वारिचर मोदते ॥ १
अहन्यहनि भूतानि गच्छन्ति यममन्दिरे ।
अपरे स्थातुमिच्छन्ति किमाश्चर्यमतः परम् ॥ २
अस्मिन्महामोहमये कटाहे सूर्याग्निना रात्रिदिनेन्धनेन ।
मासर्तुदर्वीपरिघट्टनेन भूतानि कालः पचतीह वार्त्ता ॥ ३
श्रुतिर्विभिन्ना स्मृतयो विभिन्ना नैको मुनिर्यस्य मतं विभिन्नम् ।
धर्मस्य तत्त्वं निहितं गुहायां महाजनो येन गतः स पन्थाः ॥ ४

'He who cooks his mess of vegetables at the eighth watch of the day, and he who is not in debt, and is not a sojourner,—he, O Water-Goblin, is happy. That, while every day created things are hastening to the hall of death, others should say, "I wish to remain,"—what is more wonderful than this? In this cauldron (*of the world*) full of illusion, time cooks created things, with the sun for fire, night and day for fuel, and months and seasons for the stirring ladle,—this is the news. The Scriptures are at variance and Holy Writ is at variance. Many are the holy men, but their advice is at variance. The essence of virtue is placed in the inner recesses (*of the heart*), and that, along which the great and good have gone before,—that is the path.

On hearing these replies the *Gṛdha* was mightily pleased, and, giving him all the riches he had carried off from his former victims, let him go on his journey.

Lakhimâ Thakurani.

Lakhimâ Ṭhakurâṇî was a famous poetess of Mithilâ. I have not been able to obtain any particulars as to when she lived. Numerous stories are told of her learning. The following are samples:—When her daughter was of age to be sent to her husband, she wrote the following letter to the young Paṇḍit to whom the girl was married. The text in this is written as it was given me, but is probably corrupt:—

आक्रान्ता दशमध्वजातिघतिनात्यामूर्छिता निर्जले
तुर्यद्वादशवह्नितीयमतिमन्नेकादशाभस्तिनी।
सा षष्ठी नृपपञ्चमस्य नवमभूः सप्तमीवर्जिता
प्राप्नोत्यष्टमवेदनां परिहरेत्तूर्णं तृतीयोद्भवः॥

To understand the above, it is necessary to know that the numbers refer to the signs of the zodiac, which are as follows:—

1. मेष	7. तुला
2. वृष	8. वृश्चिक
3. मिथुन	9. धनुः
4. कर्क	10. मकर
5. सिंह	11. कुम्भ
6. कन्या	12. मीन

The translation is,—'Attacked with the severe onslaught of the God of Love is she. Distraught like a crab or a fish in a dry place is she. O thou bull-minded one! the damsel, round-

formed as a water jar, with arched eyebrows, (*the destined wife*) of thou who art like a lion amongst kings, and who is not (*gross*) like (*a shopkeeper's wife who plies*) the scales. She feels pain like that of a scorpion bite. Quickly let the result of married life relieve her.'

In accordance with Lakhimâ Ṭhakurâṇî's letter, the young Brâhman came, and after the usual ceremonies, went with his wife into the bridal chamber. As, however, she was very young and tender he abstained from exercising his marital rights. The bride told her mother, who remonstrated with her son-in-law as follows :—

तन्वी बाला कृशतनुरियं त्यज्यतामत्र शङ्का
काचिद्दृष्टा भ्रमरभरतो मञ्जरी भज्यमाना ।
तस्मादेषा रहसि भवने निर्दयं पीडनीया
मन्दाक्रान्तं बहुतररसं नो ददातीक्षुदण्डः ॥

'Be not afraid that the damsel is too slender. She is as it were the bud of a flower beloved by bees which has been seen and is being plucked(?). Therefore in private must she be passionately given pangs. A piece of sugarcane (*when pressed*) gives us gently much sweetness.'

The son-in-law followed her advice, and next morning the following conversation took place between mother and daughter :—

Daughter.— मातः केलिगृहं न यामि शयने
Lakhimâ.— कस्माच्च चन्द्रानने ।
Daughter.— जामाता तव निर्दयो निजभुजे बद्धो ऽपि
मां पीडनं (sc. ददाति ॥
दन्तैश्चाङ्गरक्षणतां करोति च नखैर्दन्तैश्च खण्डीकृता
केनेयं रतिराक्षसेन रमिता शार्दूलवत्क्रीडिता ॥

'O Mother, I will not retire again to the bridal chamber.'

'Why not, my moon-faced one?'

'Your son-in-law passionately gives me pangs, even when bound in my arms. He burns me as it were with live coals, and I am torn to pieces with his nails and teeth; of what love-demon am I the sport, and why does he play with me like a tiger?'

A Pandit once came to try Lakhimâ Ṭhakurâṇi's learning. She heard this, and disguising herself as a water-girl, went to meet him. The Pandit addressed her as follows :—

किं मां हि पश्यसि घटेन कटिस्थितेन
वक्रेण चारु परिमीलितलोचनेन।
अन्यं हि पश्य पुरुषं तव कार्ययोग्यं
नाहं घटाङ्कितकटीं प्रमदां स्पृशामि॥

'Why are you gazing at me, pitcher on hips, with languid eyes? Gaze on some other man suited for you. I touch not a fair one whose hip is marked with the pitcher.'

To this piece of impertinence she replied :—

सत्यं ब्रवीमि मकरध्वजबाणमुग्ध
नाहं त्वदर्थमनसा परिचिन्तयामि।
दासोऽद्य मे विघटितस्तव तुल्यरूपः
स त्वं भवेन्नहि भवेदिति मे वितर्कः॥

'I' faith, I tell thee who art smitten by the arrow of love, that I am not so minded towards thee. I could not find my slave. You are like him, and I was merely trying to find out if you were he or not?'

Then the Pandit saw that she was Lakhimâ, and admitted himself conquered.

Lakhimâ Ṭhakurâṇî and the Bikauâ.

In Mithilâ, the men of a certain high sept of Brâhmaṇs are in the habit of selling their daughters and sisters in marriage to Brâhmaṇs of lower caste, and of marrying girls of lower caste on receipt of a consideration. This sept is called from its practices the sept of the बिकौआ, or mercenary Brâhmaṇs. The practice is much reprobrated by Brâhmaṇs of other septs. Lakhimâ Ṭhakurâṇî once noted a marriage celebrated with great pomp. It was one of these *Bikauás*, who had sold his sister in marriage to a man of low caste. She thereupon composed the following verse on the subject which has since been famous in Mithilâ:—

चपलं तुरगं परिणर्तयतः
पथि पौरजनान्परिमर्दयतः ।
नहि ते भुजभाग्यभवो विभवो
भगिनीभगभाग्यभवो विभवः ॥

Freely translated,—'You may make your spirited horses prance, and with them trample on the town-folk. But we all know that your wealth is not got by your own exertions but by the sale of your sister's person.'

The Pangs of Parting.

The following lines are well known in Mithilâ. They are very true, and are worth preserving. The metre is not very correct:—

यदि यास्यसि नाथ निश्चितं
यामि यामि वचनं हि मा वद ।
अशनेः पतनं न वेदनं
पतनज्ञानमतीव दुःसहम् ॥

'If thou must go, my Lord, say not, "I go, I go." The falling of a stone on one causeth not the pang; it is the knowledge that it is falling which is unbearable.'

With these may be compared Lakhimâ Ṭhakurâṇî's verses on the pangs of anticipated separation, which are very popular in Mithilâ. They are are as follows:—

भङ्क्त्वा भोक्तुं न भुङ्क्ते कुटिलविषलतां कोटिमिन्दोर्वितर्का-
त्ताराकाराच्चृषार्तः पिबति न पयसां विप्रुषः पद्मसंस्थाः।
छायानम्भोरुहाणामलिकुलशबलां वीक्ष्य सन्ध्यामसन्ध्यां
कान्ताविश्लेषभीरुर्दिनमपि रजनीं मन्यते चक्रवाकः॥

'He breaks the crisp lotus tendrils to eat them but does not do so, for he mistakes them for the rays of the moon; though athirst he does not drink the drops of water in the lotus leaves for he thinks them stars; in the shade of the lotus flowers dark with the swarms of bees he sees night when there is no night; always dreading separation from his beloved, the *chakravâka* imagines even the day to be night.'

CALUMNY.

The following verses on Calumny are very popular in Mithilâ. The first two are said to be anonymous, the latter are said to be in the *Bhôjaprabandhasâra*, a work which I have not seen, and which I am assured is a distinct work from the well-known *Bhôjaprabandha*.

अपूर्वा रसनाव्याली खलाननबिलेशया।
कर्णमूलं दशत्यन्यं हरत्यन्यस्य जीवनम्॥

'There is a wondrous snake,—the tongue—dwelling in its hole—the mouth of a bad man.

It bites one man behind his ear, and thereby takes away the life of another.'

विषधरतोऽप्यतिविषमः खल इति मृषा न वदन्ति विद्वांसः।
यदयं नकुलद्वेषी स कुलद्वेषी पुनः पिशुनः ॥

'The wise say not untruly that a wicked man is far worse than a poisonous serpent. For while the latter is the enemy only of the ichneumon, a calumniator is the enemy of everyone.' Here नकुलद्वेषी is a threefold pun. It means either 'hating the ichneumon,' or 'not hating his own race,' or 'not hating the members of the family of the man he has bitten.'

सर्पः क्रूरः खलः क्रूरः सर्पात्क्रूरतरः खलः।
सर्प एकाकिनं हन्ति खलः सर्वविनाशकृत् ॥
खलः सर्षपमात्राणि परच्छिद्राणि पश्यति।
आत्मनो बिल्वमात्राणि पश्यन्नपि न पश्यति ॥
दुर्जनः परिहर्तव्यो विद्ययालंकृतोऽपि सः।
मणिना भूषितः सर्पः किमसौ न भयंकरः ॥

'The snake is cruel, and the bad man is cruel, but the bad man is more cruel than the snake. The snake kills only the one man (*whom he bites*), but the bad man is all-destroying. He spies out holes the size of a grain of mustard in others, but even when he is looking at some as big as bel-fruit in himself, he does not see them. The evil man should be shunned, even when he is adorned with knowledge. A snake is not less deadly because he bears a precious jewel on his head.

सन्तस्तृणोत्तारणमुत्तमाङ्गात्
सुवर्णकोटिघर्षणमामनन्ति।
प्राणव्ययेनापि कृतोपकाराः
खलाः परं वैरमिवोद्वहन्ति ॥

'The good are as grateful for the lifting away of a straw from the head, as if it were the gift of a present of ten million pieces of gold. But the wicked when befriended even at the expense of the aider's life, are as ungrateful for the obligation as if it were an act of the greatest enmity.'

The Bee in the Lotus.

The following lines, said to be anonymous, are well known in Mithilâ. They refer to the well-known fable of the bee imprisoned in the lotus, which is released at sunrise.

अशनावसरे प्रियः प्रियाया
गलितो भोजनभाजनेन सद्यः।
अथ नाथविमोचनाय भेजे
दिननाथं वसती सती वनान्ते॥

'While eating, the lover was separated suddenly from his beloved, by the (*closing of the*) vessel which contained his food. So to release her lord, the chaste (*female bee*) dwelling in the skirts of the forest adored the lord of day.'

It should be remembered that the lotus closes at sunset, and opens at sunrise.

Tatah kim Verses.

What are called ततः किम् verses are very popular in Mithilâ. They are called so because the last line ends with the words ततः किम् 'what is the good of it,' repeated four times. Here are two examples,

The first is said to be by Kâlidâsa. The other is anonymous.

धनं पर्वताग्रं वचः सिद्धिरूपं
वपुः कर्मदक्षं कुशाग्रीयबुद्धिः ।
न दानं न शक्तिर्न कीर्तिर्न पाण्ड-
स्तत किं ततः किं ततः किं ततः किम् ॥

'Wealth, piled high as a mountain, but no liberality;—Eloquence, reaching to perfection, but no power;—A frame, skilled in action, but no fame; An intellect, sharp as the point of *kuśa* grass, but no education:—What is the good of it? What is the good of it? What is the good of it?'

शरीरं सुरूपं तथा वै कलत्रं
गृहं चारुचित्रं धनं मेरुतुल्यम् ।
यशोदाकिशोरे मनो नापि लग्नं
तत: किं तत: किं तत: किं तत: किम् ॥

'A handsome person, and a handsome wife; a gorgeous palace; and wealth piled high as Mount Meru:—If the heart is not fixed on the child of Yaśôdâ:—What is the good of them? What is the good of them?'

Some Quaint Blessings.

The following blessings were collected by me in Mithilâ. They are much admired by the Pandits:—

I.

राजोत्पले हरिभुजामिह के शवस्य
यस्योरसीन्दुरदनं हि जटाकलापे ।
शं खाम्बरो हि पवनाशरिनाथसूनुः
कान्तागशो ऽगतनया विपुलं ददातु ॥

'May he—who sleeps on a mountain (अगशो—*i.e.* Śiva), whose (यस्य) beloved is the Daughter of the Mountain (अगतनया—*i.e.* Pârvatî), whose garment is the ethereal void (खाम्बरो), whose son is the lord (*i.e.* Kumâra) of the enemy (*i.e.* the peacock) of the eaters of air (*i.e.* serpents), on whose breast (उरसि) is the king (राजा—*i.e.* Vâsuki) of the eaters of frogs (हरिभुजाम्—*i.e.* snakes), whose repast (अदनम्) is on the fleshless (उत्पले) head (के) of a corpse, and on the top-knot of whose matted hair (जटाकलापे) is the moon (इन्दुः)—give thee abundant prosperity.'

II.

गवीशपत्रो नगजार्तिहारी
कुमारतातः शशिखण्डधारी ।
लङ्केशसम्पूजितपादपद्मः
पायादनादिः परमेश्वरो वः ॥

This is capable of either of two interpretations, as follows :—

'May the Supreme Lord without beginning (Śiva)—who is mounted (पत्रो) on the lord of cows, (*i.e.* a bull), who is the destroyer of the pains of the Daughter of the Mountain (Pârvatî), who is the father of Kumâra, who bears the crescent of the moon and the lotuses of whose feet were worshipped by the Lord of Laṅkâ (Râvaṇa),—protect you.'

The other interpretation is obtained by cutting off the first syllable of all the above epithets as follows :—

'May the Supreme Lord without beginning (or found by omitting the beginning of the above

epithets) (Kṛishṇa),—who is mounted on the lord of birds (वि+ ईश *i.e.* a peacock), the destroyer of the pains of the elephant[1] (गजार्तिहारी), the father of Mâra (मारतातः), who is decorated with a peacock's tail (शिखण्डधारी), and the lotuses of whose feet are worshipped by Kêśa,—protect you.

III.

विराजराजपुत्रारेर्यन्नाम चतुरक्षरम् ।
पूर्वार्धं तव शत्रूणां परार्धं तव वेश्मनि ॥

'May the first half (मृत्युं *i.e.* death) of the four syllabled name (मृत्युंजय) of the enemy of Pradyumna, be in the house of thy enemies, and the second half (जय *i.e.* victory) in thine.

Here वि = a bird. विराज = Garuḍa.

विराजराज = Kṛishṇa. विराजराजपुत्र = Pradyumna.

A Curse on Maithila Brahmans.

The Brâhmaṇs of Mithilâ or Tirhut are a notoriously litigious people. They are always quarrelling amongst themselves. They admit this fact, and lay the blame on a curse of Râmachandra. When he came to Janaka's court to Sitâ's *Svayaṁvara*, the Maithila Brâhmaṇs treated the young Kshatriya from Avadh with contumely. He turned upon them with following curse :—

गृहे शूरा रणे भीताः परस्परविरोधिनः ।
कुलाभिमानिनो यूयं मिथिलायां भविष्यथ ॥

'Heroes at home, cowards in the battle-field, always quarrelling amongst yourselves, and

[1] Alluding to the well known legend of the elephant and the crocodile.

inordinately full of caste pride, shall ye be in Mithilâ.'

I must say that the curse is a very accurate description of a great many Maithila Brâhmaṇs.

Bangalis in Bihar.

The Baṅgâlîs, as a nation, are very unpopular in Bihâr. There are a number of popular verses exhibiting the light in which they are looked upon in that province. Here are three:—

आहारे बकक्काकशूकरसमाश्छागोपमा मैथुने
देशे सिंहसमा रणे मृगसमा देशान्तरे जम्बुकाः ।

'They feed like cranes or crows or pigs, * * * *[1]. At home they are lions, in the battle-field deer, and in a foreign country (*e g.* Bihâr) jackals.'

शूद्राचाररताः शिरस्यनुदिनं यस्त्रैर्विहीनाः खलाः
बाङ्गाला यदि मानवाः शिव शिव प्रेतास्तदा कीदृशाः ।

'Delighting in low-caste orgies,[2] with their heads continually uncovered, vile.—If Baṅgâlîs are men, O Śiva! Śiva! what are ghosts?'

The Bihâr verdict on Baṅgâlî women is even stronger than the foregoing, and is grossly unfair:

हेथा हेथेत्यस्य सदैव भाषिणी
मुखं समाच्छाद्य भगप्रदर्शिनी ।
पतिं विहायोपपतिप्रगामिणी
विराजते वंङ्गनरेन्द्रकामिनी ॥

'Saying *hethâ hethâ* when she means 'hither. Modestly covering her face, and yet grossly indecent; deserting her husband, and hasting to a lover,—so shines in her glory the fair one of the noble Baṅgâlî.' The *e* in the word हेथा is, it should be observed, short.

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[1] This half line is obscene.

[2] In allusion to the Śâkta worship prevalent in Bengal.

The Bihar opinion of Anga.

Aṅga, or Western Baṅgâl, has as bad a reputation as Baṅgâl proper, as witness the following anonymous verse :—

अङ्गानि मोटयति वारि करोत्यपेयं
शुष्कान्यपि व्यथयति व्रणमण्डलानि ।
यद्देशजः पवन एव करोति बाधां
तद्देशजाः किमु नराः सुखदा भवन्ति ॥

'A country where the wind causes the limbs to swell[1], makes the water unwholesome, reopens healed wounds, and only does harm,—how can the people of that country be pleasant?

A Word in Season, how good is it!

There are many verses on this text current in the mouths of Mithilâ Paṇḍits. The following are samples :—

अवसरकथिता वाणी
गुणगणहीनापि शोभते नितराम् ।
वामे गर्दभनादो
यथा प्रयाणे हि मङ्गलं वदति ॥

'A word in season, even when not very wise shines forth as excellent, just as an ass's bray heard on the left hand, promises a prosperous journey.'

खिद्यति सुजनोऽपि भृशमनवसरज्ञेन याचितः सुहृदा ।
सुरतान्तरे रुदन्तं प्रियमपि पुत्रं शप्यति हि जननी ॥

'Even a virtuous man is annoyed when asked for something by a friend who is exceedingly ignorant of the time for doing so.

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[1] This is the interpretation given of मोटयति. This meaning is not however in Monier Williams' *Sanskr. Dict.*

'A mother will scold even a favourite son, when he is tormenting her on certain occasions.'[1]

पिकः कृष्णो नित्यं परमरुणया पश्यति दृशा
परापत्यद्वेषी सुतमपि न वै पालयति यः ।
तथाप्येषो ऽमीषां सकलजगतां वल्लभतमो
न दोषा गण्यन्ते मधुरवचसां केनचिदपि ॥

'The cuckoo is black, and always looks at another with a red (*or* angry) eye. It hates the offspring of other birds, and does not rear even its own young: yet still it is the beloved of every world, for the faults of those with sweet voices are never counted.'

Some Verses on Faith.

The following two sets of verses, on faith, are very popular in Mithilâ. The author and date of both are unknown to me.

रे चित्त चिन्तय चिरं चरणौ मुरारेः
पारं गमिष्यसि यतो भवसागरस्य ।
पुत्रे कलत्रमित्रे नहि ते सहायाः
सर्वं विलोकयति सखे मृगतृष्णिकाभिः ॥

'O heart, think long on the feet of Krishṇa, with the help of whom thou must cross the ocean of existence. Amongst sons, wife, or friends thou wilt have no helpers, all that one sees of these is but by the help of mirage.' The text of the above appears to be corrupt.

कृष्ण त्वदीयपदपङ्कजपिञ्जरान्ते
अद्यैव मे वसतु मानसराजहंसः ।
प्राणप्रयाणसमये कफवातपित्तैः
कण्ठावरोधनविधौ स्मरणं कुतस्ते ॥

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[1] Not an exact translation.

'O Kṛishṇa, may this very day the swan of my heart dwell within the cage of thy lotus-feet; for at the time of losing my vital breath, when my throat is obstructed with the humours of my body, it will be too late for me to attempt to remember thee.'

THE FIVE WAYS OF WORLDLY WISDOM.

The following lines are very popular in Mithilâ. I think I have met them somewhere, but have not been able to identify the passage:—

देशाटनं पण्डितमित्रता च
वाराङ्गनाराजसभाप्रवेशः।
अनेकशास्त्रस्य विलोकनं च
चातुर्यमूलानि भवन्ति पञ्च ॥

'Travelling, friendship with learned men, courtezans, entering the royal council, and acquaintance with a wide range of literature, are the five roots of worldly wisdom.'

The following rhyme, current all over Tirhut, gives the popular verdict on female beauty in Southern India:—

दच्छिन कन्या कन्यकुमारी।
आगू थलथल पीछू भारी ॥

The pretty girls of the South, are pendulous in front, and are heavy behind.'

The following curious verses, half Sanskṛit half Bihârî, were noted in Tirhut, where they are well known. They represent a conversation between a girl and a beggar.

हरिहर ब्रह्म जासि गग्गर गले बध्वाम्बुधौ बूड़ि रें
मोहि तो भल आँखि धोय देखलें अस्मिन् महामण्डले ।
सोरहिँ बापक वृत्तियां शृणु सखे त्वत्पूर्वजैः पालितः
त्वं चेत् कुप्यसि छोड़ि जाहुँ कहमा त्वद्देहली मद्गतिः ॥

She.—'O beggar, depart, or I will tie a water-jar round your neck, and drown you in the sea. You stare fixedly at me (*lit.* you have washed your eyes and look at me), although there is the whole world before you.'

He.—'Hear (*the cause of this action of mine*) which was the doing of your father. I, my friend, was brought up by your ancestors. If you are angry, whither shall I go, for my footsteps are directed to your threshhold.'

In the above, I do not know the meaning of ब्रह्म, nor have I met any one who could enlighten me. गेहली, seems to be a corruption of देहली through confusion with गेह.

ON THE MEANINGS OF THE WORD HARI.

There are many songs on the various meanings of the word सारङ्ग. One will be found (*e.g.*) in Fallon's *Dict.* s. v.; another has been given by Captain Temple in *J. B. A. S.*, Part I., Vol. p. See also my Maithil Chrestomathy, Vocab. s. v.

The following is a similar Maithilí rhyme on the meanings of the word हरि :—

हरि गरजल हरि सुनल
हरि-क सबद सुनि हरि चललाह ।
हरि बाटे भेँटल हरि हरि गिरल
हरि-क प्रतापें हरि बचलाह ॥

This means, 'Indra thundered, and the frog heard it. When he heard the frog's croaking, the snake came along (*to eat him*). The peacock met him on the road, and the peacock fell upon the snake, and by the might of the peacock the frog escaped.'

Verses in mixed Bihari and Sanskrit regarding intuition.

The following curious doggrel was told me by a Mithilâ Pandit. It does not profess to be Sanskrit, but is partially in that language :—

नेत्र भौं विकाराभ्याम् ।
ज्ञायते हृदये नृणाम् ॥

This is said to mean, 'The hearts of men are known from the motions of their eyes and eyebrows.'

The Story of King Dahariya Karṇa and the Pandit's Promise.

King Dahariyâ once went to the Ganges to bathe, taking his mother with him, and in honour of the event he made her a present of 125,000 head of cattle. It happened that at the same *ghât* there was a poor Brâhmaṇ, who also had brought his mother with him. In spite of his poverty he told her to choose whatever gift she might desire. Thereupon she asked for the same gift as that which had been given by the king to his mother, laughing at the same time at the idea of his being able to fulfil such a request. The Brâhmaṇ however, who was a great Paṇdit, swore by a mighty oath that he would seize the king by the lips and bring him before his mother, and cause him to make

her a present of the required number of cattle. Before, however, he could carry out his design the king had heard of it and for fear of its being accomplished shut himself up in his tent and refused admission to all Brâhmaṇs of every kind, and after concluding his bathing ceremonies returned to his palace, where he again shut himself up carefully, and refused to admit any Brâhmaṇs to see him. The Paṇḍit tried his best to gain an audience, but unsuccessfully, so at length he gave up overt attempts, and built a small hut for himself near the king's palace, where he lived continually on the watch. One night, a very rainy one in Bhâdra, when the clouds produced a thick darkness, and the wind and the thunder conspired to make the hour terrible, he began to sing a song to the melody called *Malldra*, which was very sweet, and dealt with the passion of love. So sweetly did he sing that when the queen, the wife of king Dahariyâ, heard his voice where she was sleeping by her husband, she could not restrain her feelings, and leaving her husband's side went out through the blinding rain to the Paṇḍit's hut, and entreated him to allow her to enter and to throw herself into his embraces.

The king, who had been awake when she went out, had followed her in secret, and had heard her request. The Paṇḍit refused, in spite of all her entreaties, and advised her to go home quietly as she had come. She replied that she was afraid to go back in the rain, and added :—

अनाहूतैवैमि प्रचुरगुणलोभेन भवतः
समीहे सौहार्दं तदपि परितापं च तनुते।

'Uncalled I come, attracted by your excellence, I long for your friendship, and nevertheless my anguish increases.'

Finding her efforts unavailing, she went on:—

विदग्ध त्वामेवं तदिह परियाचे कुरु तथा
यथा नश्यादालीकपटकरतालीकदुरवः ॥

'O wise sir, I beg thee, even here, to do that by which the deceitful hand-clappings and jeers of my companions will be prevented.' Whereupon the Pandit recited the following verses:—

उन्नादाम्बुदवर्धितान्धतमसप्रभ्रष्टदिग्मण्डले
यामे यामिकजाग्रदुग्रसुभटव्याकीर्णकोलाहले।
कर्णस्यारिमहार्णवाम्बुवडवावह्नेर्यदन्तः पुरा-
दायातासि तदम्बुजाक्षि कृतिकं मन्ये भयं योषिताम्॥

'Inasmuch-as, O lotus-eyed one, you have come from the inner apartments of (Dahariyâ) Karṇa, who is as it were a consuming subaqueous fire amidst the sea of his enemies, on a night in which the circle of the universe has disappeared in a thick darkness increased by bellowing clouds, and in which the turmoil is pervaded by watchmen, and by waking, fierce warriors, I think the fear of women is but a sham.'

The queen at length consented to go home provided he would sing his song again to cheer her on her journey. He consented to do so, and sang for her the *Mallára* as she hurried back through the wind and rain. The king also went home, thinking on what had occurred, and well pleased with the Paṇḍit. The next morning he sent for him. The Paṇḍit came, much pleased at having at length got an audience. Directly on

his arrival the king said, 'That was a very pretty verse you recited last night, pray recite it again, as I have forgotten it.' I can only remember that it ended कृतिकं मन्ये भयं योषितां, "I think the fear of women is but a sham."

When the Paṇḍit heard this he was terribly frightened, for, of course, he did not know that the king had followed his wife, and had heard all that had taken place. On the contrary, he imagined that the queen had told her spouse some lie, and that the king intended to kill him. He knew that if he repeated the verses which he had said the night before his fate would be sealed, and so on the spur of the moment he invented another set of lines having the same ending. They are as follows:—

उद्यद्ग्राहमुदन्वति जलमतिक्रामत्यनालम्बिनि
व्योम्नि भ्राम्यति दुर्गमक्षितिभृतां मूर्धानमारोहति ।
व्याप्तं याति विषाकुलैरहिकुलैः पातालमेकाकिनी
कीर्तिस्ते मदनाभिराम कृतिकं मन्ये भयं योषिताम् ॥

'(O king) who art as handsome as the God of Love, thy Fame [*the word for fame,* कीर्ति, *is of the feminine gender, and is here personified as a woman*], passes across the sea in whose waters crocodiles are rising, wanders about in the unsuspended sky, and has mounted on to the heads of mountains hard to be approached. She has gone alone down to Hell, full of poisonous serpents, and therefore I think the fear of woman is but a sham.'

The king had been pleased on the previous night by the high principles shown by the Paṇḍit, and now he was astonished to find that his

learning was at least equal to his virtue, for he had without doubt made an impromptu verse, in a complicated metre, without any hesitation. He was sitting facing the east, and covering his face with his hand he determined, after consideration, to give him all that portion of his kingdom which was before him. Then, that he might not covet another man's goods he turned round, and sat facing the north. The poor Pandit, however, not understanding these motions, concluded that the king was even still more displeased, and in order to pacify him, began again as follows:—

कीर्तिस्ते नृप दूतिका मुररिपोरङ्के स्थितां भारतीं
मां चाकृष्य ददौ तवेति गिरिशः श्रुत्वार्धनारीश्वरः।
ब्रह्माभूच्चतुराननः सुरपतिश्चक्षुःसहस्रं दधौ
स्कन्दो मन्दमतिर्विवाहविमुखो धत्ते कुमारव्रतम् ॥

'Thy Fame, O king, is the procuress who seduced Sârasvatî (the goddess of learning) seated in the lap of Vishṇu, and Lakshmî (the Goddess of prosperity), and gave them to thee. When Śiva heard this he absorbed Pârvatî into himself, while Brahmâ put on his four faces, and Indra his thousand eyes (*so as to be better on the watch*), while Kârttikêya, dull-witted god, became averse to marriage, and swore to be a bachelor.'

The king was so pleased with the ingenuity of the compliments contained in these verses that he again considered as before, and determined to give the Paṇḍit all that portion of his kingdom then in front of him, that is to say, the northern quarter of it. The poor Paṇḍit, however, terrified still more by his actions, and thinking that his death was near, again began as follows, the king

at the same time having turned as before,—this time to the west :—

राजन् कनकधाराभिस्त्वयि वर्षति सर्वदा ।
अभाग्यच्छत्रसंपन्ने मयि नायान्ति बिन्दवः ॥

'O king, the heavens continually pour golden showers on thee, but no drops fall on me, luckless one, who have taken refuge beneath thy umbrella.'

This verse had the same result as the others. The king was again pleased, and again determined to give all his kingdom, which was then before his face, *viz.* all that to the west. He thereupon turned to the south. The Paṇḍit, frightened as before, went on :—

असिधारापथे नाथ शत्रुशोणितपिच्छिले ।
आजगाम कथं लक्ष्मीर्निर्जगाम कथं यशः ॥

'How did Lakshmî come to you, and how did your glory go forth along the path of the edge of your sword, all slippery with the blood of your enemies ?'

Thereupon the king determined to give him the southern, and last, quarter of his kingdom. By this time he had mentally given the Brâhman all his kingdom, and his prime minister recognized the Paṇḍit as the man who had made the oath about which the king was so much afraid, and told the king so. The latter welcomed the Paṇḍit with open arms, and instead of carrying out his resolutions, gave him 125,000 head of cattle, and sending for a pair of tongs (खिपटा or झुटका) allowed the Paṇḍit to catch him by the lips, and bring him in this state, together with the cattle, before his mother.

G. A. Grierson.

REVIEW OF SAKUNTALA

OR

KALIDASA

BY

PANDIT S. M. NATESA SASTRI, B.A., M.F.L.S.

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To

The Memory of my Father

Sri

SANGENDI MAHALINGAM AIYAR

THIS WORK IS INSCRIBED.

PREFACE.

THE review was written in 1891, but, owing to certain unavoidable circumstances, it was not sent for publication till 1894, when it appeared in the issues of the *National Magazine*, Calcutta. With the kind permission of the Editor, BABU K. P. DEV, it is now reprinted in a book form. Extract quotations in Sanskrit which form the basis of my remarks have been added, where necessary: but the reader unacquainted with Sanskrit may omit these excerpts and yet have a full idea of this famous drama of Kâlidâsa and its beauties.

S. M. N.

OOTACAMUND,
6th July 1897.

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SAKUNTALA.

Kâlidâsa is one of the foremost of Sanskrit poets and dramatists and has been known to the Western world for more than a century. The first Sanskrit dramatist that the Western scholars heard of is Kâlidâsa through the *Fatal Ring* of Sir William Jones in 1780. A king of the lunar family, named Dushyanta, goes to the forest on a hunting expedition, meets with a beautiful damsel named Sâkuntalâ, marries her after a loug courtship and, promising to take her to the capital, returns without her. After the monarch's departure, the lady in the forest is ever thinking of him and is always absent-minded. Her lord and his promise ever stand before her mind, and in always thinking of these she is inattentive to everything around. One morning, while she was thus lost in reverie, a sage name Durvâsas, who is represented as flying into the greatest rage at the slightest neglect, stood before her cottage and demanded hospitality according to the usual custom. He saw Sâkûntalâ sitting inside the cottage. She was within hearing distance, but she was absent-minded; and there was none beside her. Thrice the sage repeated his demand; but if he had done it a

hundred times it would not have succeeded in drawing her attention. The easily irascible sage flew into a towering passion and cursed her thus:—

विचिन्तयन्ती य मनन्यमानसा
तपोनिधिं वेत्सि न मा मुपस्थितम् ।
स्मरिष्यति त्वां न स बोधितोऽपि सन्
कथां प्रमत्तः प्रथमं कृतामिव ॥

"He upon whom thou art contemplating with absorbed attention, disregarding me, an ascetic, that am standing before thee, will forget thee even when reminded of thy existence, like an insane person forgetting the words uttered by him while sane!" Having uttered this curse, the sage was hastily disappearing. The curse did not fall on the ears of the lover inside; but her companions who were near in the garden heard the voice and ran in haste to meet the sage. They fell at his feet and, explaining to him the turn in Sâkuntalâ's life (as they were in her confidence), viz., how Dushyanta had married her and promised to take her soon to his capital and how she was always absent-minded, contemplating upon him, appeased Durvâsas' anger somewhat. Reluctantly the sage replied that the monarch would remember her on seeing some token presented to him.

आहरणाहिण्णाणदंसणेण से सावो णिउंत्तिस्सदि ।

These maids had preserved with them a ring given by the monarch to their friend during his stay in the forest. This they thought would be quite sufficient for

making the king recollect Sâkuntalâ in case of any forgetfulness :—

अत्थि तेण रण्णसिणा संपत्थिदेण अत्तणो णामाङ्किदं अङ्गुलीअअं।

Even this concession on the part of the sage they thought a great act of mercy.

एदं जेव तस्सिं बहुदरं।

For that sage, who was anger itself in bodily shape, was never known on any other occasion to have relaxed his wrath. So having a ring with them which would open up the recollections of Dushyanta about Sâkuntalâ, they imagined themselves to be on the safe side, praised the sage for his unprecedented mercy, and returned to their cottage. On their way they agreed to keep this affair a secret to themselves as it would be a great shock to Sâkuntalâ to hear it in her delicate state of health. Just at this time, her foster father, Ka*n*va, who, foreseeing some calamity to his daughter, had undertaken a pilgrimage to the holy Ganges to propitiate the deities, returns from it, and finds that Sâkuntalâ had already married Dushyanta. She had also conceived and had advanced some months in that state. Her lord forgot her completely through Durvâsas' curse. Ka*n*va, not deeming it proper to keep his daughter any longer in the forest, sends her up with his sister and two disciples to Dushyanta. The party enter the court. The king denies having married her. Unfortunately for Sâkuntalâ, the ring given to her by her good maids is lost on the

in the river Ganges. So without knowing this loss she promises to produce it, but in its search is doubly disappointed and ridiculed. The court priest promises to protect her till her confinement, and if the child born of her be of royal marks, he recommends her to be accepted by the king. Finding her unsullied character and sincerest love for her royal lord thus doubted and questioned, and burning with remorse at finding that by the so-called external evidences she was no better in the eyes of the public than a vile courtezan, Sâkuntalâ heaves a deep sigh and calls upon her mother Menakâ. She is a nymph of the heavens, and unable to leave her good and virtuous daughter at the mercy of the ever-suspecting world, she appears like a streak of lightning and carries her away to the hermitage of Marîchi, the brother of Kanva. This sage knowing within himself the whole affair, gladly received the rejected lady as his own daughter and made her very comfortable. There she gave birth to a son—the future Bharata—from whom the whole of India is called Bhâratavarsha.

Some fishermen on the banks of the Ganges cast their nets and find the lost ring; and not suspecting its worth or value dispose of it to a bazaarman. The king's initials are discovered on it. He hands them over to the police who take the jewel to the king. The moment the ring is seen, the whole past rushes into the recollection of the king. For was it not the effacer of the curse of Durvâsas? The sorrow and pinings of the monarch then come, and this portion of the drama is extremely beautiful. These continue for three

years, and afterwards by Indra's kindness, Dushyanta and Sâkuntalâ are united together in unbroken love and affection.

Such is the short story of the play before us. We propose to review some of the characters to give an idea to western readers of Sanskrit heroes and heroines.

DUSHYANTA.

The hero of the play is Dushyanta and we shall begin with him. He is introduced to the readers as chasing a swiftly-flying deer.

एष राजेव दुष्यन्तः शारङ्गेणातिरंहसा।

True to the Hindu idea it is the deer that takes the king to his meeting with Sâkuntalâ. Dushyanta had almost aimed his death-dealing arrow at it when two sages appear on the scene.

अस्य खलु ते बाणपातपथवर्त्तिनः कृष्णसारस्यान्त-
रायौ तपस्विनौ संवृत्तौ।

They loudly ask the king not to kill that poor animal which was domesticated and which belonged to the hermitage. "Arrows," say they, "are not to be thrown on the soft-bodied deer like fire on a cotton-heap."

न खलु न खलु बाणः सन्निपात्योऽयमस्मिन्
मृदुनि मृगशरीरे तूलराशाविवाग्निः।
क्व बत हरिणकानां जीवितञ्चातिलोलं
क्व च निशितनिपाताः वज्रसाराः शरास्ते॥

They point out that the arrow is given to the king to protect the afflicted and not to kill the innocent.

आर्त्तत्राणाय वः शस्त्रं न प्रहर्तुमनागसि ।

The moment the king saw the sages and heard their admonitions, he loosened his bowstring. The deer escaped unhurt. The sages were pleased. They blessed him to the following effect :—

"Mayst thou obtain a son possessed of such good qualities as thy royal self to reign as emperor (after thy royal self)!"

पुत्रमेवंगुणोपेतं चक्रवर्तिनमाप्नुहि ।

It is a belief that the blessings of sages never fail. So the poet is here preparing Dushyanta for his approaching wedding with Sâkuntalâ. The monarch who had great love for the chase and who in tracking the deer had left behind him at a great distance all his retinue, gave up his game and let the poor beast escape the moment he was prevented from pursuing the pastime. They were pleased with the readiness of the monarch in obliging them, and requested him to visit the hermitage of Kanva, where without any hindrance many sages were performing penances. "Your Majesty can have an idea at such a sight of how happily we live under your protection," said they and took leave of the king.

धर्म्यास्तपोधनानां प्रतिहतविघ्नाः क्रियाः समवलोक्य ।
ज्ञास्यसि कियद्भुजो मे रक्षति मौर्व्वीकिणाङ्क इति ॥

Dushyanta enters the hermitage of Kanva only for a short visit and to see how the sages are performing their penances. He says to his charioteer that the

horses may be bathed and kept ready by the time he returns from the visit.

यावदाश्रमवासिनः प्रत्यवेक्ष्य निवर्त्तिष्ये
तावदार्द्रपृष्ठाः क्रियन्तां वाजिनः।

The monarch has the greatest regard for sages, and not wishing to attract much attention and put them to inconvenience by proclaiming his dignity, he enters the hermitage like a common person, putting away his royal robes and other ornaments, including his bow.

सूत! विनीतवेशेन प्रवेष्टव्यानि तपोवनानि तदिमानि
तावद् गृह्यन्ता माभरणानि धनुश्च।

Before he had advanced many steps he observed some young ladies engaged in the simple duty of watering the garden trees. The monarch, who had till then imagined beauty to be centred in palaces only, was struck with the charming and innocent appearance of those damsels and exclaimed within himself that even as a creeper in its wild state far surpasses in beauty the creeper in an artificial garden, so these damsels of the forest excelled their sisters in the harem.

शुद्धान्तदुर्लभमिदं वपु राश्रमवासिनो यदि जनस्य।
दूरीकृताः खलु गुणै रुद्यानलता वनलताभिः॥

There were three in all, and one of them was Sâkuntalâ: the other two were her friends. From the conversation that took place, the king discovered that Sâkuntalâ was the daughter of Kanva. "How is it

possible?" thought he to himself. "Kanva is a celibate." He wanted to get himself introduced into their society to know more of Sâkuntalâ's history and parentage. If the custom would permit, his intention was even to marry her. For, at the very first sight, he became enamoured of her; and the confidence that he had in his own rectitude of heart made him bold to think that Sâkuntalâ must be a damsel fit by caste to be united with him in marriage. Though this may amount to a sort of self-conceit, yet it is an indication of the high ideal of morality which the king had.

असंशयं क्षत्रपरिग्रहक्षमा
यदार्य्य मस्या मभिलाषि मे मनः।
सतां हि सन्देहपदेषु वस्तुषु
प्रमाण मन्तः करणप्रवृत्तयः॥

He was waiting at an easy distance for an opportunity to get himself introduced into the society of the young ladies. This was afforded by the confusion caused by a wasp. The king makes his appearance suddenly. The maids of Sâkuntalâ tell him that it was nothing after all and gave him a very kind reception. They ask Sâkuntalâ to run to the cottage for fetching water and fruits for the entertainment of the guest. The king in return informs them that he is well entertained by their kind words.

भवतीनां सूनृतयैव वाचा कृतमातिथ्यम्।

They all go and sit under the shade of a tree where in the course of a long and pleasant conversation the

king finds out that Sâkuntalâ is, after all, only the foster daughter of Kanva and that her real father was Vi'svámitra, a sage of the warrior caste. It was only when this point was reached that the king's mind was at rest. Till then, notwithstanding his love for her at the very first sight, he regarded her as unapproachable as fire. Now that that point was settled, he was very glad at heart.

भव हृदय! साभिलाषं सम्प्रति सन्देहनिर्णयो जातः ।
आशङ्कसे यदग्निं तदिदं स्पर्शक्षमं रत्नम् ॥

Still he is not satisfied; he is not sure whether it is possible for him to secure for his own future happiness that gem of womankind, that incarnation of beauty.

With the plainness due to his nobility, he prefers questioning the ladies as to the intentions of the sage. For he thinks that it would be a waste of beauty if Sâkuntalâ should remain wedded to some sage in the forest. Her beauty is not of the kind to be wasted in a hermitage. He questions the young ladies:

वैखानसं किमनया व्रतमाप्रदाना-
दथापाररोधि मदनस्य निषेवितव्यम् ।
अत्यन्तमेव सदृशेक्षणवल्लभाभि-
राहो निवत्स्यति समं हरिणाङ्कनाभिः ॥

He learns that Kanva has the intention of giving her in marriage to some young man equal to her in age and beauty.

गुरुणो उण से अनुरूअवरप्पदाणे संकप्पो ।

Already, from the majestic appearance of the unknown visitor, the maids had suspected him to be the king himself. His simple and unimposing manners, his noble and dignified looks, his fine powers of conversation, the extreme respect which he showed to every one in that small party, his special attention to Sâkuntalâ, the eagerness with which he drank the story of her birth and the several enquiries which he made about her, made the unknown visitor's company all the more welcome. Sâkuntalâ's companions were not unobservant of the extreme tenderness of feeling arising between the unknown visitor and their friend. Some jokes, extremely simple, follow, by which the maiden is a little irritated and wishes to proceed to the cottage to report the conduct of her companions to her aunt—Kanva's sister—Gautami. In fact, she prepares to go. Her companions, to tease her the more, out of pure fun, won't leave her till a petty debt to them (and that was two pot-fulls of water which they had poured for her in the early part of the morning) was discharged.

दुवे मे रुक्खसेअणकेधारेसि तेहिं दाव अत्ताणं मोआवेहि तदो गमिस्ससि ।

Like Ferdinand in the *Tempest*, Dushyanta could never see his Miranda work. "He would rather crack his sinews, break his back, than she should such dishonour undergo, while he sat lazy by." He pulls out his ring from his finger and giving it to the ladies requests them to consider Sâkuntalâ's debt as discharged.

तदहमेना मनृणां करोमि । (इत्यङ्गुरीयकं ददाति)

It was at the sight of the inscription on the ring that the party stand amazed and suspect the person to be the king. Just at this time the hunters and others of the retinue of the king turn up, and already the sages proclaim in a loud voice to the inhabitants there, that at the sight of the king's party of hunters a wild elephant has taken fright and is running hither and thither. They warn the inhabitants to take care of their lives. Soon as the king heard this, he wished to proceed at once to put a stop to the disturbance and check the coming of his retinue into the sacred precincts of the hermitage. Sâkuntalâ and others were also anxious to return to the cottage as the aunt at home would be very anxious about their safety, now that a wild elephant was proclaimed to be at large. So they parted hastily, the ladies requesting the unknown visitor to honour them again by a second call, as in the confusion that followed they were not able to offer him fruits and water even as an apology for that entertainment which was his due.

महाभाअ! विदिदमूइट्ठोसि सम्पदं उबआरमज्झत्थ-
दाए अबरज्झह्म तं मरिसेहि असम्भाविदसक्कारं
भूओबि पच्चवेक्खणणिमित्तं अज्जं विण्णवेह्म ।

Though the visit had lasted for a short while, Dushyanta and Sâkuntalâ parted with mutual love, each suspecting the state of the other's heart.

किं खलु यथा वयमस्या मियमपि अस्मान् प्रति तथा
स्यात् , अथवा लब्धावकाशा मे मनोवृत्तिः ।

The king proceeds to his men. His body only goes on but not his heart. It turns back like the silken cloth of a banner floating in an opposite direction.

गच्छति पुरः शरीरं धावति पश्चा दसंस्थितं चेतः ।
चीनांशुकमिव केतोः प्रतिवातं नीयमानस्य ॥

The king calls all his retinue together to a respectable distance from the hermitage, stations them there on the pretence of continuing the hunt, wishing to prolong his stay. His mind is always on Sâkuntalâ and not on the hunt. After seeing her, he renounces the idea of returning to his capital.

शकुन्तलादर्शनादेव मन्दौत्सुक्योऽस्मि नगरगमनं प्रति यावदनुयात्रिकानतिदूरे तपोवनस्य निवेशया-मि न खलु शक्तोस्मि शकुन्तलादर्शनव्यापारादा-त्मानं निवर्त्तयितुम् ।

He knows the great power of the penance-practising sages; but still he is unable to turn his mind away from Sâkuntalâ. His love for her is very strong.

जाने तपसो वीर्य्यं सा बाला परवतीति मे विदितम् ।
न च निम्नादिव सलिलं निवर्त्तते मे ततो हृदयम् ॥

Though fond of the chase, he can no longer aim his arrows at the deer as they have now become very dear to him by their eyes being exactly similar to Sâkuntalâ's.

न नमयितु मधिज्य मुत्सहिष्ये
धनु रिद माहितसायकं मृगेषु ।

सहवसति मुपेत्य यैः प्रियायाः
कृत इव लोचनकान्तिसंविभागः ॥

He knows too well the pleasures of such manly exercises as hunting and does not want these to be pointed out to him by any one. One of his men tells him,—

मेदश्छेदकृशोदरं लघु भवत्युत्साहयोग्यं वपुः
सत्त्वानामपि लक्ष्यते विकृतिमच्चित्तं भयक्रोधयोः ।
उत्कर्षः स च धन्विनां यदिषवः सिध्यन्ति लक्ष्ये चले
मिथ्या हि व्यसनं वदन्ति मृगया मीदृग्विनोदः कुतः ॥

This is as fine a description of the pleasures of the chase as any in the whole range of literature, Eastern or Western. The chase has frequently been called the mimicry of war. Here, however, is something better. In consequence of the fat and adeps being dispelled, the growth of the abdomen is prevented. The body becomes light, and ready and fit for every movement of courage and strength. The workings of the heart, under fear and wrath, of the creature that is hotly pursued and that turns to bay, may be noticed or studied. That, again, is regarded as the height of skill in bowmen when their shafts strike the quickly-moving object of aim. False is the charge that the chase is a vice deserving of abandonment, for where else is there such real pleasure?

The king issues strict orders that the hermitage and its environs should not be molested. The beasts of the forest should also rest as his own self.

गाहन्तां महिषा निपानसलिलं शृङ्गै र्मुहु स्ताडितम्
छायाबद्धकदम्बकं मृगकुलं रोमन्थ मभ्यस्यतु।
विश्रब्धैः क्रियतां वराहपतिभि र्मुस्ताक्षतिः पल्वले
विश्रामं लभता मिदञ्च शिथिलज्याबन्ध मस्मद्धनुः॥

Let the buffaloes plunge into the sheets of water they choose, disturbing the liquid element with their horns as often as they like. Let the dappled deer, herding together in the shade of forest trees, chew the cud in peace. Let the leaders of porcine herds commit havoc, in perfect safety, upon the bulbous roots they find of aquatic plants in the marshes that lie around. Verily, let also this bow of mine, with its string loosened from the horn, rest from its cruel work.

But he cunningly devises reasons for allowing such unexpected rest to the beasts of the forest. The sages and their hermitages, says he, though extremely soft and unruffled in external appearance, have internally in them the power of destroying intruders; the crystal glass, though extremely refreshing to the touch, vomits fire when put to shame by exposure to the sun's rays.

शमप्रधानेषु तपोवनेषु गूढं हि दाहात्मक मस्ति तेजः।
स्पर्शानुकूला अपि सूर्य्यकान्तास्ते ह्यन्यतेजोऽभिभवा-
द्दहन्ति॥

Thus after discontinuing the chase, the king still lingers in the forest. His love weighs so heavily on him that he must take into his confidence some one or another to ease himself of that burden. It is then that the services of the fool become invaluable to him.

He is always in his company and ever relating to him his observations on Sâkuntalâ's beauty, perfection, &c. He asks the fool to suggest to him a course by which he might again enter the hermitage. On that person's suggesting that the king could go into that place on the pretence of collecting one-sixth of the produce as the assessment due to the state, Dushyanta scolds him and replies that he is literally a fool inasmuch as he is not able to perceive that the sages by giving him one-sixth of their austerities have already made him richer in the moral than in the material world.

यदुत्तिष्ठति वर्णेभ्यो नृपाणां क्षयि तद्धनम् ।
तपः षड्भाग मक्षय्यं ददत्यारण्यका हि नः ॥

This and the king's statement to the hunter that the sages have the power of burning intruders show clearly the high estimation and extreme reverence in which Dushyanta held them. Nor were they wanting in high appreciation of his prowess. "The Devas," said they, "look up to only two weapons for subduing the Asuras —Dushyanta's bow and Indra's thunderbolt." The Rákshasas have commenced molesting the hermitage; a commission waits upon the king to ask his help for some time till the fear is removed; for they have begun a sacrifice. The king accepts it readily, for while keeping away the Rákshasas, he would, at the same time, have opportunity enough to win Sâkuntalâ by a regular courtship. It would give him the privilege of entering the hermitage freely.

Thus, while the king is thankful to the sages for their request to prolong his stay in the woods, there

comes an urgent letter from his old mother requesting (nay, ordering) him to be present without fail at the celebration of a ceremony which she had undertaken for his own welfare.

आगामिनि चतुर्थदिवसे पुत्रपिण्डपालनो नाम उपवासो भविष्यति तत्र दीर्घायुषा अवश्यं वयं सम्भावयितव्या इति।

Old mothers are always fond, to an unreasonable degree, of their children and undertake on not a few occasions many unmeaning vows. Surely the annihilation of the Rákshasas was a greater task to the monarch than his punctual attendance at a ceremony in which the hero would be his own self. Still his old mother required to be gratified. He wrote to her to say that he was detained in the forest by a more important duty and that his fool—Mádhavya—would attend upon her worship and see that every arrangement was duly made.

सखे माधव्य! त्वमप्यम्बाभिः पुत्र इव गृहीतः सभवानितः प्रतिनिवृत्य तपस्विकार्य्यव्यग्रता मस्माक मावेद्यतत्रभवतीनां पुत्रकार्य्यं मनुष्ठातु मर्हति।

In this arrangement also the king had a double object in view. He saw from the garrulity of the fool that he had trusted him too much. With the liberty that is generally allowed to such persons, he might talk about the monarch's love for a maiden in the woods to the queens in the harem.

चपलोऽयं ब्राह्मणबटुः कदाचिदिमामस्मत्प्रार्थना
मन्तः पुरिकाभ्यो निवेदयेत् ।

Dushyanta humoured the fool and told him jokingly that he was drawing upon his imagination when he related to him all about his love for a maiden of the forest. He reminded him also of the difference there must exist between himself—a monarch—and a damsel of the forest bred up in the company of deer and beasts.

क्व वयं क्व परोक्षमन्मथो मृगशावैः सह वर्द्धितो जनः ।
परिहासविजल्पितं सखे परमार्थेन न गृह्यतां वचः ॥

Even supposing that the king uttered this in an evasive way, he lays himself open to the charge of having uttered an untruth, in his anxiety to preserve his respect before his elders and wives. It is on this, and on this occasion only, that we find Dushyanta coming down a little lower from the high pedestal of a hero. We must excuse him, however; for does not Jove laugh at lovers' perjuries?

Thus the fool was sent away and the king's whole time was occupied in quelling the disturbance of the Rákshasas and in attaining the object of his affection. The former was nothing to him. It was almost child's play. He had not even the trouble of fixing his arrows to his bow. The obstacle was removed at the mere twang of the string attached to it.

का कथा बाणसन्धाने ज्याशब्देनैव दूरतः ।
हुङ्कारेणेव धनुषः स हि विघ्नान् व्यपोहति ॥

But the attainment of the latter object was extremely difficult. Asleep or awake, Sakuntalâ ever stands before his mind's eye. She is very perfection to him. Eyes were a vain possession if they did not see Sakuntalâ. The whole world of living creatures deserved to be blind if they did not see Sakuntalâ. He told him before he sent him away that he had not as yet reaped the fruit of the gift of eyes to him by God.

सखे माधव्य! अनासचक्षुः फलोऽसि येन त्वया द्रष्टव्यानां परं न दृष्टम् ।

His affection is not in the least misplaced.

न च परिहार्य्ये वस्तुनि दुष्यन्तस्य मनः प्रवर्त्तते ।

She is the best of women even to a king.

चित्ते निवेश्य परिकल्पितसर्व्वयोगान्
रूपोच्चयेन विधिना विहिता कृशाङ्गी ।
स्त्रीरत्नसृष्टि रपरा प्रतिभाति सा मे
धातु र्विभुत्व मनुचिन्त्य वपुश्च तस्याः ॥

For all that, and notwithstanding his power and influence as a king, he cannot go on in his love adventure with a free heart. He knows the power of penance; he has the greatest respect for the sages, but at the same time his heart will not give up Sakuntalâ.

The emotion of love reigns so supreme that he prefers wandering by the side of the Mâlinî, the heat of his affection being now and then assuaged by the cool breeze that springs up from it.

शक्योऽरविन्दसुरभिः कणवाही मालिनीतरङ्गाणाम् ।
अङ्गैरनङ्गतप्तैर्निर्व्यमालिङ्गितुं पवनः ॥

At last he succeeds, for, as we shall see when we examine the character of the heroine, Sakuntalâ was as deeply in love, if not more, with the monarch as he was with her. He sees her in company with her friends at a distance, and without being observed by them, exclaims to himself that the unguent to his eyes is at last attained.

अये लब्धं नेत्रनिर्व्वाणम् ।

She openly speaks to her friends that Dushyanta is the object of her affections; she knows not whether he would accept her; she wishes to send a love note to him. The king wonders how a gem could remain unsought and how perfection itself, if it counts its match, would stand a chance of refusal.

लभेत वा प्रार्थयिता न वा श्रियं
श्रिया दुरापः कथमीप्सितो भवेत् ॥
न रत्न मन्विष्यति मृग्यते हि तत् ॥

They meet. Sakuntalâ fears whether their secret love would not incur the displeasure of her father. The king proves that by the *Gándharva** form of marriage, the daughters of many sages have selected their own partners in life to the approval afterwards of their parents.

गान्धर्व्वेण विवाहेन बह्वोऽथ मुनिकन्यकाः ।
श्रूयन्ते परिणीता स्ताः पितृभि श्चानुमोदिताः ॥

After this, Sakuntalâ becomes wedded to him according to the *Gándharva* form. Her company is

* A secret but recognised form of marriage.

perfect bliss to him—his *summum bonum* of life. When away from her his heart is always with her.

त्वं दूरमपि गच्छन्ती हृदयं न जहासि मे।
दिवावसाने च्छायेव पुरोमूलं वनस्पतेः॥

The sacrificial ceremony of the sages proceeds on. After rendering assistance towards its completion and after drinking deep at the fountain of love, the king returns to his capital, promising to send a suitable retinue to take her to the palace. Still he is always thinking of her. Everything connected with her is most charming and welcome to him though he sees her no more.

तस्याः पुष्पमयी शरीरलुलिता शय्या शिलाया मियं
कान्तो मन्मथलेख एष नलिनीपत्रे नखै रर्पितः।
हस्ताद्भ्रष्टमिदं बिसाभरणमित्यासज्यमानेक्षणो
निर्गन्तुं सहसा न वेतसगृहादीशोऽस्मि शून्यादपि॥

But alas! the continuance of such happiness was not for them. The blessings of the sages who were pleased with the readiness with which Dushyanta allowed the deer to escape unscathed had their effect. Sakuntalâ had conceived. Still no person or retinue turned up. Every moment she was expecting them. Even her maiden friends began to doubt the sincerity of the monarch's words. At this unfortunate juncture the sage Durvásas appears before the cottage of Sakuntalâ with his begging bowl. Unfortunately for Sakuntalâ, her maids are then absent in the garden,

collecting flowers for workshipping the deities on behalf of the disappointed Sakuntalâ.

णं सउन्तलाएबि सोहग्गदेवदाओ अच्चिदव्वाओ ।

The sage uttered his demand for alms.

अयमहं भोः ।

He perceived Sakuntalâ sitting inside the cottage. No answer was given to his demand. He was enraged at the thought that he was insulted. A curse, and that the most dreadful to Sakuntalâ, was the result. He knew well by spiritual foresight that the lady inside was thinking of her lover. That this should make the lady disrespect the sage standing outside added fuel to the flame of anger. So the burning words were uttered: "May he of whom thou art thinking forget thee!" fell from the lips of Durvásas. It was this curse that wiped away Dushyanta's recollections of Sakuntalâ, else it would be impossible to conceive how he could so suddenly forget everything. At the beginning of this review we have dwelt upon the curse and its remedy.

By this time the sage Kanva returns from his pilgrimage, and was informed by the Fire he worshipped that his daughter was bearing in her body the seed of the Lunar race, like the *Sami* wood (*Ficus Religiosa*) bearing the fire, and that his son-in-law was no other person than the monarch Dushyanta himself:—

दुष्यन्तेनाहितं तेजो दधानां भूतये भुवः ।
अवेहि तनयां ब्रह्मन्नग्निगर्भां शमीमिव ॥

The sage is delighted to find that by her own excellent and noble qualities his foster daughter has obtained a suitable husband for herself, and not wishing to keep her long in separation sends her to the palace, though the king had not sent for her. Durvásas' curse is working its virulence and the ring entrusted to Sakuntalâ by her kind friends is lost on the way. Two disciples of the sage and Gautami conduct her to the monarch. The king, under the influence of the curse, has entirely forgotten her. And yet how noble he appears to us, though apparently extremely cruel to Sakuntalâ, when he utters, "It is a great sin to look at the wife of another." **अनिर्वर्ण्यं खलु परकलत्रम्।** Sakuntalâ, to clear her character, brings out various proofs of her marriage.

But they are all rejected by the king.

For all that, with the keen observance of a student of human nature, the king notes the various emotions of anger, rage and remorse that pass and repass in every line of her face, and exclaims to himself that they can never be assumed.

When proofs were vain, the whole anger of Sakuntalâ breaks out. Her modesty, however, even then does not desert her. The king studies fully those strong sentiments and now and then imagines that he might have married her, but this bright ray of grace to Sakuntalâ is soon covered by the cloud of Durvásas' curse. In this oscillation of his mind—whether he himself is at fault in having forgotten his

union with Sakuntalâ or whether she herself is uttering a falsehood—he prefers the course of abandoning a wife married (if that enraged lady was one) as better than the act of unknowingly accepting a woman who might be the wife of another person.

मूढः स्यामहमेषा वा वदेन्मिथ्येति संशये ।
दारत्यागी भवाम्याहो परस्त्रीस्पर्शपांसुलः ॥

How noble does Dushyanta appear in this scene to us! His forgetfulness of a true wife we cannot but excuse him when we grant the efficacy of the curse, and when we trace our course through the pathetic pinings of his heart hereafter. Granting for the occasion that the unacknowledged woman was his own wife —as no doubt she was—he thought that he would be in several ways a lesser sinner by rejecting than by accepting, for the sake of her beauty, an unknown woman as his own wife. Her beauty had attracted him as soon as he saw her in the midst of the people from the forest. His heroic self-restraint will be appreciated by all who will recognise with the poet the weakness of woman's son generally when a woman and that a beautiful one woos.

So with this motive he rejected Sakuntalâ and she was conveyed away by her mother Menaká, who descended as a flash of lightning, to the hermitage of Kâsyapa (Marîchi). To return to the monarch: to the best of his remembrance he has not any recollection of his having married the sage's daughter; for how can he have it when the curse reigns supreme?

But his heart now and then throbs and makes him suspect that he might have married her.

This thought now and then troubles him till the town police bring to his presence some fishermen who had stolen, or were suspected of having stolen, the signet ring of the king, and whom they had caught in the act of disposing of the article. It was, as our readers might surmise, no stolen ring but the ring first given by the monarch to Sakuntalâ and then lost by her in the Ganges on her way to meet her royal lord. It was the happy ring on which depended the recollection of the monarch of his virtuous wife. However, fatal it was, the occasion now demands us to call it a happy ring. At the very sight of it, though brave and courageous by nature, the recollection of all his past history with Sakuntalâ rushes into his mind and he is stupefied for a time.

Soon he sits up and remembering the good service rendered to him by the apparent thieves, he rewards them with his golden armlets and sends them away. That he had truly married Sakuntalâ and that he most unjustly, like a villain, renounced his true love, now haunts him awake or asleep. Ever since the day of his getting back the ring, all objects which used to please him have become hateful to his sight; no more does he care to grant visits to his courtiers and subjects. His nights are sleepless; his speech brief; for hours and hours he sits idle, resting his face on his left palm, with his eyes fixed on the air; his eyes are, again, red by wakefulness.

"And where care lodges, sleep will never lie."

The whole scene of the arrival of Sakuntalá from the forest, her request to be accepted, the spurning she received from him, the way in which her own relatives scolded her, her deplorable state, stood before the monarch and remorse for his cruelty pierced his heart like barbed arrows.

That her own chastity and virtue brought down from the heavens her mother Menaká who took her away in a streak of lightning became now plain to him. He is half mad now, curses the ring and accuses it of want of merit as it dared to drop away from the tender finger of the chastest of womankind.

His hopes of ever getting back his lady are entirely gone; he thinks to himself: was it a dream, a shadow, a freak of his mind? was that his destiny? has it gone away never to return? His past affection for Sakuntalâ revives with tenfold vigour.

Now he accuses the ring; then his own self the more—for while he, a human being, disregarded his affectionate mistress, an inanimate object could disregard its mistress.

कथं नु तं कोमलबन्धुराङ्गुलिं
करं विहायासि निमग्नमम्भसि ।
अचेतनं नाम गुणं न वीक्षते
मयैव कस्मादवधीरिता प्रिया ॥

His only consolation was the memory of the past. Sakuntalâ, her pets, viz. the deer, &c. and her fo-

vourite walks on the banks of the Málinî ; its beds with swans, &c., recur to him constantly. He draws the whole scene :—

कार्य्या सैकतलीनहंसमिथुना स्रोतोवहा मालिनी
पाद्दास्तामभितो निषण्णचमरा गौरीगुरोः पावनाः ।
शाखालम्बितवल्कलस्य च तरोर्निर्मातुमिच्छाम्यधः
शृङ्गे कृष्णमृगस्य वामनयनं कण्डूयमानां मृगीम् ॥

He looks at the picture often ; admires the perfection of Sakuntalâ's beauty as he has drawn it in the painting ; laughs at his own foolishness which recognises now the lady in the painting, but never acknowledged her when she stood before him in the flesh ; compares himself to that fool who, abandoning actual water on his way, pursues the mirage for quenching his thirst.

साक्षात् प्रिया मुपगता मपहाय पूर्व्वं
चित्रार्पिता मुहुरिमां बहुमन्यमानः ।
स्रोतोवहां पथि निकामजलामतीत्य
जातः सखे प्रणयवान् मृगतृष्णिकायाम् ॥

He gives himself up to extreme sorrow that his race must come to an end with him as he has no heir to his throne.

Thus he had the most weary time of it ; no hope, no consolation. His whole thoughts are occupied with Sakuntalâ and Sakuntalâ alone ; that ideality becomes actuality ; he has to be convinced that the object

before him is only the picture of Sakuntalâ and not Sakuntalâ herself.

We have already once or twice mentioned that our hero was a great friend of Indra, and the Devas (gods) looked upon Indra's thunderbolt and Dushyanta's bow as means for putting down the Asuras.

Indra understood the great change that had come over the king; he sent for him to the other world to assist him in an expedition against the evil-doers. This was purposely meant by Indra for rousing the vigour of the monarch. For the monarch had already gone mad, and unless engaged in some active adventure he was sure to be ruined.

The king sets out; success accompanies him in that adventure. His fame is sung by the denizens of heaven.

For rewarding him for his help, he—the god Indra—cleverly managed to send him to the hermitage of Kásyapa where Sakuntalâ was living in great affliction. Indra's charioteer leaves him there and returns. The king, while engaged in seeing the beautiful scenery around him, hears the voice of two nurses chiding a child of two or three years of age who was dragging from a lioness its cub while it was engaged in the act of sucking its dam's milk.

The beauty, the boldness, the charming, tender and innocent look of the boy, attracted him. He thought how happy he would be if he had only such a child for his son. Those only must be considered rich, said

he to himself, whose clothes are soiled by the climbing up of eager children :—

आलक्ष्यदन्तमुकुलाननिमित्तहासै-
रव्यक्तवर्णरमणीयवचःप्रवृत्तीन् ।
अङ्काश्रयप्रणयिनस्तनयान् वहन्तो
धन्यास्तदङ्गरजसा मलिनीभवन्ति ॥

The little rogue is still persistent in mischief. The nurses try their best to divert his attention. But he won't. He was mocking them all and only making fools of them. The king observed from a distance all that passed. The more he saw, the more he admired the boy. Approaching him, he addresses him jokingly that it was unbecoming his parentage as a sage's son in the forest to be cruel to the animals of the forest. The nurses correct the remark and observe that the boy is a prince and, in a conversation unparalleled for beauty, Dushyanta discovers his own son in the boy and meets Sakuntalâ.

Kâlidâsa has employed all the magic of his poetry in the 7th act of the drama where our hero and heroine meet. At the glimpse of the long-lost face of Sakuntalâ—now lean and pale and devoid of its previous charms in the misery and sorrow brought on by her banishment—and at the sight of her uncombed hair and unwashed clothes, the king's sorrow knows no bounds. "On account of me, the most cruel and the vilest of mankind, this virtuous gem of womankind is undergoing all this mortification!" he exclaims ;—

वसने परिधूसरे वसाना
नियमक्षाममुखी धृतैकवेणिः।
अतिनिष्करुणस्य शुद्धशीला
ममदीर्घं विरहव्रतं बिभर्त्ति ॥

Overcome by her extreme virtue, and his own cruelty for which he sees no justification, he falls down at her feet, comparing himself to a blind fool who threw away the garland on his head, suspecting it to be a serpent, and begs to be received back into her heart. Sakuntalâ, with her inborn nobility of mind, had already excused her lord. The king did not know why he had been idiot enough not to accept her, and what guarantee had that lady of her lord's continuance of affection when it had been once suspended? Marîchi appears before them to cement firmly the union and redeem the noble sovereign from public ridicule. Durvásas' curse and the charm of the ring lost and discovered were now explained. The king's heart breathed joy that he was saved from public ridicule and that he was all the while under the influence of a curse. Sakuntalâ heaved a heavy sigh and shook away from her inmost mind whatever iota of unpleasantness she might have entertained regarding her lord for his unjust treatment of her. In the words of the English dramatist,

Why did you throw your wedded lady from you?
Think that you are upon a rock and now throw me again,

said Sakuntalâ to Dushyanta, embracing him.

"Hang there like fruit, my soul! till the tree die,"

replied Dushyanta. With his wife and child he returned happy to his capital.

Thus, from beginning to end, we find our hero perfect in all the noble qualities of a monarch, the ready protector of the oppressed, the defender of all, one under whose protection the sages lived happily as well as others. He suits himself to the place and occasion: enters the hermitage with an appearance suitable to that place, receives the disciples of Kanva with honours due to their position. His power of conversation is great. He is unassuming and speaks always to the point. He never wounds the feelings or tastes of any one. Only at leisure moments he devotes himself to love and other pleasures, and is always the first person to renounce these when any mightier work requires his attention. While in the pleasant party of the damsels in the hermitage he is the first to get up and advise the girls to proceed home and himself runs in haste to quell the clamours caused by the elephant. While drooping down at the thought of the injustice to his dear love, Indra sends for him and he is prompt to obey. His valour and prowess are not at all abated by his sorrow. His success is still the same, if not more. He is an excellent artist, and in his drawings Sakuntalâ is seen as it were in her bodily shape. Patient and calm and always composed, he coolly sits to be severely rebuked and abused by the raw disciples from the hermitage of Kanva. His cruelty to Sakuntalâ in rejecting her is dictated by the idea

that another man's wife ought not to be accepted. Renunciation of a wedded wife is a lesser sin which he would gladly incur than the horrible crime of accepting an unknown beauty who might be another's wife. This motive and Durvásas' curse must ever be before the reader, and these will prevent him from judging ill of our hero. His pinings and his remorse are as noble as his love. The moment he meets his lost love he falls down and begs for forgiveness. There is not a single occasion in which we miss the perfection of Dushyanta's character.

THE FOOL.

Having thus traced the character of our hero, we shall next turn to his fool—Mádhavya—the Brahman. A word of explanation is necessary here to English readers. These fools were generally employed by Oriental monarchs of old for diverting their attention from the weighty concerns of kingdom for purposes of relaxation. Their prototype is the court fool of the middle ages in Europe and the modern Hâsyakâras—laughter-exciters—of some roval families and rich zemindaris in India. The men chosen for such profession are generally very old people of unblemished character.

After this passing remark let us turn to Mádhavya. He is, as he says himself, a Brâhman that has to run after the wild beasts of the forest.

अअं मिओ अअं वराहो अअं सद्दूलो त्ति ।

"There goes the deer, there runs the boar, there darts the tiger, &c." All this is against his grain. It is unbecoming his caste. But he had descended low, and he must dance to the tune of his master. In his age his only pleasure is to eat and sleep well. Every other thing he hates. He is cunning and shrewd. He is the first person to perceive that the monarch has met with a sage's daughter in the woods and that, as such, he won't leave the forest soon for Hastinâpura to give him ample opportunities of eating to his fill.

तत्थभअदा मिआणुसारिणा अस्समपदं पविट्ठेण मम अधण्णदाए सउन्तलाणाम काबि तवास्सिकण्णआ दिट्ठा।

What is to be done? He must undergo the hardship of unseasoned food and dirty water with all its impurity of autumn leaves rotten in it.

पत्तासङ्करकसाअविरसाइं उण्णकडुआइं पिज्जन्ति गिरिणईसलिलाइं अणिअद्वेलञ्च उण्णोण्णमंसभूइट्ठं भूञ्जीअदि।

He wishes to induce the king to put a stop to the hunting, for then he might sleep undisturbed without being made to run after the beasts before dawn and without the din of the tom-tom disturbing his rest. He enters into a secret understanding to that effect with the master-hunter and succeeds.

The monarch at first takes, as is to be expected, the fool into his confidence about his love and relates to

him everything, then fears his garrulity and checks himself. Fools are allowed for their old age to move freely with the ladies of the harem. The monarch, in his haste to unburden his heart to some one or other, has trusted the fool too much. He then fears whether the man may not reveal all he knew to the ladies in the palace and arouse their jealousy. He, therefore, humours him at the first opportunity afforded for it and sends him away to the city from the forest. Thus the fool here is not trusted by the king much. The situation might have been purposely devised by the dramatist to make the king only responsible for his subsequent forgetfulness of Sakuntalâ. The only person in the forest with the king who is likely to have known anything of such love was the fool, and that fool was told by the king that when he had related to him all about his love to a damsel in the woods, he had been only drawing upon his imagination, for the distance was too great between the king and an unlovable person reared in the woods with deer and other animals. It was all a jest, and his friend was not to take the story in earnest.

क्व वयं क्व परोक्षमन्मथो मृगशावैः सह वर्द्धितो जनः।
परिहासविजल्पितं सखे परमार्थेन न गृह्यतां वचः॥

Notwithstanding this, the king again takes to the society of the fool when he is pining after his rejection of Sakuntalâ. A question here may arise as to whether there is any discrepancy in the poet in representing the king as resorting to one for consultation whom

he has formerly sought to mislead by an untruth. There is, however, no actual discrepancy of any kind. When the king resorted thus to the fool, it was on account of his profession as a fool which was to console the agitated mind of the monarch. Secondly, the fool, by saying to himself that the monarch was possessed by the Sakuntalâ-phantasy, was from beginning to end thinking of Sakuntalâ as existing only in the imagination of the king.

हुं भूओवि लंघिदो एसो सउन्तलावादेण ण आणे कधं चिकिच्छिदव्वो भविस्सदि ।

With him she was not a real personage. Though he might have suspected first that the king was in love with a maiden in the forest, named Sakuntalâ, the explanation of the king that he was only drawing upon his imagination must have long ago removed the reality of Sakuntalâ from the fool's mind. That is why the fool thinks that his master is again possessed—*i.e.*, possessed for a second time,—by the Sakuntalâ-phantasy. On this occasion of the king's second resorting to him, the fool tries to please him in his own way.

SAKUNTALA.

Our next character would be Sakuntalâ whom we should have treated before the fool. From what we see of her in the drama, she is the cast-off daughter of Menaká and Viśvámitra, tenderly protected by the mercy of the birds (*Sakuntas*—whence her name) during the first moments after her birth and then

taken care of by Kanva whom alone she regards as her father.

पुरा किल तस्म राएसिणो उग्गे तबस्सि वट्टमाणस्स कधम्पि जादसङ्केहिं मेणआ णाम अच्छरा णिअम-विग्घआरिणी पेसिदा।

तं सहीए पहवं अवगच्छ उज्झिदाए सरीरसम्बड्ढ-णादिहिं उण तादकण्वो बि एदाए पिदा।

Though brought up in the woods, she was a jasmine dropped by accident on the *Arka* shrub (Calatropis gigantea.)

अर्कस्योपरि शिथिलं
च्युतमिव नवमालिकाकुसुमम् ॥

Her beauty declared her to be more than a mortal; for how could a streak of lightning have its origin on the surface of the earth!—

मानुषीभ्यः कथं नु स्या दस्य रूपस्य सम्भवः।
न प्रभातरलं ज्योति रुदेति वसुधातलात् ॥

Kanva, though her foster father, always loved her as tenderly as if she were his own daughter. He had the gratification to see that she had the same regard for him. Her simplicity, her modesty, her implicit obedience, and, above all, her love of nature and her fondness for the birds and beasts of the forest, made her a worthy denizen of that ascetic retreat. She would never taste a drop of water before the trees planted by her father, for which she had a sisterly affection, सहोअरसिणेहो। had been first

watered. Though fond of such ornaments as flowers and tender leaves which the woods freely supplied, she would never commit the cruel act of plucking any of them for her own decoration. Her great happiness was in seeing the trees and plants put forth their buds and flowers.

पातुं न प्रथमं व्यवस्यति जलं युष्मास्वसिक्तेषु या
नादत्ते प्रियमण्डनापि भवतां स्नेहेन या पल्लवम् ।
आदौ वः कुसुमप्रवृत्तिसमये यस्या भवत्युत्सवः
सेयं याति शकुन्तला पतिगृहं सर्व्वैरनुज्ञायताम् ॥

Deer, peacocks and all other pets of the retreat took their nourishment from her tender hands. She not only fed them, but dressed them when wounded by the sharp blades of grass, petted them, and always went about with them at her heels. Her path would sometimes be obstructed by the deer demanding food from her kind hands.

यस्य त्वया व्रणविरोहणमिङ्गुदीनां
तैलं न्यषिच्यत मुखे कुशसूचिविद्धे ।
श्यामाकमुष्टिपरिवर्द्धितको जहाति
सोऽयं न पुत्रकृतकः पदवीं मृगस्ते ॥

It was on one of these occasions, while engaged in the pleasing duty of watering the plants of the hermitage, that the king first meets her. Her foster father had such a high regard for her that, entrusting to her the difficult task of superintending those trees

and entertaining guests during his absence, he had undertaken a pilgrimage to the sacred Ganges for performing some propitiatory rites on her behalf.

दुहितरं शकुन्तला मतिथिसत्कारायादिश्य दैव मस्याः प्रतिकूलं शमयितुं सोमतीर्थं गतः ।

It was during this absence that Dushyanta visits the hermitage. At the very first sight, Sakuntalâ falls in love with him. She is unable to understand what it was, but she asks herself,—

कधं इमं जण पेक्खिअ तबोवनविरोहिणो विआरस्स गमणीयाह्मि संवुत्ता ।

Surprised at the suddenness of her love, she keeps it to herself; she is resolved to marry Dushyanta and Dushyanta alone. If unsuccessful, she would rather give up her life than wed another.

अण्णधा सुमरेध मं ।

"If my object be not attained, do you only remember me as a name." Her companions, perceiving her altered condition, question her several times in vain, till at last, finding her health declining and unable herself to accomplish anything, she opens her mouth and reveals her secret. Her friends, who at her first meeting with Dushyanta had perceived that love was working in her heart, received the revelation gladly and chid her for having kept the secret so long. They would have long ago assisted her in the proper treat-

cannot be prescribed without knowing the nature of the disease.

विआरं परमत्थदो अआणिअ अणारम्भो किल पदी-आरस्स ।

They suggest a love-note to her lord which they would carry in a flower basket, but there is no occasion for this. The loving king, himself suffering from pangs of love, is near where Sakuntalâ is pining for him. They meet. Sakuntalâ sees before her the dearest object of her heart, but her extreme modesty makes her dumb. Her kind friends plead her cause and request the monarch to receive her as a wife.

तेण हि इअं णो पिअसही तुमं ज्जेव उद्दिसिअ भअवदा मअणेण इमं अवत्थन्तरं पाबिदा । ता अरिहसि अब्भुबबत्तीए जीविदं से अवलम्बइदुं ।

The poet cleverly manages to send away Sakuntalâ's maids from the spot.

पिअम्बदे एस तबस्सिमिअपोदपो इदोतदो दिण्णदिट्ठी णूणं मादरं पब्भट्ठं अण्णेसदि ता संजोजेमि णं ।

Sakuntalâ is happy when alone with her lord. Meetings take place often. The long-extending sacrificial rites of the ascetics are over. The monarch has drunk deep at the fountain of love. His time for leaving the forest has approached. Promising to send a fit retinue soon for taking her to Hastinâpura with all the honours due to a queen, Dushyanta departs, to the great grief of our heroine. Days and months

pass in vain. The promised retinue does not turn up. The lady, while thinking of her lord and his promise, has become forgetful of every other thing. Durvâsas now stands before her. His demand for charity is unheeded. He curses her, but Providence, through her absent-mindedness, makes her ignorant of her unhappy fate. Kanva has returned from his pilgrimage and is informed by his sacred fire of the union of his daughter with the king. Preparations are made to send Sakuntalâ to her royal lord. She is so deeply attached to the forest that she takes leave of the creepers, birds and beasts, and of her companions before she departs.

अनुमतगमना शकुन्तला तरुभिरियं वनवासबन्धुभिः ।
परभृतविरुतं कलं यतः प्रतिवचनीकृतमेभिरात्मनः ॥

Her way is obstructed by her pets. Without her the retreat would be a wilderness to her friends. She was the life of the humble society there. Even the trees weep by dropping down their leaves under the mid-day sun. The peacock has ceased to dance, and the deer has dropped down the fodder from its mouth.

उग्गिण्णदब्भकवला मई परिच्चत्तणत्ताणा मोरी ।
ओसरिअपाण्डुपत्ता मुअन्ति अस्सुं विअ लदाओ ॥

Kanva, ever bent upon his duties, sends her away, giving her good counsel, to her lord. Like the sandal reared in the Malaya mountains decorating the palaces of kings, the foster daughter of Kanva goes from the wilderness to adorn Dushyanta's harem. Her friends,

at the last moment, decorate her finger with the ring to be produced as a token if the king showed himself inclined to disown her. This very thought is a forerunner of calamities to Sakuntalâ. Her right eye throbs—a bad omen—and the journey is performed with a beating heart.

Dushyanta receives the company in the room where the sacred fire is maintained; and in the course of a long inquiry, Sakuntalâ finds that she is doomed to misery. She begins her address to her lord with "My husband!" but shudders at the expression, as her lord has pooh-poohed the marriage and then addresses him as "O descendant of Puru!" She musters up all her courage and anger and tries modestly to recall to his memory their love for one another, their favourite haunts by the Mâlinî. The doubting king perceives a reality and not assumption in her anger. Her own relatives spurn her for her secret marriage. The disciples of Kanva leave her behind. She is left to the mercy of the royal priest and is trusted to his charge, but only for a moment. Her mother comes to her rescue, and she is carried away in a streak of lightning to the hermitage of Marîchi, her foster-uncle, in the Himalayas, who takes care of her, arranges for her safe delivery, appoints nurses, and performs all the necessary rites to the baby born. Though well-housed and tended, and the mother of a child, Sakuntalâ, because of her great affection for her insincere lord, is always miserable. Her hair is uncombed and her garments dirty. Pallor,

sorrow, and misery appears in every line of her face. She sends Misrakesi, her mother's friend, to examine in secret her untrue lord and to see whether there was any hope for her. That friend returns with glad news, and it is only this and this alone that gives courage to our heroine to bear her miseries calmly till better days dawn for her; and they soon dawn. She meets her lord and readily forgives him when he falls at her feet and begs her forgiveness. That she is again remembered is quite enough for her. All her previous misery is forgotten and she realises that sweet is pleaure after pain.

Her foster-uncle Marîchi explains the curse, and the last particle of displeasure towards her once untrue lord is removed. Messages of her happy re-union with Dushyanta are swiftly despatched to Kanva and Menaká. Our heroine returns in triumph to Hastinâpura, bearing with her the future emperor of "Bhâratavarsha," with the then emperor her lord in her company.

Thus, throughout the play, we find Sakuntalâ the type of true love and sincere devotion to her husband. A cast away child, protected by birds, and reared with birds and beasts as her companions in the hermitage of Kanva; regarding the trees planted by him as her brothers, respected by all the disciples as a sister, loved by the sovereign as an incarnation of virtue, doted on by a celibate father as his own daughter, rejected by her husband through fate and Durvâsa's curse as a wily courtesan, and bearing even in that state her miseries with extreme patience and hope of better days.

Those days come. Her own good nature and virtue bring them. She is doubly happy in the end through her own chastity.

THE TWO MAIDS.

We shall now turn to her maids—Anasûyá and Priyamvadá. We always find them the inseparable companions of Sakuntalâ in the hermitage—now engaged in the pleasant duty of watering the trees of the sage side by side with Sakuntalâ, now cracking jokes with her, and always attentive to the happiness and comfort of their young friend. They are elderly ladies unmarried and extremely virtuous. When our hero and heroine meet, they welcome the king and relate to him freely all the incidents of Sakuntalâ's life. They are educated damsels and though virgins brought up in the woods, they display great knowledge of men and of the world. Their duty is always to attend upon Sakuntalâ and minister to her welfare. They collect flowers to propitiate the deities for conferring boons upon their friend. They perceive with a keen shrewdness that Sakuntalâ is in love with the monarch, and with the same shrewdness they conclude that he is also in love with her.

Though now and then they make fun of her, they never once put the question boldly to her face. Their extreme modesty and good nature make them delay it till the last moment, and the breakdown of Sakuntalâ's delicate health drives them to it. They then most politely suggest to her that sorrow becomes less trouble-

some when shared with bosom friends by revelation of any secret that may be its cause.

सिणिद्धजणसंविभत्तं क्खु दुक्खं सज्जवेअणं भोदि ।

And even so it was. They had a great respect for Sakuntalâ and she cherished similar sentiments towards them. Once questioned, she opened to them at once her secret. They are wise enough to praise Sakuntalâ for her choice in having placed her heart upon the monarch, for where else would a sacred river go to but the mighty ocean ?

अधवा साअरं उज्झिअ काहिं महाणइए पविसिदव्वं ।

No sooner do they come to know the spring of Sakuntalâ's misery than they proceed to devise means to the best of their ability to alleviate it. They dictate to her the love letter, and when the king turns up welcome him, requesting him to accept their friend as his true wife. Here the maids being comparatively elderly ladies, perform the duty of bringing together the young pair—a task done even now by such members of a Hindu household.

They are pleased to see that Sakuntalâ is wedded to the monarch by the *Gândharva* form of marriage ; and they expect that, true to his promise, he would soon send a retinue to take her to the palace. The monarch's delay awakens first their fear which reaches its height when they hear Durvâsa's curse. Seeing what had happened, their only course was to find the means for removing the curse. They run hastily and falling at the feet of the angry sage, plead their

friend's cause; they succeed but keep the matter to themselves lest in her delicate health and anxiety at the king's delay the news should prove a shock to her; for who would pour hot-water for vivifying the jasmine?

अन० ॥ हला दोण्णं ऊेव णो हिअए एसो वुत्तन्तो चिट्ठदु रक्खणिआ क्खु पइदिपेलवा पिअसही।
प्रिय०॥ को दाव उण्णोदएण णोमालिअं सिञ्चदि ।

The thought that they have a ring with them, given originally by the king to Sakuntalâ, makes them happy :—

सक्कं दाणिं अस्ससिदुं अत्थि तेण राएसिणा संपत्थिदेण अत्तणो णामाङ्कितं अङ्गुलिअअं सुमरणीअं त्ति।

Now and then a thought arises in their mind that makes them somewhat miserable. They think of Kanva who had just returned from the pilgrimage and of how he would receive the news of Sakuntalâ's union with Dushyanta.

ण पारेम्ह तादकण्वस्स वा प्पवासपाडिणिउत्तस्स दुस्सन्तपरिणीदं आवन्नसत्तं सउन्तलं णिवेदिदुं ता एत्थ दाणिं किं णु खु अम्होहिं करणिज्जं ।

They console themselves that the sage must be delighted to hear what has happened. When Sakuntalâ is unhappy at the disregard of the king, they are also unhappy. Their limbs then do not perform their regular functions. Their duty is to go to Sakuntalâ every morning to make enquiries about her health.

When it is announced that Sakuntalá is to be sent to Hastinâpura, no one is more pleased than these her two friends :—

प्रिय०॥ अणसूए तुवर तुवर सउन्तलाए पत्थाणकोदूहलं णिव्वत्तिदुं ।

Still they are sorry, for what is a gain to Hastinâpura is a loss to the hermitage especially to themselves. The whole day they are engaged in adorning their friend as superfluous a piece of business as gilding refined gold. They follow her till Kanva says to Śakuntalâ that they must desist.

They weep at the departure of their friend but check their sorrow lest it be construed into a bad omen—as it always is in Hindu belief. They have carefully brought with them the ring—Sakuntalâ's charm to open up the recollections of the king—and their last gift to their friend is this. They put it on her finger while taking their parting kiss and only ask her to carry it carefully and produce it if the king showed any sign of forgetfulness.

Even at this stage, they do not communicate to Sakuntalâ Durvásá's curse as they have a very great regard for her and do not wish to give any kind of shock to her fellings by such an unpleasant revelation.

Thus, throughout the play and as long as we meet them, they are the true companions of our heroine, ever attending upon and feeling for her and having as

their sole occupation the happiness and comfort of Sakuntalâ. Their conversations with the king and with their friend are charming specimens of modesty, politeness, frankness and sincerity.

KANVA.

Kanva, the hermit and the foster-father of Sakuntalâ, is sparingly introduced; only in a part of the IVth Act we meet with him direct. Though his appearance is thus scarce, his speeches are dignified and choice, and convey to the reader the high ideal of a sage who has devoted his whole life to penance. We learn something about the force of his penances when we are told that his presence alone in the retreat is sufficient to scare away the Rákshasas. His force of character, therefore, must have been very great. Though a celibate throughout his rigid life, he has a deep knowledge of the world and can imagine the pleasures and pains of domesticity.

Is he not the foster-father of Sakuntalâ? Notwithstanding his rigid practices and observances and the very hard rules of an anchorite, he has the time and the desire to bring up a baby from the very day of its birth. Sakuntalâ, instead of being a source of trouble to him, is his delight and consolation. "She was a cherubim that did preserve him and infuse a fortitude in him." On account of her he undertakes a pilgrimage to the holy Ganges. His intention is to get his adopted child disposed of in marriage to some suitable husband. He foresees some calamity to her; and that is,

of course, the future curse of Durvásas. It is owing to Kaṇva's pilgrimage ? undertaken to propitiate the deities, that Durvásas, the sage of irascible disposition, is brought down to the point of relaxing the severity of his curse. Destiny is unavoidable and its fulfilment is frequently due to our own acts undertaken for baffling it. The sage, for averting the calamity to his daughter, leaves the hermitage. Durvásas comes and finds Sakuntalâ unmindful of him. If Kaṇva were present, this would not have occurred. But propitiatory rites cannot be unsuccessful. Hence, the angry Durvásas, who is never known to relent, relents towards Sakuntalâ through the prayers of her companions. The Hindu idea has been worked out in full. On his return from the pilgrimage, Kaṇva learns through divine agency the fact of his daughter's marriage with Dushyanta. It was his sacred fire that told him everything.

Well-versed in all the rules of religion and morality, the sage sees that there is nothing wrong in the course adopted by his daughter in choosing a husband for her own self, and loves his daughter all the more for it, praises her that her own noble qualities have secured her such an excellent husband and promises to send her soon to her husband's abode.

His sorrow at the idea that his daughter must now be sent away is more than what a real father would feel for his child. The verse in which it is represented is considered to be one of the finest in the play. He

weeps that Sakuntalâ is going away to Hastinâpura ; at the same time, he is obliged to check his sorrow as weeping would be a bad omen on that auspicious occasion. Tears gush out of his eyes. His vision is obstructed. He exclaims :—" If he who is only after all a hermit of the forest, and a celibate feels so much sorrow in sending away his foster-daughter, what must be the feelings of real fathers born and bred up in cities when they have to send to their husbands' houses their own daughters !"

यास्यत्यद्य शकुन्तलेति हृदयं संस्पृष्टमुत्कण्ठया
अन्तर्व्वाष्पभरोपरोधि गदितं चिन्ताजडं दर्शनम्।
वैक्लव्यं मम तावदीदृशमपि स्नेहादरण्यौकसः
पीड्यन्ते गृहिणः कथं न तनयाविश्लेषदुःखैर्नवैः॥

But he is a sage whose rule of life is that things ought to take their own course. The wife must go to the husband's house. Things necessary ought to be done. There is no use of sorrowing over the business. He encourages himself and shows that whatever he may appear to be in others' eyes, he is not wanting in the power to procure ornaments and robes, at once splendid and costly, to decorate the beautiful Sakuntalâ, on this occasion, though her natural beauty, as the daughter of a divine lady, made even leaves and barks excellent ornaments for her.

Like Prospero in his humble and banished isle, Kanva too must display his power. Both call to aid their superhuman puissance. In Kanva it is the magic

of penance. He sends out his disciple like Prospero his Ariel. A human hand stretches out from a tree and gives to the disciple the finest silk; another throws out coloured cottons to decorate the lady's feet. The sylvan gods give him rare jewels for adorning the half-divine daughter of the hermitage.

क्षौमं केनचिदिन्दुपाण्डु तरुणा माङ्गल्यमाविष्कृतं
निष्ठ्यूतश्चरणोपरागसुभगो लाक्षारसः केनचित ।
अन्येभ्यो वनदेवताकरतलैरापर्व्वभागोत्थितै
र्दत्तान्याभरणानि नः किसलयच्छायापरिस्पर्द्धिभिः ॥

Decorated with these and appearing beautiful with all that nature and art can make her, Sakuntalâ stands before her adopted father. The sage, though a celibate of the forest, breaks out with the finest piece of advice ever uttered by an experienced worldly father. "In your lord's house, always worship and serve the elder relations; treat as your equals your co-wives; if ever your lord is angry at any of your acts, do not be angry in return with him, but be his ever-ready friend for all that; be extremely kind to your servants and always display a limited appetite for the pleasures of the world. Only those that act up to this advice attain to the eminent honour of being called wives; and those that do not act as above are ugly sores in the family in which they are born."

शुश्रूषस्व गुरून् कुरु प्रियसखीवृत्तिं सपत्नीजने
भर्तुर्विप्रकृतापि रोषणतया मास्म प्रतीपं गमः।
भूयिष्ठं भव दक्षिणा परिजने भोगेष्वनुत्सेकिनी
यान्त्येवं गृहिणीपदं युवतयो वामाः कुलस्याधयः ॥

How very short and simple is this advice of the sage to his daughter! How full of wisdom and instruction to a well-behaved, intelligent, and noble girl! Kaṇva has the greatest regard for his daughter. He knows her nature well, intimate as he has been with her from a child. He knows also that she is not much in need of any advice from others. But it is the duty, the imperative duty, of a father which Kaṇva performs. We must do our duty and then leave things to take their own course.

He must advise his daughter. It is this principle of doing his duty that makes him resolve to send his daughter to the palace. For, must not a married lady go to her husband's house? The question arises as to whether he was not aware of the repulse which Sakuntalâ was to receive. By his foresight and rare powers he must have clearly seen it. He must also have seen the way in which Sakuntalâ would then be assisted. The course of events must happen. He cannot avert it. That he foresaw all these and left events to take their own course is revealed to us by Mârîcha in the VIIth Act.

So decorating Sakuntalâ and giving her the necessary advice, he prepares her for the journey. His own sister and two of his disciples accompany her to Hastinâpura. Thus the father sends his daughter to her husband's house. What is his message to the royal son-in-law? It is simple, and displays a justifiable pride. Sakuntalâ, though bred up in the woods, is represented as not wanting in any of those

accomplishments which go to make women fit for the royal harem. He himself was not wanting in any of the qualifications of a father-in-law to make such a gift to a royal bridegroom.

"We belong to as noble and respectable a family as yours; we are of unsullied character; we are as rich in penance as you are in wealth; we approve and appreciate the affection placed upon our daughter by you without the knowledge of her relatives. Do you now show her the good feelings due to her as your wife; her happiness with you is an affair of her own and yours, over which her relations have no voice."

अस्मान् साधु विचिन्त्य संयमधनानुच्चैः कुलञ्चात्मन-
स्त्वय्यस्याः कथमप्यबान्धवकृतां स्नेहप्रवृत्तिं च ताम्।
सामान्यप्रतिपत्तिपूर्व्वकमियं दारेषु दृश्या त्वया
भाग्यायत्तमतःपरं न खलु तत् स्त्रीबन्धुभिर्य्याच्यते ॥

Ponder, reader, over this message; how noble, simple and dignified it is! The old sage requests the acceptance of his daughter as a wife by the monarch and does no more than that. He does not recommend her for any special favour as doting fathers invariably do. Kaṇva knows well that it is a foolish and unreasonable request. It is his daughter's good conduct that must secure these. Like a rigid Brâhman, Kaṇva asks his daughter to circumambulate the sacred fire kept in his cottage and then sends her away.

He follows her for a pretty long distance through the woods. Through his affection for her, he even

breaks the rule about not crossing a water. He has to be reminded of it by his own pupils.

When he loses sight of Sakuntalâ, he returns to his cottage to resume his duties, and the thought by which he consoles himself is nobler than the true fatherly affection he entertained for her. Says he: "A daughter in a family is always the wealth of another. I have now sent her away to her master and lord who married her. My mind is as free now as that of him who has safely delivered to the real owner the property entrusted to his care."

अर्थो हि कन्या परकीय एव तामद्य संप्रेष्य परिग्रहीतुः।
जातोऽस्मि सद्यो विशदान्तरात्मा चिरस्य निक्षेपमिवा
र्पयित्वा ॥

Here we shall take leave of the sage Kaṇva, so sincere in his affections, so rigid in the observances of piety, so well-versed in all the several duties of a father, father-in-law, master and anchorite, so capable of foreseeing coming events, so resigned as to leave them to take their own course and yet, like a human being, trying to do what little he can for averting the evils apprehended by him.

GAUTAMI.

The Sakuntalâ of the hermitage is now lost to our sight, and we shall follow her to the palace. Gautamî and the two disciples of Kaṇva accompany her. Let us examine the characters of these. Gautamî speaks on a very few occasions. We know very little of her. When first she is introduced to the reader's notice she

appears as an old lady of the hermitage and the general director of the female members. When the elephant is proclaimed to be at large, the young ladies in the garden, including Sakuntalâ, are afraid of what Gautamî would think of them, and how anxious she would be of their safety.

She has neither shrewdness nor common sense to perceive that when Sakuntalâ's health was failing, there was a love affair at the bottom. What Anasûyâ perceived, from her experience of books, Gautamî was not able to see, notwithstanding her age.

In her own simple way she brings some sacred water, over which she has pronounced some incantations, for sprinkling over her and curing her of her malady.

She is, after all, a blunt old lady, only fit for the unmeaning title of the oldest female member of the family, with little or no intelligence or shrewdness which are the most essential requisites in the management of young damsels. When standing before the monarch, pleading for Sakuntalâ, for the first time her untrained feminine nature puts in her request to accept Sakuntalâ, thus :—

"This lady did not care to take the advice of elders :
"nor did you act by the consent of your relations in
"this marriage. What shall I say of the act which
"each of you did without reference to others ?"

णाबेक्खिदो गुरूअणो इमिए तुएबि ण पुच्छिदों बन्धू ।
एक्कक्कस्सअ चरिए किं भणदु एक्क एक्कस्सिं ॥

Gautamî, though an old lady, is entirely at the mercy of the disciples in this part of the play. In other parts we do not hear of her at all, except indirectly on one or two occasions. As an old woman, she was entitled to very high respect from the king, but she never puts forth her views independently. She always utters in her own plain-spoken way what the disciples say. They take the master's share in the whole controversy, as we shall soon see. They direct Gautamî and she merely shudders and obeys. When Sakuntalâ is in a hopeless condition, rejected by her lord, Gautamî's feminine nature predominates and she recommends the thrown-away wife to the mercy of the disciples. She is unheeded.

That shows what influence Gautamî had. She is an old, blunt lady, respected for the only qualification of age.

THE TWO DISCIPLES.

The two disciples of Kanva, who accompany Sakuntalâ to the city, have a peculiar type of character. Once only we hear of them, and that as accompanying our heroine. They are the chosen disciples for whom the master has great regard. He calls them "my children" and entrusts to their care his daughter as their sister. "Be ready to accompany your sister to the city" he commands and forthwith they go.

They take her with Kanva's message to the king. The elderly lady Gautamî is also one of the party.

Soon the city is reached. This is probably the first time that they see a town. But they are shrewd enough

on their first entrance into it, to admire the better sanitation of their own forests. To their eyes the happy people of the city appear as anointed men to persons fresh from their bath, as the dirty to the clean, as sound sleepers to those that are wide awake or as persons imprisoned to those that are in liberty.

अभ्यक्तमिव स्नातः शुचिरशुचिमिव प्रबुद्ध इव सुप्तम्।
बद्धमिव स्वैरगतिर्जनमिह सुखसङ्गिनमवैमि॥

They see the king, and after the formal inquiries, are questioned as to the chief object of their visit. They deliver the sage's message in their own sweeter words. Say they:—"Our master has approved and appreciated the love placed by you upon his daughter, because you are the best of respectable men and Sakuntalá is the embodiment of all good qualities of women. Providence in thus knitting you both has done the wisest act and escaped from the public criticism of keeping the pair apart for a long time. Do you, therefore, accept your wife quick with child."

त्वमर्हतामग्रसरः स्मृतोऽसि नः शकुन्तला मूर्तिमतीव सत्क्रिया।
समानयंस्तुल्यगुणं वधूवरं चिरस्य वाच्यं न गतः प्रजापतिः॥

The king is confused. What is it that they say? He is unable to understand them. He denies having married her or even seen her.

From this point the tone of the disciples changes. They shudder to hear the king deny the relationship.

Sakuntalâ, their sister, brought up under the rigid discipline of Kanva, they cannot bring themselves to imagine as having gone wrong. If so, would not the great sage, with his fore-knowledge, have perceived it? They think that the king is chaffing them. Wishing for the company of a lady in the forest he had married her according to the *Gándharva* form of marriage and now renounced her as a villian. Like true brothers taking up a sister's cause, they are indignant. They would have kept her for a long time in the forest, but they did not like the idea of keeping in their cottage a monarch's lady quick with child. A woman, however chaste, is looked upon with suspicion if she lives for a long time in the abode of her own relations. She must live with her husband whether he likes her or not.

'Tis slander
Whose edge is sharper than the sword; whose tongue
Outvenoms all the worms of Nile; whose breath
Rides on the sporting winds, and doth belie
All the corners of the world,—kings, queens and states,
Maids, matrons,—nay, the secrets of the grave,
This viperous slander enters.

Not to give room for any such undeserving slander they have brought her to her lord.

सतीमपि ज्ञातिकुलैकसंश्रयां
जनोऽन्यथा भर्तृमतीं विशङ्कते ।
अतः समीपे परिणेतुरिष्यते
प्रियाऽप्रिया वा प्रमदा स्वबन्धुभिः ॥

When the monarch doubts his marriage, or rather says in so many words that he has never married her, they ask, respectfully at first, as to whether a monarch can act against the acknowledged rules of righteousness when people apply to him.

And then regarding him as a mere worm of the world notwithstanding his high position—for they can never believe that Sakuntalâ is false—they say that such violation of the rules of good behaviour are only possible in those that are blinded by wealth and power.

The king perceives the vehemence of their abuse and sits confounded, half-doubting his own conviction about his never having married the lady before him. This makes the disciples suspect that he is taking time to concoct some excuse or other. "Why this silence?" roar they. The king says that he cannot, without injuring his reputation as a Kshatriya, accept her as his wife, as he has no knowledge of his having ever married her.

The disciples cuttingly remark that their preceptor was a fool to have thus overlooked the secret love of the monarch; that his conduct was like that of a man honouring a thief with the thing he had stolen; and that, instead of cursing and visiting the king with some severe punishment, Kanva had acted unwisely by honouring him as a son-in-law by thus sending his daughter to him.

कृतावमर्षामनुमन्यमानः सुतां त्वया नाम मुनिर्विमान्यः।

They then say that they had said all they had to say, and asked Sakuntalâ to speak for herself and convince the monarch. When she fails and weeps, the disciples unaccustomed in their austere life to any kind of tender feelings, cuttingly remark that unions should never be contracted in secrecy.

अतः परीक्ष्य कर्तव्यं विशेषात् सङ्गतं रहः ।

Having full confidence in Sakuntalâ's good conduct, they curse the king that in the other world hell is the place reserved for him for his faithlessness. The king rejects Sakuntalâ, and she wants to follow the disciples to the woods. Their advice to her, though cruel, is pregnant with that high ideal of morality which is sanctioned by the Hindu standard. They point out to her that servitude in her lord's house would be a far better course than following them to the woods.

पतिगृहे तव दास्यमपि क्षमम् ॥

As long as the king was not pleased to accept her, she, knowing herself to be his true wife, should live in his house, serving like even a maid-servant if her lord wished it.

Though raw disciples, wanting a good deal of worldly experience and just introduced by circumstances into the town and before a royal personage for the first time in their life, they behave at the commencement with all respect due to his high position. When, however, they suspect him to be in the wrong, they argue with him undauntedly, without caring a straw for his high authority, accuse him of pride, treachery and

deceit, and point out to his face his cruelty and faithlessness to Sakuntalâ. In their opinion Kaṇva's daughter could never have erred. No doubt, their position as ascetics gave them such a license, but with all that, their firm conviction in Sakuntalâ's innocence supported them throughout the interview.

THE POLICE.

We now come to the last scene of the Fifth Act. Considering its relation to the main story, it may, with some extensions, be regarded as an independent act, however short. It introduces us the police of that time and the thief. Two fishermen, who had tried to dispose of a ring bearing the initials of the king on it, were apprehended. This, as the reader must know, is the lost ring of Sakuntalá. Extremely short as the scene is, it gives us a very good insight into the system of the police—the lowest ranks of it—then, and we are not surprised to find it exactly coinciding with our own modern British police system—of course, the lowest ranks. The same must have been the case everywhere and in every age, for all the tendency of some to praise the old and condemn the current system. The two policemen who are in charge of the two thieves are almost equal in rank to our modern constables getting from Rs. 7 to 9 per month. They begin to enquire of the culprits as to how the property was got. The simple fishermen, whose guilt is yet to be proved, relate that they would never dare to commit such a wicked act as thieving. The police work with ready self-assumption and derision peculiar to their vocation.

They ask whether a present of the ring was made to them by the king on the score of their being a highly-religious class of persons.

The supposed culprits begin their story and say that they are fishermen, which is but the first sentence to what they have to say. Without an iota of patience to listen to what is yet to come, one of the policemen remarks,—"What, are you asked to give out your profession and place of abode ?" as if these are of no avail.

What an unmeaning kind of brow-beating is this and how exactly similar to the modern way ! The Nâgarika, the head of the petty police, answering to the Inspector of Police, perhaps,—who is, of course, a better sort of individual with more experience and education,—interferes and checks his men and allows the culprits to proceed with their account which is listened to by him. By the smell he thinks it probable that the ring has been got from the stomach of a fish, and takes the article and the men to the king.

Two minor policemen had taken charge of the fishermen. Though the enquiry, from the surmises of the Nâgarika, proved more favourable to the culprits, still the two members of the town police said that their hands were itching to belabour the culprits to death. That is sometimes their practice whatever be the future course the case may adopt—if only they happen to know that the crime is a grave one or that the culprit

gives them a pair of gold bracelets as rewards from the royal hands.

Thus these innocent men of the net breathe freely again, but not quite freely. The subordinate policemen release them reluctantly. Seeing that instead of being fixed on the stakes they are sent away with presents, they look at them smiling goodwill and friendliness. What this means the fishermen are shrewd enough to understand. They at once give them half of their reward to serve for their drink, and themselves having no objection to share the treat, they all repair to a tavern.

How like tho modern constabulary is this picture of the police by Kâlidâsa 13 centuries ago! What an exact coincidence! Soon as the culprit is apprehended they hover round him, jeer and hoot him, laugh at and mock the first words of his story withqut the patience to listen to the end of it, jump into hostile conclusions, and threaten him with all punishments while the crime is still unproved. The prisoners are soon released. They smile at them, meaning—you are fortunate now; let us see what will become of you tomorrow if you do not take care to reward us on this occasion. The innocent men, breathing freely, understand the smile and bribe the petty officers. This last respect to the police paid by the released fishermen is not singular.

THE FISHERMEN.

In speaking of the police we have spoken of the fishermen also. Simple as their life is, they are

themselves with the greatest honour as long as they follow the vocation handed down to them from time immemorial. The duty laid down should be done. Though prevented by caste rules from killing a living being, the Brâhman sacrificing an animal on his altar of worship does his duty and is acknowledged not to have done any wrong. Even so the fishermen casting their nets for fish, notwithstanding its cruelty.

शहजे किल जे विणिन्दिदे णहु से कम्म विवज्जणीअए।
पशुमालणकम्मदालुणे अणुकम्पामिदुकेवि शोत्तिए॥

These men display extreme simplicity and ignorance of the law. This is, perhaps, the first time they have ever been brought to dread the law and that for no fault; they shudder all the more for it; they are confused; they regard their release to be as unaccountable as the charge of theft. Still they are extremely happy to get away; they shrewdly perceive that the police grieve for it. They reward their captors for avoiding future trouble. On the whole, we are throughout pleased with their simplicity, honesty, dread of crime, and pride of their humble profession.

THE PRINCE.

A word about the boy prince—the son of Sakuntalâ and Dushyanta. He was born in the hermitage of Mârîcha who performed over him all the rites of infancy that appertain to the Kshatriyá caste. He is of very beautiful and enchanting appearance, resembling his father in face so much that when the latter first sees the boy without knowing who he is, the nurses wonder at the resemblance.

His general boyish sports were with lion cubs, and he would not be easily disengaged from them by the present of some other thing to play with. The old nurses are nothing to him. He makes mouths at them and never listens to them. By thrashing every beast in the forest he acquired the name of Sarvadamana which was changed afterwards into Bharata by his protecting the whole world from wrong and oppression.

रथेनानुद्घातस्तिमितगतिना तीर्णजलधिः
पुरा सप्तद्वीपां जयति वसुधामप्रतिरथः।
इहायं सत्वानां प्रसभदमनात्सर्वदमनः
पुनर्यास्यत्याख्यां भरत इति लोकस्य भरणात्॥

It is from this Bharata, the son of Dushyanta, that the *Mahâbhârata* is named, as it is the history of the race originated by him.

THE ORIGINAL OF THE PLAY.

Thus we have traced in a way all the main characters of the play. Before we close our review we shall make a few remarks on the original from which the play is borrowed, how Kâlidàsa has developed his plot, and what additions or subtractions or alterations he has made.

The original of the play is to be found in Chapters 68 to 74 of the *Âdiparva* (1st Book) of the great Hindu Epic, the *Mahâbhârata*. The plot there is very simple and runs thus :—Dushyanta of the Lunar race goes out on a hunting expedition, enters the hermitage of Kaṇva much exhausted, and arrived before the

sage's cottage, asks for some water to drink and quench his thirst.

Sakuntalâ from inside brings him the water. He is surprised at the sight of her beauty and asks her who she is. "I am Kanva's daughter," she replies. But Kanva is a bachelor! Even charity may alter its course but never the sages their vows :—

चलेद्धि वृत्ताद्धर्मोऽपि नचलेत्शंसितव्रताः।

The king wonders at hearing of that sage having a daughter.

Then the damsel relates her history as she has heard it related by Kanva to another sage. The king then understands that through her veins flows the blood of the warrior caste. There was no objection to a warrior marrying a woman of the warrior caste. Already he has been captivated by her beauty.

He courts her and requests her to marry him. She pleads the absence of Kanva. Kanva, here is only gone out to collect roots and fruits required for his humble repast and not on any pilgrimage.

The king does not like the idea of waiting. He points out to her that every one under the canopy of heaven is independent and that she can without waiting for the return of her father make up her mind and choose him as her partner in life.

आत्मनो बन्धुरात्मैव गतिरात्मैव चात्मनः।
आत्मनैवात्मनो दानं कर्तुमर्हसि धर्मतः॥

She is convinced by the king's dexterous arguments, and agrees to become his wife on his promising to make the child she may bear to him the heir-apparent to the throne.

मयि जायेत यः पुत्रः सभवेत्त्वदनन्तरः ।
युवराजो महाराज ! सत्यमेतद्ब्रवीमि ते ॥
यद्येतदेवं दुष्यन्त ! अस्तु मे संगमस्त्वया ।

The king expressed his assent, married her according to the *Gándharva* form of marriage, and spent sometime with her, and left her for returning to his capital, promising to send a retinue soon to take her to his palace.

The sage, her father, returned with his basket full of roots and fruits and much exhausted. His daughter, who would always be looking for him eagerly at the cottage door, he missed that day. He contemplated for a while, and by his spiritual vision concluded that she had wedded Dushyanta without having waited for her father's consent, and that it was her guilty conscience that made her shy of facing him. He readily, like a kind father, excused the conduct of his daughter and called her to come out. She approached him, fell at his feet, and requested him not to curse Dushyanta who had become her lord. He was gladly excused and Kanva blessed Sakuntalâ and wished her a happy life, foreseeing the future greatness of her son.

She then gave birth to the future Bharata. Kanva performed all the preliminary rites in respect of the boy and named him Sarvadamana as he always, even

in childhood, took great pleasure in beating and riding over all the beasts—even those of prey—of the forest.

There was not a single ferocious animal in the forest which had not run away at the terror of his mighty fists. In his sixth year the boy had become so great a terror to the beasts of the hermitage that the sage resolved to send him and his mother away to the king, and this was done.

The king, at the very sight of the lady approaching with the stout boy, recollected well his love. But he denied having ever married her and accused her of being a liar and a bad woman. She requested that the child at least might be accepted.

The king would not. Hopeless of success she prepared to depart. If she had only wished it, she could have cursed the king whose head would have split into a thousand pieces.

But she was too gentle and noble to do so. Just then an invisible voice in the sky exclaimed that the woman departing again to the forests was the true and unsullied wife of the monarch, and the boy the offspring of both of them. Dushyanta begged pardon of his insulted wife and said that knowing the whole story, he had purposely denied her, as the suspicious world required to be convinced in that peculiar way before he could accept her.

अहं चाप्येवमेवैनं जानामि स्वयमात्मजम् ।
यद्यहं वचनादेव गृह्णीयामि स्वमात्मजम् ।
भवेन्हि शंका लोकस्यनैव शुद्धो भवेदयम् ।

Such is the simple story in the epic. Kâlidâsa has this for the warp of his play and has spun out the woof by the magic of his imagination. Instead of the monarch going to the hermitage of Kaṇva, tired and exhausted in a desert, as in the epic, he is directed to go there, in the play, by two sages who were pleased with his ready acquiescence with their request to let their deer escape and who wished him a son. Sakuntalâ and the monarch do not meet face to face for the first time and that for a few hours in a single day, but they have several such meetings. The two companions of Sakuntalâ receive the king, introduce him to our heroine, and embellish the society of both by their pleasant conversation. The love between them (in the play) grows like a tender but luxuriant creeper, little by little, and not like the prophet's gourd suddenly in a day—nay, an hour, perhaps,—which hour was more needed by the monarch for rest and refreshment than for any amorous business. Durvâsas' curse and the fatal ring are purely inventions of Kâlidâsa. How much nobler does the king appear to us protected by these,—which entirely take away the fault of his forgetfulness and rejection of his chaste wife—than when he says, in the epic, like an idiot wanting in moral force,—'I knew it all to be so and so, but still I wanted to convince the world by some superior agency.'

The pinings of the guilty monarch at the sight of the ring, Indra's interference, the meeting with his lost love in the asylum of Mârîcha, the recognition, the

inability to understand why he had renounced his virtuous wife, the explanation given by the sage and, to go back, the interference of Mênaká at the moment of Sakuntalá's trouble, the fishermen and the police, and a thousand and one beauties in the play before us, are all additions and embellishments of the most fertile brain of the prince of Sanskrit poets.

Though the predominating passion throughout the play is Love, handled by the excellent pen of Kâlidâsa in his own happy way almost exhaustively, still there are as perfect descriptions of every kind of wild and rural scenery and nature as the poet's masterly delineation of love in the play. Human nature is well delineated. Quotations would only swell our criticism. We would ask the reader to peruse the original or the translation.

All look upon the sovereign for the things they want, and getting, live happily. But the king's lot is ever miserable in securing others their happiness, regardless of his ownself. The title of king is an empty name having a charm till it is secured; the task of protecting the world when won is extremely difficult. It was not so much for getting rid of one's troubles as for taking the burden of new troubles that one becomes a king. It is extremely difficult for a person to perceive his own flaws and weaknesses day by day. How much more difficult must it then be to be engaged in watching the weaknesses of others? And how, with all these responsibilities, could one call oneself lord?

Compare this with what the western Kâlidâsa says on the duties of kingship :—

Upon the king! Let us our lives, our souls,
Our debts, our careful wives, our children, and
Our sins, lay on the king :—we must bear all.
O hard condition! twin-born with greatness,
Subject to the breath of every fool,
Whose sense no more can feel but his own wringing!
What infinite heart's ease must kings neglect.
That private men enjoy?
And what have kings that privates have not too,
Save ceremony, save general ceremony?
And what art thou, thou idle ceremony?
What kind of god art thou, that suffer'st more
Of mortal griefs, than do thy worshippers?

KING HENRY V., Act IV, Sc. I.

How exactly similar are both the eastern and western dramatists in their sentiments! To appreciate the former as well as the latter, his sentiments must be studied in the original Sanskrit and not in the translation in which the aroma of poetry evaporates.

THE HINDU CIVILIZATION AS DEPICTED IN THE PLAY.

Before closing this criticism it would be well to take a glance at the Hindu society of the time, its civilization, manners, customs, &c., as depicted in the drama before us. The scene is laid before the learned assembly of Vikramâditya, who is himself the great patron of all fine arts.

The time of Kâlidâsa was the Augustan age of Sanskrit literature and the reigning monarch was the great patron of *belles-lettres*. Even people well-trained

in the several departments of knowledge could not trust their faculties till the special committee of the learned, which was the touchstone for examination, pronounced them competent.

आपरितोषाद्विदुषां न साधु मन्ये प्रयोगविज्ञानम् ।
बलवदपि शिक्षितानामात्मन्यप्रत्ययं चेतः

The free mingling of the hero with the three ladies, Sakuntalâ, Priyamvadâ, and Anasûyâ, indicate the high civilization of Hindu society—the type of the pure unsullied Aryan element before the innovations of later times affected it. How exactly approaching to modern European society is the small party of three ladies with a male guest in their midst engaged in a most pleasant conversation. There is no reservedness, no suspicion, on either side. The ladies introduced to us are all young and educated and extremely modest and respectful. All those acquisitions which make woman a true companion of man were present in each of them.

In the discourses between men and men, we see a very high state of manners and polish. The sages, though men of the forest, in requesting respectfully the king to pay a visit to their hermitage, say to him: 'If your majesty has not any other more important business to claim your attention, you may as well pay a visit to the hermitage of Kanva.'

The king, in reply to this request, politely asks whether the sage Kanva is on the spot. They say that he is not there, but leaving behind his daughter

Sakuntalâ to attend to the entertainment of guests, he has gone on a pilgrimage to the Ganges. How polite and natural does this look. And, again, how simple and good-natured does the monarch appear to us when he thinks it his duty to enter the hermitage in plain and unimposing attire, and tries his best not to give any unnecessary trouble to the humble dwellers of the wood.

The monarch Dushyanta is introduced as driving fast in his car with the swiftness of a kite. This shows that metalled roads were in existence between the town and the forest: *á fortiori*, in the several parts of the town. Saddles and reins and all the equipments of a horse harnessed to a car are mentioned. This indicates that so early as the 5th or the 6th century the Hindus had all these in perfection almost. The occurrence of the word 'Chînânsuka' cloth from China, though only once, in the first act is an indication that trade existed between China and India in the 6th century, A.D., which is also well established by the travels of the Chinese pilgrim Hioun Thsang in that period in India.

We are introduced to the ladies as being engaged in the pleasant duty of watering the garden plants, an indication that the system of gardening both for pleasure and for use, in palaces as in the forest, was well understood. That at this period palaces were constructed with the aid of lime (mortar) is proved by the words of the king himself in the 7th Act where he says that the members of his family, after having

led a happy life in cities, in their mansions built of chunam, &c., resorted to forests.

भवनेषु सुधासितेषु पूर्वं
क्षितिरक्षार्थमुशन्ति ये निवासम् ।
नियतैकयतिव्रतानि पश्चात्
तरुमूलानि गृहीभवन्ति तेषाम् ॥

Recreations seem to have been as common among the old Aryan kings as among those of the civilized nations of the present day. The effects of exercise on the constitution seem to have been equally well understood in those days as now. The king starts on a hunting expedition to give rest to his mind troubled by the cares of state. Hunting seems to have been a regular business. There were trained hunters and beaters of the wood with bugles, dogs, and tomtoms, and a captain of the hunters, to obey the commands of the sovereign.

We have already alluded to the police and this shows the function of Government for the preservation of peace. With all these indications in the drama of the high state of civilization, the Hindus then, like the ancient Greeks and Romans, were great believers in omens, charms, and other superstitions. The left eye of a lady or the right eye of a gentleman throbbing was an indication of impending good fortune, and the reverse of this indicated impending evil. The science of palmistry was fully believed. Dushyanta reads in the lines on the palms of his son, before his relation

ship to him was known, that he must be the offspring of royal parents.

Charms were equally believed then. Gautamî carries a cupful of water over which she has pronounced an incantation to besprinkle over Sakuntalâ to assuage her bodily pains,—an indication of the belief that charmed water cured certain maladies. Mârîcha, the great sage, has attached a creeper to the wrist of the prince to find out by its miraculous power his royal father. The curse, and its effects, and the alleviation of its effects by the ring, have been regularly alluded to in the course of this criticism. Sakuntalâ's mother appears in the shape of lightning and carries away her daughter.

The poet by his own genius and imagination takes us now and then to the other world. Indra is a close friend of our hero. Free communication exists between the upper and this world; and Kálidâsa, now and then, takes his heroes to the heavens for a day and brings them back with presents and garlands.

This drama gives us an insight into the revenue system of the day. The revenue was collected in the form of produce. It was a sixth part—gross or net—after subtracting the value of labour and capital is not known.

तपःषड्भागमक्षय्यं ददत्यारण्यका हि नः

The method of calculating time was by examining the position of the moon and the stars. The disciple of Kanva in the 5th Act is sent out by his master to

ascertain the time and he follows this method. More improved methods are not alluded to in the drama. These are the few points which we think it desirable to point out to the reader regarding Hindu society as depicted in the play under review.

Allusions occur to free hand painting, to the art of polishing diamonds, to Vina music, and the bringing up of well-to-do children by paid nurses. These are additional considerations that help the reader to judge of the high state of civilization during Kâlidâsa's time.

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