



## CHAPTER II.

## NALA AND DAMAYANTÍ.

HISTORY OF  
INDIA.  
PART III.

Three Hindú  
traditions  
referring to  
three different  
epochs.

THE three Hindú traditions which will now be exhibited in an English dress, are not only exquisite pictures of ancient Hindú life, but seem to refer to three distinct epochs in the History of India. Their respective titles, and the age to which they appear to belong, may be indicated as follows:—

Nala and Damayantí—the Vedic period.

Devayání and Yayáti—the Brahmanic period.

Chandrasahna and Bikya—the modern period.

“Nala and  
Damayantí”  
to be referred  
to the Vedic  
period.

The first of these stories, namely, “Nala and Damayantí,” is widely known to English readers through the metrical translation of Dr Milman.<sup>1</sup> The events seem to have occurred in the Vedic period, or that period which preceded Brahmanism; for although Bráhmans are introduced it is only to act as messengers, and the marriage rites of the happy pair are not performed by a Bráhman, but by the Raja who was the father of the bride. But it must have belonged to a late stage in the Vedic period, and at a date when the Aryans were already settled

Proofs that the  
story belongs to  
a late stage in  
the Vedic  
period.

<sup>1</sup> A free translation in blank verse by Mr Charles Bruce appeared in Fraser's Magazine for December, 1863, and January, 1864, and is perhaps even more popular than that of Dr Milman.





in Hindústan, for the hero was a Raja in Nishada or the Bhíl country, whilst the heroine was the daughter of a Raja of the Dekhan who reigned at Vidarbha, the modern Berar. Again, the evidences of civilization which are furnished by the story, combined with the geographical position of the leading actors, indicate a period long subsequent to the great war of Bhárata. It will also be remarked that the Vedic deities, who are represented as being present at the Swayamvara of Damayantí, seem to have lost their abstract nature, and appear as human beings, who pay great respect to a Bráhmaṇ sage, and are to some extent humbled by the hero of the tradition; whilst a considerable number of supernatural details have been introduced, either to disguise some usage in the original tradition which was condemned by a subsequent age, or as artificial embellishments which have been introduced in accordance with a meretricious taste which appears to have prevailed in the later era of Sanskrit literature. Indeed a wide interval appears to separate the age in which the main events of the story actually took place, from the age in which the poem itself was composed; and thus while the tradition belongs to a period when the Vedic deities were still worshipped, and the rites of marriage were performed by Rajas, the poem must have been thrown into its present form in a far later age of Brahmanism, when the worship of the Vedic deities had fallen into decay, and the Brahmanical sages were held to be equal if not superior to the gods.

HISTORY OF  
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Advance of the  
Aryans into the  
Dekhan.

Degeneration of  
the Vedic  
deities.

Supernatural  
details.

Wide interval  
between the age  
when the events  
occurred and  
the age when  
the poem was  
composed.

The leading incidents in the story of Nala and Damayantí may be thus indicated:—

Main incidents  
of the story.

1st, The Loves of Nala and Damayantí.





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2nd, The Swayamvara of Damayantí.  
3rd, The Gambling Match between Nala and Pushkara.

4th, The Exile of Nala and Damayantí.

5th, Nala's desertion of Damayantí.

6th, Adventures of Nala.

7th, Discovery of Damayantí.

8th, Discovery of Nala.

9th, Nala's Drive from Ayodhyá to Vidarbha.

10th, Damayantí recovers her husband.

11th, Nala recovers his Raj.

Story of Nala  
and Damayantí.

The story of Nala and Damayantí may now be related as follows:—

1. *The Loves of Nala and Damayantí.*

Nala, Raja of  
Nishadha or the  
Bhil country.

In ancient times there lived in Nishadha a certain Raja named Nala, and he was handsome, brave, majestic, and splendid, gifted with the choicest virtues, renowned for his skill in archery and in taming horses, of unblemished truth, admired by noble women, but loving dice exceedingly; and he was also deeply read in the Vedas, and had brought every sense and passion under control. Farther south, in the city of Vidarbha, reigned Raja Bhíma, terrible in strength, whose blooming and slender-waisted daughter Damayantí was famous amongst all the Rajas for her radiant charms and exceeding grace. And Nala, the tiger amongst Rajas, had so often heard of the exquisite loveliness of Damayantí, the pearl of maidens, that he was enamoured without having seen her; and the soul-disturbing Damayantí had, in like manner, so often been told of the godlike comeliness and virtues of the hero Nala, that she secretly desired to become his bride.

Damayantí, the  
beautiful  
daughter of  
Bhíma, Raja of  
Vidarbha or  
Berar, in the  
Dekhan.

Mutual love of  
Nala and  
Damayantí.

The swan with  
golden wings  
promises to  
induce Dama-  
yanti to think  
of no one but  
Nala.

Now on a certain day Raja Nala wandered to a grove and pondered on his deep love for Damayantí, when a flock of swans with golden plumage flew into the grove; and he caught one of the bright birds. And the bird cried out:—





“Slay me not, O gentle Raja, and I will so praise thee in the presence of Damayantí, that she shall think of no other man but thee.” So Nala set it free, and the bird of golden wing flew away with all its companions to the city of Vidarbha, and entered the garden of Raja Bhíma. And the beautiful Damayantí was sporting with her maidens in the garden, when they all beheld a flock of swans who dropped their golden plumes; and the slender-waisted damsels chased the bright birds about the garden, when suddenly a swan turned round, to Damayantí, and said in the language of men:—“O Damayantí, thou art the loveliest of maidens, and Nala is the handsomest of heroes; if the peerless wed the peerless how happy will be the union.” Then the royal maiden softly said to the bird:—“Speak the same words to Nala!” And the bird fluttered its golden wings, and flew away to Nishadha, and told all to Nala.

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The swan  
performs its  
mission.

Meantime the beautiful maiden grew pale and dejected in her father's Court at Vidarbha. She could not sleep, she often wept, she found no joy in banquets or in conversation, and she gazed upon the sky at night-time with a look of wild distraction; for her heart was wholly possessed with a deep love for Nala. So the maidens told her royal father that Damayantí was fading away into a deep melancholy. And the Raja of Vidarbha said:—“My daughter is full grown, and must be given away in marriage.” And he sent Bráhmans round the world to proclaim a Swayamvara; and all the Rajas of the earth who had heard of the divine loveliness of Damayantí, flocked to the Court of Bhíma, with all the pomp of chariots and horses, and elephants, and armies. And Bhíma welcomed them all with due courtesy and entertained them well.

Melancholy of  
Damayanti.

Raja Bhima  
proclaims a  
Swayamvara.

Assembling of  
the Rajas at  
Vidarbha.

Now at this time the holy sage Nárada ascended on high to the heaven of Indra. And Indra gave him honourable welcome, and said:—“Where, O sage, are all the Rajas, that they come not to my abode?” And Nárada replied:—“O cloud-compeller, all the Rajas and their mighty sons have gone to the Swayamvara of Damayantí, for she, the loveliest of maidens, is about to choose a husband for her-

Nárada, the  
sage, carries the  
news of the  
Swayamvara to  
Indra.





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Indra, Agni,  
Varuna, and  
Yama set off for  
the Swayam-  
vara.

The gods pre-  
vail on Nala to  
ask Damayanti  
to choose one  
of them for her  
husband.

Indra renders  
Nala invisible.

self." Then the gods were stricken as they heard of the transcendent beauty of Damayantí, and they exclaimed :— " We too will go to her Swayamvara ! " And Indra, lord of Swarga, and Agni, god of fire, and Varuna, who rules the seas, and Yama, who judges the dead, called for their celestial chariots, and drove through the air to the city of Vidarbha ; and as they approached the earth they beheld the hero Nala, as radiant as the sun, and as comely as the god of love ; and they stayed their chariots in the blue air, and said to the heroic one :— " O Nala, we pray you to do our bidding." And Nala stood with folded hands, and said :— " Whatsoever you command, that I will do." So Indra, sovereign of the gods, said to Nala :— " Go now and tell the fair daughter of Bhíma that the four immortal gods have come from heaven to woo her, and that she must choose from amongst them whom she will." But Nala replied :— " O spare me this, for I too am enamoured with the damsel, and how can I woo her for another ? " But all the gods spoke out with one accord :— " Have you not pledged yourself to do whatsoever we command ? Delay not, therefore, nor belie your word." Then Nala said :— " The palace of Bhíma is strongly guarded, and I cannot enter the presence of the maiden." But Indra replied :— " No man shall stop you, only go ! " Then Raja Nala entered the palace of Bhíma, and no man hindered him ; and he reached the inner apartments, and beheld the beautiful damsel sitting amongst her maidens ; and when the damsels saw him they sprang from their seats, and marvelled at his wondrous beauty. And Nala smiled sweetly upon Damayantí, and she with lovely eyes smiled sweetly in return, and said :— " O hero, how came you hither ? How have you escaped the guards that my father has set around us ? " Then Nala replied :— " O loveliest of damsels, my name is Nala, and I am a messenger from the gods, and through their power I have passed the gates unseen by men : Now the four gods desire to wed you, and pray you to choose one of their number to be your lord." And Damayantí bowed in reverence to the gods, and then smiled again upon Nala





and said :—"O Raja, the language of the golden-plumaged swan has kindled my soul, and I will choose no other lord but you; and if you spurn my love, I will take poison, or plunge into the water or the fire." And Nala replied :—"O beautiful maiden, how can you choose a mortal man in the presence of the bright gods? How can you refuse to be arrayed in heavenly raiment, and bright amaranthine flowers, and all the glory of the celestials? Where is the damsel who would not wed the radiant Agni, god of fire, whose mouths consume the world? Or the bright Indra, sovereign of the gods, at whose dread sceptre all the assemblies of the earth are forced to do justice and work righteousness? Or the majestic Varuna, lord of waters? Or the mighty Yama, judge over all the dead?" But Damayantí trembled at the words of Nala, and her eyes were filled with tears, and she said :—"I will pay due homage to all the gods, but you only will I choose to be my lord." And Nala went his way and told to the expectant gods all that Damayantí had said.

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INDIA.  
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Damayantí  
refuses to choose  
any one but  
Nala.  
Nala remon-  
strates.

Fidelity of  
Damayantí.

## 2. *The Swayamvara of Damayantí.*

At length the day of happy omen, the great day of the Swayamvara, dawned upon the city of Vidarbha. And all the Rajas, sick with love, passed through the glittering portals, and the court of golden columns, and entered the Hall of State, like lions entering their mountain lairs. And all the Rajas were adorned with fragrant garlands, and rich earrings of costly gems were hanging from their ears. And some had long arms, robust and vigorous as the ponderous battle-mace; whilst others were as soft and delicately rounded as a smooth serpent. With bright and flowing hair, and arched eyebrows, their faces were as radiant as the stars; and they filled the Hall of State, as the serpents fill the under world, or as tigers fill the caves in the mountains. But when Damayantí entered the hall, every eye was fixed, and every soul entranced, at her dazzling loveliness; and all the Rajas gazed upon her beauty, and were stricken with deep and passionate desire. Then the name

The day of the  
Swayamvara.  
Assembly of the  
Rajas in the  
Hall of State.

Damayantí  
enters the Hall.

Each of the  
four gods  
assumes the  
form of Nala.





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Perplexity of  
Damayanti.

Her prayer.

The gods grant  
her prayer and  
reveal them-  
selves in their  
true forms.

Damayanti  
discovers Nala  
and gives him  
the garland.

Nala's vow to  
Damayanti.

Divine gifts of  
the gods to  
Nala.

of every Raja was proclaimed aloud, and Damayanti glanced around her at the glittering crowd of suitors, and she saw in her dismay that there were five Nalas in the hall, for each of the four bright gods had taken upon himself the form of Nala. And Damayanti trembled with fear, and after a while she folded her hands in reverence to the gods, and said in sad and humble tones:—"Since I heard the language of the swan, I have chosen Nala for my lord, and have thought of no other husband: Therefore, O gods, I pray to you, that you resume your own immortal shapes and reveal Nala to me, that I may choose him for my lord in the presence of all." And the gods heard the piteous prayer of Damayanti, and they wondered at her steadfast truth and fervent love; and straightway they revealed the tokens of their godhead. Then Damayanti saw the four bright gods, and knew that they were not mortal heroes, for their feet touched not the earth, and their eyes winked not; and no perspiration hung upon their brows, nor dust upon their raiment, and their garlands were as fresh as if the flowers were just gathered. And Damayanti also saw the true Nala, for he stood before her with shadow falling to the ground, and twinkling eyes, and drooping garland; and moisture was on his brow, and dust upon his raiment; and she knew that he was Nala. Then she went in all maidenly modesty to Nala, and took the hem of his garments, and threw a wreath of radiant flowers round his neck, and thus chose him for her lord. And a sound of wild sorrow burst from all the Rajas; but the gods and sages cried aloud:—"Well done!" And Nala turned to the slender-waisted damsel, and said:—"Since, O maiden with the eye serene, you have chosen me for your husband in the presence of the gods, know that I will be your faithful consort, ever delighting in your words; and so long as my soul shall inhabit this body, I solemnly vow to be thine, and thine alone." Then the blest pair approached the gods with reverence, and the gods gave rare gifts to Nala. To him Indra gave the sight which sees the Unseen in the sacrifice, and the power to go unhindered where he pleased;





and Agni gave him the mastery over fire, and power over the three worlds; and Varuna gave him the mastery over water, and the power of obtaining fresh garlands at will; and Yama gave him a subtle taste for food and eminence in every virtue.

Then Raja Bhíma, in his joy and pride, performed the marriage rites of his beautiful daughter and her chosen lord, and in due time Raja Nala carried away his bride to his own city. Thus the tiger among Rajas obtained the pearl of maidens; and henceforth the bliss of Nala and Damayantí was equal to that of the giant-slayer Indra and his beautiful Sachí. Radiant and excellent as the sun, Nala ruled all the subjects of his Raj with a just and equal sway. He performed an Aswamedha, with many rich gifts to holy men; and Damayantí bore him two children, a handsome son named Indrasen, and a beautiful daughter named Indrasena.

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Marriage of  
Nala and  
Damayanti.

Damayanti  
bears a son and  
a daughter.

### 3. *The Gambling Match between Nala and Pushkara.*

Now when the bright gods were returning from the Swayamvara to the heaven of Indra, they met the evil spirit Kali, accompanied by Dwápara.<sup>2</sup> And Indra said to Kali:—“Whither art thou going, O Kali?” And Kali replied:—“I am going to the Swayamvara of Damayantí; for I have set my heart upon having her for my bride.” And Indra laughed and said:—“The bridal of Damayantí is ended, for in our presence she chose Raja Nala to be her lord.” Then Kali was filled with rage, and bowing with reverence to the gods, he exclaimed:—“Since she hath preferred a mortal man to the immortal gods, heavy shall be her doom.” But the four gods replied:—“It was with our consent that Damayantí chose her lord; and what maiden would not

Wrath of Kali  
at finding that  
Nala was chosen  
by Damayanti.

Mirth of Indra.

Kali's threat.

The four gods  
remonstrate  
with Kali.

<sup>2</sup> This Kali must not be identified with the black goddess Káli, who has been identified with the wife of Siva, and was apparently unknown in the Vedic period. On the other hand, the Kali of the present story is a male personification of the Kali age, or the fourth and last age through which the world is now passing, and which is presumed to be one of vice and iniquity. In like manner Dwápara is a personification of the Dwápara age, or third age of the world. These personifications do not appear to belong to the Vedic period, but are the work of a subsequent epoch. In the old Vedic times Kali may have been the demon of the dice.





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Kali plots with  
Dwápara for the  
destruction of  
Nala.

Twelve years of  
happiness.

Nala prays to  
the gods with  
unwashed feet,  
and Kali takes  
possession of  
him.

Kali brings  
about a  
gambling match  
between Nala  
and his brother  
Pushkara.

Nala's losses.

Nala's friends  
vainly remon-  
strate.

The chief men  
of the Raj in-  
terpose in vain.

Interference of  
the Council.

incline to one so virtuous as Nala? And he who has read the Vedas, and constantly adores the gods with pure offerings, and is gentle to all living creatures, and true in word and deed, he is equal to the immortal gods." Then the gods ascended on high, but Kali said to Dwápara:—"I will not stay my wrath, but henceforth I will keep watch on Nala, and you shall abide in the dice; and when the hour comes I will enter his soul and gain the mastery over him until I have cast him out of his Raj and parted him from his sweet bride." And from that hour the two evil spirits Kali and Dwápara dwelt in the palace of Nala.

Twelve years passed away, and none in all the world were so supremely blessed as the beautiful Damayantí and her husband Nala. But on a certain evening Nala failed in duty, for he prayed to the gods with feet unwashed; and Kali seized the opportunity, and straightway entered into him and possessed his inmost soul. And Nala had a brother named Pushkara, and Kali said to Pushkara:—"Go you and play at dice with Nala, and I will make you the winner of his Raj." And Pushkara challenged Nala to a game at dice, and Nala and Pushkara sat down to play in the presence of Damayantí. And they played for gold and jewels and raiment, and for chariots and horses, but Nala was worsted at every throw, for Dwápara embodied the dice, and Kali had mastered him body and soul. Then the faithful friends of Nala prayed him to throw no longer, but he was maddened with the love of play, and shut his ears to all they said. And all the chief men of the Raj assembled at the gate of the Palace to arrest the frenzy of the Raja. And the charioteer entered the Hall and said to Damayantí:—"Lo all the city are gathered together, for they fear lest some dire misfortune befall the Raja." And Damayantí was stricken with deep sorrow, and she entreated the Raja to listen to the voice of his people, but he turned away from her beautiful and tearful eyes, and answered not a word; and so the play went on, and the people returned to their houses, saying:—"Surely this gambler cannot be the Raja." And when Nala had lost all his treasures, the sorrowing





Damayantí told her nurse to summon the Council; and the Council assembled at the Palace, and Damayantí announced their presence to Nala, but he heeded not her words; and she was filled with shame, and left the Hall and went to her own rooms.

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INDIA.  
PART III.

Damayantí  
retires from the  
Hall.

Then Damayantí sent for the charioteer, and spoke to him winningly, and said:—"You know what trust my lord the Raja has ever placed in you: Go now and harness the steeds to the chariot, and take my children to my father's city, and leave them in my father's house; and then dwell there, or go wherever you will." And the charioteer went to the Council and obtained their consent; and he took the noble boy and the beautiful maiden to the city of Vidarbha, and he gave them into the charge of Raja Bhíma; and then he went his way with great sadness of heart to the city of Ayodhyá and entered the service of Raja Rituparna.<sup>3</sup>

Damayantí  
summons the  
charioteer  
Varshmeya, and  
sends her chil-  
dren to her  
father's house at  
Vidarbha.

Varshmeya takes  
service under  
Rituparna.

Meanwhile, Nala had lost all his treasures and his chariots and his horses; and he staked his Raj and the vestments which he wore, and he lost all to Pushkara. And Pushkara smiled and said:—"O Nala, you have lost your all, excepting only your wife, Damayantí: Throw once more and stake Damayantí.<sup>2</sup> At these words the heart of Nala was rent asunder, and he said not a word. And he took off all his robes and ornaments, and looked sadly upon Pushkara, and went out with but a single scanty covering, and Damayantí also had but a single covering, and she followed him slowly behind.

Raja of  
Ayodhyá.  
Nala loses his  
Raj, but refuses  
to stake his wife  
Damayantí.

Departure of  
Nala and  
Damayantí for  
the jungle.

#### 4. *The exile of Nala and Damayantí.*

Then Pushkara proclaimed throughout the city:—"Whoever shall give food or shelter to Nala shall be put to death." And for three days and three nights Nala lived on fruits and roots, and his sorrowing Rání followed behind him and did the same. Then Nala saw a flock of birds upon

Cruel proclama-  
tion of Push-  
kara.

The birds fly  
away with  
Nala's only  
covering.

<sup>3</sup> Some attempt has been made to fix the date of the story by reference to the position held by Nala and Rituparna on the respective lists of the Lunar and Solar dynasties; but the genealogies of both races have been so hopelessly garbled that no inferences of any real value can apparently be drawn from them.





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INDIA.  
PART III.

Mock Nala.

Nala entreats  
Damayanti to  
go to her  
father's house.

Damayanti  
refuses unless  
Nala will  
accompany her.

Nala refuses to  
take refuge with  
his wife's father.

Wanderings of  
Nala and  
Damayanti.  
The two fishes.

Dire extremity.

Nala tempted  
by Kali to  
abandon his  
wife in the  
jungle.

the ground, and he said within himself:—"This day we shall have food." And he threw his only garment upon the birds, but they flew into the air and carried the garment with them.

And the birds spoke in human language, and mocked Nala in his misery, and said:—"O foolish Nala, we are the dice, and we came hither to rob you of your covering, for whilst you had a single garment left, our joy was small." Then Nala was in an agony, and he said to Damayanti:—"Weep not for me, but go to the house of your father: Yonder lies the road, and it passes through woods that have abundant fruits, and on the way are many hermitages of pious sages." But Damayanti burst into tears and replied:—"O my lord, your words will break my heart: How can I leave you in this lonely wood, when you have been robbed of all? No, I will stay and soothe your weariness, for the wisest physicians say that a true wife is the best balsam in every time of sorrow: If I go to my kindred it must be with you, and we must both go together." But Nala had not the heart to take refuge in the house of his wife's father; and he said:—"I will not seek refuge in your father's Raj: Once I went there in joy and pride, but now should I appear there I should only increase my shame."

So Nala and Damayanti journeyed on together, and they made one garment suffice them. And they came to a brook, and Nala caught two fishes and laid them before his wife and went into the brook to bathe; and Damayanti in her hunger put her hand upon the fishes, but the touch of her fingers revived them like a draught of amrita, and they sprang back into the water. And when Nala returned he thought that Damayanti had eaten the fishes, but he said nothing, and so they still wandered on.

Now when both the Raja and the Rání were wearied with their toil and faint with thirst and hunger, they reached a little hut, and there they lay and slept upon the bare ground. And Damayanti was oppressed with sleep, but Nala was distraught with sorrow. And Nala awoke and thought of the Raj which he had lost, and the friends who had deserted him, and of his weary wandering in the jungle. And he grew frantic, for the evil spirit of Kali was working within





him ; and he said within his heart :—" If Damayantí remains with me she must bear certain sorrow, but if I leave her she may return to her father's house : If I go, I know not which is better for me, life or death ; but for her no one will harm a wife so devoted and so beautiful." Then Nala pondered how he should divide the single garment between them ; and he saw a sword that lay in the cabin, and he severed the garment in two, and he clothed himself with the half of the garment. Then he fled into the jungle, but came back again and beheld his wife sleeping. And he wept bitterly and said :—" My love, whom neither sun nor wind dared look upon, how will she awake ? How will she wander alone through the deep jungle, haunted by serpents and wild beasts ? May the Sun god and the god of wind protect her, though her virtue is her best guard." Then the mind of Nala was swayed to and fro, first by love and then by despair, until at last he left his wife alone in the hut, and rushed like one who is mad into the depths of the jungle.

HISTORY OF  
INDIA.  
PART III.

Severs his wife's  
garment.

His irresolution.

His flight.

### 5. *Nala's desertion of Damayantí.*

Now when the slender-waisted Damayantí awoke from her deep slumber and found herself abandoned in the jungle, she shrieked aloud in grief and pain, and ran about the wood leaping in madness ; and she sobbed very bitterly, and said :—" May that evil one who has caused this dread suffering to Nala, be smitten by a curse more fatal still." Thus she went wailing through the forest, until suddenly there came a great serpent and seized her in his grasp and coiled around her ; and she cried out in great terror, and a huntsman heard her screams, and shot an arrow at the serpent's face, and released her from her peril. Then the huntsman brought her water and food, and refreshed her ; and at his bidding she told him all her story ; but as he gazed upon her beautiful form, which was scantily covered by half a garment, a deep passion burned within him, and he whispered words of love. Then Damayantí was filled with wrath, and she cursed him in her bitterness of soul, and he fell down dead like a tree that has been stricken with lightning.

Damayantí's  
anguish.

The great  
serpent.

The huntsman.



HISTORY OF  
INDIA.  
PART III.Damayanti joins  
a caravan.Pleasant  
encampment.Terrible night  
attack of wild  
elephants.Alarm of the  
merchants.Escape of  
Damayanti.Pitiful appear-  
ance of Dama-  
yanti in the city  
of Chedi.Damayanti  
invited into the  
palace by the  
mother of the  
Raja.

Then Damayanti wandered on in quest of Nala until she met a caravan of merchants, with elephants, and camels, and chariots, and horses; and when the people saw her so beautiful and noble, and yet so pale and worn, they took compassion on her; and they told her they were going to the city of Chedi. And Damayanti went with the caravan, and when it was evening they came to a pleasant lake fragrant with lotos flowers, and they pitched their tents and encamped there. But at midnight there was a great cry, for a horde of wild elephants of the jungle had scented the tame elephants of the caravan, and rushed down upon the encampment, like mountain-tops rolling down to the valley; and they trampled upon the sleeping people, and crushed many with their heavy tread, and gored others with their fierce tusks. And the merchants shrieked aloud with terror, and some began to fly, and others stood gasping blind with sleep; whilst many struck each other down, or stumbled over the rough ground, or climbed the trees, or hid themselves in the holes in the earth. And Damayanti awoke amidst the dreadful turmoil; and some said that she was a woman of evil omen, and had worked all the mischief; and she was filled with shame and fear, and fled once again into the depths of the jungle.

After many days Damayanti entered the city of Chedi, and she was famished and distressed and broken down with sorrow. And she was clad in only half a garment, and her long hair was hanging dishevelled over her shoulders, and her gaze was wild and distracted, and her face was emaciated from long fasting. And the people of the city thought that she was mad, and a crowd of boys followed her and mocked her. And as she approached the gate of the palace, the mother of the Raja beheld her from the terrace, and sent her waiting woman to bring the wanderer in; and Damayanti entered the palace and told how her husband was a Raja, who had lost his all by dice, and how she had followed him into exile through the greatness of her love, but how he had left her in the jungle with only half a garment. And the eyes of Damayanti were filled with tears,





and the gracious lady bade her take up her abode in the palace, whilst the servants of the household went abroad in search of Nala. And Damayantí said to the mother of the Raja :—"O mother of heroes, I will dwell with you, but I will not eat the victuals left by others, nor wash the feet of others, nor converse with strange men." And the mother of the Raja agreed, and called her daughter Sunandá, and bade her take Damayantí to be her friend. And Damayantí dwelt in the palace many days as friend and companion of the Princess Sunandá.

HISTORY OF  
INDIA.  
PART III.

Takes service  
under condi-  
tions.

Becomes com-  
panion to the  
Princess  
Sunandá.

### 6. *Adventures of Nala.*

Now when Raja Nala left Damayantí in the hut, he beheld a great fire in the forest, and he heard a voice crying :—"Hasten, Nala, and come hither!" And Nala remembered that on his bridal day the god Agni had given him power over fire; and he plunged into the bright flame, and saw the Raja of Serpents coiled up in a ring. And the Serpent said :—"I deceived the sage Nárada, and he has cursed me that fire should surround me until you save me." And the Serpent shrank to the size of a finger, and Nala lifted him up and carried him out of the fire. Then the Serpent bit Nala, and immediately the form of Nala was changed into that of a deformed dwarf, so that no man could know him. And the Serpent said to Nala :—"My poison shall work on the evil spirit who has entered your soul, until he leaves you free: Take now the name of Váhuka and enter the service of Rituparna, Raja of Ayodhyá; and you shall teach him the art of taming horses, and he shall teach you all the secrets of the dice: Therefore, sorrow no more, O Nala, for you shall see again your wife, your children, and your Raj; and when you would again resume your proper form, put on this change of raiment and think of me." So saying, the Serpent gave a change of raiment to Nala, and vanished away from his sight.

Nala rescues a  
serpent from a  
circle of fire.

Nala's form  
changed by the  
serpent.

Then Nala journeyed on to the city of Ayodhyá, and offered his services to Raja Rituparna, both as a tamer of horses, and as skilled in the art of cooking viands; and

Nala takes  
service with  
Rituparna,  
Raja of  
Ayodhyá, under  
the name of  
Váhuka.





HISTORY OF  
INDIA.  
PART III.

Meets his old  
charioteer  
Várshneya.

Nala's evening  
song.

the Raja engaged him, and bade him take heed that the horses were swift of foot; and he gave him Várshneya and Jívala to be his adjutants. Now Várshneya had been charioteer to Nala, and had driven his children to the city of Vidarbha; but Nala's form had been changed by the Serpent, and Várshneya knew him not. And every evening Nala used to sing this single verse:—

“Where is she whom I left in the jungle to suffer hunger, thirst, and weariness?

“Does she think of me, her foolish lord, or does she sit in the presence of another?”

Nala's explana-  
tion.

And Jívala said to Nala:—“Who is she, O Váhuka, for whom you are grieving?” And Nala answered:—“A man there was bereft of sense, who had a faithful wife, but in his foolishness he forsook her in the wilderness; and ever since that time the man wanders to and fro in despair, for whether she lives or no he cannot say!”

### 7. *Discovery of Damayantí.*

Raja Bhíma  
sends Bráhmans  
in search of  
Damayantí.

Meantime, Raja Bhíma of Vidarbha had sent holy Bráhmans to every land in quest of his daughter Damayantí and her husband Nala; and the joyful Bráhmans, hoping for rich rewards, went through every city and every clime, but nowhere could they find a trace of those they sought. At length a certain Bráhman, whose name was Sudeva, went to the pleasant city of Chedi, and there he saw the slender-waisted Damayantí, standing in the palace by the side of the Princess Sunandá; and her beauty was dim, and seemed like the sunlight struggling through a cloud, yet he failed not to see that she was the daughter of Raja Bhíma. And the Bráhman spoke to her, saying:—“O daughter of Bhíma, your father has sent me to seek for you; and both he and your mother and your brethren are all well; and so too are your little ones, who are dwelling in your father's palace.” And Damayantí remembered Sudeva, and made inquiry about all her friends. And the mother of the Raja came in and saw her talking to the

Damayantí  
discovered by  
Sudeva the  
Bráhman.





Bráhmaṇ; and presently she took the Bráhmaṇ aside, and said:—"Who is this lady to whom you have spoken? Who is her father, and who is her husband?" Then the Bráhmaṇ told all to the mother of the Raja, and he said:—"I knew she was the daughter of Bhíma, because of her peerless beauty; but from her birth a lovely beauty mark was to be seen between her eyebrows, and now it has passed away." When the Princess Sunandá heard the words of the Bráhmaṇ, she took water and washed away the traces of tears that were between the eyes of Damayantí, and the beauty mark was present to the eyes of all. Then the mother of the Raja exclaimed to Damayantí:—"You are the daughter of my sister: I know you by the mark, for I myself was present at your birth: Lo, all I have is yours." And Damayantí bowed to her mother's sister, and prayed that she might be sent to her two children at Vidarbha. And the palanquin was prepared, and a guard was ordered, and Damayantí was carried to her father's palace at Vidarbha. And when she saw her children her heart was filled with joy, and she passed the night in sweet slumber; but in the morning she went to her mother, and softly said:—"O mother, if my life is dear to you, I pray you to do all you can to bring back Nala." And her mother went to Bhíma and said:—"Your daughter is mourning for her husband Nala."

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INDIA.  
PART III.

Identified by a mole as the niece of the mother of the Raja of Chedi.

Damayantí returns to her father's house at Vidarbha.

Her joy at seeing her children.

Her anxiety for Nala.

Then Raja Bhíma sent the Bráhmaṇs once again to every land in search of Nala; and before the Bráhmaṇs departed, Damayantí sent for them, and entreated them to cry aloud these words in every public place:—"Whither didst thou go, O gambler, who severed thy wife's garment, and left her in the lonely forest, where she still sits sorrowing for thee?" So the Bráhmaṇs went forth to all lands, and they searched everywhere in crowded cities and quiet villages, and in the hermitages of holy men, and everywhere they repeated aloud the words of Damayantí, but no man took heed of the question respecting Nala.

Bráhmaṇs sent to search for Nala.

Damayantí's directions to the Bráhmaṇs.

### 8. *Discovery of Nala.*

Now after a while a certain Bráhmaṇ went to the great

Groaning of Nala on hearing the proclamation of the Bráhmaṇs.





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INDIA,  
PART III.

Response of  
Nala to the  
proclamation.

Damayanti  
suspects that  
she has found  
Nala.

Sudeva directed  
to inform Rituparna that  
Damayanti was  
about to celebrate a second  
Swayamvara.

Desire of Raja  
Rituparna to be  
present at the  
second Swayam-  
vara.

Rituparna  
consults Nala.

city of Ayodhyá, where reigned Raja Rituparna, and where Nala was dwelling in the guise of a charioteer and under the name of Váhuka. And the Bráhmaṇ cried aloud the question of Damayantí in all the streets and ways and market-places in the city, but no man heeded him. So he took leave of the Raja and prepared to depart, when Váhuka came to him and groaned in anguish and wept bitterly, and said :—“Even in the extremity of misery a noble woman is mistress of herself; and even when abandoned by her husband, she will not give her soul to anger.” At these words the Bráhmaṇ left the city of Ayodhyá with all speed, and hastened to the city of Vidarbha, and told Damayantí all that Váhuka had said; and the eyes of Damayantí overflowed with tears, for she thought that she had found Nala. Then Damayantí went to her mother, and said :—“O mother, I must send a message to the city of Ayodhyá which my father Bhíma must not hear; and I will deliver it in your presence to Sudeva, that best of Bráhmaṇs who found me in the city of Chedi; and as he brought your daughter to her father’s house, so may he swiftly bring my royal husband from the city of Ayodhyá.” So she sent for Sudeva, and requested him in the presence of her mother to go to the city of Ayodhyá, and to seek out Raja Rituparna, and say to him as if by chance :—“Damayantí, daughter of Raja Bhíma, is about to choose a second husband, and all the Rajas and sons of Rajas are hastening to Vidarbha: If you would be there you must make good speed, for to-morrow is the appointed day, and at sunrise she makes her choice, for Raja Nala cannot be found, and no man knows whether he be alive or dead.”

And Sudeva went to the city of Ayodhyá and performed the bidding of Damayantí; and when Rituparna heard the tidings that Damayantí was about to choose another husband, his heart burned to be there, but the way was far.<sup>4</sup> Then Rituparna went to Váhuka, his charioteer, and spoke

<sup>4</sup> The distance from the city of Ayodhyá on the river Goomtí, to that of Vidarbha on the river Taptí, must have been about five hundred miles as the crow flies.





to him with winning words, like one that asks a favour, and said :—“On the morrow the daughter of Bhíma will choose a second husband ; I too would seek to win her, but the city of Vidarbha is afar off : Say then if you have horses that can reach it in a single day.” Then the heart of Váhuka was smitten with anguish, and he wondered that the holy Damayantí should be driven to a deed so unholy, and he thought within himself that he would see if the tidings were true. So he folded his hands in reverence to the Raja, and said :—“I promise in a single day to reach the city of Vidarbha.” And he went to the stables of the Raja, and pondered long over the horses ; and he chose four that were very slender, but fleet and powerful for the road, and they had broad nostrils and large jaws ; and he harnessed them to the chariot of the Raja. But when Rituparna saw the slenderness of the coursers, he cried out :—“What steeds be these ? Have they strength and wind for such a journey ?” And Váhuka replied :—“These horses will not fail to carry you to Vidarbha ; but if you desire others, tell me which you will have, and I will harness them.” But the Raja said :—“You know the horses best, and may harness what you will.”

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Anguish of  
Nala.

Nala engages to  
drive from  
Ayodhya to  
Vidarbha in a  
single day.  
Choice of  
horses.

### 9. *Nala's drive from Ayodhyá to Vidarbha.*

Now when the chariot was ready, Raja Rituparna took his seat, and commanded Várshneya to ascend likewise, whilst Váhuka drove. Then the fiery horses began to prance and paw the air, but Váhuka gathered up the reins, and cried out to the horses with a soothing voice, and they sprang into the air as if they would unseat their driver, and then tore along the ground as swift as the wind. And the riders were well nigh blinded with the speed ; but the Raja marvelled and rejoiced greatly at the driving of Váhuka ; and Várshneya said within himself, as he felt the rattling of the chariot and beheld the driving of Váhuka :—“Either this Váhuka must be the charioteer of Indra, or else he is my old master, Raja Nala.”<sup>5</sup>

The chariot and  
horses set out  
for Ayodhya.

Marvellous  
driving of Nala.

<sup>5</sup> The description of the driving of Nala might be compared with that of the



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INDIA.  
PART III.Speed of the  
horses.The Raja's  
mantle.Skill of the  
Raja in the  
calculation of  
numbers.Nala counts the  
leaves and  
berries on a  
tree.The Raja  
teaches Nala  
the secrets of  
dice in return  
for the secrets of  
horsemanship.Nala freed from  
Kali.Approach to the  
city of Vidarb-  
ha.Damayantí  
recognizes the  
driving.

Thus the chariot flew along, like a bird in the air, through the deep forests, and over the rivers and mountains and broad lakes. And the Raja dropped his mantle and prayed Nala to halt a moment and pick it up ; but Nala said:—"The mantle is miles behind, and we cannot return to recover it." And they passed a certain tree, and the Raja said to Nala:—"Mark now my skill in numbers, for I know the secrets of dice and the rules of calculation : On those two branches hang fifty millions of leaves, and two thousand and ninety-five berries." And Nala descended the chariot to count the leaves and berries ; and whilst the Raja cried out that he could not wait, Nala persisted ; and after a while Nala found that the numbering of the Raja was true to a single leaf. And Nala said:—"O Raja, teach me this skill of yours, and you shall learn from me all the secrets that I know in horsemanship." And the Raja did so, and when Nala knew the secret of the dice, the evil spirit Kali went forth out of him, and Kali vomited the poison of the serpent that was burning within him. And Nala would have cursed Kali, but he fled away and entered a tree, and men ever afterwards gave an evil name to that tree. Thus Nala was released from all his sufferings, but still he took not his own form of Nala, but remained in that of Váhuka the charioteer.

Now when it was near to the setting of the sun, the chariot approached the city of Vidarbha, and the heart of Nala beat faster and faster ; and when they reached the city gates the watchmen on the walls proclaimed the coming of Raja Rituparna ; and the rushing of the horses and rolling of the chariot-wheels were like the thunder which heralds in the coming rain ; and the peacocks on the palace walls raised their necks and clamoured, and the elephants in the stables roared tumultuously. And the heart of Damayantí thrilled with delight as she heard the old familiar sound of her husband's driving ; and she said :—"Unless Nala comes

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driving of Jehu. "The driving is like the driving of Jehu, the son of Nimshi, for he driveth furiously." 2 Kings ix. 20.





this day, and I feel the gentle pressure of his arms, I will no longer live, but will perish by the fire."

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### 10. *Damayantí recovers her husband.*

Then Damayantí ascended to the terrace on the roof of the palace, and looked down into the middle court; and she saw Raja Rituparna, and her old charioteer Várshneya, and the dwarfish and deformed Váhuka; and she beheld her father Bhíma receive Rituparna with all courtesy, although amazed at the suddenness of his coming; and she remembered Várshneya, and thought that he had learned to drive furiously like Nala; for she knew not Váhuka because of his altered form. But still her heart thrilled and she pondered deeply, for she remembered what Váhuka had said to the Bráhmaṇ; and she called her fair-haired handmaiden named Kesiní, and said to her:—"Go, my little maid, and speak to that chariot-driver who is short in stature, and find out who he is; and do you repeat to him the message which was brought to me by the Bráhmaṇ, and tell me what he says." So whilst Damayantí watched from the terrace, the blameless little maiden went into the middle court to speak to Nala.

Damayanti fails  
to recognize him  
as Váhuka.

Sends her maid  
Kesini to  
Váhuka.

Meantime, Nala had taken the chariot to the stall, and after he had tended to his horses, he mounted the chariot and sat there alone. And the fair-haired Kesiní went to him and said:—"I salute you, O charioteer, and pray you to hear the message of my mistress Damayantí. She desires to know whence you came and wherefore you have come?" Nala answered:—"When my master, the Raja, heard that Damayantí would wed again, and would choose another husband on the morrow, he bade me drive him hither with all speed; and, lo, we have come this day all the way from the city of Ayodhyá." Then Kesiní said:—"And who is that other charioteer who came with you?" Nala answered:—"That is the renowned Várshneya, who was once the charioteer of Nala; and when his Raja went into exile he took service with Rituparna; and I

First interview  
between Kesini  
and Nala.

Kesini's ques-  
tions and Nala's  
replies.





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Kesini ques-  
tions Nala  
respecting the  
reply he had  
given to the  
Bráhmaṇ.

Anguish of  
Nala.

Nala repeats his  
reply.

Kesini returns  
to Damayanti.

Damayanti  
sends Kesini to  
watch Nala.

Kesini perceives  
the divine  
powers of Nala.

Damayanti  
sends for a  
portion of the  
meat which  
Nala had  
cooked.

also serve Rituparna, for I am his charioteer, and the chief of all his cooks." And Kesiní said further :—" Does Várshneya know aught of Nala? And for yourself, how came you to know the story of Nala?" Nala answered :—" It was Várshneya who brought the children of Nala to this city, and then he went his way and heard no more of his old master." And Kesiní said still further :—" The Bráhmaṇ that lately went to the city of Ayodhyá was com-  
manded by my mistress to cry aloud in every place :—" Whither didst thou go, O gambler, who severed thy wife's garment, and left her in the lonely forest, where she still sits sorrowing for thee?" Now it was you who gave the Bráhmaṇ his answer back; so I pray you to repeat that answer again, for my mistress desires to hear it." At these words of the blameless little maiden the heart of Nala was wrung with a deep sorrow, and his eyes overflowed with tears, and with a voice half choking from weeping, he thus repeated his reply :—" Even in the extremity of misery a noble woman is mistress of herself; and even when abandoned by her husband, she will not give her soul to anger." And Nala wept afresh, and the maid went back to Damayanti, and told her all that Váhuka had said, and described to her the bitterness of his sorrow.

Then Damayanti was still heavy at heart, wondering whether the charioteer could possibly be Nala; and she said :—" Go again, O Kesiní, and watch this man, and observe all that he does, and see that no fire or water be given to him; and whatsoever he does, be it human or divine, come back and tell to me." And Kesiní went out and watched Nala, and presently she returned and said :—" O Damayanti, never before did I behold a man so god-like; for if he approaches a low portal he never bows his head, but the portal rises above him; and when he prepared to dress the victuals for his master, the vessels were filled with water directly he looked at them; and when he had washed the meat he held some blades of grass towards the setting sun, and they blazed with fire of their own accord." And Damayanti remembered the gifts which the gods had





given to Nala on his marriage-day, and she said with a gentle voice:—"Go again, Kesiní, and bring me some of the meat that the charioteer is cooking." So the little maiden went into the kitchen and brought some of the food to Damayantí; and Damayantí tasted it, and cried aloud:—"The charioteer is Nala!" And her heart was stirred with vehement emotion, and she directed her maid to carry her two children to the charioteer. And when Nala beheld his son and daughter, as beautiful as the children of the gods, he wound his arms around them, and pressed them to his bosom, and burst into a flood of tears; and he said to Kesiní:—"O blameless maiden, the children are so like my own, that I have been compelled to weep: But go now, beautiful girl, for we are guests and strangers, and peradventure people will see that you are much with me, and may therefore suspect evil."

Damayanti  
sends her  
children to  
Nala.  
Emotion of  
Nala.

When Damayantí heard from her handmaid of the deep affliction of the charioteer, she was seized with a deep longing to behold Nala, and she sent Kesiní to her mother, saying:—"We have watched the charioteer most closely, and we suspect him to be Nala, only that his form is changed: I pray you, therefore, either to permit him to be brought to you, or give me leave to have him brought to me, with or without the knowledge of my father." So the mother of Damayantí told to Bhíma all the secret counsel of his daughter, and the Raja permitted Damayantí to summon the charioteer, and to receive him in her own chamber.

Damayanti  
permitted to  
receive the  
charioteer in her  
own room.

Then Damayantí sent for Nala, and as she saw him she trembled greatly, and her hair was dishevelled about her shoulders, and she was arrayed in a mantle of scarlet; and the eyes of both Nala and Damayantí overflowed with tears. And Damayantí was almost overcome by her strong emotion, and she said:—"O Váhuka, did you ever know an upright and noble man who abandoned his sleeping wife in a wood? Who was he who thus forsook a beloved and blameless wife, who but Raja Nala? He who was chosen by me, and for whom I rejected the gods! He left me, who had borne him children; me, whose hand he had clasped in the presence of

Damayanti  
receives Nala in  
the garb of a  
widow.

Her question.





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Nala's reply.

the immortal gods; me, to whom he had plighted his faith before the nuptial fire;—where is that promise now?"

And Nala gazed upon his long-lost wife like one in a dream, and he said:—"I lost my Raj by the dice, but the evil was wrought by Kali; I forsook you in the jungle, but the guilty deed was the work of Kali: Long time has Kali dwelt within me, but now he is subdued and gone, and for thy sake I made haste to come hither: But how may a high-born woman choose a second husband? Yet heralds are proclaiming throughout the world that the daughter of Bhíma will celebrate a second Swayamvara."

Damayantí's  
appeal to the  
three gods,  
Váyu, Súrya,  
and Soma.

At these last words Damayantí trembled and said:—"Do not suspect me of such shameless guilt! The Bráhmans proclaimed a second Swayamvara only to find thee, and to bring thee here: I call on the all-seeing Wind, the Sun, the Moon, who are the three gods that govern the three

Voice of Váyu.

worlds, to attest the truth of what I say." Then the voice of the Wind was heard in the air: "Nala! she hath neither done nor thought evil, but for three long years hath treasured up her virtue in all its fulness: The second Swayamvara was but a plot to recover thee: Thou hast met with the daughter of Bhíma, and the daughter of Bhíma has met with thee: Take thy own wife to thy bosom!"

The reconcilia-  
tion.

Even as the Wind was speaking the flowers fell in showers from heaven, and the gods sounded sweet music; and every doubt of the blameless Damayantí passed away from the mind of Nala, and he threw off his disguise and put on the garments that the Serpent had given to him, and at once resumed his proper form as Raja Nala. And Damayantí shrieked aloud and embraced her husband; and Nala, radiant as of old, clasped her to his heart, and the children were brought in, and the night passed away in the fulness of joy.

### 11. *Nala recovers his Raj.*

Rejoicings in  
Vidarbha.

And when the white-robed dawn was awakening a sleeping world, the sound of rejoicing ran through the city of Vidarbha. In every street the people exulted in the safe





return of Raja Nala, and adorned their houses with banners and garlands, and hung chains of flowers from door to door, and strewed the roadways with leaves and blossoms. And all was gladness in the palace at Vidarbha, for Raja Bhíma was transported with joy when he beheld the long-lost husband of his beloved daughter; and Raja Rituparna was filled with wonder and delight when he knew that his fiercely driving charioteer was no other than Raja Nala. Then they took counsel together how they might compel the evil-minded Pushkara to restore the Raj to his elder brother. And Nala had learned the whole art of throwing dice from his old master Raja Rituparna, and he saw how Pushkara had won the Raj, and resolved to win it back in like manner. So when one month had passed away and Nala was perfect in the game, he set off to Nishadha, with elephants and horses and chariots, and challenged his brother Pushkara to another throw, in which he would stake Damayantí against the Raj; and the wicked Pushkara eagerly agreed, and exulted in the certainty of winning the wife of Nala. But the throw was against Pushkara, and thus Nala won back his Raj and all his treasure; but when Pushkara humbled himself before him, Nala forgave him all, and dismissed him with many gifts to his own city. Then Nala returned to Vidarbha and brought away his beautiful Damayantí; and henceforth he reigned at Nishadha, as Indra reigns in heaven, and performed every holy rite in honour of the gods, with all the munificence of a royal devotee.

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Nala recovers  
his Raj from  
Pushkara.

Happy reign of  
Nala.

The foregoing story of Nala and Damayantí is worthy of consideration on two grounds. In the first place, it furnishes abundant evidence that the events which form the groundwork of the tradition, and which have already been referred to the Vedic age, must have long preceded the age in which the poem was composed; and thus, as will presently be seen, it throws an extraordinary light upon the civilization

Review of the  
foregoing tradi-  
tion of Nala  
and Dama-  
yanti.





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of two different eras, which have been distinguished as the Vedic and Brahmanic periods. In the second place, it exhibits some of the most graphic pictures of Hindú life and manners which are to be found in Hindú literature, whilst it displays a knowledge of the human heart and an appreciation of woman's devotion, which stamps it as the production of a genuine bard.

Conflict of ideas  
indicative of  
two different  
eras.

Opposition of  
heroic and re-  
ligious ideas in  
the character of  
Nala.

As regards the light which the story throws upon two different eras, it may be remarked that there is throughout a conflict of ideas, especially as regards the character of the ancient Rajas, the social intercourse which prevailed between the two sexes, and the custom of widows re-marrying, which can only be referred to two different ages corresponding to Vedic and Brahmanic times. Thus the character of Nala as delineated at the opening of the story indicates such an opposition of heroic and religious ideas, that it is impossible to conceive of them both as existing in the same individual. It is easy to imagine a Kshatriya hero as a great archer, skilful in taming horses, beloved of women, and fond of gambling; but it is difficult to believe that such a hero would be deeply read in the Vedas, and it is impossible to reconcile the existence of a strong passion for gambling with the statement that the gambler had all his passions under perfect control. Moreover, being beloved of women may have been the characteristic of a hero of the old days of Aryan chivalry, but it would not be regarded as a virtue in Brahmanic times, when women were supposed to lead a life of seclusion, and were treated as entirely subservient to the other sex, and given in marriage without the slightest reference to the state of their





affections. This point of view is still more plainly illustrated by the evident freedom of intercourse which prevailed between the sexes in the Vedic period, and the efforts of the narrator to disguise this freedom by the interpolation of detail which may be fairly regarded as supernatural. Thus there is the plain statement that Nala and Damayantí were deeply in love with each other; and from this statement only one inference can be drawn, namely, that they had seen each other, and consequently had been inspired with a mutual affection. Such an idea forms indeed the very essence of the Swayamvara, but it would scarcely be relished in a later age when women were kept in the inner apartments, and were never seen by men until the day of their betrothal. Accordingly, the Hindú bard has endeavoured to veil this implied freedom of intercourse by intimating that they had fallen in love with each other without having seen each other; and that they carried on an amatory correspondence by means of birds with golden plumage, who were gifted with a power of speech far beyond the mere imitative faculty of parrots, and corresponding in every respect to the intellectual faculty as exercised by human beings. Thus, whilst it is possible to believe that the interest of a youth or maiden may be awakened by a description of a beautiful damsel or a handsome hero, it is impossible to believe that the deep affection of the love-sick Damayantí for the gallant Nala could have existed without a sight of the beloved object; and it is still more impossible to believe that the episode of the speaking birds is anything more than a pretty fable introduced by the Hindú bard. Again, it is distinctly intimated that

HISTORY OF  
INDIA.  
PART III.

Freedom of intercourse which prevailed in the Vedic period veiled by the introduction of supernatural details.

Incident of Nala making his way to the inner apartments disguised by the incident of the spell.

*Cf. Qui ranguam visae flagrabat amore felleo.*



HISTORY OF  
INDIA.  
PART III.

The second  
Swayamvara op-  
posed to Brah-  
manical ideas.

Conception of  
an avenging Ne-  
mesis.

Gambling not  
regarded as a  
vice.

immediately before the Swayamvara the hero made his way into the presence of Damayantí, on which occasion the royal maiden pledged her troth to Nala, by promising to choose no other husband. Here again the prudish bard appears to be shocked, not at the interview itself, but at the possibility of such an interview taking place in the inner apartments. Accordingly, the incident is disguised by a story of a power to pass where he pleased without being hindered, which is said to have been granted to Nala by the god Indra, and which, like the story of the birds, may be safely rejected as a mere creation of the imagination. Again, the sequel turns upon a plot which was diametrically opposed to later ideas. Damayantí secures the presence of her long-lost husband at her father's city, by pretending that she was about to choose a second husband; an idea which appears so perfectly in accordance with the usages of the Vedic period, that the Raja of Ayodhya does not doubt the rumour for a moment; but, at the same time, was so foreign to the ideas of the Bráhmans, that the poet duly represents a second marriage as something unholy. Indeed an insinuation in the present day of the possibility of a second marriage, would be regarded as the deepest insult which could possibly be inflicted upon the father of the widow.

The main purpose of the story seems to be to illustrate that conception of an avenging Nemesis which was undoubtedly familiar to the ancient bards. The ruin of Nala was brought about by an evil spirit named Kali, a personification of the Kali age, who envied his excess of happiness, and suddenly reduced him to the extremest misery. As regards the gambling, it is curious to remark that





whilst the progress of the match and the evils of dice are delineated with a master hand, gambling itself is not held up to reprobation. On the contrary, whilst Nala loses his Raj by the dice, he recovers it by the same means, and even deliberately perfects himself in dice-throwing for the purpose of effecting this object.

HISTORY OF  
INDIA.  
PART III.

The pictures which are presented in succession to the eye are calculated to impart a vivid conception of the civilization which prevailed in ancient times. The damsels chasing the birds in the royal garden, the melancholy of the love-sick maiden, and the flocking of the Rajas to the Swayamvara, are all told with considerable power. The description of the Swayamvara is unique, and contains none of those rude incidents which characterize the Swayamvara of Draupadī, and which must be referred to a rude and patriarchal age. On the other hand, Damayantī appears throughout as a maiden of high rank and blood; and whilst she is invested with the right of choice, and exhibits an undisguised preference for one particular hero, yet her maidenly modesty is preserved with rare delicacy, and even the public expression of her affection in no way militates against her conduct, as a pure, loving, and unsophisticated girl. The picture of the gambling match is equally sensational, though far less coarse and barbarous than the gambling match of Yudhishthira. The interest does not turn upon such a rude scene as that which transpired in the gambling booth of the Kauravas, and in which a matron was rudely handled by a successful gamester. Indeed, in the present instance, the interest of the scene turns upon the alarm of the Council and the people;

Graphic pictures in the story.

Damayanti and her maidens.

The Swayamvara of Damayanti compared with that of Draupadi.

The gambling match of Nala compared with that of Yudhishthira.





HISTORY OF  
INDIA.  
PART III.

The wife's devo-  
tion.

Episode of the  
birds.

Episode of the  
fishes.

Scene in the  
hut.

Night scene of  
the horde of  
wild elephants  
trampling down  
the caravan.

Palace life.

the convulsive efforts of the terrified wife to arrest her husband in his frantic play ; and the quiet agony with which she sends her children to her father's house. Then, again, the devotion of Damayanti to her ruined husband, and her refusal to leave him in the jungle, are depicted with an appreciation of woman's love, and a truthfulness to human nature, which are the essence of real poetry. The incident of Nala's single garment being carried away by the birds is perhaps too artificial to awaken the sympathies of a European reader, but the episode of the fishes is touching to the last degree. So, too, is the scene of the pair spending the night in a hut ;—the wife fallen into a heavy slumber through toil and privation ; the husband sleepless from remorse, and maddened with the sight of the being whom his folly has reduced to such sore extremity, until he hesitates whether to stay or go ; and, finally, the horror of Damayanti on awaking and finding that her husband has abandoned her, and that she is alone in the jungle. The story of the serpent and the huntsman, again, can scarcely perhaps be realized by the European to the same extent as it is by the Hindú ; but the terrible night scene in which a horde of wild elephants rush through the encampment of a caravan, trampling and goring to death all that comes in their way, can scarcely fail to inspire every reader with awe and terror. The pictures of palace life are equally real. The old Rání beholding from the terrace of the palace at Chedi a mad woman followed by a crowd of boys ; the rapid driving of Nala into the city of Vidarbha ; the noise of the peacocks and elephants ; the entertainment of one Raja by another without any question as to





the reason of the visit ; are scenes which evidently belong to an age of Hindú civilization. But the beautiful description of the interview between Nala and Damayantí, the final reconciliation of the husband and the wife, and the bringing in of the children, exhibit the workings of the human heart with a power and truthfulness which cannot fail to awaken a universal sympathy in every age or clime, in which husbands may be temporarily separated from their wives, and the children are introduced as forming the bond of union.

HISTORY OF  
INDIA.  
PART III.

Exquisite description of the interview between Nala and Damayantí.





## CHAPTER III.

## LEGENDS OF DEVAYÁNÍ.

HISTORY OF  
INDIA.  
PART III.

Character of  
Devayáni, a con-  
trast to that of  
Damayanti.

Devayáni's  
father a type of  
the modern  
Brahman pre-  
ceptor.

THE story of the love adventures of Devayáni, the daughter of a Bráhmaṇ priest named Sukra, represents a new phase both in human character and Hindú history. The heroine Devayáni furnishes a striking contrast to the modest, gentle, and devoted Damayanti, for she is a self-willed and vindictive girl, who prides herself upon being the daughter of a Bráhmaṇ priest, and who occasionally meets with some mortifying rebuffs, for which she seeks to gain a pitiful revenge. The father of the morose young damsel is a fair type of the Bráhmaṇ priests of both ancient and modern times, who occasionally keep a village or a tribe in strict subordination, by preying upon their superstitious fears, and arrogating to themselves the power of bringing rain from heaven, or healing diseases, or securing victory in battle, or averting any of the thousand ills to which flesh is heir. In the first instance Devayáni entertains an unrequited affection for her father's pupil; and on finding that her advances are rejected she exhibits that sourness of disposition which subsequently becomes a marked feature in her character; and which leads to her engaging in a girlish quarrel





with the daughter of the Raja as to their respective ranks, which is carried on with considerable spirit, and terminates in an unexpected and amusing manner.

HISTORY OF  
INDIA.  
PART III.

The period in which the events seem to have transpired may be easily inferred from the surrounding circumstances. The story contains no satisfactory traces of the Vedic age, and evidently belongs to an early period in the Brahmanic age; inasmuch as the interest turns first upon the Brahmanical rule that a pupil is prohibited from marrying the daughter of his preceptor; and secondly, upon a primitive assertion of Brahmanical supremacy over a superstitious and barbarous tribe. There is one remarkable feature in the story which is of some historical importance. It will be seen that Sukra, the father of Devayání, was not the priest and preceptor of a tribe of Aryans, or Devatás, but of a tribe of Daityas; and the Daityas were the dark-complexioned aborigines who are generally represented as the enemies of the Aryans. From this circumstance it may be inferred that the Bráhmans were not originally a tribe or nationality, but a professional class of priests who were as ready to officiate for one race as for another, for the Turanian aborigines of the country as well as for the Aryan invaders. The same circumstance also throws some light upon the means by which the Bráhman missionaries, who made their way into the territories of the aborigines, established their ascendancy over the rude and barbarous tribes who appear in the Rig-Veda as the enemies of the Aryans.

The story to be referred to the Brahmanic age.

The Bráhmans a professional class officiating for both Aryans and aborigines.

The legends respecting Devayání may now be related as follows:—





HISTORY OF  
INDIA.  
PART III.

Sukra, priest of  
the Daityas.

Vrihaspati,  
priest of the  
Devatás.

Love passages  
between Kanju,  
the pupil of Su-  
kra, and Deva-  
yáni, the daugh-  
ter of Sukra.

Sukra delivers  
his pupil from  
the wrath of the  
Daityas.

Kanju prepares  
to return to his  
father's house.

1. *Refusal of Kanju to marry Devayáni.*

In days of old when the Daityas and Devatás were at war for the government of the world, Sukra was the priest and preceptor of the Daityas, and Vrihaspatí was the priest and preceptor of the Devatás; and Kanju, the son of Vrihaspatí, became a pupil in the house of Sukra.

Now Sukra had a daughter named Devayáni; and she and Kanju passed their time very pleasantly together; for both were very young, and Kanju always revered Devayáni as though she were his own sister, and rendered her every service as though he were her brother. Sometimes she sang to him, and sometimes he sang to her, or he would relate to her famous stories of ancient times; and Devayáni began to feel a deep love for her father's pupil, and could never be happy save in the presence of Kanju. But all this while the Daityas were wroth that their priest Sukra should teach all his spells and mantras to the son of the priest of their enemy. One day when Kanju was taking his tutor's cows to pasture, the Daityas carried him off; and Devayáni seeing the cows return home without him, immediately told her father, who thereupon compelled the Daityas to restore the youth. After this when Kanju had gone into the jungle to gather flowers for the sacrifice, the Daityas again found him and carried him away; and Devayáni went to her father, and acquainted him with what the Daityas had done, but Sukra refused to interfere, saying:—"I cannot be always compelling the Daityas to restore Kanju." Then Devayáni urgently entreated her father, and said:—"O father, this youth is the son of Vrihaspatí and the grandson of Angiras, and he has served you better than a son, and if you do not interfere I will not live another day." So Sukra threatened the Daityas that he would pronounce a curse upon them unless they delivered up Kanju; and they, being sore afraid of the Bráhmaṇ, permitted the young man to return to the house of his preceptor.

Now when the years of the studentship of Kanju were





fully accomplished, he desired to leave his tutor and take up his abode in his father's house; and Sukra, having taught him all he knew, spoke very kindly to him, and permitted him to take his leave. Then Kanju went to Devayání and prayed her also to permit him to depart; but Devayání said: —“O Kanju, I have long nourished an entire friendship for you: Do you now demand me of my father in marriage, and espouse me in proper form.” Kanju replied:—“Your father is the same to me as my father, and you are my perfect sister: How then can I ask for you in marriage? Moreover, you are the daughter of my tutor, and I have served you with clasped hands as a sign of reverence: How then can I take you for a wife, and suffer you to serve me?” Devayání said:—“If a young man be instructed by a preceptor he does not thereby become the son of his preceptor: You are the son of the Bráhmaṇ Vrihaspatí, and I am the daughter of the Bráhmaṇ Sukra, and there has always been a firm alliance between your family and mine, and for a very long time there has been a friendship between you and me: How then can it be in any way improper for you to demand me of my father in marriage?” But Kanju still persisted in his refusal, saying:—“I am the son of your father, and I will never presume to ask your father to give you to me; for you are the daughter of my tutor, and have the right of sisterhood in regard to me.” Then Devayání was very wroth, and said:—“As you have refused to accede to my wishes, I pronounce this curse, that all the mantras you have learned of my father may prove of no avail when you utter them.” Kanju replied:—“I have served you for many years, and it is my profound respect for you, as the daughter of my tutor, that prevents my asking for you in marriage: So as you have cursed me unjustly I also curse you that no Bráhmaṇ shall ever demand you in marriage; and that you shall only marry a Kshatriya.” So saying, Kanju threw himself at the feet of Devayání, and declared that he was her servant; and then he went his way to his father's house, and she saw him no more.

HISTORY OF  
INDIA.  
PART III.Devayání pro-  
poses marriage.

Kanju declines.

Devayání re-  
monstrates.

Kanju persists.

Devayání curses  
Kanju.Kanju curses  
Devayání.



HISTORY OF  
INDIA.  
PART III.

Devayáni, the daughter of the priest, and Sarmishthá, the daughter of the Raja, take their pleasure in the jungle.

Quarrel of Devayáni and Sarmishthá about the rank of their respective fathers.

Devayáni pushed into the well.

Devayáni delivered from the well by Raja Yayáti.

Devayáni refuses to return to the city of the Daityas.

2. *Devayáni pushed into a well by Sarmishthá.*

Some time after this, Devayáni went out into the jungle, accompanied by Sarmishthá, the daughter of the Raja of the Daityas, and a number of other young damsels of the tribe, to take their pleasure amongst the trees and flowers. On reaching a pleasant pool, the damsels threw off their garments and went into the water to bathe, when it so happened that Váyu, the god of the wind, passed by, and seeing their clothes upon the bank, he mingled them up together. Accordingly, when the damsels came out of the water, some of them put on the clothes which belonged to the others, and Sarmishthá put on the dress of Devayáni, and Devayáni put on the dress of Sarmishthá. Devayáni then said to the daughter of the Raja:—"My father is a Bráhmaṇ, and yours is a Kshatriya, and therefore it does not become you to flaunt about in my clothes." Sarmishthá replied:—"When my father sits in Council, your father enters with clasped hands and pays him reverence; so what honour can I gain by wearing your clothes? If you say another word about it, I will order my maids to beat you and thrust you out of the city." Devayáni replied with a scowl so bitter, that Sarmishthá slapped her face, and pushed her into a dry well, and leaving her there returned with her other companions to the city.

Now it so happened that a great Raja named Yayáti was hunting that very day in the same jungle, and being very thirsty he approached the well, where instead of water he saw a beautiful young damsel. Accordingly, the Raja asked her who she was, and what she was doing in that well; and when he had heard her story he stretched his right arm into the well and bade her take his hand. So the Raja took hold of her hand and drew her out of the well, and she uttered a blessing upon him, and he then took leave of her and returned to his own city.

3. *Vindictiveness of Devayáni.*

Devayáni then proceeded a little way in the direction of





her father's house, when she was met by her own maid who had come out to rescue her, and who wept very much at seeing her; but she told the girl that it was no time for weeping, and that she had better go and tell Sukra what had happened, for that she herself would never enter the city again. The maid carried the story to Sukra, and he was exceedingly wroth at hearing that his daughter had been pushed into the well by the daughter of the Raja. He set off for the jungle, and taking Devayáni in his arms, he bade her not to grieve, for whatever might have been her offence against the Princess, it had been more than wiped away by the insult she had received. But Devayáni was determined that her father should procure her revenge, and she said that she cared very little about being thrust into a well, in comparison with hearing that her own father stood with clasped hands in the presence of Sarmishthá's father, and begged alms of him, and that it was because of this saying of Sarmishthá that she was resolved upon never again entering the city. Sukra desired her not to be troubled about that matter, for he never stood with clasped hands in the presence of the Raja, and asked alms of him, but the Raja stood in that posture before him; and the Raja and his tribe were his slaves, for without his prayers they could never procure the rains to fall in proper season. But Devayáni refused to be pacified; and though he discoursed to her upon the merit of patience and long suffering, and of repaying good for evil, she declared that her heart still burned with the taunts of Sarmishthá, and that it was better to die than to live with such insolent people.

Anger of Sukra  
with the Raja's  
daughter.

Devayáni re-  
fuses to be com-  
forted.

Sukra, seeing his daughter in such affliction, was greatly grieved, and he went to the palace, and found the Raja sitting with his Council. And he was received with every respect by all present, and invited to take the highest seat; and after a short pause, he spoke to the Raja as follows:—"He who does evil to another will certainly reap the fruits of that evil, either in his own person or in the persons of his posterity: I am a man of mortifications and penances who has fallen amongst you, and of me you have received nothing

Sukra threatens  
to abandon the  
Raja of the Dai-  
tyas.



HISTORY OF  
INDIA.  
PART III.Alarm of the  
Raja.Humiliation of  
the Raja and all  
his Council be-  
fore the Brah-  
man.The Raja pro-  
mises that Sar-  
mishthá shall be  
servant to De-  
vayáni.Sarmishthá  
obeys.

but unmixed good : By the efficacy of my prayers the rains have fallen in their proper season, and by my mantras your wounds have been healed after the battle : In return you have twice carried away the young man Kanju, who came to me for instruction, and now my daughter has been grossly insulted by your daughter, and thrown into a well : After this I will remain with you no longer." Then the Raja was alarmed, and he tried to pacify the Bráhmaṇ, saying :— "Why do you hold such language to us? Have we not always treated you with respect? If the children have quarrelled amongst themselves, that is no reason why you should be offended with us ; and if you forsake us, we must fly to the islands of the ocean, for without your aid we shall never be able to withstand the Devatás." Sukra replied that the Raja and his tribe might do what they liked, but that he was determined to leave a country in which his daughter had been so grievously insulted. The Raja and the whole of the Council were then greatly alarmed, and humbled themselves very much before the Bráhmaṇ ; and the Raja laid his head at the feet of Sukra, and began to weep, and to implore the priest to pardon him. Sukra replied that if the Raja would pacify his daughter Devayáni then he would remain, but unless she were reconciled he must go away to another country.

Then the Raja of the Daityas, accompanied by all his Council, went out of the city to seek Devayáni, and having found her, the Raja spoke to her as follows :—"We are all the slaves of your father, and if my daughter has behaved with incivility towards you, I will do with her according to your command." Devayáni replied :—"I shall be satisfied upon one condition, that whensoever my father shall give me to a husband, your daughter, who has thrown me into a well, shall be given to me as my servant." The Raja said :—"This is a light thing for me, who am ready to sacrifice my own life to appease Sukra : Why, then, should I hesitate to give you my daughter?" So he sent a messenger to the palace to tell Sarmishthá that she was to enter the service of Devayáni. And Sarmishthá replied :—





“Whatever my father commands I will obey, for I have no remedy.” The Raja’s daughter then set out with her slave girls to present herself to her father; and he immediately made her over, together with her maids, to the service of the daughter of the Bráhmaṇ. Devayáni then proceeded with great joy into the city, accompanied by her father; and henceforth Sarmishthá presented herself every day to Devayáni to receive her commands and do what she was ordered, and then returned to her own apartments.

#### 4. *Marriage of Devayáni and Yayáti.*

One day Devayáni went out of the city, attended by Sarmishthá and her maids, and they came to the place where Sarmishthá had pushed Devayáni into the well. In this pleasant spot, where the trees were loaded with delicious fruits, and the verdure was enlivened by running streams, Devayáni sat down upon the grass; and some of her companions sat by her, whilst others stood round about them in groups conversing. At that moment Raja Yayáti was hunting in the forest, and whilst in hot pursuit of a stag, he suddenly burst in upon the damsels. The sight of so much loveliness almost deprived Yayáti of his senses, for they were all in the prime of beauty; though Devayáni and Sarmishthá were incomparably more lovely than the others, whilst in dignity and grace Sarmishthá was superior to Devayáni. The Raja immediately alighted from his horse and begged the damsels to tell him who they were; and Devayáni answered him and said:—“I am the daughter of Sukra, the preceptor of the Daityas, and this is Sarmishthá, the daughter of the Raja of the Daityas, and wherever I go, she always attends me.” Raja Yayáti replied:—“Sarmishthá is the daughter of a great Raja, and excels you in elegance: How then is it that she has become your slave?” Devayáni said that it was by the will of God, and desired him not to ask any more such questions, but to answer her inquiries and tell her who it was that had come amongst them arrayed in royal vestments and with a resplendent counten-

Devayáni goes  
with Sarmish-  
thá and her  
maidens to the  
well.

Approach of  
Raja Yayáti.

Yayáti inquires  
how Sarmishthá  
has become the  
servant of De-  
vayáni.





HISTORY OF  
INDIA.  
PART III.

Devayáni re-  
quests Yayāti to  
espouse her.

Yayāti excuses  
himself.

Devayáni urges  
that he espoused  
her when he de-  
livered her from  
the well.

Yayāti's reply.

Yayāti's inter-  
view with Su-  
kra.

Marriage of Ya-  
yāti and Deva-  
yáni.

ance. The Raja replied that his name was Yayāti, that he was descended from a long line of Rajas, and that he had come into the forest to hunt deer, in like manner as she had come to gather the flowers; and he likewise said that whatsoever she commanded him to do, he would perform. So Devayáni said :—" All these damsels are my slaves, and this lady also, who is the daughter of a great Raja, is my slave; and my request to you is that you espouse me in due form." Yayāti replied :—" I am a Kshatriya and you are a Bráhma-man : How then can I take you for my wife?" Devayáni said :—" All the Kshatriyas were begotten by the Bráhmans, and you yourself are descended from a Rishi." Yayāti replied that this was true, but that the rule of life had changed, and that it was not proper for him now to marry the daughter of a Bráhma-man. But Devayáni rejoined that the mode of espousal among the Kshatriyas was for the man to take the woman by the hand, and this he had already done with her; and she reminded him of his having delivered her from the well, when he had taken her by the hand and lifted her out; and she said :—" Since you have given me your hand and taken mine, I will never give my hand to any other husband." So the Raja was afraid of her, and said :—" If your father will give you to me I will espouse you, but I cannot take you without the consent of your father."

Then Raja Yayāti went his way to the house of Sukra, and respectfully saluted him. At that moment Devayáni returned also from the forest, and entered the house, and said to her father :—" This is the Raja who gave me his hand to deliver me from the well, and since he has given me his hand, I will never give mine to any other man." Then Sukra said :—" O Raja, since you have first given your hand to my daughter, I now give my daughter to you : You are a mighty Raja, and I have an unbounded affection for my daughter, and I therefore pray you to use her kindly." Yayāti replied :—" I too am very desirous for this marriage, but I am afraid lest I commit a crime in marrying a Bráhma-man." Sukra said :—" Take no concern : I will absolve you from any guilt in this respect, and pray the Almighty that true es-





teem and affection may subsist between my daughter and you." Sukra then chose a fortunate moment, and performed the rites of marriage between Raja Yayāti and his daughter Devayáni.

HISTORY OF  
INDIA.  
PART III.

After many days Raja Yayāti took his leave of Sukra, and departed with his wife Devayáni for his own city; and Devayáni took Sarmishthá with her. In due course they reached the city of Yayāti, which was as resplendent as the city of Indra; and there the Raja placed Devayáni in a splendid palace, according to her rank, and appointed a house for Sarmishthá in the garden. Then Raja Yayāti lived for a long while in great happiness with his wife Devayáni, and she gave birth to two sons, Yadu and Turvasu.

Yayāti departs  
with Devayáni  
and Sarmishthá  
to his own city.

### 5. *Sarmishthá's revenge.*

At length it so happened that one day Raja Yayāti went to walk in the garden wherein was the house of Sarmishthá, and as he passed by she came out and made him a reverence. And the Raja was enamoured with her beauty and elegance, and he entered her apartment and sat down, and said to her:—"You are the daughter of a great Raja, and I am very desirous to espouse you, but when Sukra sent you along with Devayáni to accompany me hither, he bade me take every care of you, but never to make you my wife, and I pledged myself to obey, and now I do not know how to escape from my promise." Sarmishthá replied:—"A friend is a friend's second self; Devayáni and I are such friends: Therefore when you married her, you at the same time married me." Yayāti then said:—"It is my rule of conduct never to refuse a request which any one may please to make; and therefore whatever you may ask of me I will assuredly grant." So Sarmishthá asked that she might become the mother of a son.

Love passage  
between Yayāti  
and Sarmishthá.

Some months after this it was told to Devayáni that Sarmishthá had given birth to a son; and she was greatly afflicted, and went to Sarmishthá, and said:—"So you could not persevere any longer in the preservation of your chast-

Sarmishthá  
gives birth to a  
son.

Wrath of Deva-  
yáni.



HISTORY OF  
INDIA.  
PART III.Sarmishthá's sex-  
case.Devayáni dis-  
covers that Ya-  
yáti is the father  
of Sarmishthá's  
children.Sarmishthá's de-  
fence.Devayáni re-  
turns to her  
father's house.

ity: Who is the father of this child?" Sarmishthá replied:—"A Rishi of the most holy life and conduct came to me, and I desired him to espouse me: He did espouse me, and this son is the fruit of our union: I have committed no crime in this!" Devayáni said:—"If this be true you are innocent: but do you not know who that Rishi was?" Sarmishthá replied:—"The light of that Bráhmaṇ was like that of the sun, and from the greatness of my awe I could not ask him his name." Devayáni said:—"As this is the case you have done right, and I have not suffered by your wrong doing." So she returned to her own palace.

After some years Raja Yayáti was walking in the garden with Devayáni, when they came to the house occupied by Sarmishthá; and Devayáni saw three boys at play, who appeared to be the most beautiful children in the world. She accordingly asked the Raja whose children they were, for their countenances greatly resembled his own. The Raja gave her no answer; so Devayáni called the boys and asked them whose sons they were. The boys immediately pointed with their fingers to the Raja, and said:—"We are his sons;" and then pointing to Sarmishthá, they said:—"That is our mother." They then ran to the Raja, and tried to put their arms round his neck; but he, in order to dissemble with Devayáni, and keep her in good humour, thrust the children away, and they went crying to their mother. Devayáni then turned to Sarmishthá, and said:—"It is all a lie you told me about a Rishi coming to you: It is all my own fault, for not keeping you day and night in constant attendance upon me: But you are the daughter of a Daitya, and a lie is no offence in your eyes." Sarmishthá replied:—"I told you no lie at all, for the Raja is a Rishi, inasmuch as he follows the same form of worship as the Rishis: Besides, I am no purchased slave that I may not look out for a husband without your leave." Devayáni then told the Raja that she would never more enter his house to have a slave treat her as an equal in his presence. So she immediately went away to the house of her father.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Here the story virtually ends. Devayáni declared that she would live no





The foregoing legends of Devayáni are valuable relics of the early age of Brahmanism, and throw a new light upon one of the most obscure portions of Hindú history. The most important element in the story is perhaps the opposition which is exhibited between the Devatás, or fair-complexioned Aryan invaders, and the Daityas, or dark-complexioned aborigines of the country. In the Rig-Veda this opposition clearly appears as one between the invaders and the aboriginal inhabitants; and as the Vedic hymns are the expression of Aryan sentiments and ideas, the aborigines are naturally alluded to in terms of hatred and reproach as robbers and cattle-lifters. In the subsequent age to which the foregoing legends belong, the traditions of the old wars between the Aryans and the aborigines became converted into mythical legends of wars between the Devatás, or gods, and the Daityas, or demons, which was carried on for the empire of the world. This circumstance has led to a strange confusion of ideas in many of the Brahmanical versions of the old traditions. Sometimes the term Devatás refers to the Vedic pantheon, in which Indra appears as sovereign; sometimes, however, as in the present story, it seems to refer to the Aryan people, who were the worshippers of the Vedic deities. Then, again, the

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PART III.

Review of the  
foregoing legends of Deva-  
yáni.

Opposition be-  
tween the De-  
vatás, or Aryans,  
and the Daityas,  
or aborigines.

Expression of  
the opposition  
in the Rig-Veda.

Subsequent con-  
version of the  
traditionary  
wars of Devatás  
and Daityas into  
mythical wars of  
gods and de-  
mons.

Confusion in the  
application of  
the terms De-  
vatás and Dai-  
tyas.

longer with the Raja, and carried her complaint to her father Sukra, who thereupon pronounced a curse of old age upon Yayāti. The curse is said to have taken effect, but Sukra offered to remove it by transferring it to any one of Yayāti's sons, who would agree to accept the infliction. Yada, his eldest son by Devayáni, refused, and was cursed that his posterity should never enjoy dominion; and he ultimately became the ancestor of the Yádavas, or cowherds. Then all the other sons of the Raja refused, and were cursed in like manner, excepting the youngest son by Sarmisthā, who was named Puru, and who agreed to bear the burden of his father's old age for a period of a thousand years, and who ultimately became the ancestor of the Pándavas and the Kauravas.





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term Daityas was applied both to demons and to the aborigines, and having thus become current as a term of reproach, it was apparently applied in a still later age to the Buddhists. Thus the question occasionally arises as to whether the term Daityas applies to the aborigines who preceded the Aryans, or to the demons who fought against the gods, or to the Buddhists who fought against the worshippers of the Linga. In the present instance the term undoubtedly applies to the aborigines.

Friendship between the Bráhma-  
man preceptors  
of tribes who  
were at enmity.

Another point for consideration is the curious friendship which existed between the Bráhma-  
man priests of rival tribes, even when those tribes were at war. Thus the son of the priest of the Devatás is entertained as a pupil in the house of the priest of the Daityas; a circumstance which naturally excited the jealousy of the Daityas, and led to that animosity of the Daityas towards the pupil, which, but for the interposition of Sukra, would have led to his destruction.

Mythical detail  
representing the  
Yadavas as de-  
scendants of  
Yayáti and De-  
vayáni.

The legend of the marriage of Devayáni and Yayáti seems to be cumbered with some mythical detail for the purpose of ennobling the tribe of Yádavas, to which Krishna belonged, by representing them to have been descended from one of the ancient Rajas of Bhárata and the daughter of a Bráhma-  
man. In the genealogical lists Yayáti appears as the great-grandfather of Raja Bhárata; a circumstance which may well be doubted, if the theory be accepted that the Bráhmans held but a subordinate rank in the Vedic age. The story of Sarmishthá is very suggestive, but scarcely calls for comment. It may, however, be observed that the explanation of Sarmishthá, that a Rishi was the father of her chil-





dren, refers to an extraordinary and revolting dogma, which is especially connected with the worship of Krishna, that a woman acquires religious merit by intercourse with her religious preceptor; and even in the present day this abominable idea has not been wholly eradicated from India, and notably finds expression amongst a sect in the Bombay Presidency which is known by the name of the Mahárajás.

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Significant expression in the story of Sarmishtha of the privileges claimed by certain Brahmans.





## CHAPTER IV.

## CHANDRAHASA AND BIKYA.

HISTORY OF  
INDIA.  
PART III.

Romantic character of the story.

Scene laid in the Dekhan.  
Allusions to temples.

Education of young ladies in reading and writing.

Belief in the influence of the stars both upon the fortune and the physiognomy.

THE story of Chandrabasa and Bikya appears more like a romance than a historical tradition, and seems to belong to a much later era than any of the foregoing legends. In the first place, it will be noticed that the scene is laid in the Dekhan, or south of India. The narrative contains allusions to temples which do not appear to have existed in the Vedic age; and indeed it may be remarked that no ruins of temples have hitherto been found in India of a date antecedent to the age of Buddhism. Again, the story turns upon a letter which was written by a Minister to his son, and which a young lady could not only read, but was able to alter with her own hand; circumstances which plainly indicate a modern origin; for in the earlier legends messages are always carried by word of mouth, and none of the ancient heroines appear to have been able to read or write. The story is based upon a belief in astrology, and involves the idea that the influence of the stars is perceptible not only in the fortunes of an individual, but in his physiognomy; a belief which was once as widely spread in Europe as it still is in India, and to this day the terms mercurial,





jovial, and saturnine are employed to express those characteristics of temperament which were once supposed to result from the influences of the planets Mercury, Jupiter, and Saturn.

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The story, which needs no preliminary explanation, may now be related as follows:—

The story.

### 1. *Chandrasahsa, the fortunate boy.*

Far away in the farthest extremity of the Dekhan, in the country where camphor is collected, there lived a Raja who was doomed to suffer the severest adversity. To this Raja a son was born when the full moon was in the most favourable of all the lunar mansions, and who was thus destined to enjoy the highest prosperity. Very soon after the birth of this son, a powerful enemy invaded the country, and the Raja was slain with most of his army, and his Rání perished on the funeral pile. The nurse then fled away with the infant to a city named Kutuwal, but told to no one the secret of the child's parentage. She put herself out to service, and supported herself and the child by the proceeds of her toil; but after three years she died, and the little boy was thus thrown destitute upon the world.

Birth of Chandrasahsa.

Preserved alive by his nurse.

The child now wandered about without a soul to care for him. Sometimes the people of the city gave him a little provision out of charity, and at night he sheltered himself in a pagoda. When he was five or six years old he began to associate and play with other children of his own age; and sometimes the boys would take him to their own homes, and their mothers, hearing that he was without a parent or a friend, would take pity upon him, and give him victuals and clothes, and wash him and take a liking to him. One day he happened to go to the house of the Minister of the Raja of Kutuwal, and a number of Rishis and astrologers were present who were well skilled in the science of physiognomy; and when they saw the boy they said to one another:—"Who is he? for on his face are all the signs of royalty." No one, however, knew him, and when they

Destitution of the child.

The Rishis predict his future greatness to the Minister of the Raja of Kutuwal.