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the story that it is frequently impossible to narrate the one without referring to the other, however irrelevant the matter may be to the main subject in hand.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Some idea may be formed of the original by the following translation of the first chapter of the Bhagavad-Gítá, which comprises the appearance of the field of battle on the morning of the first day. It will be seen that the blind Mahārāja Dhritarāshtra is being informed by his charioteer Sanjaya of what had taken place. The translation is by Mr J. C. Thomson, and has been extracted from his valuable edition of the Bhagavad-Gítá.

“Dhritarāshtra spoke.

What did my followers and those of Pāndu do, when assembled for the purpose of fighting on the sacred plain, the plain of Kuru, Sanjaya?

“Sanjaya spoke.

When King Duryodhana beheld the army of the Pāndavas drawn up in order, he then approached his preceptor and spoke these words: ‘Behold, O preceptor! this huge army of the sons of Pāndu, drawn up by thy clever pupil, the son of Drupada. In it are warriors with huge bows, equal to Bhīma and Arjuna in battle (namely): Yuyudhāna and Virāta, and Drupada on his great car; Dhṛishtaketu, Chekitāna, and the valiant King of Kāshī; Purujit and Kuntibhoja and Shaivya, chief of men; and Yudhāmanyu the strong, and Uttamaujas the brave, the son of Subhadra, and all the sons of Draupadi, too, in their huge chariots. But remark those, who are the most distinguished amongst us, the leaders of my army, O best of Brāhmans! I will name them to thee, that thou mayst know them.

“‘There are thyself, and Bhīshma, and Karna, and Kripa, victorious in battle, Aswatthāma, and Vikarna, and Saumadatti too, and many other heroes, who risk their lives for my sake armed with divers weapons, all experienced in war. This army of mine, which is commanded by Bhīshma, is not sufficient; but that army of theirs, commanded by Bhīma, is sufficient. And do you, even all of you, drawn up in all the ranks of the army, according to your grades, attend even to Bhīshma.’

“Then, in order to encourage him, the ardent old ancestor of the Kurus blew his trumpet, sounding loud as the roar of a lion. Then, on a sudden, trumpets, kettle-drums, cymbals, drums, and horns were sounded. That noise grew to an uproar. And standing on a huge car drawn by white horses, the slayer of Madhu and the son of Pāndu blew their celestial trumpets. - Krishna (blew his horn called) Pāñchajanya; the Despiser of wealth blew ‘the Gift of the Gods;’ he of dreadful deeds and wolfish entrails blew a great trumpet called Paundra; King Yudhishtira, the son of Kuntī, blew ‘the Eternal Victory;’ Nakula and Sahadeva blew ‘the Sweet-toned’ and the ‘Blooming-with-jewels.’ The King of Kāshī, renowned for the excellence of his bow, and Shikandin in his huge chariot, Dhṛishta-dyumna, and Virāta and Sātyaki, unconquered by his foes; and Drupada and the sons of Draupadi, altogether, O king of earth! and the strong-armed son of Subhadra, each severally blew their trumpets. That noise lacerated the hearts of the sons of Dhritarāshtra, an uproar resounding both through heaven and earth. Now when Arjuna beheld the Dhārtarāshtras drawn up, and that the flying of arrows had commenced, he raised his bow, and then addressed these words, O king of earth! to Krishna.

“‘Draw up my chariot, O Eternal One! between the two armies, that I may examine these men drawn up and anxious for battle, (and see) with whom I have





With these preliminary observations it may now be possible to select those descriptions which may

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to fight in the strife of war. I perceive that those who are assembled here are about to fight, from a wish by so doing to do a favour to the evil-minded son of Dhritarashtra.

“Sanjaya spoke.

Krishna being thus addressed by Arjuna, O Bhārata! drew up that best of chariots between the two armies; and before Bhishma and Drona and all the kings of the earth, he said :—

“Behold, O King! these Kurus here assembled.’ Standing there, the King beheld fathers and grandfathers, preceptors and maternal uncles, brothers, sons, grandsons, and friends, fathers-in-law and acquaintances, in both of the armies. Gazing on all these relations drawn up (in battle-array), the son of Kuntī, moved by extreme compassion, spoke with sadness, as follows :—

“Arjuna spoke.

“Now that I have beheld here this kindred standing near together for the purpose of fighting, my limbs give way, and my face is dried up (of the blood in my veins) and tremour is produced throughout my body, and my hair stands on end. My bow, Gāndiva, slips from my hand, and my skin, too, burns (with fever). Nor am I able to remain upright, and my mind is, as it were, whirling round. And I perceive adverse omens, O hairy one! Nor do I foresee anything better, even when I shall have slain these relations in battle. I seek not victory, Krishna, nor a kingdom, nor pleasures. What should we do with a kingdom, Govinda? What with enjoyments, or with life itself, (if we slew these relatives)? Those very men—on whose account we might desire a kingdom, enjoyments, or pleasures—are assembled for battle, having given up their lives and riches. Teachers, fathers, and even sons, and grandfathers, uncles, fathers-in-law, grandsons, brothers-in-law, with connections also—these I would not wish to slay, though I were slain myself, O killer of Madhu!—not even for the sake of the sovereignty of the triple world, how much less for that of this earth! When we had killed the Dhārtarāshtras, what pleasure should we have, O thou who art prayed to by mortals? We should incur a crime were we to put to death these villains. Therefore we are not right to kill the Dhārtarāshtras, our own relations, for how could we be happy, after killing our own kindred, O slayer of Madhu?

“Even if they whose reason is obscured by covetousness, do not perceive the crime committed in destroying their own tribe, nor a sin in the oppression of their friends, should we not know how to recoil from such a sin—we, who do look upon the slaughter of one's tribe as a crime, O thou who art supplicated by mortals? In the destruction of a tribe, the eternal institutions (laws) of the tribe are destroyed. These laws being destroyed, lawlessness prevails throughout the whole tribe. From the existence of lawlessness the women of the tribe become corrupted, Krishna; and when the women are corrupted, O son of Vrishni! confusion of caste takes place. Confusion of caste is (a gate) to hell both for the destroyers of the tribe and for the tribe itself. For their fathers are deprived of the rites of funeral-cakes and libations of water, and thus fall (from heaven). By the crimes of the destroyers of a tribe, and by those who cause confusion of caste, the eternal institutions of caste and tribe are subversed. We have learnt (from sacred writ) that a sojourn in hell necessarily awaits the men who subvert the institutions of their tribe, O Krishna! Alas! we have determined to commit a great crime, since, from the desire of sovereignty and pleasures, we





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Narrative of the  
eighteen days of  
the war divided  
into four pe-  
riods, corre-  
sponding to the  
four commands  
of the four suc-  
cessive General-  
issimos of the  
Kauravas, viz.  
Bhishma,  
Drona, Karna,  
and Sálya.

serve to throw some light upon this ancient and memorable war. The hostilities are said to have extended over eighteen days; and the narrative may be subdivided into four periods of irregular duration, according to the days during which the four successive Generalissimos of the Kauravas held the command. Upon this point it may be remarked that the Pándavas retained their Generalissimo, Dhrishta-dyumna, from the beginning until the end of the contest; but that four successive Generalissimos of the Kauravas fell upon the field of battle. Bhishma, who was appointed at the commencement of the struggle, was slain on the tenth day of his command. Drona, the old preceptor of the Kauravas and Pándavas, succeeded Bhishma, but was slain on the fifth day of his command, or fifteenth of the war. Karna was next appointed Generalissimo, but he was slain on the second day of his command, or seventeenth of the war. Finally, on the eighteenth and last day of the war, Sálya was appointed to the command, and slain before nightfall. Accordingly, the eighteen days of the war may be divided into four terms, as follows:—

(1) Bhishma's command . . .	10 days.
(2) Drona's command . . .	5 „
(3) Karna's command . . .	2 „
(4) Sálya's command . . .	1 „

Total, 18 days.

1st, Bhishma's  
command—ten  
days.

The narrative of the war of Bhárata during the

are prepared to slay our own kin. Better were it for me, if the Dhártaráshtras, being armed, would slay me, harmless and unresisting in the fight.

“Sanjaya spoke.

Having thus spoken in the midst of the battle, Arjuna, whose heart was troubled with grief, let fall his bow and arrow, and sat down on the bench of the chariot.”





ten days of Bhīshma's command is little more than a description of battles, in which neither the Kauravas nor the Pāṇdavas gained any decided advantage. It commences with an incident which is singularly illustrative of the feelings of respect and veneration towards Brahmanical preceptors which prevailed in later times. In its present place, this incident must be regarded as a mythical interpolation, but it is none the less worthy of consideration. It is also associated with another event of dubious authenticity; but before offering any comments, it may be as well to relate the story as it appears in the Mahā Bhārata:—

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Mythical story of Yudhishtira's respect for his elders and preceptors, and Yuyutsu's desertion to the Pāṇdavas.

Now, when the night had passed away, and the morning of the first day of the great war dawned upon the plain of Kurukshetra, both armies marched out and faced each other, and the air was filled with the beating of drums and the sounding of shells. And Yudhishtira suddenly descended from his chariot, and proceeded towards the army of the Kauravas; and Arjuna and his brethren, and Krishna and the other Rajas, dismounted in like manner and walked after him to see what he purposed doing; and they earnestly asked him the reason of his going, but he answered not a word. At this moment a great uproar arose amongst the Kauravas, and they said one to the other:—"Terror has got the better of Yudhishtira, and he has come to demand peace of Bhīshma; and certain it is that he is not a true Kshatriya." And they danced for joy, and then held their peace that they might hear what Yudhishtira had to say. And Yudhishtira went first to Bhīshma and paid him reverence, and requested his permission to fight against the Kauravas, and Bhīshma granted him leave; and he then went to his preceptor Drona, and paid him reverence also, and in like manner asked his permission, and Drona granted his request; and Bhīshma and Drona both said to Yudhishtira:—"We fight on the side of the Kauravas because for

Morning of the first day.

Yudhishtira proceeds on foot to the army of the Kauravas.

Asks the permission of Bhīshma and Drona to fight against the Kauravas.





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Bhishma and  
Drona excuse  
themselves from  
fighting for the  
Pándavas.

Yuyutsu, half  
brother of Dur-  
yodhana, goes  
over to the  
Pándavas.

Joy of the Pán-  
davas.

Mythical cha-  
racter of the  
foregoing inci-  
dents.

The story of  
Yudhishtira's  
requests refer-  
able to the later  
Brahmanical  
period.

Improbability  
of Bhishma and  
Drona's pro-  
fessed partiality  
for the Pánd-  
vas.

many years we have eaten their bread and salt, or otherwise we would have fought for you." Then Yudhishtira returned to the army of the Pándavas, and when he was mid-way between them and the Kauravas, he turned round and said with a loud voice to the army of the Kauravas:—"O my friends, whoever wishes well to our cause, let him come over and join us." At these words Yuyutsu, who was a half brother of Duryodhana, deserted his own party and presented himself to Yudhishtira, and said:—"If you will take me by the hand, and promote me, I will engage myself in your service." Yudhishtira answered:—"Come then, I pray you, and I will regard you as one of my own brethren." Then Yuyutsu came out with all his followers from amongst the Kauravas, and he ordered his drums to beat, and cried out:—"I am going over to the army of the Pándavas; so let him who desires to hinder me come forth and fight me." But no man came out to oppose him. So Yuyutsu went over and presented himself in due form to Yudhishtira; and the Pándavas and all their army were much rejoiced, and beat their drums in joy; and Yudhishtira took off the coat of mail from his own body, and had it put upon Yuyutsu, and he called for another cuirass for himself.

The apparently mythical character of the foregoing incidents may now be briefly indicated. The strange story of the visit paid by Yudhishtira to Bhishma and Drona on the very morning of the battle, and his Pharisaical request that they would permit him to fight the Kauravas, evidently has its origin in the abject submission to elders and preceptors which is so rigidly enforced by Brahmanical law. The proceedings of Bhishma and Drona are equally forced and artificial. Their open declaration that they would have fought on the side of the Pándavas had they not eaten the bread and salt of the Mahárajá, is not only improbable, but inconsis-





ent with the post held by Bhīshma as Generalissimo of the allied armies of the Kauravas, and the esteem and respect in which both were held by the sons of Dhritarāshtra. At the same time such a declaration is perfectly in accordance with the mythical speeches said to have been delivered by those warriors at the Council held at Hastināpur to receive Krishna as an ambassador from the Pāndavas. Accordingly it seems highly probable that the incident has been introduced to harmonize the violent partisanship which they exhibited at the Council in favour of the Pāndavas, with the fact that they were prepared to fight to the death in behalf of the Kauravas. The desertion of Yuyutsu from the Kauravas to the Pāndavas is somewhat dubious. It may be either an actual fact, or a mythical interpolation. He is said to have been a son of the Mahārāja, but only a half-brother to the Kauravas; and it is easy to conceive of a jealousy between the half-brothers which may have led to the desertion of Yuyutsu on such an occasion. At the same time, the existence of Yuyutsu is doubtful. The blind Mahārāja is not likely to have had a son by any woman save his wife Gāndhāri. Moreover, as all the Kauravas are said to have been ultimately slain upon the field of battle, the Mahārāja would have been doomed to the fate, so terrible in the eyes of a Hindú, of dying without leaving a son behind him. The introduction of Yuyutsu as a son by another mother, and the preservation of his life by a timely desertion, saved the Mahārāja from so dire a calamity.

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Introduced to  
harmonize with  
the speeches  
they are said to  
have delivered  
at Krishna's  
embassy.

Dubious au-  
thenticity of the  
desertion of  
Yuyutsu.

The story of the commencement of the battle, and the combats which ensued on the first day of the war, may now be related as follows:—

First day of the  
war.



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Battle between  
Bhishma and  
Bhima, and  
their respective  
armies.

Character of the  
battle.

Single combats.

Disregard of the  
rules of fighting.

Combat between  
the youthful  
Abhimanyu and  
the patriarcha  
Bhishma.

Now after Yudhishtira had returned to the army of the Pándavas, Bhíshma advanced with the troops of the Kauravas, and Bhíma marched out from amongst the Pándavas to confront him. And Bhíshma blew his war-shell which sounded like the roar of a lion. And Krishna and Arjuna sounded their shells in reply, standing in a huge chariot drawn by white horses; for Krishna drove the chariot of Arjuna on all the days of the war. At that moment there was a mighty uproar throughout the plain; and the air was filled with the beating of drums and the sounding of war-shells; and the men shouted, and the elephants roared, and the horses neighed, so that the earth and air resounded with a clangour which seemed to reach the sky. Then Bhíma cried out with a voice of thunder, louder than all the other noises; and the Kauravas were deafened at his cries, and were as fearful as children who had seen a demon; and they hurled a shower of darts at him. Then Duryodhana advanced with ten of his brethren, and they shot their arrows at Bhíma and his soldiers, and thus the battle commenced; and the shouting of the combatants, and the gleaming of the cuirasses, and the flashing of the swords and spears, were like a storm of thunder and lightning. And the other Pándavas came out to help Bhíma, and there was as good a battle among them as has ever been seen or heard, whilst the dust dimmed the light of the sun, and the sword-strokes fell like heavy rain upon a mountain. And Yudhishtira fought Sálya, and Dhrishta-dyumna fought Drona, and Drupada fought Jayadratha, and there were very many other single combats between renowned warriors whose names need not be declared. And they fought fairly for about an hour or two, each man against his own foe, and those who were mounted fought against those who were mounted, and those who were on foot against those who were on foot; but then, like drunken Asuras, they forgot all the laws of fair fighting, and fell to in great confusion. And Abhimanyu, son of Arjuna, seeing that the battle was going against the Pándavas, went out against Bhíshma, and fought with great valour; and he cut down the ensign on





Bhishma's chariot, and passed on and killed some and wounded many; and as he was returning, many darts were thrown at him, but he regarded them as so many drops of water; and Bhishma bestowed great praise upon Abhimanyu, and said that of all the heroes he had ever known, he had never before seen a youth, whose age was only sixteen years, perform such prodigies of valour. And Uttar, son of Raja Virata, was mounted on an elephant, and fought against Salva; and his elephant overturned Salva's chariot with his trunk, and Salva fell to the ground; but Salva rose up and discharged an arrow at Uttar, who thereupon fell senseless from the elephant, and was carried off by his father's people; and Salva slew the elephant, and it fell to the ground like a tower. Then Bhishma charged the soldiers of the Pandavas and made great havoc, but Arjuna went out against him; and Bhishma attacked Arjuna first, and the two fought together for a long while, until the sun set and the drums beat to quarters, and the first day of the great war of Bharata was fully over.

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Praises bestowed by  
Bhishma upon  
the prowess of  
Abhimanyu.

Combat between  
Uttar and Salva.

Combat between  
Bhishma and  
Arjuna.

The foregoing account of the first day of the war of Bharata is followed in the Mahabharata by a dialogue between Yudhishtira and Krishna, which is both puerile and mythical. The language is poor and the matter contemptible, whilst it seems to have been inserted for the sole purpose of associating Krishna with the war. As, however, it may serve as a fair specimen of the many dialogues which are introduced into the story, it may be reproduced here, as follows:—

Mythical dialogue between  
Yudhishtira and Krishna.

Now when it was night, Yudhishtira went to the lodgings of Krishna, together with his brethren, and Dhrishadyumna, and other warriors; and he said to him:—  
“You have seen, O Krishna, how Bhishma has fought this day, and how in his old age he so handled our army, that had not Arjuna stood out against him we should have been wholly discomfited: These people of mine compared with

Yudhishtira complains of the  
havoc committed by Bhishma,  
and proposes retiring.



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Consoled by the  
remonstrances  
of Krishna, who  
dwells on the  
prowess of Ar-  
juna and  
Dhrishhta-  
dyumna.

Bhíshma are like moths around a lighted lamp; and I believe it would be better for me to dismiss them all, and retire to the jungle, or step aside and slay myself." Krishna answered :—" O Raja, why do you despair so soon, when you have so many valiant brethren, and such famous warriors on your side? What if Bhíshma did make havoc in your army, such is the nature of war, and a tiger does not fall back at the first rebuff: Moreover, towards evening time Arjuna made equal havoc amongst the Kauravas: Besides, no army ought to despair which has Dhrishhta-dyumna in command." And Dhrishhta-dyumna was much pleased at the words of Krishna, and the spirit of Yudhishtira was revived; so they all took leave of Krishna and returned to their own quarters.

Narrative of the  
war from the  
second to the  
tenth day.

The narrative of the war from the second to the tenth day contains some curious incidents, but demands no preliminary explanation. The story may be accordingly related as follows:—

Second day of  
the war.

Now on the morning of the second day, the two armies appeared again upon the plain in battle array; and Duryodhana commended the care which the Kauravas had taken of Bhíshma on the preceding day, and desired that they would now be equally mindful. Then Bhíshma and the Kauravas rushed upon their enemy, and at the first onset they drove the Pándavas back; and Arjuna seeing this, requested Krishna, who was his charioteer, to drive him against Bhíshma. And Duryodhana reproached Bhíshma, in that he had quarrelled with Karna, who was the only warrior in the world who was fitted to oppose Arjuna. And Bhíshma replied :—" Shame be upon me for being a Kshatriya, for however reluctant I may be, I am compelled by honour to fight my beloved Arjuna." And he immediately set out to do battle with Arjuna, and the two heroes fought and wounded each other. Meanwhile Dhrishhta-dyumna was engaged in a hard contest with Drona. At this moment Bhíma came up and was stopped by the Raja of Magadhá, and hemmed in by the people of the Raja; and Bhíma took

The Pándavas  
repulsed by  
Bhishma, but  
rallied by  
Arjuna.

Bhishma reluc-  
tantly engages  
with Arjuna.

Bhima attacked  
by the Raja of  
Magadhá and  
his army.



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his mace and struck about him in all directions, and at every stroke he killed several elephants, and such a battle took place between them as was fought in olden time between Indra and the Asuras. And the son of the Raja of Magadhá came up and killed Bhíma's charioteer and his four horses, and Bhíma slew him with one blow of his mace. Then the Raja of Magadbá, to revenge the death of his son, drove his elephant at Bhíma, who was now without horses or driver; and Bhíma leaped down from his chariot, and rushed forward with his sword, when another son of the Raja of Magadhá interposed with his elephant; and Bhíma put his hands upon the tusks of the elephant and vaulted upon his back, and cut off the head of the young man and threw it at the feet of his father. And the Raja of Magadhá almost died with grief at the death of both his sons, and had a fierce battle with Bhíma; but at length Bhíma lifted up his great mace and slew both the Raja and his elephant at a single blow. Then the Raja's troops fell upon Bhíma, but he blew the shell of victory, and his own army heard it and came to his rescue; and the Kauravas were greatly troubled when they heard that the Raja of Magadhá and his two sons were amongst the slain.

Slays a son of  
the Raja of  
Magadhá.Vaults on an ele-  
phant and slays  
a second son.Slays the Raja  
and his elephant  
at a single blow.

After this there was a great battle between Abhimanyu, son of Arjuna, and Lakshmana, a son of Duryodhana. The two youths fought bravely together, and Abhimanyu gained the victory and slew the son of Duryodhana. And when Duryodhana saw that his son was dead, he flew with many of his Rajas to attack Abhimanyu, and the Pándavas cried out:—"They are murdering Abhimanyu by force of numbers." And Arjuna heard these words, and pounced like a falcon upon Duryodhana and all his forces; and all the Rajas fled at the very sound of his chariot, and left their arms, and their horses, and their elephants, and everything else behind them, for there was no one amongst them who would face Arjuna. And Duryodhana called upon them by name to rally round him, but no one heeded his words, and Duryodhana finding himself alone was compelled to fly in like manner. So Arjuna gained the victory, and he and

Abhimanyu  
slays a son of  
Duryodhana.Attacked by  
Duryodhana,  
and rescued by  
Arjuna.Flight of all the  
Rajas at the  
sound of Arju-  
na's chariot.



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Alarm of Bhishma at the havoc created by Arjuna.

Successes of the Pándavas.

Third day of the war.  
Tremendous charge of the Pándavas in the form of a half-moon.

Terrible slaughter.

Cries of the wounded.

Dead men rise without heads and fight each other.

Krishna blew their shells in triumph. Meantime the wise Bhishma perceived the disastrous condition of his army, and was much astonished, and he said to Drona :—" See, worthy preceptor, how Arjuna is committing fearful havoc : He is dreadful as Yama, and I see no chance of defeating him this day ; and our own army is so shattered that we cannot lead them against the Pándavas, who the more they fight seem to grow the stronger : The gods are against us ; our warriors are weary and panic-stricken ; and it would be unwise to expose them this day to another conflict : So pass the order for leaving the field, and direct that all may be ready in the morning for to-morrow's battle." Then Drona gave the order, and the Kauravas returned to their camp with sad hearts. But on that day the Pándavas had done mighty things, and they and their troops returned to their quarters in great joy and glory ; and so that night passed away.

On the morning of the third day the Pándavas drew up their army in the form of a half-moon, and made such a charge that they fell at once on the front and two flanks of the Kauravas. And they dashed on pell-mell and broke the enemy's line and threw it into disorder, and then re-formed themselves and charged again ; and in the confusion charioteers and horsemen charged the footmen contrary to rule, and slew them with darts on which they had inscribed their own names ; but order was soon restored by Bhishma and Arjuna, and they then fought their equals only, as had been agreed upon at the beginning of the war. The slaughter on this day was terrible, and the plain was strewn with heaps of dead, and weapons of every description, and bodies without heads, and horses without riders ; and the dust was laid with rivers of blood ; and the wounded writhed about in all directions and filled the air with their piercing shrieks and melancholy cries ; and still as they fell and rose they struggled in combat with each other ; and from the excess of bloodshed and carnage that day the battle was called Maharadra. Even the bodies of those who were dead rose up without their heads and fought each other ; and when the people saw this they saw it was an omen that the whole of





the living would be slain. Then the great Chieftains of the Kauravas fell upon the Pándavas, and the battle raged furiously, and was fearful to behold; for when the swords of the warriors were blunted and their arrows spent, they tore up trees by the roots and slew each other with them, or flew at each other with their clenched fists, and kicked, and wrestled, and tore each other with their teeth and nails. And the Pándavas drove back the Kauravas, and the Kauravas in their flight resembled the rushing of the waters at the new and full moon.

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The warriors  
fight with their  
fists, feet, teeth,  
and nails.

Repulse of the  
Kauravas.

Duryodhana now saw that his forces were being routed, and he went to Bhíshma and complained of his indifference to the slaughter of the Kauravas, and begged that he would exert himself to the utmost to defeat the Pándavas. At these words the eyes of Bhíshma became red with wrath, but he sounded the shells and trumpets, and the Kauravas responded to the call; and the battle raged again more furiously than before, and Bhíshma drove the army of the Pándavas before him, and killed very many. But Arjuna requested Krishna to drive him against Bhíshma, and the Pándavas turned back and fought desperately; and after a long time the Kauravas were defeated, and retired to their own quarters; and the Pándavas blew the shell of victory and returned in triumph to their camp, and bestowed great praises upon Arjuna, and thus ended the third day of the battle.

Duryodhana  
complains of the  
indifference of  
Bhishma.

Bhishmarenews  
the battle, but  
the Kauravas  
are driven back  
by Arjuna.

And now the war raged every day from the fourth to the ninth day, and sometimes the Chieftains fought single combats, and sometimes the armies fought together pell-mell; but though very many were killed on either side, yet the issue was as far off as ever, and the Pándavas were still unconquered, whilst the Kauravas were much disheartened at their ill success. On the evening of the ninth day, when the Kauravas had returned to their quarters, Duryodhana, Sakuni, Duhsásana, and Karna held a consultation together about their disasters; and Duryodhana said:—"O warriors, why is it that whilst we have Bhíshma, and Drona, and Kripa, and Sálya on our side, we are still unable to conquer

The war rages  
from the fourth  
to the ninth day.

Kauravas dis-  
heartened at not  
conquering the  
Pándavas.

Duryodhana  
complains to his  
Chieftains of his  
want of success





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Karna engages to slay the Pándavas if Bhíshma will retire from the command.

the Pándavas? Why should I be defeated every day, and my army decrease in numbers, whilst the Pándavas are still alive? Let me know, I pray you, how we can succeed in destroying our enemies?" Karna replied:—"O Raja, cast aside your grief! Arrange that Bhíshma withdraws from the fight, so that I may put on my armour and do battle upon the plain, and I swear to you that I will clear the earth of the Pándavas."

Duryodhana proposes to Bhíshma that he should retire.

So Duryodhana went to the tent of Bhíshma and said:—"If you will defeat the Pándavas according to your promise, it will be well; but if you are desirous of showing mercy to the Pándavas, then do you lay aside your arms and permit Karna to destroy my enemies."

Bhíshma's wrath.

When Bhíshma heard this reproachful language from Duryodhana he was touched to the heart, and uttered not a word; but presently he exclaimed, with a voice of thunder:—

Bhíshma engages to defeat the Pándavas on the tenth day or perish upon the field.

"O Raja, I am doing my utmost, and disregarding my own life, in order to serve you: Why then do you still reproach me with cruel words! On the morrow however you shall either behold me dead upon the field, or you shall be entirely freed from your enemies." So saying he dismissed Duryodhana and retired to his own couch.

Tenth day of the war.

Next morning, being the tenth day of the war, Duryodhana told all his Chieftains that Bhíshma had resolved to slay the Pándavas or to fall by their hands. Then the armies were marshalled upon the plain, and Bhíshma proceeded to the front of his army; and challenged Arjuna to

Terrible conflict between Bhíshma and Arjuna.

battle; and there was a terrible conflict between Bhíshma and Arjuna which lasted many hours, and all the warriors on either side ceased their combats in order that they might look on. At last after much fighting Bhíshma received a mortal wound; and he fell from his chariot upon the ground, and Arjuna went up to him and brought him water, and all the warriors on either side paid homage to the dying patriarch. But Bhíshma did not give up the ghost, but lay on the ground many days, and a guard was set upon him by Raja Duryodhana until he died.

Bhíshma mortally wounded.

Review of the first ten days of the war.

The foregoing selections from the narrative of





the first ten days of the war are sufficient to illustrate the desultory character of the fighting; and here it should be remarked that however popular some of the scenes appear to be, such as the mythical contest between Bhîma and the Raja of Magadhâ and his sons, the onslaught of Arjuna, and the great charge of the army of the Pândavas in the form of a half-moon, still the interest centres in the single combat between Bhîshma and Arjuna, in which the former was slain. The legend of this combat undoubtedly referred to a real event; but in the Mahâ Bhârata, the narrative is so overloaded with supernatural details, introduced for the purpose of explaining away the unseemly character of the contest between the old patriarch and his youthful kinsman, that it will be sufficient to accept the bare fact that the two warriors engaged in several single combats, and that ultimately Bhîshma was slain. One point, however, in these mythical additions appears to be worthy of notice, namely, the palpable effort to Brahmanize the character of Bhîshma. In what appears to be the original tradition Bhîshma is represented as a loyal and venerated patriarch, who had withdrawn his claim to the Raj in order to gratify his father, and had subsequently educated the fathers of the Kauravas and Pândavas for the throne, and trained them in the use of arms. The Brahmanical compilers, however, seem to have been desirous of reproducing so celebrated a hero in a character more adapted to their own religious ideas; and consequently, by the bold introduction of fabulous matter, they have actually succeeded, from a Hindû point of view, in transforming the rude and honest veteran into a pious ascetic and moral

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Interest centres  
in the single  
combat between  
Bhishma and  
Arjuna.

Singular effort  
to Brahmanize  
the character of  
Bhishma.



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Mythical story that Bhishma lay for many days upon a couch formed of arrow heads, and then delivered some moral and religious discourses.

teacher. Bhíshma is said to have been so thickly pierced in every part of his body by the arrows of Arjuna, that when he fell mortally wounded from his chariot, he rested as it were upon the points of the arrows. A pillow for his head was formed by three more arrows. In this condition he lay in a state of consciousness for many weeks, having received from his father the miraculous power of fixing the hour when he should die. In the first instance he called for Duryodhana, and in a lengthy address advised him before it was too late to restore half of the Raj to the Pándavas; and subsequently tried to persuade Karna to desert Duryodhana and espouse the cause of the Pándavas. Having failed in both cases, he continued to lie on his arrowy couch, until long after the war was over, when just before giving up the ghost he took the opportunity of delivering to Yudhishthira a prolix discourse on the duties of kings.<sup>2</sup> Such startling incongruities as these are only valuable as illustrating the character of the interpolations, which the Brahmanical compilers have introduced into the national Epic; but the Brahmanical teaching involved in the discourses will be brought under discussion in dealing with the religious ideas which prevailed at a later age.

2nd, Drona's command—five days.

The second period in the progress of the war comprises the history of the five days during which

<sup>2</sup> Another preposterous myth connected with the death of Bhíshma may be recorded in a note. He is said to have received the mortal wound not from Arjuna, but from a warrior named Sikhandin, who was a younger son of Raja Drupada. In a previous birth Sikhandin is said to have been a female named Ambá, and was indeed the elder daughter of the Raja of Kási whom Bhíshma had carried away to be the wife of his half-brother Vichitra-virya. She had perished in the jungle, but before her death she had been assured by Parasu Ráma, that she should become a man in a future birth, and cause the death of Bhíshma, who had been the author of all her misfortunes. See page 53.





the command was held by the preceptor Drona, who succeeded Bhîshma as Generalissimo of the Kauravas. At this stage of the contest the single combats became more prominent; and it is evident that in the original tradition it was in a great measure these combats that decided the fortunes of the war. The narrative of Drona's command is characterized by three important incidents :—

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Prominence of  
single combats.

Three important  
incidents in the  
history of Dro-  
na's command.

1st, The attempts of Drona and the Kauravas to take Yudhishthira prisoner.

2nd, The death of Abhimanyu, son of Arjuna, and the tragical circumstances which followed it.

3rd, The death of Drona, who was slain in a single combat with Dhrishta-dyumna, the Generalissimo of the Pândavas.

These incidents will call for remark hereafter, but they may first be related as follows :—

Now it was on the tenth day of his command that Bhîshma was mortally wounded; and Duryodhana, and his brethren, and all his allies returned to the camp very mournful; and they elected Drona to take the command in the room of Bhîshma.

Election of  
Drona.

And on the morrow, which was the first day of Drona's command, and the eleventh of the war, Drona promised Duryodhana that he would take Yudhishthira prisoner; but he could not do as he had desired, for Krishna and Arjuna were ever on the alert to protect Yudhishthira. And when it was evening, Drona said to Duryodhana :—"I cannot deliver Yudhishthira into your hands whilst Krishna and Arjuna are his keepers; but if you can draw away Arjuna from the field, I can take Yudhishthira alive." Then Susarman, Raja of Trigarta, said to Duryodhana :—"I and my four brethren will send a challenge to Arjuna on the morrow to fight us at some place far away from Yudhishthira; and it is certain that he will accept the challenge

Eleventh day of  
the war and  
first of Drona's  
command.

Efforts of Drona  
to take Yudhish-  
thira prisoner.

Frustrated by  
Krishna and  
Arjuna.

Susarman and  
his four bre-  
thren send a  
challenge to  
Arjuna.





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Arjuna accepts  
the challenge,  
contrary to the  
advice of Yud-  
hishtira.

Twelfth day of  
the war and  
second of Dro-  
na's command.

Arjuna defeats  
Susarman and  
his brethren.

Yudhishtira  
narrowly  
escapes being  
taken prisoner  
by Drona.

Thirteenth day  
of the war and  
third of Drona's  
command.

Arjuna fights  
Susarman a  
second time.

Drona draws up  
the Kauravas in  
the form of a  
spider's web.

without caring for our superior numbers." And Duryodhana approved of the plot, and Susarman and his brethren took an oath that while life remained they would not turn their backs against Arjuna; and they kindled a fire and adjured it to bear witness to their sincerity. So Susarman despatched a challenge to Arjuna to come out to battle on the twelfth day of the war; and Arjuna acquainted Yudhishtira with the challenge which he had received. And Yudhishtira said:—"This is a plot to separate you from me, that Drona may take me prisoner according to his promise." But Arjuna replied:—"I am bound not to refuse any challenge, nor to dispute about the place proposed, nor to chaffer about superior numbers." So Arjuna returned answer that he accepted the challenge.

When the morning of the second day of Drona's command and twelfth day of the war had fully come, both armies were put in battle-array; and Arjuna, having obtained the permission of Yudhishtira, went to the place appointed by Susarman, and found the brethren there, and sounded his shell. And the battle lasted some time, but Arjuna obtained the victory over all his enemies, and put them to flight, and then taunted Susarman and his brethren with the oath they had taken not to turn their backs upon him. Meanwhile, Drona advanced to take Yudhishtira prisoner, and Yudhishtira retreated in great alarm; and being much pressed, he mounted a fleet horse and galloped out of sight; for it is no shame for a Kshatriya to fly away from a Bráhmaṇ. And Duryodhana and Karna reproached Drona, for having permitted Yudhishtira to escape out of his hands.

On the third day of Drona's command, and thirteenth day of the war, Susarman and his four brethren sent a second challenge to Arjuna to fight in the southern quarter of the plain, and Arjuna again accepted the challenge. Meantime Drona, who was very skilful in the art of war, drew up his army in the form of a spider's web; so that if a Pándava made a charge, and got within the enemy's lines, he would be thereupon surrounded by warriors and unable





to make his escape. And when the Pándavas saw their enemies arranged in this manner, they were astonished, and said :—“ As Arjuna has gone out to fight Susarman and his brethren, we are unable to draw up an army in the same array as the Kauravas.” So the Pándavas marshalled themselves in the best form that they were able, and placed Bhíma in their van, and their other Captains here and there. Then Yudhishtira said to his principal warriors :—“ The Kauravas have placed themselves in an array which no one understands save Arjuna and Krishna ; so until they return it will be necessary that some who are here should fight against them, lest it should be said that without Arjuna and Krishna we are no match for the Kauravas.” And there was present the young and heroic Abhimanyu, who was only sixteen years of age ; and he was the son of Arjuna, and had been married to Uttará, the daughter of Raja Viráta. And Yudhishtira said to Abhimanyu :—“ A son is the essence of his father, and a lion’s cub has the valour and fierceness of the lion ; so do you charge the Kauravas and break this spider’s web of theirs.” Then Abhimanyu kissed the feet of Yudhishtira, and said :—“ You desire me to pass through this impenetrable spider’s web, but I cannot consent to take the lead in any dangerous undertaking.” Then Yudhishtira said :—“ I only ask you to enter the spider’s web, and make a passage for us : We will follow immediately upon your heels : If you can once make an opening it will never close ; and Bhíma and others of our army will take care to profit by your skill.” Abhimanyu replied :—“ O reverend Sire, I shall enter the impenetrable spider’s web, as an insect falls upon a fire : But unless I kill one of my enemies, I am not the son of Subhadrá ; and if, seated upon my chariot, I do not kill all the Kshatriyas who are here, I will never acknowledge myself to be the son of Arjuna.” Abhimanyu then ordered his charioteer to drive on, and he entered the ranks of the enemy, and challenged any warrior to battle ; and the Kauravas caught him in their midst like a whirlwind ; and Abhimanyu fought manfully, and he cut down all who came before him ; but he was as a

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Pándavas un-  
able to oppose  
the spider’s web.

Yudhishtira  
commands Ab-  
himanyu to  
charge the  
spider’s web.

Abhimanyu  
drives his cha-  
riot into the  
enemies’ ranks,  
and performs  
prodigies of  
valour.





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Pándavas pre-  
vented by Jaya-  
dratha from res-  
cuing Abhi-  
manyu.

Abhimanyu  
overpowered by  
six warriors and  
slain.

Extreme beauty  
and prowess of  
Abhimanyu.

Profound grief  
of Yudhishtira.

General outcry  
against the  
cowardly Chief-  
tains who slew  
Abhimanyu.

Arjuna's over-  
powering grief  
at hearing of the  
death of Abhi-  
manyu.

Vows to slay  
Jayadratha be-  
fore sunset on  
the morrow.

single man against all the Kauravas. Meanwhile the Pándavas saw that the boy was being hemmed in, and they pursued him closely to deliver him; but the wicked Jayadratha saw what they were striving to do, and the fire of enmity was in his heart, for the humiliation he had received after carrying away Draupadí. And Jayadratha threw himself into the way of the Pándavas, so that they could not pass him and rescue Abhimanyu. At this time Duhsásana, and his son, and four other warriors surrounded the young Abhimanyu, and thought to slay him; but he still withstood them all. At last his foot slipped, and just as he was recovering himself, the son of Duhsásana struck him on the head with his mace and dashed out his brains; and he died that same moment as pure as if he had never been born. And he was very young and very handsome, and he left the world with such a display of valour as no man has ever seen; and such sweetness and beauty appeared upon his dead body, that all who saw him were astonished at his comeliness, and they lamented him very sore. And when Yudhishtira heard that Abhimanyu was dead, he rushed to the spot and found him lying on the earth covered with wounds as befits a hero; and he could not endure the sight, but threw himself upon the ground, weeping and wailing, and casting dust upon his head; for he knew that it was by his command that Abhimanyu had gone upon this service. And all his friends and all the enemies of the Kauravas alike condemned the manner of the death of Abhimanyu, for they said it was a cowardly thing for six experienced Chieftains to fall upon such a stripling.

Now as Arjuna was returning from fighting Susarman, he saw many evil omens, and he showed them to Krishna; and when they returned to their quarters, Yudhishtira told him all that had happened to his son Abhimanyu; how that Abhimanyu had been beset by six heroes, and had fallen with the utmost glory, and how Jayadratha had blocked up the way and prevented the Pándavas from coming to the rescue; but he did not say that he had commanded Abhimanyu to charge the Kauravas. When Arjuna heard that his





son was slain, his grief was beyond all bounds, and he fell down like one dead; and when he recovered himself he swore that he would take the life of Jayadratha before the setting of the morrow's sun, or else enter the funeral pile; but he was a changed man under the burden of his grief, and the perspiration ran down his face heavily. Then Krishna said:—"Your son has perished so gloriously that his fame will endure for ever, and it might be said that he is still alive: Children, like worldly goods, are given to us by God, and he can resume them at his own pleasure." In this manner Krishna in some degree consoled Arjuna; and he then went off to comfort Subhadrá, the mother of the young man; and he said to her:—"How happy is the mother whose son has met with so glorious a destiny!" Then he spoke in like manner to the young widow Uttará, who was about to become a mother; and after a while he administered some consolation to them, for they had given themselves up to despair. He then dismissed all the Rajas who had come to console Arjuna, saying:—"It is now night, and the morrow is a great day for us, and you should not lose a moment of sleep that you can possibly secure." So the Rajas went to their several quarters, and Krishna was left alone with Arjuna; and he took him by the hand, and led him in, and seated him, and he laid many topics of consolation before him; for he would not leave him alone lest he should rush out in despair and fall madly upon the enemy in the night time; but he ordered all the people about him to continue armed and on the watch throughout the whole night. And when it was midnight Krishna called to his charioteer, and acquainted him with the vow that Arjuna had made to slay Jayadratha, and he ordered him to make ready his chariot at early morn that he might drive Arjuna to the battle.

Krishna con-  
soles Arjuna.Comforts Su-  
bhadrá and  
Uttará, the  
mother and  
widow of  
Abhimanya.His touching  
attendance  
upon Arjuna  
throughout the  
night.Orders his cha-  
riot at early  
morn to drive  
Arjuna against  
Jayadratha.

Meanwhile a spy, that was in the camp of the Pándavas, had gone to Jayadratha and told him of the vow that Arjuna had made. And Jayadratha was sore afraid, and at night time he went to Raja Duryodhana, and besought him for leave to depart; and Duryodhana took him to Drona, and

Cowardly at-  
tempt of Jaya-  
dratha to with-  
draw.





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told all his story. But Drona made light of the matter, and said :—“ There are many great warriors here who can protect Jayadratha ; and on the morrow I will so arrange the army that Arjuna cannot come near him, and I will station him in the rear of the army.” So Jayadratha was satisfied and returned to his own quarters.

Fourteenth day of the war and fourth of Drona's command.

Fierce struggle of Arjuna, Sátyaki, and Bhíma to reach Jayadratha.

Combat between Sátyaki and Bhurishrava.

Bhurishrava conquers Sátyaki and prepares to cut off his head.

Krishna requests Arjuna to interfere.

Arjuna cuts off the arms of Bhurishrava.

Bhurishrava abuses Arjuna for interfering.

Arjuna's defence.

All the Kauravas reproach Arjuna.

Now when the morning had dawned of the fourth day of Drona's command, and fourteenth day of the war, Arjuna went out to fight Jayadratha, and Sátyaki and Bhíma went with him ; but Duryodhana kept them at bay ; and these four Chieftains were like four gamblers, and Jayadratha was their stake. And Karna came up and fought Bhíma, and a warrior, whose name was Bhurishrava, fought against Sátyaki. And the battle between Bhurishrava and Sátyaki was very hot, and when their weapons were all exhausted they came to close quarters after the manner of wrestlers. And Bhurishrava caught Sátyaki by the hair of his head, and kicked him on his breast, and dragged him along the ground, and made ready to cut off his head. Now Sátyaki was the kinsman of Krishna, and Krishna seeing that his kinsman was about to be slain, turned to Arjuna and said :—“ We must hasten and release Sátyaki.” So Arjuna threw a weapon which cut off the arms of Bhurishrava, and saved the life of Sátyaki. Then Bhurishrava opened his mouth in abuse of Krishna and Arjuna, and said :—“ The Pándavas once were famous for fair fighting, but it is foul play that whilst I am engaged with my own antagonist, you should come up and wound me unawares : Will Yudhishtira praise you for such conduct, or is it Yudhishtira, or Indra, or Bráhma who has given you such lessons in war ?” Arjuna answered :—“ War is altogether treachery and deceit, and the whole business of it is to get the better of one's enemy : Now Sátyaki is one of our side, and you had seized him by the hair, and were dragging him along the ground, and the injury was as if it was done to myself ; and when you were going to cut off his head, where would have been any friendship in the world if I had not rescued him from your hands ?” But all the Kauravas bitterly reproached Arjuna for throw-





ing a weapon at a man with whom he was not in conflict; and Arjuna bade them look to themselves, who had sent six of their greatest warriors to murder his son Abhimanyu, who was a mere stripling and had done no harm. Meanwhile, Bhurisrava in consequence of his wound had let his weapons fall to the ground, and prepared himself for death; and Arjuna said to him :—"Since it is I who have caused your death, I now send you to the assembly of Indra; so go thither until you are purified from all your sins." At this time Sátyaki, who had been delivered from the hands of Bhurisrava, approached him in great anger; and notwithstanding all that Krishna and Arjuna could say to prevent his falling upon a dying man, he buffeted and kicked Bhurisrava, and then he cut off his head.

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Arjuna's retort  
respecting the  
cowardly  
murder of his  
own son.

Sátyaki beheads  
Bhurisrava.

When Sátyaki had thus slain his enemy, Arjuna went with him and Bhíma to fight against Jayadratha; and the day was far spent, and Duryodhana sent many warriors to fight against them, so that the sun might set without the fulfilment of the vow, and Arjuna be compelled to enter the fire. And Arjuna fought desperately and defeated many Chieftains of high renown; and at last he found Jayadratha, and engaged with him in battle. And Jayadratha struggled with all his might, for the sun was going down in the west; and he and Arjuna came to kicks and buffets, and Arjuna at last threw him upon the ground, and cut off his head only a moment before the setting of the sun.

Desperate conflict  
between  
Arjuna and  
Jayadratha.

Arjuna beheads  
Jayadratha just  
before sunset.

Then Bhíma, when he saw the head of Jayadratha, set up a loud shout of triumph; and the hearts of the Kauravas were filled with sorrow, whilst the Pándavas rejoiced with exceeding joy. And the sun set in the heavens, but the warriors would not stay the battle in the evening as they had done on all the previous days of the war, but they fought on and cared not for food or sleep; and there was much slaughter, for every man was in great wrath. And when the darkness came on they fought at hazard, not knowing friend from foe. And the night became terrible beyond all telling; fathers slew their sons and sons their fathers, and they cut and hewed like men that were mad.

Exultation of  
the Pándavas  
and grief of the  
Kauravas.

Battle continued  
throughout  
the night.

Frightful confusion  
in the  
darkness.





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Plain of Kurukshetra lit up  
by torches.

Battle scenes by  
torchlight.

Short interval  
of slumber at  
midnight.

Renewal of the  
battle by moon-  
light.

The battle goes  
against the  
Pandavas.

Vow of Dhrishtha-  
dyumna to slay  
Drona.

Bhíma fights  
Drona until  
sunrise.

Then Yudhishtira, seeing that the darkness was filling the plain with unutterable horror, ordered many lighted torches to be brought; and every man took a torch and fought with it in his hand, and ten torches were fastened to every chariot. And the whole plain of Kurukshetra was as light as day; and the golden cuirasses of the Rajas were as radiant as the sun; and the jewels on their arms and hands sparkled in the glare, and the swords and spears flashed like lightning. And they threw large stones at each other, and hurled chariot-wheels; and when a man threw his enemy down he cut off his head, and carried it in his hand; and their mouths were stained with blood as they thirsted for the blood of each other, and the plain was filled with dead corpses. And the son of Bhíma, by his Asura wife, was amongst the slain.

And when it was about midnight, and sleep was overpowering the eyes of all those who remained alive, Arjuna cried out with a loud voice that the battle should cease for a while, and that all men should rest and sleep. Then all the warriors on either side rejoiced at the words of Arjuna; and the rider of the elephant laid his head upon his elephant, and the horseman laid his head upon his horse, and for a brief space they were in a deep slumber; but presently the moon arose, and both armies were awakened and again begirt themselves for shedding each other's blood. Then Duryodhana reproached Drona, inasmuch as he had not murdered the Pándavas whilst they were sleeping; but Drona objected to the wicked perfidy, and said that Arjuna could never be taken thus. And the battle raged furiously, and Yudhishtira was sorely wounded, and the Rajas Viráta and Drupada were both defeated by Drona, and Drona cut off their heads upon the plain. Now the Pándavas were nearly vanquished, for thousands of their warriors were slain; but Dhrishtha-dyumna, the Generalissimo of the Pándavas, vowed to avenge the death of his father Drupada, and took an oath that he would not drink water until he should have slain Drona. Then Bhíma said to Dhrishtha-dyumna:—"You are too young a warrior to cope





with such an experienced soldier as Drona, so let me engage him first so as to tire him, and then do you come up and finish him." And Bhîma fought with Drona until the rising of the sun, and then Dhrishta-dyumna fought against Drona until it was mid-day, but neither could prevail against him; but at this moment it was falsely told Drona that his son Aswatthâma was dead; and Drona laid down his arms, and Dhrishta-dyumna rushed upon him and severed his head from his body. And Dhrishta-dyumna then took up the head of Drona, and threw it towards Duryodhana and the other Kauravas, saying:—"Take the head of him in whom you prided yourselves, and I will cut off all your heads in like manner."

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Fifteenth day  
of the war and  
fifth of Drona's  
command.

Dhrishta-dyum-  
na fights Drona.  
Drona overcome  
by means of a  
lie.

Dhrishta-dyum-  
na beheads  
Drona.

Then all the Pândavas rejoiced exceedingly, and Bhîma ran to Dhrishta-dyumna and embraced him, and kissed his hand and face, and said:—"To-morrow, when Karna also has lost his head, I will kiss and embrace you again." But all the Kauravas were very sorrowful when they beheld the head of Drona, and they were all disheartened, and like a flock without a shepherd; and they were in great despair, and said:—"The Pândavas have extinguished the light of us all." Then they all burst into tears and forsook the field of battle. At this time, Aswatthâma, not knowing that his father Drona had been slain, went to Raja Duryodhana, and asked him why he desisted from fighting; and when Aswatthâma heard all that had happened, he said:—"If I do not revenge the death of my father, and slay Dhrishta-dyumna, and all his kinsfolk, I am not the son of Drona: So long as I have breath will I make war against the Pândavas."

Rejoicings of  
the Pândavas.

Deep regret of  
the Kauravas at  
the death of  
Drona.

Vow of Aswat-  
thâma to re-  
venge the death  
of Drona.

The foregoing narrative of the five days of Drona's command comprises some of the most significant incidents in the history of the great war. Whilst it has been found impossible on all occasions to separate the mythical from the real, still the graphic pictures of barbarous warfare, and the terrible illustrations of the savage passion for re-

Review of the  
foregoing ac-  
count of the five  
days of Drona's  
command.





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Yudhishtira  
represented as a  
coward.

Brahmanical  
reasons assigned  
for his coward-  
ice.

venge, which are frequently presented to the imagination, throw a strong light upon the real character of this memorable conflict.

The first point which demands consideration is the representation of Yudhishtira, not merely as a man of peace, but as an arrant coward. In the negotiations which preceded the war, he had offered to sacrifice so large a proportion of his own rights and those of his brothers as to excite the anger of Draupadī and the disapproval of Krishna. But in the foregoing narrative he exhibits a pusillanimity which is scarcely intelligible. When attacked by Drona he mounted a horse and galloped away; and such cowardice is excused on the ground that it was no shame for a Kshatriya to run away from a Bráhmaṇ. This assumption in favour of the Bráhmaṇs is startling from its very audacity, and may be ascribed to the same Brahmanical compilers who would convert Drona into a Brahmanical Guru or Acharya. Again, when Drona had drawn up his army in dangerous array, Yudhishtira refrained from charging the enemy himself, and commanded his young nephew, the boy bridegroom of sixteen years of age, to make the desperate attempt; but he appears to have been so ashamed of his conduct on this occasion that when he was called upon to tell the sad story to Arjuna, he carefully suppressed the fact that he had himself ordered Abhimanyu to charge the "spider's web." How far this singular timidity formed a part of the real character of Yudhishtira, or how far it is the result of the effort of the Brahmanical compilers to represent him in the character of Dharma, must of course be open to question. Possibly Yudhishtira, who is elsewhere





treated as a model of goodness and wisdom, is intended as an apology for the unwarlike conduct of the Bráhmans themselves, or for the cowardice of some priest-ridden Raja, who had been brought under the thraldom of the Bráhmans.

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The story of the death of Abhimanyu, and the tragical incidents which followed, forms, perhaps, one of the most touching events in the history of the war. How far the details are mythical will be a matter of opinion; but the main story is painfully pathetic. The boy bridegroom had been cowardly overpowered and slaughtered after performing prodigies of valour; and the beauty and sweetness of his countenance in death excited the pity of all who beheld him. But the wrath of the spectators was excited not so much by the dastardly conduct of the six warriors who had surrounded the stripling, as by the malicious proceeding of Jayadratha, the ill-conditioned Raja who had endeavoured to carry off Draupadí in the jungle, and who on the present occasion obstructed the Pándavas in their efforts to rush to the rescue. Under such circumstances the vow of the bereaved father to take the life of Jayadratha becomes intelligible, and the details connected with the performance of the vow are such as might have been expected in an ancient tradition which has been more or less embellished by the bards. But there are one or two collateral scenes which are very suggestive. The combat between Bhurisrava and Sátyaki is fearfully savage. After a desperate struggle without weapons, Bhurisrava throws his enemy upon the ground, and drags him along by the hair, and then prepares to cut off his head. Arjuna interferes, contrary to the laws of

Touching character of the story of Abhimanyu.

Savage character of the combat between Bhurisrava and Sátyaki.





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war, and saves Sátyaki by mutilating Bhurisrava. Lastly, Sátyaki falls upon his wounded enemy, kicks and buffets him, and then cuts off his head. Such atrocious proceedings seem to have excited both armies to madness; and led to that desperate battle by torch-light which furnishes, perhaps, the most picturesque description of hand-to-hand carnage which can be found in the history of war.

Review of the  
death of Drona.

The death of Drona, the venerable preceptor of the Kauravas and Pándavas, was evidently regarded as a turning-point in the great struggle. He had nearly vanquished the Pándavas by the slaughter of their chief allies; but he in his turn was slain by the son of one of his victims. He had defeated and put to death his ancient enemy Drupada, the Raja with whom he had been at feud when he first entered the service of Mahárajá Dhritaráshtra; and it is a curious circumstance that the Pándavas had originally aided their preceptor in revenging himself upon Drupada, and had subsequently taken the daughter of Drupada to wife. Dhrishta-dyumna, the son of Drupada, swore to revenge the death of his father, and did eventually succeed in beheading Drona, as Drona had beheaded Drupada. But in the Mahá Bhárata the story of the combat between Dhrishta-dyumna and Drona is complicated by mythical details, which have apparently a two-fold object in view; namely, first to represent Drona as a Bráhmaṇ, and a faithful worshipper of Vishnu; and, secondly, to cover or conceal a treacherous lie which seems to have been told by Yudhishtira. The outline of these mythical additions may be indicated in a few words, and may perhaps serve as a sample of much of the religious matter which has

Mythical details recorded  
in the Mahá  
Bhárata.

Extraordinary  
account of a lie  
inadvertently  
told by Yud-  
hishtira.





been grafted upon the original tradition. The battle between Dhrishta-dyumna and Drona was fought with magical weapons, and gods and Rishis were amongst the spectators. Many armies came to the aid of Dhrishta-dyumna, but the martial skill of Drona, and his long and faithful worship of Vishnu, enabled him to resist every enemy. At length Krishna, somewhat inconsistently with his divine character, told Yudhishtira that if he would assure Drona that his son Aswattháma was dead, the old warrior would immediately lay down his arms and become an easy prey. Yudhishtira, however, utterly refused to tell a lie, even to secure the death of so powerful an enemy. Krishna then endeavoured to overcome the difficulty by directing the Pándavas to slay an elephant which was named Aswattháma; as by so doing the statement that Aswattháma was dead would cease to be a lie. Bhíma accordingly killed the elephant, and then told Drona that Aswattháma was dead. But Drona was convinced that Bhíma was telling a falsehood; and in his anger he slew ten thousand cavalry and twenty thousand infantry, and would have destroyed all the armies of the Pándavas, had he not been restrained by the gods and Rishis who reminded him that he was a Bráhmaṇ. Drona, however, was still disturbed by the idea that Aswattháma might be dead, and accordingly asked Yudhishtira, who had never been known to tell a falsehood. Yudhishtira accordingly intended to say:—"Aswattháma is dead; not indeed the man but the elephant." No sooner, however, had he uttered the first part of the sentence than Krishna and Arjuna sounded their war-shells with all their might, and Drona only

Krishna suggests the lie.

Krishna suggests a prevarication.

Manner in which Yudhishtira is said to have told a lie.





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Drona dies in  
the character of  
a Brahman  
Yogi.

Escape of his  
soul through his  
skull.

3rd. Karna's  
command—two  
days.

Three important  
combats.

heard the words:—"Aswattháma is dead!" At the same time Drona was assailed by evil omens. His left eye began to quiver, his left hand began to shake, his heart grew weak, and tears flowed from the eyes of his horse. He still, however, continued fighting until Bhíma again assured him that Aswattháma was dead. Believing now that his son was really slain, he stripped himself of his arms, and sat upon the end of his chariot cross-legged like a Yogi. He then drew up all the breath of his body into a spot in the neighbourhood of his heart, and drove it into his head, upon which the top of his skull was burst open, and his soul escaped through the orifice like a ray of the sun. Dhrishta-dyumna then rushed upon the expiring body and cut off the head. The terrible story of the revenge of Aswattháma for the slaughter of his father will appear hereafter.

By the death of Drona the Kauravas were once more deprived of their Generalissimo, and Karna was elected to succeed to the command. Karna only held this post for two days, namely, the sixteenth and seventeenth of the war; but within this brief period are crowded some of the most decisive events in the great struggle. The most important combats which took place during Karna's command were as follows:—

1st, The battle between Karna and Yudhishthira.

2nd, The battle between Bhíma and Duhsásana.

3rd, The crowning battle between Karna and Arjuna.

The story of these incidents is as follows:—





Now Drona had been slain in the fifth day of his command, and on the fifteenth day of the war; and when it was evening the Kauravas assembled together and elected Karna to be their Generalissimo in the room of Drona. Next morning the Kauravas, commanded by Karna, again went out to battle on the plain of Kurukshetra; and there was a great slaughter, and the rivers flowed with blood, and the whole plain was covered with corpses; and when it was evening the battle was stayed, and the Pándavas and Kauravas returned to their respective camps. Now after nightfall Duryodhana summoned Karna, and Duhsásana, and Sakuni, and many others to Council, and said:—"This is the sixteenth day of our war with the Pándavas, and some of our greatest Captains, such as Bhíshma and Drona, have been slain to our great reproach." Karna then smote his hands together, and said:—"It has so happened that the Pándavas have escaped with their lives from my attack this day, but you shall see how I will deal with them to-morrow, as well as with their army; for I have determined with myself either to slay Arjuna and his brethren to-morrow, or to lay my head level with the ground." At these words Duryodhana and the other Kauravas returned with great elation of mind to their several quarters.

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Election of  
Karna to be  
Generalissimo  
of the Kauravas.

Sixteenth day  
of the war, and  
first of Karna's  
command.

Indecisive  
struggle.

Karna engages  
to slay Arjuna.

On the morning of the seventeenth day, both armies bathed and perfumed themselves, and arrayed themselves in all their splendour; and they all said to each other:—"This will be the great day of the war, and whoever comes out safely from this day's battle will be like one who is born again." And when both armies had been drawn up in opposite ranks, Karna ascended his chariot, and drove to the chariot of Duryodhana, and said:—"This is the day on which I will slay Arjuna, and now if I do not kill him you shall never see me again: But Arjuna has Krishna for his charioteer; and if Sálya, the Raja of Madra, will drive my chariot, I shall be certain to get the better of Arjuna, for if any one in all this army can match Krishna in driving, it is Sálya." So Raja Duryodhana went with some of his brethren to the quarters of Sálya, and Sálya was not yet

Seventeenth day  
of the war and  
second of  
Karna's com-  
mand.

Karna desires  
that Sálya  
would drive his  
chariot.





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Duryodhana  
makes the re-  
quest to Sálya.

mounted for the battle; and he received Duryodhana with every mark of respect, and seated him on the same couch with himself." Duryodhana then said to Sálya:—"There is not in my army this day a single person who is equal to you, and just as the Pándavas pride themselves upon having Krishna, so do I pride myself upon having you: Now I have a particular request to make to you: To-day Karna is to combat with Arjuna, whose charioteer is Krishna, and we have no one among us who can drive like Krishna excepting yourself: My request is therefore that you will mount Karna's chariot this day, and drive it for him; and then Karna will certainly be the conqueror of Arjuna."

Sálya's indigna-  
tion.

When Sálya heard this speech he threw himself into a great rage, and rising up from his seat, he struck his hands together, and said:—"O Duryodhana, I have committed one great fault, that when I was going to join the Pándavas I suffered myself to be persuaded to join your army; and now I am punished by being asked to be a charioteer to Karna, who is himself the son of a charioteer: I have a hundred persons in my service who are quite equal to his father, and shall I make myself a servant to him?" So saying, Sálya went out in a rage, but Duryodhana and his brethren followed him, and said:—"We all of us respect

He sneers at the  
birth of Karna  
as the son of a  
charioteer.

Duryodhana  
assures Sálya of  
his respect, and  
rauks him with  
Krishna.

you as our Chief, and we know that there is no one equal to you in either army save Krishna alone: We did not invite you to be charioteer to Karna out of disrespect, but because such a condescension on your part would ensure us the victory; and surely it would be no more derogatory for you to drive the chariot of Karna than it is for Krishna to drive the chariot of Arjuna." Sálya replied:—"Since you rank me with Krishna I am satisfied; and I will drive Karna's chariot provided he obeys my orders and does as I shall direct him." And Duryodhana agreed to the condition, and he and all his brethren paid many compliments to Sálya. So Sálya rose up and went towards Karna's chariot, and he said to Karna:—"At the request of Duryodhana I have consented to drive your chariot on the condition that you will not swerve from my advice." Karna answered:—





"As Siva was charioteer to Bráhma, and Krishna is charioteer to Arjuna, so have you now conferred a similar favour upon me."

Karna then ascended the body of the chariot, and sounded his shell and beat his drum; and he said to Sálya:—

Sálya drives Karna against Arjuna.

"Drive speedily, I pray you, to the chariot of Arjuna, for I have nothing to do with Yudhishtira, or Bhíma, or the other Pándavas, but with Arjuna only." And Sálya drove off the chariot; and when they had gone a little way the four horses suddenly halted of their own accord, and a bone

Evil omens.

fell upon Karna from the air, and it could not be seen from whence it came. And Karna said:—"O Sálya, these are bad omens, and I much doubt if I shall return in safety from this battle; but I have no intention of returning, so drive me against Arjuna and Krishna, and God's will be done." Then Karna went to the field of battle, and there arose a contention

Contention between Karna and Sálya respecting the prowess of Arjuna.

between Karna and Sálya, for Sálya would vaunt the prowess of Arjuna, and declare that Karna would be alarmed at the twanging of his bow. And Karna replied in a rage:—

Karna retorts by a reference to the depraved customs of Sálya's subjects.

"I have heard a description of the people of your country of Madra, and you measure me by what you are yourself: In your country, wives and mothers, sisters and daughters, brothers and uncles, all commune together without modesty or shame, and eat flesh and drink wine until they are drunk, and then all dance together in a medley; and if their enemy pray for quarter they continue fighting until they have killed him; and if the enemy prove victorious, they sacrifice their wives and children to him without shame or concern: But I have taken you with me to assist me in this conflict, not to try and terrify me with Arjuna, and be a cause of mischief to me: If your heart be right towards me, conduct me at once to Arjuna, and you shall then see how I will deal with him; but if you mean to deceive me, descend from the chariot before the battle begins, that I may get another driver in time, and do what I have to do; for if during the combat I see any sign of treachery in you, I will certainly slay you." And Sálya, hearing these words, began to drive Karna towards the ranks of the Pándavas.

Now when Karna charged the Pándavas, Arjuna had

Karna charges the Pándavas.





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Karna attacks  
Yudhishtira in  
the absence of  
Arjuna.

Reproaches  
Yudhishtira  
for the coward-  
ice he had im-  
bibed from  
Bráhmans.

Wrath of Yud-  
hishtira at  
being left with-  
out protection.

Anger of Yud-  
hishtira with  
Arjuna for fight-  
ing Susarman  
when he should  
have been fight-  
ing Karna.

Arjuna taunted  
by Yudhishtira.

Draws his  
sword, and  
threatens to kill  
Yudhishtira.

again gone away to fight against Susarman and his brethren ; and Karna bore down upon the Pándavas, and pressed on to the spot where Yudhishtira was, and commenced a battle with him. And at first Yudhishtira wounded Karna in the breast, but Karna pressed him hard ; and the people of Yudhishtira placed him on a fleet horse to favour his escape ; but Karna pursued him, and pulled him off the horse by the neck, and said :—" Had you been a true Kshatriya and son of a Raja, you would never have turned your back upon the field of battle ; but as you have spent so much of your time amongst Bráhmans, and have borrowed their disposition and manners, you cannot stand in the field against men of courage : Take therefore to your heels, for why should I slay you ? Though had you been Arjuna I would have put you to death without hesitation." So Karna turned about, and left Yudhishtira upon the ground ; and Yudhishtira was presently removed by his own people, but he bitterly reproached Bhíma and Dhrishta-dyumna for having suffered him to be so greatly dishonoured in the absence of Arjuna. Then Bhíma fell upon Karna, and a great battle ensued, and Karna once again bore down like a lion upon the ranks of the Pándavas. Meantime Arjuna had conquered Susarman and his brethren ; and hearing that Karna was making great havoc he became alarmed for his elder brother Yudhishtira, and desired Krishna to drive him back to the side of Yudhishtira. And Krishna did so, and Yudhishtira was rejoiced to see them, for he thought that Arjuna had left him to fight Karna. When however Yudhishtira heard that Arjuna had merely gone away to fight Susarman, he was in a great rage ; and he taunted Arjuna with having fled from Karna, and bade him give up his weapons to Krishna, and take himself the place of charioteer, so that Krishna might go out and fight against Karna. Then Arjuna was furious at the reproaches of Yudhishtira, and drew his sword, and would have killed him on the spot, had not Krishna interposed and prevented him. Arjuna then cried out :—" I have vowed to kill any man who should tell me to lay aside my arms, and therefore I must kill the Raja what-





ever guilt I may incur." But Krishna said:—"Away with you and your speech for threatening to kill your Raja! Have you never read the Vedas, or heard that any one who attempts the life of his father, or elder brother, or Raja, will never see Swarga, for that God's anger will be kindled against him, and a perpetual curse fall upon him?" Then Arjuna was much abashed, and said:—"How am I to escape from my guilt; I am compelled to break my resolution to kill any one who desired me to lay down my arms, and I have threatened the life of my Raja and elder brother." Krishna answered:—"The satisfaction of Raja Yudhishtira will absolve you of both, and that satisfaction depends upon your slaying Karna." Krishna then went to Yudhishtira and interceded for Arjuna, and cast Arjuna at his feet, and the two brothers were again reconciled.

Reconciled to  
Yudhishtira  
by Krishna.

All this while Bhîma had engaged in a deadly conflict with Karna and Duryodhana; when Duryodhana's brother Duhsâsana came up to their aid, and shooting an arrow from one side, he slew Bhîma's charioteer. Now Duhsâsana was that wicked Kaurava who had dragged Draupadî into the gambling pavilion, and treated her like a slave girl; and Bhîma had sworn a great oath that the day should come when he would drink the blood of Duhsâsana. And when Bhîma saw Duhsâsana he was filled with wrath; and he aimed such a stroke at Duhsâsana with his mace, that he drove him, chariot and all, to the distance of a bow-shot; and Duhsâsana fell with such force to the ground that he broke all his bones, whilst his chariot was dashed to pieces. Duhsâsana trembled for a moment, and began to give up the ghost, when Bhîma running up to him lifted him from the ground and whirled him round his head, and shouted with a loud voice:—"O Kauravas! Behold Duhsâsana has come to the aid of Karna, and see how I have smitten him: Whoever of you has sufficient strength and courage, let him come and release Duhsâsana from my hands!" No one however dared to approach, and Bhîma continued thus:—"This day I fulfil my vow against the man who insulted Draupadî!" Then setting his foot on the breast of Duh-

Bhîma attacked  
by Duhsâsana.

Deadly conflict  
between Bhîma  
and Duhsâsana.

Bhîma's address  
to the Kauravas.

Fulfils his vow  
by drinking the  
blood of Duh-  
sâsana.



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sásana, he drew his sword, and cut off the head of his enemy; and holding his two hands to catch the blood, he drank it off, crying out:—"Ho! ho! Never did I taste anything in this world so sweet as this blood." At this sight the Kauravas began to weep very bitterly, whilst the Pándavas rejoiced; and the Kauravas threw away their arms and fled, saying:—"This is not a man, for if he were he would not drink human blood!"

Arjuna goes forth to a final battle with Karna.

Meantime Arjuna had gone forth in his chariot, with Krishna for his charioteer, to fight against Karna; and this battle was the most famous in all the war. And when Arjuna and Karna beheld each other they sounded their war-shells, and prepared for a terrible combat; for each one was determined either to conquer his enemy, or to give up the ghost upon the plain. And all the warriors in both

The armies stop fighting, and the gods descend from heaven.

armies gave over fighting and stood round to see the great battle; and all the gods came down from heaven to behold the contest between Arjuna and Karna; and Karna said to Sálya:—"This day now be so careful of myself and my chariot, that the whole world may resound with your commendations." Arjuna also said to Krishna:—"You

Arjuna and Karna address their respective charioteers.

know full well the valour and prowess of Karna; I therefore beseech you so to manage my chariot that Karna may find no occasion of advantage over me." Then the battle commenced, each one shooting arrows at the other from his own chariot, whilst all the armies of the Pándavas and Kauravas looked on; and for a long time no man could say who would gain the day. At length Arjuna was so wounded and stunned by the arrows of Karna that he would have

The battle.

been defeated, but at that moment one of the wheels of Karna's chariot sunk deeply into the earth, and it would not stir, notwithstanding all that Sálya could do to urge the horses to the utmost. And Karna leaped from his chariot to relieve the wheel, and cried out to Arjuna:—"Hold your

A wheel of Karna's chariot sinks into the earth.

hand for one moment, to give me the chance of recovering my wheel; for it is no mark of manhood to strike at me whilst I am in this extremity." And Arjuna stayed his hand, but Krishna cried out:—"O Karna, what you say is

Arjuna stays from fighting. Krishna reminds Arjuna of the insults to Drupadi and murder of Abhimanyu.





true enough, but where was the manhood when Draupadi was insulted in the midst of the assembly, and when you and five or six more surrounded the stripling Abhimanyu, and put him to death without pity? ” When Arjuna heard this allusion to the slaughter of his son, the fire of wrath burst from his eyes and nostrils, and he drew forth an arrow with a broad sharp blade at the end shaped like a crescent; and he discharged it with all his strength whilst Karna was endeavouring to release his chariot-wheel, and it struck the neck of Karna and severed his head from his body.

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Arjuna slays  
Karna with a  
crescent-shaped  
arrow.

Then the Pándavas beat their drums, and sounded the trumpets of triumph, but the Kauravas were filled with great grief and consternation; for they said that they had no other hero now that Bhíshma, and Drona, and Karna were numbered with the slain. And they fled in all directions like scattered sheep, and Duryodhana tried to rally them against Arjuna, but in vain. And Kripa said to Duryodhana:—“Those heroes upon whom you depended for success are now no more: I therefore advise you to enter into a treaty with the Pándavas: From what I know of the character of Yudhishthira I do not consider that it is too late to propose peace: If you make your intentions known to him, he will still be glad to share the Raj with you; whereas it would be folly for you to continue this destructive war.” Duryodhana replied:—“I am perfectly aware of your friendship for me, and of the services rendered by you in this very war: I know that what you say does not proceed from any selfish motive, but from a pure regard for my own welfare; but I cannot act according to your counsel, as a man who is destined to die will not follow the advice of a physician: After all the wrongs I have inflicted upon the Pándavas, with what face can I now ask for a treaty? I am therefore resolved to carry on this war, be the consequences what they may.” And the whole army of the Kauravas was filled with new life by this speech of Duryodhana; and their despair left them, and they resolved that on the morrow they would renew the attack upon the Pándavas.

Triumph of the  
Pándavas and  
consternation of  
the Kauravas.

Flight of the  
Kauravas.

Kripa advises  
Duryodhana to  
conclude a  
treaty.

Refusal of  
Duryodhana.

The Kauravas  
resolve to renew  
the battle on the  
morrow.



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INDIA.  
PART II.Review of the  
foregoing nar-  
rative of Karna's  
command.

The foregoing narrative of the war during the two days in which the command was held by Karna scarcely calls for much consideration. On the first day the two armies confined themselves to general charges, but the second day is filled with single combats which seem to have decided the fortunes of the war. The battles between Karna and Yudhishthira, Bhíma and Duhsásana, Arjuna and Karna, are all curious and interesting, but seem to require no explanation.<sup>3</sup>

4th, Sálya's  
command—one  
day.

The narrative of the eighteenth day of the war, and single day of Sálya's command, is as follows:—

Election of Sálya  
to be General-  
issimo of the  
Kauravas.

Now on the evening of the seventeenth day of the war, being the day in which Karna was slain by Arjuna, the Kauravas appointed Sálya to be their Generalissimo in the room of Karna. And Duryodhana said to Sálya:—“The time has come when friends and enemies are to be tested: I considered you as my friend; do you therefore prove yourself to be such by accepting the post of Generalissimo.” And Sálya replied:—“I am ready to do as you

<sup>3</sup> The description of the battle between Arjuna and Karna is overlaid in the original by many supernatural details, and it may be convenient to record in a note the seven mythical circumstances to which the death of Karna is ascribed by Nárada the sage.

1st, He is said to have surreptitiously induced Parasu Ráma, the Brahmanical hero, to teach him the Brahmanical mode of archery, which ought only to be imparted to a Bráhmaṇ, after which Parasu Ráma prayed that the archery might fail him in battle.

2nd, He was cursed by a Bráhmaṇ for having killed the man's calf while aiming at a deer, that the earth should arrest his chariot-wheel in battle.

3rd, He had given to Indra the golden cuirass and earrings with which he had been born. This myth is connected with the fable that he was begotten upon Kunti by the Sun god.

4th, He had presumed to be the rival of Bhíshma.

5th, He had disobeyed his assumed mother Kunti by fighting Arjuna.

6th, His enemy Arjuna was steadily assisted by Krishna throughout the battle.

7th, When Karna shot a snake at Arjuna instead of an arrow, Arjuna was saved from certain death by Krishna, who miraculously lowered the chariot, and thus prevented the snake from doing more than cut off Arjuna's tiara.





order: My Raj, my wealth, and my life, are all at your service: I accept the post you offer me, and I promise that the sun when it sets on the morrow shall either see you without an enemy upon this earth, or else see me slain upon the plain of Kurukshetra." And Duryodhana and the remaining Kauravas rejoiced as they heard the words of Sálya, and they set up a loud shout which reached the camp of the Pándavas; and Yudhishtira, hearing that the Kauravas had appointed Sálya to be their Generalissimo, issued the necessary orders for renewing the battle on the morrow, which would be the eighteenth day of the war. Then both armies retired to rest, and slumbered until the dawn of morning.

Now the eighteenth day was the last of the great war, and the Kauravas, seeing that their numbers were few, made a new rule, that no man should engage in single combat with any of the Pándavas, but that all should fight together in support of the common cause. Then the battle commenced, and both sides fought desperately; and Yudhishtira engaged with Sálya, and slew him after much fighting. And the Kauravas were beaten on all sides, and Duryodhana, seeing that all was lost, fled secretly from the battle like one distracted, but he still carried his mace in his hand.

Eighteenth and last day of the war.

Kauravas abstain from single combats.

Sálya slain by Yudhishtira. Utter defeat of the Kauravas.

Now there was a lake in the plain of Kurukshetra, and Duryodhana possessed a charm by which he could remain under water for as long as he pleased, so he plunged into the lake, and no man knew where he was concealed. Meantime all the warriors on the side of the Kauravas were slain, excepting three only, namely, Kripa, Aswattháma, and Kritavarman; but these three continued fighting with the Pándavas, until they saw that Duryodhana was no longer present in the field. Then they said one to another:—"We are fighting the battle of Duryodhana, but lo, he himself is not to be found: Wherefore then should we expose ourselves to the last extremity for nothing? Let us go and look for Duryodhana!" So the three warriors left the field of battle and searched for Duryodhana all over the fatal plain of Kurukshetra; and the Pándavas in like manner searched for Duryodhana, but they could find no trace of him, and accord-

Duryodhana conceals himself in the lake.

Three survivors

General search for Duryodhana.





HISTORY OF  
INDIA.  
PART II.

The three Kaurava warriors discover Duryodhana, and pray him to renew the battle.

Duryodhana declines, and recommends concealment.

Aswattháma vainly remonstrates.

Failure of the Pándavas to discover Duryodhana.

Bhíma's servants discover him.

The Pándavas proceed to the lake.

ingly returned to their own quarters. Meanwhile the three Kaurava warriors were told that Duryodhana had concealed himself beneath the waters of the lake, and they went to the side of the lake, and cried out :—" O Raja, arise out of the water, that we may still do battle in your service, and under your auspices make another struggle for victory." Duryodhana replied with a loud voice :—" I see you all three from where I am, and I thank God that he has preserved your lives ; but his favour is now with the Pándavas, and it is not advisable for us to continue the contest against them : Do you therefore remain in quiet, until I shall see what turn may be taken by the hidden events of futurity." Aswattháma replied :—" Be not too much troubled by the slaughter of your armies, for while we three are in your service, we are still able to slay a thousand such as the Pándavas ; and if you will only come out of this lake we will avenge you completely upon your enemies."

Meantime Yudhishtira had sent many men in all directions to procure tidings of Duryodhana, but they had all returned without finding him. And Yudhishtira and his brethren were very uneasy, and they said one to the other :—" All the anxieties and fatigues we have endured during this war are of no avail so long as Duryodhana is missing ; for whilst he lives he may yet find means to raise another army, and renew the war against us." Now it so happened that at this time some of the servants of Bhíma, who had gone out to hunt game for their master's supper, had come to the lake to drink water ; and they overheard this discourse between Aswattháma and Duryodhana, and discovered that Duryodhana was concealed in the lake ; and accordingly they hastened away to carry the news to the Pándavas that they might obtain a reward for their discovery. When the Pándavas heard that Duryodhana had been found, they were overjoyed, and bestowed great rewards upon the servants of Bhíma, and all set off at once for the lake. And when Aswattháma and Kripa and Kritavarman saw them coming, they said to one another :—" If Duryodhana would join us we would certainly fight them, but as we have no





leader it is useless to expose our lives." So the three warriors hid themselves in a great tree, whence they could see all that took place; and the Pándavas came up to the side of the lake, and Yudhishtira called out with a loud voice :—" O Duryodhana, you have caused the death of so many thousands of people, that it is now shameful in you to hide yourself at the bottom of this lake : You fought manfully enough at first; so come out now and let us see whether God will give the victory to you or to us : A man of your rank ought not to turn his face from a challenge : Why do you, being a Kshatriya, care so much for your own life after the sacrifice of the lives of your friends and relatives?"

Duryodhana replied :—" I did not enter this lake from fear; but as all my people have been killed, and my arms and chariots are all broken in pieces, and my charioteer is slain, and I myself am extremely weary and worn out, I am come hither to rest and refresh myself a little, and when I am somewhat recovered, I will come out and renew the contest with you."

Yudhishtira replied :—" Our ease and comfort for to-day is to fight with you : Come out therefore and fight us, and if you conquer, go and take your ease upon the throne : The refreshment you would now take at the bottom of the lake is too mean for you." Duryodhana answered :—" My Raj consisted of my brethren, and friends, and kinsmen; and now that they are gone, what sort of Rajaship can I exercise? Take you the Raj, and I wish you joy of it, for your brethren are all still living, and most of your friends and your troops still remain to serve you : Even now, if I wished, I could conquer all five of you and all your allies; but seeing that Bhíshma, and Drona, and Karna are no more, I do not want to fight : So leave me to my fate, for I shall assume the garb of skins, and retire in prayer to the desert; and do you take upon yourself the government of the Raj, and leave me to myself." Yudhishtira said :—" Think not of exciting any pity by speaking to me in this manner : Your language now is not consistent with your former resolution not to give us an inch of land except by war : You may now be disposed to give me my share in the Raj, but I myself am not disposed to accept anything from you, even

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INDIA.  
PART II.

Yudhishtira  
calls upon Dur-  
yodhana to leave  
the lake.

Duryodhana  
prays for rest be-  
fore renewing  
the combat.

Yudhishtira  
remonstrates.

Duryodhana  
prays the Pan-  
davas to take the  
Raj, and let him  
retire to the  
desert.

Yudhishtira  
refuses to take  
the Raj except  
by conquest.





HISTORY OF  
INDIA.  
PART II.

Duryodhana offers to fight the Pándavas one at a time, if they will fight fairly.

if you offer me the whole earth : I must establish my rights by conquering you : You cannot save your life by these tempting offers to me : If you and I remain alive, people will be doubtful of the result of this war."

On hearing these words, Duryodhana smote his hands together under the water, and was almost provoked to come out from the lake ; but he restrained himself, and again cried out with a loud voice :—" You know full well that I have neither friend nor brother remaining, nor even a chariot to mount upon for the purpose of battle ; nor have I armour, nor bow and arrows, nor sword, nor spear wherewith to enter into combat with you ; nor have I anything now remaining save my mace : So if you all attack me at once, you will kill me in a moment : But if you will bind yourselves to fight me only one by one, I will accept the challenge and come out and kill you all ; and you must engage to fight me fairly, and not make use of any stratagem or foul play against me : If then you will agree to these terms, and promise not to swerve from them, I will fight you ; and as the sun overpowers the stars, and eclipses their light with his light, so shall my light outshine you all."

Yudhishtira accepts the conditions.

Yudhishtira replied :—" Now you have spoken in a manner worthy of yourself and your own dignity, and we will engage ourselves by oath not to go from the promises we will make you : If you will fight us alone, as you now say, and shall conquer us, your name and honour will redound to the world's end, and every one who shall survive you and us will make a proverb of your prowess, and say :—" Raja Duryodhana slew all the five brethren, and so secured to himself the empire of the world.' "

Duryodhana stipulates to fight with the mace only.

Duryodhana then said :—" I am on foot, and have no weapon here save my mace : Whoever fights with me must therefore only use that weapon, and must fight on foot like myself ; and then, even if Indra were to combat me with the mace, I am certain to come off conqueror."

Yudhishtira agrees.

Yudhishtira answered :—" Whatever mode you propose will agree to, so come out now, and take your choice as to which of us you will fight with."





Now though Raja Yudhishtira repeated these assurances a hundred times, Duryodhana continued to repeat the conditions which he demanded, without making any advance towards coming out of the lake. So Yudhishtira said to Krishna :—"You see that this man merely holds us at bay with fair speeches." And Krishna answered :—"If you would have Duryodhana come out of the lake in good earnest, you should desire Bhíma to speak to him; for he will never bear with Bhíma's provoking words, but will speedily come out of the water." Then Yudhishtira commanded Bhíma to call upon Duryodhana to come out; and Bhíma cried out with a loud voice :—"O Duryodhana, how long do you mean to shelter yourself by falsehood? We have consented to every condition proposed by you; why then do you delay making your appearance? If you hope to deceive us by these speeches, and to escape from us with your life by such artifices, it will be of no avail; for if you are determined not to come out, I will myself enter the water and haul you out by main force."

HISTORY OF  
INDIA.  
PART II.

Duryodhana  
still remains in  
the lake.

Krishna advises  
Bhíma to pro-  
voke Duryod-  
hana to leave  
the water.

Bhíma's irritat-  
ing address to  
Duryodhana.

Duryodhana answered :—"What you are now doing is altogether improper for a Kshatriya: You say that it is fair and right for a Kshatriya to accept every challenge that is offered him: Now I do not say that I will not fight you, but I say that it is now mid-day, and I wish to rest a little, and on the morrow I will fight you in any way you may desire."

Duryodhana  
offers to fight on  
the morrow.

Bhíma then said :—"O Duryodhana, you speak of the rules which Kshatriyas should follow, but what rules did you observe when you ordered poison to be given to me, and when you plotted to burn us alive in the city of Váránásvata, and when by foul play at the gambling match you stripped us of our all, and compelled us to go into exile, and caused Draupadí to be dragged into the assembly by the hair of her head? But it is something that even in your dying hour you can call to mind the true principles of a Kshatriya: A hundred curses be upon that life to which you have sacrificed all your brethren and their families, and the venerable Bhíshma, and your tutor Drona, and your best

Bhíma threatens  
to drag Duryod-  
hana out of the  
lake.



HISTORY OF  
INDIA.  
PART II.Duryodhana  
leaves the lake.Laughter of the  
followers of the  
Pándavas.His ghastly ap-  
pearance.  
Yudhishthira  
offers him arms  
and armour.Question of who  
should fight  
Duryodhana.Krishna sug-  
gests Bhíma.Bhíma gladly  
assents.

friend and companion Karna; and yet, wonderful depravity, you still wish to live; but I promise you that unless you leave the lake without delay I shall enter the water and bring you out with my own hand."

When Duryodhana heard these provoking words of Bhíma, he could no longer endure them, but lifted his head from the water; and he sighed so loudly that the sound was heard a mile off. Then taking his mace in his hand he walked out of the water towards the Pándavas. And all the followers of the Pándavas laughed at him, crying out:—"Look at the Raja who possessed such mighty armies! See how he moves!" And Duryodhana was in vehement wrath at their laughter, and cried out:—"What do you sneer at? I will now slay you all, and turn your laughter to tears." Then he advanced with his mace, and he appeared so grim and ghastly that men took him to be Yama. When he came nigh, Raja Yudhishthira said to him:—"I will provide you with all weapons, and whatever else you may require." And every kind of weapon and armour was immediately made ready and placed before Duryodhana. Then Duryodhana took up a golden cuirass and put it on, and said:—"One man should oppose one man, but come on as it is your own wish, and I will fight you all together." Yudhishthira answered:—"If one man should oppose one man, how was it that so many of you surrounded the stripling Abhimanyu, and killed him amongst you?" Duryodhana made no reply, and Yudhishthira said to Krishna:—"If you speak the word I will go and fight him myself." Krishna answered:—"You are no match for Duryodhana with the mace; so do not expose yourself to be killed for nothing: It is a common proverb that we must use a stone to break a stone: So do you command Bhíma to go and fight Duryodhana, for he is his equal." Bhíma came forward at these words, and said:—"Only send me, and under your auspices I shall certainly slay Duryodhana; and if he had his whole army with him I would kill them all: So let me go and take my revenge on him." Then Krishna and all the others applauded Bhíma;





and Bhíma went and kissed the feet of Raja Yudhishtira and of Krishna, and received their blessings, and the blessings of all his brethren.

HISTORY OF  
INDIA.  
PART II.

Bhíma then took his mace in his hand, and went forward in a pompous style until he came up to Duryodhana; and he said:—"O Duryodhana, this is the day for me to punish all your evil actions; how you played foul with us at gambling, and sent us to the jungle, and insulted Draupadí, and defrauded us of our Raj." Duryodhana replied:—"O Bhíma, the field is the scene for action and not for words: If you have any manhood shut your mouth and ply your arms: Come on and let us try our skill, and see to whom God will give the victory."

Bhíma and Duryodhana reproach each other.

Now it so happened that at this moment, just as they were on the point of fighting, Balaráma, the elder brother of Krishna, arrived at that place, having completed his pilgrimage to the sepulchres of his fathers at Prabhása. So all present rose up and paid reverence to Balaráma; and Yudhishtira told him that he was come just in time, for that these two, Duryodhana and Bhíma, who had both been his pupils in the use of the mace, were on the point of going to fight; and Yudhishtira and his brethren besought Balaráma to stay and behold the combat. And when Duryodhana and Bhíma saw Balaráma, they both came and fell at his feet, and besought his leave to engage; and when they had obtained his permission, they chose their ground and prepared for battle. Then Balaráma called them both to him, and said:—"I perceive that one of you two must be slain, and the proper place to die is in the middle of the plain of Kurukshetra." Accordingly all present proceeded to the middle of Kurukshetra, and Yudhishtira commanded that all the drums and trumpets that were in the camp should be sounded; and Duryodhana and Bhíma stood with their battle-axes ready to engage. At length they commenced with a mock skirmish, hurling their maces in the air, or whirling them round their heads and shouting. Then they ran at each other, and struck each other so violently with their maces that the earth trembled; and now the

Balaráma, brother of Krishna, appears upon the plain.

Advises the combatants to fight in the middle of the plain.

The battle.

Desperate struggle.





HISTORY OF  
INDIA.  
PART II.

Krishna advises  
Bhīma to com-  
mit foul play.

Arjuna gives the  
hint to Bhīma.

Bhīma nearly  
killed.  
Smashes the  
thigh of Duryodhana.

battle began, each striking at the other with his mace, or leaping in the air, or stooping to the earth to avoid a blow, whilst all the people were standing round and looking on. And many a time the one or the other was beaten violently to the ground, whilst the noise of the blows reached to the sky, and the blood streamed from their bodies from the waist upwards. And Krishna said to Yudhishtira and Arjuna:—"Bhīma is superior to Duryodhana in strength of limb, but Duryodhana is his superior in agility and knowledge of the mace, and will certainly gain the victory, unless Bhīma changes his mode of fighting." Then Krishna hinted that Bhīma should fulfil the vow, which he had made when Draupadī was insulted, that he would smash the thigh of Duryodhana; for otherwise not only would Bhīma be beaten by Duryodhana, but each one of the remaining four brethren would be in like manner beaten after him. Krishna also said:—"If, when Duryodhana came out of the water, Raja Yudhishtira had not agreed to the conditions which he proposed, then you, O Pándavas, might have surrounded him and put him to death in the same manner that the Kauravas surrounded Abhimanyu and slew him; but now there will be no end to the feud, for during all the thirteen years that you were in exile, Duryodhana has been ever practising himself in the use of the mace, saying to himself:—"If the Pándavas should overpower my armies, and kill every man of them, I will still fight them one after the other with this mace, and be the death of them all." In this manner he has rendered himself superior to Bhīma; and there is no other remedy but this little foul play of striking his thigh, which you must hint to Bhīma to put into practice." So Arjuna cast a significant look towards Bhīma, and struck himself upon the right thigh with his hand, and Bhīma immediately comprehended his meaning, and began to shift and feint with his blows; but Duryodhana, by his prodigious alertness, avoided every stroke. At length they came to closer quarters and struck heavily at each other; and Duryodhana gave Bhīma so violent a blow upon the head that all present thought he was killed;





when Bhīma suddenly jumped up and laid about him in all directions, until at last, when Duryodhana was leaping about to aim another blow, Bhīma struck him so violently upon the right thigh, that it smashed the bone, and Duryodhana fell heavily to the ground, and the earth shook like a cup of quicksilver.

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PART II.

When Bhīma saw that Duryodhana had fallen, he began to strut and wheel round him like a war elephant, and coming up to him he kicked him on the forehead with his two feet, saying:—"You have now received the retribution of all the abominable acts you have committed against us, and all your offences against Draupadī." And again Bhīma kicked him on the head twice or thrice. Then Raja Yudhishtira was exceedingly wroth at the conduct of Bhīma, and struck him a severe blow in the face with his fist, saying:—"A curse be upon you! What villany is this, to expose us all to be evil spoken of by all the world, who will condemn us for ever for this baseness?" Yudhishtira then ordered Arjuna to take Bhīma by the arm and thrust him away; and Yudhishtira came forward weeping very bitterly and took the hand of Duryodhana, and said:—"This evil you have brought upon yourself: We have all acknowledged you to be our lord, and would have served you with our lives and our hearts, but you bore malice against us, and drove us from our house and home into utter ruin: Even then we would have been content with five villages, but you refused us, and desired our deaths, and forced us to go to war with you: But still you are our lord, and we acknowledge you to be our sovereign; and the curse of God will therefore rest upon this act of Bhīma; and if you command me, I will even order him to be put to death for it: Be not however concerned at your present condition, for it is your certain passport to eternal paradise; but as for our lot, it is hard indeed, for all those whom you leave behind you, all your wives and children, will curse and condemn us for your fate."

Bhīma kicks  
Duryodhana on  
the head.

Wrath of Yudhishtira.

Yudhishtira  
strikes Bhīma in  
the face.

Addresses  
Duryodhana.

With these words Raja Yudhishtira again wept profusely, but by this time Balarāma had risen up and ap-

Balarāma's indignation at  
Bhīma's foul  
play.