

ever engaged in the welfare of thy subjects? Do the household Fires receive due worship at thy hands? Thy priests and teachers, is it all well with them? Does the current of their lives flow on smoothly and are they ever intent upon the search for Truth and upon the proper discharge of the duties of their high office? Are thy people happy and contented as ever? Next, with the permission of the great Viswamitra, he ventures to place before thee this request. 'It is not unknown to thee that I have instituted a trial of valour and skill among the various princes of the Earth and mighty warriors; my daughter Sita, of divine beauty, is the prize of him who wins over the heads of the competitors. Great kings and famous warriors sought her hand and essayed the test I have set for them; but they were as nothing before thy valiant son who chanced to come here in the wake of the sage Viswamitra. Thy god-like boy distanced them unspeakably and carried away the prize of valour from among the midst of countless champions, older in years, renowned kings of the Earth and veterans worn with fight and grown grey in war. In a vast concourse of the assembled multitudes of the Earth, princes and peasants, warriors and citizens, saints and sages, thy son, Sri Rama, of divine presence, broke in twain the wonderful bow entrusted to me by the Lord Mahadeva. And so I should, as promised, give my daughter Sita in marriage to him as the prize of Valour. I entreat thy consent to my request and pray thee to enable me keep my word. Deign thou to bless my humble abode with thy presence along with thy saintly priests and teachers. Tarry not, for thou shouldst, of a truth, behold thy lordly sons even now. It behoves thee to gladden a friend's heart and I doubt not that thou wilt give inexpressible pleasure to thy dear sons.' Thus does our lord and master, King Janaka of Mithila, speak to thee, in accents sweet and wise. Viswamitra sanctions his request and graciously thinks



with him." They delivered themselves thus and paused, restrained by the lordly presence of the ruler of Ayodhya.

Dasaratha heard the message of his friend and brother king; it sank deep into his heart and gladdened it beyond words. He turned himself to his spiritual guides, Vasishtha and Vamadeva and to his other councillors and said, "Kausalya's Delight and my heart's joy, resides at present at the capital of the Videhas, led thereunto by the mighty Visvamitra, who extends over them his envied protection. Janaka, the great-souled One, has had an opportunity of acquainting himself in person with the might and prowess of Rama; and now he desires to give his daughter in marriage unto Raghava. If his proposal seems good and fitting in your eyes, (and Janaka is not unknown to you as a royal sage), we should make haste to proceed to his capital, for it becomes us not to delay."

The sages assembled and the ministers, whose hearts were ever turned towards the interest of their master, expressed their joyful assent and approval. Then, Dasaratha gave it out to his ministers that he intended starting the next day. Meanwhile, the envoys of Janaka were invited to pass the night there and with right royal welcome and cheerful talk, the hours passed away.

CHAPTER 69.

Janaka and Dasaratha.

The next morning Dasaratha repaired to the council-chamber where he his kinsmen and priests awaited his presence. He called unto him Sumantra the Faithful and said "Let those in charge of the Royal Treasury start to day in advance and take with them large stores of gold and gems. The armies of our kingdom shall be ready



to march as soon as I give word, elephant, horse, foot and chariot; the conveyances relays and baggage-vans shall company them. Kindly request the holy sages Vasishtha, Vamadeva, Jabali, Kasyapa, and Markandeya the long-lived, to honour me by going in advance; and have my chariot ready as soon as you can. Janaka's envoys are hurrying us and we have already delayed too long".

It was done, and in no time were they on the road, the sages in advance, the king next, and the army following behind. They marched by easy stages and on the fifth day sighted the realms of Janaka, who, duly informed of their approach, welcomed them right royally.

Soon he met the aged monarch and his heart rejoiced thereat. "Had your majesty a pleasant journey hither and safe?" inquired he affectionately of his royal guest. "Honoured am I beyond words by your gracious visit to my humble place. Soon shall your heart rejoice to see the laurels your noble boy has won from many an older rival. And may I hope that the holy One there, even Vasishtha, has had a pleasant journey and the countless Brahmanas that have blessed my fortunate country by coming along with him. Verily do I seem to behold again the Ruler of the Immortals, Indra, girt by his band of Shining Ones. Sure am I that my dark days are over and my race stands high in the esteem of the worlds, in that I have been fortunate to secure an alliance with the high-souled Raghus, that mighty line of warriors. The morning Sun rises on the last day of my sacrificial rite and at its close I wish the wedding to be celebrated. The sages approve of it and I add my own request if it would be of any use."

To which, the aged Dasaratha replied in apt and skilful words (and he was no novice at that). "Friend of my heart!" said he, with a meaning glance at the sages around "have I heard right that the receiver of a gift



awaits the pleasure and the convenience of the giver? You are to us the ideal of all virtues and we are ever glad to abide by your directions."

Janaka of Videha was struck with amaze at this reply of the saintly Dasaratha of straight speech, so thoroughly consonant as it was with righteousness and so highly redounding to his praise. They parted for the night and it was a pleasant time for the sages, who enjoyed unfeigned delight in the company of their brothers in wisdom, old friends and mates.

While, to the aged Dasaratha, it was the happiest day of his life. He could never gaze enough at his dear boys and his eyes were never off their lovely faces for a moment. What with the joy at being restored to his loved ones and what with the princely and hearty welcome of Janaka, the night wore away all too soon.

On his part, Janaka brought the sacrificial rite to a happy conclusion. Great was the glory of his spirit, for he was the wisest of his age and his eye saw into the Heart of things; and in the sweet company of his daughters did the winged Hours pass in swift flight, in peace of heart and joyful anticipation.

CHAPTER 70.

The Race of the Sun.

The next morning, Janaka, having finished his daily round of religious observances, turned to his chaplain Sata-nanda, even as he sat in the midst of the sages, and said, "It is not unknown to you that Kusadhvaja, my younger brother, of great energy, resides in the blessed Sankasya; magnificent, even as the Pushpaka, the aerial car, it is



situated on the banks of Ikshumati, whose furthest limits extend unto the sharp stakes let into the bed of the rapid river. Him do I desire to see, for he is the protector of my sacrifice; and he should, of a truth, share this joy with me."

He spoke and soon there stood before him messengers, quick of grasp, skilful of speech and fleet of foot; and at the command of the king, they were away, on swift horses, to bring the royal Kusadhvaja; even so do the messengers of Indra haste for the Lord Vishnu. They were at Sankasya in no time and communicated unto its ruler the pleasure of his royal brother. He lost no time in complying with it and very soon had the pleasure of touching the feet of the godlike Janaka and his high priest Satananda. Janaka directed him to take his seat; then sent for the prime minister, Sudaman, and said to him, "Seek thou audience of the Ruler of Ayodhya, and request his presence here with his sons and ministers."

Sudaman bowed low to his master and proceeded straight to the royal quarters of Dasaratha, to whom he respectfully conveyed the message of his lord. "Monarch of Ayodhya! my master would know if it would please you to go over to his residence, with your sons, priests, chaplain and others."

"We follow you" replied Dasaratha and very soon he was at the royal palace of Janaka, accompanied by his kinsmen, the holy sages and his countless retinue. "Your Majesty!" said he "the holy Vasishtha here is the patron saint of the line of Ikshvaku; he is our spokesman on every important occasion and you know it. With the permission of Visvamitra and the other sages here, he will now proclaim our royal lineage to all who may list."

He spoke and ceased; and Vasishtha, turning to Janaka and the assembled kings, spoke thus. "From the Unmanifested One issued Brahma; and from the Four-faced One,



eternal, ancient and unchanging, was born Marichi; Marichi begat Kasyapa; Kasyapa begat Vivaswan; Vivaswan begat Manu, known as the Vaivaswata, the first Lord of Men; Manu begat Ikshvaku, the first king of Ayodhya; Ikshvaku begat Kukshi; Kukshi begat Vikukshi; Vikukshi begat Bana; Bana begat Anaranya; Anaranya begat Prithu; Prithu begat Trisanku; Trisanku begat Dundhumara; Dundhumara begat Yuvanaswa; Yuvanaswa begat Mandhata; Mandhata begat Susandhi; Susandhi begat Dhruvasandhi and Prasenajit; Dhruvasandhi begat Bharata; Bharata begat Asita.

And him did his foes, the Haihayas, the Talajanghas and the Sasabindus, confront in battle; his forces defeated and dispersed, the weak and spiritless Asita fled from his kingdom, and took refuge in the solitary depths of Bhrigu Prasravana and with him his ministers. Two wives had he, big with child at that time. One of them bore a bitter hatred towards the other and managed to poison her food. At that time, Chyavana, of the line of Bhrigu, a sage of mighty powers, lived thereabouts; and him did one of the queens wait upon to be blessed with a fair boy. Kalindi (as she was called) the fair-eyed, (it was she who was poisoned by her rival) approached the Holy One and prayed to have a son born unto her. "In thy womb" replied he "there lies a son of immeasurable strength, great lustre and unfathomable energy. But, poison, terrible in its effects, permeates his frame. Grieve not, noble lady! for he will come to no mishap through that." She bowed and retired; and unto her, devoted to her lord and heavy of heart at his misfortune, there was born, through the grace of Chyavana, a son, who came out of the womb even with the poison upon him administered unto his mother by her rival. Hence the world knew him as Sagara.

Sagara begat Asamanjas; Asamanjas begat Amsuman; Amsuman begat Dilipa; Dilipa begat Bhagiratha;



Bhagiratha begat Kakutstha ; Kakutstha begat Raghu ; Raghu begat Pravridha, the Man-eater, otherwise known as Kalmashapada ; Pravridha begat Sankhana ; Sankhana begat Sudarsana ; Sudarsana begat Agnivarna ; Agnivarna begat Sighraga ; Sighraga begat Maru ; Maru begat Prasusruka ; Prasusruka begat Ambarisha ; Ambarisha begat Nahusha ; Nahusha begat Yayati ; Yayati begat Nabhagha ; Nabhagha begat Aja ; Aja begat Dasaratha ; Dasaratha begat Rama and his brother Lakshmana.

And on behalf of the brothers, the worthy descendants of Ikshvaku, whose royal race is characterised by spotless purity, devotion to virtue, valor and straight speech, even unto the utmost, I ask of you your daughters in marriage. Happy will be the alliance and approved of by all, since the parties are so highly worthy of each other."

CHAPTER 71

The line of Janaka.

And to him thus speaking, replied Janaka, in all reverence, "Hail to thee ! great sage ! it behoves one who gives away his child in marriage to proclaim his ancestry, if he come of a high and pure race. So, do me the favor to listen to me while I go through the line of my forefathers of happy memory.

There lived, of yore, a king, by name Nimi, a pattern of everything good and holy. The first and best of men, he won for himself immortal renown in all the worlds by his mighty deeds. Mithi was his son and he gave his name unto Mithila, of which he was the founder. He was the first who bore the name of Janaka ; and after him Uda-vasu, Nandivardhana, Suketu, Devarata, Brihadratha, Mahavira, Sudhriti of great fortitude and prowess, Dhrishtaketu,



Haryasva, Maru, Pratiṇḍhaka, Kīrtirāṭha, Dēvamīdhā, Vibūḍha, Mahīḍhraka, Kīrtirāṭha, Mahāroma, Swarnāroma, and Hriṣvaroma ruled in succession, father and son.

And to the last, of noble soul, who knew better than many others the Mysteries of the Great Law, were born two sons, myself and next to me, the valiant Kuṣāḍhwaja.

After a long and happy reign, my father placed me in his seat and sought the quiet solitudes of the forest, committing to my charge the kingdom and my brother. And when my father departed for the bright abodes of the Blessed, I ruled over the land, following in the path of Justice trod by my ancestors of old, and with a brother's fond love cherished Kuṣāḍhwaja, the apple of my eye.

Sometime after, Sudhanva, the powerful ruler of Saṅkāśyā, besieged Mithilā and sent me this insulting message, "Fail not to send me the bow of Śiva that thou hast in thy keeping and thy lotus-eyed daughter Sītā along with it". Of course I could not put up with such an ungracious demand ; and in consequence, went forth to meet him in battle and laid him low. And to Kuṣāḍhwaja, whose valour gained me the day, I made over the kingdom of Sudhanva. I am the first born of my father and he comes next to me. Verily shall I give my daughters in marriage unto your sons of mighty renown, Sītā of godlike beauty to Rāma, who bore her of as the prize of valour; and Ūrmilā, her sister, to Lakshmaṇa. Doubt me not ; you have my hand and word upon it, once, twice and thrice. It is with a glad heart that I keep my plighted troth; it is a pleasure to me and an honor to give my girls into your house. So, lose no time in going through the preliminary rites of marriage—Samāvartana and Nāṇḍī Srāddhas. The constellation Magha rules over this day ; and on the third from this, shalt we perform the marriage under Uttara Phalguni. For, I shall, of a truth, give my girls in marriage to your sons Rāma and Lakshmaṇa.



CHAPTER 72

THE GODĀNA

THEN answered him Viṣvāmītra, while Vasishtha signified his assent thereto; "The royal houses of Ikshwâku and Viḍēha, inconceivable is their glory and immeasurable. Search as you may, you come not across any that stand beside these. Râma and Lakshmaṇa, Sîtâ and Ūrmilâ stand beautifully matched, in beauty of form and righteousness of heart. But one more word I beseech you. Kuṣadhwaḥja here, your worthy brother, is the father of two maidens of peerless beauty ; and them I would even ask of you in marriage unto the great-souled princes, Bharata and Śaṭrughna. Sons of the royal Daśaraṭha, the beautiful youths, of god-like prowess, yield not the palm to the great Deities themselves that rule the spheres. Grant my request, and knit in bonds indissoluble the royal houses of Ikshwâku and Janaka. "

This proposal of the sage of holy vows, fell honey-sweet on the ears of the Lord of Mithilâ ; and doubly so, in that they were warmly supported by Vasishtha ; and he hastened to reply in all reverence.

"Thrice blessed indeed is my house, inasmuch as your holy selves are pleased to pronounce the alliance a well-matched one. Hail ! saintly ones ! Be it so ; let Bharata and Śaṭrughna take the daughters of Kuṣadhwaḥja to wife. A beautiful sight it would be to see the four maidens wedded to the four royal sons of Daśaraṭha on the same day. The wise astrologers hold that the most auspicious day for marriage is that on which the moon is in conjunction with the asterism Uttara Phalguni ; for, Bhaga, the Lord of Generation, is ruler thereof,"



He stood up and approaching the holy pair, resumed, "Your humble pupil am I, to whom you have deigned to show high favor. May you be pleased to grace these excellent seats. Daśaraṭha lords these wide domains of mine and he grants me no less lordship over Ayôdhyâ. Hesitate not to exercise your authority here and do what you will with your own."

Then replied unto him the Lord of Ayôdhyâ "You and your worthy brother here, are famed over the earth for your manifold graces of heart and mind. Right royally have you entertained the sages and the numerous kings here. All good be yours. Give me leave to retire to my quarters, for I have to perform the preliminary Śrâddhas."

And with the permission of Janaka, Daśaraṭha repaired unto his palace, and Viśvâmiṭra and Vasishthâ along with him. The Śrâddhas were duly conducted and the next morning, the king set about to perform the Gift of Kine. Hundreds of thousands did he give away to pious Brâhmaṇas, to secure the welfare of his sons. A hundred thousand cows, full-yielding, he gave away in the name of each one of his sons,—their horns plated with gold, each with its calf and milking vessel of bronze. And in honor of that glorious occasion of the Gift of Kine, did he make the virtuous Brâhmaṇas royal presents of untold wealth. The rites over, the aged Monarch sat there in the midst of his four sons and looked as grand and glorious as the Self-born One, surrounded by the Guardians of the Worlds on high.



CHAPTER 73

THE WEDDING

THAT selfsame day did Yudhâjit, son of the Kêkaya king and uncle to Bharata on his mother's side, reach Mithilâ. Daśaraṭha welcomed him warmly ; and after mutual enquiries of welfare, did the visitor address the Lord of Kôśala. "The Ruler of Kêkaya makes anxious inquiries after your well-being and desires me to tell you that those in whose welfare you are interested, enjoy peace and happiness. His heart yearns for a sight of my sister's boy and I am here to take him back. They told me at Ayôdhyâ, that you had come over here with your sons to celebrate their marriage ; and all eager to see my nephew, did I hasten here on the wings of speed."

A welcome guest was he to Daśaraṭha, who entertained the worthy prince right royally. A happy night they passed ; and next morning Daśaraṭha finished his religious observances and followed the sages on to the sacrificial grounds. At the auspicious moment, Vijaya, Râma and his brothers, having completed the preliminary rites, came to the place in the wake of Vasishtha and the other sages of holy vows and sat by their royal sire.

Then rose up Vasishtha and spoke to Janaka. "Daśaraṭha, the Lord of Ayôdhyâ and his sons have come here ready for the consummation of the marriage, and await the pleasure of the Giver. Eternal blessings crown the heads of him that gives and him that takes. Perform this marriage and act up to your traditions."

At which words of the holy Vasishtha, Janaka, broad of heart and profound in his knowledge of Righteousness, cried out "Who stands warden at my gate and yet



awaits my orders to inform me of the arrival of my royal guests? This kingdom is yours to command and curious is your hesitation to make yourself at home in it. My daughters, behold them seated near the altar, like lambent tongues of flame; they have gone through the preliminary rites and I but await your arrival. Why not my royal brother proceed straight hither, but tarries?"

Daśaratha accepted the kind invitation and hastened to enter the hall and the princes and the sages along with him.

Janaka then turned to Vasishtha and prayed, "Holy one! Thou and thy saintly brethren here, conduct the marriage rites of Râma, the Worlds' Delight."

"So be it" replied the sage, and proceeding to the altar along with Viśvâmitra and Satânanda, laid out the fire-place therein and decorated it with sweet perfumes and bright flowers. Fresh shoots peeped out from many a vessel of gold, from many a branching vase, from many a jewelled bowl, ranged upon it in neat procession, while countless censers wafted sweet perfumes over the hall. Shells, spoons, ladles, salvers, ready prepared to welcome the honored guest, fried corn and colored rice unbroken in gemmed goblets, stood there in magnificent array. With solemn rites they spread the sacred grass thereon and lighted the holy fire, while Vasishtha made offerings to the Radiant God. Janaka then led forward Sîtâ gaily attired for the occasion and placed her before the Fire, in front of Râma, and spoke these words of solemn import.

"Sîtâ here, my daughter, shares with thee the duties of life. Accept her from me in sign of holy wedlock. May all good be thine.

A faithful wife she will prove to thee, my noble girl, and will ever be with thee, even as thy own shadow.'

He paused and poured over Râma's hands the consecrated water. Shouts of applause and approval from sages



and gods shook the hall and rang along the welkin ; celestial music played on high and flowers of heavenly fragrance rained on the happy couple.

Sitâ thus given in marriage with due rites, Janaka next turned to Lakshmaṇa and with a joyful heart exclaimed, " Come unto me, Lakshmaṇa, and recieve from me my daughter Ūrmilâ, whom I bestow upon you. Be quick about it and all good be yours."

Bharata's turn came next and to him said Janaka, "Noble scion of the race of Raghu! Take thou Māṇḍavî unto thee for wife"; and last came Śaṭrughna, to whom Janaka made over Śrūtakīrti with the words "Join ye your hands in holy bands of matrimony. Every one of you is blessed with all desirable graces of body and mind and have kept your observances ; and it is but meet that you take upon yourselves the duties of a householder's life."

Whereupon, the four royal youths clasped the hands of the four maidens, directed thereunto by the holy Vasishtha. The princes then went round the Sacred Fire, the altar, Janaka and the sages assembled ; and the after-marriage rites were duly gone through as enjoined by the Holy Books. And no sooner did the bridal pairs join hands than the delighted gods showered upon their happy heads the flowers of heaven. Music gay and martial, blended with the sweet strains of the golden-throated Gandharvas, while the lovely Apsarasas, danced in joyous throng thereto. Such was the wonderful sight witnessed on the wedding day of those illustrious descendants of Raghu. And with the joyful notes still in their ears, did the valiant youths pace the Sacred Fires around, once, twice and thrice and lead their happy brides homeward ; while, girt by his kinsfolk, did Janaka follow near, fondly gazing.



CHAPTER 74

RÂMA OF THE AXE

WHEN the shades of Night melted away before the golden shafts of the Orb of Day, Visvâmitra took kind leave of the kings and departed for his distant home in the north, leaving behind him his mighty blessings, that hovered around the princes even as ministering angels. And close upon that came the departure of king Daśaraṭha for his capital, to which his brother-king gave reluctant leave.

Loth to part, Janaka followed him a long way ; and right royal was the dowry he bestowed on his girls. Herds of kine past count ; rare and costly carpets ; cloths of lovely texture and priceless value ; untold wealth in gold and gems, coral and pearl, slaves and servants, horses and elephants, chariots and troops, magnificently attired and gaily caparisoned ; these and many other gifts evidenced his loving heart and royal munificence. It was with much ado that Daśaraṭha could persuade the happy king to turn back to his capital.

Well, it was over, the painful parting ; and the Ruler of Ayôdhyâ, set his face towards his capital and journeyed thither by easy stages, in the sweet company of his noble sons and the saintly hermits.

And him thus proceeding, there met the frightful cries of birds, ill-omened and harsh ; while the beasts of the earth passed from right to left, signs of good, strangely contradicting the former. His heart in a quiver with fatherly anxiety and his senses all in a whirl, Daśaraṭha turned questioning eyes of fear to Vasishtha and cried,

“ Lo ! these signs ! Hoarse are the cries of the birds at large, and bode no good. The beasts of the forest pass

from right to left and that presages safety. I feel a dire sinking of the heart and a mist rises before my eyes. What may it be, your Reverence?"

And to him the sage returned sweet answer, "The birds warn us of the near approach of some fearful danger, while the beasts allay it. Let not this trouble thy royal heart."

And upon them thus conversing, there rushed a mighty wind at which the solid earth trembled in affright, and the giant trees of the forest strewed the ground with their shattered limbs. A pall of darkness swept across the bright luminary : the quarters of the earth were confused, North and South, East and West and could scarce be discerned. Next, a shower of ashes rained down and reft them of what little reason they had. Alone, Vasishtha and the other sages, Daśaraṭha and his sons, appeared to be aware of what was taking place around them.

And in that fearful darkness in which the armies of the king were dimly visible even as so many statues of ashes, they saw a terrible Being approach, with massive coils of matted hair crowning his lofty head. Rāma of the Axe was he, the son of Jamadagni, of the royal race of Bhrigu,—even the dread One who laid low, time and oft, the proudest heads of the earth. Strong and unassailable even as the mighty Kailāsa, unapproachable even as the Fire of Dissolution, blazed forth his lustre, from which the eyes of ordinary men shrank away blinded. On his lofty shoulders rested the terrible Axe and a huge bow ready strung ; his hand grasped a mighty dart, even as the Lord Mahādēva when he went forth against the Demons of the Three Cities.

Great was the anxiety that filled the heart of Vasishtha and the other sages of pure vows and strict observances ; and they spake to one another, "Is it possible that the cruel



fate of his sire still rankles in his heart and he has once again lifted his terrible axe against the royal race on earth ? Dire was the vengeance he took and ample ; he put away his anger and with it his desire for vengeance. It behoves him not to lay his axe once again at the root of the Solar Race ".

They hastened to offer him respect due and sought to pacify the fiery spirit with sweet words of welcome. He of the Axe accepted it of the sages ; and as if heeding them not, haughtily turned towards Râma the son of Daśaraṭha and cried out.



CHAPTER 75

RÂMA AND RÂMA

“**R**ÂMA ! thou son of Daśaratha, Râma, the voice of fame speaks in no measured tones of thy marvellous might. Thy breaking of the bow of Mahâdeva at Janaka's hall, I know it all. That was a wonderful feat and one would hardly think thee capable of it. Close on the heels of the report I hastened hither with this bow. String thou this weapon of my honoured sire—no light task for thy boyish hands—and fit this shaft to it. Then shall thou convince me of thy boasted might ; and then shall I be pleased to offer thee the coveted honour of battle with me : for, thy valour would then entitle thee to be so distinguished.”

At which words of terrible import, the aged king turned towards him of the Axe a face blanched with terror and pitiable with grief and hands of humble entreaty and said : “ A Brâhmana thou and of cloudless fame, thou hadst, long ere this, laid aside thy relentless vengeance against the race of kings. With raised hands I implore thee to harm not my innocent ones. Of the race of Bhrigu thou comest, men renowned for saintly wisdom and chaste vows. Thy word thou passed unto the Lord of the Celestials and laid aside thy weapon of wrath. Thou betookest thyself to the paths of peace and righteousness, made over the earth that was thine by conquest unto Kâsyapa, and sought the quiet solitudes of Mahendra. And lo ! here hast thou come to send us all along the path of destruction ; for, doubt not that we will outlive Râma, our life and soul, if any harm should light on his fair head.”

But Paraśurâma seemed to ignore him and his words



and addressed himself again to Râma. "Of yore, Viṣvaka-
man, the Architect of the Gods, fashioned two bows, strong,
firm and of celestial might, famed through all the worlds.
One of them the Gods gave to Śiva when he marched forth
to destroy the fierce Asuras of the Three Cities ; and *that*
was the one you happened to break. The other that I have
here, was given to the Lord Viṣṇu, equal in strength to
the one handled by Rudra and no easy thing to essay.

Lo ! how it blazes forth in its divine lustre !

Well, the gods sought out Brahma and questioned him
about the respective mights of the Lords Viṣṇu and Mahâ-
dêva. The Self-born One read into their hearts and set the
one against the other. Great was the fight that ensued
between the two and frightful to behold ; for, each strove
his best to get the better of the other.

Then Viṣṇu sent forth a mighty shout. 'Hum' he
cried and the terrible bow of Mahâdêva gave way, and he
himself was stupified thereby. Then, Angels and Gods,
sages and saints, approached and implored them to
lay aside their wrath. When they beheld the bow of
Śiva break before the might of Viṣṇu, the shadow of
doubt that lurked in the hearts of the Gods vanished and
Viṣṇu stood the mightier of the two. Having paid high
reverence unto Him, they took respectful leave of Rudra
and left for their respective regions and Brahma and Indra
along with them.

The Lord Mahâdêva, his heart still sore with the
sense of defeat, gave his bow and shafts to king
Dêvarâṭa of the Viḍêhas : while Viṣṇu handed over his
mighty bow and arrows unto Rîchîka of the line of Bhrîgu.

My sire Jamaḍagni, of unrivalled prowess, got it from
him. Later on he engaged himself in severe austerities
and unspeakable was the might that accrued to him there-

by; and he laid aside his weapons of war, useless to him and never to be resumed. But, King Arjuna, base of heart, slew in cold blood the unoffending sage. The cruel death of my innocent sire burnt into my heart like molten lead and cried out for vengeance, dire and swift. And I laid my axe at the root of the race of kings, times out of count, as fast as they grew. I wiped them off the face of the earth, which I subdued by the might of my arms. And at a grand sacrifice, I offered it as a gift to the great Kāsyapa, the Holy One. Thereafter I repaired to Mount Mahēndra and engaged myself in severe austerities. There do I yet remain, in that happy resort of Gods and Angels.

But, to-day I happened to hear the Gods speak to one another in the high heavens of thy wonderful feat, in tones of admiration and awe. They said that thou, out of thy marvellous energy, broke asunder the divine bow of Śiva; and all at once I hastened thither to assure myself of the truth of the report.

Take thou this bow, used of yore by the Lord Viṣṇu. Walk in the path of thy forefathers of stainless fame. Fit thou this shaft of fiery energy unto the string. Well, if thou but succeed in doing that, I shall then be glad to offer thee a chance to measure thyself with me."



CHAPTER 76

THE BITER BIT

RÂMA heard him out ; his father's presence kept back the hot words that rose to his lips ; yet, he managed to reply in cool and even accents of icy disdain.

"Worthy descendant of Bhrigu ! Not unknown to me your fierce deeds, which I excuse in consideration of the debt of vengeance you owe your honored sire. But you seem to regard me as a low specimen of the warrior class, weak and despicable, fallen from the high traditions of his forefathers. Well, this day shall you have a chance of knowing me better ; and shall convince yourself of my energy and valour."

A storm of suppressed wrath shook his powerful frame as he, with a quick motion and grace, took the bow and arrow from the hands of the dread son of Jamadagni. Playfully he strung it and laid the arrow on the string ; then turned himself to Râma of the Axe and cried in words winged with angry flame,

"This divine shaft, used by the Lord Vishnu, strikes down the mighty and shrivels up the energy and pride of him against whom it is discharged. None can shoot it in vain. But you are a Brâhmaṇa and an object of reverence unto me ; and doubly so, in that you claim kinship with my venerable Master, Viśvâmiṭra. That alone keeps back the shaft, which, else, would have drunk your heart's blood ere this.

Now, which do you choose ? Shall I deprive you of the high regions you have won by the force of your Tapas ; or of your unimpeded power of motion through the worlds above and below ?"

Meanwhile, Gandharvas and Apsarasas, Siddhas and Chāraṇas, Kinnaras and Yakshas, Rākshasas and Nāgas, sages and gods, flocked to the spot to behold that wonderful sight, and at their head, the Ancient of Days, Brahma. They saw the son of Daśarāṭha as he stood there, his hand grasping the mighty bow of Viṣṇu and the dread shaft drawn to his ear and ready to take its flight. The beings of the Earth stood dazed and listless; while the haughty son of Jamadagni felt himself drained of his valour and fiery might and gazed powerlessly on the hero. The superior energy of Rāma absorbed his proud strength and sunk him in torpor quite.

Then, lifting eyes of lack-lustre hue to the bright-eyed boy before him, he spoke in accents slow and painful.

“Of yore, I made a gift of this broad earth to Kāsyapa. ‘A moment ago’ said he, ‘you were lord of the world, but now it is mine. And you shall not stay in my dominions.’ The words of the great One are a law unto me; and I make it a point never to pass the night here. I have given my word unto Kāsyapa that the Earth shall be his. So I would even request you take not from me my power of free motion through the worlds. Quicker than a flash of thought, shall I speed back to whence I came, the beautiful Mount Mahēndra. Worlds of surpassing glory have I won by my hard Tapas; this powerful dart shall destroy them for me. Delay not. Your wonderful mastery of this divine weapon has opened my eyes to the great truth. Know I not that Thou art the Changeless One, the Destroyer of Maḍhu, whom the Lords of Light are proud to call their God and Ruler. All glory be hine, Thou scourge of the wicked! Behold the Shining Ones ranged along the sky, gazing with never satisfied eyes on Thee, of unparalleled fame, and of unapproachable energy in battle. No sense of disgrace do I feel at being discomfited by Thee, the Lord



of the Universe. Let loose the shaft, I pray Thee and soon shalt Thou see me taking my way to Mahêndra."

Then Śrī Râma discharged the arrow of divine might ; and the son of Jamadagni lost the bright regions that he had made his own by his long and severe Tâpas. Râma of the Axe went round in meek reverence Râma, the son of Daśaratha and sang his praises high. The bright gods ranged along the firmament took up the strain and made the welkin ring with their shouts of joy. Back sped Paraśurâma to Mount Mahêndra ; and the Earth and the sky were bright again and clear and the quarters thereof.



CHAPTER 77

BACK TO AYODHYĀ

WHEN Rāma of the Axe had taken his departure, the victor handed over the bow and arrows to Varuṇa of unspeakable might, who stood by invisible to the rest. He then saluted Vasishtha and the other sages with profound reverence, and turning to his sire found him still dazed with grief and fear.

“Jamaḍagni’s fiery son,” cried he “is far away by this time, and will not return in a hurry. Give orders to your forces and retinue to resume their march towards Ayôdhyā, delayed by this trifling annoyance. See you not they wait for it impatiently?”

“Gone is Jamaḍagni’s son”—these words fell like sweet music on the ears of the afflicted Daśaraṭha and brought him round. He strained his darling to his breast, smelt him on the head, felt him all over to see whether he was safe and said to himself, “Verily, this day have I passed through the dread portals of Death and come back among the living—I and my dear son.” And with a bright face he directed his troops to proceed to his capital.

Right royal and hearty was the welcome his happy citizens accorded to their beloved monarch, of untarnished glory, come back among them with his sons of mighty arms. They advanced to meet him, even when he was far away from the city and lined the roads leading thereto. And Daśaraṭha entered his capital amidst the hearty blessings of the Brāhmaṇas and the jubilant shouts of welcome of his loyal subjects. Gaily they decked it for the occasion ; the roads were swept clean and well-watered and strewed thick with sweet flowers of rare perfume ;



pennons and flags, banners and streamers, festoons and garlands, triumphal arches and inscriptions met him on every side ; sweet strains of music, vocal and instrumental, gay and solemn, martial and melodious greeted his pleased ears wherever he turned. And thus he and his sons of mighty fame passed on to his royal home, that towered aloft even as the lofty Home of Ice and Snow and as gay and grand. Joy unspeakable filled his aged heart ; for were not his desires fulfilled, even beyond his wildest hopes ?

Meanwhile, Kausalyâ and Sumit̃ra, Kaikêyî and the other queens of Daśaraṭha, were busily happy with welcoming to their royal home the wives of their sons, as became their rank and station—Sītâ, and Ūrmilâ, Māṇḍavî and Śrutakīrti. The princesses were next taken to the temples of the gods to offer reverent worship and humble thanksgiving--(dressed in gay robes and flashing with gems and gold), while bards and minstrels, poets and eulogists called down every blessing on their fair heads. Next, they paid their respects to every one that deserved it and repaired unto their mansions, that put to blush the lordly home of the Guardian of Riches. They made large gifts to Brâhmaṇas, of kine, gold and corn, and passed their lives in the enjoyment of every kind of pleasure, in the sweet company of their lords.

And the royal sons of the Lord of Ayôdhyâ, those great-souled Ones, of unequalled fame on earth, ever waited on their noble sire with sweet solicitude, anticipating his least wishes. The hearts of their elders they won by their bright virtues and rare tact ; and they were not the ones to let any chance go by. Their days were one long dream of unalloyed bliss ; for, wherein did they lack ? Married to the loves of their hearts, perfect in every art of warfare, with the wealth of the worlds at their disposal, and



surrounded by friends who lived in them and for them alone, how could their happiness be otherwise than ideal?

Sometime after, his father called Bharata unto him and said, "Bharata dear, Yudhâjit, your uncle and son of the ruler of Kêkaya, waits here to take you with him unto his kingdom. Him have I promised thereunto at Mithilâ, in the presence of the saintly ascetics. It behoves you to go with him and gladden his heart."

"Nothing would please me better" replied Bharata. He saluted his sire and Râma, lovingly embraced Lakshmana; and taking kind leave of his mothers and of his mighty brother Râma, the sweet friend of all beings, he took his departure, accompanied, of course, by the inseparable Satrughna.

Râma and Lakshmana, thus left behind, waited upon their godly sire of unparalleled renown. Under the advice and guidance of his father, Râma, the soul of virtue, looked after the interests and welfare of the citizens; but, withal, the duties to his parents and elders were his first care and lay next his heart. Even thus did he endear himself to all by his sweet ways and saintly life, father and mother, Brâhmanas grown grey in sacred lore, and the loyal citizens, happy under the benign rule of his father. His unfailing might, and ideal virtues outran his growing fame; and all looked up to him in love and reverence, even as the created beings regard their Lord and Maker, the Self-Born One.

And the happy years chased one another with light feet as they tripped over the heads of Râma and the love of his heart, Sîtâ, the fairest of the daughters of the Earth, as centred in each other, they grew more and more into each other's soul and being. Dear was Sîtâ unto Râma, as the wife of his sire's choice; and dearer yet did she make



herself unto him, through her divine loveliness and rare excellences. And Sitâ loved her lord with a love passing speech, passing belief. He was the life of her life, the soul of her soul. And heart spoke to heart plainer and more powerfully than feeble words, poor expressions of the myriad-hued human thought. Râma's heart went out to her, as it did to no one else, to this daughter of Janaka, the royal sage of Mithilâ, fair as a goddess, even as the Divine Mother come down among mortals. Nay, the Almighty Parents, Vishnu and Lakshmî, had not a brighter home and a happier than Râma in the sweet company of his princess of ravishing beauty, whose love towards that worthy son of the royal sage was boundless as Eternity, stronger than Fate.





NOTES

ON THE

BALAKANDA

Valmeeki set himself to place before men the heart-doctrine of the Vedas. The Ithihasa, whose meaning lies on the surface, gives us friendly advice ; the Epic that preserves its treasures in deeper depths, admonishes us like the object of our love. Our poet has utilised the two in his poem. He knew, best of all, the defects that mar a perfect Epic. He should compel the respect and admiration of the best and brightest intellects. He proceeds to show, in the first four chapters of the Balakanda, that his Ramayana satisfies the most exacting critic. In the first of these, he unfolds the subject and the purpose.

“Bow in reverence to the Teacher ; wait upon him ; question him keenly, closely and without reservation, until your doubts are at an end. Thus and no otherwise can you get access to the truths enshrined in the Vedas” says the Lord in his Geetha (IV, 34). The Sruthi enjoins the aspirant after divine wisdom to learn it only through the Teacher ; and, it directs the latter to impart it only to him who seeks it with his heart and with his soul. Valmeeki illustrates this hoary tradition in the questions he put to Narada on the nature of Brahman. He begins by saluting Him whom he worships in the sanctuary of his heart, and after Him his teacher. “Wisdom is most precious when imparted by the Teacher” ; “Verily, he who has found a good Teacher and capable, knows Brahman”—these Vedic texts led Valmeeki to expatiate upon the manifold perfections of his Teacher.

P. 1.—2. *The Thretha Yuga :—*

Yugas.	Adi Sandhi	Yuga Varshas.	Anthya Sandhi.	Total.	Maha Yugam.
Kritha ...	144,000	1,440,000	144,000	1,728,000	4/10
Thretha ...	108,000	1,080,000	108,000	1,296,000	3/10
Dwapara ...	72,000	720,000	72,000	864,000	2/10
Kali ...	36,000	360,000	36,000	432,000	1/10
Total ...	360,000	3,600,000	360,000	4,320,000	1

Thus, a Mahayuga is made up of 4,320,000 mortal years. 71 Mahayugas make a Manvanthara; but, its prologue and epilogue occupy each 1,728,000 years. So, the latter half of the epilogue forms the first half of the prologue of the next Manvanthara. 14 Manvantharas and 15 interludes make up a Kalpa; in other words, $(14 \times 71 + 4/10 \times 15)$ 1000 Mahayugas = 4,320,000,000 years. A day of Brahma forms a Kalpa; and his night is of equal duration. 360 days of Brahma make up his year. 100 years of Brahma make up his life-period, which again is but as the twinkling of an eye to Maha Vishnu—*Soorya-siddhantha*.

During the second half of the present Brahma's life, in the 51st year, on the first day, known as Swetha-varaha-kalpa, the seventh Manvanthara (Vaivaswatha), in the Mahayuga and in the Thretha-yuga, 28th the second of the series, the Lord Maha Vishnu came down on earth as Sree Rama.

3. *Sage :—*The Valakhilyas and the Vaikhanasas are two of the most distinguished varieties. "The Vaikhanasas came from the nails of the Supreme Brahman; and the Valakhilyas from His nether parts."—*Sruthi*.



V. R. VII. 1, classifies them thus :—

East:—Kausika, Yavakreetha, Gargya, Galava and Kanva.

South :—Swasthyathreya, Namuchi, Pramuchi and Agasthya, (Athri, Sumukha, Vimukha—*Thilaka*.)

West:—Nrishadgu, Kavasha, Dhaumya, Raudreya.

North:—Vasishtha, Kasyapa, Athri, Visvamithra, Gauthama, Jamadagni and Bharadwaja.

But, the Mahabharatha, (Anusasanaparva 150), gives a different version.

East:—Yavakreetha, Raibhya, Arvvasu, Ausheeja, Kaksheevan, Bala, Kanva, Barihishad—the Priests of Indra.

South:—Unmuchu, Pramuchu, Swasthyathreya, Dridhavya, Oordhwabahu, Thrinasoma, Angiras and Agasthya—the Priests of Yama.

West:—Dridheyu, Ritheyu, Parivyatha, Ekatha, Dwitha, Thritha and Sarasvatha, son of Athri—the Priests of Varuna (Ushanka and Krishna—*Ib.*, Santhiparva 208).

North :—Athri, Vasishtha, Gauthama, Kasyapa, Bharadwaja, Visvamithra, Kausika, and Jamadagni—the Priests of Kubera.

Vishnupurana (III, 6) divides the sages as :—*Rajarshis* like Visvamithra, who attained that level from Kingship ; *Devarshis* like Narada, who rose to that height from Godship ; *Brahmarshis* like Vasishtha, who are either the sons of Brahma or Brahmanas.

But, Vayupurana understands it differently. The *Brahmarshis* are the descendants of Kasyapa, Vasishtha, Angiras, Athri and Bhrigu, the sons of Brahma and the founders of the Brahminical Gothras (clans). The *Devarshis* are the Valakhilyas, Kardama, and Kubera ; sons of the Prajapathis Krathu, Pulaha and Pulasthya ; Parvatha and Narada, sons of Kasyapa ; Achala, son of Prathyoosha ; and Nara-Narayana, sons



of Dharma. The *Rajarshis* are Ikshwaku, Janaka and the like. The Brahmarshis dwell in the Brahmaloka, the Devarshis in the worlds of the Gods and the Rajarshis in the heaven of Indra.

The Vedas :—In the beginning they were divided into four parts and comprised many crores of sentences. Maha Vishnu takes upon himself to arrange them in every Dwapara of the twenty-eight Maha-Yugas in this Vaivasvatha Manvanthara. He is then known as Veda-Vyasa.

The following personages have held the office till now :—

- | | |
|----------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Brahma. | 15. Thraiyaruna. |
| 2. Manu Swayambhuva. | 16. Dhananjaya. |
| 3. Sukra. | 17. Krithanjaya. |
| 4. Brihaspathi. | 18. Rina. |
| 5. Savitha. | 19. Bharadwaja. |
| 6. Yama. | 20. Gauthama. |
| 7. Indra. | 21. Uththama. |
| 8. Vasishtha. | 22. Vena. |
| 9. Sarasvatha. | 23. Thrinabindu. |
| 10. Thridhama. | 24. Valmeeki. |
| 11. Thrivrisa. | 25. Sakthi. |
| 12. Bharadwaja. | 26. Parasara. |
| 13. Anthariksha. | 27. Jathukarna, and |
| 14. Vapri. | 28. Krishnadwaipayana. |

Aswaththama, son of Drona, will exercise that function in the next Dwapara.

Dwaipayana divided the Vedas into four and gave the Rik, the Yajus, the Saman and the Atharva to his disciples Paila, Vaisampayana, Jaimini and Sumanthu. Paila divided the Rigveda into two Samhithas, (rescensions) and gave them to Indrapramathi and Bashkali. The latter divided his portion among his pupils Bandhya, Agnimathara, Yagnyavalkya and Parasara. Indrapramithi taught his Samhitha to his son Mandukeya.



(The Vayupurana tells us that it passed from him in succession to Sathyasravas, Sathyahitha, Sathyasree and to Sakalya Rathanthara and Bashkali, pupils of the last. This was the very Sakalya who rashly opposed Yagnyavalkya in the sacrificial hall of Janaka and being defeated, lost his life in consequence). Vedamithra, also known as Sakalya, divided the same among his students Mudgala, Galava, Vathsya, Saleeya and Sisira. Sakapoorni, the pupil of Indra-pramathi, divided his portion and his Vedic glossary among Krouncha, Vaithalaki, Valaka and Niruktha-kriith. Another Bashkali taught his Samhitha to Kalayani, Gargya and Katha-Java.

Vaisampayana divided the Yajurveda into 27 branches and taught it to his disciples Syamayani, Aruni, Alambi and others.

Once upon a time, the sages gave out that any one of them who did not attend a conference to be held on Mount Meru within a given time, should incur, within seven nights, the sin of killing a Brahmana. Vaisampayana kept away; he hit, by accident, the child of his sister and it died instantly. The sin of Brahminicide caught him in its dark folds. He called unto him his pupils and directed them to perform expiatory penances on his behalf. But, Yagnyavalkya kept aloof and exclaimed, "How can I get on with these miserable and weak-minded Brahmanas?" His teacher turned upon him in a rage and cried out, "And this is how you speak of your fellow pupils, who are, for aught I know, as good as yourself. What have I to do with any disciple who heeds not my wishes?" "It was no haughtiness of mine" replied Yagnyavalkya "nor self-conceit that prompted my words. I spoke but the barest truth. But, I see this is no place for me. And here is what I have learnt of you." With that, he ejected from his mouth the texts of the Yajurveda and passed



out. The other youths changed themselves into Thiththiris (partridges) and gobbled up the texts stained with blood. Hence, the Samhitha was known as Thaitthhareeya. Yagnyavalkya then prayed hard to the Solar Deity and got from him the knowledge of those texts of the Yajur-Veda which even his teacher knew not. It is known as the Sukla Yajur-Veda, and the Vajasaneya-Samhitha.

Jaimini taught the Sama Veda to his son Sumanthu and his grandson Sukarma. The latter divided it into a thousand branches and taught it to his disciples Hiranyanabha and Paushyinji. Fifteen disciples of each of them founded as many schools, north and east. Krithi, another disciple of Hiranyanabha, taught 24 Samhithas to as many scholars.

Sumanthu taught the Atharva Veda to Kabandha, his pupil, through whom it descended in two portions to Devadarsa and Pathya. Maudga, Brahmbali, Saulkayani and Pippalada, learnt it from Devadarsa; while Jajali, Kumudadi and Saunaka had it from Pathya—*V. P. III, 4, 5, 6*.

The Vedas are divided into, the *Samhithas*, containing the Manthras used in religious rites; the *Brahmanas*, explaining the relation of the Manthras to the ritual, the rules of procedure, illustrative anecdotes, philosophical reflections, subtle instructions, expiatory penances, laudatory texts and genealogical history; the *Aranyakas*, to be studied in the forest solitudes by hermits and ascetics; and the *Upanishads*, revealing the Science of Brahman.

Rig Veda.

i. The *Samhitha* is divided into eight Ashtakas; each Ashtaka is sub-divided into eight Adhyayas; each Adhyaya is sub-divided into 33 Vargas; and each Varga contains 5 stanzas. There is also another arrangement of it in ten Mandalas, 85 Anuvakas, 1077 Sookthas



and 10580 Riks. Kathyayana's Anukramanika mentions the first division, while the second is found in the Aithareya-Aranyaka, the Grihya-Soothras of Asvalayana and Sankhayana, the Prathisakhya and the Niruktha of Yaska.

Mandalas one and ten are composed by several Rishis; the second by Grithsamada; the third by Visvamithra; the fourth by Vamadeva; the fifth by Athri; the sixth by Bharadwaja; the seventh by Vasishtha; the eighth by Kanva; and the ninth by Angiras. Yaska's Niruktha (Vedic Glossary) and other Nighautus (lexicons) are the works of reference upon it. Sayanacharya has written a masterly commentary upon the Samhitha.

It contains the manthras to be recited by the Hotha who offers the sacrifice to the Fire.

ii. *The Brahmanas* :—the Aithareya-Brahmana in 40 Adhyayas and the Kausheethaki-Brahmana in 30 belong to this Veda. Soma-yaga, Agnihothra and the Coronation ceremony form the subject of the first; while Soma-yaga is dealt with in the second. The former is commented upon by Sayana, and the latter by Vinayaka.

iii. *The Aranyakas* :—The Aithareya-Aranyaka in 5 parts, and the Kausheethaki-Aranyaka in 3 parts are commented upon by Sankaracharya.

iv. *The Upanishads* :—Aithareya, Kausheethaki, Nada-bindu, Athma-bodha, Nirvana, Mudgala, Aksha-malika, Thripura, Saubhagya-lakshmi, Sarasvathee-rahasya and Bahvricha belong to this.

v. *Soothras* :—The Srautha-soothras (sacrificial manuals) of Sankhayana in 18 Adhyayas and of Asvalayana in 12; and the Grihya-Soothras (house-holders' manuals) by Asvalayana, Sankhayana and Saunaka are attached to this Veda. Saunaka is also the author of a Prathisakhya-soothra. It is a grammatical or rather phonetic treatise, regulating the euphonic combination of letters and their peculiar



pronunciation, according to the practice of the different Sakhas of the Vedas. It does not divide the words in the same way as the Vyakarana, but takes actually formed words as they occur in the hymns and teach the phonetic changes they undergo, the mode of pronouncing the accents, etc. In fact, they show how the Pada text is converted by a process of euphonic combination into the Samhitha. Panini has written a Siksha (Phonetic Directory) on the Rigveda, and Pingala on the Prosody of it. There are two Anukramanikas (Indices) one by Kathyayana and the other by Saunaka. The latter gives the Seer, the Deity, the Metre, and the Object of each manthra. The Indices aim at preserving the texts from corruption, by exactly calculating the number of hymns, verses, words and even syllables in the work.

Yajurveda.

The Thaiththareeya-samhitha (Krishnayajus) and the Vayasaneya-samhitha (Suklayajus) form the two main divisions. More than half of the manthras in this are taken from the Rig-veda. The invocation of the Gods during the sacrifice, their praise, the fire-altar, the bricks, the sacrificial posts, the Rajasooya, the Asva-medha, and the other details of sacrifice, the Aupasana, the Agnihothra and other domestic rites form the subjects of it. It is indispensable to the Adhwaryu (the Director of the sacrifice).

Krishnayajus.

i. *Samhitha*:—It has three Sakhas or branches—the Taitththareeya-sakha of Apasthamba, the Kathaka of the Charayaneeyas, and the Vathseya of the Aukheeyas. The Apasthamba-sakha is divided into seven Kandas, 44 Prasnas, 651 Anuvakas and 2198 Kandikas (containing about 50 words each).

The Kathaka-sakha is divided into five parts, of which the first three is sub-divided into 40 Sthanakas. The fourth

contains the manthras to be recited by the Hotha and the fifth the manthras used in the Asvamedha sacrifice. Sayana-charya, Balakrishna, Bhatta-kausika, Bhaskara-misra, Bhava-swami and many others have commented upon it.

ii. *The Brahmana* :—The Thaitthhareeya-brahmana.

iii. *Aranyaka* :—The Thaitthhareeya-aranyaka.

iv. *Upanishad* :—Katha, Thaitthhareeya, Atharva-sikha, Atharva-sira, Brahma, Kaivalya, Swethasvathara, Garbha, Amritha-bindu, Narayana, Amritha-nada, Kalagni-rudra, Kshurika, Sarvasara, Suka-rahasya, Thejo-bindu, Brahma-vidya, Yoga-thathva, Thri-sikhi-brahmana, Dakshinamoorthi, Skanda, Sareeraka, Yoga-sikha, Ekakshara, Akshi, Adhyathma, Avadhootha, Katha, Rudra-hridaya, Yoga-kundali, Pancha-brahma, Prana-gnihothra, Varaha, Satyayana and Kali-santharana.

v. *Soothras* :—The Srautha-soothras of Bodhayana, Bharadwaja, Apasthamba, Hiranyakesi and others.

Sukla-yajus

i. *Samhitha* :—is divided into Madhuyandina-sakha and Kanva-sakha. The Vajasaneya-samhitha is divided into forty Adhyayas, 303 Anuvakas, 1975 Kandikas. The first and the second chapter, treat of the Darsa and the Purnima sacrifices ; the third of the Agnihothra and the Chathurmasya sacrifices; the fourth to the eighth of Agnishtoma; the ninth and the tenth of Vajayapeya and Rajasooya ; from the eleventh to eighteenth of the erection of fire-altars ; from the twenty-second to twenty-fifth of the Asva-medha ; from the twenty-sixth to thirtieth of the manthras to be used in the above ; from the thirtieth to the fortieth of Purusha-medha, Sarva-medha, Pithri-medha, and Pravargya; and the fortieth of the Science of Brahman. The sixteenth is known as Satha-rudreeya, the thirty-first as Purusha-sooktha and the fortieth as the Eesavasya-upanishad.

Maheedhara, Uvatacharya, Madhava and others have commented upon it.

ii. *Brahmana*:—The Sathapatha in 100 Adhyayas. The second part of the 14th Kanda is known as Brihadaranyaka.

iii. *Upanishad*:—Eesavasya, Brihadaranyaka, Jabala, Hamsa, Parama-hamsa, Subala, Manthrika, Niralamba, Mandala-brahmana, Adwaya-tharaka, Paingala, Bhikshuka, Thureeyatheetha-vadhootha, Thara-sara, Yagnyavalkya and Mukthika.

iv. *Soothra*:—The Srautha-soothras of Kathyayana and Vaijavapa, the Grihya-soothras of Paraskara and the Prathisakhya-soothras of Kathyayana. Krishna-yajus has two Anukramanikas connected with the Athreya and the Kathaka Sakhas; while the Sukla-yajur-veda has the Anukramanika of Kathyayana.

Sama Veda

i. *Samhitha*:—The first part is divided into 6 Prapathakas and the second part into 9. There are 1549 Riks in it, of which all but 78 are taken from the Rig Veda. It is sung by the Udgatha, during the Soma-yaga, when offerings are made to the fire. They are also divided into Gramageya-gana, Aranya-gana, Ooha-gana, and Oohya-gana.

ii. *Brahmana*:—Thandya, Shadwimsa, Adbhutha, Chandogya, Samavidhi, Arsheya, Devathadhyaya, Upanishad, Samhithopanishad, Vamsa, etc.

iii. *Upanishad*:—Kena, Chandogya Goodharunika, Maithrayani, Maithreya, Vajrasoochi, Dhyana-bindu, Yoga-choodamani, Vasudeva, Maha, Sanyasa, Avyaktha, Kundika, Savithri, Rudraksha, Jabala, Darsana and Jabali.

iv. *Soothra*:—The Srautha-soothra of Masaka, Latyayana, Drahyayana, and the Anupada-soothra, Nidana-soothra, Pushpa-soothra, Panchavidhi-soothra, Prathihara-soothra of Kathyayana, Danda-lakshana-soothra, Upakranda-soothra, Kalpanupada, Anusthothra, Kshudra, and many



others; the Grihya-soothras of Gobhila, Khadira, Drahyayana and Gauthama; and the Karma-pradeepa of Kathyayana.

Atharvaveda

i. *Samhitha*:—is divided into 20 Kandas, 38 Prapathakas, 760 Sookthas and 6,000 Manthras. Sayana has commented upon it.

ii. *Brahmana* :—Gopatha.

iii. *Upanishad*:—Prasna, Mundaka, Mandookya, Pancharudra, Brihad-jabala, Nrisimha-thapani, Narada-parivrajaka, Seetha, Sarabha, Maha-narayana, Rama-rahasya, Ramathapini, Sandilya, Parama-hamsa parivrajaka, Annapoorna, Soorya, Athma, Pasupatha-brahma, Thripura-thapini, Devi, Bhavana, Bhasma-jabala, Ganapathi, Maha-vakya, Gopalathapini, Krishna, Hayagreeva, Daththareya and Garuda.

iv. *Soothra* :—The Prathisaakya of Saunaka named Chathuradhyayika, the Sroutha-soothra of Vaithana, the Grihya-soothra of Kausika, and the Nakshathra-kalpa, Santhi-kalpa, Vithana-kalpa, Samhitha-kalpa and Abhichara-kalpa are connected with it.

This is indispensable to the Brahma, who is to watch over the right conduct of the sacrifice.

The Mahabhashya of Pathanjali enumerates 21 Sakhas of the Rigveda, 100 of the Yajus, 1,000 of the Sama and 9 of the Atharva ;

The Mukthikopanishad ascribes 150 to the Yajus and 50 to the Atharva.

5. *Vedangas* :—i. *Siksha*.—Panini is the earliest writer upon it. The origin of the various letter-sounds from the various parts of the body, the intonation given to them—Udaththa (high), Anudaththa (low), and Swaritha (long)—are dealt with in detail. Narada, Vyasa and Bharadwaja have also written upon it.

ii. *Vyakarana*.—It is generally held that there were nine schools of grammar and that Hanuman learned



them from the Sun-god ; but, Panini is the standard authority on the subject. Kathyayana and Pathanjali have commented on his Soothras. It deals with the Laukika (secular) and Vaidika (Vedic) words, their roots, terminations, modifications, joinings etc. The other schools are not held as orthodox ; they are not Vedangas ; they are applicable only to the Puranas.

iii. *Chandas* :—Rishi Pingala is the recognised writer on Prosody. It deals with Gayathri, Brihathi and the other metres used in the composition of the Vedic hymns.

iv. *Niruktha* :—Rishi Yaksha is the standard exponent of it. The derivation and the history of rare and obsolete words used in the Vedas, and a general glossary to the hymns, with occasional dissertations on Philology and the growth of language are the main points discussed. It is divided into Pada-kanda (on words) and Artha-kanda (on their meanings). There is also extant a work on the same subject by Sakapoorni.

v. *Jyothisha* :—Soorya, Gargya, Narada, Maya and Parasara are some of the earliest writers thereupon. It treats of the proper time to begin and end the various complicated rituals, domestic and public, the results attributed to them and the future of individuals and nations.

The Siddhantas by Pulisa, Romaka, Vasishtha, Soorya and Pithamaha and the works of Varaha-mahira and Aryabhata, are the modern authorities on the subject. Astronomy, Horoscopy and Natural Astrology are its main divisions. An adept of this science should, according to Brihath-samhitha (Ch. II), must be of noble birth and of agreeable appearance ; meek, truthful and without jealousy ; with well-proportioned limbs, joints well-knit, and of good growths, he should have no physical defects ; he should be blessed with a fine physique and a high sonorous voice ; he should have fine hands, feet, nails, eyes, chin, teeth, ears, forehead, eye-brows and head. Of cleanly habits, able,



noble-minded, eloquent, he must be a man of originality and imagination ; he must possess a knowledge of time and place ; he must be free from nervousness ; he must be learned in matters of expiatory ceremonies, hygiene, occult magic and ablutions ; he must be a favourite of the Gods and an observer of fasts and penances ; he must possess a remarkable memory and should solve any difficulty, save in matters of direct divine interference.

He should have mastered the Thanthra-sasthra (Astronomy); he should have studied the Panha-siddhanthas. He should have a correct knowledge of a Yuga (4320000 solar years), Varsha (a solar year), Ayana (6 solar months), Rithu (2 solar months), Masa (a solar month), Paksha (15 solar days) Aho-rathra (a solar day), (Yama) ($\frac{1}{8}$ of a solar day), Muhoor-tha ($\frac{1}{30}$ of it), Nadi ($\frac{1}{60}$ of it or 24'), Vinadi ($\frac{1}{60}$ of a nadi or 24"), Prana (4"), Thruti ($\frac{1}{33750}$ of a second) and other divisions of time and space. He must have studied the causes of solar, Savana, siderial and lunar months, as well as of intercalary lunations and intercalary days ; of the beginning and end of a Shashtyabda (a cycle of 60 years), a Yuga (5 years), Varsha (a year), Masa (a month), Dina (a day), Hora (an hour), and of their lords. He must know the divisions of time relating to the sun, the moon, the earth, the Pithris, the stars, the men and Brahma ; their similarity and dissimilarity ; and the fitness or otherwise of each for particular purposes. If the five Siddhanthas should lay down different results, he must be able to calculate correctly the places of the sun and the planets by means of shadow, water-level and astronomical instruments ; of the termination of their Ayana (course northward and southward), of their being due east to the observer after rising and of their altitude at any time. He must know the reason for the correction required for the conversion of the Heliocentric into Geocentric longitude and *vice*

versa ; the causes of the Ayana of the sun and the planets and of their slow and rapid movements at different times. In solar and lunar eclipses, he must be able to calculate the times of their commencement and end, the places of first and last contact, their magnitude and duration ; and in total eclipses, the time between middle eclipse and the beginning or end of total phase; he must also ascertain the colour of the eclipsed lunar disc. He must calculate beforehand the times of the moon's conjunction with the planets, as well as of planetary conjunctions. He must know the length of the daily motion of each planet in its orbit and of the orbit itself. He must know the Earth's revolution round the Sun and its rotation round its axis ; its shape and size ; the latitude of a place and its complement ; the nature of the hour-circle ; the difference between six hours and half a day ; the times of the rising of the Zodiacal signs. He must be able to calculate time from shadow and shadow from time; and to convert Longitude into right ascension and right ascension into Longitude. He must be able to answer questions and meet objections in clear and distinct language.

In Horoscopy, he must know such divisions of space as Rasi (a sign of zodiac occupying 30°), Hora (15°), Drekkana (10°), Navamsaka ($3^{\circ} 20'$), Dwadasamsaka ($2^{\circ} 30'$) Thrim-samsaka (1°) and their strength or weakness horoscopically; the horoscopic strength of the planets with respect to their direction, place, time, motions, conjunctions and the like ; the temperament of the planets and the parts of the body lorded over by each ; the mineral divisions of each ; the caste, sex and authority. He must be able to state from the time of conception or birth of a person, the particulars connected with these occasions ; to say in what cases a child will die in infancy ; to determine the period of one's life ; to divide it into planetary divisions and sub-divisions, and to



apply the Ashtavarga tables to a given horoscope (to discover from the positions of the planets in one's nativity how they affect one's fortunes as they pass through the several zodiacal signs). He must know how the Raja, the Chandra, the Dwigraha and the Nabhasa-yogas (particular positions of the planets) affect the fortunes of men. He should ascertain the effects of the position and look of the planets, to calculate the cause of one's death and discover his future life. He should fix auspicious periods for marriages and the like. In the case of a king marching out upon his enemy, he must determine the fitness or otherwise of a Thithi (lunar day), a Vara (week-day), Karana, Nakshathra (asterism), Muhoortha and Lagna (the rising sign). He must be able to interpret natural gestures and dreams and to state when a prince ought to start for battle to secure victory (the king's minister, his astrologer and his priest slept in the temple of the gods and their dreams were interpreted by experts). Ablutions, offerings to the fire in honour of the planets, offerings to appease evil spirits, the interpretation of phenomena connected with the sacred fires and with elephants and horses while mounting the same—he must be proficient in them all. He must be able to give directions about the capture of the enemies' fortress; to predict the success or failure of an undertaking; to decide upon the favourable halting places for the king's army; to interpret the colour of sacrificial fires, omens, the language and gestures of fighting men; he must know when to use the Shadgunas—*Sandhi* (Peace), *Vigraha* (War), *Yana* (Strategic movements), *Asana* (Truce), *Dvaidheebhava* (Duplicity) and *Samasraya* (Submission); the four *Upayas*—*Sama* (Reconciliation), *Dana* (Bribery), *Bheda* (Alienation) and *Danda* (Chastisement); and when to employ ministers, spies, messengers and feared men,

Natural Astrology treats of the motions of the sun and the planets ; of their size, color, rays, brilliancy, shape, changes, disappearance and reappearance ; of their courses and deviations therefrom ; of their retrograde and re-retrograde motions ; of their conjunction with and their places among the stars ; the effects of the Heliacal rising of Canopus and the Bear (Agasthya-chara and Saphtharshi-chara) on particular parts of India corresponding to particular portions of the ecliptic ; of the stellar divisions of every substance, animal and plant ; of their increase or decrease according to the motion of the planets among the stars ; of the formation and interpretation of various figures presented by the planets when meeting together ; of planetary conjunctions and planetary years of the indications of the monsoon ; of the moon's conjunction with Rohini (the fourth constellation), Swathi (the 15th) and the two Ashadhas (the 20th and the 21st) on particular week-days in the month of Ashadha ; and of predicting from the same the nature of the coming weather and the crops ; of the prediction of immediate rain from surrounding phenomena ; of judging the nature of the future crops from the growth of plants and flowers ; of the halos round the sun and moon ; of lines of clouds crossing the solar disc at rising and setting ; of winds, meteoric falls, false fires, earthquakes, dust-storms, thunderbolts, the fanciful shapes of clouds, the red sky immediately before sunrise and after sunset ; of the price of food-grains ; of gardening ; of the Indradhwaja (erecting of a flag-staff during certain annual ceremonies performed by princes) ; of the rainbow ; of the prediction of events from casual words and gestures, and from the cawing of crows ; of architecture ; of the formation of the zodiacal circle for purposes of horary astrology ; of the prediction of future events from phenomena connected with the deer,



the dog, the jackal, the cow, the horse, the elephant and the motions of the wind; of the construction of temples, towers and palaces; of the casting and the founding of images; of the growth of plants and trees; of under-currents; of certain annual ceremonies to be performed by princes for success in war.

vi *Kalpa*.—Aswalayana, Kathyayana, Apasthamba, Bodhayana, Drahyayana, Bharadwaja, Sathyashadha, Vaikhanasa and Hiranyakesi have written Manuals of sacrificial rites.

6. *Fourfold Path*.—i. Discrimination between the eternal Brahman and the transient Universe, resulting from a thorough study of the Vedas, the Smrithis, the Ithihasas, and the Puranas and from the instructions of the Teacher.

ii. Supreme disgust with and indifference to the joys of this world and of the higher ones, even up to where Brahma abides.

iii. Restraint of the organs of sense and action; the absence of the least desire to enjoy the pleasures of the senses; equanimity in joy and sorrow, in that they are but the unfolding of causes generated in the past; unswerving concentration of the mind upon what his studies and teachings have declared to be the Highest; and supreme faith in his Teacher and in the words of the Holy Scriptuers.

iv. An eager desire to taste of the delights of eternal life, and escape from the burning fire of material joys and sorrows.

7. *His place*.—Valmeeki was a Brahmana by birth and a Vanaprastha by his mode of life. A householder's life prepares him for it; grey hairs and the sight of his grand-children are the warnings given him that he should quit his home and seek the solitude of the forest. His diet, his comforts, his servants, his articles of luxury—he should turn his back upon them all. His wife may



accompany him if she prefers it or, remain in charge of his sons. The sacred fire that he had been tending, the pots, the ladles and the spoons useful in sacrifices, are the only articles he should take with him. He should gather, from day to day, fruits, roots and wild grain to perform the five great daily sacrifices. The barks of trees or the skins of the deer supply him with the necessary raiment. He should ever honour the guests that come to him and entertain them with his best. He should allow his hair and his nails to grow ; and he should bathe at sunrise and at sunset. He should ever give and never take ; he should be the friend and helper of all sentient beings; he should put up with the inclemencies of the weather, with hunger and thirst ; he should never omit the daily recitation of the Holy Books, nor to worship the sacred Fires. The offerings to be made on the new and the full-moon days should be continued on such scale as he could afford. The offerings of cakes and boiled rice to the Gods should be made as before, during the Agrayana (the first harvest), the Chathurmasya (the rainy months), the Uththarayana and Dakshinayana (the summer and the winter solstices). He must make his own salt from the saline earth of the forest. He may lay in his small store of provisions day by day, or once a month, or once in six months, or once in a year. He may eat in the last quarter of the day or the night ; or on alternate days ; or on every fourth day ; or once a fortnight ; or he may regulate his food according to the waxing and waning of the moon. Or, he may satisfy his wants with the fruits upon the trees, with fallen flowers or roots. Never should he allow his senses to stand in the way of his progress. When tired, he may gently walk about or sit on some kind of seat, or recline on the ground. During the summer, he should surround himself with five fires; during the rains, he should stand to his neck in water ; during dewy months



he should cover himself with a wet cloth; and all along, his mind must be away from his body and fixed upon the Supreme. Every day he should offer libations of water to the Gods, to the Fathers and to the Sages. He must gradually increase the length and frequency of his fasts.

Six months of such a life prepare him for the next stage, where he absorbs in himself the three Fires which he had been tending till then, and sits silent and calm under a tree. No prayers, no offerings, no libations, no sacrifices, no fasts, no vigils and no observances for him. The Upanishads and the teachings of the great Sages form the subject of his thoughts and meditation, day and night. He may sustain life upon the fruits or the flowers that fall from the tree; or he may take it from men of his own order who still have a home; or from such house-holders as reside in the forest; or he may go to some village and receive eight handfuls of food. Impervious to heat or cold, wind or rain, snow or hail, hatred or love, joy or sorrow, pleasure or pain, he stretches himself at ease under the nearest tree. When the load of years becomes too heavy for him to carry, he may walk on straight, subsisting upon water and air, until his mortal frame falls lifeless; or he may, when sure of himself, take up the next stage of life—that of the Sanyasin.

10. *Narada*:—Out of the navel of the Lord came a lotus; and upon it was Brahma, the Ancient of Days. He is one of the Trinity, the Fashioner of Forms. He is the Ruler of the Brahmanda and the fourteen worlds within it. His life-period comprises 311,040,000,000,000 lunar years of mortal men. He is now in the second half of his life (Parardha), the fifty-first year the first Ayana, the first month, the first fortnight, the first day of it; of the fourteen Manvantharas that make it up, six have gone by; of the 71 Mahayugas that go to form a Manvanthara,



27 have passed away ; Of the four Yugas that comprise a Mahayuga, three have been added to the past. Of the 432,000 years that must elapse before Kaliyuga, the fourth, comes to an end, we are in the year of grace 5012, named Sadharana (1911 A. D.)

He had five faces at birth, one of which he happened to lose later on. Sarasvathi, the Goddess of Speech, is his wife ; the Swan is his conveyance ; the Sathyaloka is his abode ; and Manovathi is his capital.

Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanathana and Sanath-kumara were his first-born. They paid no heed to his instructions to increase and multiply. So, he evolved Mareechi from his mind, Athri from his eyes, Angiras from his mouth, Pulashtya from his ears, Pulaha from his naval, Krathu from his hands, Bhrgu from his skin, Vasishtha from his life-breath, Daksha from his toe, Narada from his stomach, Dharma from his right breast, Adharma from his back, Desire from his heart, Anger from his brows, Greed from his lower lip, Speech from his tongue and Kardama from his shadow—*Bh. III. 12.*

Narada was a Gandharva at first, later on a Soodra and at last the son of Brahma.—*Ib. VI. 7.*

The Matsya-purana and the Manu-smrithi take him as the tenth Prajapathi (complementary to the usual nine). The Brahma-kaivarta-purana gives it out that he was cursed by his father to be the head of the Gandharvas, in that he taught the Science of Renunciation to the Haryasvas and the Sabalasvas and prevented them from multiplying. In the Brahma-purana, Vayu-purana and Hari-vamsa, he is said to have been saved by Brahma when Daksha was about to curse him for a similar offence ; and to have been let off with being born the son of Kasyapa and a daughter of Daksha. But, in another portion of Vayu-purana, Kasyapa is said to have adopted him as his



son. The Brahma-purana and the Hari-vamsa (Karthaveer-ya-charithra) make him the son of Haridasa, a Gandharva, while the commentator upon the latter names him Upa-barhana. He was a proficient in playing upon the Veena and was consequently invited by some Brahmanas to play during the sacrifice they were conducting. He happened to fall in love with some women there, whereupon, the good Brahmanas cursed him to be born a Soodra. But, the spiritual forces generated in his past births led him on to serve the holy Sages and *that* ranked him amongst the mind-born sons of Brahma.

Narada and his nephew Parvatha made a compact, that they would have no secrets from one another and wandered over the earth (*M. B. Santhi-parva* 30.) He forms one of the audience in Indra's hall (*Ib. Sabha-parva*).

He is unrivalled in his knowledge of the Ithihasas, the Puranas, the Vedangas, the events of the past Kalpas and the mysteries of the Law. There is not a spot in the fourteen worlds that he is not acquainted with. He is a very high authority on the science and art of government. The Vid-yas and the Kalas (Sciences and Arts) live in him. As a speaker and conversationalist, Brihaspathi is nowhere beside him. The countless hosts of the Shining Ones pay him supreme honours. He stands first and foremost in the theory and practice of Music and Gesticulation. (The English language has no word to render adequately the meaning of Bharatha-sastra or Abhinaya-sastra. It is peculiar to the East and more so to India. It represents the various shades of emotions and feelings by appropriate gestures and movements of the face, the eye-brows, the eyes, the lips, the neck, the arms, the hands, the trunk and the feet, to the accompani-ment of vocal and instrumental music, the words of which



give out the theme. Rishi Bharatha is the first and the highest exponent of the science and the art).—(*Ib. id. 5.*)

He is gifted with remarkable patience, intelligence, humility, courage, truthfulness and splendour. His fame and lineage are stainless and high. With senses under perfect control, he has kept the vows and observances. An adept in the inner mysteries of the Science of Brahman, he exemplifies in his life the best and the purest teachings of the Vedas. Pure of speech, of pleasant manners, he knows the hearts of men like an open book, but loves them all the more. Ever bent on doing good to others, his heart knows not evil. Alike to all, he has no friend nor foe. The world and its fleeting joys and sorrows touch him not ; but, he acts the part of a worldly man to perfection. He very rarely speaks of himself and then only in the humblest terms. The entire range of knowledge is within his ken; but he is ever an eager student. Seemingly absorbed in the concerns of external life, his soul is ever centred in profound meditation on the Brahman. Yet, with all these, his heart knows not a shadow of pride or egoism. Hence, Devas and Asuras, friends and foes reverence him alike—(*Ib. Santhi-parva, 230.*)

Narada and Thumburu belong to the group of the Gandharvas—(*Ib. Adi-parva, 132.*)

Narada, Thumburu, Gopa and other Gandharvas played and sang during the feast that Bharadwaja gave to Bharatha—(*V. R. II, 91*), So, Narada, the uncle of Parvatha, is not the same as Narada, the associate of Thumburu. The Bhagavatha (*I. 5. 6*) narrates one of his previous births as follows :—

“ During the last Kalpa, I was the son of a woman who waited upon a group of sages. During the rainy months, they abode in one place and I was deputed to attend to their wants. I was a boy, but had nothing in common with my fellows. My senses were under perfect control ; my



mind was never my master ; calm-eyed, silent, grave and not given to lightness, frolic or impulsiveness, my masters could not fail to remark my extreme reverence to them and my almost intuitive attention to their least wishes. The Lords of Compassion deigned to regard me with favour and one day allowed me to partake of the remains of their food. All at once, a change came over me ; my heart was cleansed of all its stains ; and I was seized with an eager desire to follow the life they led. I was privileged to hear them narrate the Lord's life and doings, and my devotion and love to the Stealer of Hearts grew apace. My whole being was absorbed in the contemplation of His divine perfections ; my bodies, gross and subtle, were but so many mists that clouded the Divine Sun beyond ; my fiery devotion burnt away the dark and passionate elements in my Self.

When the rains were over, the Great Ones left the place ; but, they were gracious enough to initiate me in the innermost secrets entrusted to them by the Lord. The Veil of Illusion was rent in twain before my eyes ; I saw beyond it into Heart of the Universe ; I set my feet on the path that leads to the Throne of Light. And in the fulness of time, I had a vision of the Supreme ; the utmost of knowledge and power was mine.

Some time after, a snake breathed death upon my mother. I rendered her the last offices and left the place for the mountains of the north. Forests, hills, rivers, towns, villages and hamlets I left behind and chose a dark and dense wood to reside in. I sat myself down under an Aswaththa tree with senses under control and concentrated mind. Soon I lost myself in the contemplation of the Divine Form ; my mind was to me but a dream ; tears of joy welled from my eyes : the feet of the Lord were enshrined in my heart. And, lo ! the Lord stood before me in all His beauty, in all His glory, in all His might. My love to Him,



supreme and over-powering, steeped my heart in unspeakable joy ; and I became entirely oblivious to everything else. Then spake the Lord unto me and said "The heart must be washed pure of desire and hate, love and anger, before it can stand in my presence. It is not within the range of your past karma that you should have a vision of myself and my glory ; but, I come to you that you may realise the absolute necessity of centering your mind and heart suffused with love upon me and me alone ; for, then, the world will hold nothing that can enchain you. The faithful service you have rendered to the holy sages has drawn you to me. When this physical vesture shall fall away from you, you shall abide in me for ever ; Evolution and Involution shall have no power over you ; and your consciousness shall know no break, no limit." With that parting benediction, he disappeared from my sight.

When the moment drew near for me to shake off the mortal coil, it dropped away of itself and I arose from it in the pure and dazzling Garments of Light. When, at the end of his Day, Brahma retired within himself, his Breath drew my body into his own. When, at the end of his Night, he came out of his sleep and began the work of evolution anew, I came out of him with Mareechi and the other mind-born sons. I am an Eternal Celibate ; the Lord has given me power to range through the fourteen worlds of this Brahmanda without let or hindrance. The Shining Ones have given me this Veena adorned with divine notes ; and on it I play ever, singing the glories of the Lord. Countless are the Jeevas whom I have enabled to cross the ocean of material existence."

In short, we understand that Narada was the repository of the highest knowledge and wisdom of the last Kalpa. He is the first sage of this Kalpa. The seven-stringed Veena, on which he plays, represents



the seven great divisions of Divine Wisdom ; and he is the GREAT TEACHER. Alone among Gods and men, he holds along with Sarasvathi the right and privilege to play on the divine Veena. Sages, kings, gods—all consult him on the most momentous questions and follow his advice. He stands behind Valmeeki, Vyasa and the other sages, who brought down to men divine knowledge and wisdom. Says the Lord in his Geetha (X, 16), "Among the divine sages Narada am I." It is absurd and ridiculous in the extreme to hold with the ignorant world, that he is a fomentor of quarrels, a spy, a tell-tale and a delighter in the misfortunes of others. The wise know him as but one of the Lords of Karma, meting out to each Jeeva the results of his past ; he is but the Adjuster, the bringer-about, rather the judge that pronounces the karmic decrees. He is also one of the Keepers of the Records of Time. He arranges the great cycles and the smaller ones.

10. *Morning* "Valmeeki spent an hour or two in his cottage after his guest left it, his thoughts absorbed in the eventful conversation of the morn. All at once, he found that it was high time for the mid-day bath."—(V. R. I, 2.)

18. *Strains* :—There lived, of yore, a Brahmana named Kausika, who devoted his life to the science and the art of music. He dedicated it to the service of the Lord, whose greatness and glory he set himself to sing. When his life on earth was over, Maha-vishnu took him to his own world ; and in honour of his servant, he gave him an entertainment, where the divine Choristers led by Thumburu, the Gandharva, displayed their skill and proficiency in the noble art. Narada could not behold without feelings of envy and spite the honors showered upon the Gandharva. Hari failed not to notice it ; calling unto him Narada, he said, "Charity, Sacrifices, and Thapas give me not as

much delight as to hear my life and doings sung to the accompaniment of perfectly-rendered and flawless music. Thumburu, the Gandharva and Kausika, the Brahmana are the living examples of it. Do you desire to be as they, and lie close to my heart ? Then, seek out one Ganabandhu, a hooting-owl that dwells on mount Manasoththara and tell him that I sent you to learn music of him."

Narada found the owl surrounded by a host of Gandharvas, Kinnaras, Yakshas and Apsarasas to whom he taught the noble art. He communicated to him the Lord's message, was graciously accepted and for 360,000 years he was a pupil under him. "I have taught you all I know" said his master at the end ; and forthwith Narada came back, his heart all a-fire to demolish his hated rival Thumburu. Approaching his house in the Gandharva-loka, he was amazed to find all around it countless men and women cut to pieces. "Who may you be " cried Narada "that have been reduced to this miserable plight ?" And they wailed him a reply, "We are the Powers that rule over the notes ; we are the gods and goddesses of the Ragas (melody-types). Somewhere in the world, there lives a wicked one, Narada so called, who has taken it into his head that he must sing and play. Every time that he does so, the discord is so horrible that it tortures and reduces us to what we are ; later on, comes Thumburu whom we serve, and by his perfect music restores us to life and health." And then, Narada said to himself "A nice musician am I, and well am I qualified to defeat Thumburu. I am glad that I have not announced my name and mission." So, back he went on the wings of speed to where the Lord lay reclined on the myriad folds of the Serpent of Eternity, gently lulled by the throbbing waves of the Ocean of Milk. Maha-vishnu received him with a smile and said, "Great indeed is the progress you have made under Ganabandhu ; but, you



were not well-advised when you went against Thumburu with that poor equipment. In the twenty-eighth Dwapara-yuga of the Vaivasvatha-manvanthara, I go down on earth as Krishna in the clan of the Yadus. Come to me then, and I will place you on the path that will lead you to where Thumburu stands. Till then, learn what you can of the Gods, the Gandharvas and the Kinnaras."

Accordingly Narada wandered through the worlds, humbler in spirit, his heart ever-turned towards the Lord and his lips ever sounding his praise. Once, he went to Sathya-loka and took part in a concert with Haha and Hoo-hoo, the Gandharvas that grace the audience-hall of the Ancient of Days. He won sweet praise from his father.

Another day, he ventured to approach the house of Thumburu ; but, the presiding deities of music never so much as deigned to notice him. Overcome with shame, he came back and for a long time sat at the feet of the ablest exponents of the art.

At last, the Lord came down on earth as he promised to do ; and Narada went to him of and humbly proffered his request. Krishna directed his wife Jambavathi to instruct Narada in music. A year he spent with her, another with Sathyabhama and two more with Rukmini. But, he was as far as ever from the goal of his aspirations. His long period of probation and his association with the high and mighty personages under whom he learnt purified his heart of envy, jealousy and spite. Then, the Lord took him in hand, and initiated him into the higher mysteries of the art. "You may now go and have it out with your old rival Thumburu" said Krishna. "Nay, nay" exclaimed Narada "No more of that if you please. I have got over that foolishness, once for all. My only prayer is to be allowed to stand in your presence through all eternity and join with my brother

Thumburu in singing your greatness and glory." "Be it so" replied Krishna "Now, you are indeed perfect; and there is none dearer unto me. The gods and goddesses that erst while shunned you as a pest, shall be your faithful servants for all time."—(*Adb. R. VI, 7.*)

He is also known as the author of the Brihan-naradeeya Purana, the Naradasmrithi, the Naradabhakthisoothra and the Naradaseeksha.

24. *Impelled*:—The Lord knew that his work down on earth would be slowly undermined by the ravages of Time, that the Good Law established among men would grow fainter and fainter in men's hearts. So, he directed Brahma to take the necessary steps to counteract the evil. The latter composed the Original Ramayana in a hundred crores of stanzas and taught it to Narada and the other sages of his world. Who shall carry the divine Message to the hearts of men? Who but Valmeeki, that arose to his present pinnacle of wisdom and purity solely and wholly through the might of the divine Name? Narada gave him the life-record of Sree Rama as it lay imbedded in the hymns of the Rigveda. Valmeeki rendered it, later on, into the Samkshepa or Laghuramayana, that forms the first chapter of the Epic.—*G. o's preface to V. R—A. R. Manoharakanda, 1.*

"The Rig, Yajus, Sama and the Atharva Vedas, the Ithihasas, the Puranas, the Fathers, the Shining Ones, the Science of Brahman, the sciences and the arts current among the Gods, the Beings of the Middle World and the Nether, the kings, the constellations and the Dragons of Wisdom—all these do I know" says Narada, in speaking of the Bhoomavidya. In the words of Apasthamba, he is amply endowed with the prime qualifications of a Teacher of the divine wisdom. He has passed through the stages of study, meditation and realization; and no one could desire



a higher Teacher in whom should be gathered all the excellences of birth, knowledge, wisdom, purity and divine grace.

“Let a Brahmana be free from desires, having examined the worlds produced by Karma and being convinced that nothing eternal can be the fruit of Karma. Let him, if he wishes to know It, take with him sacrificial fuel and approach the Teacher who is proficient in the Vedas and whose consciousness is eternally centred in the Brahman. And to him who thus approaches him with mind subdued and with senses under control, the Teacher will truly impart that Science of Brahman through which he can know the Purusha, who is Eternity and Truth.”—*Mundakopanishad* I, ii, 12-13.

The first stanza of the poem clearly lays down the qualifications of the Disciple as also of the Teacher, in consonance with the Vedic text quoted above.

The grand epic opens with the word ‘Thapas’ which is a symbol of Brahman. No Sanskrit writer, lay or religious, ever begins his work otherwise than by offering devout and reverent salutation to the Dweller in the Sanctuary of his heart; and Valmeeki begins his immortal poem by the calling down the grace of the Supreme Brahman upon him and upon his work. By a slight permutation of the words we read *Niratham thapas swadhyaya*, which means ‘having profoundly meditated upon the Brahman as Unbounded Wisdom and Supreme Bliss.’ We have here the salutation to the Almighty. A slightly modified form of the above would give us *Thapassu niratham naradam adhyaya*, which means ‘having offered my profound respects to Narada, whose life is one long study of the Holy scriptures and earnest meditation upon its mysteries.’ We have here the salutation to the Teacher of Divine Wisdom.

"The twenty-four thousand stanzas of the Ramayana are based upon the twenty-four letters of the Gayathri. Each thousand begins with a letter of the sacred manthra. The letter *Tha*, that forms the first of the series, is also the first letter of the first word *Thapas*. "It confers good upon him that utters it and upon him that listens to it."—*Sahithya-choodamani*.

"The letter *Tha* destroys evil. It has its source in Water; Brihaspathi is its presiding deity; and, as such, it is bound to confer all good. The fool who proceeds to compose stanzas before he has mastered the knowledge of the letters, their origin, their number, their correllating elements, their seed (Beeja) and their presiding deities, inevitably brings destruction upon himself and upon those that listen to his stanzas."—*Chamathkara-chandrika*.

This explains why Valmeeki should select the word *Thapas* out of the many that convey the idea of Brahman; he could not have begun the life-record of Sree Rama with a better word. There is also an implied injunction to all aspirants for divine knowledge, that they should take Valmeeki as their Ideal and that they should seek a Teacher after the model of Narada."—*Go*.

27. *Lives there among men* :—The great sages have taught us that, in the far past and in other worlds, there have been personages answering to the description.—*Go*.

28. *Every excellent quality* :—Practical Omniscience and Omnipotence; containing everything in himself (Bala); supreme rulership over all (Aiswarya); ever remaining unmodified, though, in himself, he is the material cause of the Universe (Veerya); unfailing will and purpose; freedom from sin, decrepitude, death, sorrow, hunger, thirst and similar material defects; supreme splendour, patience, compassion, love, purity, truth, and beneficence.

P. 2-1. *Weapons* :—Vide *V. R. I*, 27-28.



5. *The Smrithis* :—The Manu Swayambhuva and the other great souls revolved in their minds the teachings of the Vedas and deduced from them rules for every-day life and conduct; hence, the word *Smrithi* (*Smri*, to remember). They are eighteen in number and are associated with the names of Manu, Vishnu, Yama, Angiras, Vasishtha, Daksha, Samvartha, Sathathapa, Parasara, Apasthamba, Usanas, Kathyayana, Brihaspathi, Gauthama, Sankha, Likhitha, Hareetha and Athri—*Bhavishya-purana*. I, i. *Yagnyavalkya-smrithi* adds Vyasa and Yagnyavalkya to the above. *Smrithi-rathna* substitutes Yogeaswara and Prachethas for Vasishtha and Kathyayana among the eighteen. *Angiras Smrithi* enumerates Jabali, Nachikethas, Skanda, Lokashi, Kasyapa, Vyasa, Sanath-kumara, Santhanu, Janaka, Vyaghra, Kathyayana, Jathukarni, Kapinjala, Bodhayana, Kanada, Viswamithra, Paitheenasi and Gobhila as the author of the eighteen Upa-smrithis (Minor Codes). The *Jabala Smrithi*, the *Apasthamba Smrithi*, the *Meemamsa Sastra* and the *Skanda-purana* (Sootha-Samhitha, Sivamahathmya-khanda I, i) explain with one voice that no Smrithi is authoritative, if it is not in perfect consonance with the teachings of the Vedas; while, the Yajur Veda (Kanda II, Prasna II, Anuvaka 10) and the Brihaspathi Smrithi declare, "Of these, Manu Smrithi is the most excellent. The other Codes that go against it are not in the least authoritative."

6. *Bears not in mind* :—He magnifies the least service rendered to him at any time and anyhow and delights in it. He has no memory for any evil that others might do him, countless though they be.—*V. R. II, 2.*

12. *Peril and distress* :—The study of the Vedas, the performance of sacrifices and the giving of charity are prescribed for the Kshathriya as the natural duties of his caste, as also rulership. But, when, in times of peril and

distress, he cannot maintain himself thus nor could make a living by agriculture, cattle-rearing and trade, he might buy and sell juices and essences ; but, never should he dream of usurping the duties of the higher caste—*Manu-smrithi*.

“ Seetha ! It would not grieve me in the least, if I had to sacrifice yourself or Lakshmana or my life ; but, never shall I go back upon my word. Further, my promise to a Brahmana is as sacred to me as the commands of the Holy Writ”—*V. R. III, 10*.

17. *The Real and the Unreal* :—Brahman is the soul of all. The Universe, as apart from It, is unreal. Brahman is the only Reality.

22. *Mind* :—Thought, memory, reason and egoism are, in general, the functions of the Anthakharana. When it is directed outward towards the objects of the senses, it is called *Manas* ; when it rests upon the Past and the Future and tries to link them together, it is *Chiththa* ; when it deduces certain conclusions from the materials placed before it by the *Manas*, it is *Buddhi* ; and when the consciousness of I pervades it, it is *Ahamkara*.—*Sareerakopanishad ; Paingalopanishad II*.

24. *Temper* :—“ His anger is ever directed at those that deserve to be punished.”—*V. R. II, 2*. Of the Trinity He is the Preserver ; and as such, anger is foreign to him. Hence it is said that “ he put on the mantle of Anger.”

26. *Charming* :—“ His beauty, his generosity and his matchless excellences rivet the eyes and the hearts of men upon him.”—*V. R. II, 3*. “ The ascetics and the hermits of Dandaka gazed with wonder and delight upon his surpassing beauty and splendour.—*V. R. III, 1*.”

29. *Men and Gods* :—“ Gods, Asuras, Kings, Vidya-dharas, Gandharvas, Uragas, Siddhas, Kinnaras, Garudas, Indra—there is none that dares brave the anger of Rama,



with the might of Maha-vishnu in him, at any time and any where. Brahma, the Self-born, the Four-faced ; Rudra, whose three eyes reduced to ashes the Asuras of the Three Cities ; Indra, the Lord of the Celestials—dare not stand between Rama and him against whom his wrath has gone forth.”—*V. R. V*, 51. “Of those that bear weapons, Rama am I.”—*Geetha X*, 31.

35. *All-seeing eye* :—Valmeeki is quite confident that Narada and he alone knows such a person. For, the disciple should seek the Teacher, only after he has thoroughly convinced himself of the perfect ability of the latter to impart to him the knowledge he is after.

36. *Would gladden* :—Long have I waited in grief and sorrow for one who could clear my doubts ; and your presence here puts in me an eager desire to seek it of you.

P. 3, 9. *Questioned* :—Q: Valmeeki was not sincere with Narada. Rama, Seetha and Lakshmana visited him at his hermitage in the Dandakaranya. Sumanthra tells Dasaratha (*V. R. II*, 59) that the very trees, creepers, flowers, buds and leaves did fade and languish when Rama left the capital for the dark forests. Besides, we read later on (*Ib. VI*. 130) that when Sree Rama ruled the world, no other name was in the mouths of the people. He was everywhere and his marvellous deeds were recounted by the young and the old, prince and peasant. Now, is it in the least possible for Valmeeki to have lived in the dominions of Rama and not to have heard of his wonderful adventures ? Nor is it likely that Narada should come down from the world of Brahma to inform him of it.

A :—But, we are not to understand it that way. Valmeeki knew the life and doings of Rama very well. We also read that Narada did not give an immediate reply to him ; he would, with a little thought, find him the person answering to the description. He

understood that Valmeeki's question really aimed at something else. The Vedantha-sastras enumerate various Vidyas, and speak of a Supreme Being characterised by countless perfections. Is It Maha-vishnu or any one of the other gods? Accordingly, Narada declares that he who came down on earth as Sree Rama was indeed the Supreme One, Maha-vishnu, whom the Vedas lead us to. Brahma, Rudra and others rank below Him. *Sath, Brahma, Athman* and, for the matter of that, all words are but His names. The attributes predicated by the Vedantha-sastras find perfect expression in Sree Rama alone.

10. *Excellences*:—None but Vishnu are endowed with them; nor do any deserve the epithet of Parama-Purusha (the Supreme Person). The Sruthi "That from which Speech and Thought turned back baffled is Brahman. He who knows Its bliss has nothing to fear," indicates that all Its attributes are as illimitable as Bliss.

Not easy:—The Sruthi "It is neither Brahma nor Rudra," precludes the possibility of any other deity possessing them. Narada hints that he has understood the question right—Valmeeki desires to settle once for all, past doubt, past discussion, who the Supreme One is.

11. *Are united*:—If, as the Advaitins contend that Brahman is devoid of any attributes whatever, the expression used would have been *Aropitha*, 'imposed upon' and not, as it is in the text, *yuktha*, 'possessed of.'

With a little thought.—"I will mentally go through the Original Ramayana composed by my father, and give you a satisfactory answer." This is proof enough that Narada got his wisdom after the traditional method of initiation. Or, it may mean, "I am quite overwhelmed with the joy born of the recollection of the excellences of Sree Rama. Give me time to recover myself."



12. *Person* :—This is a hint that the Supreme Person is the subject of the question.

15. *Listen* :—No disciple is entitled to be instructed in the Science of Brahman, who has not waited upon his Teacher at least for a year. But, it does not apply to the eldest son; and Valmeeki, as the son of Bhrigu stands to Narada as his brother's son. Hence, he could claim to be initiated in the inner mysteries without the preliminary period of probation.

17. *Ikshvaku* :—*Vide V. R. I. 70.*

Q :—Why should the Lord choose the line of Ikshvaku of the many that rule the earth?

A : The king worshipped Hari for untold ages and found favour in his eyes, enough to be blessed with the image of Sree Ranganatha. Hence, the Lord has a partiality, as it were, to those born in his line.

18. *Fall short* :—You could not have but been acquainted with the superhuman acts of Sree Rama. You saw him when he was at Chithrakoota. The world resounds with his deeds of valour. He slew Thataka; he guarded the sacrifice of Visvamithra from the Rakshasas; he delivered Ahalya from a dreadful curse; he broke in twain the Bow of Siva; he shattered the pride and haughtiness of Parasu-rama; his single arrow pierced the seven Sala trees; he laid low the redoubtable Vali; he threw a bridge across the pathless ocean; he wiped off from the face of the earth the terrible hosts of Ravana.

19. *Self* :—These are the attributes that illuminate his divine nature. "Age has no power over his physical vesture nor change, nor death. Sin, sorrow, hunger, thirst and the other material defects know him not."—*Sruthi*.

Prowess :—"Unthinkable is His might and wisdom, supreme and infinitely varied."—*Sruthi*.



20. *Splendour* :—He shines in his own light. He is Infinite Consciousness.

21. *Serene* :—“Brahman is Bliss.”—*Sruthi*.

22. *Intellect* :—Here begins the enumeration of the attributes of the Lord that are utilised in the evolution of the universe. “He who knows everything in general and in detail.”—*Sruthi*.

23. *Kingcraft* :—“Brahma evolved the universe through his knowledge of the past” ; “He is what keeps back the waves of Time and Change; He is the substratum of all.”—*Sruthi*.

The Science of Polity was first given to the world by Brahma in a work of 100,000 chapters. Siva learnt it of him, and condensed it into a work *Vaisalakshya* of 10,000 chapters. Indra learnt it of him, and condensed it into a work *Bahudandaka* of 5,000 chapters. Brihaspathi abridged it further into a work *Barhaspathya* of 3,000 chapters ; and Sukra epitomised the same into a work of 1,000 chapters.—*M. B. Santhi Parva* 59 ; *Sukra-neethi. I*. But, the *Neethi-prakasika*, (31) gives the following figures: Brahma, 100,000 chapters ; Rudra, 50,000 ; Subrahmanya, 25,000 ; Indra, 12,000 ; Manu, 6,000 ; Brihaspathi, 3,000 ; Sukra, 1,000 ; Bharadwaja ; 700, Gaurasiras, 500 ; Veda-vyasa, 300. At present, the *Sukra-nithi-sara*, the *Chanakya neethi*, the *Kamandakeeya-neethisara*, the *Vidura-neethi*, the *Dhaumya-neethi*, *Manu-smrithi*, *Panchathantra*, *Hithopadesa* and the *Raja-dharma* of the *Anusasanika-parva* are the only works extant on the subject.

24. *Speech* :—The *Sruthi* “He who evolved Brahma before the universe came into being, He who imparted unto him the Vedas,” declares that the holy books were given out to men by the Lord.

25. *Lovely* :—This might also be construed to mean that he is the Lord of the Logoic spheres and also



the material ones. "He pervades the entire universe, and extends ten inches beyond".—*Sruthi*.

26. *Enemies*.—"He is the Lord of all beings. He is their protector"—*Sruthi*.

27. *Broad*:—The following is a material description of the divine form hinted at in the *Sruthi*:—"The Person who is seen in the midst of the solar orb, golden in hue to the tip of his toe-nails, with golden hair, beard and whiskers; His eyes are lovely as the petals of the red lotus awaking to the touch of the first rays of the sun." For further particulars, *vide V. R. V. 35*.

P. 4, 14. *Champion*.—Here follows his attributes that are utilised in the protection of those that take refuge in him. "Never do I close my heart against any that seek refuge of me. He may have 'a single virtue linked to a thousand crimes'; but, none the less, is he an object of solicitude to the compassionate. It is enough if one seeks my shelter even once; it is enough if he says, 'I throw myself upon your protection; save me from my enemies.' Right then and there I vow that he shall have nought to fear from all beings. This is my life-work; this is the vow that I live to accomplish".—*V. R. VI. 18*.

16. *Fame*:—"Unbounded Fame is his name"—*Sruthi*.

19. *Meditation*:—"With my permission you shall rise to spheres higher than those to which the Knowers of Brahman are entitled." No other has the power to say the above.

30. *Wealth*:—Maha-lakshmi, the Goddess of Wealth and Prosperity, ever has her home on his breast.

P. 5, 4. *Friends*:—"I am the same to all beings. No one is the object of my love or hate" says Sree Krishna in the Geetha. The Almighty Father has no enemies, no prejudices, and no partiality.—*Thilaka*.

6. *Highest good* :—Generally emperors protect those who depend upon them and over whom they rule; but, Rama is the protector of all. Some reserve their bright side to their subjects and persecute their kinsmen, unrelentingly whom they suspect of standing between themselves and power. But, Rama "is the humble servant of his kin. He would share with them his joys and keep his sorrows to himself. He has no eye to their imperfections." In the words of the Geetha, "he comes down upon earth during every cycle to humble the wicked, to exalt the righteous and restore Law and Order."

8. *Warfare* :—There are four Upa-vedas (supplements). The *Ayur-veda* deals with the constitution of the physical body, the diseases that flesh is heir to, and the remedies thereof. Vahata, Charaka, and Susrutha are the recognised writers on the subject. The *Dhanur-veda* instructs the warrior in physical culture, in the use of weapons, human and divine and in the art of warfare. The standard works on the subject are lost to us except some chapters in the Agni-purana, and some isolated passages in the works on Polity. The *Gandharva-veda*—the science of Music and Gesticulation—enables us to recite with accuracy the Vedic manthras and to sing the glories of the Lord. The *Arthaveda* instructs us in the acquisition of wealth by fair and proper means and in the right use of it.

25. *Attracted* :—Except during the hours he devotes to the practice of weapons and physical culture, Rama is ever to be found in the company of men grown old in wisdom or in experience or in right conduct.—*V. R, II, 1*. His children have always free access to the Lord. No rules, no etiquette, no ceremony, no guards, no hours and no restraint where he is concerned.—*Thilaka*.

35. *Every* :—The archer turns away, not because



the sky affords no space for his arrows, but because his quiver is empty. Countless are the perfections of the Lord ; but, our limited faculties recoil in utter powerlessness to describe them. Even Valmeeki has to confess it.

Kausalya :—Why not say ' the son of Dasaratha ' ? It was *she* who was thrice-blessed to come into contact with the Lord first ; she bore him in her womb ; she was ever with him in his infancy, in his childhood, in his boyhood and in his youth ; Dasaratha was not so fortunate. To her alone it was given to furnish a fit vehicle for the coming down of the Lord of all the worlds.

36. The poet reviews the material embodiments in the universe of the highest virtues and asserts that Rama summed up in himself their manifold excellences.

Deep :—All through his incarnation, he was ever careful to preserve his assumed character of a man ; and even when the high gods recount his divine attributes, he says all innocently "I am at a loss to make out what you are speaking about. I verily believe that I am a human being like any of my friends here."—*V. R. VI. 119.*

6. *Unshaken* :—"The dark clouds vent their fury upon the lofty mountain tops, but fail to make any impression upon them. Those who have centred their heart and soul in the Lord are entirely beyond the range of care and anxiety, sorrow and grief."—*Bh.*

8. *Wrath* :—Entirely oblivious to anything that might be done to *him*, he is quick to perceive and to resent the slightest harm done to those that have sought his protection.

11. *Giver* :—*O.* The Lord of Wealth was never known as a great giver ; he is only the guardian-deity thereof. The poet might have chosen the Cow of Plenty, the Kalpaka tree, or the Chinthamani gem to compare Rama with,



A :—He, whose favour gained confers unbounded riches, is certainly higher than the giver thereof. Rama was both in himself. He need not give; enough if he turns a gracious eye on the suppliant.

13. The Vedantha characterises Brahman as the cause of the universe, as Omniscient, Omnipotent, and as the Inner Ruler in all. Now, did It take birth as Sree Rama? Or is he an incarnation of the minor powers Brahma, Rudra, and the like? Narada once for all settles it that Rama is the Supreme One whom the Vedas speak of, since he is blessed with all perfections.

Q:—The Vedas reveal to us the nature and the attributes of Brahman; but, they also instruct us in the Means and the Goal. Valmeeki never desired to know the latter; nor did Narada volunteer to speak of them.

A:—The word *Pari-paprachcha* is not to be understood to mean only *questioned*; Valmeeki's question was comprehensive in the extreme. It took in the Brahman, the Goal, the Means, the Obstacles and the Aspirant. And Narada has conscientiously replied to each point. 'Rama is ever set upon doing good, the highest good to all beings; now, that is the Means; go thou and do likewise. "You can never have enough of looking at him, so lovely a sight is he to see. You may look at him ever so often; but, every time you find in him something that surprises you, a new beauty, a new charm." Now, that is the Goal—ever to revel in the joy of the Supreme Presence, and to bask in the sunshine of His grace.

Q:—If Brahman, which is absolute and eternal Purity, be the Means and the Goal, then, every one of us should reach It.

A:—Nay, the remark applies only to him who is fully qualified to utilise the Means and to stand in Its presence, Intense burning desire to serve the Lord



are to be one of the Elect, is the first and foremost qualification, coupled with the utter avoiding of other plausible means.

Q :—You said that the Ramayana was intended to simplify and to supplement the abstruse teachings of the Vedas. Now, Dharama or the Rules of Life forms an equally important portion thereof. Then, why does it not find a place in the answer of Narada ? Besides, what comes next to the elucidation of the Vedanthic aspect of the above ?

A :—The infinite excellences of Rama reveal themselves to us through his relations with others. Further, the poet inculcates many important rules of life and conduct, general and particular, by the acts and words of the other characters in his poem.

Q :—But, how can we take it that the prominent incidents in the Balakanda are referred to here ?

A :—His divine incarnation is hinted at in the expression 'of the godly line of Ikshvaku'. 'His prowess is unequalled,' is what you can deduce from his victory over Thataka, Subahu, Mareecha, and the like. 'He is a past-master in the science and art of warfare and in the use and mastery of weapons, human and divine'—this alludes to his pupilage under Visvamithra and to his receiving from him the divine weapons. 'One has but to come within the range of his benign glance, nay, to seek him in earnest thought, to have his heart's wishes realized to their utmost in this world or the next ;' Rama's marriage with Seetha, the Goddess of Wealth and Prosperity, could alone account for his power to do so.

The poet now takes up the story of the Ayodhya-kanda.

14. *Set his heart upon* :—The giver was Dasaratha 'whose war-chariot rolled unimpeded in all directions above and below'; no one coerced him into giving his kingdom to



Rama ; he gave only that which descended to him by right of birth ; hence, the giver was fully and supremely qualified to do so. Nor was the recipient less so. As the eldest son, the kingdom was his by right of birth ; he was amply fitted to take upon himself the government of the earth—physically, mentally, morally and spiritually. He was the benefactor of his people, their idol, their darling, even before he was chosen to be their king ; they could desire no more valiant protector. Dasaratha's heart, the counsels of his ministers and the prayers of his people, all pointed out to Rama. Hence, it is broadly hinted at by the poet that Dasaratha was extremely wrong in taking the kingdom back from Rama to whom he had promised it.

P. 7. 17. *Rohini* :—Daksha, the Progenitor, had twenty-seven daughters whom he bestowed in marriage upon *Soma*, the Moon-God. But, he was drawn most to Rohini, and shamefully neglected her sisters. Tears, prayers and anger were utterly unavailing. As a last resort, they complained of his behaviour to Daksha. Soma was taken to task by his father-in-law and repeatedly adjured to treat all his wives alike. But, he could not be weaned away from his old ways. Daksha, tired of it, cursed him with consumption. Soma tried to shake it off by every means in his power—sacrifices, expiations, ablutions, incantations and oblations ; but all in vain. Now, he was the presiding deity of trees, shrubs, plants, creepers, and medicinal herbs. As he waned away, they faded, withered and died. In consequence, those that fed upon them grew languid and weak.

One day Soma was questioned by the gods upon his evident loss of energy and brightness ; and he related unto them what Daksha's righteous indignation had done for him. Then they repaired unto Daksha and said "Reverend Sir ! Take pity on poor Soma and recall your