

TALE VIII.

THEN the sprite said, "O king! there is a city named Mithalāvati, the king of which is Gunādhip. A young rājput, named Chiramdeva, came from a distant land to enter his service. He used to go daily to pay his respects to the king, but did not obtain an interview. And in the course of a year he consumed all the money he had brought (with him) while tarrying here without employment, and there (in his native land), his home went to ruin."

"It happened one day that the king mounted his horse for the chase, and Chiramdeva also joined his cavalcade. The king became accidentally separated from his followers in a forest, and the attendants lost themselves in another jungle; one, however, Chiramdeva, was following the king. At length, he called out, and said, 'Your majesty! all the attendants have remained behind, while I am accompanying you, making my horse keep pace with yours.' On hearing this, the king reined in his horse, and so he came up (to

the king). The king looked at him, and asked, 'How hast thou become so emaciated?' "

"Then he replied, 'If I live with a master, such that he cherishes thousands of people, while he takes no thought of me, no blame (attaches) to him for this, but rather my own fate is to blame. As, for example, by daylight the whole world is clearly visible; yet it is not visible to the owl;—what blame can be imputed to the sun for this? It is astonishing to me that he who caused the means of subsistence to reach me in my mother's womb, should take no thought of me now, when I have been born, and am capable of enjoying worldly aliment. I know not whether he sleeps or is dead. And, in my opinion, it is better to swallow deadly poison and die, than to ask for goods and money from a great man who, while giving the same, makes a wry face, and turns up his nose (in contempt), and raises his brows. Now these six things render a man contemptible,—first, the friendship of a perfidious man; second, causeless laughter; third, altercation with a woman; fourth, the serving a bad master; fifth, riding a donkey; sixth, unpolished (or uncouth) speech.¹ And the following five things the Creator records in a man's destiny at the time of his birth,—First, length of life; second, acts; third, wealth; fourth, know-

¹ *Lit.*—A dialect without Sanskrit.

ledge; fifth, reputation. O king! so long as a man's virtues¹ are conspicuous, all continue to be his servants; but when his virtues decrease, his very friends become his enemies. This one thing, however, is certain; by serving a good master one derives benefit sooner or later; he does not remain unbenefited."

"On hearing this, the king pondered over all these words, but did not then make any reply. He said this to him, however, 'I feel hungry; bring me something to eat from somewhere.' Chiramdeva said, 'Your majesty! bread² is not to be obtained here.' Having said this, he went into the jungle, killed a deer, took out a flint and steel from his pocket, kindled a fire, broiled some slices of meat, and served up a plentiful meal to the king, and partook of it himself as well. To be brief, when the king was quite satisfied,³ he said, 'Now, Rājput! conduct me to the city, for the road is not known to me.' He conducted the king into the city, and brought him to his palace. Then the king appointed him to an office, and bestowed many robes and jewels upon him. After that, he continued in close attendance upon the king."

¹ I should much prefer translating "so long as a man's fortunes are in the ascendant," were it not that none of the lexicons I have seen sanctions the sense of "fortunes" for *punya*.

² *Lit.*—"Grain-food," which might mean boiled rice, or cakes of bread and boiled pulse.

³ *Lit.*—When the king's belly was filled.

"In short, the king one day sent that Rājput on some business to the sea-side. When he reached the sea-shore, he beheld a temple (dedicated) to Devī. He entered it, and worshipped Devī. But, on the instant of his coming out thence, a beautiful damsel came up to him from behind, and began questioning him, saying, 'O man! why hast thou come here?' He replied, 'I have come in quest of pleasure, and at the sight of thy beauty I am fascinated.' She said, 'If thou hast any design on me, first go and bathe in this pool; after that I will listen to whatever thou shalt say to me.'"

"On the instant of hearing this, he took off his clothes, entered the pool and dipped, and came out, and lo! he was standing in his own city! On beholding this marvel, he was filled with fear, and returning home in his helplessness, clothed himself, and went and related the whole story to the king. The king no sooner heard it than he said, 'Show me this wonder also.' This said, he ordered the horses, and both mounted and set off. After several days, they reached the sea-shore, and entered the same temple of Devī, and paid adoration. Farther, when the king came out, the very same damsel, accompanied by a female friend, came and stood beside the king, and on beholding the king's handsome appearance, became fascinated, and said, 'O king! I will execute any command you may give me.' The king replied,

saying, 'If thou wilt obey my command, become the wife of my servant.' She said, 'I have become the slave of thy beauty, how then can I become his wife?' The king replied, 'It was but this instant thou saidst to me, 'I will obey any command you may give me.' Now, whatever the good promise they perform. Keep thy plighted word, (and) become the wife of my servant.' On hearing this, she said, 'Your word is law to me.' Thereupon the king married his servant to her without the usual ceremonies,¹ and brought them both with him to his palace."

Having related so much of the story, the sprite said, "Tell me, O king! Of master and servant, whose was the greater virtue?" The king said, "The servant's." The sprite said again, "Was not the merit of the king greater, who obtained so beautiful a woman, and bestowed her on his servant?" Thereupon king Bir Vikramājī said, "What superior merit is there in their conferring favours, whose office it is to do so? But he who, while having his own interests to attend to, promotes the interests of another—*he* is the greater. For this reason, the servant's merit was the greater." On hearing these words, the sprite went and hung himself on that same tree; and the king went and again took him down from thence, placed him on his shoulder, and carried him away.

¹ A *gandharb* marriage is one where the usual formalities are dispensed with, and the parties become man and wife by mutual consent.

TALE IX.

THE sprite said, "O king! there is a city named Madanpur, where was a king named Bīrbar. Now, in that same country there was a merchant named Hiranyadatt, whose daughter's name was Madansenā. One day, in the spring-time, she went, with her female friends, into her garden, to stroll about and enjoy the scene. It so happened that, previous to her coming out, Somdatt, the son of a merchant named Dharmdatt, had come, with a friend, to take a stroll in the forest. On his return thence, he came into that garden; (and) on beholding her, became enamoured, and began to say to his friend, 'Brother! Should she ever be united to me, then my living will be to some purpose; and if not, then my living in the world is in vain.'"

"Addressing these words to his friend, (and) being distracted by the pangs of separation, he involuntarily approached her, and seizing her hand, began to say, 'If thou wilt not love me, I will sacrifice my life on