

whatso thou sayest is soothfast. But which is he who declared that I am ignoble and what was his proof and what sign in me exposed it to him?" Quoth the youngest Prince, "I am he who said it"; and the Sultan rejoined, "There is no help but that thou provide me with a proof." The Prince rejoined, "O my lord, I have evidence that thou art the son of a cook and a base-born, in that thou didst not sit at meat with us and this was mine all-sufficient evidence. Every man hath three properties which he inheriteth at times from his father, at times from his maternal uncle and at times from his mother. From his sire cometh generosity or niggardness; from his uncle courage or cowardice; from his mother modesty or immodesty; and such is the proof of every man." Then quoth to him the Sultan, "Sooth thou speakest; but say me, men who like you know all things thoroughly by evidence and by your powers of penetration, what cause have they to come seeking arbitration at my hand? Beyond yours there be no increase of intelligence. So fare ye forth from me and manage the matter among yourselves, for 'tis made palpable to me by your own words that naught remaineth to you save to speak of mysterious subjects; nor have I the capacity to adjudge between you after that which I have heard from you. In fine an ye possess any document drawn up by your sire before his decease, act according to it and contrary it not." Upon this the Princes went forth from him and made for their own country and city and did as their father had bidden them do on his death-bed. The eldest enthroned himself as Sultan; the cadet assumed possession and management of the moneys and treasures, and the youngest took to himself the camels and the horses and the beeves and the muttuns. Then each and every was indeed equal with his co-partner in the gathering of good.

A Tale of a Demon

From the Sanskrit

ON the banks of the Godávarí there is a place named Pratishthána. In it there lived of old time a famous king, named Trivikramasena, the son of Vikramasena, equal to Indra in might. Every day, when he was in his hall of audience, a mendicant named Kshántiśíla came to him, to pay him his respects, and presented him with a fruit. And every day the king, as soon as he received the fruit, gave it into the hand of the superintendent of his treasury who was near him. In this way ten years passed, but one day, when the mendicant had left the hall of audience, after giving the fruit to the king, the king gave it to a young pet monkey, that had escaped from the hands of its keepers, and happened to enter there. While the monkey was eating that fruit, it burst open, and there came out of it a splendid priceless jewel. When the king saw that, he took up the jewel, and asked the treasurer the following question, "Where have you put all those fruits which I have been in the habit of handing over to you, after they were given to me by the mendicant?" When the superintendent of the treasury heard that, he was full of fear, and he said to the king, "I used to throw them into the treasury from the window without opening the door; if your Majesty orders me, I will open it and look for them." When the treasurer said this, the king gave him leave to do so, and he went away, and soon returned, and said to the king, "I see that those fruits have all rotted away in the treasury, and I also see that there is a heap of jewels there resplendent with radiant gleams."

When the king heard it, he was pleased, and gave those jewels to the treasurer, and the next day he said to the mendicant, who came as before, "Mendicant, why do you court me every day with great expenditure of wealth? I will not take your fruit to-day until you tell me." When

the king said this, the mendicant said to him in private, "I have an incantation to perform which requires the aid of a brave man. I request, hero, that you will assist me in it." When the king heard that, he consented and promised him that he would do so. Then the mendicant was pleased and he went on to say to that king, "Then I shall be waiting for you at nightfall in the approaching black fortnight, in the great cemetery here, under the shade of a *banyan*-tree, and you must come to me there." The king said, "Well! I will do so." And the mendicant Kshântiśīla returned delighted to his own dwelling.

Then the heroic monarch, as soon as he had got into the black fortnight, remembered the request of the mendicant, which he had promised to accomplish for him, and as soon as night came, he enveloped his head in a black cloth, and left the palace unperceived, sword in hand, and went fearlessly to the cemetery. It was obscured by a dense and terrible pall of darkness, and its aspect was rendered awful by the ghastly flames from the burning of the funeral pyres, and it produced horror by the bones, skeletons, and skulls of men that appeared in it. In it were present formidable Bhútas and Vetálas, joyfully engaged in their horrible activity, and it was alive with the loud yells of jackals, so that it seemed like a second mysterious tremendous form of Bhairava. And after he had searched about in it, he found that mendicant under a *banyan*-tree, engaged in making a circle, and he went up to him and said, "Here I am arrived, mendicant; tell me, what can I do for you?"

When the mendicant heard that, and saw the king, he was delighted, and said to him, "King, if I have found favor in your eyes, go alone a long way from here toward the south, and you will find an *asoka*-tree. On it there is a dead man hanging up; go and bring him here; assist me in this matter, hero." As soon as the brave king, who was faithful to his promise, heard this, he said, "I will do so," and went toward the south. And after he had gone some way in that direction, along a path revealed by the light of the flaming pyres, he reached with difficulty in the darkness

that *asoka*-tree; the tree was scorched with the smoke of funeral pyres, and smelled of raw flesh, and looked like a Bhúta, and he saw the corpse hanging on its trunk, as it were on the shoulder of a demon. So he climbed up, and cutting the string which held it, flung it to the ground. And the moment it was flung down, it cried out, as if in pain. Then the king, supposing it was alive, came down and rubbed its body out of compassion; that made the corpse utter a loud demoniac laugh. Then the king knew that it was possessed by a Vetála, and said without flinching, "Why do you laugh? Come, let us go off." And immediately he missed from the ground the corpse possessed by the Vetála, and perceived that it was once more suspended on that very tree. Then he climbed up again and brought it down, for the heart of heroes is a gem more impenetrable than adamant. Then King Trivikramasena threw the corpse possessed by a Vetála over his shoulder, and proceeded to go off with it, in silence. And as he was going along, the Vetála in the corpse that was on his shoulder said to him, "King, I will tell you a story to beguile the way, listen.

STORY OF THE PRINCE, WHO WAS HELPED TO A WIFE BY
THE SON OF HIS FATHER'S MINISTER

There is a city (said the demon) named Váránasí, which is the dwelling-place of Śiva, inhabited by holy beings, and thus resembles the plateau of Mount Kailása. The river Ganges, ever full of water, flows near it, and appears as if it were the necklace ever resting on its neck; in that city there lived of old time a king named Pratápamukuta, who consumed the families of his enemies with his valor, as the fire consumes the forest. He had a son named Vajramukuta, who dashed the god of love's pride in his beauty, and his enemies' confidence in their valor. And that prince had a friend, named Buddhīśarīra, whom he valued more than his life, the sagacious son of a minister.