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James S. de ...

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Edited by

WILLIAM GOONETILLEKE.

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THE ORIENTALIST.

DEVOTED TO ORIENTAL LITERATURE.

EPISODES FROM THE MAHĀVAṆSA.

V. SILĀKĀLA.

THE materials for the subjects treated in this article are derived from portions of the 39th and 41st chapters of the Mahāvaṇsa, recording the history of the period between A.D. 515 and A.D. 540. We head it with the name of a remarkable man, whose life history extends over a space of time covering the reign of five kings, and who was a more or less prominent figure among them until, by a final and resolute effort, he succeeded in grasping the crown and wielding the sceptre of his country.

To trace the history of this fortune-favoured man we must go back a little to the turbulent time when Kāsyapa and Moggallāna struggled fiercely for the throne of their murdered father, Dhātusena. The parricide, Kāsyapa, on usurping the throne, had several powerful adherents, among whom was a retainer by the name of Dāṭhā Pabhuti, a Kṣattriya, or man of the royal caste belonging to the "Lambakarṇa" race.[1] Dissatisfied with Kāsyapa he quitted the service of the usurper and took up his residence in an obscure district, then called *Mereliya*. He had a son named Silākāla, well-known throughout the country as a valiant man and a brave soldier. This young man, apprehensive perhaps of danger from the jealousy or anger of Kāsyapa, united his fortunes with those of his kinsman, Moggallāna, and went over to India with that forlorn prince. Seeing, however, no immediate prospect of being employed in active military service under Moggallāna, he embraced the priesthood and became a *Sāmanera* or novice in a monastery at Gayā in the vicinity of the great Bodhi tree. Here he spent his time in seclusion, performing with zeal and alacrity the various duties devolving on a member of that order. A trifling incident that occurred during his obscure career at this monastery stamped him with a nick-name, which the course of time and his exaltation to the throne could not obliterate. One day, while going about in search of alms, he was fortunate in obtaining an offering of a mango, a rather rare fruit, it would seem, in that part of the country. He brought it to the monastery, and, induced either by its rarity and richness, or impelled by the natural generosity of his disposition, he cut up the fruit into small pieces and distributed them among his brethren. Delighted at the kindly spirit evinced by this act, the priests of that monastery facetiously gave him the *sobriquet* of "*Amba-Sāmanera*"[2] or "Mango-novice," by which name he is more generally known and recognised by the Sinhalese up to the present day.

Subsequently, on the assumption of the throne by Moggallāna and the establishment of peace throughout the kingdom, Silākāla gave up his robes and returned to his native land with a precious gift to his friend, the king, in the shape of a "Hair-

[1] The ancient Sinhalese kings traced their descent from either the Okkāka, the Maurya, or the Lambakarṇa races.

[2] Sinhalese *Amba-Heraṇa*.

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relic"[3] of Buddha, which he had obtained in India. The king, gratified at the sight of his faithful friend, and delighted with the present he had brought, paid him great honour. The assurance of his friend persuaded the king to believe in the genuineness of the relic, and to regard it with the highest respect and veneration. Placing it in an invaluable casket made of the purest crystal, he conveyed it in gorgeous procession to the beautiful temple of "*Dīpaṅkara*," and deposited it there amidst the joyful shouts of admiring multitudes and the pious offerings of thousands of devotees. The presents made to this relic by the king himself are enumerated in the Mahāvaṃsa, and are remarkable for their variety and value. They consisted of golden statues of himself, his queen and his maternal uncle—probably a great favourite of the palace; of golden images, among which were two statues representing the two chief disciples of Buddha; of a large gold bell-shaped cover; of a royal parasol, a fly-whisk, and an altar ornamented with gems. It is said that the king bestowed greater honours and privileges[4] on this relic than he cared to retain for himself; and as a token of his regard for Silākāla, the fortunate finder of this relic, he made him the custodian thereof, with the title of "Sword-bearer"[5] and gave his widowed sister[6] in marriage to him with a large dowry.

We have somewhat minutely entered into these details on the following account:—the Mahāvaṃsa, after relating this much, states that it is only a short summary, and refers the reader for an extended account to a work called Kesadhātuvaṃsa which we stated, while casually referring to the matter in a former article, had been lost and is not extant; but a learned and friendly critic in the "Ceylon Observer" pointed out to us, on the strength of the late Maha Mudaliyār De Zoysa's official reports to Government on the Temple Libraries of the N.-W. Province, that the work *is* extant, and that a copy of it had been found in the Library of the Aṁbagahapitiya Temple situated at Velitara in the Southern Province. We had, however, our doubts as to the identity of that work with the one referred to in the Māhavaṃsa, although the names were similar; and, however much the circumstance is to be regretted, we find that our doubts were well-grounded, and that the work referred to by Mr. De Zoysa is not the one alluded to in the Mahāvaṃsa. Not the slightest allusion is made in the former to any of the events narrated in the latter. The Kesadhātuvaṃsa[7] found in the monastery of Velitara gives an account of the fortunes of a Hair-relic in a country adjoining India (probably Assam or Burmah) and makes no allusion to Ceylon, Silākāla or Moggallāna.

Return we now to our story. We shall leave Silākāla for a time in the peaceable

[3] *Kesa-Dhātu.*

[4] The word used is *parihāra* which means protective honours and privileges such as guards, attendants, retinue, and other paraphernalia betokening dignity, rank, or consequence.

[5] "*Asiggāhaka.*"

[6] The only daughter of Dhātusena and wife of the General who encompassed the savage murder of that unfortunate monarch.

[7] This work, written in Pāli and in the Burmese character, is now in the possession of the learned priest, Vimalasāra Thera, of the Aṁbagahapitiya Temple. It is evidently a very modern importation from Burma and betrays, as regards authorship, the hand of an unscrupulous monk regardless of facts recorded in the Buddhist Scriptures. The subject-matter of it briefly is as follows:—Buddha was residing at Rājagaha in the Veluvana monastery when six Arhats, headed by Anuruddha Thera approached and informed him that a certain frontier country (paccanta-desa) thickly populated, and bordering the sea, had been converted to his religion, and that it was meet, therefore, that a bodily relic of the holy sage should be placed there for veneration and worship. On hearing this Buddha raised his right hand to his head and pulling off six hairs from it, gave them to the Arhats, who took the relic to the aforesaid country and deposited it in a Caitya or Stūpa built for that purpose. The greater part of the book consists of an account of the building and a description of the Stūpa. No allusion is made to any event recorded in the pages of the Mahāvaṃsa in connection with the hair-relic brought to Ceylon by Silākāla. It is evident that Mr. De Zoysa did not examine this work, or he would not have fallen into the error of supposing it to be identical with the one alluded to in the Mahāvaṃsa.

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enjoyment of the laurels which he had earned from royalty and follow the march of events that happened thereafter. At the death of Moggallāna his son, Kumāra Dhātusena, the Kumāradāsa of Sinhalese literature, duly ascended the throne and reigned prosperously for nine years. His reign was most brilliant: his end deplorably tragical. Unfortunately, however, a gap occurs here in the history of the Mahāvansa by the loss of the 40th chapter which the learned editors of that work have rightly, we believe, conjectured as having contained a detailed account of the great and beneficial works effected by Kumāradāsa and probably, too, of the romantic but painful incident which led to his heroic self-immolation. The loss of this chapter must have occurred at a very remote period; for the 41st chapter begins with a very brief and cursory account, embodied in three verses, of the accession and reign of Kumāradāsa,—a king who is put on a par by Totagamuva, the greatest Sinhalese poet of mediæval times, with the grandest monarchs that wielded the sceptre of Lankā. This apparent neglect can only be accounted for by the supposition that the 40th chapter was not forthcoming at the time the compiler of the 41st set himself to his task, and that he indexed the contents of the former from memory in order to supply the missing link in the chain of history, and to complete its chronology. However this may be, the three verses with which the 41st chapter disposes of the reign of the celebrated Kumāradāsa run as follows:—

"After his (Moggallāna's) demise his son, celebrated as Kumāra Dhātusena, a man of god-like form and extraordinary power, became king. He repaired and improved the temples which his father had built; caused to be held a council for the settlement of the text of the Scriptures and otherwise purified the religion of the land. He also supported the great priesthood with the four necessaries of life, and after performing various other acts of merit, untimely departed[8] this life in the ninth year of his reign."—Chap 41, vv. 1-3.

An account of this king and of the sentimental passion which ended in his tragical death, is given in "Alwis's Introduction to the *Sidatsangarā.*" In the construction of the story the author has drawn his materials mostly from tradition, supported by allusions made to the fate of that unfortunate monarch in Sinhalese works. The story, though somewhat coloured and tinged with the imagination of the writer is, nevertheless, graphically told, and will well repay the perusal of the reader. It is as follows:—

"A short interval elapsed between *Dhātusena's* death and the accession of Kumāradās, A.D. 515, one of the best and most enlightened of the Sinhalese kings. Whether we regard him as a benefactor of the people, as a just king, or as a scholar, our admiration of him is equally great. A long course of study before he assumed the reins of government peculiarly fitted him for the throne, and enabled him to govern his people with justice and equity, and to promote those interests which the exigencies of the times required. Eighteen temples and as many tanks were founded by this Prince; and Buddhism naturally obtained all the triumph which one of her devoted sons might achieve. He was an elegant writer and a celebrated poet; and gave to the public many a valuable work, of which the ravages of succeeding times have left behind but a solitary Sanskrit poem called the *Jānakīharana.*

"The following passage occurs in the *Perakumbā Sirita,* a Sinhalese poetical work of some celebrity:—'King Kumāradās, who on the very same day celebrated a threefold feast in honour of the accession of the Queen-

[8] The original word is *atigā*, and it is after much deliberation that I have rendered it "untimely departed." The preposition *ati*, placed before a verb signifying motion, often denotes what is improper or out of place; and the well-known circumstance of the self-immolation of Kumāradāsa justifies, I think, this rendering.

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Consort to the throne, the installation into office of a number of the priesthood, and the founding of 18 temples and 18 tanks; and who, in masterly and elegant rhymes composed Jānakīharaṇa, and other celebrated poems—offered his life for the poet Kālidās.'

"The circumstances which led to the tragical end of the sovereign, were as follows:—Kumāradās conceived an attachment to a female of great personal attractions, and during his visit one evening at her house (which was situated on the borders of a beautiful pond overgrown with lotuses,) the king observed that a 'bee' which had alighted upon a lotus and 'sat on the bloom extracting liquid sweet,' was insensibly imprisoned within the fading petals of this flower of the oriental poet. A felicitous poetical idea, having reference to the danger of his own situation, was the result of the observation; and the royal poet, not wishing to give utterance to the whole of his sentiments, left the two following lines on the walls of the apartment which he then occupied, with the addition to them of a promise to grant the request of any one who should complete the stanza:

Vanabambarā mala notala ronaṭa vanī,
Mala dedarā pana galavā giya sevenī.

"Kālidās,—not Ṛiṣi Kālidās, the 'Shakespeare of the East,'—who during this reign visited Ceylon, acquired the native Sinhalese, and made accessions to the literature of this island by his own compositions;—invited perhaps by the attractions of the lady to whom we have already referred, was once spending a day with her, when he saw the above lines and that which followed them.

"The poet, to whom the pen of royalty was perceptible, could not be long in conceiving the comparison, which the prince with a sense of delicacy had failed to institute: and at once completed the stanza by superscribing (as the genius of the Sinhalese language very frequently admits), instead of subjoining, the two following lines:

Poet...Siyatambarā siyatambarā siya se venī,
Siyasa purā nidi no labā un se venī.

King...Vanabambarā mala notalā ronaṭavanī
Mala dedarā pana galavā giya sevenī.

LITERAL TRANSLATION BY MR. ARMOUR.

'On resorting to the roseate receptacle for the sake of its sweets,
Anxiety deprived the eyes of sleep—
The forest bee got to the honey without bruising the flower,
And when the flower expanded escaped with life.'

VERSIFIED.

'Enthralled by blushing sweets; their power shall keep
The anxious mind from rest and eyes from sleep.
Though closed at eve, the glowing lotus see
Unhurt at dawn, release the captive bee.'

"The above, we regret, is not a literally correct translation of this elegant but difficult verse.

* * * * *

"After considerable inquiry and discussion amongst the pandits of the present day, we submit the following with much diffidence, as the meaning which we attach to the stanza:—

'(1) As the relation of the sun (or king of the solar race) in the company of the lotus-eyed beauty (2) was without full sleep to his eyes; (So) (3) the forest bee, which reached its sweets *without bruising the flower* (whilst it was open), (4) *escaped with life when the flower had expanded* (escaped not with life until the flower had again expanded).'

* * * * *

"To return however to the history of the verse under consideration. The courtezan, with a view to obtain the promised reward, murdered the poet, and represented to the king that she had herself completed the stanza. The king required but little reflection to detect the falsehood, and discover the murder of a friend who had suddenly disappeared. Inquiries were instituted and the body of the murdered

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pandit was found. The end was tragical! The king

'*with tears*
Watering the ground, and with *his* sighs the air
Frequenting, sent from heart contrite, in sign of sorrow unfeigned'

'prostrate fell' upon the blazing funeral pile of the murdered poet, and sacrificed his own life for that of Kālidās!

"According to tradition this sad occurrence happened at a place called Hatbodivatta at Anurādhapura; and some suppose, from the similarity of the name which they find given to a spot in the Mātara District, that Kumāradās died in the latter place. But this we apprehend is a mistake."—*Alwis's Introduction*, pp. clii. to clvi.

There can be no doubt as to the antiquity of the tradition, for we find it distinctly referred to by the great poet Totagamuva who flourished in the 15th century of the Christian era; nor are the surrounding circumstances connected with the extraordinary incident so improbable as to beget scepticism in the mind of even the most wary and circumspect. If the Hindus, in practising the barbarous though ancient custom of *Satī* (*Suttee*), held it as a sacred honour for a widow to immolate herself on the funeral pile of her deceased husband, why, at the remote period of which we are speaking, should it not have been held an honour as great, if not greater, for a man, in the desperation of insufferable sorrow and agony, to sacrifice his life for the friend of his bosom? Kumāradās is a striking specimen of the spirit which actuates humanity under certain circumstances; and, if we can discard from our minds the idea of voluptuousness and effeminate luxury which history has associated with the name of Sardanapalus, the episode above narrated would forcibly remind us of the unhappy fate of the royal Assyrian.

After the untimely and unnatural death of Kumāradās, his son Kittisena was crowned king. He followed in the footsteps of his father, and immediately on his assumption of the reins of government commenced several works of great merit; but his life was cut short by assassination in the ninth month of his reign. The perpetration of this foul deed is attributed to his maternal uncle, Siva, who aspired to the throne and succeeded in assuming the sovereign authority; but before he had time to complete the preparations for his public coronation he was in turn assassinated on the 25th day of his reign by his brother-in-law,[9] Upatissa, who at once assumed the reins of government and was crowned king without loss of time. In this series of violent revolutions that followed each other so rapidly within the precincts of the palace, there is every reason to believe that Silākāla was a moving spirit, if not a prominent leader, and quietly acted the part of a "king-maker" with the view, as we are disposed to think, of paving his own way to the throne. In support of our conjecture we have the significant fact stated that the first public act of Upatissa was the appointment of Silākāla to the high office of Commander of the Royal Forces, and the giving in marriage of the king's daughter to him with a liberal provision for her maintenance. These acts were undoubtedly intended to secure the allegiance of a powerful and dangerous man by the double ties of gratitude and kinship, and were, we suspect, dictated more through fear of a repetition of conspiracies and revolutions in which Silākāla had figured as a prime mover than by a desire of acknowledging and rewarding real worth and merit. But, as in the case of Dhātusena, the sequel will show that the old and imbecile king, Upatissa, was doomed to sad disappointment, and had reason to rue the day on which he entered into a political compact with the designing Silākāla by

[9] The relationship is given in Turnour's Chronological List of Kings, but no mention is made of it in the Mahāvaṇsa.

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means of a marriage alliance. The insatiable ambition of the unscrupulous man could not so easily be gratified. Soon after he had been installed in the high office and had obtained the hand of the princess he set out for the "Southern Hills"[10] with the ostensible object, doubtless, of collecting recruits for the army, but really impelled by the ambition of obtaining the kingdom after dethroning the king. For this purpose he collected and disciplined a large force in that country; and his sinister design of invading the district of the capital soon became known at the seat of government.

The old king, who was almost blind and extremely infirm, had only one son, named Kassapa—a young man of splendid accomplishments and superior virtue. He is described as manly and brave, independent and self-reliant, industrious and persevering, liberal and high-minded, affectionate and dutiful to his parents and elders—a combination of qualities, it must be acknowledged, that rarely adorn and embellish the lives of ordinary princes. He had sixteen chosen companions of noble blood, gifted with similar virtues, with whom he formed an inseparable bond of union and friendship. Silākāla, no doubt, found this brave phalanx of heroes no light enemy to encounter. With a pertinacity worthy of a better cause he penetrated seven or eight times into the northern district as far as the capital, only to meet each time with defeat and disaster from Kassapa and his brave little army. At last the rebel chief betook himself to the eastern and western districts of the Island, and establishing his authority over them by means of cunning and artifice, he greatly increased the strength of his army; advanced suddenly northwards, and took up a strong position at the foot of a mountain to the east of Anurādhapura called "*Tissa pabbata*"[11] where he encamped and fortified himself. On receiving information of this movement, Kassapa, with his sixteen comrades and small army, went out to meet the enemy and gave him battle. He stormed the entrenchments; carried the enemy's position and completely defeated him. In pursuing the flying enemy that had been routed by his gallant charge, he rode up boldly to the very summit of the mountain on the back of his favourite elephant, and hence obtained the name of "*Giri Kassapa*" or "Kassapa the Rock," in commemoration of the daring feat which crowned the glorious victory.

Undaunted by repeated defeats in the open field, but rather exasperated at his ill-success and resenting the frowns of Fortune, Silākāla put forth all the might and energy of his indomitable temper to bring the whole country outside the capital under his rule. In a short time the rebellious chief seems to have succeeded in becoming all-powerful everywhere except in the vicinity of the capital, evidently proving that Kassapa had been either too weak or too irresolute to have followed up, as he ought to have done, his brilliant victories by a vigorous pursuit of the enemy and inflicted on him a crushing and deadly blow from which he could never recover. Silākāla had thus the opportunity given him of collecting undisturbedly the "invincible force of men and materials"[12] with which, we read, he finally invaded the northern district and pushed on to the capital, which he invested. Nothing daunted by the numberless host opposed to him, Kassapa made seven successive sorties in force and fought fiercely, but he was repulsed by the weight of numbers and beaten back each time into the city. At last, seeing that his provisions were rapidly failing and his ranks daily thinning, he reflected in this wise :—"All the citizens—aged men, helpless women, and innocent children—are sufferers by this siege. The fighting-men are reduced to

[10] *Dakkhinaṃ Malayaṃ*." I should think the ancient "*Malaya*" included almost the whole of the central and the northern portion of the Southern Province "*Malaya*" is "the hilly region."

[11] Sinhalese, "*Tispauva*."

[12] "*Ajeyya-bala-vāhano*."

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a mere handful. The king, my father, is both blind and old. I shall therefore take my aged parents away to Meru-Kandaraka,[13] where I shall leave them in a place of safety, and afterwards collect an army with which I could reasonably hope to vanquish the foe." Having thus resolved on flight as the only way of rescuing his parents from imminent danger and saving the inhabitants of the city from pillage and massacre, he made arrangements to carry out the plan with reasonable hopes of success. The plan he decided upon was to take the king and queen away, together with the most valuable treasures, accompanied by a number of trusty, valiant soldiers selected from the garrison and his sixteen bosom companions: the party was to steal out from the city at dead of night and pursue their venturesome journey, leaving the rest to fortune or fate. The project was successful so far as regards the exit from the city unperceived by the besiegers. But the night was apparently dark and stormy; and the guides, unfamiliar with the locality (according to the historian), or gained over by inducement (as we suspect) led the escaped party hither and thither, until, at dawn, they found themselves not far from the suburbs of the city. News of the flight soon reached the ears of Silākāla who lost no time in pursuing the fugitives with a numerous force, and succeeded in overtaking them.

Kassapa now perceived that either accident or treachery had disconcerted his plans, and that further flight was useless: he therefore resolved on making a bold and determined stand by turning upon the pursuers and attacking them. Most probably, he was induced to adopt this course in order to give time to his aged parents to continue on their journey and give them a chance of escape. Mounted on his noble elephant and supported by his friends and adherents with all the might of extreme desperation, the prince fought like a giant, laying around him heaps upon heaps of slain. "The carnage was frightful," says the historian, "and the fierce battle raged as it were a fight between gods and demons."[14] At length, seeing his companions one after another laid low while fighting desperately by his side; his faithful followers fallen around him either dead or wounded, and his favourite war-elephant receding through sheer fatigue, Kassapa lost all heart and hope. In the agony of desperation he drew out his dagger, cut his own throat and fell forward clinging, with the grasp of death, to the neck of the noble animal that bore him so bravely to the last. News of the prince's crushing defeat and desperate suicide was conveyed to the flying monarch who, on hearing the heart-rending tale, fell down dead, "stricken with the arrow of sorrow."[15] Such was the end of the imbecile Upatissa whose name, but for the filial devotion and heroic valour of his noble son would have been justly buried in eternal oblivion, or, at best, received only a passing notice, instead of being honoured with a page in the history of past ages.

After the death of Upatissa whose turbulent reign extended only over a short period of one year and a half, Silākāla assumed the reins of government unopposed by any competitor. He ruled for thirteen years, and his reign was characterized by justice and humanity, spreading

[13] Sinhalese, *Meru Kaňdura*. This spot, situated in the "Malaya" region or "The Hills," seems to have been regarded anciently as a place of safe refuge for kings and princes in times of peril and danger. The name would imply that it was a country abounding in caves, caverns and streams, and answers to the appearance of the district about Kotmale or Bagavantalāva. There is a large and capacious cavern, concealed by the fall of a beautiful cascade over and in front of it, in the Rammudu-oya running through Boltumbe, a large village adjoining Bagavantalāva. According to tradition, this spot was the habitation of a former king and queen who were driven to take shelter there by accidents of misfortune. Unmistakable traces of the cavern having been inhabited at some remote period are still visible.

[14] "*Saṅgāmo tattha bhiṃsanako ahū—Devāsura-ranākāre vattamāne mahāhave*," &c. See vv. 22—25, ch. 41.

[15] "*Soka-salla-hato marī*." This episode will remind the classical reader of the heroic stand made at Thermopylæ by Leonidas and his 300 brave Spartans against the hosts of Xerxes.

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contentment, peace and prosperity among the people. He was, and is still, known more familiarly by the agnomen "Amba-sāmanera" which he obtained, as we related before, at Gayā, from the priests of the monastery in which he had lived as a novice; but his proper name was Silākāla, which being interpreted means "Black as a rock."[16]

The character of the man, so far as we can make out from the account given of him in the Mahāvansa, appears to have been a compound of genial kindness, sincerity in friendship, show of piety and devotion, unwearied perseverance and dogged resolution,—all combined with extraordinary cunning and artifice. Ambition, of course, he had in the highest degree. It is a quality of the human mind from which only a marvellous few are exempt. It may either be good or bad, according to the direction in which it is manifested and the aims it has in view. In the instance before us—that of Silākāla—the materials at our command are too scanty to decide whether it was employed throughout for good or for evil; but, to do evil that good may come, is not a maxim to be accepted unreservedly, since the ideas of good or evil may vary in different minds. But be that as it may, we have a short account of the public and private acts of Silākāla's career as king given in the Mahāvansa, from which it is evident that he did not use power for the gratification of his passions or the infliction of pain and suffering on his fellow-creatures. As regards his private life, it is stated that he was scrupulously careful to perform his daily devotions at the foot of the sacred Bo-tree and at the Sanctuary of the Hair-relic which he had brought from India. Regularly he gave the royal alms to the priesthood at the great Alms-hall called "Mahāpāli," and distributed at his expense the three robes *to all the priests living in the Island.* Among his public acts are recorded *the issuing of a royal decree forbidding the taking away of animal life throughout the Island,*[17] and the *increase of grants and funds to hospitals and dispensaries*[18]—acts, certainly, evidencing, as the Mahāvansa justly remarks, that this monarch "had the well-being of the people at heart." In the 12th year of this king's reign the "*Dhammadhātu*" was brought into this country by a young merchant who went from Ceylon to India on a visit to the city of "Kāsi" or Benares. It is a pity that the Mahāvansa does not tell us what this "Dhammadhātu" was. We fancy, however, from the disparaging remarks immediately following on the conduct of the king with reference to it that it must have been a book of the northern Buddhist Canon; for the narrative goes on relating how the sovereign, "unable to distinguish the Dharma of Buddha from what is not the Dharma, conceived an attachment to it like the grasshopper that flings itself at the burning lamp mistaking it for shining gold." The king regarded the book with great reverence; had it deposited in a chamber at his palace, and made it a custom to carry the curious book in grand procession periodically to the Jetavana Temple under the impression that by this ostentatious display he was conferring a great boon on the people. This, and the division of his kingdom among his sons, which we shall refer to hereafter, were, we fancy, the last silly acts of Silākāla's incipient dotage.

L. C. Wijesinha.

[16] "The Sinhalese historians call him Ambaherana Salamevan."—"The Mango-novice, Cloud-coloured like a rock."

[17] "*Māghātan karayi dīpe sabbesan yeva āpninan.*" "In respect of all living animals, he made '*no-killing*' a rule throughout the island." This decree was enforced by several other kings from time to time.

[18] "*Vejja-sālāsu bhoge ca vaddhesi janatā hito.*" "Having the welfare of the people at his heart, he increased the revenues of Medical Halls."

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THE RELIGION OF THE ABORIGINAL TRIBES OF INDIA.[1]

By Professor J. Avery, of Bowdoin College, Brunswick, Maine, United States.

If an apology were needed for bringing to the attention of students of religion the crude notions of savage tribes regarding their relations to the unseen world, and the often revolting practices which have sprung therefrom, this would not be founded solely upon the claim which they rightly make upon Christian philanthropy, but as well on their scientific interest and value. If we have observed aright the course of thought at the present time, there is a growing disposition to study attentively all the systems of religion which at one time or another have been devised or accepted by men, with the view to discover their origin and the laws which have governed their development. There is a tendency also to withdraw the study of religion from the exclusive dominion of sentiment, and to apply to it the same rigid canons of criticism which have been used so successfully in other fields of inquiry. There has been a time when the Christian Church viewed everything called religion outside its own fold much as the Greeks looked at the world beyond the confines of their peninsula, and lumped together alien beliefs of every variety and merit under the general title of heathenism; but, happily, a more appreciative spirit now prevails, and we are coming to see that there is much in other systems of belief which deserves our admiration, and not a little that has served the Divine purpose in educating the world up to the understanding of a purer revelation. The study of religions has a scientific as well as a practical aim, and scholars have employed in it the inductive method of investigation with such a degree of success, that we may feel assured that the foundations are being laid for a science of religion. Indeed, some writers talk as if such a science were already constructed; but we are constrained to believe that this use of language is premature. So vast is the field of inquiry, so important is it that every part of its surface be explored and carefully mapped out, and so recently have scientific methods been employed in its survey, that investigators in this domain may well at present be content with modest claims for their study. It cannot be denied, then, that we shall not have a complete science of religions—much less of religion—until we shall have measured and deposited in its proper place in the building every variety of religious belief, no matter how crude it may seem, or how near the bottom of the social scale its professors may stand. If we feel any diffidence, therefore, in presenting to the members of the Victoria Institute a sketch of the religious beliefs and practices of the aboriginal tribes of India, it is not on the score of the subject possessing no intrinsic interest, but rather because of the present lack of materials in some parts of the field and our consequent inability to present the theme with the fulness of illustration desirable. And here we desire to express our great indebtedness to Colonel Dalton's invaluable work, the *Ethnology of Bengal*, without which many facts stated in the following pages would have been beyond our reach. Before proceeding with our inquiries, it will be useful if we state the location of the tribes to whom we shall repeatedly refer; for, though British power has existed in India for nearly two centuries, it has only been within a very recent period that we have been able to get trustworthy information concerning the aboriginal population; and even now that information is largely confined to the few persons whom official duties or missionary efforts have brought into close relations with it. It has been usual to divide these primitive races into three groups—viz., Thibeto-Burman, Kolarian, and Dravidian. Without entering upon the question of the correctness of this classification, or the ethnic connexions

[1] Read before the Victoria Institute, or Philosophical Society of Great Britain.

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of its several members, we shall find it sufficiently convenient for our purpose.

The tribes comprising the first group are found in their most primitive condition scattered along the foot-hills of the Himālayas, from Nepal eastward to the farther extremity of Assam, thence along the range forming the eastern and southern border of that province back to the valley of the Ganges. Some tribes of the same stock are also found in the lowlands on either side of the Brahmaputra; but they have to so great a degree exchanged their ancient customs for those of the Hindus, that they offer fewer points of interest for our present inquiry than their kindred in the jungles upon the hills.

Following the route just indicated, we find on the northern border of Nepal the Kirantis, the Limbus, and some other tribes of inferior importance. Passing across Sikhim and Bhutan, whose inhabitants, the Lepchas and Bhutias, have adopted Buddhism, we come to the Akas, and next in order, to the Dophlas, the Miris, and the Abors, which last tribe has settlements as far east as the Dibong, a northern tributary of the Brahmaputra. The Dibong serves also as an ethnic boundary, the tribes already named to the west of it showing a decided affinity to the Thibetans, and those beyond the stream exhibiting a closer likeness to tribes in Burmah. Between the Dibong and the Digaru are the Chulikata, or Crop-haired Mishmis. Next to these, on the north-eastern border of Assam, is another tribe, also called Mishmis, but differing in many respects from the one last mentioned. South of the Mishmis, partly within and partly beyond the eastern boundary of the province, are the Khamtis and the Singphos. Now, turning westward, and still keeping within the mountain district, we come first to the numerous tribes of Nagas spreading westward, to about 93rd deg. of E. long. On their western border are the Mikirs and the Kukis. Continuing in the same direction across the Kapili river, we meet, first, the Syntengs or Jaintias; next, the Khasias; and last of all, at the end of the range, the Garos. At the foot of the Garo hills are the Pani-Koch, a tribe partly converted to Hinduism. The tribes of the lowlands might be left out of view altogether, were it not that their conversion has not been so radical as to quite efface their primitive superstitions. The most important of these tribes are the Ahams, the Chutias, the Koch, and the Kacharis. They are scattered here and there over the entire valley, and are reckoned as inferior castes of Hindus.

Crossing the lower Ganges valley, and ascending the rugged highland which forms the core of India, we find ourselves in the home of a most primitive population. Here tribes of both the Kolarian and the Dravidian stock, protected by the nature of the country, have long resisted the advance of a higher civilisation. Of the un-Hinduised Kolarians, the Santals occupy the Santal Parganas and the hill tracts of Orissa, on the eastern border of the highland. Adjoining this tribe, on the south and south-west, are the Bhumij, the Mundas, the Kharrias, and the Hos or Larka-Kols. Still farther south, in the tributary states of Cuttack, are the Juangs. In the Ganjam district of the Madras Presidency are the Savaras. Directly west of the Kharrias are the Korwas, and, extending in scattered settlements across the plateau to the Nerbudda and Tapti rivers, are the closely-allied tribes of Kurs and Kurkus. Of the Dravidian tribes, the Khonds live just north of the Savaras, in the tributary states of Orissa; the Oraons are found in Chutia Nagpur; the Paharias or Malers occupy the Rajmahal hills, where they overlook the Ganges; the Gonds spread over a large area in the centre of the plateau; while the Todas, Badagas, and one or two other small tribes, are far away on the Nilgiri hills of southern India. It is hardly necessary to add that the tribes of the last group do not represent the whole Dravidian population; with the civilised portion, which constitutes the majority, we have here no concern. In addition to the tribes already named, there are certain partly-Hinduised

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tribes to whom we shall occasionally refer. These are the Cheros and Kharwars of the Shahabad and Palamau districts; the Parheyas, the Kisans, the Bhuihers; the Boyars, the Nagbangsis, and the Kaurs about Palamau, Sirgūja, and Jashpur.

Proceeding now to the subject of our inquiry, after this preliminary explanation, we shall describe the religion of the aboriginal population under the following heads:—1st, the gods, and the kind of worship paid to them; 2nd, places of worship; 3rd, images and other representations of Deity; 4th, the priesthood; 5th, divination; 6th, witchcraft; 7th, the future life and the worship of ancestors; 8th, speculations regarding the origin of the world and of man; 9th, influence of Buddhism and Hinduism. It is almost needless to say that these tribes, without exception, and in common with the lower orders of men generally, have an unquestioning belief in the existence of spirits, both human and divine; sometimes they go even farther than this, and attribute to animals and inanimate objects immortal souls, like their own. The materialistic theories which have been reached by the speculations of civilised philosophers seem never to have clouded their child-like faith. But, teeming as is the unseen world with beings created by a savage imagination, we are not to look for an orderly and consistent arrangement of powers and spheres of activity among these deities, such as we find in the Pantheons of Greece and Rome; rather, we are to expect the condition of things out of which these developed. Whenever such an elaborate system of theology is described as worked out by a tribe in other respects low down in the social scale, it is to be viewed with extreme caution, and by no means accepted as genuine, until attested by more than one skilful observer. An example in point is the account of the Khond religion by Major Macpherson. We shall be more likely to find confused and even flatly contradictory notions of the gods, blind attempts to properly adjust human relations with the higher powers. Though the gods served by these tribes are for the most part of a low order, scarcely rising above the level of their worshippers, still there are here and there indications of a dim conception of a God throned far above these inferior deities, and more deserving of reverence and love. We will first search for these. The Singphos have a tradition that in a former sinless state they worshipped a Supreme God, of whose attributes they can give no account; but that they fell from that condition, and have since adopted the superstitions of surrounding tribes. The Abors and Miris have a vague idea of a God who is the Father of all; but as they connect him with the abode of the dead, and call him Jam Raja, it is easy to see that their conceptions are derived from the Hindu god, Yama. The Kukis, who seemed to have advanced farther in their reasoning, or borrowed more, believe in a Supreme God, whom they call Puthen, who not only created the world, but governs it and rewards men according to their deeds. It is in the last particular that their views are in marked contrast with those generally held by these tribes. Puthen has a wife, Nongjar, whose good offices as an intercessor with her husband can be secured by suitable offerings. The children of this benevolent pair are, like the other inferior gods, of a malicious disposition. With most of these tribes the sun is regarded as the impersonation of their highest god. The Garos call him Saljang, or Rishi Saljang, and sacrifice white cocks in his honour. They say that he resided for a time on the Garo hills with his wife, Apongma, and begat children, but subsequently returned to heaven, where he now dwells. The Bhuiyas call him Boram, and likewise offer to him a white cock at the planting season. He is worshipped by the Kharrias under the name Bero, and every head of a family is bound to offer to him five sacrifices in a lifetime, each oblation exceeding in value the last

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one. The Hos and Santals call the sun-god Sing Bonga. He is represented as being self-created and the author of the universe. He does not inflict suffering, but is sometimes invoked to remove it when appeals to the inferior gods have proved ineffectual. The Hos observe a yearly festival in honour of him, at which a white cock and the first-fruits of the rice harvest are offered. Among the Santals, the head of the family, every third or fourth year, sacrifices a goat to Sing Bonga in an open space at sunrise. The Mundas pray to him when selecting the site of a house. The Korwas worship him under the name Bhagavan, a Sanskrit word. The Muasis pay homage to both the sun and the moon. The Oraons reverence the sun as Dharmesh, the Holy One. They say that he created the world, and that he preserves men, unless thwarted by the malice of demons. No oblations are presented to him, since his good-will is already secured. The Khonds are divided into two sects, if Major Macpherson's statement can be trusted. One sect worship Bura Pennu, who manifests himself in the sun, and is the creator and benefactor of mankind. The other sect have chosen as their highest object of regard his wife, the bloodthirsty earth-goddess, Tari, who demands a yearly offering of human victims. The Todas regard the heavenly bodies as gods, and address them in certain set phrases, but have no clear idea of their attributes or requirements.

It seems plain, from the facts cited, that most of the aboriginal tribes of India have some vague notion of a Power throned far above the world; who was concerned with its creation; who manifests himself in the heavenly luminaries; whose disposition towards his creatures is benevolent, but is sometimes unable to reach its aim; and who demands from them only a distant and formal recognition, or none at all. Whether these are vanishing traces of a primitive revelation, or the result of their own reflections, or have been borrowed from the religion, particularly the Hari worship, of the Hindus, we will not here inquire. It is, at any rate, certain that the contemplation of their highest god has little effect in regulating conduct.

Another god of a similar character, but second in rank, is worshipped chiefly by the Kolarian tribes in Central India. This is Marang Buru, or Great Mountain.

Remarkable peaks, bluffs, or rocks not unnaturally suggested to their simple minds an idea of Divinity, and called forth their reverence. Since from such places descend the streams which irrigate the fields, Marang Buru has become the god to be invoked for rain. Offerings are made to him on the summit of the hill or other object in which he is supposed to reside.

It is not, however, with the superior gods and their decorous worship that we have most to do in describing the deities of these rude tribes. Their chief concern is to keep the peace with a host of minor gods, with whom their imagination has filled the whole realm of nature. In the forest, the field, the house—everywhere these beings throng. They are mostly of a jealous, revengeful disposition, and seem to take a malicious pleasure in teasing mankind. Fortunately, they are not insensible to human blandishments, and he is pretty sure to prosper who most assiduously cultivates their good-will, which can best be done by providing for them some toothsome dainty. It would be quite unnecessary to record lists of these lower gods, whose names are legion, since their attributes and the worship by which they are propitiated are everywhere of the same general type. A few characteristic examples will suffice. The Singphos recognise three spirits called Nhats, who preside respectively over the higher, the lower world, and the household. Offerings of fowls, dogs, and on special occasions a buffalo, are made to them. The Chulikata Mishmis declare that the spirits whom they worship are mortal like themselves. The gods of the Abors and Miris dwell in the

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trees of the woods which cover their hill-sides. They love to kidnap children, whom they can generally be made to restore by proceeding to fell the trees in which they reside. The Nagas say that their gods are created beings, and they are accustomed to vary their offerings according to the dignity of the recipient. Semes, the god of wealth, gets the larger domestic animals; Kuchimpai, the god of fertility, receives fowls and eggs; while Kangniba, who, on account of blindness, cannot distinguish offerings, gets nothing of any value. They believe that each disease is the work of a special demon, whose business and pleasure it is to spread it abroad; but his malicious design is sometimes thwarted by hanging bunches of withered leaves on the lintels of the door to frighten him, or branches of trees are stuck in the paths leading to the village, that the spirit may take them for untravelled ways. Since the tiger is of all beasts in India the most dreaded, it is not strange that a tiger-demon should be recognised. He is worshipped by the Kisans, who think in this way to escape the ravages of that animal. Among the Santals, in Ramgarh, only those who have lost relatives by the tiger think it necessary to propitiate the tiger-demon. The Gonds also pay him reverence. Since the deities of these tribes are anthropomorphic, it is a matter of course that gender should be allotted them; hence goddesses are frequently worshipped, and they show themselves not a whit behind their male consorts in malignant and bloodthirsty disposition. The Bhuiyas and Savaras, though recognising the benevolent sun-god, pay special honour to a savage goddess called Thakurani, who was formerly propitiated by human sacrifices. It is thought that upon her worship is founded that of the Hindu Kāli, who once received human victims in this very part of India.

But the most remarkable system of human sacrifices, in connexion with the worship of female deities, was that instituted in honour of Tari, the earth-goddess of the Khonds. Since she presided over fertility, victims were immolated chiefly at the time of sowing. The persons destined for sacrifice, called Meriahs, were kidnapped from the plains or from other tribes, and, under strict guard, were petted and fed like cattle fattening for the slaughter. Children were allowed to grow up, and were encouraged to marry and rear families, but parents and offspring were equally devoted to the goddess, and were liable at any moment to be sacrificed to quench her thirst for blood. When the time of offering came, the body was hacked into small pieces, and each worshipper struggled to secure a shred of flesh or piece of bone to bury in his field. It has been about forty years since an end was put to these horrid rites by the combined efforts of Major S. C. Macpherson and General John Campbell. The Khonds say that Tari lives in heaven with her beneficent husband, Bura Pennu, while numerous inferior gods roam the earth, seen by the lower animals, but invisible to men. It cannot be doubted that the custom of human sacrifice was once wide-spread in India, as indicated not only by the facts just stated, but by the practice of sham offerings existing among other tribes at the present time. The Oraons and Gonds even now make a wooden or straw image of a man, and after prayer to a divinity for the blessings desired, sever its head with the stroke of an axe. As a general rule, the inferior gods stand in no clearly recognised relation of dependence upon the superior gods. Their will is usually exercised independently of higher control. We have noticed an interesting exception in the case of Kols, who assert that there are certain blessings reserved for the sun-god, Sing Bonga, to grant; and that offerings made to the lower gods will induce them to intercede with their master in behalf of the supplicants. One of the simplest, most childlike forms of worship is that practised by the Todas on the Nilgiri Hills of Western India. Almost the sole means of support possessed by this tribe are their herds of buffaloes; hence these,

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together with the implements and persons specially connected with them, have come to assume a sacred character. Certain old cow-bells, said to have come originally from heaven, are worshipped as gods; and the priests or milkmen who tend the sacred buffaloes, of which several herds are specially set apart, are during their time of service also gods, and as such cannot be touched by any mortal. The duty of the priest is to perform a few simple rites daily before the cow-bells, and to care for his buffaloes, in which labour he is assisted by a semi-sacred herdsman. He can return at pleasure to ordinary human life, when, though no longer the embodiment of deity, he is treated with marked respect. The Todas believe in other gods, who are invisible, and whom the priest salutes as fellow-deities, but their ideas regarding them are extremely vague.

The residence of the gods is sometimes localised by these aboriginal tribes as heaven, some distant and lofty mountain peak, a huge rock, or a grove of ancient trees. Spirits who are likely to prove good neighbours are sometimes enticed to take up their abode near a village by liberal offerings. Among the Kolarians of Central India every village has several sacred groves consecrated to tutelary gods. The trees in these groves must be left undisturbed on pain of divine displeasure. It is true, as a rule, that the Thibeto-Burman and Kolarian tribes construct no temples nor images of their gods, while images, or something answering to them, are common among the Dravidians. Still, among the former tribes there is usually some spot where village or family worship is commonly performed, and which is marked by certain objects designed to suggest the sacredness of the place. The Garos set up before their houses bamboo poles, with fillets of cotton or flowers attached, and before these make their offerings. The same thing is done by the Limbus. The Kacharis, the Bodo, the Mishmis, and some of the tribes of Central India worship the Sij (Euphorbia) plant as an emblem of deity. The Juangs, Kharrias, and Korwas regard the ant-hill as a sacred place, and use it to take an oath, or to sacrifice upon. The Akas alone of these north-eastern tribes have images of their gods, and little huts to serve for temples; but, as they are partly converted to Hinduism, this custom is probably derived from that source. In the villages of Dravidian tribes one finds some objects set up to represent the tutelary gods. These are often rude in shape—a lump of earth, a stone, or stakes of different heights to represent the two sexes.

Having spoken of the deities reverenced by these primitive races and of the worship accorded to them, we proceed to describe the persons, whenever there are any such, whose special duty it is to perform that service. It may be said that, with few or no exceptions, all the tribes employ priests regularly or occasionally. When a tribe has no priests of its own, it borrows them from another tribe. Moreover, the office is usually not hereditary, but may be taken up or laid down at pleasure. In this respect the priesthood among the aboriginal population of India stands in marked contrast with that of the Hindus. The Singphos have no regular priests of their own, though members of the tribe sometimes act as diviners. The Buddhist priests of their neighbours, the Khamtis, are greatly esteemed by them. Among the Garos the priest leads the same kind of life as the laity, and the only preparation needed by him before assuming the sacred office seems to be an ability to repeat the usual incantations. The Oraons, when in want of a priest, discover the proper individual by divination. Taking a winnowing sieve in their hands, they march about the village, and are involuntarily led away by movements of the sieve to the right house. Among the Paharias, persons desiring to enter the priesthood are required to retire for some days to the jungle, and commune in solitude with the deity. Before they are confirmed in their office they are expected to perform some marvellous act, as evidence of having acquired superhuman

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power. They wear their hair uncut while acting as priests. The same tribe have also priestesses as well as priests. Some tribes, that have in other respects adopted the religion of the Hindus, employ the priests of neighbouring unconverted tribes to propitiate local deities. The distinction between priests and laity among most tribes is so slight that unconsecrated persons not unfrequently perform the offices of religion. The Juangs, who are among the lowest of all the tribes described, employ an old man as priest. Among the Kharrias the head of the family presides at offerings to the sun-god in behalf of the household, but a priest is employed to act for the community. The Kols allow certain elders or the heads of families to perform the service. Among the Santals the head of the family offers the ancestral sacrifices, but other services are performed by village priests, who fit themselves for the purpose by prayer, fasting, and silent contemplation of some god until they are possessed by him. Among the Khonds a regular priest always officiated at the festivals in honour of the earth-goddess, but it appears that on ordinary occasions any one who chose to do so could assume the priestly functions, his reputation being dependent upon his skill as a diviner. We are told by Hodgson that among the Bodos and Dhimals the priests do not form an hereditary class, though it is not uncommon for the son to take up the business of his father; but that the elders of the people, heads of families or clans, frequently act as priests. We have already seen that among the Todas the manager of religious affairs is at once priest and god. His novitiate is passed by retiring to the jungle, and remaining there alone and without clothing for eight days, during which time he performs certain purificatory rites. On the eighth day he returns and enters upon the discharge of his duties.

Among the hill tribes generally the principal duties of a priest are to cure sickness, to ascertain coming events by divination, and to preside over the public offerings. The theory of the Nagas that sickness is caused by a demon, who takes this way to gratify a personal spite against some mortal, is shared by other tribes. This being the diagnosis, the only rational course to pursue is to call in the priest. Among the Kukis, when this personage arrives, he first determines from the symptoms which one of the gods is offended. He then roasts a fowl and eats it on the spot where the sick man was first seized with his malady. After throwing the fragments away, as an offering to the demon, he goes home. Should the gravity of the case demand the sacrifice of a larger animal, the priest collects his friends and shares the feast with them. In case the first application of the remedy does not prove effectual, it has to be repeated until the man dies or his resources fail. Among the Garos, the priest, with the patient lying beside him, takes his seat near a bamboo altar, around which an assistant leads the animal to be sacrificed. From time to time it is taken away and washed, and then brought back and fed with salt and caressed. Its head is then severed with a single blow, and its blood smeared upon the altar. A somewhat more economical plan is in vogue among the Bodos. The exorcist places before him on the ground thirteen leaves, with a few grains of rice upon each. Over these leaves, which represent the names of divinities, he causes a pendulum suspended from his thumb to vibrate, and the leaf towards which it moves indicates the god to be propitiated. An appropriate victim is then promised him, but only on condition that the patient recovers. The same use of a pendulum has been observed among the Paharias. Sometimes the sickness is due to the spell of a witch, and then the following method is employed by the Kols for the detection of the offender :—A large cone-shaped wooden vessel is placed apex downward upon the ground, and on this is laid a flat stone. A boy is made to balance himself upon the stone, while the names of

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all the people in the vicinity are slowly repeated. With the mention of each name a few grains of rice are thrown at the boy; and when the right name is uttered the stone moves, and he falls off. The foretelling of future events by the observation of omens is one of the most important functions of the priest; although the interpretation of these is among some tribes the duty of a special diviner, who is another person than the priest. Among the Singphos the diviner holds over the fire joints of a large sort of grass until they explode, and then examines the position of the minute fibres thrown out beside the fracture. The Abors scrutinise the entrails of birds, but get the best results from pig's liver. They informed Colonel Dalton "that the words and faces of men were ever fallacious, but that pig's liver never deceived them." The Khasias seek omens from the contents of eggs. The western Naga tribes put the village under *tabu*, when the omens are to be observed; and no one is permitted to enter or leave it, or to engage in labour for two days. This especially occurs when they are about to cut down the jungle for their rude agriculture. At this time all fire is extinguished, and new fire is produced by the friction of two sticks. When there is a birth or death in a family the house is put under *tabu* for five days, and no one but the inmates can enter or leave it. The same practice of *tabu* is observed among the Mishmis, who, when misfortune visits a house, thus isolate it by placing the sprig of a certain plant at the door. A common mode of divination among the Nagas is to cut slices from a reed, and observe how these fall. They also kill a fowl, and notice how the legs lie. If the right leg lies over the left, the omen is favourable; but if the reverse is the case, it is unlucky. Among some of the tribes the diviners are called *ojhas*, a Bengali word derived from *ojh*, "entrail." Among the Mundas a common way to ascertain which of the gods ought to be propitiated is to drop oil into water, at the same time naming a deity. If the globule remains whole, the right name has been pronounced, but if it divides, the experiment must be repeated. A method sometimes employed by the Oraons to show whether the god is pleased with a proposed sacrifice is to make a mud image of him, and to sprinkle upon it a few grains of rice; then the fowls designed for the sacrifice are placed before it, and if they peck at the rice the omen is favourable. Belief in witchcraft is not uncommon. The Kacharis regard sickness as frequently due to this cause; and, having discovered by divination the old woman exercising the spell, they flog her until she confesses, and then drive her from the village. This belief in witches, and wizards as well, appears to be most prevalent among the Kol tribes of Central India. Sometimes a magician pretends to have discovered that the evil influence proceeds from a rival in another village. The latter is then summoned and beaten until he finds it best to admit his fault. If he is unable to undo the evil caused by his spell, the beating continues, sometimes with fatal results. If the Gonds have reason to think that death has been caused by witchcraft, the funeral rites are postponed until the sorcerer has been pointed out. This is accomplished by the aid of the corpse. They first make a solemn appeal to it, and then taking it up carry it about the village. It will lead the bearers to the house of the guilty person, and if this is done three times it is regarded as conclusive evidence, and summary vengeance is inflicted upon him. It is easy to see that this is a convenient way to get rid of an obnoxious individual. Witches are supposed to have demon lovers, with whom they dance and sing at night in the forest. The Khonds believe that some women can transform themselves into tigers; and occasionally individuals endeavour to spread this impression regarding themselves in order to extort presents from their neighbours as the price of immunity from their ravages. Trial by ordeal is also resorted

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to by the Gonds for the conviction of a person suspected of witchcraft; but it is so arranged as to make escape impossible in any case. The woman is securely bound and thrown into deep water. If she swims, she is guilty; if she sinks, she is drowned. Or the witch is beaten with castor-oil rods; if she feels pain, it is proof of guilt. Women, and those not always the old and ugly, are more often suspected of the black art than men are.

We have reserved to this place an important feature of the religion of the aboriginal tribes of India, namely, their views concerning a future life and the customs connected therewith. While it is true that savage races generally have held to the survival of the soul after death, their notions regarding the character of the future life and its bearings upon the present existence have greatly varied. Among the lowest tribes the future life has been commonly imagined to be a continuation of the present life, though under conditions more favourable for physical enjoyment. In a more advanced stage of society, where the moral powers have reached a fuller development, men have looked upon that life as an opportunity to balance the accounts of this life, to render to every man according to that he hath done. We therefore proceed to inquire with much interest what these tribes have to say concerning the world of the dead. The Chulikata Mishmis deposit in the grave with the dead his weapons, clothes, and ornaments, and some food; but they affirm that this is done only as a mark of affection, and not with the idea that he can make any use of them. They declare that there is no future life, but that they and the gods whom they worship have but a temporary existence. The Juangs also are said to have no expectation of survival after death. The Mundas have a vague notion that the ghosts of the dead hover about, and they sometimes set apart food for them in the house. The same vagueness of conception is characteristic of the Oraons. They say that those who have been killed by tigers are transformed into that animal; also that the ghosts of women who have died in childbirth hover about graves, clad in white garments, and having lovely faces, but hideous backs and inverted feet. But as a general rule, the tribes not only believe in a future life, but are able to tell something more definite of its nature. The Abors think that the character of the future state is determined in some degree by present conduct, but this advanced conception is perhaps due to the Hindus, whose god of the dead they have borrowed. Their neighbours the Miris share the same views, and bestow unusual care upon the bodies of the dead. They are completely dressed, and supplied with cooking vessels and every appliance for a journey, and are placed in graves lined with strong timbers to protect them from the pressure of the earth. The eastern Naga tribes believe that the future life is like the present one, or on the whole rather more to be desired. Their belief in immortality is shown by the care with which they place in the grave the belongings of the dead. The residence of the disembodied spirit is not necessarily a distant region. The Nagas suppose that the soul hovers about its former abode, and considerable anxiety is felt for its convenience. Captain Butler mentions an instance where a native was buried midway between two villages in which he had resided at different times in order that his soul might most conveniently visit either. Some tribes place the body in a wooden hut, in the wall of which an aperture is made for the ghost to pass to and fro. When a Garo dies, his soul goes to Chikmang, one of the highest mountain peaks in their country. Food is provided for the journey, and dogs are slaughtered to track out the path for him. Formerly slaves were killed at the grave to attend persons of note, but the custom was stopped by order of Government. A choice offering on such occasions, and probably for the same purpose, used to be heads of Bengalis from the

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plains. An incident observed by Colonel Dalton shows that the Garos believe not only in the survival after death of the souls of men and animals, but in that of inanimate objects. Witnessing the funeral of a young girl, the friends were observed to break all the earthen vessels placed on the grave. In answer to inquiry he was told that only in this way could they be used by the girl, that for her the pieces would reunite. In other words, the vessels must die like men, but their ghosts survive. The Khasias, while burning the corpse, make offerings to the ghost that it may be kindly disposed to them hereafter, but take little thought about the future life. The Kukis imagine a paradise in the north, where the good will enjoy abundance without labour, where the enemies one has slain will attend him as slaves, and the cattle he has killed in acts of hospitality will be restored to him. The wicked will be subjected to the worst tortures the imagination can devise. The Toda after death goes to a home in the west, where he is joined by the ghosts of his buffaloes, and goes on living just as before. It does not appear that he ever returns to trouble his relations.

According to what seems to be the prevailing view, however, the spirit acquires after death divine powers to some degree, and hovers about its former abode in a restless and uncomfortable state. It has wants much like those experienced in the body, and if these are not attended to it becomes malicious, and the cause of innumerable vexations to its kindred and neighbours. The Pani-Koch offer some of the first-fruits of the harvest to the ancestral spirits, clapping the hands to attract their notice. The priests of the Kirantis celebrate two festivals yearly to ancestors. Among the Kharwars, each family sacrifices annually a wether goat to the dead. The Hos celebrate a festival to the shades, after the sowing of the first rice-crop, in order that they may favour the sprouting of the grain. It is also the custom with them to prepare for a visit from the ghost of the deceased on the evening when the body is consumed. Some boiled rice is set apart in the house, and ashes are sprinkled on the floor, by which its footsteps may be detected. The relatives then go outside, and, walking around the funeral pile, invoke the spirit. If, on returning to the house, the ashes are found disturbed, they are filled with terror at the supposed presence of the ghost. The Santals have very little to say about a future life, though offerings are made to ancestors at the close of the late harvest. The Korwas, of Sirgūja, told Colonel Dalton that they worshipped no gods, but that the head of each household made offerings to the dead. The Gonds say that one of their chiefs was, in early life, devoured by a tiger, and that he afterwards appeared to his friends, telling them that, if worship were paid to him, he would protect them from that animal. They acted upon the suggestion, and he was duly installed among their gods. The Bhuiyas, of Keonjhur, after the funeral rites are concluded, place a vessel, filled with rice and flour, upon the grave. This has the effect to recall the ghost, for, after a time, the print of a fowl's foot will be plainly visible at the bottom of the vessel.

It would be interesting to know how the speculations of these rude tribes regarding the origin of the universe and of the human race compare with those of more civilised peoples; but we have little information on this point. It does not seem to be a subject upon which they have spent much thought. It is enough for them to know that they and the world are, without taking the trouble to inquire how they came to be. A few exceptions are worth noting. The legend of the Singphos, to which we have already alluded, is that "they were originally created and established on a plateau called 'Mājai-Singra-Bhum,' situated at the distance of two months' journey from Sadiya, washed by a river flowing in a southerly direction to the Irrawaddy. During their sojourn there they were immortal, and held celestial intercourse with the planets and

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all heavenly intelligences, following the pure worship of the Supreme Being." They, however, fell by bathing in forbidden water, and, descending to the earth, became mortal, and adopted the debased worship of their neighbours. The Abors get back as far as the first mother of the race, who had two sons, the elder of whom was skilled in hunting and the younger in handicraft. Like Rebecca, she loved the younger son better than the elder, and migrated with him to the west, taking along all the products of his skill. Before forsaking her elder son, she gave him a stock of blue and white beads, and taught him how to make the *dao*, a sort of hill-knife, and musical instruments from the gourd. The Abors are the descendants of the elder brother, while the younger brother became the progenitor of the English and other western nations. The Garos, who do not seem lacking in imagination, explain the origin of the world as follows:—The germ of creation was a self-begotten egg. From this sprung the goddess Nushtoo, who sat, for a time, on a water-lily; but, finding her quarters too restricted, she sent to Hiraman, the god of the lower world, for some earth, upon which she successively fixed the different objects of nature. First, rivers proceeded from her, then a reptile of the crocodile type, afterwards grasses and reeds, an elk, fishes, trees, buffaloes, a priest, and last of all a woman.

The Hos relate that their god Sing Bonga, who was self-created, made the earth and furnished it with vegetation and animals,—first the domestic and then the wild ones. He then created a boy and a girl, and taught them how to make rice-beer. This produced amatory desires, and they became the parents of twelve boys and twelve girls. For these children Sing Bonga made a feast, providing all manner of food. The guests were told to pair off, and taking the kind of food they preferred, to go away and shift for themselves. They did so, and their choices can still be discerned in the various modes of life among mankind. The Santals say that a wild goose came over the great ocean, and laid two eggs from which the first parents of their tribe were hatched.

We have more than once intimated that it is impossible in all cases to draw the line sharply between what is primitive in the religious beliefs and usages of these tribes and what has been borrowed in whole or in part from Brahmanic or Buddhist sources,—chiefly the former. It is not uncommon to observe Hinduism and Paganism struggling for supremacy in the same tribe and the same village, now the one and now the other claiming the larger share of interest. Hinduism, with its extraordinary power of assimilating alien systems, has usually been content to insist upon some general and public observance of caste rules, while not interfering with the private observance of the old religion; or it has given to the ancient superstitions some new explanation or purpose, and fitted them into its own system. So it would be hard to find an aboriginal tribe so completely transformed into Hindus in language, dress, and manner of life, that its non-Aryan origin may not be detected by its private religious usages, as well as by its physical traits. Facts illustrative of this have already been cited. We have spoken chiefly of the influence of Hinduism upon the pagan religion, and it cannot be doubted that this will ultimately result in the effacement of the latter, unless, as is to be devoutly hoped, this work shall be done by Christianity; but the counter-influence of the older faith upon Hinduism is not less certain, if less easily traced, and would form a most interesting theme for inquiry; but we cannot enter upon it here.

In conclusion, we trust that this necessarily imperfect sketch of the religion of the aboriginal tribes of India may at least serve to attract those who are interested in the history of the religious development of the race to an important source of evidence. If Hinduism, whose many-sidedness is well symbolised by the many-faced images of

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its gods, shall furnish greater attractions to the majority of students, still it must not be forgotten that the simple beliefs and rites that we have sketched belong to a much earlier stage of religious growth, and may, if attentively studied, throw much welcome light on the genius of all religion.

THE GOOD WAY (NALVALI).

By Auvaiyār.[1]

Dedication.

O high Ganeśa, flawless gem,
Who teachest style[2]—I here present
Milk, honey clear, sugar and pulse;
Grant me the threefold Tamil speech.[3]

1. Merit avails, sin profits naught;
Past deeds affect men's lot to-day;
Here is the key! all faiths agree
Good must be done and evil shunned.

2. Two castes I own, and only two;
Who mete to all unerring right,
As truth dictates, these are the high;
Who act not thus are low in caste.

3. This body's full of ills—count not
The false for true—quickly give alms,
Reward is sure; from mortal woes
Released heaven's plaudits shall be yours.

4. If merit join with effort great
The end is gained; fit time must come
Or it will be as when the blind
Hurled his short staff at mango-tree.

5. What though we call and beg, some things
Come not, and others come, though 'Go'
We say; but men, devoid of sense,
Fret, fume, and die, beset with cares.

6. You may not have another's lot,
But only that which merit gives:
You cross the sea, and rich return—
What profits wealth to mortal life?

7. Disease infests the cherished frame;
Though in it yet from it sit loose,
As rounded drop on lotus leaf;
The good live thus, nor proudly speak.

8. Though countless efforts may be made
One's wealth is fixed by former birth:
Listen, O men! right conduct seek,
For this abides, but riches pass.

9. The flood is gone, hot sand is there,
But flood-fed springs still bless mankind:
The nobly born, when poor, still find
It hard to say, 'I've naught to give.'

10. Though year by year you weep and roll
On graves of friends, they come not back;
Weep not! that goal is yours, content,
Give alms and eat, till you too die.

11. One day, no food; 'Submit,' I say;
Ah me! my stomach's in revolt:
Then two days' food is mine, 'Eat all,'
I say: it won't: what grief is mine!

12. A tree by river's brim, the smiles
Of kings, last they for aye? then till
The ground and eat, that's noblest life,
To other works some evil clings.

13. Who slays those destined to live long?
Who can avert death from the doomed?
Who hinders holy mendicants?
Give answer true on this fair earth.

14. The cringing fawning suppliant
May gain his end and prosper well;
But better death, with name unstained
Than boundless luxury with shame.

15. To those who meditate and cry
'O Śiva hail!' no ill e'er comes:
This stratagem is wisdom true,
All else will lie within fate's ken.

16. Good land means water good; gifts proved,
The worthy man; kindness that lasts
Tests glancing eye, and a chaste walk
A woman's mind: learn this, O men!

17. 'Cut off your sins!'—they heard, but gave
No alms; and if they now blame God
Will He grant wealth? will empty pot
Bubble when placed above the fire?

[1] See the *Orientalist* for October 1884, p. 227.

[2] Ten different styles are enumerated in Nannūl, the standard (Native) grammar of the Tamil language.

[3] The three kinds of Tamil desired are (1) *common*—this may be prose or poetic, (2) *poetic* and adapted to music, (3) *dramatic*.

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18. Parent or child, kinsman or friend,
Or countryman, misers love not;
A modest suit gets naught, harsh words
And cruel blows gain great reward.

19. We serve, or beg, or cross the sea,
Revere or rule, sing songs to please,
And thus wear out ourselves to still
The hunger for a seer[4] of rice.

20. Who toys with wantons is as one
Who takes a grindstone as a help
To swim: no good can e'er ensue;
Wealth fades and poverty draws near.

21. The goddess,[5] lotus-throned, will grant
Streams, shade, lands, grain, name, fame, great joy,
Country, long life and growing wealth
To those who live without deceit.

22. Hark! ye who vainly toil and wealth
Amass—O sinful men, the soul
Will leave its nest; whose then will be
The buried treasure that you lose?

23. Imps come, ill-omened creepers[6] spread
About the house of those who speak
With partial lips; and there the snake
And goddess of ill-luck will dwell.

24. The forehead lacking sacred marks,
Food without ghee, the streamless land,
Life with no brother's love, and home
With no fond wife—vain are they all!

25. Mark this! who lives beyond his means
Forfeits respect, loses his sense,
Where'er he goes, through the seven births,
All count him knave: him women scorn.

26. Let hunger come, these ten will fly:—
Fame, station, study, knowledge, truth,
Gift, penance, effort, moral worth,
And lust for honey-spoken fair.

27. The thing we want eludes our grasp,
Some other thing is giv'n; sometimes
Our wish is gained, and gifts unsought
Are ours: these all are God's own work.

28. A seer of rice, two yards of cloth
Suffice; but senseless man still thinks
Of countless things;[7] so keeping house
Is one long care till death ends all.

29. No need to call the bats when fruit
Is ripe; and if, like a milch-cow,
One freely gives refusing none,
Then friends will come from all the world.

30. O king! man's lot is ruled by deeds
Of former birth 'neath sway of Brahm;
How can we help those plagued? though all
The land should deprecate, fate holds!

31. Better the tune than limping verse,
Better good life than lofty birth,
Better disease than failing might,
Better lone life than shrewish wife.

32. The ever-shifting river-bed,
Now mounds, now holes, is type of wealth;
Alms are your help, give food and drink,
Thus shall true wisdom grow in you.

33. The elephant is pierced by dart
Which goes not through a cotton-bale;
So gentleness is strength, and rock
Which laughs at crow-bars yields to roots.

34. They come from far and near to greet
The wealthy fool; but the poor sage,
Despised by wife and mother too,
Speaks words of wisdom to the deaf.

35. Ere need be shown some men will act,
As trees may fruit without a flow'r:
To some you speak with no result,
As seeds may die and yield no grain.

36. Crab,[8] oyster, plantain, and bamboo
Produce and die; O woman fair
These also die—wisdom, wealth, lore,
When lust is born in heart of man.

[4] Enough for one day's food for a man.

[5] Lakshmi, the goddess of fortune.

[6] Two creepers are mentioned, the white *calotropis gigantea*, and the *menispermum cordifolium*; the Tamil name for the latter means the root that goes into the abyss, or nether regions (pātāla).

[7] Literally 800,000,000 things.

[8] Naturalists since Auvaiyār's time have made mistakes about the generation of the crab.

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37. Search all the sacred books, one thing
Alone avails to thwart stern fate;
Bid care begone and, thought destroyed,
In Brahma dwell; for thought is fate.

38. Reed-cutters seek not other band
To tie their load, but draw a reed;
Let this content you, not to know
Or good or ill, 'I' or 'not I'.[9]
(Two stanzas are omitted.)

E. STRUTT.

TAMIL FOLKLORE.

THE ROBBER-PROOF HOUSE.

The following story appeared in the last New Year Supplement to the "Ceylon Observer." It was contributed by "*a Tamulian*" who relates it as one of those stories which he had heard in early life illustrating the belief in "the mystic power of letters and incantations and cabalistic signs." Certain persons in old times were supposed to acquire this power by a study of the occult sciences, carried on unknown to their friends and relatives, and they only exerted it on critical occasions.

The story is inserted by permission of the proprietors of the "Observer." Some alterations have been made in the phraseology.

THE EDITOR.

"At a time when torch-light robberies and midnight burglaries were common in Jaffna, the then existing rural police or patrol was found insufficient to ensure the safety of the houses of the rich and opulent. Such persons therefore used to have trained watchmen of their own, who, armed with daggers, javelins, and other formidable-looking weapons, patrolled the more important approaches leading to the compounds and houses, and were unceasing in their vigilance till the small hours.

In the neighbourhood to which I refer, there was one house, however, which was an exception to the rule. There the inmates lived unprotected. In that house there were no watchmen and often even the outer gate used to stand ajar throughout the night, whereas in all other houses the gates were not only bolted and barred, but, for extra security, were also barricaded with ponderous stones, logs of wood, and other heavy articles.

On inquiry one learnt that even thieves and burglars had certain sacred traditions, and that one of these was that this particular house and compound were to enjoy an immunity in perpetuity from the raids and ravages of midnight marauders. A solemn oath to this effect had been taken by a gang of burglars in the time of the Dutch, and successive generations of thieves had respected it and regarded it as inviolable. The story connected with this curious fact can be soon told.

'Katirkāma Pulavan,' i.e. the poet Katirkāman, flourished in the time of the Dutch, if not at an earlier period. His mother was a widow, and he, though her only son, was a wayward youth, careless of all domestic duties. He was usually out the whole day, as his mother thought, idling away his time, and generally got home late in the night and just in time to swallow a mouthful of something before composing himself to sleep. Many a time did the poor mother plead earnestly with him, urging her unprotected state and the burglaries, which were then of such frequent occurrence, as some reason for his changing his habits. But he paid no heed to all her admonitions, and, although always respectful to his mother, he continued stolidly indifferent to her earnest entreaties, and never allowed the possibility of burglars breaking into the house to interfere with his peace of mind. At last, however, one night, when Katirkāman was at home and in deep sleep, the thieves so long dreaded scaled, at midnight, the roof of the old square house, and enter-

[9] Auvaiyār's philosophy bids us reckon all life's varying states as equal.

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ing the inner apartments laid hands on all the household goods. Some were removing brazenware, others had attacked the paddy store and were helping themselves to as much as they could carry, whilst others again were engaged in unlocking the door to effect their egress. In this state of affairs Katirkāman woke up from his slumber, and saw with his own eyes that what his mother had so long dreaded and so often warned him about, had at last come to pass. Taking his writing-knife from under the pillow, he cut off a piece of ola from the thatch over his head, wrote something on it, put it under his pillow, and quietly went to sleep again. He slept longer than usual and did not get up until his mother and the other inmates had been already up for some time. He felt awe-struck at the state of the house. There were men standing with loads of paddy on their heads and immovable as posts. Others had bagfuls of small and large brazenware thrown over their shoulders, ready to start, yet standing fixed like statues of stone or metal: but those were in the most ludicrous predicament of all who had attempted to unlock chests and doors: there they were with their hands on the keys or the handles, but apparently unable to move an inch in any direction. At first the inmates were alarmed, but when they saw how matters stood, their alarm changed into a feeling more like bewilderment than anything else. The mother, thinking that her wayward son might know something about the cause of this strange phenomenon, woke him up on the plea that it was a disgrace to a young man to be in bed after the sun had enlightened the horizon. Rubbing his eyes he was making his way towards the well, as if there was nothing strange in the house to attract his notice, when his mother asked him to explain what he saw. He said nothing, but went to the well and had his usual bath. Then for the first time accosting the strange visitors he asked them if they had been in the house and in the condition they were in for long. Until then they had remained silent, as if dumb or tongue-tied. But when Katirkāman addressed them thus they spoke out freely as follows :—

'We have mistaken the place and the person we had to deal with. We beg a thousand pardons.'

'It is nearly 8 o'clock, and you have had nothing to eat. Surely you must be hungry ?' said Katirkāman.

'We are not hungry. We again beg a thousand pardons: we feel more fatigued than hungry, standing like this all through the night. We promise never to do the like again in this house,' replied the robbers. 'Never mind,' said Katirkāman, 'you shall have rest and refreshment besides. Go and put back all your loads, each in its proper place.'

In silence and shame the robbers obeyed, Katirkāman all the while watching them with great benignity, as if sympathizing with them and commiserating their hard lot. After they had done replacing all the goods and chattels in their proper places, they were requested to rest themselves for a while in the porch, until some kañji was ready for their morning repast. They were next told to refresh themselves by a bath, and on their return they were all regaled with kañji made of raw rice mixed with cocoanut milk—the usual morning meal. After they had partaken of this repast, Katirkāman, addressing them, said in the blandest tones :—

'This house is your mother's house. Consider it your own. It is always open to you, whenever you feel hungry or thirsty, you have a right to come here and eat and drink to your hearts' content. So long as the sun and moon endure, no one shall ask for a meal in this house and go away empty. But remember that the house and premises are guarded, and if you are found in the premises for an unlawful purpose, after Katirkāman is dead and gone, and in the same predicament as I found you in this morning, and if there be no one to help you out of it, the fault will not be mine.'

To this they answered: 'May you live

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for a thousand years. We vow and take a solemn oath, which we invoke heaven and earth to witness, that we will never again enter this house or compound for a nefarious purpose; if ever we do, may the rice and milk we took just now to refresh us turn into poison in our veins and may we fall dead on the spot.'

'It is quite possible that other houses besides this may be as well guarded and perhaps by more powerful spirits. Do you not think it better to abandon your present occupation? Do you not see your danger? Can you not betake yourselves to the cultivation of your gardens and fields?'

'Sir, we did not take to this trade of our own will or choice. We have been driven to it, and we had to accept it as the destiny written on our heads by the great Brahma. As to fields and gardens, though we inherited some, they are no longer ours. Our well-to-do neighbours and the head-men have partitioned them all amongst themselves. Our home is in the jungle. We meet our families on New Moon or Full Moon days. We, each of us, have a sad story to tell, but we will not tarry. With your leave we will be gone.' With these words the robbers departed."

FOLKLORE OF THE SANTALS.

Tales for Children.

(3)

A little bird built its nest in the field of a farmer and laid its eggs in the nest. One day the farmer brought his plough to cultivate the field. Seeing this, the bird wept and said to the Sun-god, "Men have come to plough up the field in which I have built my home, hence my nest will be spoiled." The Sun-god heard its cry and spoke in comforting words:—"Child, be still, if men destroy your home, their houses will be burned." On hearing this the bird came back from the Sun-god to its nest, but the farmers ploughed the land and destroyed the bird's nest. Seeing this, the bird flew to the bank of a tank and began to lament. Soon one of the farmers became thirsty, and going to the tank to drink water he heard the bird's lament, and was so moved and delighted that he sat down to listen. As he did not return to his work another farmer from the field went there, and he too became so delighted by the bird's lament that he sat down there. So one by one went seven brothers and sat down there.

At just this time a tiger came from the jungle and killed all the oxen that had been ploughing, then assuming the form of a beautiful woman he stood beside them. A little later the seven brothers returned to the field and found that all the bullocks had been killed and a beautiful woman was standing there. Then they all held a consultation; and married the eldest brother to this woman. Soon after this the woman said, "Let us go and see my father and mother." Both man and wife went. On the road was a great jungle, and while they were passing through it the Creator took to himself the form of a bird and was singing in one of the trees,

"Ahead, ahead goes the tiger,
Behind him a man,
Oh man, turn back."

Hearing this the man stood still and said to his wife, "Halt a bit, let me hear what says this bird. I don't wish to go on." "There is no need of halting," answered the wife, "there are many kinds of birds in the jungle, and they sing in many ways." Saying this the wife went on. As they travelled on, they came to a huge cave beside the path, and the wife said,—"Upon jumping over this cave we shall find the house of my father and mother." So saying she jumped across it, but the man in leaping fell into the cave, and was at once torn to pieces and devoured by many tigers.

Several days afterwards this tiger again taking the form of a woman went to the remaining six brothers, and said to them, "Your elder brother is very ill with fever, do one of you come to help him." Hearing

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this, the middle brother went with the woman. Passing through the jungle he heard the same bird singing its warning, but heeding it not he also fell into the same cave and perished. In this way six of the seven brothers were destroyed, but each time that self-same bird uttered its note of warning bidding the man turn back. The youngest brother alone was left, and a few days later on the woman went to him and said, "All your brothers are very ill with fever, do come with me." But this youngest brother, being suspicious of foul play, took a sword in his hand. He too heard the warning of the Creator-bird :—

"Ahead, ahead goes the tiger,
Behind him a man,
Oh man, turn back."

Upon hearing this he grew more doubtful and walked very cautiously behind the woman, till they reached the aforesaid cave. The woman sprang across it, but the man fell into it, and all the tigers came upon him in hot haste to eat him up, but he slew them all with his sword.

Seeing what had happened the woman took the form of a beautiful stone, and fell down there. The man upon getting out of the cave saw this beautiful stone, and taking it up whetted his sword with it and carried it away. On his way through the jungle he found a mango-tree full of fruit. Wishing to eat the mangos he put the stone down at the foot of the tree and climbed up into the branches and began eating the fruit. On looking down he saw a tiger standing at the foot of the tree. Cutting open a mango he said, "If I be the legitimate child of my father and mother let me with my sword find a place inside this mango fruit, and let a crow come and take this mango and drop it into the tank of king Kuar, and let a big fish swallow it." Instantly a crow came and took the mango and dropped it into the tank of king Kuar, and a big fish swallowed it. The tiger standing at the foot of the tree had heard all this, and once more taking the form of a woman he went and stood on the bank of that tank. One of the king's people on seeing her went and told the king, "I have never seen so beautiful a woman. If you command it, I will bring her from the bank of the tank." The king upon hearing this at once sent his palankeen and brought the woman to his palace and made her his queen. After a few days the new queen fell ill and said to the king, "If you can bring me all the fish from that tank I shall get well." Then the king gave orders that the tank should be emptied of water and all the fish caught. They went and did this, but the big fish hid away and was not caught. All the other fish were brought before the queen and she ordered that they should be cut in pieces. Not finding the mango in any of them she was very angry, and resumed the form of a tiger and began making sad havoc in the city.

About this time a poor childless woman, seeing the tank dry, went to catch fish and found a big fish, which she hurriedly took to her house. In the evening when she was about cutting the fish in pieces, she heard a voice in the fish saying, "Cut on one side, not down the middle." Cutting on one side she found a mango, and in it a little person, whom she took out of the fruit and adopted as her son. Soon he grew up and began to learn many kinds of work. The tiger having done much mischief in the city, the king said, "Whoever kills this tiger shall receive half of my kingdom and shall have my daughter to wife." Many tried to kill the tiger, but failing were devoured by him; whereupon the little man, who was in the mango, heard of the king's promise, and understood that this tiger was the one that had taken the form of a woman. He said, "She has destroyed my brothers, hence I shall kill her." Saying this he took his sword in his hand and went forth to fight with the tiger. Having killed the tiger he married the king's daughter, won half the kingdom, and taking his childless foster-father and mother began to live in great joy and happiness.

Midnapore, Bengal. J. L. PHILLIPS,

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CONTRIBUTIONS TO SINHALESE FOLK-LORE.

(North-Western Province).

The bird and her two eggs.

Once upon a time a bird laid two eggs in a cleft between two large stones. Through some movement of the stones this cleft became closed up, and she could not gain access to her nest.

So she begged a mason to split open the stones again, in order that she might go to her eggs. But the man would not do so.

She then went to a wild boar, and requested him to enter the paddy-field and eat the mason's corn; explaining that the mason would not split open the stones, and she could not go to her two eggs. The wild boar refused to assist her.

She next appealed to a hunter to shoot the wild boar: the wild boar would not eat the mason's paddy: the mason would not split open the stones: and she could not go to her two eggs. But the hunter declined to help her.

She then found an elephant, and begged him to kill the hunter: the hunter would not shoot the wild boar: the wild-boar would not eat the mason's paddy: the mason would not split open the stones: and she could not go to her two eggs. The elephant would not comply with her request.

She afterwards went to a *Katussā* ("bloodsucker" lizard), and tried to induce it to crawl up the elephant's trunk into his brain (!): the elephant would not kill the hunter: the hunter would not shoot the wild boar: the wild boar would not eat the mason's paddy: the mason would not split open the stones: and she could not go to her two eggs. But the *Katussā* would not attempt it.

She next asked a jungle-hen to peck and kill the *Katussā*: the *Katussā* would not crawl up the elephant's trunk: the elephant would not kill the hunter: the hunter would not shoot the wild boar: the wild boar would not eat the mason's paddy: the mason would not split open the stones: and she could not go to her two eggs. Like all the other animals the jungle-hen was very polite to the bird; but she, too, refused to help her.

She then went to a jackal, and begged him to eat the jungle-hen: the jungle-hen would not peck the *Katussā*: the *Katussā* would not crawl up the elephant's trunk: the elephant would not kill the hunter: the hunter would not shoot the wild boar: the wild boar would not eat the mason's paddy: the mason would not split open the stones: and she could not go to her two eggs.

The jackal was only too glad to eat the jungle-hen, and he immediately set off after her: the jungle-hen pecked at the *Katussā*: the *Katussā* began to crawl up the elephant's trunk: the elephant went to attack the hunter: the hunter took his bow and arrows to shoot the wild boar: the wild boar commenced to eat the paddy: the mason, seeing the turn things had taken, split open the stones: and so the bird at last got back to her two eggs.

Of course this is the Sinhalese variant of the story of the old woman whose pig would not go over the bridge. I have endeavoured to give the story almost exactly as it was told to me by a villager in the Kurunāgala district.

The Root of Eternal Youth.

There is a certain root the possession of which confers eternal youth. But it will easily be believed that the discovery of this valuable root is a matter of no small difficulty. It can only be brought about in the following way:—

The nest of the Ati kukulā, ground-cuckoo, (*Centropus rufipennis*), must first be found. When the nest contains young, one of the young birds must be fastened to the bottom by a small iron chain attached to one of its legs. When the other young ones come to leave the nest, the parent finds that a bird is unable to get away, and she then perceives the iron chain by which it si confined. Now, a minor virtue of this

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root of eternal youth is its power of snapping in two bars of iron, on merely touching them. Naturally, therefore, the Aṭi kukulā, being aware of this, goes in search of the wonderful root, brings it to the nest, touches and snaps the chain with it, and flies off triumphantly with the little prisoner, leaving the root lying in the nest.

There is nothing special in the outward appearance of the root by which it may be distinguished from many other roots or twigs; but there is one infallible test which must now be put into practice. The nest must be taken down, and very carefully carried to a spot where four streams meet, and there scattered on the surface of the water. All the common twigs and roots either sink or float away with the current; but the root of eternal youth sails away by itself up stream, *against* the current. Of course it is then an easy matter for any one to seize this invaluable treasure, and "live happily ever afterwards."

HENRY PARKER.

LAṄKĀ.

BY LOUIS NELL, CROWN COUNSEL.

(*Reprinted from the Ceylon Miscellany*).

Laṅkā was, as far as we can ascertain, the earliest name by which Ceylon was known. It is so called in the Rāmāyaṇa, which is supposed by some to be the oldest existing epic in the world. This ancient poem recites the feuds and retaliations of Rāvaṇa, monarch of Ceylon and Southern India, and Rāma, the prince of Oude. The former king, in revenge of insults offered to him by Rāma, carried off Sītā, the beautiful wife of the latter. The Eastern Helen, as she has been aptly called, was secreted in the forests of Ceylon, and Rāma, like another Menelaus, as the classic comparison has been carried out, proceeded with a mighty army to lay siege to Srī Laṅkā Pura, the capital of king Rāvaṇa, which we should therefore call the Indian Troy. Laṅkā was therefore the Sanskrit and Pāli denomination of Ceylon, if we agree with the arguments of those writers, who, equally inclined to believe the wonderful narrations of an Indian epic, and forced to yield to the evidence of their own senses, do not scruple to consign extensive regions of thousands of miles to the bottom of the ocean. A consideration of those arguments will, however, greatly dispose the inquirer to believe, that Ceylon was indeed the ancient Laṅkā of the Hindus, even on the supposition that extraordinary physical changes had since happened to separate it from adjoining India, and greatly to reduce it in extent. The antiquity of date claimed for the event we have just cited is startling, nor do all the calculations agree to a reconcilable degree. Sir William Jones dates Rāma's subjection of the island about 1810 B.C., but the Rājavallia puts it back to 2387 B.C. Sinhalese accounts proceed also to state that soon after the death of Rāvaṇa (the latter date) the island was reduced in size from a circumference of 5120 miles to one of 2992. It is remarkable how close the date transmitted by the ancient Sinhalese comes to that of the great Deluge recorded in our own Scriptures B.C. 2348. The deficiency of 39 years is not so great as it would otherwise appear, and both accounts would seem to allude to the same event, if we consider the liability to difference in such widely separated accounts, and the difficulty of very exact calculation during such long periods. We may elsewhere allude to other remarkable coincidences between the native Cosmogony and the Mosaical. We must now proceed to notice some other difficulties in the way of believing Ceylon to have been the ancient Laṅkā; the explanations of discrepancies; and the corroborations of ancient oriental accounts.

Srī Laṅkāpura, the capital of Rāvaṇa, and the meridian of Eastern Astronomers

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lay in 75° 53′ 15″ east longitude; but the westernmost point of Ceylon only reaches 80° 41″. In order to reconcile this latter fact with the transmitted one, we must adopt the theory that ancient Laṅkā was far more extensive than the modern island; and that some convulsion of nature or encroachment of the ocean had reduced it to its present size. According to the Sinhalese records no less than three encroachments of the sea had contributed to reduce Laṅkā to its present limits. The first, which occurred immediately after Rāvaṇa's death, we have already mentioned. The second took place in the reign of Panduvassa (whose capital was Upatissa-Nuvara), who is said to have ascended the throne B.C. 504. By this inundation a great part of Ramanaga, the territory which lay between Ceylon and Continental India, was submerged. That tract is said to have been under the rule of Rāma, a contemporary or feudatory of Panduvassa. The third overflowing of the sea took place when Devenipētissa reigned in Anurādhapura, whose accession dates B.C. 306. In this instance also a subordinate or co-existent principality was the scene of maritime submersion. A great portion of the coast of the territory of Kẹlanitissa was overflowed by the sea, 979 fishing villages, and 470 pearl fishers' villages are said to have been lost, and the distance between Kẹlaniya, the capital of Kẹlanitissa, and the sea reduced to one gow, which before was four gows, or 16 English miles, reckoned from the city to the mouth of the Kẹlani-gaṅga. Ceylon was reduced to 928 miles by the last calamity, which, according to a Kaḍa-impota and Laṅkāvistara (Sinhalese topographical works), is the present extent of the island. Considering the rude and inefficient method of measurement possessed by the Sinhalese, it will not be thought a material disagreement that Ceylon is found to be about 128 miles less in circumference by more scientific measurement. Respecting the alleged separation of Ceylon from India there is a fabulous tradition connected with the famous foot-print or Adam's Peak. According to one version of this fable, our greater progenitor is said to have paused on the summit to take a last fond lingering look at the Eden he was forced to abandon. He turned towards India and crossed the narrow isthmus by which it was joined to Laṅkā; but no sooner was his last step firm upon the continent, than the ready ocean rushed to render his banishment complete. This account of the separation of the Paradise which hung like an eardrop from the southernmost cape of Hindustan, was very probably invented by the Muhammadans of India, or to speak more correctly, was a variation adopted by them of the original tradition of India. And here it may be asked whether the imperfect means of communication possessed by European travellers in the East, have not in a great degree contributed to incorrect accounts of such things, as they have even personally experienced, but have been unable to understand without necessary explanation. There is no doubt also that the accounts they have obtained of things not seen by them, have been mainly incorrect. Mere tourists especially have lately committed many ridiculous mistakes. Nor have men of science and genius been exempt when they have partaken of that character. In ancient times the case of the ambassadors from Taprobane to Rome was a notable instance. In the case of traditions especially where travellers have sought for information who have not been acquainted with the native languages, great errors have thus been originated and propagated. There are many accounts of Ceylon which are signal instances of the truth of this remark.

With respect to the inundation of the sea by which Rāvaṇa's capital of Srī Laṅkāpura was submerged, Forbes adduces a circumstance inducive of our belief. That city is said to have been surrounded by a very broad ditch, supplied with water from the sea. If such was the case, a violent storm or convulsion of nature would have

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accomplished the flooding of a great tract of land. He says that "the ditches of Śrī Lankāpura being filled with salt-water (like the present levāyas of Ceylon) shows that no very great convulsion of nature was required to overwhelm a city in such a position." With respect to the northern invasions of the sea there is a corroborative circumstance, which should be here mentioned. There is, on the Coromandel Coast of India, an ancient city, which the land has but partly secured from the usurping sea. The present northernmost parts of the island, which we may presume were saved by their comparatively superior height from sharing the fate of the tracts which have been successively overwhelmed by the sea, are distinguished from the rest of Ceylon by their low level and unmountainous character. Forbes mentions that "From the Rāmāyaṇa it might be inferred that the island of Maniaca, to the westward of Manar, had sunk below the level of the ocean or been overwhelmed prior even to the era of Rāma, but that tradition then preserved its name, and noted the fate which had befallen it." The same author urges against our scepticism that the name "Lankā" was probably derived from the old Sinhalese name of Ceylon, Lakadiva, and he also construes that Elu name into Laka, the ten thousand, and diva, islands. "This position," he says, "would serve to explain the immense extent of territory said to have been overwhelmed by the sea * *." He also quotes from Davies (On the Astronomical Computation of the Hindus) that the dimensions of "Lankā" were equal to one-twelfth part of the equatorial circumference of the earth. To quote again from Forbes: "As the same authorities that mention these different irruptions of the sea, and consequent diminution of the size of the country, allude to the several thousand islands attached to the kingdom of Lankā which have disappeared in these successive visitations, it is no unnatural conjecture that the Maldive and Lakadive islands were at one time dependencies on Lankā, when its capital of Śrī Lankāpura was in longitude 75° 53′ 15″ E. We have already seen that from the Rāmāyaṇa it might be inferred that an island to the westward of Manar had sunk below the level of the sea before the time of Rāma. The western invasion of the sea by which the distance between the capital of Kalamya and the mouth of the Kelani River was reduced from 16 miles to 4 miles as recorded in Sinhalese history, also corroborates the position that the western regions of Lankā had been the scene of those destructive convulsions which had repeatedly attacked the northernmost territory. A glance at the map of the world will show the plausibility of the theory which supposes the western coast of ancient Lankā, or the isles belonging to it, to have bordered near the Maldives and Lakadives. The identity of the name of the latter group with the ancient Sinhalese denomination of Ceylon is also striking. There is a possibility that an archipelago anciently lay between Sumatra and Siam on the one side, and Lankā and the Coromandel Coast of India on the other. In the before-mentioned work of Davies there is mention made of Salmala, a country a little to the eastward of Lankā (where "Meya performed his devotions.") There is now no country to the eastward of Ceylon; but according to Major Forbes, "Sinhalese traditions agree that there were islands there after the commencement of Sinhalese History B. C. 543; and it was to them the Yakkhas were banished soon after the introduction of Buddhism." If we adopt the dimensions of Lankā as rendered by Davies, equal to one-twelfth part of the earth's equatorial circumference, it will be equally reasonable to suppose that the Salmala of the ancient geography of the Hindus is the Sumatra of the present time; an island, which has by some speculative writers been fixed upon as the Taprobane of the ancient classical writers. There is a similarity in the sound of the ancient name Salmala with that of modern Sumatra, and

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the difference, I believe, may not be unaccounted for by an Oriental scholar competent to decide upon the matter. In addition to the supposition grounded upon the calculated dimensions of ancient Laṅkā, and the fact transmitted by Sinhalese traditions that islands once existed to the east of Ceylon, an examination of a Map of the World will show, that the appearance of the clusters of islands so characteristic of the sea eastward of Sumatra and the Malayan Peninsula, is likely to strengthen the theory that the Archipelago which terminates so abruptly with Sumatra and Java, must have connectedly continued to westward, till it had reached the Maldives, thus leaving islands immediately to the east and west of Ceylon. The Philippines, Borneo, Sumatra, Java, Celebes, New Guinea and the other large islands between Asia and Australia, seem to have formed the thickest part of the belt of Archipelagos which reach eastward to the western Hemisphere, where the clusters gradually become spread and more widely distributed throughout the regions which were the scenes of the discoveries of Cook and other well-known navigators. These continued clusters of islands are most crowded in the neighbourhood of Sumatra; but to the west of the island there is the appearance of an abrupt termination, which seems to corroborate the assertion of Eastern traditions and histories that the waves of the ocean now roll over once fertile and populous lands. In adopting that theory we find an explanation of the absence of lands to the East of Laṅkā, and a reason why Indian Astronomers had fixed their meridian where there is but an expanse of sea, and learn the fate of the thousands of islands which gave to Laṅkā its ancient name. "Silan," says Sir William Jones, "was peopled out of mind by the Hindu race, and formerly, perhaps, extended much further to the west and south, so as to include Laṅkā or the Equinoctial point of the Indian Astronomers."

What the learned Orientalist has sanctioned with his countenance, so that the equinoctial point of the Indian Astronomers may find a local habitation in our belief, we have seen that there are corroborative grounds for believing. There are equally so for believing that Silan did also anciently extend much further to the east, and that it was the central and largest island of an Archipelago forming a link of the connected chain which extends from the east of Sumatra to the ocean which washes the western coasts of the great continents of America.

Another argument in favour of the theory we have discussed, is furnished by the verdict of the Geologist and man of Science. The few scientific men who have hitherto been able to pronounce upon the Geology of Ceylon with any degree of that weight which should attach to the opinion of those only who are entitled to pronounce such verdicts by previous actual acquirements, those few have countenanced the supposition that Ceylon at an early period was connected with continental India. "This opinion," says Gardner, "is confirmed both by its position and its Geological constitution." Campbell incidentally mentions that the sea was said to have once broken into the Fortress of Colombo.[1]

This of course relates to a comparatively very late period, but still it shows what serious calamities of nature are likely to happen where the coasts are very much lower. Dr. Kelaart observes that "the cutting of the new canal through the cinnamon gardens to the sea gives a very favorable opportunity of observing how recently, in a geological view, the whole of the Coast of Colombo must have been the bed of the sea."[2] At Trincomalie also he had observed several indications of sea-beaches. This will bear as proof upon the question in hand, since the late Dr. Gardner asserted that he hoped, in due course of time, to prove that the whole of Ceylon is gradually

[1] Campbell's Excursions and Field Sports in Ceylon, Vol. II. p. 366.

[2] Nat. His. of Nuvara Eliya prefixed to Prodromus Faunæ Zeylanicæ. (p. ix).

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rising above the sea level, and that consequently the time, geologically speaking, is not far distant when the island will again become united to the continent." He also mentions that according to tradition the passage at Paumben was once wider and deeper than now, and that this tradition actually led to the survey which preceded the deepening of the strait.[3] The first observation of the gradual rise of the Western Coast of Ceylon has been wrongly conceded to Dr. Macvicar by Dr. Gardner, and after him by Dr. Kelaart. The evidences of such a gradual rise may have struck Dr. Macvicar at Mount Lavinia; but they are strikingly apparent at different parts of the Western Coast. Lord Valentia, as early as January 1804, remarked that the Fort of Negombo had every appearance of having been close to the sea, but that at the period of his visit it was some hundred yards distant from it. He adds that it is a universal opinion upon the Island that the sea was retiring on the western and encroaching on the eastern shores.[4]

His Lordship also testifies to the appearance presented by the "singular" island Naveharre, which had every appearance of having been formerly covered by the sea.[5] In travelling from Putlam to Aripoo, Lord Valentia drew the conclusion that the said bank forming the outer boundary of the lagune was formerly part of the ocean. The lagune he thought would be soon filled up and the sea itself removed to a still greater distance. The same author testifies to the tradition, according to which extensive tracts had been carried away from the eastern part of the island, either by the force of the monsoon or some violent concussion.[6]

It is therefore evident that so far from Dr. Macvicar having been the first observer of the gradual rise of the Western Coast, that fact was a matter of universal opinion long before the year 1804. There are possibly earlier authorities than Valentia, but we have settled our point satisfactorily. It has been a matter of experience that

"The old
And crazy earth has had her shaking fits."[7]

But though since the day of the first and universal Deluge we read of such earthquakes and overwhelmings, we cannot muse on the calamities which overcame the fair territories of ancient Lankā, depriving her of the little isles, which like youthful daughters, surrounded her in the classic days of ancient India; and perhaps overwhelming in a common calamity her sister-isles to the East and fair as she, without exclaiming with the same poet,

"When were the winds
Let slip with such a warrant to destroy?
When did the waves so haughtily o'erleap
Their ancient barriers?[7]"

It ought to be here mentioned of ancient Lankā, that "according to some Hindu accounts, it is distinct from Ceylon, from which island Lankā is said to be just visible."[8] Thus the statement of a Fakīr, communicated by Mr. Duncan, in the fifth volume of the "Asiatic Researches," speaks of his going to Rāmesvaram but not to Ceylon, "from whence the glitterings of Lankā are to be seen."

And from the Introduction to Robert's translation of a Hindu Book of Fate, Major Forbes quotes, that "many of the people in the distant provinces of India believe that Ceylon is destroyed."[9]

[3] Gardner's Geology of Ceylon. Appendix to Lee's Transl. of Ribeyro's Ceylon (p. 103).
[4] Mavor's Collection of Travels, Vol. XXVIII. p. 136.
[5] Ibid p. 138. [6] *ut supra*, p. 139.
[7] Cowper's "Task." Bk. ii.
[8] Wilson's Sanscrit Dictionary (quoted by Forbes).
[9] It is incorrectly stated by Cordiner (p. 2) that a freed man brought to Rome an account more correct than any previous ones, by which it appeared that the Great Bear was not visible in Taprobane. This, according to Cordiner, if true, would prove that the Roman was further south than any part of Ceylon now existing, and Cordiner continues: "Indeed it is a tradition of the natives (supported as it is said by astronomical observations) that the island is much diminished in size from what it was formerly." But it appears on an examination of Pliny's History that the statement was made by the Embassy from Taprobane which accompanied the freedman of Annius Plocamus to Rome, and accordingly should not carry so much weight as it would do if

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These facts are, however, explainable by those we have adduced in support of Ceylon having been the ancient Laṅkā. If the sceptical spirit however, prevail with you, reader! you deprive our native island of no little interest, and leave to the Laṅkā of ancient reputation "no local habitation," nothing but "a name." But the fond fancy of those who still treasure the legends of Laṅkā of old will yet mistake the gilding lights of sunset for the gleam of Śrī Laṅkāpura's wave-embosomed battlements; and whatever of truth there may be in that poetical belief, we cannot long doubt that some of the watch stations of Rāvaṇa and Hanumān may yet have their site in the lovely prison-isle of the beauteous Sītā.

When history will not assist us we must be content with legends; but to identify Ceylon with Laṅkā we need not altogether betake ourselves to blind credulity and partial license.

Lakdiva is the name by which the island is indicated in two inscriptions on the great tablet at Polonnaruva.

Laṅkadvīpa is given by Turnour as synonymous with Lakdiva, which is the term occurring in the inscription at Mihintale; Laṅkadivīpa means the island of Laṅkā.

Laṅkā and Lakdiva seem to have been indiscriminately used in the inscription on the Dambulla Rock.

The signification of Laṅkā, the root of the above names, is given as "adorned, elegant, beauteous." The inscriptions above alluded to were six in number, one at Dambulla, two at Mihintale, and three at Polonnaruva. They were transcribed by Major Forbes, translated by the late Mr. Armour, and published in the Ceylon Almanac for 1834, with an introduction and notes by the late Mr. Turnour.

The date of the inscription on the Dambulla Rock being A.D. 1200, it would appear that the term Laṅkā had continued to be applied to Ceylon from the most ancient times.

The old Portuguese writers Juan de Barros and Diego de Couto, according to the French editor of Ribeyro, also record that Ceylon was first called Lança, Lançao, or Lanças, signifying "the land of delight," "the terrestrial paradise." These old writers must have derived their information from the popular belief of the natives of Ceylon or of adjoining India, who were contemporaneous with them. It is evident that the designations Lança, Lançao and Lanças are mere variations of the name Laṅkā and it is possible that the Indians who also called Ceylon "the land of delight, and the terrestrial paradise" did not intend to give those epithets as conveying the meaning of the variations of the word Laṅkā; but as additional designations of the island. It is also possible that the unlearned population of India or Ceylon, as it has occurred in other instances of vulgar mistake, may have ignorantly connected the terms in the relation in which they were written by de Barros and de Couto.

It will not be uninteresting in this chapter to note such places mentioned in the history of the Eastern Helen as have been identified in Ceylon. According to native traditions Sītā, accompanied by young Trisidā, the niece of Rāvaṇa, was removed from Srī Laṅkāpura and conveyed through Manaar, Trincomalee, Paravaha forest (in Nuvarakalāviya) Nayakumbura, Nālanda, Vahakōṭṭe, Goṅgāvala, Yatavara-ela, Malgamadeniya, Katugastota, Halloluva,

made by a Roman subject explaining himself in the Roman tongue, without all consequences of imperfect interpretation, so frequently noted by Editors of Pliny.

Marco Polo describes Ceylon as 2,400 miles in circumference, but states that in ancient times it was still larger, its circumference then measuring fully 3,600 miles, as the Mappu Mundi says: "But the northern gales, which blow with prodigious violence have in a manner corroded the mountains, so that they have in some parts sunk and fallen in the sea, and the island from that cause no longer retains its original size." M. P. Bk. 3. C. 19. But Maundeville describes it as 800 miles about, and he travelled nearly the same time as Marco Polo. [This note did not appear in the *Ceylon Miscellany*].

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Payangomuva, Udalagundeniya Katukitu-la-kale, Atbāge-oya, Katudahūma, Nidan-kotu-ela, Pusselava, Aggalıakalē, Rawani-dala-ela, Māvala, Garinda-ela, Punava-ela, Dimbula and Sītākoṅda.[9] We have now come to the neighbourhood of Nuvara Eliya; but no one is better qualified to introduce us to the prison bower of the lovely Sītā than the gallant Major Forbes, the lover of Landscape and Romance.

"Having ascended the wooded range and skirted the rocks of Hakgalla, we were within the precincts of the pleasure grounds of Rāvaṇa; this is a range varying from five to seven thousand feet above the level of the sea, and it is included within the steep ranges of mountains, in ancient legends called the walls of Rāvaṇa's garden; these extend from Adam's Peak to Hakgalla, and from Pedurutalāgala to Galleganuva kande. After passing through a swampy jungle, in which I remarked fern trees of thirty feet in height, and turning round the northern end of Hakgalla mountain, we reached an open valley fringed with barberry bushes and diversified by groups and single trees of the superb rhododendron arboreum, the dell was surrounded by hoary forests; whose rich but sombre colouring was unable to counteract that sullen gloom which shade and silence throw over the scene between Hakgalla and the massive Piduru. This is the Sītā Talāva (plain of Sītā) where, it is believed, the goddess was concealed together with Trisida, the niece of Rāvaṇa, who was her sole companion. Hanumān, eluding the vigilance of the guards, contrived to penetrate to their bower, and having delivered to Sīta the ring of Rāma, with assurances that her release would be accomplished, he proceeded to set fire to the neighbouring forests. It was this conflagration which cleared Nuvara Eliya, and other plains in this region of genii; and as they now are, that is barren of useful productions, Vishṇu has doomed them for ever to remain."

No reader of the Rāmāyaṇa will fail to be struck with the analogies between that ancient Epic and the Iliad of Homer. The Indian Sītā, and the Argive Helen; Rāvaṇa and Paris; Rāma and Menelaus, Achilles and Sugrīva (Hanumān) by whose assistance Rāma chiefly succeeded: Srī Laṅkapura and Troy; are striking coincidences in the two Epics; and the duration of the siege of Troy is given as ten years; of the war of Rāma as twelve.

SĪTĀVAKA AND ITS VICINITY.

Sītāvaka has a legendary and historical interest. The place, which in the "dark backward and abysm of time" was the jungle fastness to which the ravished Sītā was carried by Rāvaṇa, was, in the "Middle ages" of Ceylon history, the petty fortress where a tributary prince raised the standard of revolt. Sacked and burnt again and again by Sinhalese and Portuguese, it was for a brief period the capital of a *de facto* king. The halting-place of English troops and embassies, it became a petty fort again, and is now a small Judicial outstation, with a prosaic Police Court and Gaol. The very name Sītāvaka has disappeared from modern maps, and the town which has grown up on the old site is now known generally as Avisavella.

Sītāvaka is situated on a river of the same name, just on the confines of the Kandyan kingdom. Local tradition still points out the "Biso nāpu ela" as the bathing place of the captive Sītā, whose ravishment by Rāvaṇa is described in the Rāmāyaṇa. It is a small pool in a rocky rivulet, surrounded by jungle and approached by a footpath. It is situated near the junction of the Colombo and Ratnapura roads, and is now a favourite bathing-place for those living near.

Modern criticism has thrown a cold shade of doubt over the whole romantic episode which forms part of the subject of the Rāmāyaṇa. Whether we hold, with some, that the story merely represents the conflict always going on between the powers of good and evil, or whether we hold, that Rāma is the impersonation of Solar energy, and Sītā of agriculture or civilization,

[9] Eleven years in Ceylon, vol. 2, pp. 131 and 132.

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introduced into the South of India, by immigrants from the North (see Monier Williams' "Hindu Wisdom," p. 302), it is evident that an actual princess's bath fits in with neither of these theories. It is the possession of this which gives Sītāvaka its legendary interest, and we cling to the legend of the captive princess and the rocky rivulet wherein she bathed.

The historical interest of Sitāvaka rests on a sounder basis. We first hear of it about 1540 A.D. Ceylon was then divided into three kingdoms, of which the chief was that of Cotta, where then reigned Buvaneka VII. His younger brother, Maya Dunna, was tributary prince of the district of which Sītāvaka was the capital. Davy, who visited the place in 1819, thus describes it :—

" Sītāvaka, once a royal residence, and a place of considerable importance, is now merely a name. No traces of what it once was are now to be seen by the traveller passing along the road, and for a considerable time none were supposed to exist. Lately, some remains of buildings have been discovered. In June 1819, when travelling this way the third time, I was conducted by the natives to an old fort, concealed by wood, situated on a tongue of elevated ground, formed by the confluence of a small deep stream (the Getahette) with the river. I went in a boat, and ascended from the river by a short flight of hewn stone steps, and after walking about a hundred yards, came to the building, which I found to be nearly square, formed of three walls, one within the other. The walls were of cabook, as the stone is called by the natives. The outer wall was between eight and ten feet high, and six and eight wide. It was widest at its angles, where it communicated with the enclosure by steps. Between this wall and the next, the distance might be 24 or 30 feet; the space was overgrown with bushes. Here I observed a deep well, carefully made, and its sides lined with masonry. The second wall, only a very few feet from the inner, seemed intended for its defence. The inner enclosure was probably roofed, and was the donjon keep of the fortress. There were no marks of its having been divided into different compartments, and indeed, it was hardly large enough to admit of it. The natives, who call this ruin Kotuva (a fort), have a tradition which is probably correct, that it was built and occupied by the Portuguese when the neighbourhood was the arena of bloody contention between these bold invaders and the princes of Sītāvaka." —(Davy's Ceylon, Part II. Chap. II.)

Buvaneka wished to adopt his grandson as his heir, and desired an alliance with the Portuguese, who had landed in Ceylon a few years before.

Maya Dunna resisted this, and fortified Sītāvaka, but his stronghold was captured by Buvaneka and the Portuguese. Maya Dunna, obtaining assistance from India, retook Sitāvaka and ravaged the neighbourhood of Cotta. He was again defeated by the allied forces, and Sītāvaka was again captured, and burnt. After the death of Buvaneka, his grandson Dharmapāla or Don Juan, succeeded him, and Sītāvaka was captured and burnt for the third time. Rāja Sinha, who made himself virtually master of the Kandyan kingdom, made Sītāvaka his capital. He was defeated at Kadugannāva and died in 1592.

When Kandy became the capital of the Sinhalese kings, and the maritime provinces were in the hands of foreigners, Sītāvaka, as a border fortress, was doubtless of some importance. After the arrival of the English, it was there that the embassy from Governor North to Kandy in 1800 was met by the adigar or prime minister of the Kandyan king. The embassy left Colombo on March 10th, and after passing Kadavela and Hanvella arrived at Sītāvaka on the 18th. Percival, who accompanied it, thus describes the place :—

" Sittivacca presents as beautiful and romantic an appearance as any spot in Ceylon. It is famous for being the chief

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theatre of intercourse, both friendly and hostile, between the Kandyans and their European neighbours. Here many bloody battles were fought by the natives against the Portuguese and Dutch; here their treaties, or rather truces, have been repeatedly signed; and this was the spot usually chosen for the interviews of the European with the native ambassadors. It is the last station belonging to us in this quarter, and is separated from the king's country only by a large branch of the Mullivaddy[1] river which winds around here in several directions, and is joined by a branch of the Malivagonga[2] a little below this place. On the summit of a hill, immediately under which we encamped, stood a large range of buildings defended by an entrenchment, and formerly occupied by the Dutch, but now almost in ruins. The view of the country from this height is truly grand and enchanting. The hills, covered with the thickest woods, are diversified with immense perpendicular ledges of rocks, which rear their stupendous heads above the tallest groves. Through the thickets which cover the valleys, the eye is enabled to trace the windings of the rivers and the green tracts of clear land which imitate their serpentine course."—Percival's Ceylon, p. 381.

The entrenched hill, spoken of by Percival, is on the hither or Colombo side of the river, and is now occupied by the magistrate's bungalow. On a tree, on the top of the hill, Mayadunna used to hang malefactors, of whom, he doubtless had many to deal with, both in the ranks of his mercenary army, and among his other subjects in those troublous times. I am informed by an old priest living in the neighbourhood that he selected this spot as his place of execution, on account of its being conspicuous, and having the distant views on all sides mentioned by Percival. All traces of the Dutch buildings have now disappeared, but the entrenchment still remains. Of the Koṭuva described by Davy there only remain an overgrown mound and a few hewn stones.

Exactly opposite it, on the Kandyan side of the Sītāvaka river, are the well-preserved ruins of the "Burandi Kōvil," built by Rāja Sinha, to atone for his sin of killing some Buddhist priests. He favoured the Hindu religion. A wide ditch, which is crossed in approaching this ruin, is spanned by single hewn stones, of great length and thickness, and accurately fitted together. The ruins are in fair preservation, but a number of the stones have been carried away and used for building purposes. The beauty of the carved stones which still remain, show that the hand of the worker in stone had not lost its cunning, even so late at the middle of the sixteenth century, when this Kōvil was built. It is situated on the farther side of the Sītāvaka river, and about 200 yards from the ferry.

The English placed a small garrison in Sītāvaka, which occupied the same hill as the Dutch garrison did before. The priest, alluded to above, is the incumbent of the Maniangama vihāra. This is a rock-temple situated on the side of one of the steep hills, nay almost mountains, mentioned by Davy, and called Yakahatua. It is about two miles from Sītāvaka. The vihāra is built in the usual way, under an overhanging mass of rock, and contains a recumbent figure of Buddha, two upright figures, and one of Vishnu, while about the entrance are painted representations of Sakraya and the dewiyo. Among the curiosities of the vihāra are, a copper bowl with the word "Śrī," (Royal) engraved upon it, a pair of elephant's tusks, and a curious old blunderbuss, said to have been the gift of one of the kings. It is very short, with a cumbrous stock, and is very heavy.

I have ascended to the trigonometrical station, on the summit of Yakahatuva, and

[1] The Sītāvaka river.

[2] "Malivagonga" is an attempt to write "Maveliganga." It should "Kelaniganga."

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from thence obtained a magnificent view of the whole surrounding country. The sea on the west coast is distinctly visible. A rock which forms part of the same group bears the name "Kobottera Gala." It was the residence of two birds called "Gale Kurullo." The inhabitants caught one of their offspring, and presented it to the king. While in his possession it fought with a deer. The bird, grasping the deer by the leg, clung to a tree and was rent in two. The family living near this rock, have as their family name "Gala Balannalāgē," or "protectors of the rock," and are in possession of land near the rock, which they allege was given to their ancestors, by the king, upon a "sannas," or grant, which is not now forthcoming. The legend of these birds is locally current, and I had this version from one of the guardians of the rock. He says that he saw one of the birds in his youth, and describes it as black, with three white marks on its neck. I think the duty of this family must have been to guard these legendary birds.

Near the Sītāvaka ferry, and on the bank of the Getahette stream, is a mound, encircled by a broad but shallow ditch or moat. This is called the "Hakuru Koṭuva," or "Sugar fort," and the natives say that in days gone by it was used as a jaggery store. The moat, filled with water, prevented the approach of ants who would otherwise consume the tempting treasure. The Getahette stream, was and still is a famous stream for gemming (menik gerīma). It now winds its capricious way among old pits in its bed, and eats away its banks, honeycombed as they are with dry pits, for both bed and banks are excavated in the search for gems.

The word "Avisavella" is said locally to be derived from two words, meaning "treacherous dam" from the frequency with which the dam or "vella" between two deep fields and on which the high road now runs, was breached by floods, but I am inclined to doubt this.

Thus, beneath Avisavella, lies, buried as it were, the historical Sītāvaka, which suffered like most border towns, from its geographical position, and has in consequence left few traces of its very existence. The old "Koṭuva," or fort, is now hidden by a dense grove of areca trees; the "Burandi Kōvil" is in the middle of a cocoanut garden; a library stands within a few yards of the "Princess's Bath," the surrounding hills are green with tea bushes. The sallies of Maya Dunna from Sītāvaka are forgotten, the noise of the skirmishes and border forays of old times grows fainter and fainter, and Kandyan and Lowlander meet peacefully together in the friendly shade of the court-house verandah.

H. White.

TRANSLATION FROM THE DUTCH, OF AN EXTRACT FROM JACOB HAAFNER'S "REIZE TE VOET DOOR HET EILAND CEILON" (JOURNEY ON FOOT THROUGH THE ISLAND OF CEYLON).

De wilde boschbewoners op Ceilon.

The wild Dwellers in the Woods of Ceylon.

But there wander in these woods, through the impenetrable forests, and deep marshes, cut off from all society, a wild race, the sons of the forest, the freedom-loving Vaddā, despising all subjection and acknowledging no master: content with his desolate woods, which no European grudges him, he lives happy and free from cares, and so long as it suits his humour, in blissful poverty: things which a more enlightened world deems its greatest happiness are unknown to him; in the dark woods he is nourished only by providing heaven, and necessity has invented his household furniture; the hollowed hand is his glass and a leaf his platter. He drinks together with the elephant who knows him, and from whom he has nothing to fear, at the overshadowed stream which flows between the trees overgrown with moss; no idle desire after needless things disturbs the

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calmness of his mind, and useless knowledge tortures not his brain: he lets the sun and moon shine upon him without endeavouring to investigate their course: no heavy work tires out his limbs, and he sweats not after the plough, the chase is his sole and most pleasant occupation, and the inexhaustible woods furnish him abundant food: the honey is his salt, being that in which he, in hollow trees, preserves the killed game from rottenness, and which sweetens the dreggy water; the wild fruit-trees bend their heavy loaded branches above his head, and in the earth he finds deliciously nourishing roots: for ills inevitable to human nature he knows salutary herbs and healing plants which the accidents and beasts of the wood have taught him.

Armed with an axe and accompanied by his son he walks in the pathless woods and goes out hunting, his stubborn hounds sniffing about him, and his arrow, which hits to a certainty, defends him against the attacks of beasts of prey: when he encounters the cruel tiger on his way he approaches him, despising flight, undaunted to meet him; he pierces him at the same time with his never-missing arrow, and the strings of his bow whiz in the wind; or, having met in dispute with the grunting bear concerning the hives of bees, he sends the whizzing javelin into its heart and covers himself with his hairy fleece: tired by the chase, he rests under green arbours by the bank of a murmuring stream while the lovely harmony of the innumerable birds rocks him to sleep.

A hut of branches woven together, large enough for himself and his family, is his dwelling; under the thick shady wood he lives secure from the burning rays of the sun, and a talipot fan protects him from the rain. He fears neither enemy nor attack, except that of the wild beasts, but the rustling of the dry leaves and branches, which he, to serve that end, spreads in great heaps round his bed, informs him of the approach of his stealthy stranglers.

His temple and altar is the foot of a tree, where he lays down his offerings and prays to his god for a seasonable shower, his only want. Thus he lives contented and satisfied with his lot in these thick forests: surrounded by foreign nations, curiosity follows him not to examine their customs and habits: his woods are his world to which he, above all other lands, gives the preference; his mode of life he deems the best.

O happy choice!—blessed tastes! who of us is born with this desire in the heart—a desire which conceals all the defects of our nature, and to the most unfavoured of all lands, the most desolate country and the saddest sky, binds their inhabitants with secret chains.

F. H. de Vos,
Barrister-at-law.

TRANSLATION OF THE JĀTAKAS.

Āsiṅsavagga.

(*Continued from Vol. I. page* 271.)

2. *Cūlajanakajātaka* (52).

The "younger Janaka" story.

"*Men should energetic be, &c.*"

This the teacher told whilst dwelling in Jetavana also on occasion of (a priest) who had given up exerting himself in any way. The appropriate story will be found in the Mahā-janaka-jātaka. The king, seated under a white canopy uttered this stanza:—

Men should energetic be,
Wise men ne'er throw up the game,
Proof of this was seen in me,
When I to the surface came.

Hereupon the mendicant, who had abandoned energy, attained to arahatship. (The Teacher

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said) " king Janaka was the Buddha himself."
End of " younger Janaka " Birth story.

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3. *Puṇṇapātijātaka* (53).
" Full-vessel" birth story.
" The Vessels are as full as before, &c."

This the teacher told while residing at Jetavana on occasion of some poisoned liquor. Once upon a time the tipplers of the city of Sevat met and consulted together as to how they should obtain money to buy drink as they were out of funds. Then a most inveterate tippler said, " Never mind, I have an expedient." The others asked him what it was. " It is usual for Anāthapiṇḍika wearing his signet ring and clad in costly apparel to go to wait upon the king. We will put intoxicating drugs in the liquor vessels and open a shop and when the treasurer (Anāthapiṇḍika) passes by we will call to him saying come (here) great treasurer. We will then serve him that liquor and make him intoxicated, and when he is drunk we will strip him of his ring and rich clothes and by means of these we will obtain money to buy liquor." They all agreed to this, pronouncing it an excellent contrivance and so carried it out. When the treasurer was coming they advanced to meet him and said to him, " Sir, come here, before any one is served. This liquor that we have is most excellent, take a drink before you go." " What ! will a sanctified venerable disciple of Buddha drink liquor !" Though reluctant to drink, yet with a view of discovering the object of these drunkards he entered their shop. Perceiving from what he had noted of their conduct that certain drugs had been put into the liquor, and resolving to expel the drunkards from the place he thus addressed them, " You rascals of drunkards, you have been putting drugs into the liquor vessels with the intent to intoxicate and plunder every one who enters your shop. Meanwhile, seated in your shop, you forsooth sing its praises, not one of you, however, dares to take a drink of it. If it is not drugged then drink of it yourselves." In this way he threatened them and drove them away and went home. He (the treasurer) went to Jetavana for the purpose of giving an account of this performance of the drunken rogues to Buddha and related to him what had happened. The teacher said, " Householder, as these reprobates attempted to deceive you on this occasion, they attempted in a former birth to deceive even learned philosophers," and at his (the treasurer's) request he told the story of the past.

In past time when Brahmadatta was reigning in Benares the Bodhisat was the treasurer of Benares. Even then these rascals conspired together and played the same trick with their liquor. They advanced to meet the treasurer of Benares on his way (to the palace) and made the same request. The treasurer was displeased, but wishing to learn what their motives were, entered their shop. Noting their conduct and resolving to expel them thence, he thus addressed them : " You rascals of drunkards, it is wrong to drink on one's way to the palace, on my return after waiting upon the king, I will see about it ; till then stay here." He then went to the palace, and when he was returning the rascals again invited him saying, " Walk in, sir." He went in and observing the liquor mixed with intoxicating drugs said to them, " You rascals, your conduct is displeasing to me, your liquor vessels are as full now as when I saw them last. You merely praise the liquor but do not drink of it yourselves ; if it is good you yourselves will drink of it. It must therefore be drugged." Having thus frustrated them in their attempt he uttered this stanza :—

> Still the goblets full I see,
> Words and acts do not agree ;
> Hence it's manifest to me
> Sorry liquor this must be."

Giving alms and performing acts of merits for the rest of his life, he passed away (in the end) according to his deeds.

The teacher by means of this religious discourse linked the birth story on to the present thus : " The rogues of that time are the present rogues, and the then treasurer of Benares was I myself."

End of the " Full vessel" Birth story.

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4. *Phalajātaka* (54).
" The fruit birth story."
" 'Tis an easy tree to climb, &c."

This the teacher told while dwelling at Jetavana on occasion of a devotee expert in

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telling (good) fruits (from bad). A certain squire in Sevat invited the priesthood headed by Buddha and lodged them in his park, and having treated them to rice-gruel and cakes, ordered his park-keeper thus : "Go about the park with the priests and offer the holy men mangos and other kinds of fruit." "Very well,' said he, and in obedience to the order took the priests over the park. Now by a mere glance at a tree (this man) could say this fruit is green, that not quite ripe, the other quite ripe, (and so on) and whatever he said proved to be correct. The priest approaching the teacher informed him of this thus, "Sir, this park-keeper is an expert in (the knowledge of) fruits. While himself is on the ground by a mere glance at the tree, he can discern that one fruit is green, another not quite ripe, a third quite ripe (and so on). Whatever he says proves to be quite correct." Whereupon the teacher said, "Priests this is not the only park-keeper that is expert in judging of fruits, in the past the wise were expert in distinguishing fruits, and told the story of the past.

In the past while Brahmadatta was reigning in Benares Bodhisat was born in the treasurer caste, and when he had attained to manhood was trading with five hundred carts. On a certain occasion he entered a great forest. At sight of the forest he called all his men and said, "In this forest there are poisonous trees. Do not eat any leaf, flower, or fruit (of a kind) that you have not eaten before without asking me." "Very well," said they and entered the forest. At the entrance near a village there is a tree called Kimphala. Its trunk, branches, leaves, flowers and fruit and everything else are like (those of a) mango tree. Not only this, the green and ripe fruits are like mango fruits in colour, shape, smell and taste, but when eaten they are like deadly poison; instant death ensues. Certain gluttons, who were ahead (of the rest) thinking that it was a mango tree, ate the fruits of it. Others stood still with fruits in their hands saying, "We will ask our chief (about them) before eating (them)." On the arrival of the chief they asked him, "May we eat these mango fruits?" Bodhisat, knowing that they were not mangos (said), "This is a Kimphala tree, and not a mango tree. Do not eat (the fruit)," and caused those, who had eaten to vomit, gave them a drink of the four kinds of sweets, and restored them to health. Before this too, men taking shelter under this tree had eaten these poisonous fruits, mistaking them for mangos, and had died. Next day the villagers would come and seeing the dead bodies take them by the legs and throw them into a secluded place and take everything that was on them, together with the carts, and would return home. That day early at sunrise as usual the villagers made for the tree in great haste one saying, "the bulls for me," another "the carts for me," and a third "the goods for me," but seeing the men safe and sound they asked them, "How did you come to know that this is not a mango tree?" They replied, "We do not know, but our chief knew it." Then the men questioned the Bodhisat, "Sage, by what experiment have you ascertained that this is not a mango tree?" "I knew it from two facts," said he, and uttered the following stanza :—

> 'Tis an easy tree to climb
> And the village is hard by;
> From these two facts I know
> That the tree bears not good fruit.

Having given alms and performed meritorious acts he passed away according to his deeds.

The teacher related this religious history in explanation of his saying :—"In like manner have the wise formerly been experts in the knowledge of fruits," and shewed the connection of the birth story thus, "the then followers were the followers of Buddha, the chief was I myself."

End of the "Fruit" Birth story.

T. B. Panabokke.

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SANSKRIT PUZZLES.

No. XIII.

राक्षसेभ्यः सुतां हृत्वा जनकस्य पुरीं ययौ ।
अत्र कर्तृपदं गुप्तं मर्यादा दशवार्षिकी ॥

The first line constitutes the puzzle, and the second merely informs us that there is a word in it in the nominative case, which is so concealed as to render a ten years' search insufficient for its detection. In the absence of a knowledge of this hidden word, we should translate the first line thus: "Having taken the daughter of Janaka from the Rākṣasas he went to the city." Quite opposed to this will be the sense of the words when the agent of the verb *yayau* is discovered.

EDITOR.

No. XIV.

कान्तं विना नदीतीरं मदमालोक्य केकिनी ।
अत्र क्रियापदं गुप्तं यो जानाति स पण्डितः ॥

SOLUTION OF SANSKRIT PUZZLES.

No. XI.

आगतः पाण्डवाः सर्वे दुर्योधनसमीहया ।
तस्मै गां च सुवर्णं च रत्नानि विविधानि च ॥

Lit. :—"To him who came in search of wealth, the Pāṇḍu princes all gave a cow and gold and gems diverse."

In this verse we have a more intricate grammatical construction than a charade. The difficulty consists in finding out the verb to the nominative plural, *Pāṇḍavāḥ*—the verb bring masked, as it were, in the combination "*Duryodhana,*" the name of the eldest of the *kaurava* princes who figure in the great Indian Epic, the Mahābhārata. The mention of the Pāṇḍava princes in this connection tends to strengthen the deception and mislead the mind. The combination *Duryodhana* coming after *sarve* can, however, be resolved into *aduḥ*, *yo* and *dhana*, in which we find the verb *aduḥ* with the initial vowel elided—meaning, "*gave.*"[1]

L. C. WIJESINHA.

No. XII.

पानीयं पातुमिच्छामि त्वत्तः कमललोचने ।
यदि दास्यसि नेच्छामि नो दास्यसि पिबाम्यहम् ॥

In order to solve this very ingenious puzzle, the reader must imagine to himself the circumstances and surroundings connected therewith. Let him, then, imagine to himself a high caste Brahman on a toilsome journey traversing a sandy plain on a sultry day. Wearied and thirsty, he longingly approaches a village-well, from which a maiden is drawing water, and addresses to her the stanza which embodies the puzzle we have to solve, and the ordinary translation of which would run thus :—

"I wish to drink water from thee, oh lotus-eyed maid! If thou wilt give, I do not wish; if thou wilt not give then do I drink."

The key to the proper translation of the two last lines is found in the word *dāsyasi*, which, of course, one would take to be the form of the future tense of the second person singular of the verb *dā* to give. But the word admits of being broken into two words; *i. e. dāsī* + *asi*, "thou art a slave," which by the rules of combination become *dāsyasi*. Thus the meaning of the last two lines would be, "If thou art a slave-girl I drink not from thee; if thou art not a slave-girl I will drink."

A Brahman, however wearied and thirsty he may be, dare not break caste by taking even a drink of water at the hands of a pariah or a slave; so that his inquiry as to the caste and position of the maid was natural. Whether, however, the beautiful girl with "a lotus-eye" understood the witty Brahman or appreciated his pun, is a puzzle which must remain unsolved.

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[1] सर्वे + अदुः = सर्वेदुः Pāṇini VI. 1. 109.—[EDITOR.]

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