

TALE III.

THE sprite said, "O king! there is a city named Bardwān, wherein is a king named Rūpsen. It happened one day that the king was seated in an apartment adjoining the gate (of his palace), when, from without the gate, the loud voices of some people reached him. The king said, 'Who is at the gate? and what noise is that taking place?' Upon this the gate-keeper replied, 'Great king! you have asked a fine question! Knowing this to be the gate of a wealthy personage, numbers of persons of all kinds come and sit at it for the sake of money, and converse on a variety of topics; this is *their* noise.'"

"On hearing this the king kept silent. In the meanwhile a traveller, named Birbar, a Rājput, came from the south to the king's gate, in the hope of obtaining service. The gate-keeper, after ascertaining his circumstances, said to the king, 'Your majesty! an armed man has come in the hope of entering your service, and stands at the door: with your majesty's leave he shall come before you.' Having heard this,

the king gave the order to bring him in. He went and brought him. Then the king asked, 'O Rājput! How much shall I allow thee for daily expenses?' On hearing this Birbar said, 'Give me a thousand *tolās* (about 833 oz.) of gold daily, and I shall be able to subsist.' The king enquired, 'How many persons are there with you (dependent on you)?' He replied, 'First, my wife; second, a son; third, a daughter; fourth, myself: there is no fifth person with me.' Hearing him speak thus, all the people of the king's court turned away their faces and began laughing; but the king began to consider why he had asked for a large sum of money. Ultimately he thought it out in his own mind, that a vast sum of money given away will some day prove of advantage. Coming to this conclusion, he sent for his treasurer and said, 'Give this Birbar a thousand *tolās* of gold daily from my treasury.'"

"On hearing this order, Birbar took a thousand *tolās* of gold for that day, and brought it to the place where he was staying, and dividing it into two parts, distributed one half among the Brahmans; and again dividing the remaining half into two parts, distributed one portion thereof among pilgrims, devotees, the worshippers of Vishnu, and religious mendicants; and of the one part which remained he had food cooked and fed the poor, and what remained over he consumed himself. In this way he, with his wife and children,

used regularly to subsist. And every night he used to take his sword and shield and go and mount guard over the king's couch; and when the king, roused from sleep, used to call out, 'Is any one in waiting?' then he used to answer, 'Birbar is in attendance; what may be your commands?' Thus answered he whenever the king called out, and thereupon, whatever he (the king) ordered to be done, he executed."

"In this way, through eagerness for wealth, he used to keep awake the whole night long; nay, whether eating, drinking, sleeping, sitting still, or moving about (that is to say) during the whole twenty-four hours (*lit.* eight watches), he used to keep his lord in mind. The practice is, that if one person sells another, this one becomes sold; but a servant, by entering service, sells *himself*; and, when sold, he becomes a dependant; and once dependant, he has no prospect of peace. It is notorious, that however clever, wise, and learned he may be, still, when he is in his master's presence, he remains quite silent, like a dumb person, through fear. So long as he is aloof from him, he is at rest. On this account it is that the learned say, 'To perform the duties of a servant is more difficult than to perform religious duties.'"

"(To) the story: It is related, that one day the weeping voice of a woman chanced to come at night-time from the burning-ground. On hearing it the king

called out, 'Is any one in waiting?' Birbar instantly answered, 'I am here; your commands.' Thereupon the king gave him this order,—'Go to the spot whence yon weeping voice of a woman proceeds, and enquire of her the cause of her weeping, and return quickly.' Having given him this order the king began to say to himself, 'Whosoever desires to test his servant should order him to do things in season and out of season; if he execute his order, know that he is worth something; and if he object, be sure that he is worthless. And in this same way prove brethren and friends in days of adversity, and a wife in poverty.'"

"In fine, on receiving this order, he took the direction whence the sound of her weeping proceeded; and the king also, after dressing himself in black, followed him secretly, for the purpose of observing his courage. In this interval Birbar arrived there. What does he behold in the burning-ground, but a beautiful woman, lavishly decked with jewels from head to foot, crying aloud and bitterly! At one moment she was dancing, at another leaping, at another running; and not a tear in her eyes! And while repeatedly beating her head, and crying out, 'Alas! alas!' she kept dashing herself on the ground. Seeing this her condition, Birbar asked, 'Why art thou crying and beating thyself so violently? Who art thou? and what trouble has befallen thee?'"

"On this she said, 'I am the royal glory.' Birbar

said, 'Why art thou weeping?' Upon this she began relating her case to Birbar, saying, 'Impious acts (*lit.* acts such as a Shūdra performs) are committed in the king's house, whence misfortune will find admission therein, and I shall depart thence; after the lapse of a month the king will suffer much affliction and die; this is the sorrow which makes me weep. Further, I have enjoyed great happiness in his house, and hence this regret: and this matter will in nowise prove false.'

"Birbar then asked, 'Is there any such remedy for it, whereby the king may escape, and live a hundred years?' She said, 'Towards the east, at a distance of four *kos* (eight miles), is a temple sacred to (the goddess) Devī; if you will cut off your son's head with your own hand, and offer it to that goddess, then the king will reign a hundred years precisely as he now reigns, and no harm of any kind will befall the king.'

"As soon as he had heard these words, Birbar went home, and the king also followed him. To be brief, when he got home, he awoke his wife, and minutely related the whole story to her. On hearing the circumstances, she roused the son alone; but the daughter also awoke. Then that woman said to her boy, 'Son! by sacrificing your head the king's life will be saved, and the government, too, will endure.' When the boy heard this, he said, 'Mother! in the

first place, it is your command; in the second, it is for my lord's service; thirdly, if this body come of use to a deity, nothing in the world is better for me, in my opinion, than this: it is not right to delay any longer now in this business. There is a saying, 'If one have a son, to have him under control,—a body, free from disease,—science, such that one benefits thereby,—a friend, prudent,—a wife, submissive,—if these five things are obtainable by man, they are the bestowers of happiness and the averters of trouble: if a servant be unwilling, a king parsimonious, a friend insincere, and a wife disobedient, these four things are the banishers of peace and the promoters of misery.'

"Birbar again addressed his wife, saying, 'If thou wilt willingly give up thy child, I will take him away and sacrifice him for the king.' She replied, saying, 'I have no concern with son, daughter, brother, kinsfolk, mother, father, or any one; from you it is that my happiness proceeds; and in the moral Code, too, it is thus written,—'A woman is purified neither by offerings nor by religious offices; her religion consists in serving and honouring her husband, no matter whether he be lame, maimed in the hands, dumb, deaf, blind of both eyes, blind of one eye, a leper, hunch-backed,—of whatever kind he be, if she perform any description of virtuous action in the world, while she does not obey her husband, she will fall into

hell.' His son said, 'Father! the man by whom his master's business is accomplished—*his* continuing to live in the world is attended with advantage; and in this there is advantage in both worlds.' Then his daughter said, 'If the mother give poison to the daughter, and the father sell the son, and the king seize everything, then whose protection shall we seek?'"

"The four, deliberating with one another somewhat after the above fashion, went to the temple of Devī. The king also secretly followed them. When Birbar arrived there, he entered the temple, paid his adoration to Devī, and joined his hands in supplication, and said, 'O Devī! grant that by the sacrificing of my son the king may live a hundred years.' Saying so much, he struck such a blow with the sword that his son's head fell upon the ground. On witnessing her brother's death, the daughter struck a blow with the sword on her own neck, so that her head and body fell asunder. Seeing her son and daughter dead, Birbar's wife struck such a stroke with the sword on her own neck, that her head was severed from her body. Further, seeing the death of those three, Birbar, reflecting in his mind, began to say, 'When my *son* is dead, for whose sake shall I retain service? and to whom shall I give the gold I receive from the king?' Having reflected thus, he struck such a blow with the sword on his own neck, that his

head was severed from his body. Again, beholding the death of these four, the king said to himself, 'For my sake the lives of his family have perished; accursed is it any longer to govern a realm for which the whole family of one is destroyed, while one holds sovereignty; it is no virtue thus to reign.' Having deliberated thus, the king was on the point of killing himself with the sword; in the meantime, however, Devī came and seized his hand, and said, 'Son! I am well pleased at thy courage, and will grant thee whatever boon thou mayest ask of me.' The king said, 'Mother! if thou art pleased, restore all these four to life.' Devī said, 'This same shall take place,' and on the instant of saying it, Bhawānī brought the water of life from the nether regions, and restored all four to life. After that the king bestowed half his kingdom on Birbar."

Having related so much, the sprite said, "Blessed is the servant who did not grudge his life, and that of his family, for his master's sake! And happy is the king who showed no eagerness to cling to his dominion and his life. O king! I ask you this,—Whose virtue, of those five, was the most excellent?" Then King Vikramājī said, "The king's virtue was the greatest." The sprite asked, "Why?" Then the king answered, saying, "It behoves the servant to lay down his life for his master, for this is his duty; but since the king

gave up his throne for the sake of his servant, and valued not his life at a straw, the king's merit was the superior." Having heard these words, the sprite again went and suspended himself on the tree in that burning-ground.

TALE IV.

THE king, having gone there again, bound the sprite and brought him away. Then the sprite said, "O king! there is a town named Bhogwati, of which Rūpsen is the king, and he has a parrot named Chūrāman. One day the king asked the parrot, 'What different things do you know?' Then the parrot said, 'Your majesty! I know everything.' The king rejoined, 'Tell me, then, if you know where there is a beautiful maiden equal to me in rank.' Then the parrot said, 'Your majesty! in the country of Magadh there is a king named Magadheshwar, and his daughter's name is Chandrāvati; you will be married to her. She is very beautiful, and very learned.'"

"On hearing these words from the parrot, the king summoned an astrologer named Chandrakānt, and asked him, 'To what maid shall I be married?' He also, having made the discovery through his knowledge of astrology, said, 'There is a maiden named Chandrāvati; you will be married to her.'