

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 Magadbeshwar, 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.'

Hearing these words, the king summoned a Brahman, and after explaining all, said to him at the moment of despatching him to King Magadheshwar, 'If you return, after placing the arrangements for my marriage on a firm basis, I will make you happy.' Having heard these words, the Brahman took leave."

"Now, in the possession of King Magadheshwar's daughter was a *mainā*, whose name was Madanmanjarī. In the same way the princess, too, one day asked Madanmanjarī, 'Where is there a husband worthy of me?' On this the *mainā* said, 'Rūpsen is the King of Bhogwatī; he will be thy lord.' To be brief, unseen (of one another), the one had become enamoured of the other, when, in the course of a few days, the Brahman also arrived there, and delivered his own sovereign's message to that king. He too consented to his proposal, and summoning a Brahman of his own, entrusted to him the nuptial gifts and all customary things, sent him along with that Brahman, and gave him this injunction, 'Do you go and present my compliments to the king, and having marked his forehead with the usual unguents, return quickly; when you return I will make preparations for the wedding.'"

"The short of the story is, the two Brahmans set out thence. In the course of some days they arrived at King Rūpsen's, and related all the occurrences of that place. On hearing this the king was pleased,

and after making all (necessary) preparations, set out to be married. Reaching that country after some days, he married, and after receiving the bridal gifts and dowry, and bidding adieu to the king, started for his own kingdom. When leaving, the princess took Madanmanjarī's cage with her too. After some days they arrived in their own country, and commenced living happily in their palace."

"It happened one day that the cages of both the parrot and the *mainā* were placed near the throne, and the king and queen entered into conversation, saying, 'No one's life passes happily without a companion; hence it is best for us to marry the parrot and *mainā* to one another, and put them both in one cage; then will they also live happily.' After conversing together thus, they had a large cage brought, and put both into it."

"Some days after, the king and queen were seated conversing with each other, when the parrot began to talk to the *mainā*, saying, 'Sexual intercourse is the essence of all bliss in this world; and he who, on being born into the world, has not enjoyed sexual intercourse—his life has been passed in vain. Hence, do thou let me copulate with thee.' On hearing this the *mainā* said, 'I have no desire for a male.' Thereupon he inquired 'Why?' The *mainā* said, 'The male sex are sinful, irreligious, deceivers, and wife-killers.' Hearing this, the parrot said, 'The female

sex, too, are deceitful, false, stupid, avaricious creatures, and murderesses.”

“When the two commenced wrangling in this manner, the king asked, ‘Why are you two quarrelling with each other?’ The *mainā* replied, ‘Great king! the male sex are evil-doers and wife-killers, and hence I have no desire to have a male partner. Your majesty! I will tell you a tale, do you be pleased to hearken; for such (as I describe them) are men.’”

THE MAINA'S STORY.

“There was a city named Ilāpur, and a merchant named Mahādhan dwelt there, who could not get a family. On this account he was continually making pilgrimages and keeping fasts, and always hearing the Purānas read, and he used to give gifts largely to the Brahmans. In fine, after some considerable time, by God's will, a son was born in that merchant's house. He celebrated the event with great pomp, and gave large gifts to the Brahmans and bards, and also gave away a good deal to the hungry, thirsty, and indigent. When he reached the age of five years, he placed him (in school) for instruction. He used to leave home for the purpose of learning, but used to gamble with the boys when he got there.”

“After some time the merchant died, and he (the

son) becoming his own master, used to spend his days in gambling and his nights in fornication. Thus he dissipated his whole wealth in a few years, and having no alternative, quitted his country, and proceeding from bad to worse, arrived at the city of Chandrapur. In that place dwelt a merchant named Hemgupt, who possessed much wealth. He went to him, and mentioned his father's name and circumstances. He (the merchant) felt instant pleasure on hearing these accounts; and rising and embracing him, inquired, ‘How came you here?’ Then he said, ‘I had engaged a vessel, and set out for an island to trade, and having arrived there, and sold the goods, had taken in other goods as cargo, and left with the vessel for my own land, when suddenly so violent a storm arose that the ship was wrecked, and I was left seated on a plank; and so, drifting on, I have reached this shore. But I feel a sense of shame at having lost all my property and wealth. How can I now return and show my face to my fellow-citizens in this state?’”

“To be brief, when he uttered such words in his presence, he (the merchant) too began to think to himself, ‘God has relieved me of any anxiety without any effort of my own (*lit.* I sitting at home); now, a coincidence like this occurs through the mercy of God alone; it behoves me to make no delay now. The

best thing to be done is to give my girl in marriage¹ to him; whatever is done now is best; as for the morrow—who knows what it may bring forth!’ Forming this grand design in his mind, he came to his wife and began to say, ‘A merchant’s son has arrived; if you approve, we will give Ratnāvati in marriage to him.’ She, too, was delighted on hearing (this), and said, ‘Sir merchant! when God brings about a coincidence like this, then alone does it occur; for the desire of our hearts has been obtained without our bestirring ourselves in the least (*lit.*, we sitting quietly at home); hence, it is best not to delay, but quickly send for the family priest, have the auspicious moment determined, and give her away in marriage.’ Hereupon the merchant sent for the priest, had the fortunate planetary conjunction determined, and gave his daughter away, bestowing a large dowry upon her. In fine, when the marriage had taken place, they commenced living together there.”

“‘To proceed:—After some days, he said to the merchant’s daughter, ‘A long time has passed since I arrived in your land, and no news of my household has reached me, and my mind remains troubled in consequence. I have told you my whole case; you should now so explain matters to your mother that

¹ *Lit.* “make the girl’s hands yellow.” Among the Hindūs, for some days before marriage, the hands of a betrothed couple are stained yellow with turmeric.

she may, of her own free will, allow me to depart, that I may return to my own city. If it be your wish, do you also come.’ On this, she said to her mother, ‘My husband desires permission to depart to his own land; do you, too, act in such a manner now that his mind may receive no pain.’”

“‘The merchant’s wife went to her husband, and said, ‘Your son-in-law asks leave to return home.’ On hearing this, the merchant said, ‘Very well; we will let him go, for we can exercise no authority over a stranger’s son; we will do that alone wherein his pleasure consists.’ Having said this, he sent for his daughter, and asked, ‘Will you go to your father-in-law’s, or remain at your mother’s? Speak your own mind.’ At this she blushed, and gave no answer, (but) returned to her husband, and said, ‘My parents have declared that they will do that wherein your pleasure consists; don’t you leave me behind.’ To be brief, the merchant summoned his son-in-law, loaded him with wealth, and dismissed him, and allowed his daughter to accompany him in a litter, together with a female servant. After this, he set out from thence.”

“‘When he reached a certain jungle, he said to the merchant’s daughter, ‘There is great danger here; if you will take off your jewels and give them to me, I will fasten them round my waist; when we come to a town you can put them on again.’ She no sooner

heard this than she took off all her ornaments, and he having taken them, and sent away the bearers of the litter, killed the woman-servant and threw her into a well, and pushing her (his wife) into a well also, went off to his own country with all the jewels."

"In the meantime, a traveller came along that road, and hearing the sound of weeping, stopped, and began to say to himself, 'How comes the weeping voice of a human being (to be heard) in this jungle?' Having reflected thus, he proceeded in the direction of the sound of the crying, and perceived a well. On looking into it, what does he behold but a woman weeping! Then he took out the woman, and commenced questioning her on her circumstances, saying, 'Who art thou, and how didst thou fall into this (well)?' On hearing this, she said, 'I am the daughter of Hemgupt, the merchant, and was accompanying my husband to his country, when thieves waylaid us, killed my servant and threw her into a well, and bound and carried off my husband together with my jewels. I have no intelligence of him, nor he of me.' When he heard this, the traveller took her along with him, and left her at the merchant's door."

"She went to her parents. They, at the sight of her, began enquiring, 'What has happened to thee?' She said, 'Robbers came and plundered us on the road, and after killing the servant and casting her into a well, pushed me into a dry well, and bound and

carried off my husband, together with my jewels. When they began demanding more money, he said to them, 'You have taken all I possessed, what have I now left?' Beyond this, whether they killed him or let him go, I have no knowledge.' Then her father said, 'Daughter! feel no anxiety; thy husband lives, and, God willing, will join thee in a few days, for robbers take money, not life.'"

"In fine, the merchant gave her other ornaments in place of all that had disappeared, and comforted and consoled her greatly. And the merchant's son, also, having reached home, and sold the jewels, spent his days and nights in the company of loose women, and in gambling, so much so, that all his money was expended. Then he came to want bread. At last, when he began to suffer extreme misery, he one day bethought himself of going to his father-in-law's, and pretending that a grandson had been born to him, and that he had come to congratulate him on the event. Having determined on this in his mind, he set out."

"In the course of several days he arrived there. When he was about to enter the house, his wife saw from the front that her husband was coming (and said to herself), 'He must not be allowed to turn back through any apprehension he may feel.' Upon this she approached him and said, 'Husband! be not at all troubled in mind; I have told my father that rob-

bers came and killed my servant, and after making me take off all my jewels, and casting me into a well, bound and carried off my husband. Do you tell the same tale; feel no anxiety; the house is yours, and I am your slave.' After speaking thus she entered the house. He went to the merchant, who rose and embraced him, and questioned him on all that had befallen him. He related everything precisely as his wife had instructed him to do."

"Rejoicings took place throughout the house. Then the merchant, after providing him with the means of bathing, and placing food before him, and after ministering much comfort, said, 'This house is yours, abide (here) in peace.' He commenced living there. In brief, after several days the merchant's daughter came and lay with him one night with her jewels on, and fell asleep. When it was midnight, he perceived that she had fallen into a sound sleep. He then inflicted such a wound on her neck, that she died; and after stripping her of all her jewels, he took the road to his own country."

"After narrating so much the *mainā* said, 'This, your majesty! I saw with my own eyes. For this reason I have no wish to have anything to do with a male. You see, your majesty! what villains men are! Who would love such, and so cherish a serpent in her own home? Will your majesty be pleased to consider this point,—What crime had that woman committed?' "

"Having heard this, the king said, 'O parrot! do you tell me what faults there are in women.' Thereupon the parrot said, 'Attend, O king!'

THE PARROT'S STORY.

"There is a city (called) Kanchanpur, where (dwelt) a merchant, named Sāgardatt, whose son's name was Shridatt. The name of another city is Jayshripur, where there was a merchant, named Somadatt, and his daughter's name was Jayshri. She had married the son of that merchant, and the son had gone to a certain country to trade. She used to live at her parents' house. In fine, when he had spent twelve years in trading, and she arrived at woman's estate here, she one day addressed a companion of hers thus: 'Sister! my youth is being wasted; up to this moment I have tasted none of the world's joys.' On hearing these words, her companion said to her, 'Be of good cheer! God willing, thy husband will soon come and join thee.' "

"She got vexed at these words, and ascending to the upper chamber, and peeping through the lattice, saw a young man coming along. When he drew near her, his eyes and hers suddenly met. The hearts of both went forth to one another. Then she said to her companion, 'Bring that man to me.' On hearing this, the companion went and said to him, 'Somadatt's

daughter wishes to see you in private; but do you come to my house.' She then put him on the track to her house. He said, 'I will come at night.' The companion came and informed the merchant's daughter that he had promised to come at night. When she heard this, Jayshri said to her companion, 'You go home; when he arrives, let me know, and I will also come when free to leave home.'"

"On hearing her words, her companion went home, and seating herself at the door, began watching for his coming. In the meantime he arrived. She seated him in the doorway, saying, 'You sit here; I will go and give notice of your arrival.' And she came to Jayshri and said, 'Your sweetheart has arrived.' On hearing this she said, 'Wait awhile; let the household go to sleep, and then I will come.' And so, after some delay, when it was near midnight, and all had gone to sleep, then she arose softly and accompanied her, and arrived there in a very short time; and the two met in her house without restraint. When nearly an hour and a half¹ of night remained, she rose and returned home, and went quietly to sleep; and he also went to his house at daybreak."

"Many days passed thus. At last her husband, too, returned from foreign parts to his father-in-law's house. When she beheld her husband she became

¹ *Lit.*—"Four *gharis*." A *ghari* is equal to twenty-four minutes; and hence the exact time would be six minutes more than "an hour and a half."

troubled in mind, and said to her companion, 'Such is my anxiety, what shall I do? whither shall I go? Sleep, hunger, thirst, all are forgotten; nothing is agreeable to me (*lit.* neither hot nor cold pleases me). And she told her the whole state of her heart. To be brief, she got through the day somehow or other; but at night, when her husband had finished supper, his mother-in-law had a bed made for him in a separate building, and sent word to him to go and take repose, while she said to her daughter, 'You go and do your duty to your husband.'"

"She turned up her nose and knitted her brows on hearing this, and remained silent. On this her mother rebuked her sharply, and sent her off to him. Being powerless, she went there, but lay on the bed with her face turned away. The more he kept addressing her in words of tenderness, the more vexed would she become. On this he presented her with all the various descriptions of apparel, and the jewels which he had brought for her from different places, and said, 'Wear these.' Then, in truth, she became still more vexed, and frowned and turned away her face. And he, too, went to sleep in despair; for he was fatigued with the journey. To her, however, thinking of her lover, sleep came not."

"When she thought that he was in an unconscious sleep, she arose softly, and leaving him asleep, went fearlessly in the dark night to the abode of her lover;

and a thief seeing her on the way, thought to himself, 'Where can this woman be going, alone, with her jewels on, at this midnight hour.' Thus soliloquising, he followed her. In short, she managed somehow to reach her lover's house. Now, there, a snake had bitten and left him; he was lying dead. She thought he was sleeping. Being, as it was, consumed with the fire of separation, she clasped him to her without restraint, and began caressing him; and the thief from a distance was watching the fun."

"An evil spirit, too, was seated on a pipal tree there, looking on at the scene. All at once it came into his mind to enter his (dead) body and have carnal intercourse with her. Having resolved on this, he entered the body, and after having intercourse with her, bit off her nose with his teeth, and went and sat on the same tree. The thief observed all these occurrences. And she, in despair, went as she was, all stained with blood, to her companion, and related all that had happened. Whereupon her companion said, 'Go quickly to thy husband ere yet the sun rise, and, arrived there, weep aloud and bitterly. If any one should question thee, say, 'He has cut off my nose.'"

"She went thither on the instant of hearing her companion's words, and commenced weeping and wailing excessively. Hearing the noise of her weeping, all her relations came, and lo! she had no nose,—was sitting noseless! Then they exclaimed, 'O you shameless,

wicked, pitiless, mad wretch! Why have you bitten off her nose without any fault on her part?' He, too, became alarmed on witnessing this farce, and began to say to himself, 'Trust not a wanton-minded woman, a black snake, an armed man, an enemy,—and fear the wiles of a woman. What can an eminent poet not describe? What does he not know who has acquired supernatural power? What absurd nonsense does a drunkard not chatter? What can a woman not accomplish? True it is, that the defects of horses, the thunder of the clouds, the wiles of woman, and the destiny of man,—these things even the gods do not comprehend; what power has man, then (to understand them)?"

"In the meantime her father gave information of the occurrence to the city magistrate. Policemen came from the station there, and bound and brought him before the magistrate. The magistrate of the city gave notice to the king. The king having sent for him, and questioned him about the case, he declared he knew nothing. And on his summoning the merchant's daughter, and interrogating her, she replied, 'Your majesty! when you see plainly (what has happened), why do you question me?' Then the king said to him, 'What punishment shall I inflict on thee?' On hearing this, he replied, 'Do unto me whatever you deem just.' The king said, 'Away with him, and impale him!' On receiving

the king's order the people took him away to impale him."

"Observe the coincidence;—that thief was also standing there, looking on at the scene. When he was convinced that this man was about to be unjustly put to death, he raised a cry for justice. The king summoned him, and asked, 'Who art thou?' He said, 'Great king! I am a thief; and this man is innocent; his blood is about to be unjustly shed; you have not given judgment at all wisely.' Hereupon the king summoned him (the husband) also, and questioned the thief, saying, 'Declare the truth on thy honour! What are the facts of this case?' The thief then gave a detailed account of the circumstances; and the king, too, comprehended them thoroughly. Ultimately he sent attendants, and had the woman's nose brought from the mouth of her lover, who was lying dead, and inspected it. Then he was assured that the man was guiltless, and the thief truthful. Hereupon the thief said, 'To cherish the good, and punish evil-doers, has from of old been a duty of kings.'"

"After relating so much of the tale, the parrot Chūrāman said, 'Great king! such embodiments of all crime are women! The king having had the woman's face blackened and her head shaved, had her mounted on an ass, and taken round the city, and then set at liberty; and after giving betel-leaf to the

thief and the merchant's son, he allowed them to depart.'"

Having related so much of the story, the sprite said, "O king! to which of these two does the greater guilt attach?" Then King Bir Vikramājit said, "To the woman." On this the sprite said, "How so?" On hearing this, the king said, "However depraved a man may be, still some sense of right and wrong remains in him; but a woman does not give a thought to right and wrong; hence great guilt attached to the woman." Hearing these words, the sprite went again and hung himself on the same tree. The king went again and took him down from the tree, tied him up in a bundle, placed him on his shoulder, and carried him away.