TALE VII.

The sprite said, "O king! there is a city named Cham-pêpur, the king of which is Champakeshwar. And the queen's name is Sulochana, and the daughter's Tribhuvan-sundari. She is an eminently-beautiful woman, whose face is like the moon, hair like black clouds, eyes like a gazelle's, eyebrows (arched) like a bow, nose like a parrot's (beak), neck like a pigeon's, teeth like the grains of a pomegranate; the redness of whose lips resembles that of the kandûri,¹ whose waist is like a leopard's, hands and feet like the tender lotus, complexion like the champā-flower; in short, the bloom of her youth was daily on the increase."

"When she became marriageable, the king and queen began to feel anxious in their minds. And the news spread among the monarchs of the different countries (round about) that so beautiful a girl had been born in the palace of king Champakeshwar that, at a mere glance at her beauty, gods, men, and holy sages, remain fascinated. Thereupon the kings of the different countries had each his likeness painted, and sent it by the hands of a Brahman to king Champakeshwar. The king received and showed the portraits of all the monarchs to his daughter, but none of them suited her fancy. Thereupon the king said, 'Do thou, then, make a public choice of a husband.' To this, too, she did not agree, but said to her father, 'Father! give me to him who possesses the three qualities of beauty, strength, and superior knowledge.'"

"In fine, when several days had elapsed, four suitors came from four different countries. Then the king said to them, 'Do each of you set forth clearly before me the superior qualities and knowledge he possesses.' One of them said, 'I possess such knowledge that I manufacture a cloth and sell it for five rubies. When I realise the price, I give one of the rubies to Brahmans, of another I make an offering to the gods, a third I wear on my own person, a fourth I reserve for my wife, the fifth I sell, and constantly support myself with the money so obtained. No one else possesses this knowledge. And as to the good looks I possess,—they are open to view.' The second said, 'I am acquainted with the languages of both land and aquatic beasts and birds; have no equal in strength; and my beauty is before you.' The third said, 'So well do I comprehend the learned writings

¹ The kandûri is a cucurbitaceous plant with red fruit, or the gourd of the momordica monosperma. Its Hindi name is bind.
that no equal of mine exists; and my beauty is before
your eyes.' The fourth said, 'I stand alone in my
knowledge of the use of weapons; there is no one
like me; I can shoot an arrow which will strike an
object which is heard, but not seen; and my beauty
is famous in the world,—you, too, must surely
see it.'"

"On hearing the statements of the four of them,
the king began to think to himself, 'All four are on
an equal as to excellences; to which should I give
the girl?' Having reflected thus, he went to his daughter
and set forth the virtues of the whole four of them,
and said, 'To which of them shall I give thee (in
marriage)?' On hearing this, she hung down her
head through modesty, and kept silent, making no
answer."

After relating so much of the story, the sprite said,
"Now, King Vikram! for which of them is this
woman suited?" The king replied, "He who makes
cloth and sells it is a śūdra by caste; and he who
knows the languages is a bais by caste; he who has
studied the learned writings is a Brahman; and he
who hits with an arrow an object which is simply
heard, and not seen, is of her caste: the woman is
suitable for him." On hearing these words, the
sprite went again and hung himself on that tree; and
the king, too, went thither, bound him, placed him
on his shoulder, and carried him off.

1 I suspect an error in the text here; viz., śāstra for śastra; for the
third sūtra had already claimed the possession of unrivalled excellence in
the śāstras, while the fourth boasted of his superior skill in archery, which
would certainly seem to accord better with śastra than śāstra. Moreover,
the judgment of King Vikram shows satisfactorily, I think, that
śastra is the word intended.