

THE
BAITĀL PACHCHISĪ;

OR THE
TWENTY-FIVE TALES OF A SPRITE.

TRANSLATED FROM.

THE HINDI TEXT OF
DR. DUNCAN FORBES.

BY

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CENTRAL PROVINCES OF INDIA.

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

THE English translation of these tales has been made by special request, to meet repeated demands for a translation of the text as edited by the late Dr. Duncan Forbes. The aim of the Translator has been to produce a work which would enable the student to study the original with facility and accuracy. It being considered that few save students who are compelled to study the Hindī original would be likely to peruse the work, the translation has been made as literal as it was possible to make it without doing unpardonable violence to English idiom. All difficulties have been boldly, if not successfully, met; and explanatory and other notes have been added, wherever the text appeared to call for such. The study of the translation must not be supposed to dispense with that of the Grammar of the language; it will be found, however, to prove of the highest utility to a student who has mastered the elementary principles of Grammar, and uses it—not as a mere “crib” but—for the purpose of discovering what light it sheds on the application of those principles.

PREFACE.

THE origin of these tales is as follows:—In the reign of the Emperor Muhammad Shāh, Rājā Jaisinh Sawā'ī (who was the ruler of Jainagar) ordered the eminent poet, named Sūrat, to translate the Bāitāl Pachīsī (which was in the Sanskrit) into the Braj dialect. Thereupon he translated it into the dialect of Braj, in accordance with the king's command. And now, during the reign of the Emperor Shāhi 'Alam, and in the time of the lord of lords, the cream of exalted princes, the Privy-Counsellor of the Monarch of England, whose court stands as high as Saturn; the noblest of the noble, the Governor-General, Marquis Wellesley (may his government be perpetuated!); and in accordance with the bidding of His Honour, Mr. John Gilchrist (may his good fortune endure!); to the end that illustrious gentleman may learn and understand, the poet Mazhar Alī Khān (whose *nom de plume* is Vilā), with the aid of the poet Shri Lallū Lāl, rendered the same into easy language, such as high and low use in speaking, and which the learned

and the ignorant, the talented and the obtuse, would all comprehend, and which would be easy to the mind of every one, no difficulty of any kind presenting itself to the intellect, and wherein the dialect of Braj frequently occurs.

Now, in conformity with the command of the Professor of Hindi, the bounteous patron, His Honour, Captain James Mouat, (may his prosperity last long!) Tārīnīcharan Mitra, (in preparing the work) for the press, has struck out such Sanskrit and Braj words as seldom occur in the Urdū dialect, and introduced words in current use. Some words, however, in use among the Hindūs, the exclusion of which he regarded as detrimental, he has preserved intact. He trusts that the work may meet with a favourable reception.

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THE BAITAL PACHCHISI.

INTRODUCTORY TALE.

THERE was a city named Dhārānagar, the king of which was Gandharb Sen. He had four queens, and by them six sons, one more learned and more powerful than another. Fate ordaining, after some days the king died, and his eldest son, Shank by name, became king in his stead. Again, after some days, a younger brother, Vikram, after slaying his eldest brother, himself became king, and began to govern well. Day by day his dominion so increased that he became king of all India;¹ and, after fixing his government on a firm basis, he established an æra.

After some time the king thought to himself that he ought to visit those countries of which he had

¹ *Jambudwīp* is the name of one of the seven divisions of the world, and implies the central division, or the known world; according to the *Bandhas*, it is confined to India.