

TALE II.

ON looking about him, the king perceived that the sprite was not present; so he went straight away back, and, reaching that place, climbed up the tree, bound the corpse, and placing him on his shoulders, set off. Then the sprite said, "O king! the second story is as follows:—"

"On the bank of the Yamunā (Jamnā) is a city named Dharmmasthal, the king of which is named Gunādhīp. Moreover, a Brahman named Kesava lives there, who is in the habit of performing his devotions and religious duties on the banks of the Jamnā; and his daughter's name was Madhumāvātī. She was very beautiful. When she became marriageable, her mother, father, and brother, were all three intent on getting her married. It happened that while her father had gone one day, with one of his supporters,¹ to a marriage ceremony somewhere, and

¹ *Jajmān*, from the Sanskrit *Yajamāna*, is a person who institutes a sacrifice, and pays for it. In a village where there is a hereditary priest, the priest's fees are paid by the villagers (who constitute his *jajmān*), and that whether they choose to employ his services, or those of any other

her brother to his teacher's in the village, for instruction, in their absence a Brahman's son came to the house. Her mother, seeing the youth's beauty and excellent qualities, said, 'I will give my daughter in marriage to thee.' And there the Brahman had agreed to give his daughter to a young Brahman; while his son had given his word to a Brahman at the place where he had gone to study, that he would give him his sister."

"After some days those two (*i.e.*, the father and son) arrived with the two youths, and here (at home) the third youth was stopping from the first (awaiting them). One's name was Tribikram, the other's Bāman; the third's Madhusūdan; they were all on a par in point of good looks, moral excellence, learning, and age. On seeing them, the Brahman began to reflect thus, 'One girl, and three suitors-elect! To whom shall I give her, to whom not? And we have all three given our words to the three of them: this is a strange piece of business that has happened! What shall I do?'"

"He was sitting reflecting thus when in the meantime a snake bit the girl, (and) she died. On hearing the news, her father, brother, and the three youths, all five ran off in a body, and, after much toil and trouble, brought all the snake-charmers, conjurers,

priest. I object, therefore, to the meaning of "employer" as being inexact, and to that of "customer" as being both inexact and inelegant.

and as many practisers of magic arts for the purpose of expelling poison, as there were (in the place). They all looked at the girl, and said she could not be restored to life. The first said, 'A man bitten by a snake on the fifth, sixth, eighth, nine, or fourteenth day of the lunar month does not survive.' A second said, 'One who has been bitten on a Saturday or Tuesday, too, does not live.' A third said, 'Poison which has ascended (into the system) when the moon is in the fourth, tenth, ninth, sixteenth, nineteenth, and third asterisms of its path, does not descend.'¹ A fourth said, 'One bitten in any of the following members, viz., an organ of sense, the lips, the cheek, the neck, the abdomen, or the navel, cannot escape.' A fifth said, 'In this instance even Brahma could not restore to life; of what account are we then? Do you now perform her funeral rites; we are off.' Having said this, the conjurers went away; and the Brahman took the corpse away, burnt it in the place for such rites, and went off."

"Now, after he had gone, those three youths acted in this wise:—One of them picked up and fastened together her charred bones, and becoming a religious mendicant, went forth to wander from forest to forest.

¹ Any one who has seen the conjurers at work will know that the operator always pretends to work the poison out of the system *downwards*, from the head towards the feet; hence the expressions "ascending" and "descend" in connection with the action of the poison.

The second, having tied her ashes up in a bundle, built a hut, and began living on that very spot. The third became a devotee, furnished himself with a wallet and neck-band, and set out to wander from land to land. One day he went to a Brahman's house in some country for food. The resident¹ Brahman, on seeing him, began to say, 'Very well; eat food here to-day.' On hearing this he sat down there. When the food was ready, he had his hands and feet washed, and took and seated him in the square place where the food was cooked, and himself sat down near him; and his wife came to serve out the food. Some was served, some remained, when her youngest son cried, and seized the border of his mother's mantle. She was trying to make him let it go, but he would not; and as much as she tried to soothe him, he but cried the more, and became more obstinate. On this the Brahman's wife, becoming angry, took up the child and threw him into the burning fire-place; the child was burnt to ashes."

"When the Brahman (the guest) witnessed this occurrence, he rose up without eating anything. Then the master of the house said, 'Why do you not eat?' He replied, 'How can one partake of food in his house where a diabolical deed has been perpetrated.' On hearing this the householder arose, and going to

¹ The word *grihastî* means properly a Brahman who is settled in a house and performs the duties of the father of a family.

another part of his house, brought a book on the science of restoring to life, took a charm from it, muttered some prayers, and brought his son back to life. Then that Brahman, seeing this wonder, began to ponder in his mind, 'If this book were to fall into my hands I, too, could restore my beloved to life.' Having made up his mind on this point, he ate the food, and tarried there. To be brief, when night came on, after some time all partook of supper, and went and lay down in their respective places, and were chatting together on one subject or another. The Brahman, too, went and lay down apart, but kept lying awake. When he thought that the night was far advanced, and all had gone to sleep, he arose quietly, softly entered his (host's) room, took that book, and decamped; and in the course of several days he arrived at the place where he (the father) had burnt the Brahman's daughter. He found the other two Brahmans there also, sitting and conversing together. Those two also, recognising him, approached and met him, and inquired, saying, 'Brother! you have wandered from land to land, it is true; but, tell us, have you learned any science as well?' He said, 'I have learned the science of restoring the dead to life.' As soon as they heard this, they said, 'If you have learned this, restore our beloved to life.' He replied, 'Make a heap of the ashes and bones, and I will restore it to life.' They gathered together the

ashes and bones. Then he took a charm out of the book, and muttered prayers; the girl rose up alive. Thereupon Cupid so blinded the three of them that they began wrangling among themselves."

Having related so much of the tale, the sprite said, "O king! tell me this; to whom did that woman (by right) belong? (or, whose wife was she?)." King Vikram replied, "To him who built the hut and stayed there." The sprite said, "If he had not preserved the bones, how could she have been restored to life? And if the other had not returned instructed in the science, how could he have restored her to life?" The king made answer thus:—"He who had preserved her bones, occupied the place of her son; and he who gave her life, became, as it were, her father; hence, she became the wife of him who built a hut and remained there with the ashes." On hearing this answer, the sprite went again and suspended himself on that tree. The king, too, arrived close at his heels, and, having bound him, and placed him on his shoulder, started off with him again.