

After relating so much of the story, the sprite said, "O king! whose virtue was greatest of these three?" King Bir Vikramājīṭ replied, "The king's." The sprite said, "How so?" The king replied, "He left alone the wife given to him by the commander-in-chief, while he sacrificed his life on her account, and yet preserved his virtue. It behoves a servant to lay down his life for his master; and it is right for a wife to sacrifice herself for her lord. Therefore the virtue of the king was greatest." Having heard these words, the sprite went and hung on to that same tree. The king, too, followed him, and again bound him, and placed him on his shoulder, and carried him away.

## TALE XVII.

THE sprite said, "Your majesty! there was a king of Ujjain, named Mahāsain; and an inhabitant of that place was a Brahman, Devasharmā, whose son's name was Guṇākar. He (the son) turned out a great gambler; so much so that he lost at play all the wealth the Brahman possessed. Thereupon all the members of the family turned Guṇākar out of house and home. And he could not help himself in any way; (so) having no other resource, he took his departure from the place, and in several days' time came to a certain city. What does he see there but a devotee sitting over a fire, and inhaling smoke by way of penance. After saluting him, he, too, sat down there. The devotee asked him, 'Wilt thou eat anything?' He replied, 'Your highness! of course I will eat, if you give me (something).' The devotee filled a human skull with food and brought it to him. On seeing it he said, 'I'll not eat food out of this skull.'"

"When he did not partake of the food, the ascetic

repeated such an incantation, that a fairy<sup>1</sup> appeared before him with joined hands, and said, 'Your highness! I will execute any command you may give me.' The ascetic said, 'Give this Brahman whatever food he desires.' On hearing this, she built a very fine house, and furnishing it with all comforts, took him away with her from that place, and seating him on a stool, placed various kinds of condiments and meats, by dishfuls, before him. He ate whatever he liked to his heart's content. Again, after this, she placed the pān-box before him, and after rubbing down saffron and sandal in rose-water, applied (the mixture) to his body. Farther, she clothed him in garments scented with sweet perfumes, threw a garland of flowers round his neck, and bringing him away thence, seated him on a bed. Now while this was taking place it became evening, and she, too, having first decked herself out, went and sat on the bed, and the Brahman passed the whole night in pleasure and enjoyment."

"When morn arrived, the fairy went away to her own place, and he came to the devotee and said, 'Master! she's gone away; what shall I do now?' The ascetic said, 'She came through the power of magic art, and abides near him who possesses the art.' He replied, 'Impart this art to me, your highness! that I may practise it.' Then the devotee gave him a

<sup>1</sup> *Yakshanī* is a female *Yaksha*, or kind of demi-god, attendant on *Kuvera*, the god of wealth.

charm, and said, 'Practise this charm for forty days, at midnight, sitting in water, and with a steadfast mind.' Thus used he to go to practise the charm, while many and various frightful objects appeared in view; but he felt no alarm at any of them. When the time expired, he came to the devotee and said, 'Your highness! I come from practising (the charm) for the number of days you prescribed.' He said, 'Now practise it for that number of days, sitting in fire.' He replied, 'Master! I will go and pay a visit to my family, and then return and practise it.'"

"After saying this to the devotee, he took leave and went home; and when his relations saw him, they embraced him and commenced weeping; while his father said, 'O *Guṇākar*; where have you been so many days, and why did you forget your home! O my son, it is said that, he who leaves a faithful wife and lives apart, and turns his back on a youthful woman, or he who does not care for one who loves him, is on a level with the lowest<sup>1</sup> of the low. It is said, farther, that no virtue equals the domestic virtues, and no woman in the world imparts happiness equal to that which the mistress of one's house imparts; and those who slight their parents are impious men, and their future state will never, never be one of salvation; thus has *Brahmā* declared.'"

"On this *Guṇākar* spoke, saying, 'This body is

<sup>1</sup> *Lit.*—Is equal to a *chaṇḍāl*, or man of the lowest of the mixed tribes.

composed of flesh and blood, which same is food for worms; and its nature is such that, if you neglect it for a day, a fetid smell proceeds from it. Fools are they who feel affection for such a body, and wise are they who set not their heart on it. Further, it is of the nature of this body that it is repeatedly born and destroyed. What dependence can one place on such a body! Cleanse it ever so much, it does not become clean; just as an earthen vessel, filled with filth, does not become clean by washing the outer surface; or however much one washes charcoal, it does not become white. Again, by what means can that body become clean, in which the fount of impurity is never-failing? Having said so much, he spoke again, saying, 'Whose father (is one)? Whose mother? Whose wife? Whose brother?'<sup>1</sup> The way of this world is such, that numbers come and numbers depart. Those who offer sacrifices and burnt-offerings consider Agni (fire) their god; while those who are deficient in understanding make an image and worship it as god; but the class of ascetics regard god as in their very bodies. I will not practise such domestic duties (as those you have mentioned), but will practise religious meditation.'"<sup>2</sup>

"Having said this, he bid adieu to his kindred, and

<sup>1</sup> This may also be rendered, "Who has a father," &c.

<sup>2</sup> *Yogābhyaś* may mean, either "the particular practice of devotion by which union with God is supposed to be obtained," or "the practice of the magic art."

came where the devotee was, and practised the charm, seated in fire. The fairy, however, did not come. Then he went to the devotee, and the devotee said to him, 'Hast thou not acquired the art?' Thereupon he said, 'Just so, Master! I have not acquired it!'"

Having related so much of the story, the sprite said, 'Say, O king! why did he not acquire the art?' The king replied, saying, 'The practiser was of two minds, (*i.e.*, did not give his undivided attention to the task), and hence he failed to acquire it. And it is said that a spell is perfected by (the operator's) being of one mind (or by his giving his entire mind to it), and does not succeed on his thoughts being divided. Further, it is also said that those who are wanting in liberality do not obtain celebrity; and those who lack truthfulness are without shame; those who are wanting in justice do not acquire wealth; and those who lack meditation do not find God."

"When the sprite heard this he said, 'How can the operator who sat in fire to work his spell be termed two-minded?' The king replied, 'When, at the time of practising the spell, he went to visit his family, the devotee said to himself in vexation, 'Why did I teach the magic art to so vacillating an operator?' and it was in consequence of this that he did not acquire the art. And it is said, that however much a man may exert himself, destiny attends him all the

same; and whatever number of things he may achieve by force of his intellect, he, nevertheless, obtains that alone which fate has recorded." On hearing this the sprite went again and hung on to that tree; and the king, too, followed him, and having bound him, and placed him on his shoulder, took him away.

## TALE XVIII.

THE sprite said, "Your majesty! There was a city named Kubalpur, the name of the king of which was Sudakshī. Now, a merchant named Dhanākshī used also to live in that city, and he had a daughter whose name was Dhanvatī. He gave her in marriage in her childhood to a merchant named Gauridatt. After a considerable time she had a girl, whom she named Mohanī. When she attained to some years, her father died, and the merchant's kinsfolk seized all his property. She, in her helplessness, left the house in the darkness of the night, and taking her daughter with her, set out for the house of her parents."

"After proceeding but a short distance, she lost the road, and came upon a burning-ground, where a thief was stretched upon an impaling-stake. Her hand quite unexpectedly came in contact with his foot. He called out, 'Who is it that put me to pain just now?' On this she replied, 'I have not willingly inflicted pain on you; forgive my fault.' He said, 'No one gives