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ART. XIII.--__Translation of the M^¢rka.n.deya Pur^¢.na.__

Books VII. VIII. By the Rev. B. HALE WORTHAM.

BOOK VII.

ONCE upon earth there lived a saintly king
Named Hari⁻ichandra; pure in heart and mind,
In virtue eminent, he ruled the world,
Guarding mankind from evil. While he reigned
No famine raged, nor pain; untimely death
Ne'er cut men off; nor were the citizens
Of his fair city lawless. All their wealth,
And power, and works of righteousness, ne'er filled
Their hearts with pride; in everlasting youth
And loveliness the women passed their days.

It so fell out, that while this mighty king Was hunting in the forest, that he heard The sound of female voices raised in cry Of supplication. Then he turned and said, Leaving the deer to fly unheeded: "Stop! Who art thou, full of tyranny and hate, That darest thus oppress the earth; while I,

The tamer of all evil. live and rule?" Then, too, the fierce Gane ja, -- he who blinds The eyes, and foils the wills of men, -- he heard The cry, and thus within himself he thought: "This surely is the great ascetic's work, The mighty Vi¯ivˆ¢mitra; he whose acts Display the fruits of penance hard and sore. Upon the sciences he shows his power, While they, in patience, discipline of mind, And silence perfected, cry out with fear, 'What shall we do? The illustrious Kau-ika Is powerful; and we, compared with him, Are feeble.' Thus they cry. What shall I do? My mind is filled with doubt. Yet stay; a thought Has come across me: Lo! this king who cries Unceasingly, 'Fear not!' meeting with him, And entering his heart, I will fulfil All my desire." Then filled with Rudra's son--Inspired with rage by Vigna Raj--the king Spake up and said: "What evil doer is here, Binding the fire on his garment's hem, While I, his king, in power and arms renowned, Resplendent in my glory, pass for nought? Surely the never-ending sleep of death Shall overtake him, and his limbs shall fail, Smitten with darts from my far-reaching bow, Whose fame this lower world may scarce contain." Hearing the prince's words, the saint was filled With wrath o'erpow'ring, and the sciences Fell blasted in a moment at his glance.

But when the king beheld the pious sage All-powerful, he quaked exceedingly, And trembled like the sacred fig-tree's leaves. Then Vi įv ¢mitra cried: "Stop, miscreant!" And Hari ichandra, humbly falling down Before the saint, in accents low and meek: "O Lord! most holy! most adorable! Oh, blame me not! This is no fault of mine! My duty calls," he said, "I must obey." "Is it not written in the Holy Law, 'Alms must be given by a virtuous king; His people must be fought for, and be kept From every ill'?" Then Vi įv ¢mitra spoke And said: "To whom, O king, should'st thou give alms? For whom in battle should'st thou fight? and whom Should'st thou protect? Oh, tell me, nor delay, But quickly answer, if thou fearest sin." "Alms should be given to Br^o¢hmans," said the king: "Those who are weak should be protected: foes In battle should be met and overcome."

Then Vi⁻iv[^]¢mitra spoke and said: "O king!

If thus indeed thou rightly dost perceive Thy royal duty, give thine alms to me; I am a holy Br^¢hman, and I seek A dwelling-place; moreover I would gain A wife: therefore bestow on me thine alms." The king, his heart filled with exceeding joy, Felt, as it were, his youth return, and said: "Fear not! but tell me, son of Kau-ika, Thy heart's desire; and be it hard to gain, Or be it easy, it shall still be thine. Say, shall I give thee gold, or wealth, or life? Or shall I give thee wife, or child, or land? Or my prosperity itself?" "O king!" The sage replied, "thy present I accept; But let thine alms, I pray, be granted first,--The offering for the kingly sacrifice." "O Br^¢hman!" said the king, "the alms are thine; Further than this, whatever be the gift Thou mayest desire, freely I give it thee. Ask what thou wilt." Then Vi¯įvˆ¢mitra spake: "Give me the earth, its mountains, seas, and towns, With all its kingdoms, chariots, horses, men; Its elephants, its treasure-houses too; Its treasures vast, and all whate'er beside Is recognized as thine: oh! give me all, I pray, except thyself, thy wife, thy son, And this thy righteousness, that follows close Beside thee. Sinless one! oh thou who art Perfect in righteousness! oh give me all--All beside these. What need of further words."

The king, with heart rejoicing, and unchanged In countenance, hearing the sage's words, Said, humbly bowing down before the saint, "So be thy wish fulfilled." "O saintly king," Said Vi įv ¢mitra, "if the world is mine, And power, and wealth, I pray you who shall reign, Since in this kingdom as a devotee I dwell?" Then Hari ichandra said: "'Ere this, Before the world was thine by my free gift, Thou wast the lord of all; how much more now? Thy right is doubly sure." Then said the sage: "If this indeed be so, -- if the whole world Be truly mine, and all its sovereignty, Then should'st thou not remain, nor leave thyself Aught of that kingdom which thou hast renounced, But, casting off thy royal ornaments, Thou should'st depart, clothed in a dress of bark." The king, obedient to the sage's word, Stripped off his royal dress, and, with his wife And son, made haste to go. Then said the saint: "Stop, Hari ichandra! Hast thou then forgot The offering for the kingly sacrifice

That thou hast promised us?" Replied the king: "O mighty saint! the kingdom now is __thine__; All have I given to __thee__: and as for me, What have I left?--nought! save myself, My wife, my son!" "Thou sayest the truth, indeed," Answered the sage; "but yet there still remains The offering for the kingly sacrifice. And this know well: A vow to Br[^]¢hmans made, If unfulfilled, works special woe to him Who made the vow. For in this sacrifice Must offerings of worth be freely made To Br^¢hmans;--offerings until they cry Hold! that suffices for us! Therefore pay Thy promised vow, nor longer hesitate. 'Alms are for Br[^]¢hmans,' thou thyself hast said, 'Those who are weak must be protected: foes In battle must be met and overcome." "O saintly priest!" answered the king, "my wealth Is all departed: nothing now remains For me to give: yet grant me time I pray, And I will pay the offering!" "Noble king," Said Vi-įv^¢mitra, "speak I pray thee! Say What time dost thou appoint that I should wait? Speak! no delay! or else my curse of fire Shall burn thee up." Then Hari ichandra said: "Most holy Br[^]¢hman! when a month has past The money for the offering shall be thine. Now I have nothing. Oh! be pleased to grant Remission for the present." Said the sage, "Go! go! most noble prince! maintain thy faith! And may'st thou prosper! may no enemies Harass thy road." Commanded thus, the king Departed as an outcast; -- he, the king Of all the earth, an exile with his wife Unused to go afoot, and with his son Went forth: while cries and lamentations rose On every side: "Our hearts are filled with pain, Why dost thou leave us thus? O virtuous king! Show mercy to thy subjects. Righteousness Indeed shines forth in thee: if thou art full Of mercy, may it overflow on us. Stay! Mighty Prince! one moment, while we gaze With lover's eyes upon thy beauteous form. Alas! our Prince! Shall we ne'er see thee more? How changed thy princely state! Thou, who did'st once Go forth, surrounded by attendant kings, Who marched on foot; while stately elephants Bore e'en thy ministers. Now, Lord of Kings! Thyself art driven forth on foot. Yet, stay! Think, Hari ichandra! how wilt thou endure The dust, the heat, the toil? Stay, mighty prince, Nor cast thy duty off. Oh, show to us

Some mercy, for herein thy duty lies.

Our wealth, our children, our possessions, all Have we relinquished; like thy shadow, We would follow thee. Oh leave us not! For wheresoe'er thou art is happiness, And heaven itself would be no heaven to us Without our prince." Then, overwhelmed with grief At these laments, the king stayed on his course, In pity for his loving citizens. Then Vi-įv^¢mitra, filled with rage, his eyes Rolling with wrath, exclaimed: "Shame on thee! shame! O full of falsehood, and of wickedness. How! would'st thou, then, speaker of lies! Resume the gifts that thou hast freely made, And reinstate thee in thy kingdom?" "Sir! I go!" replied the king to these rude words, And trembling crept away in haste, his wife Holding him by the hand. And, as she went, Her fragile form o'ercome with weariness, The Br[^]¢hman smote her fiercely with his stick. Then Hari ichandra, pained with inmost grief, Seeing the stroke, said meekly, "Sir! I go!" Nor further spoke. Filled with compassion then, The Vi⁻ivadevas said: "What sin is this? What torments shall indeed suffice for him By whom this pious king--the offerer Of prayer, and sacrifice, has been cast forth. Who now will sanctify the Soma-juice With prayers and hymns, at the great sacrifice, That we may drink it with rejoicing hearts?"

Behold, we cast off all for thee! Our wives.

Then, having heard these words, the Br[^]¢hman turned Upon the Vi įvedev ¢s; and, in wrath Exceeding hot, he spake a fearful curse: "You shall be cast down from the height of heaven, And live as men." The curse had hardly passed His lips, when filled with pity for their fate, The sage yet further added: "you shall live Indeed as men, but yet, there shall be born To you no son, nor shall you know the state Of marriage. Envy, love, and wrath shall ne'er Hold sway o'er you: and when the appointed time Has past, you shall re-enter once again The courts of heaven, and wear again the form Which you had lost." The Vi įvedev ¢s then Came down from heaven, and, clothed in human form, Were born as men, the sons of Pritha, wife Of Pa.n.du. Therefore those five P^¢.n.davas--Mighty in war--by Vi įv ¢mitra cursed, Knew not the state of marriage. Thou hast heard The tale of Pa.n.du's sons; thy question, too, Of fourfold import has been answered. I pray thee, say, what further would'st thou hear?

BOOK VIII.

Said Jaim^fini: An answer ye have found To all my questions; and indeed have filled Me full of deepest interest. Oh! I long To hear yet more! Alas! that saintly king! What grief he suffered! Did he e'er attain To any comfort answering to his woe? Noblest of Birds! Oh tell me this, I pray.

The Holy Birds continued: Then the king, O'ercome with grief and pain, hearing the words Of Vi~įv^¢mitra, with his wife and son Journeyed along, dragging his weary steps. At length the holy place appeared in view--The shrine of - iva; thus within himself, He said: "Benares, sacred to the god, Lies now before me; there shall I find rest, For there man has no power." The king approached The gates on foot: lo! at the entry stood The Br[^]¢hman Vi⁻¡v[^]¢mitra. Mighty Saint! The king, his hands in supplication joined, With humble reverence, said: "Here is my life, My wife, my son, I offer all to thee; Accept, I pray, the offering! or choose Whatever else thou wouldest!" But the sage Replied: "The month is past! most saintly king! Give me the present for the sacrifice--The offering thou hast promised." "One half-day As yet remains before the month be past, Oh Br[^]¢hman of surpassing piety, And penances unfading. Wait, I pray, A few short hours." Then Vi-įv^¢mitra said: "So be it, king! once more I will return, But if the offering be not duly paid, Before the sinking of this evening's sun, My curse shall smite thee." And the priest Departed, while the king, in anxious thought, Debated thus: "How shall I make the gift? The promised gift? where are my friends? my wealth? I may not beg for alms; how can I then Fulfil my vow? Nor even in the world Beyond shall I find rest. Destruction waits, If with my promise unfulfilled, I pass From hence. A robber of the holy saints; I shall become the lowest of the low.

Nay, I will sell myself! and, as a slave,

Redeem my promise." Then the queen, in tears

Bewildered, and afflicted, lost in thought, With face cast down, "Maintain thy truth," she said, "Most mighty prince! Oh! let not doubt prevail! The man devoid of truth is to be shunned Like contact with the dead. The highest law Declares, that inward truth and faithfulness Must be maintained. Burnt sacrifices, alms, The study of the scriptures, penances, Are counted not for righteousness to him Whose word is faithless. Listen! noble prince! Is it not written in the sacred law: 'The wise attain Salvation through the truth, While lies and falsehood are destruction's way To men of low and evil minds.' There lived, 'Tis said, a king upon the earth, by whom The kingly sacrifice--burnt offerings too, Were offered in abundance. That same king Fell once from truthfulness, and by that fall, He lost his righteousness, and forfeited His place in heaven. Prince! I have borne a son"--Her utterance failed her, issuing forth in nought But sighs and lamentations. Then the king, With eyes o'erflowing, said, "Behold thy son! He stands beside thee! cast away thy grief! Tell me what presses on thee." Said the queen, "Prince. I have borne a son: and sons are born To none but worthy women. This my son Shall take me--he shall offer me for sale--Then with the money gained, pay thou the priest The promised offering." Hearing these words, He fell down fainting. When his sense returned, Filled with exceeding pain, the king burst forth, Lamenting: "This, alas! most loving one! Is hardly to be framed in words, much less Be carried out in deed. Alas! alas!"--His spirit fled again, and to the earth He fell unconscious. Overcome with grief, The queen exclaimed, filled with compassion: "King! How art thou fallen from thy high estate! The ground is now thy resting-place, whom once A gorgeous couch received. Lo! this my lord, By whom wealth, honour, power, are freely given An offering to the Br[^]¢hman--see, he lies Insensate on the ground. Ye gods of heaven! Tell me, I pray you, has this noble king, Equal to gods in rank, committed sin Against you, that he lies thus overcome With woe?" Then fell the queen, bereft of sense Upon the earth, o'erwhelmed with grief and pain, Seeing her husband's misery. When the boy Beheld his parents lying on the ground, He cried in terror: "Father! give me food! Mother! my tongue is parched with thirst!" Meanwhile Upon the scene the mighty Br[^]¢hman came;

And when he saw the king lie senseless, "King!"--

Sprinkling cold water on his face--he said,

"Rise up! rise up! Pay me the promised vow;

For this thy misery from day to day

Increases, and will yet increase, until

The debt be paid." The water's cooling touch

Refreshed the king; his consciousness returned;

But when he saw the Br[^]¢hman, faintness seized

His limbs again. Then overpowering rage

Seized Vi įv ¢mitra; but before he left,

The best of Br[^]¢hmans said: "If what is just,

Or right, or true, enters thy mind, O king!

Give me the present. Lo! by truth divine

The sun sends forth his vivifying rays

Upon the earth. By truth this mighty world

Stands firm and steadfast. Truth all law excels.

By truth the very heaven itself exists.

Wert thou to weigh the truth, and in the scale

Opposing, wert to place burnt-offerings,

And sacrifices countless, still the truth

Would far outweigh them all. Why need I waste

My words of loving-kindness upon thee--

An ill-intentioned, false, ignoble man.

Thou art a king,--so should the truth prevail

With thee. Yet hear me; -- if the offering

Be still unpaid when th' evening's sun has sunk

Behind the western mountain to his rest,

My curse shall smite thee." Speaking words like these

The Br[^]¢hman left him; and the king, o'ercome

With fear--a fugitive--robbed of his wealth--

Degraded to unfathomable depths--

The victim of his evil creditor--

Heard once again the counsel of his wife:

"O king! sell __me__! nor let the fiery curse

Dissolve thy being!" Urged repeatedly,

The king at length replied: "Most loving one!

What the most wicked man could hardly do,

That same will I:--and I will sell my wife.

Alas! that I should utter such a word!"

And going with his wife into the town--

Eyes dimmed with tears, voice choked with grief--he cried:

"Come hither, townsmen! hearken unto me!

A wretch! inhuman! savage as a fiend!

I offer here my wife for sale, and yet

I live! Here is a female slave! Who buys?

Make haste and speak." "The female slave is mine!"

(So spake an ancient Br[^]¢hman to the king.)

"Money I have in heaps, and I will pay

You well for her. My wife is delicate;

Her household duties are beyond her strength;

I want a slave, and therefore I will give

A price proportioned to the woman's skill

And temper; nor will I o'erlook her youth And beauty. What you think is fair and right, That will I pay." Struck dumb with grief, the king Stood mute, nor answered aught. And then the priest, Tying the price in the king's garment-hem--His bark-cloth garment--roughly grasped the queen, And dragged her off. But when the loving child Beheld his mother led away, he seized Her by her garment. And the queen exclaimed: "If only for a moment, noble sir! Oh! let me go! that I may gaze once more Upon my child, whom I shall never see, And never touch again! My child, behold Thy mother, now a slave! And thou--a prince! Oh, touch me not! My lot of servitude Forbids that thou should'st touch me." But the child, His eyes bedewed with tears, ran after her, Calling her "Mother!" As the boy came near, The Br[^]¢hman spurned him with his foot; but he Still following close would not be torn from her, Calling her "Mother!" "Oh, my lord! I pray, Be gracious to me!" said the queen. "Oh, buy My son with me; divide us not! For I Without him shall be nought of use to you. Be gracious, O my lord!" Then said the priest: "Here! take the money! give the boy to me! The saints, who know the scriptures, have ordained The right and lawful sum. Take it!" He tied The money in the king's bark dress, and led Them both away--the mother and the child--Together bound. But when the king beheld Himself bereft of both his wife and son, He burst forth: "Ah! my wife! whom neither sun, Nor moon, nor air have ever seen I who hast Been kept from vulgar gaze! Alas I a slave Hast thou become! Alas! thou, too, my son!--A scion of the noble dynasty, Sprung from the sun! disgrace has seized on thee, And--shame upon me!--thou too art a slave! Ye have become a sacrifice; ye, through my fault, Have fallen. Would that I were dead!" Thus spoke The king. Meanwhile the Br[^]¢hman hastily Entered the grove wherein his dwelling stood, And vanished with his slaves. Then met the king The Br[^]¢hman Vi⁻¡v[^]¢mitra. "Prince!" he said, Pay me the offering!" Hari ichandra gave The money gain ad by the shameful sale Of wife and child. And when the priest beheld The money, overcome with wrath, he said: "How canst thou mock me with this paltry sum! Base Kshatriya! And thinkest thou that this Suffices for a sacrificial gift

Such as I would accept? But if thy mind

Thus far misleads thee, thou shalt feel my power--Power transcendant, gained by penances, And scripture meditation. Yes! the power Of my pure Br[^]¢hmanhood shall show itself On thee." "More will I give thee," said the king, "But wait, most noble saint! Nought have I left! Even my wife and child are sold." Replied The Br^¢hman: "Hold! be silent! Further time Than the remaining fourth part of to-day I grant thee not." Enraged, he turned away, Departing with the money. And the king, Immersed in grief and fear, with face cast down, Cried out: "If there be any one of you Who wants a slave, let him make haste and speak While day remains." Then Dharma, putting on The form of a Cha.n.d^¢la, hastily Came forward, taking pity on the king. His countenance was fearful, -- black, with tusks Projecting; savage in his words; his smell Was foul and horrible; a crowd of dogs Came after him. "Tell me thy price," he said; "Be quick; and whether it be large or small I care not, so I have thee as my slave:" The king, beholding such a loathsome form, Of mien revolting--"What art thou?" he said. "Men call me a Cha.n.d^¢la." he replied. I dwell in this same city--in a part Of evil fame. As of a murderer Condemned to death, such is my infamy. My calling is a robber of the dead." "I will not be a slave," exclaimed the king, "To thee, a base Cha.n.d^¢la. Better far That I should perish by the fiery curse." The words were scarcely uttered, when the saint Returned, his countenance with rage Distorted; and he thus addressed the king: "The sum is fair; why dost thou not accept The offer? Then indeed thou mightest pay The gift thou owest for the sacrifice." "O son of Ku-ika!" replied the king, "Consider this, I pray!--my noble race! Truly am I descended from the sun! How can I then become, though sore in want, Lowest of creatures--a Cha.n.d^¢la's slave?" "Delay no more," the Br^¢hman said, "but pay The gift at once, and sell thyself a slave To the Cha.n.d^¢la--or assuredly I curse thee." "Saintly priest, be merciful!" The king entreated; and, immersed in care, He seized the Br[^]¢hman's feet, exclaiming thus: "What am I but a slave, o'erwhelmed with grief! Fear holds me! Saintly priest, be merciful!

Protect me, mighty saint! Save me, I pray,

From this most horrible Cha.n.d^¢la. Sir!

Most noble saint! hereafter shall thy will

Be all the object of my life! To serve

Thy lightest wish shall be my highest joy!

Thus will I make the offering--I will be

Thy __slave__!" Replied the Brahman: "If thou art

My slave, then will I sell thee as a slave

To the Cha.n.d^¢la." Then, filled with delight,

Paying the money, the vap ¢ka bound

His lately-purchased slave, and striking him,

Led hill away. Parted from all his friends;

In utmost grief; in the Cha.n.d^¢la's house

Abiding--morning, noon, and eventide,

And night, the king thus made lament:

"Alas! my tender wife, overwhelmed with pain,

Looking upon her son in misery,

Bewails her lot. But yet she says: 'The king

Will surely ransom us, for he has gained

By now more money than the Br[^]¢hman paid

For us;' and all the time she little knows

My fate--worse than her own. For I have passed

From woe to woe--kingdom and friends--my wife,

My son, have passed from me, and now the state

Of a Cha.n.d^¢la holds me." While he dwelt

A slave in the Cha.n.d[^]¢la's house, the forms

Of those he loved were still before his eyes--

Were ever in his mind. Meanwhile the king,

Obedient to his master's will, became

A robber of the dead; and night and day

He watched for plunder. "One part of the spoil

Is for the king, three for thy master, two

For thee. Go to the city's southern part,

Where is the dwelling of the dead, there wait."

Obeying the Cha.n.d^¢la, to the place

Of burial he went; -- an awful place,

Filled full of fearful sounds and loathsome sights--

Of evil smells, and smoke, and locks of hair

Fallen from the dead; while troops of fiends and ghouls,

Vampires and demons, wandered to and fro.

Vultures and jackals prowled, and spirit forms'

Of evil hovered o'er. The ground was strewn

With heaps of bones; and wailing, sharp and shrill,

Re-echoed from the mourners of the dead.

The bodies on the funeral piles, half burnt,

Crackled and hissed; showing their shining teeth,

They grinned, as if in sport; while all the time

The howl of demons and the wail of fiends

Were mingled with the roar of flames--a sound

Of fearful import, such as ushers in

The day of doom. The sights, and sounds, and smells--

The heaps of ashes, and the piles of bones,

Blackened with filth--the smoke, the shouts,

The yells--struck fear on fear into the heart.

The burial-place resembled nought but hell.

Such was the place appointed for the king.

"Priests! Br^¢hmans! Counsellors! how have I fallen

From all my royal state! Alas! my queen!

Alas! my son! Oh! miserable fate!

We have been torn asunder by the power

Of Vi-jv^¢mitra." Thoughts like these possessed

His inmost mind; while foul, unshorn, unwashed,

He served his master. Running here and there,

Armed with a jagged club, he sought the dead,

From whom he gained his wages. So he lived,

Degraded from his caste. Old knotted rags

Served as his dress; his face and arms and feet

With dust and ashes from the funeral piles

Begrimed; his hands defiled with putrid flesh

From contact with the bodies of the dead.

So neither day nor night he ceased from toil.

And twelve months passed--twelve weary months, which seemed

To his grief-stricken mind a hundred years;

And then at last, worn out, the best of kings

Lay down to rest; and as upon his couch

All motionless in sleep he lay, he saw

A wondrous vision. By the power divine

He seemed to wear another form, -- a form

Both new and strange, -- and in that form to pay

The vow. Twelve years of expiation passed

With difficulty. Then within himself

King Hari ichandra thought: "So too will I,

When I am freed from hence, perform my vows

With generous freedom." Forthwith he was born

As a Pukkasa; while a place was found

For him among the dead, and funeral rites

Were ordered as his task. Thus seven years

Were passed; then to the burying-place was brought

A Br^¢hman seeking sepulture: in life

He had been poor, but honest; and the king,

Though he knew this--the dead man's poverty

And his uprightness--pressed his friends to pay

The funeral dues. "Enforce thy right," they said,

"And do this evil deed; yet know thou this:

Once upon earth there was a mighty king

Named Hari ichandra; though he but disturbed

A Br^¢hman's sleep, through that offence he lost

His merit, and by Vi įv ¢mitra's curse

Became a base Pukkasa." "Yet the king

Spared not the dead man's friends, but still required

His fee. Therefore they cursed him in their rage--

"Go!--go!--thou most degraded of mankind--

Go to the lowest hell!" Then in his dream

The king beheld the messengers of death.

Fearful to look at, armed with heavy chains,

They seized him, and they bound him hand and foot,

And bore him off. And then, in fear and pain,

Headlong he fell into the bath of oil In N[^]¢raka. There, torn with instruments Sharp-edged as razors, fed on putrid blood, He saw himself. For seven years in hell--Now burnt from day to day, now tossed and torn, Now cut by knives, and now by icy winds Frozen and numbed--a dead Pukkasa's fate He underwent. Each day in N^¢raka, A hundred years of mortal reckoning--So count the demons who inhabit hell. Then he beheld himself cast up to earth, His spirit entering a filthy dog; Feeding on things all foul and horrible--Consumed by cold. A month thus passed away. His spirit changed its dwelling, and he saw Himself an ass: and after that an ox. A cow, a goat, a sheep, a bird, a worm. So day by day he saw his spirit change Its outward shape. A multitude of forms--Some moving, others rooted to the ground--Received his soul. And when the hundred years Were passed and gone, he saw himself again Re-occupy his pristine human form--Once more a king. And then he seemed to lose His kingdom, casting it away in games Of chance. Turned from his home a wanderer Into the forest with his wife and child: Devoured by a ravening beast, but raised To life again on earth, he sore bewailed His wife: "Alas! why hast thou left me thus? Alas! O Saivya! where hast thou gone?" Then in his dream he seemed to see his wife And son lamenting: "What hast thou to do With gambling? Oh protect us, mighty king!" The vision faded, and he saw no more The cherished forms. And then the dream returned By power divine. And Hari ichandra stood In heaven, and he beheld his wife on earth, With flowing hair, dragged forcibly along--Stripped of her clothes: the cry came to his ear, "Protect us, king of men!" Then, snatched away, The demons hurried him before the judge; And Hari ichandra seemed to hear the words: "Go forth! return once more to earth! Thy grief Is well nigh past and ended; joy ere long Shall come to thee. The sorrows that remain Endure." The king, then driven from the sky By Yama's messengers, falling through space--Senseless in fear and terror, filled with pain Yet more exceeding--thought within himself, "How shall I suffer all these torments sore!--The changes manifold of form--the pain

In N°¢raka." Then Hari ichandra sought

Aid from the gods: "O mighty lords," he said, "Protect me! O protect my wife and child! O mighty Dharma, thee I worship! Thee, O Krish.na, the Creator! Faultless ones, Both far and near, before you now I come, A suppliant. On thee, O lord of prayer, I call! on thee, O Indra too! to thee O ancient one! I pray--immutable!" The vision fled, the king arose from sleep. His tangled hair, his body black and grimed, Recalled to him his state--the plunderer Of dead men's clothes. His recollection gone, He thought not of his sorrowing wife and child, For reason failed. The loss of kingdom, wealth, And friends, his dwelling-place among the tombs, Had overthrown his senses, and destroyed His mind. Then to the burying-place the queen Came, bearing the dead body of her son--Pale and distracted. "My beloved son! My child!" she kept exclaiming, while she threw Dust on her head. "Alas! alas! O king! O that thou could'st behold thy child," she said--"Thy child now lying dead upon the earth, Killed by a serpent's bite. Alas! my son! So lovely! so delightful!" Then the king, Rearing the sounds of mourning, went in haste To rob the dead: nor did he recognize His wife, in that sad mourner, changed by grief As if into another. And the queen Knew not the form that stood before her, clothed In rags, with matted hair, withered and foul. Then recollection dawned upon the king, Seeing the dead child's princely form, the thought Of his own son came o'er him. "Ah! my child! What evil chance," he said, "has brought thee here! A child of princely race thou seemest. He, my son, Long lost to me through my accursed fate, Would have been even such as thou in age." Then raised the queen her voice, and thus she spoke: "Alas! has some unexpiated crime Brought upon us, my child! this endless woe. My absent lord! since thou did'st not console My grief in times gone by, how can the pain I suffer now assuage? Did'st thou not lose Thy kingdom? did'st thou not desert thy friends? Did'st thou not sell thy wife and child?" The king Heard her lament, and as he heard, the wail Fell from his eyes, -- he recognized again His wife and son--and saying but the words, "Ah! Saivya! Ah! my beloved child!" He fainting fell to earth. Then, too, the queen, Hearing her husband's voice, o'ercome with grief,

Insensate fell. Returning consciousness

Brought to them both affliction's heaviest weight And mutual lamentations. "Ah! my son!" Thus mourned the king, "my inmost heart is torn, When I behold thy form so delicate: My child! embracing thee in tend'rest love, Words of affection I will speak, that rise Unbidden to my lips. Alas! thy limbs Will be defiled by my embrace; the dust That clings about my garments will pollute Thy lovely form! Alas! my child, thou had'st An evil father! He who should have kept All dangers from thee, he it was who sold Thee as a slave! and yet in heart and mind First of all things I love thee. Ah! my child! Thy father's realm--my heaped-up wealth--all this By lawful right was thine inheritance, And now thou liest slain! Ah me! the tears Rise to my eyes in blinding force: thy form, In grace and beauty like the lotus flower, Fades from my sight." He spoke, and faltering With grief embraced his son. The queen exclaimed: "This is indeed my lord--I know his voice! I know his form! this is the mighty king. The wisest of all beings. But how changed! What fate is this? Ah what a dreadful place For him, the lord of men. This grief yet more Is added to the mourning for my son--My husband's fate--for as a slave he serves A base Cha.n.d^¢la. Curs^'d be that god, Or demon foul, through whom a godlike king Has fallen to this degraded state; the lot Of a vap^¢ka. Ah! most noble prince, My mind is filled with grief, when I recall Thy regal state, thy past magnificence. No kingly ensigns go before thee now, No captive kings, brought down to slavery, Humbly precede thee, casting in the way Their garments, lest the dust should soil thy feet. But now! O king! alas, thyself a slave, Thou livest in this fearful place, begrimed With filth; thy sacred cord concealed, thy hair Tangled and long, plunder of dead men's clothes Thy livelihood. Ah! king! and is thy life Spent in this awful wise?" So spake the queen, And falling on his neck, embraced her lord: While she, sprung from a king herself, bewailed Her sorrows endless. "King! I pray thee speak! Is this a dream? If it be real and true, Then justice, truth, and righteousness have fled And gone from earth: nor aught avails mankind, Of sacrifice, or reverence, to gods Or priests! 'Tis vain to follow innocence

If thou, most perfect, purest of mankind,

Art brought to such a depth of infamy."

Then spoke the king, and told his sorrowing wife

How he had fallen to this wretched state,--

The state of a Cha.n.d^¢la. She, in turn,

Weeping, with many sighs, poured out her tale,

Telling him how the serpent's bite had killed

Their child. "Beloved one! I suffer not

These evils," said the king, "by mine own will--

Thou seest what I endure; my evil fate

Depends not on myself. I am a slave,

And if I fly from the Cha.n.d^¢la's bonds,

The fiery torment in the depths of hell

Will overtake me, and I shall become

A slave again. My doom is fixed! lo! hell

Is my abode hereafter; and in forms,

Creeping and loathsome, shall my soul abide.

Yet from this miserable life on earth

There is one only refuge. He! my son!

My hope! my stay! is dead; drowned by the sea

Of my misfortunes. But I am a slave!

I am dependent on another's will!

Can I give up my wife? Yes! even so!

For know thou this: one who is steeped in woe

Cares not for evil chances; not the state

Of the most loathsome beast, nor yet the wood

Of sword-leaved plants, nor even hell's dread stream,

Could add the smallest fraction to the pain

I have already borne. My son is dead!

Who then will make atonement for my sins?

Yet listen to my words, beloved one,

If I have offered sacrifice, and paid

Due reverence to the saints; if I have given

Alms to the needy--may we meet again

Hereafter, in the world to come, and find

The refuge for our woes denied us here.

Let us together follow in the path

By which our son has gone. Our hopeless fate

Can never alter here. Whatever words

I may have uttered, thoughtlessly, in jest,

These, when I pray for pardon, shall receive

Fullest forgiveness. Thou must not despise

Thy lord: nor pride thee on thy queenly state

Now passed and gone." The prince's wife replied:

"I am prepared to tread that path with thee,

O king, most saintly! and with thee that world

To enter." While she spoke these words, the king

Made up the funeral pile, and placed thereon

His son, himself ascending with his wife.

And then, in meditation wrapt, he thought

Upon N^¢r^¢yana, the lord supreme,

And V[^]¢sudeva, lord of deities,

iva, and Br^¢hma the eternal god,

And Krish.na clothed in glory. As the king

Was meditating, all the gods from heaven

Came down headed by Dharma. And they said:

"Hear us, O king! hear us, O lord! The gods--

Even the mighty gods have come to earth,

And at their head is Dharma. Gods, and saints,

And heroes--yea, and Vi įv ¢mitra too,

The sage implacable,--all summon thee--

Ascend! to heaven: receive the due reward,

That thou hast gained. O king! slay not thyself!

I, perfect Righteousness, I summon thee

To enter now the heaven that thou hast gained

By thy transcendant virtues, self-control,

Patience, and truth." Then Indra spoke, and said:--

"O Hari ¡chandra! King, most eminent!

In virtue! lo! before you Indra stands--

For I am he. The everlasting world

Thou hast attained: together with thy wife,

And son, ascend to heaven; -- to that third heav'n--

So difficult to be attained by men--

The heav'n that thou hast won." Then Indra rained

Life-giving am.rit from the sky, and flowers

That blossomed in the heavenly courts: while sounds

Of music filled the air, and round him stood

The gods, a vast assembly. Then the son

Of Hari ichandra rose, restored to life,

And health, his mind and senses whole, his form

More beautiful than ever: and the king

Embraced his wife and son, with perfect joy

Filled to o'erflowing, crowned with heavenly wreaths.

Then Indra said: "Thou, with thy wife, and son,

Shalt dwell in bliss supreme: bliss that thyself

Hast purchased, by thy virtues and thy toils."

Then spoke the king: "Hear me! most holy gods!

Unbidden by my master, will I not

To heaven itself ascend." Then Dharma spoke:

"I am thy master. I assumed the form

Of a Cha.n.d^¢la. All thy pain and woe

Was brought upon thee by my magic power,

And thou wast made a slave! I have beheld

Thy truth, and thy uprightness. Saintly king!

The highest place that heaven accords to men,

Whose virtue has been tried and proved:--to that

Ascend!" But Hari ichandra answering, said:

"Receive, most mighty lord! my words of praise

And thanksgiving. I offer them to thee

Full of affection. Lo! my people stand

With grieving hearts, longing for my return.

Can I ascend to heav'n while they on earth

Lament for me? If they have ever slain,

Br^¢hmans, or teachers of the holy law,--

If lust or avarice have ruled their hearts,--

Then may my labours and my toils atone,

For these their sins. I may not leave my friends.

For neither here, nor in the world to come. Can there be peace to one who casts aside The friend whose love is pure and true--the friend Who serves him from the heart. Return! Return! to heaven! O Indra! If thou grant My friends to rise with me, to heav'n will I Ascend; if not, with them will I descend To N^¢raka." "O king! thy prayer is heard! Thy people's sins are pardoned: even for them, Hard though it be, thy toils and pains have gained A place in heaven." Thus mighty Indra spoke. Replied the king: "Indra! I will not leave My kinsmen. By his kinsmen's help a king His kingdom rules; by them he offers up The kingly sacrifice, and for himself Lays up a store of meritorious deeds. So have my kinsmen too enabled me To work whate'er I may of righteousness. My actions virtuous, my granted prayers, Truly I owe to them, for by their aid Have these been possible. May the reward Thou grantest me, I pray, be shared with them. My kinsmen, though I should ascend to heaven, I will not leave." "So be it!" Indra said; "So be it!" said the Br^¢hman; Dharma, too, Gave his assent: and then, in countless hosts. Appeared the heavenly chariots. Indra said: "Men of Ayodhya, ascend to heaven." The saintly Br^{*}¢hman, having heard with joy The words of Indra, poured the sacred oil Upon the prince, and with the perfect ones, The sages, and the gods, anointed him "Son of the mighty king." Then all the throng--The king, his wife, his son, his followers--Filled with rejoicing and delight, ascend To heaven, surrounding, as they go, the king Borne in his chariot. He, too, filled with joy--The mighty father, who eternal bliss Both for his people and himself had gained, Once more in form and mien a king--reposed, Resting from all his toils, his faithful friends Surrounding him with a protecting wall. And Indra spoke and said: "Upon this earth Great Hari ichandra's equal has not been Nor shall be. Whosoe'er may hear his life, His toils, his sorrows, and in sympathy For him lament, transcendant happiness Shall he attain, and all his heart's desire Shall be accomplished. Is his prayer a wife, Or son, or kingdom, he shall gain them all, E'en heaven itself. And he who imitates The truth, and steadfastness, of that great king, Like him shall enter everlasting rest.

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