

Tales of Ind eBook

Tales of Ind by Ramakrishna

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FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 1: Ranipett.]

THE STORY OF RUDRA.

A deep calm sea; on the blue waters toiled,
From morn till eve, the simple fishermen;
And, on the beach, there stood a group of huts
Before whose gates old men sat mending nets
And eyed with secret joy the little boys
That gaily gambolled on the sandy beach
Regardless of their parents' daily toils.
And all the busy women left their homes
And their young ones with baskets on their heads
Filled with the finny treasures of the deep.

A thousand yards to landward rose a town
With its broad streets, high roofs, and busy marts.
An ancient temple in the centre stood,
Where to his servant Nandi once appeared
Great Siva, it is said, in human frame.
E'en learned saints sang of the holy shrine;
And to this sacred spot from far-off lands
For adoration countless pilgrims came
And men to buy all rarest things that poured
Into her busy marts from foreign parts.

Here in this ancient port of Nundipore
In royal splendour lived a merchant youth,
Who scarce had reached his one-and-twentieth year.
His aged father had but lately died
And left him the sole heir of all his wealth.
And Rudra—for that was the brave youth's name—
Had heard from infant days full many tales
Of how his grandsire and his sire had braved
The perils of the deep in search of gold,
And in his bosom fondly nurtured hopes
To travel likewise on the dang'rous sea.
And oft would he to Rati, his fair wife,
Exulting tell how wisely he would trade
In foreign shores and with rare gems return;
How even princes, by those gems allured,



To court his friendship come from distant lands,
And he dictate his own high terms to them,
And thus add glory to his glorious house.
And often would she vainly plead in turn
Her desolate position and her youth.
And her dear lord implore upon her knees
For ever to dismiss his cherished thoughts
And turn to her and to their lordly wealth
Which God had given them, to live in peace.
Thus wrangled for some months the timid wife
And he whom woman's charms could not subdue
Until at last arrived th' appointed day.
The little ship was waiting in the port,
And Rudra to his youthful wife repaired
His purpose to disclose; and as at times
Clouds hover over us and darken all
The sky for days, and still no rain descends—
But suddenly when least expected comes—
So she to whom her husband's parting lay
In words saw it burst in reality.



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He said, "Dear Rati! well thou knowest how
I fondly wish to trade in distant realms.
The time has come for me to part from thee.
This morn a little ship was sighted here,
And she is riding yonder on the sea.
And ere the setting sun sinks down to rest
Into the western waves the little bark
Now destined to take me will leave the port;
And I have therefore one, but one short hour.
'Tis willed by Him above that I should soon
Bid farewell to the place where I was born,
Where all my thoughts for ever centred lie,—
Soon part from all that to my heart is dear,
But soon come richer, greater to my home,
To spend my days in joy and happiness.
Dear wife! allow me therefore to depart."

To which the wife—"Dear husband, sad it is
To me to think that thou shouldst part from me;
But sadder still the thought that thou shouldst go
On seas to roam in lands unknown and strange,
And canst not tell when to this spot return.
There is our lordly mansion here; there is
Our wealth, and here I am thy youthful wife.
Why go away and risk thy precious life
While we enjoy our days like king and queen?
Why leave me here to pine away in grief
And loneliness? Without my lord it is
Half death to me, and I would rather die
Than see him part; hence banish from thy mind
All thoughts of going and stay here with me."

"My wife!" he said, "why cherish idle fears?
The holy Brahmin whom thou knowest well,
So deeply versed in all the starry lore,
Tells me that I am fated to return.
It is an evil omen that thou shouldst,
Lamenting, hinder me at this last hour
And tell me not to go. Send me away
With thy good wishes, I will soon return.
By Him above that rules man's destinies,
By mother earth, by yonder setting sun,
The moon that shines up in the starry heav'ns,
By all that to his heart is sacred deemed,



And lastly by his sire whose picture hangs
On the wall there, thy husband Rudra swears
That after he returns he'll stay with thee,
And nevermore e'en think of leaving thee,
And let him therefore go in peace of mind."

"If it is true," replied the crying maid,
"That Sita followed Rama to the woods,
And that she of the Pandus also shared
With them their toils—if ever woman's charms
Had power to move the adamant heart
Of man, then let thy Rati go with thee
To share with thee thy joys and woes as well.
If thou shouldst go alone, remember then,
Dear lord, the sin rests solely on thy head
That a young maiden has been left alone
To mourn for ever for her husband on
The seas—and all for gold and for a name."



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"A *name* thou sayest—never, never would
Thy Rudra die unhonoured and unknown
And bear the evil name and the reproach
For ever with his sons and his sons' sons,
That of his old illustrious family
He was the only one that feared to go
Upon the sea. The sun is going down,
And cruel darkness is invading fast
On us; and soon the ship will leave the port.
Within a year thou shalt see me again.
But if 'tis ruled by God that I should not
Return, to one thing listen ere I go.
To soothe thy spirits in a few short months
An infant will be lying on thy lap,
And if a daughter she should be, let her
Be married to one worthy of our race.
But if a son is born tend him with care;
When he grows old, let it be said of him
That he is his lost father's worthy son."
And when the few last awful words were spoke
The frightened wife that stood supported by
Her lord at once grew pale and motionless.
As one that watched with anxious care the growth
Of a young tendril slowly fixes it
Upon a new and stronger prop, e'en so
Brave Rudra extricated himself from
Her grasp and gently placed her on the couch;
Then gazed on her for a few moments with
His hands upon her throbbing temples, kissed
Her brow, and straightway vanished from the room.

And now the little ship in which he sailed
Safe bore the crew along the wat'ry waste,
And after twenty days' fast sailing she
Encountered on the way a storm, was wrecked,
And all save Rudra perished in the waves.
The shipwrecked merchant lost all that he had,
And wandered through a distant country with
No friends, no money but his hands to earn
For him his daily bread: the lonely youth
Thus dragged for years his miserable life
With nothing to make it worth living save
The hope, the only hope, to see his wife;



Till at the end of twenty years a ship
Was sighted that was bound for Nundipore.
In it he sailed and safely landed in
His native port. It was the midday noon;
He saw the selfsame fishing village that
Stood years ago upon the sandy beach,
And with a joyful heart he hastened to
His house which all deserted seemed; inside
With falt'ring steps he went, and on the walls
Of the big hall were hanging pictures of
His sire, of Krishna playing on the flute,
Of Rama, Siva, and the other gods
Whom in his childhood days his house adored,
And seemed as they were drawn but yesterday;
A thousand other old familiar scenes
In quick succession passed before his eyes,
Then quickly passed into a room, where lo!
There slept a youth and she for whom for years
Life's toils he patient bore. As one born blind
Had after years of pray'r the gift of sight
Vouchsafed to him by God, his Maker, to



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Behold the beauties of the universe,
His wife, his children, and those dear to him,
But straightway feels the precious gift withdrawn;
Or as a lonely bird that unawares
Has wandered far into the deep blue sea
Finds nothing but a wat'ry waste all round,
And knows not where to rest its wearied limbs,
But at a distance kens at last a ship
To which with doubled speed it flies and flies,
And there discerns a seaman with his bow
Preventing it from sitting on the mast—
So Rudra felt. "Is this my wife?" he thought.
"Yes, by the mole upon her cheek she is;
And beauty, spite of age, still lingers on
Her face, and this fair youth, attracted by
Her charms, came here. Why hast Thou brought me home,
O God! why was I not drowned in the sea?
Why did I leave that distant country where
These twenty years I toiled for bread and lived?
And why was I not spared this ghastly sight?
No, Rati! never would thy husband bear
To see thee lying with another man.
First he will kill you both, then die himself."
So saying, from a sheath a blade he drew,
When lo! there fell the piece of a palm leaf
Whereon were writ—*think well before you do*.
"This is," he said, "my father's dying gift;
By the advice here giv'n I will abide,"
Then woke his wife, and in firm tones thus asked,
"Who is this youth that has defiled my bed?
Speak ere I strike you both." The wond'ring wife
The dagger and the stranger saw and cried—
"Kill me alone, but spare my only son."
"Thy only son!" he said; "now wake him up,
And let us all adore our Maker first,
Who saved us from my frenzy, which in one
Short moment would have shattered all our bliss."

THE STORY OF THE ROYAL HUNTRESS.



It was a land of plenty and of wealth;
There God's indulgent hand made for a race
Supremely blest a paradise on earth.
A land of virtue, truth, and charity,
Where nature's choicest treasures man enjoyed
With little toil, where youth respected age,
Where each his neighbour's wife his sister deemed,
Where side by side the tiger and the lamb
The water drank, and sported oft in mirth.
A land where each man deemed him highly blest
When he relieved the miseries of the poor,
When to his roof the wearied traveller came
To share his proffered bounty with good cheer.
Such was the far-famed land of Panchala.

Here reigned a king who walked in virtue's path,
Who ruled his country only for his God.
His people's good he deemed his only care,
Their sorrows were his sorrows, and their joys
He counted as his own; such was the king
Whose daily prayers went up to Him on high
For wisdom and for strength to rule his men
Aright, and guard the land from foreign foes.
Such was the far-famed king of Panchala.



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An only son he had—a noble prince,
The terror of his foes, the poor man's friend.
He mastered all the arts of peace and war,
And was a worthy father's worthy son.
What gifts and graces men as beauties deem
These Nature freely lavished on the youth,
And people loved in wonder to behold
The face that kindled pleasure in their minds.
The courage of a warrior in the field,
A woman's tender pity to the weak—
All these were centred in the royal youth.
His arrows killed full many a beast that wrought
Dread havoc on the cattle of the poor.
Such was the famous prince of Panchala.

The people, they were all true men and good,
Their ruler they adored, for by their God
He was ordained to rule their native land.
They freely to their king made known their wants,
And he as freely satisfied their needs,
And e'en the meanest of the land deemed it
The basest act to sin against his king.
Such were the people of the ancient land
Of Panchala, who stood one day with tears
Before their king to pour their plaintive tales
Of ruin wrought upon their cattle by
The tiger of the forest, that all day
Was safe in his impenetrable lair,
But every night his dreaded figure showed
And feasted on the flesh of toiling beasts.

The king gave ear to their sad tales of woe,
And straightway called his only son, and said—
“Dear son! my people's good I value more
Than thine own life. Go therefore to the woods
With all thine arrows and thy trusty bow,
And drag the dreaded tiger from his den,
And to their homes their wonted peace restore.
His spotted skin and murderous claws must soon
Be added to the trophies of the past,
Now hanging on our ancient palace walls.”
The prince obeyed, and to the forest went:
Three days and nights he wandered in the woods,
But still found not the object of his search.



He missed his faithful men and lost his way,
Till worn and weary underneath a tree,
Whose shady boughs extended far and wide,
The lonely straggler stretched his limbs and slept,
And for a time forgot his dire distress.

He woke, and thus addressed himself with tears:
“Here I am left deserted and alone,
Perchance my faithful people at this hour
Are vainly searching for their hapless prince,
While I die here of hunger and of thirst.
And gladly would I welcome now the brute
That has attracted me to this strange spot,
To plunge his claws into my body, tear
My flesh, and break my bones, and feast on me
By gnawing them between his horrid jaws,
And so spare me from this slow lingering death.”



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So thought the royal youth of his sad doom,
When lo! a spotless figure, with a bow,
A pouch with arrows dangling on her back,
A hatchet in her hand for cutting wood,
And with a pitcher on her head, appeared.
Here every day she came to gather wood,
And, dressed in male attire, her heavy load
Took to the nearest town, sold it, then reached,
At close of day to cook the ev'ning meal,
Her cottage on the outskirts of the wood,
Where, with her sire, bent down with years, she lived,
And dragged her daily miserable life.
Such was the maid that was upon that day,
As if by instinct, drawn to the fair youth,
And such the huntress Radha he beheld.
A fairer woman never breathed the air—
No, not in all the land of Panchala.

The maid in pity saw his wretched plight,
Then from the pitcher took her midday meal,
And soon relieved his hunger and his thirst.
The grateful prince, delighted, told his tale,
And she, well pleased, thus spake: "Fair youth! grieve not,
Behold the brook that yonder steals along,
To this the tiger comes at noon to quench
His thirst. Then, safely perched upon a tree,
We can for ever check his deadly course,"
Both went, and saw at the expected hour
The monarch of the forest near the brook.
In quick succession, lightning-like from them
The arrows flew, and in a moment fell
His massive body lifeless on the ground.
Then vowing oft to meet his valiant friend,
The prince returned, and with the happy news
Appeared before the king, who blest his son
And said: "My son! well hast thou done the deed;
Thy life thou hast endangered for my men;
Ask anything and I will give it thee."
"I want not wealth nor power," the prince replied,
"But, noble father I one request I make.
I chanced to meet a huntress in the wood,
And Radha is her name; she saved my life.
I but for her had died a lingering death,



Her valour and her beauty I admire,
And therefore grant me leave to marry her.”

The king spake not, but forthwith gave command
To banish from his home the reckless youth,
Who brought disgrace upon his royal house,
And who, he wished, should wed one worthy of
The noble race of ancient Panchala.
Poor youth! he left his country and his home,
He that was dreaded by his foes was gone.

Vain lust of power impelled the neighbouring king,
The traitor who usurped his sovereign’s throne,
To march on Panchala with all his men.
He went, and to the helpless king proclaimed—
“Thou knowest well my armies are the best
On earth, and folly it will be in thee
To stand ’gainst them and shed thy people’s blood.
Send forth thy greatest archer, and with him
My prowess I will try: this will decide

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If you or I should sit upon the throne,
And whether Panchala is thine or mine.”
The king, bewildered, knew not what to do,
But soon two maidens, strangers to the land,
Met him, and, of the two, the younger said—
“O righteous king! we left our distant homes
To visit shrines and bathe in holy streams.
We have been wandering in many climes,
And yesternight this place we reached, and heard
Your loyal people speak of your sad plight.
In early youth I learned to use the bow—
I pray thee, therefore, send me forth against
The wretch that dares to wrest this land from thee.”

And ere the treacherous wretch could string his bow,
A pointed arrow carrying death with it,
Like lightning flew from forth the maiden’s hands,
Pierced deep into his head, that plans devised
To kill his royal master and once more
Thought ill of Panchala and her good king.
His body lifeless lay upon the field.

Then spake the maiden to the grateful king:—
“Thou, noble ruler of this ancient land!
Before thy sacred presence and before
All these assembled in thy royal court,
I will reveal my story, sad but true.
I am the only child of him that ruled
The neighbouring state, whose kings for centuries
In peace and friendship lived with Panchala.
Alas! the villain, whom my arrow gave
To crows and to the eagles of the air,
Usurped my father’s throne, and sad to tell,
He instant orders gave to murder us.
The menials sent to do the cruel deed
Felt pity for the fallen king and me,
His only daughter, in the woods left us
And went away, reporting they had done
The deed; and there, in that deserted place,
Unknown we lived a wretched life for years.



And glad I am that death ignoble, which
The wretch deserved, has now befallen him.

“This person standing here—I now remove
The veil, and, by the mole upon his breast,
Behold in him thine own begotten son—
Was by thy orders banished from the land.
Grant that I now may plead for him, because
A woman’s words can sooner soothe the heart.
I crave your Majesty to pardon him
For loving me, and take him back unto
His father’s home; grant also, gracious king,
That I, a princess, may be worthy deemed
Of being wedded to thine only son.”

CHANDRA.

A tale of the field of TELLIKOTA, A.D. 1565.

At length the four great Mahometan governments, A'dil Shah, Nizam Shah, Barid, and Kutb Shah, formed a league against Ram Raja, then ruling at Bijayanagar. A great battle took place on the Kishna, near Talicot, which, for the numbers engaged, the fierceness of the conflict, and the importance of the stake, resembled those of the early Mahometan invaders. The barbarous spirit of those days seemed also to be renewed in it; for, on the defeat of the Hindus, their old and brave raja, being taken prisoner, was put to death in cold blood, and his head was kept till lately at Bijapur as a trophy.



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This battle destroyed the monarchy of Bijayanagar, which at that time comprehended almost all the South of India. But it added little to the territories of the victors; their mutual jealousies prevented each from much extending his frontier; and the country fell into the hands of petty princes, or of those insurgent officers of the old government, since so well known as zemindars or poligars.

The brother of the late raja removed his residence further east, and finally settled at Chandragiri, about seventy miles north-west of Madras, at which last place his descendant first granted a settlement to the English.—*Elphinstone*.

The setting sun sank slowly in the west,
The village labourer from the threshing-floor
Hied home full laden with the gathered corn,
When soon there came, as from a cage just freed,
Two lovely doves intent to peck the grain
That scattered lay upon the vacant field.
Between these birds, by instinct closely linked,
Attachment fond had grown. It seemed, indeed,
That God for speech denied to them had given
Sense exquisite to know each other's ways.
Not all the speech of favoured man in truth
Could meaning make more clear or deeply felt
Than one soft motion of the slender frame,
One gentle murmur from the tiny throat.
The wife more bold, yet pausing oft to scan
Her lord, adventurous strayed with timid steps,
Unconscious all of aught to mar their joys.
Just then with steady poise on outstretched wing
A hungry falcon hovered over her,
Resolved with one fell swoop to seize his prey,
His talons bury in her tender flesh,
Lift her away to some sequestered spot,
There drink her blood in leisure undisturbed,
And break her bones and her torn flesh devour.
At early morn upon that selfsame day
A huntsman sallied forth in search of food,
And, wandering luckless all day long, at last
Did chance upon this bird. Behind a bush
He quickly crept, and straightway strung his bow.
A gladsome vision suddenly appeared—
He saw his wife and children in their home
Enjoy the dove's well spiced and roasted flesh.
But lo! a gentle flutter of the leaves
By eagerness unconscious caused, to her



Revealed the huntsman take his deadly aim.
With head uplifted and with wings outstretched
She flight essayed, but saw the falcon near.
Thus scared and terror-struck she lay resigned
To fall by deadly arrow pierced, and give
Her lifeless form to feed the hungry bird.
The keen-eyed huntsman saw that lifted head
And open wings meant flight and sure escape.
He therefore quickly aimed his arrow high,
Which flying pierced the falcon nearing down.
That selfsame moment when the arrow flew,
When all his thoughts were centred on the bird,
The huntsman pressed his foot upon a snake



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That in the bush lay coiled. Writhing with pain,
The snake poured deadly poison from its fangs.
The huntsman and the falcon both fell dead
Before the helpless dove; and foes that came
To work her woe had worked each other woe.
The loving pair together flew away,
Their life of joy and freedom to renew.

Lo such the story of two human lives!
To them, as happens oft, abundant share
Of Nature's choicest gifts brought many ills.
But noble lives are thus more noble made,
As shining gold oft-heated shines the more.
Over the ancient land of Vijiapore^[2]
There reigned a king for truth and valour known.
The lovely Chandra^[3] was his only child,
Who like the moon among the stars of heaven
Shone fairest 'mong the daughters of the land.
The father fondly hoped his child would wed
A neighbouring prince, the mighty ruler of
An ancient kingdom richer than his own;
The mother she would be the worthy spouse
Of him who was her brother's only son
And trusted minister of Vijiapore.
But one there was, a courtier of the land,
A youth, yet full of counsel wise and true,
And ever ready to obey his master's will.
The terror of his foes, a hunter bold,
He rode the fleetest horse with ease and grace,
The wildest elephant his might could tame,
And horned bulls knew well his steady grip.
Him Chandra wished to wed, and in her breast
With silent hope her love for him kept warm.
The years sped on, the father fondly dreamt
She soon would be the queen of two proud realms,
The mother that her future lord would be
Both king and minister of state. Meanwhile
Fair Chandra and her noble Timmaraj
Longed for the consummation of their love.
A flower there is, the fairest flower in Ind,



A flower beloved by poets of all time,
Whose beauties lovers ever love to tell,
And liken oft to woman's thousand charms.
This flower, the stately lotus of our Ind,
Its petals closes to the moon at eve,
And all its beauties hides through silent night,
But with the rising of the morning sun
Opens and swells, its beauty full displays,
And sweetest fragrance breathes when fiercest beat
The rays. E'en so fair Chandra, though oft told
She womanhood had long ago attained,
And soon must wed one worthy of her race,
Nought heeded when alternate to her view
Were brought the prowess of the neighbouring king,
The wisdom of the pilot of the state.

To wean her love from noble Timmaraj,
He forth was sent against his country's foes,
With his small band to fall, and ne'er return.
But oft as he was sent, as often he
Returned victorious with fresh laurels gained.
And when the bards before the king and queen
Recited in the ancient palace hall

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The battles bravely won, the glories of
The war, fair Chandra's face with joy, e'en like
The lotus, beamed, and as by magic charmed,
Disclosed a thousand beauties centred there.
Though silent she, her looks to all made known
Her love for Timmaraj, the author brave
Of all his country's good. Yet still she kept
A seal upon her lips, until by chance
An incident occurred which sealed her fate.

As on the sand near by the water's edge
One thoughtless stands to watch with eager eyes
The surf that beats continuous on the shore,
And suddenly when least expected flows
A wave that reaches far beyond the rest,
So stood the king and queen of Vijiapore
In parents' place, tempting their daughter fair
To marry whom she loved not, could not love,
When Chandra suddenly her mind declared.
Down through the stillness of a narrow vale
The lovely Pampa flows, whose course is shaped
By hills that lift their summits to the sky.
On either side, her course is like the life
Inconstant of the daughters of this land,
Who lived in times of old in castles set
Amidst rich groves and cool, pellucid streams,
And woodlands broad and fair to roam at will;
But these by moats and battlements enclosed
Were made impassable that the eyes impure
Of man might not upon their beauty gaze,
And so defile their virgin purity.
For all that here delighted woman's eyes
Was freely lavished by their royal sires;
And countless guards to watch all day were there,
And maidens numberless to sport with them
And while away their tedious hours of life
With tales of youth, who, bolder than the rest,
Leapt over moats and scaled steep battlements
To have a glimpse of those more dear than life,
But who, alas! were doomed to endless woe,
And sent to pine away in dungeons dark



For tainting with their feet forbidden ground.
But soon their life was changed—the royal bride,
Before the happy bridal hour began,
Was first by all her kindred freely seen,
And straightway taken to the palace hall
To choose and then make known her future lord
From anxious suitors there, and thenceforth spend
With him her days of freedom and of joy.[4]

E'en so, none dared, so fearful is the gorge,
To gaze upon the river's loveliness,
Except those inmates of the mountain caves,
That in the noontide hour, to quench their thirst,
Climb down, regardless of the huntsman's bow,
Or save the vultures of the air, those birds
Which, soaring on majestic wings aloft,
Alight, as if by instinct drawn, upon
Her shady margins, there to feast upon
The carcass of some beast that died of age.
But soon the valley widens, and she flows
At will, her waters sparkle in the sun,
And on her margins for grim hills are



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seen

Green fields, deep shady groves, and peaceful homes.
'Tis here those mountains, that kept zealous guard
O'er Pampa, fade away from view, as if
To make amends for past unkindliness,
So leaving her to shoot into the plain
And watering Vijiapore and countless lands:
'Twas here the village stood of Chengalpore,
The scene of many noble deeds of man
And woman's high devotion to her lord.
'Twas here one crowded hour of Timma's life
Was worth his country's brightest annals, rich
In spoils of war and deeds of valiant men.
In that one hour of all his glorious life
He won a kingdom and a bride, for whom
He left that kingdom never to return;
And this the story of that glorious hour.

One day the news to Vijiapore was brought:
The elephant whose rich caparisoned back
The king, to please his subjects, once a year
Rode on, his keeper in a sudden fit
Of frenzy killed, and dreadful havoc wrought
Amongst the royal steeds in Chengalpore;
And now the mandate from the king went forth
That Timmaraj should slay his fav'rite beast,
For e'en the stoutest warrior of the land
Dared not approach him in his frenzied mood.
Then 'twas that Chandra suddenly her mind
Declared and boldly spake in words like these:
"It is not meet, dear father, that thou shouldst
So lightly use our only warrior's life,
Who won so many battles for his king
And added nought but glory and renown
Unto his country, and bid him thus fling
His life away before a beast insane.
Thou knowest well thy foes are ever bent
On wresting from thine hands this ancient crown,
And he alone it is that often curbs
Their pride. Yes, Timmaraj shall slay the beast,
But grant my pray'r that he shall marry me,
For often hast thou said that womanhood
I long ago attained, and soon should wed



One, therefore, worthy of our ancient house,
And gladly will I wed that warrior bold,
That shall, before to-morrow's sun has set,
Unto the portals of thy palace here
Bring dead the beast, that now at Chengalpore
Is working havoc on thy noble steeds."
The king to this his consent gladly gave,
Assured that Timma by the angry beast
Would be destroyed and never would return;
And so the second mandate was proclaimed
And sent to Chandra's other suitors too,
*That he shall win the daughter of the king
Who slays the beast before the morrow's close.*
The morrow came, and, ere the warrior youth
Leapt on his faithful steed, at early morn,
A maiden stood before his gate and said,
"Brave youth! thy Chandra sent me here to say
Thou shouldst not fear to boldly face the beast;
Shouldst thou come victor back, she will be thine
And thine for ever even after death.
But shouldst thou flee from him to save



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thy life,

Think then thou art unworthy of her love,
And she shall not e'en see thy coward face;
But, if perchance thou fallest by the beast,
Vouchsafe to her through me with thine own hand
One javelin of the eight which now thou hast,
For she will not outlive her Timmaraj,
But straightway bare her breast and plunge the dart
And lifeless fall a corpse." The youth replied,
"I gladly send this javelin, but tell her
She shall not need its use, for Timmaraj
Will surely come victorious with the beast."
With javelins seven then he sallied forth
Upon his steed to win his bride or die.

Meanwhile the news was spread that Timmaraj
And that young min'ster, who these many years
Was seeking through her mother Chandra's hand,
And Bukka, ruler of the neighbouring state,
Whom she her father fondly wished should wed,
Had started on their steeds to Chengalpore;
Each vowed to be the first to drag the beast
Unto the royal city for six miles,
And there slay him before the palace gate.
The city poured her sons the sight to see,
For in the annals of their country's past
Not e'en the brightest page contained one deed
That could this glorious feat of man surpass;
And Timma was the people's fav'rite, and
They dearly wished that he should slay the beast,
Win Chandra, and become their future king.

But soon the thought of that mad beast unnerved
Both Bukka and the minister of the state.
The royal Bukka thus to himself said:
"A richer kingdom than this Vijiapore
I own, and why should I now madly stake
My life in this hard feat; 'tis easier far
To gain this Chandra and her father's throne.
I will sit hidden in the thickest bush,
Near yonder stream, by which the pathway runs—
For Timmaraj is sure to pass that way—
And with this arrow I will end his life.
Thereafter Chandra's love for him will fade



And die, and who is there to marry her
But I?" So thought this foolish youth, to whom
A woman's love was as inconstant as
His own resolve to fight a savage beast,
And sat within a bush to watch his prey.
He too, the pilot of the state, deemed it
A mad resolve to try the dang'rous feat,
And silent sat unnoticed and unknown
Upon the other side of that same path,
Within a secret bush by that same stream.
The one knew not the other was concealed
The fatal blow upon the selfsame prey
To deal, but fearless Timma on his horse
Approached the beast, which madly rushed on them,
To force both horse and rider to the ground
With his huge leg, and then to tear them both.
The horse was fleeter than the elephant,
Which thus the chase gave up, but still the youth
Undaunted neared the beast a second time,
And hurled with all his might a jav'lin,



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which

Pierced deep the temple. Thus enraged, the beast
Began the chase again, but still the steed
Was fleeter than the wearied elephant,
And once again he stopped, but Timma hurled
A second, which went deeper than the first,
And roused him all the more—and nevermore
He stopped, but towards Vijiapore the chase
Continued; for in due succession flew
Six jav'lins, lightning-like, with deadly aim.
Thus, by the angry beast pursued, he neared
At last the little stream that must perforce
Be crossed to reach the royal city gate.
Then from the pouch that dangled on his back,
His only jav'lin, with his utmost might,
Discharged, that so enraged the maddened beast,
With fury rushing, that his writhing trunk
Had all but touched the rider and his horse
In one embrace to crush them both; but soon
The keen-eyed youth the danger saw, and spurred
His horse, which bounded o'er the stream, when lo!
Two arrows crossed each other underneath.
One pierced the min'ster dead; the other pierced
The royal Bukka, who unconscious fell.
One moment more, and at the palace gate
The wearied rider on his foaming steed
Stood, like a warrior coming with his spoils,
The beast beside him, which, worn out, fell dead.
And as the tall and massive gate of some
Old fort with spikes deep driven to withstand
The foe, who battered it incessant, falls,
And, powerless to stand the shock, at last
Falls with a crash that far and wide was heard,
So fell the beast, his massive corpse all torn
And mangled, and with jav'lins planted deep,
And when he fell from his huge throat went forth
A wail, his last, like roaring thunder, that
Resounded through the hills of Vijiapore.

Another moment and brave Timma sat
Upon the bridal seat, the veil was drawn,
And, through the veil, the sacred knot was tied
Round Chandra's neck, and all was merry there.



And still another moment when—alas!
For that strange fickleness of human life
Whose joys and griefs each other follow like
The spokes of some fast-going wheel—there came
The wounded Bukka with a violent wail
That Timma had the king's adviser slain,
Whose body lay upon the riverside,
Exposed to all the carrion birds of prey,
And him too wounded, but the arrow pierced
Not deep, but laid him senseless for awhile;
But soon, with consciousness restored, his wound
He washed, and straightway hastened on his steed,
In time to tell the story, sad but true,
And stop the marriage of that coward with
The fairest and the noblest of the land.
As when upon a tree, whose boughs with fruits
Are laden, birds innumerable sit,
Them to enjoy and to be merry there,
The cruel hand of man to mar their joys
Hurls suddenly a stone, and all the air

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Around is thick with jarring sounds of birds
That in confusion fly—so fell the words
Of Bukka on that scene, where all was joy,
Where, like a beehive, swarmed the surging crowd,
To see the marriage of their princess dear;
And straightway in confusion wild they ran
Without a purpose, but in various ways.
Unto their homes some ran the news t'acquaint,
Some to the wounded Bukka and his horse,
But many to the riverside to find
Their min'ster lying dead by arrow pierced.

The sorrow-stricken king spake not a word,
But like a lifeless figure stood awhile.
A sudden fit of frenzy overtook
The king at last, and Timma's awful doom
He thundered forth in accents strong like these:
"Be this my decree, forthwith known to all,
That Timma henceforth shall be banished from
My land for this dishonour brought on me.
He paved his way by murder to my throne,
And sullied the fair name of my dear house."

When these few awful words the monarch spoke,
Tears trickled down his eyes, and Timma from
The bridal seat received his doom, 'stead of
A blessing from the father of his bride.
A gentle touch, a whisper through the veil,
Then Timma to the royal judgment bowed,
And slowly moved from out those scenes of joy
And merriment, and reached the palace gate,
Where stood his horse by that dead elephant;
And soon in that confusion that prevailed
Was seen to slowly move a figure veiled,
T'approach the gate, and forthwith Timma swung
That figure on the saddle of his horse,
Then himself leapt and vanished straight from view.

The angry monarch saw their sudden flight,
And as some aged lion, when sore vexed,
Like thunder roaring, musters all his strength
And stands defiant to face the foe, so stood
The aged warrior, whose old strength returned,



His breast expanded, and his body raised
Erect, and for the time his age shook off.
Then spake he forth in angry tones like these:
“My only child is gone, and he that brings
My daughter back shall have my highest meed—
Nay, even half my kingdom I will give.”
None dared save Bukka to essay the feat,
Who forthwith sprang upon his horse, and soon
O’ertook the running pair, for Timma’s horse,
Though deemed the fleetest in the land, now felt
His double weight, his wonted speed decreased.
Then Timma said, “Our foe is nearing fast,
And he is armed, while weapons I have none.
In bridal dress I cannot face the foe,
And he will sure kill me and take you back
Unto your angry sire. Thou art a girl
Born of the martial Kshatriya race, and hence
Thou knowest well to ride the wildest horse;
So let me now dismount for thee t’escape.”
“Tis better far I die with thee,” she said,
“But I have here the javelin thou



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didst give

Before thou went'st to kill the elephant,
The eighth and last, concealed within my veil.
Take this and stop the coming foe,—but oh!
Kill not the wretch who dared to follow us,
And sully this our happy bridal hour
By murder; only stay, oh, stay the chase!"
So said, she gave the jav'lin, which he hurled
Upon the chasing charger's breast with all
His might, and straightway horse and rider fell;
And, like those innocent and helpless doves,
The loving pair together fled away,
Their life of joy and freedom to renew.

Before the fury of an angered king
For full three days and nights they ran, and found
At last a safe and happy shelter in
A shepherd's cot, and in those troublous times
'Twas easier for the brave to kingdoms found,
Rear palaces, and rulers strong become,
Than for the toiling peasants, from sown fields,
To reap their crops and safely bear them home.
Brave Timma was a stranger 'mongst new men;
The many tigers by his arrows killed
And neighboring clans and lawless robbers kept
In check gave them sure hopes of future peace
And future joy, and straightway they made him
Their king to guard their women and their homes,
While they their avocations of the soil
In peace pursued, and soon was raised a fort;
A stately palace too was reared within
By willing hands, and safe from dang'rous foes,
And far away from their dear native vale
Of Vijiapore they spent their peaceful days
In joy, beloved by all their loyal men.

But 'tis a saying often told in Ind,
He hath a foe who hath a lovely wife.
Her very loveliness is reason deemed
To hate her lord, nay, murder him, and hence
Her husband's foe unconscious she becomes.
For Chandra's beauty all these evils wrought
Upon the youth, who for his country fought
So many battles, and the Moslem kept



In constant dread, and for his virtue's sake,
Though most beloved in his native land,
And dreaded most for valour by his foes,
He lived a stranger in a foreign land.
She, too, that maiden, 'twas her fate to share
Her husband's troubles for her beauty rare.
Still 'twas a little heav'n their new home where
The halcyon days of mutual love were spent.
'Tis sweet to love and sweeter to be loved;
And thus in their new home their life of joy
They spent in undisturbed solitude;
But ah! this even was not long to be.
One day the news was brought to their new king,
By a small troop of sorrow-stricken men,
That ev'ry night a tiger from his den
Came down and fearful havoc wrought amongst
Their toiling cattle, and the piteous tales
Of dreadful woe they poured into his ear
Moved Timma's heart, who took his trusty bow
And forthwith started with a faithful



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band

To drag the tiger from his mountain cave
And then for ever stop his mad career.
For days and nights he wandered in the woods,
But sad to tell found not the dreaded beast.
Still, nothing daunted, continued the search,
Until at last his faithful men he missed,
And wandered far into the wilds unknown,
When lo! the villain Bukka, who, upon
The outskirts of the newly-founded state,
Was hovering like a falcon o'er his prey,
Pounced suddenly upon the lonely youth
And safely carried him to his abode;
Then tidings sent to Chandra in these words:
"Dear maid! thy Timma is a helpless slave,
A humble suppliant for his life before
The valiant Bukka; let thy pride now cease.
The jav'lin which thou sentest me to slay,
Which killed my noble steed instead, awaits
To pierce his head and forthwith end his life.
But hearken ere I strike him dead therewith,
Thy matchless beauty, valour, virtue—these
Are fit to shine in royal courts like mine,
Add splendour to my household, where installed
As queen the daughters of my land will pay
Homage to thee—discard him, therefore, and
Love me, and I will forthwith set him free."
The angry maiden made reply, "Vile wretch!
Cursed be thy head to hold this evil thought.
If in my presence this request were made,
Sure I to fragments would have splintered it
With my own weapon, and the pieces thrown
To carrion birds to feast upon withal.
Tell him 'tis better far he should be like
A cur tied at my gate, for servants, as
They pass, to throw a little morsel from
The remnants of our feast; I fear him not,
And if my lord he kills, sure I am not
His wife, if forthwith I don't leap upon
The flames and then to ashes be reduced.
Begone! 'twere better far my husband dies
Than be the prisoner of a grovelling wretch."



Bukka, whose ire was roused, sent word at last—
“Beware, you foolish maid! poor Timma’s life
Endanger not by this refusal stern,
Nor lightly treat my prowess, for to me
’Tis easier far to take away his life
Than for the lordly monarch of the woods
To kill the puny, weakly lamb; and nought
Prompts me to wait thus far, but pity for
The daughter of a friend and neighbour-king,
Else Timma’s body would have long ere this
Been given to the eagles of the air.
So listen now, once more, ere I kill him,
And, if at all thou carest for his life,
Let me but see the beauty of thy face,
And for one moment only gaze upon
Its loveliness—then Timma shall be free,
And I will pass in quietness to my home—
Nay, henceforth I will not molest you both.
Shouldst thou this last request refuse, I swear,
By all I sacred hold, the moment that
Refusal comes, the jav’lin from my hand



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Will fly at Timma and will strike him dead.”
Meantime brave Chandra in the audience hall
Of her own palace, 'midst her faithful men,
Received the news, and then in angry tones
She spurned the wild request, when there appeared
Her priest, who counsel gave in words like these:
“It is not meet, O royal lady, that
Thou shouldst this attitude defiant assume,
When Bukka in a moment may bereave
Us all of our dear, noble Timmaraj,
And drive thee, too, to fling thy life away;
And, if 'tis writ thou shouldst so die with him,
Our sad entreaties and our tears will nought
Avail, nor alter laws thus preordained.
But haply, if it is writ otherwise,
Why break the link that binds you both for life?
Call it not chance the link that binds men's hearts,
But Heaven's sacred gift to sweeten life.
It is the hand divine that guides man's life
From the inception to the very end;
Nay more, sees even after that life's end,
Its own appointed destiny is reached,
To take fresh shape, its course to run anew,
And reap what it had sown before, for take
The tree, its fruit but falls to reach its base.
The calf his mother easily doth find
Amidst a thousand cows, to suck the milk;
And all our deeds doth likewise follow us,
E'en after death, and they are not our own,
But preordained laws, that must perforce
Be anywise fulfilled, and He alone
It is that sees their strict fulfilment here.
For ah! why should the noblest maiden and
The fairest and the wisest in the land
Be mated to the meanest wretch through life?
All that is deemed the highest in the world—
Beauty and honour, valour, virtue, wealth—
All these availeth not, her mind is blank;
She herself knows not whom to love and wed;
Not e'en dear friendship kindles in her breast



The lamp of love, but suddenly
A passing stranger's glance, a simple look
Instinctive plants that love, which slow takes shape,
Despite a thousand counter forces, till
At last the final end is reached: a look
Is thus enough to bind two hearts for life,
And this is but the true fulfilment of
A preordained law that in the life
Before had all but reached perfection full,
Or their appointed shape had all but tak'n,
And in the new life easily attains
The end: such, then, the truth of all such things.
Call it what you will, simple tendency
Inherited, the least sign gives it life,
Which but leads it to its appointed end,
Like powder whose combustibleness sleeps,
The sudden spark to action rouses it.
And thus it was, O Chandra, thou didst share
A humble courtier's lot, and didst refuse
The premier noble's hand, or better still
The queenship of two mighty states, and thus
The many counter forces that were set



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At work but strengthened thy true love for him.
And why endanger such a husband's life?
One wedded so to thee, and not by chance,
But by the preordained law of God;
For know thou livest only for thy lord.
Thy husband is thy lord, and, if perchance
It is his will thou shouldst be Bukka's queen,
Thou shouldst, so knowing it, obey his will,
Else, sure thou shalt be deemed nor pure nor chaste,
But counted worse than e'en a faithless wife;
'Tis not in man to alter written laws;
'Tis hard, nay useless too to fight 'gainst fate,
And if 'tis writ that Bukka should now see
Thy matchless face, thou canst not alter it,
And fate's severities good deeds alone
Can soften, and our holy writings say
'Tis sin to let another man behold
Thy face, admire the beauties that enchant,
And thou becomest then impure; but those
Same holy books say, 'tis no sin to see
The shadow for the true reality.
Now, therefore, let a silken veil be drawn,
And underneath a bowl of oil be placed,
And the reflection of thy face therein
Let Bukka see and Timmaraj be saved."
To this the queen consent unwilling gave,
And Bukka to the palace gladly came,
Resolved to freedom give to Timmaraj,
If Chandra were like other maidens fair,
But sure possess her, if she shone among
The daughters of the earth surpassing fair,
And like the moon among the stars of heav'n.
The veil was drawn, the bowl of oil was placed,
And lo! was seen therein a face, whose like
The royal Bukka ne'er had seen before
In all his life; like lightning it appeared,
Bright'ning the surface for an instant, and
Like lightning vanished, planting in his breast
Impassioned love for Chandra, and a love
Too deeply rooted to be rooted out.



Then Chandra through the screen impatient said:
“Now that this deed is done, delay no more
My long lost husband to restore to me.”
And Bukka made reply—“O maiden fair,
O Chandra! I am smitten by thy charms,
Thy wondrous face is ever in my mind,
And nought can now induce me to restore
Thy Timmaraj to thee, to gaze upon
Thy wondrous beauty and enjoy those charms.
My kingdom broad is at thy feet, and there
Enthroned as queen my riches and my all
Shall be at thy command, and therefore hear,—
If, by to-morrow eve, thou dost not reach
My tent pitched yonder, Timmaraj shall die,
And to the pyre, if thou dost follow him,
Sure I will myself die with thee, and thus
A double sin will rest upon thy head.”
As the fond mother of an only child,
When sick, clings closely to it, and for days
And nights incessant watches it with care,
When he, well versed in all the healing lore,
Gives but to please her hopes of cure complete,
But suddenly the dang’rous malady



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New shape assumes, the symptoms serious grow,
The healer himself breaks at last the news
Unto the anxious mother, who stands mute,
And knows not what to do in blank despair—
So felt the hapless Chandra when these words
The treach'rous Bukka spake and left the scene.
Now 'twas her holy Brahmin priest appeared,
And counsel gave again in words like these:
“Grieve not, but well rejoice that Bukka builds
His future hope on base dishonesty.
His fall is near, and Timma's safe return
Henceforth is sure, for he that hopes to win
By treach'ry and deceit, fails sorely in
This world of God, and therefore fear him not;
It is the foe magnan'mous thou shouldst fear.
Our holy ancient writings say it is
No sin deceit to conquer by deceit;
And hence fail not to send immediate word
That Bukka should to-morrow eve expect
Thee as befits a woman of thy rank,
And with a hundred maidens in his tent.
Take twenty litters, and let one appear
More gorgeous than the rest, for thee to sit,
Take but a hundred of thy faithful men,
All armed to fight for their dear king and queen.
Thou art a kshatriya girl, thou knowest well
To fight, and therefore take thy fav'rite bow
And arrows and conceal thy person with
A maiden's veil, armed fully as thou art,
And likewise let thy men be covered too,
To look like thine own maids of honour, let
Each litter, with a man inside, be borne
By four, go forth equipped likewise, surprise
The foe, bring him a prisoner, or upon
The field of battle die a noble death.
And death need have no horrors unto thee,
But unto those to whom this world is bright,
Its prospects hopeful and its pleasures keen,
And to the healthy and the young death's pangs
Are most severe when life is plucked, and from



Sere age, when all is ready for the end,
Life unperceived goes as from one that sleeps.
The gentlest wind brings down the serest leaf.
To sever from the parent stem by force
The freshest must be plucked, and so with man.
And by the righteous and the just, when sore
Oppressed with grief, dear death is welcomed most.
When the eruptions on the skin pain most,
By cutting them relief at once is sought;
E'en so, if noble Timmaraj is killed,
Court instant death, thy dagger hurl, and bare
Thy breast and lifeless by thy husband fall,
Like that same bird that, full up to the throat,
Swallows the little pebbles of the sand,
And, soaring high aloft upon her wings,
Suddenly closes them and drops down dead
Near her dead lover, where the body bursts.
But this, if you find hard, run with thy life
To this our safe abode, where willingly
The fun'ral pyre we, with our hands, will raise
And feed the flames thy body to consume.



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Hence soon depart and Krishna will help thee.”
The morrow came, and Chandra sallied forth
And, as directed by her Brahmin sage,
Went with a hundred of her armed men,
All veiled, surprised the foe, who, flushed with hope,
Unguarded waited but to welcome her:
Then safely rescued her lost Timmaraj;
The fatal jav’lin wrung from Bukka’s hands,
And himself too a prisoner brought in chains.
Then in the spacious palace hall, amidst
Her faithful men, the noble queen sat veiled
With Timmaraj, long absent from the throne,
And spake to Bukka, standing in the front
With folded hands, in angry words like these:
“By treach’ry thrice thou triedst to win, and thrice
Hast failed, and, when my noble Timmaraj
Went singly forth to bring the maddened beast,
Concealed thou didst aim at his life and failed.
The hand of God had otherwise decreed.
And when upon the bridal seat we sat,
And all were merry in my father’s home,
Thou camest with a story, false and base,
And for our lives we had to flee, and now
Are strangers here, and when upon thy steed
Unjustly thou pursuedst us both, it was
My hand that stayed my husband killing thee,
Else long ago the worms had eaten thee;
Thy bones the jackals of the earth had tak’n;
And nothing left of thee but thine own sins.
It was thy charger innocent that paid
For them the penalty instead. Once more
You came, and, like a lawless thief concealed,
Carried my lord, when helpless and alone,
And for his freedom vile proposals made,
And for so many days these troubles wrought
On me and these my faithful loyal men.
Know well, ’tis virtue that is sure to win,
And truth and justice will prevail at last.
This very jav’lin will put thine eyes out;
But pity for thy present state prompts me



To let thee now alone—go safely home,
And henceforth never even sin in thought.”
And like a criminal who, by pity freed,
At once goes forth worse sins to perpetrate,
So Bukka, vowing vengeance, left the hall,
And henceforth love and hate alternate played
In his dark breast—hate for this grave insult,
And by a woman offered, and love too,
A bestial passion for her wondrous charms;
And from that selfsame moment various plans
His head devised her pride to humble and
Her purity to sully, when alas!
The Moslems’ greed of power gave him sure hopes
At last her Timma’s ruin to complete.
Unto the aged king of Vijiapore
His only warrior’s and his only child’s
Escape brought many toils and endless woe.
That Bukka, with a perjured tale, came on
The day of marriage was made known to all,
Soon after they had left their native home.
The aged monarch knew not where they lived,
But sent his faithful servants far and



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wide

To bring them home; the cruel Moslems, too,
Aware that Timma's absence weakened him,
Combined a sudden rush to make upon
The royal city, kill her ruler, and
Divide the spoils and take his vast domains.
And now the wily Bukka with those foes
Of foreign faith conspired; what though he fought
As usual in the ranks of Vijiapore,
Under the banner of her Hindu king!
To them he would run in the thickest of
The fight and sudden turn the tide of war,
And, from the conquered spoils, for his own share,
He wanted neither lands nor riches, but
Demanded Chandra and her lord alive.
And news of instant war had travelled far
And wide, the princes and the chieftains poured
Their loyal forces, ready to avenge
Their Moslem foes, who, for no cause, thus dared
Their city to invade so suddenly.
And Timma hastened with his wife at last,
And was with joy received by all, who lost
All hopes of ever seeing them alive.
And soon a council in the royal hall
Was held, to name a leader and decide
How best to strike at once th' advancing foes.
Many felt proud by Timma to be led
To victory in the field or glorious death,
And many too in that assembly said
That Bukka should not join their Hindu ranks,
For he would, in the midst of battle, join
The Moslem ranks and surely bring defeat
And ruin too upon their aged king,
The noble Ramaraj of Vijiapore,
And cause their ancient kingdom's overthrow.
But said one counted high for wisdom there:
"Do good, and so chide him that evil does,
Is the oft-quoted saying of our true
And ancient faith, and this is but the war
For mastery 'tween different creeds and faiths,
And hence let Bukka forthwith come to fight
Against the common foes, who thus combined



To mar our ancient faith and change our lives,
And let our Ramaraj himself go forth
And lead, and everlasting glory win,
And in defence of our old Hindu faith,
Or, if he falls, let him to *Swarga* go
To join th' immortals there; and one word more
To thee, O Timma,—bury all the past,
And Bukka for his sins forgive, and both
Go hand in hand to fight the Moslem foes.
To pardon is the spirit of our faith.”
To this consent was gladly giv'n by all,
And the propitious day and hour to march
Was soon named by the holy Brahmin priest,
So deeply versed in all the starry lore.
Brave Timma sought his anxious wife ere he
Went forth to fight, and thus took leave of her.
“Dear wife! the day to march is named at last.
Your aged sire and our dear monarch leads
The war, and Bukka, as a Hindu true,
Joins us to fight against the Moslem horde,
And doubly glad I am that in this war,
With Bukka vying in the field with me,

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And in the very presence of our king,
Who well rewards the val'rous and the brave,
The place of honour I will there attain
For courage true, and prove once more before
The world I am a worthy husband of
A noble wife; so let me now depart."
She made reply—"Some evil it forebodes
That Bukkaraj should thus be madly told
To join our ranks, for what is truth and God
To one so steeped in sin? And sad it is
My aged father goes with him to fight.
Trust not in him and keep a steady eye
On him, e'en if within the thickest of
The fight thou art, for any moment he
May turn the tide of war; fight till the last,
And, if thou comest back victorious from
The field, I'll be the first to welcome thee,
But, if thou fallest fighting in the field,
Or if, perhaps, it chanches otherwise,
Thou art left helpless and alone, here is
Our ever ready jav'lin to kill thee.
Thy body forthwith shall be nobly borne
Unto the pyre by thine own faithful men,
And I will gladly leap upon the flames.
But if thou comest routed and alive,
Then Chandra nevermore shall see thy face."
At early morn, upon th' appointed day,
The king his faithful servants summoned, and
Before them all his only brother named
To rule the kingdom and confided all
His subjects to his care; then, at the head
Of his brave troops, out of the city marched,
Amidst the royal bards recounting in
Sweet tones the glories of his kingdom's past,
His holy priests invoking Krishna's help
And chanting sacred hymns, and in the midst
Of maidens of the martial Kshatrya race,
Proceeding to the very city gates,
And singing to their fathers, brothers, and
Their husbands in shrill notes heard far and wide,



That Swarga's gates are ever ready to
Receive the faithful if they bravely fall,
The flames are ready to take their proud wives,
But burning hell gapes wide for to devour
The cowards that run routed and alive;
Their maidens' sweet embrace awaits them not.
At last, upon the plains of Talicot,
The armies met, fierce raged the battle, and
Old Ramaraj fought nobly in the field;
And Timma too wrought dreadful havoc on
The Moslems and their ranks oft shattered, but
Alas! the ever treach'rous Bukka pounced
Sudden on his own ranks; the king was slain;
His ghastly head upon a pole was shown,
And helpless and forlorn the Hindus stood;
But, ere perfidious Bukka could run with
The Moslem foes, to capture him alive,
A faithful soldier Timma called, gave him
His Chandra's jav'lin, in his steady grip
To hold, then boldly ran his body through
And instantly fell lifeless to the ground.
A faithful few the body bore, and laid
Before the orphaned and the widowed maid
Their precious charge, and soon the pyre



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was raised.

Then, near the flames that brightened her bright face,
Her uncle and her people shedding tears,
Her noble husband lying cold and still,
The story of her father's cruel death
Still ringing in her ears, she took farewell.
"Dear uncle and my faithful men! grieve not:
I see a cloud, now looming yonder there,
No bigger than the hand of man, that shall
Expand and rain and water to purge all
The land of th' innocent blood shed on it,
For mother India's cup of woe is full,
And but three decades more,—there will come from
The far-off ends of this vast globe of ours,—
A little island planted in the sea,—
A handful of a noble race to trade,
And shall from thee ask for a plot of land,
And they shall prosper for their valour and
Shall be exalted for their righteousness.
They shall befriend the helpless and the poor,
And like the streams that seek the ocean broad,
The chickens that run to their mothers wings,
The maidens helpless and forlorn, that court
The succour of the chivalrous and the brave,
The orphans poor, the bounty of the kind,
All men of Ind, all races and all creeds
Shall to their banner flock, to live in peace
And amity; the tiger and the lamb
Their thirst shall quench both from the selfsame brook.
The giant brute before the weakly sage
Shall bow, and men shall fear to even gaze
Upon the maidens that go forth alone,
Adorned with naught but chastity, and from
All lands the wisest shall revere our faith.
He that desires our homes to plunder and
Sully the honour of our women, him
Punishment terrible shall sure await.
Three hundred years more and the little plot
Of land thou gavest shall grow and expand
Into an empire huge, unwritten yet
On hist'ry's page, and shall surpass the dreams
Of warriors bold in times of old, and like



The creepers that, entwined around the oak,
Luxuriant grow, safe from the storms that blow,
And flow'rs give forth to beautify the scene,
Her sons shall everlasting peace enjoy,
And blessings, hitherto unknown to man—
The grandest scene for God to ever cast
His loving eyes upon, and for the world
Of man to wonder at, and there shall be
One sway, the sway of reason and of truth;
One creed, the creed of righteousness and love;
And mercy for all living things on earth;
One brotherhood, the brotherhood of man;
One fatherhood, the fatherhood of God.
But hark! there comes a shout, and yonder runs
Exulting Bukka to seize me alive.
But these kind flames are ready to save me.
Run, uncle, run at once to far-off lands
And continue thy sway in safer climes.”
So saying, she leapt on the fun'ral pyre,
And speedily to ashes were consumed
The faithful wife and her departed lord.
The monarch, who thus from the Moslem ran,
In honour of this noble maiden, reared
A princely town,[5] and here the Saxon came,
And mother India was for ever blest.



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FOOTNOTES:

[Footnote 2: Vijianagar is here called Vijiapore.]

[Footnote 3: Literally, the moon.]

[Footnote 4: The allusion here is to the ancient custom of *Swayamvara* (self-choice), which is the election of a husband by a princess or a daughter of a kshatriya at a public assembly of suitors for the purpose.]

[Footnote 5: Chandragiri.]

THE KORATHY'S LULLABY.

The Korathy is the tattooer of the Indian village, who offers her services for a small fee. Hindu females are very fond of having their bodies tattooed. The Korathy first makes a sketch of the figure of a scorpion or a serpent on the part of the body offered to her for tattooing, then takes a number of sharp needles, dips them in some liquid preparation which she has ready, and pricks the flesh most mercilessly. In a few days the whole appears green. This is considered a mark of beauty among the Hindus. While the tattooing takes place the Korathy sings a crude song, so as to make the person undergoing the process forget the pain. The following is as nearly as possible a translation of the song which I myself heard:—

Stay, darling, stay—'tis only for an hour,
And you will be the fairest of the fair.
Your lotus eyes can soothe the savage beast,
Your lips are like the newly blossomed rose,
Your teeth—they shine like pearls; but what are they
Before the beauties of my handiwork?

Stay, darling, stay—'tis only for an hour,
And you will be the fairest of the fair.
I've left my home, and all day hard I toil
So to adorn the maidens of the land
That erring husbands may return to them;
Such are the beauties of my handiwork.

Stay, darling, stay—'tis only for an hour,
And you will be the fairest of the fair;
In days of old fair Seeta laid her head
Upon the lap of one of our own clan,
When with her lord she wandered in the wilds,
And like the emerald shone her beauteous arms.



Stay, darling, stay—'tis only for an hour,
And you will be the fairest of the fair.
And often in the wilds, so it is said,
She also of the Pandus went in quest
Of one of us, but found not even one,
And sighed she was not like her sisters blest.

Stay, darling, stay—'tis only for an hour,
And you will be the fairest of the fair.
My work is done; rejoice, for you will be
The fairest of your sisters in the land.
Rejoice for evermore, among them you
Will shine as doth the moon among the stars.

TALES OF IND,

BY T. RAMAKRISHNA, B.A.

With an Introduction by the Hon. the Rev. W. MILLER, M.A., LL.D., C.I.E., and
dedicated, by permission, to the late Lord Tennyson, Poet Laureate.

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OPINIONS.

They are interesting and remarkable.—*Lord Tennyson.*

It is a great pleasure to me to find that a native of South India has so distinguished himself.—*The Right Hon. Sir M.E. Grant Duff, G.C.S.I.*

It is not often that natives succeed so well as you have done in English versification.—*H.H. Kerala Varma, C.S.I.*

Krishnapore irresistibly reminds us of Auburn, the fortunes of Seeta are in many respects not unlike those of Evangeline, and some forms of expression seem to be coined in the mint of Tennyson.... These tales possess peculiar interest as first-fruits in poetic literature of that amalgamation of Eastern and Western thought that is going on before us at the present day in this country. They are tales of India, descriptive of Indian scenery, and marked by many traits both of custom and of feeling that are characteristic of India.... These tales—tales of woman's constancy and woman's heroism—are pleasing in themselves; and the language in which they are told is simple, imaginative, and marked by a well-sustained melody. The tales are dedicated to Lord Tennyson by "His Lordship's ardent admirer in the Far East"; and certainly they move in the atmosphere of the Tennysonian idyll.—*Madras Christian College Magazine.*

Much of the versification is very pleasing, and where it is best, it has a decided ring of Tennyson in it.... The author possesses true poetical genius.—*Calcutta Statesman and Friend of India.*

SEETA AND RAMA:—The story is pretty, though simple. In parts, moreover, the author, who is anonymous, displays the true spirit of poetry, which he (or she) will do well to cultivate.... The tributes of respect for the heroism, purity, and constancy of women which are found in Mr. Ramakrishna's poems are in accordance with the teaching of the Mahabarata, as well as the spirit of the Laureate's verse. Added to this very engaging feature of his work, there is a power of description that is very remarkable in a man to whom English is not his mother tongue. For example, "Seeta and Rama" commences with the following vignette:—... "All this is in excellent taste. And the same may be said of his delineations of character. He is never wearisome or trite, and ... he succeeds in enlisting the interest and sympathy of his reader and in proving that—as Mrs. Grant Duff lately said—there is 'an indefinite amount of beauty and charm in everyday life' in Southern India."—*Madras Mail.*

SEETA AND RAMA:—A very pretty and pathetic, though simple little story, told in the true poetic vein, and possesses a deep melancholy interest.... They are simple tales, told in English verse, which is characterised by a purity and a simplicity that are very noteworthy in an Indian writer, and which show considerable acquaintance of the English language, especially of Tennyson's writings. Indeed, of them all is true what



was said of the first poem, not only according to the *Christian College Magazine*, that some forms of expression seemed coined in the mint of Tennyson, but, according to the *Statesman and Friend of India*, that where the versification is best it has a ring of Tennyson.—*Madras Times*.



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The style is simple and natural, and reminds us more often of Tennyson's "Idylls of the King" than any other English poem that we can recollect now.... Throughout, the book is most finely written in rhyme, and the learned author has minted at the forge of Tennyson, to whom the book is most dutifully dedicated, the sentiments of Oliver Goldsmith, Parnell, and Byron.—*Hindu*.

We must congratulate Mr. Ramakrishna on the success which has attended his, no doubt, pleasing labours. He is the first Hindu graduate, so far as we know, who has come before the public as a poet, and well does he deserve every encouragement.—*Madras Standard*.

This little poem is an exquisitely finished, harmonious, well-written story of a pair of Hindu lovers.... Mr. Ramakrishna is extremely felicitous in the choice of his words, and his descriptions are so picturesque and vivid, and his narrative so stirring, that the reader feels as if spell-bound by the author's great skill and power.... There can be no manner of doubt that the hand that wrote these poems is both strong and skilful, and was directed by a true spirit of poesy of a high order.—*People's Friend*.

TENNYSON COMMEMORATION MEETING.—At the meeting held in the Christian College, Dr. Miller proposed that the chair should be taken by Mr. T. Ramakrishna Pillai, an old student of the College, who, as many of our readers know, has himself won no small success in the field of poetry.—*Christian College Magazine*.

Mr. T. Ramakrishna Pillai is probably the only one in Madras, and certainly the only native of India in Madras, who had come into any kind of personal contact with Lord Tennyson.—*Speech of the Hon. the Rev. Dr. Miller at the Tennyson Commemoration Meeting*.

LIFE IN AN INDIAN VILLAGE.

BY T. RAMAKRISHNA, B.A.

With an Introduction by the Right Hon. Sir M.E. GRANT DUFF, G.C.S.I.

(London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1891.)

* * * * *

OPINIONS.

The Occidentals led by Macaulay had too complete a victory for the good of India. Much that they said and did was wise, but their system has failed in many ways, and was, indeed, never intended to breed up men interested in the past of their own land. Nearly all that has been learned about it has been learned by the labour of Europeans,



and yet natives trained to European methods of research have facilities of kinds for prosecuting research which we have not.... I had a great deal to say on that subject, and on many other cognate ones in an address which I delivered in my capacity of Chancellor of the University of Madras, shortly before I left the country, but I do not know that it has had much effect since, though an excellent little book by Mr. Ramakrishna on the village life of South India is a step in the right direction. We want, however, quite a small library of works of that kind before the harvest that is ready for the sickle of intelligent native observers is gathered in.—*The Right Hon. Sir M.E. Grant Duff, G.C.S.I., in the Contemporary Review.*



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The subject is interesting, and I do not doubt from the specimen which I saw that you would treat it in a fresh and agreeable way. What we need in Europe is to have the reality, the actual working of these Indian institutions which we have so often mentioned brought home to us, and probably such a writer as yourself may do this better than a European could do.—*The Right Hon. James Bryce, D.C.L.*

Ramakrishna,—a literary gentleman belonging to Madras, who has written a charming book called “Life in an Indian Village.”—*Professor Eric Robertson in Macmillan’s series of Orient Readers.*

I can name more than a dozen Indian authors whose works can fairly rank with some of the best productions of Englishmen. The well-known author of “Maxima and Minima,” viz., the late Professor Ramachundra, was considered by no other than De Morgan, the famous mathematician, as an original genius of a remarkable order. A celebrated Cambridge Mathematician once told me that he set a problem for the Mathematical Tripos, basing it upon Ramachundra’s “Maxima and Minima,” and with the exception of a few that headed the list, none were able to solve the problem. In the late Toru Dutt, a young Bengali native Christian lady, some of the leading literary men of England found a poet of no mean powers. Mr. Edmund Gosse writes as follows in the preface to her poems that have been published by an English firm: “It is difficult to estimate what we have lost in the premature death of Toru Dutt. Literature has no honours which need have been beyond the grasp of a girl who, at the age of twenty-one, and in languages separated from her own by so deep a chasm, had produced so much of lasting worth.... When the history of the literature of our country comes to be written, there is sure to be a page in it dedicated to this fragile exotic blossom of song.” Dr. Bandarkar of Bombay is considered to be one of the best Orientalists of the day. A number of Bengali gentlemen have earned a lasting fame by literary productions in English, among whom I may mention the Rev. Lal Behari Day, late Professor in the Hooghly College, and Mr. Dutt of the Bengal Civil Service. In our own Presidency Mr. Ramakrishna Pillai has produced a work in English—“Village Life in India”—that has won the praise of Sir Grant Duff.—*Professor Sathianadhan’s Lecture on Intellectual Results in India.*

Mr. Ramakrishna takes a typical village in the Madras Presidency, “the most Indian part of India,” and shows us in half a dozen lucid chapters that the wants of the villagers are all material—wells, roads, better breeds of cattle, and so on—and that they do not, and will not for a long time, care one cash for anything which happens, or which might be made to happen, in the great outer world beyond their palm-groves and rice-fields. There is nothing political in this pleasant little book, we are pleased to say, although we have drawn this political moral from it. It is a truthfully written account of native life in one of those 55,000 villages which dot the great district—a tract much larger than the British Isles—the daily existence of whose peaceful, and not altogether unhappy, population it is intended to illustrate; and it can be dipped into, or read through, with equal satisfaction and advantage.—*Daily Telegraph* (London).



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“Life in an Indian Village” is an amusing and clear portrayal of the manners and customs of the inhabitants of a village in the Madras Presidency. The author first depicts his little community, and then proceeds to describe the avocations of all the leading personages. As Kelambakam may be taken as a type of thousands of such villages, the book will be found particularly interesting to those who are likely to be brought into contact with the natives of India. Sir M.E. Grant Duff has written an Introduction, in which he suggests how the simple villagers can be benefited by their European neighbours.—*Morning Post* (London).

The book itself is excellent, and gives a sketch of Indian village society from inside. It is possible, however, that the ordinary English reader will prefer to take his view of “the black men” from Mr. Kipling rather than from a representative of the natives themselves. If he wishes to have a native view of native life he will find it in this work.—*Athenaeum* (London).

India is always fertile in surprises for English readers. We know something of those among its peoples which have given us trouble; but here is a “dim population” of which many Englishmen will scarcely have heard the name—the Dravidians of the Madras Presidency, and we learn with something like astonishment that they number more than the inhabitants of England. The village which Mr. Ramakrishna describes for us is one of more than fifty thousand, averaging about five hundred inhabitants apiece. The first thing that strikes us in his account is its highly organised condition. It is a self-sufficing little commonwealth, in which a quite surprising variety of professions or occupations are represented.—*Pall Mall Gazette* (London).

We welcome this little book as a much truer picture of Indian life than many more ambitious works.—*St. James’s Gazette* (London).

The work is written in admirable English—even the blank verse is perfect. The story of Harichendra alone is worth the cost of the volume.—*Literary World* (London).

We have read with great pleasure the book, “Life in an Indian Village,” as it deals with an interesting and not at all unimportant subject in a plain and unpretending way. Simplicity has a powerful charm of its own; and we recommend the book to all whose heart can still be touched by inartificial descriptions of idyllic, gently flowing, country life. He who does not assume the tone of “India, what can it teach us?” but cares to profit by teaching, will learn a great deal even from these simple village tales.—*Asiatic Quarterly Review* (London).

What more England can do for India is admirably and tersely set forth in the Introduction, which, with Mr. Ramakrishna’s pleasant description of Indian village life, deserves to be widely read.—*Mr. J.B. Knight, C.I.E., in the Indian Magazine* (London).

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Books about India by intelligent travellers have their uses, and books by Europeans who have lived for years in the country and studied the people are still more valuable, but it is only a native of India who can really show us Indian life as it is. There are already several books in English, by educated Indians, which give us valuable insight into what was once the unknown of Indian domestic and social life. Mr. T. Ramakrishna, whose "Life in an Indian Village" is introduced to the notice of the British public by Sir M.E. Grant Duff, has produced a series of very interesting sketches of the more important features of village life in the South of India. They will be found to be very readable, sometimes amusing, always interesting and instructive. Any one who reads this book with intelligence and care will be able to form for himself a very accurate picture of a Madras village, and to understand the composition of the village community, which is the basis of the whole framework of Indian social life.—*Scotsman* (Edinburgh).

Mr. Ramakrishna's book is picturesque and sympathetic.—*Manchester Guardian*.

A well-written book, and one which gives a realistic description of a condition of life which is the outcome of centuries of isolation,—*Leeds Mercury*.

It is not an easy thing to acquire a clear conception of a life and a civilisation other in every respect to our own, and it may be reasonably questioned if one Englishman in a thousand has more than a very vague idea of what life in an Indian village is like. Here is a pleasant and graphic little volume. He may acquire that knowledge from the sketches of an Indian gentleman who knows the subject through and through, and has, moreover, so much of European culture that he is able to present the facts in a form that will not seem strange or incredible.—*Birmingham Post*.

A volume issued by Mr. T. Fisher Unwin, "Life in an Indian Village," is a sample of the kind of book relating to our Eastern Empire that we should like to see multiplied. It is the production of a scholarly native, T. Ramakrishna, B.A., who writes excellent idiomatic English without the slightest tendency to Johnsonian eloquence.—*Christian Leader* (Glasgow).

The manners and customs of the people are vividly reflected in these pages, and a picturesque account is given of a number of notabilities, such as the physician, &c.—*Speaker* (London).

The book cannot fail to fulfil the author's desire in exciting a deeper interest in the people whom he so sympathetically introduces to the British public.—*Independent* (London).

Written with much naivete.—*British Weekly* (London).

The author of this book deserves our thanks and congratulations. Himself a highly educated native of the Madras Presidency, he has drawn a series of pictures of the



village life of Southern India.... The occupations, the recreations, the religion, the distribution of labour, the recurrence of feast and festival, with much more, are all told in amusing style and with such graphic power as to leave a vivid impression upon the reader's mind.—*Bookseller* (London).

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Madras should indulge some measure of pride in having turned out a University graduate who can write the English language better than most Englishmen. Ramakrishna's "Life in an Indian Village" is a charming account of Dravidian homes and customs. It is the work of a young man who has profited by Western enlightenment, and yet feels a kindly glow in his heart for all that belongs to the humblest folk in his native land. His sympathy is beautiful, because it is devoid of any pretence or forced pathos. His language is choice, yet simply constructed. There is real literary flavour about this work, which has just been published by Fisher Unwin. When will the Punjab give us a young man who can feel and think and write like this?—*Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore).

Mr. T. Ramakrishna, a graduate of the Madras University, may be congratulated on the success which seems likely to attend the publication of his well-written little book on "Indian Village Life." Judging by the comments that have appeared in the English papers, it is just the kind of book the public at home wants, not too statistical to be readable, and not too ambitious in design to be trustworthy, but just a simple, picturesque account of the particular part of India which the author really knows.—*London Correspondent of the Englishman* (Calcutta).

The great virtue of Mr. Ramakrishna's writing is the absence of pretence and fustian. Space is not wasted on ambitious and worthless descriptions of scenery, or on vague disquisitions of a sentimental character. Everywhere he is simple, straightforward, and effective.... Writing in excellent English, and in unexceptionable style, he tells plainly and simply what he has to say, and is the more successful because he is less ambitious.... It is to be hoped that Mr. Ramakrishna's interesting sketches of Southern Indian village life will obtain a wide circulation in England. He is to be congratulated on having produced a work of no little merit and originality.—*Madras Mail*.

To doubters of the good results of Western education in this Presidency, better proof could hardly be given than is provided.