

THE
VISHNU PURANA

BOOK V

TRANSLATED
FROM THE ORIGINAL SANSKRIT,
AND
ILLUSTRATED BY NOTES
DERIVED CHIEFLY FROM OTHER PURANAS,
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CHAP. I.

The death of Kansa announced. Earth, oppressed by the Daityas, applies to the gods. They accompany her to Vishnu, who promises to give her relief. Kansa imprisons Vasudeva and Devaki. Vishnu's instructions to Yoganidra.

MAITREYA. [*1] – You have related to me a full account of all the different dynasties of kings, and of their successive transactions. I wish now to hear a more particular description, holy Rishi, of the portion of Vishnu [*2] that came down upon earth, and was born in the family of Yadu. Tell me also what actions he performed in his descent, as a part of a part of the supreme, upon the earth [*3].

PARAS'ARA. – I will relate to you, Maitreya, the account which you have requested; the birth of a part of a part of Vishnu, and the benefits which his actions conferred upon the world.

Vasudeva formerly married the daughter of Devaka, the illustrious Devaki, a maiden of celestial beauty. After their nuptials, Kansa, the increaser of the race of Bhoja, drove their car as their charioteer. As they were going along, a voice in the sky, sounding aloud and deep as thunder, addressed Kansa, and said, "Fool that you are, the eighth child of the damsel whom you are driving in the car shall take away your life [*4]!" On hearing this, Kansa drew his sword, and was about to put Devaki to death; but Vasudeva interposed, saying, "Kill not Devaki, great warrior; spare her life, and I will deliver to you every child that she may bring forth." Appeased by which promise, and relying on the character of Vasudeva, Kansa desisted from the attempt.

At that time, Earth, overburdened by her load, repaired to mount Meru to an assembly of the gods, and addressing the divinities, with Brahma at their head, related in piteous accents all her distress. "Agni," said Earth, "is the progenitor of gold; Surya, of rays of light [*5]: the parent and guide of me and of all spheres is the supreme Narayana, who is Brahma, the lord of the lord of patriarchs; the eldest of the eldest born; one with minutes and hours; one with time; having form, though indiscrete. This assemblage of yourselves, O gods, is but a part of him. The sun, the winds, the saints, the Rudras, the Vasus, the Aswins, fire, the patriarch creators of the universe, of whom Atri is the first, all are but forms of the mighty and inscrutable Vishnu. The Yakshas, Rakshasas, Daityas, spirits of evil, serpents, and children of Danu, the singers and nymphs of heaven, are forms of the great spirit, Vishnu. The heavens painted with planets, constellations, and stars; fire, water, wind, and myself, and every perceptible thing; the whole universe itself – consists of Vishnu. The multifarious forms of that manifold being encounter and succeed one another, night and day, like the waves of the sea. At this present season many demons, of whom Kalanemi is the chief, have overrun, and continually harrass, the region of mortals. The great Asura Kalanemi [*6], that was killed by the powerful Vishnu, has revived in Kansa, the son of Ugrasena, and many other mighty demons, more than I can enumerate, as Arishta, Dhenuka, Kes'in, Pralamba, Naraka, Sunda, and the fierce Bana, the son of Bali [*7], are born in the palaces of kings. Countless hosts of proud and powerful spirits, chiefs of the demon race, assuming celestial forms, now walk the earth; and, unable to support myself beneath the incumbent load, I come to you for succour. Illustrious deities, do you so act that I may be relieved from my burden, lest helpless I sink into the nethermost abyss."

When the gods had heard these complaints of Earth, Brahma at their request explained to them how her burden might be lightened. "Celestials," said Brahma, "all that Earth has said is undoubtedly true. I, Mahadeva, and you all, are but Narayana; but the impersonations of his power are for ever mutually fluctuating, and excess or diminution is indicated by the predominance of the strong, and the depression of the weak. Come therefore, let us repair to the northern coast of the milky sea, and having glorified Hari, report to him what we have heard. He, who is the spirit of all, and of whom the universe consists, constantly, for the sake of Earth, descends in a small portion of his essence to

establish righteousness below." Accordingly Brahma, attended by the gods, went to the milky sea, and there, with minds intent upon him, praised him whose emblem is Garuda.

"O thou," said Brahma, "who art distinct from holy writ [*8]; whose double nature is twofold wisdom [*9], superior and inferior, and who art the essential end of both; who, alike devoid and possessed of form, art the twofold Brahma [*10]; smallest of the least, and largest of the large; all, and knowing all things; that spirit which is language; that spirit which is supreme; that which is Brahma, and of which Brahma is composed! Thou art the Rich, the Yajush, the Saman, and the Atharvan Vedas. Thou art accentuation, ritual, signification, metre, and astronomy; history, tradition, grammar, theology, logic, and law: thou who art inscrutable. Thou art the doctrine that investigates the distinctions between soul, and life, and body, and matter endowed with qualities [*11]; and that doctrine is nothing else but thy nature inherent in and presiding over it [*12]. Thou art imperceptible, indescribable, inconceivable; without name, or colour, or hands, or feet; pure, eternal, and infinite. Thou hearest without ears, and seest without eyes. Thou art one and multiform. Thou movest without feet; thou seizest without hands. Thou knowest all, but art not by all to be known [*13]. He who beholds thee as the most subtile of atoms, not substantially existent, puts an end to ignorance; and final emancipation is the reward of that wise man whose understanding cherishes nothing other than thee in the form of supreme delight [*14]. Thou art the common centre of all [*15], the protector of the world; and all beings exist in thee: all that has been, or will be, thou art. Thou art the atom of atoms; thou art spirit; thou only art distinct from primeval nature [*16]. Thou, as the lord of fire in four manifestations [*17], givest light and fertility to Earth. Thou art the eye of all, and wearer of many shapes, and unobstructedly traversest the three regions of the universe. As fire, though one, is variously kindled, and, though unchangeable in its essence, is modified in many ways, so thou, lord, who art one omnipresent form, takest upon thee all modifications that exist. Thou art one supreme; thou art that supreme and eternal state which the wise behold with the eye of knowledge. There is nothing else but thou, O lord; nothing else has been or will be. Thou art both discrete and indiscrete, universal and individual, omniscient, all-seeing, omnipotent, possessed of all wisdom and strength and power. Thou art liable neither to diminution nor increase; thou art independent and without beginning; thou art the subjugator of all. Thou art unaffected by weariness, sloth, fear, anger, or desire. Thou art free from soil, supreme, merciful [*18], uniform, undecaying, lord over all, the stay of all, the fountain of light, imperishable. To thee, uninvested by material envelopes [*19], unexposed to sensible imaginings, aggregate of elemental substance [*20], spirit supreme, be adoration. Thou assumest a shape, O pervader of the universe, not as the consequence of virtue or vice, nor from any mixture of the two, but for the sole object of maintaining piety in the world [*21]."

The unborn, universal Hari, having heard with his mental ear these eulogiums, was pleased, and thus spake to Brahma: "Tell me, Brahma, what you and the gods desire: speak boldly, certain of success." Brahma, beholding the divine, universal form of Hari, quickly prostrated himself, and again renewed his praises. "Glory to thee, the thousand-formed, the thousand-armed, the many-visaged, many-footed; to thee, the illimitable author of creation, preservation, and destruction; most subtile of the subtile, most vast of the great: to thee, who art nature, intellect, and consciousness; and who art other spirit even than the spiritual root of those principles [*22]. Do thou shew favour upon us. Behold, lord, this earth, oppressed by mighty Asuras, and shaken to her mountain basements, comes to thee, who art her invincible defender, to be relieved from her burden. Behold me, Indra, the Aswins, Varuna, and Yama, the Rudras, the Vasus, the suns, the winds, fire, and all other celestials, prepared to execute whatever thou shalt will that we shall do. Do thou, in whom there is no imperfection, O sovereign of the deities, give thy orders to thy servants: lo, we are ready."

When Brahma had ended, the supreme lord plucked off two hairs, one white and one black, and said to the gods, "These my hairs shall descend upon earth, and shall relieve her of the burden of her distress [*23]. Let all the gods also, in their own portions, go down to earth, and wage war with the haughty Asuras, who are there incorporate, and who shall every one of them be destroyed. Doubt not of this: they shall perish before the withering glance of mine eyes. This my (black) hair shall be

impersonated in the eighth conception of the wife of Vasudeva, Devaki, who is like a goddess; and shall slay Kansa, who is the demon Kalanemi." Thus having spoken, Hari disappeared; and the gods bowing to him, though invisible, returned to the summit of mount Meru, from whence they descended upon earth.

The Muni Narada informed Kansa that the supporter of the earth, Vishnu, would be the eighth child of Devaki; and his wrath being excited by this report, he placed both Vasudeva and Devaki in confinement. Agreeably to his promise, the former delivered to Kansa each infant as soon as it was born. It is said that these, to the number of six, were the children of the demon Hiranyakas'ipu, who were introduced into the womb of Devaki, at the command of Vishnu, during the hours of Devaki's repose, by the goddess Yoganidra [*24], the great illusory energy of Vishnu, by whom, as utter ignorance, the whole world is beguiled. To her Vishnu said, "Go, Nidra, to the nether regions, and by my command conduct successively six of their princes to be conceived of Devaki. When these shall have been put to death by Kansa, the seventh conception shall be formed of a portion of S'esha, who is a part of me; and this you shall transfer, before the time of birth, to Rohini, another wife of Vasudeva, who resides at Gokula. The report shall run, that Devaki miscarries, through the anxiety of imprisonment, and dread of the Raja of the Bhojas. From being extracted from his mother's womb, the child shall be known by the name of Sankarshana, and he shall be valiant and strong, and like the peak of the white mountain in bulk and complexion. I will myself become incarnate in the eighth conception of Devaki; and you shall immediately take a similar character as the embryo offspring of Yas'oda. In the night of the eighth lutation of the dark half of the month Nabhas, in the season of the rains, I shall be born. You shall receive birth on the ninth. Impelled and aided by my power, Vasudeva shall bear me to the bed of Yas'oda, and you to that of Devaki. Kansa shall take you, and hold you up to dash you against a stone; but you shall escape from his grasp into the sky, where the hundred-eyed Indra shall meet and do homage to you, through reverence for me, and shall bow before you, and acknowledge you as his sister. Having slain Sumbha, Nisumbha, and numerous other demons [*25], you shall sanctify the earth in many places [*26]. Thou art wealth, progeny, fame, patience, heaven and earth, fortitude, modesty, nutrition, dawn, and every other female (form or property). They who address thee morning and afternoon with reverence and praise, and call thee Arya, Durga, Vedagarbha, Ambika, Bhadra, Bhadrakali, Kshemi, or Kshemankari, shall receive from my bounty whatever they desire. Propitiated with offerings of wine and flesh and various viands, thou shalt bestow upon mankind all their prayers. Through my favour all men shall ever have faith in thee. Assured of this, go, goddess, and execute my commands."

Footnotes

^491:1 The whole of this book is dedicated to the biography of Krishna. Many of the Puranas omit this subject altogether, or only allude to it occasionally. In others it is equally prominent. The Brahma P. gives the story exactly in the same words as our text: which has the best right to them may be questioned; but, as it is usually met with, the Brahma P. is a very heterogeneous compilation. The Hari Vans'a has a narrative more detailed than that of the text, with additions and embellishments of its own. The Brahma Vaivartta throughout celebrates the acts of Krishna; and one portion of it, the Krishna Janma Khanda, especially describes his boyhood and youth. The incidents are the same in general as those in the text, but they are lost amidst interminable descriptions of Krishna's sports with the Gopis and with his mistress Radha, a person not noticed elsewhere; the whole is in a style indicative of a modern origin. The Agni P. and Padma P. (Uttara Khanda) have accounts of Krishna, but they are mere summaries, compiled evidently from other works. The principal authority for the adventures of Krishna is the Bhagavata, the tenth book of which is exclusively devoted to him. It is this work which has, no doubt, mainly extended the worship of Krishna, as its popularity is evinced by its having been translated into all the spoken languages of India professing to have a literature. The Prem-sagar, its Hindi version, is well known; but there are also translations in Mahratta, Telugu, Tamil, &c. It does not seem likely, however, that the Vishnu P. has copied the

Bhagavata; for although. its greater conciseness may sometimes look like abridgment, yet the descriptions are generally of a more simple and antiquated character. Here, as usual, the [p. 492] Mahabharata is no doubt the earliest extant authority; but it is not the earliest, for whilst it omits to narrate most of his personal adventures unconnected with his alliance with the Pandavas, it often alludes to them, and names repeatedly his capital, his wives, and his progeny. It also devotes a section, the Maus'ala P., to the destruction of the Yadavas. The story of Krishna the prince and hero must have been complete when the Mahabharata was compiled. It is doubtful, however, if Krishna the boy, and his adventures at Vrindavan, were not subsequent inventions. There are no allusions to them in the poem, of an unsuspecting nature. The only ones that I have met with are contained in a speech by S'is'upala, Sabha P., vol. I. p. 360, in which he reviles Krishna; but they may easily have been interpolated. There may be others scattered through the poem, but I have not observed them.

^492:2 The notices of Krishna's origin and character in various passages of the Mahabharata are by no means consistent, and indicate different dates at least. In an address to him by Arjuna, Vana P., vol. I. p. 436, he is said to have passed thousands of years in various holy places, engaged in arduous penances. He is frequently identified with the Rishi Narayana, or he and Arjuna are said to be Nara and Narayana. In the Dana-dharma he is represented as a worshipper of S'iva, and propitiating him and his wife Uma, and receiving as boons from them wives and children. As a warrior and prince he is always on the scene; but he is repeatedly called an Ans'a, or portion of Vishnu; whilst in a great number of places he is identified with Vishnu or Narayana, and is consequently 'all things.' This latter is his character, of course, amongst the Vaishnavas, agreeably to the text of the Bhagavata: 'Krishna is the lord (Vishnu) himself.'

^492:3 This is a still farther diminution of Krishna's dignity; he is not even a part, but 'a part of a part,' Ans'ans'avatara: but this, the commentator maintains, is to be understood only of his form or condition as man, not of his power, as it suffered no diminution, either in its primary or secondary state, as light by suffusion suffers no decrease; and a verse of the Veda is cited to this effect: 'Though that which is full be taken from what is full, yet the remainder is undiminished;' 'Krishna is nevertheless the very supreme Brahma, though it be a mystery how the supreme should assume the form of a man.' So the Bhagavata in one passage predicts that the Para-purusha, Purushottama or Vishnu, will be born visibly in the dwelling of Vasudeva.

^493:4 The Bhagavata tells the circumstance as in the text. The Hari Vans'a makes Narada apprise Kansa of his danger. Narada's interposition is not mentioned until afterwards by our authority. Devaki is the cousin of Kansa: see <page 436>.

^493:5 Agni, or fire, refines gold, burns away the dross, according to the commentator. The sun is the lord of the rays of light; or, as the cause of rain and vegetation, the lord of cattle. The phrase is, .

^494:6 According to the Vayu, Kalanemi or Kayabadha was a son of Virochana, the grandson of Hiranyakas'ipu: his death is described in the Hari Vans'a.

^494:7 These appear subsequently in the narration, and are destroyed by Krishna.

^494:8 Anamnaya; not the immediate object of the Vedas, which is devotion, not abstraction; ritual or worship, not knowledge.

^494:9 The two kinds of knowledge are termed Para, 'supreme,' and Apara, 'other' or 'subordinate;' the first is knowledge of Para Brahma, of spirit abstractedly considered, perfect knowledge derived from abstraction; the [p. 495] second is knowledge of S'abda Brahma, of spirit as described and taught in the Vedas, or their supplementary branches. The identity of the supreme with both descriptions of holy knowledge pervades the whole of the address.

^495:10 Para Brahma and S'abda Brahma: see the preceding note.

^495:11 The doctrine alluded to may be either intended generally, or in the several instances, the discussion of the spiritual soul and living soul, of body subtile and sensible, and of matter endowed with qualities, reference may be purposed to the Vedanta, Yoga, and Sankhya systems.

^495:12 That is, as the S'abda Brahma, the supreme is identical with philosophical doctrines, being the object, the instigator, and the result.

^495:13 This is taken from the Vedas, the original of which is quoted and translated by Sir Win. Jones: see his Works, XIII. 368. The passage is thus cited by the commentator on our text: 'Without hand or foot he runs, he grasps; without eyes he sees; and without ears he hears: he knoweth all that may be known, and no one knoweth him. Him they call the first great spirit.'

^495:14 Varenya rupa, explained by Paramananda murti; he whose form or impersonation is supreme felicity.

^495:15 Literally 'navel of all.' [p. 496] The passage is also read 'Thou art all and the first;' the cause or creator.

^496:16 Or the passage is understood, 'Thou art one subsequently to Prakriti;' that is, thou art Brahma, the active will of the supreme, creating forms from rudimental matter.

^496:17 As the three fires enjoined by the Vedas, and the fire metaphorically of devotion; or lightnings, solar heat, fire generated artificially, and the fire of digestion or animal fire; or Vishnu in that character bestows beauty, vigour, power, and wealth.

^496:18 Prita: one copy has S'anta, 'calm,' 'undisturbed.'

^496:19 Beyond the separate layers or envelopes of elementary substances (see <page 19>); or, according to the Vedanta notions, uninvested by those grosser sheaths or coverings, derived from food and the like, by which subtile body is enclosed.

^496:20 Mahavibhuti sansthana. Vibhuti is explained by Prapancha, sensible, material, or elementary substance, constituting body.

^496:21 The passage is somewhat obscurely expressed, and is differently interpreted; [p. 497] it is, 'Not from no cause, nor from cause, nor from cause and no cause.' The term 'no cause' may, the commentator says, designate fixed prescribed duties, the Nityakarma; 'cause' may signify occasional sacrifices, the Kamyakarma: neither of these can form any necessity for Vishnu's descent, as they might of a mere mortal's being born on the earth: or Karana is explained to mean 'obtaining pleasure,' from Ka and Arana, 'obtaining;' obtaining happiness, or the cause of it, piety, virtue; and with the negative, Akarana, the reverse, pain, the consequence of wickedness. The purport is clear enough; it is merely meant to state that Vishnu is not subject to the necessity which is the cause of human birth.

^497:22 The term Pradhana, which is repeated in this passage, is explained in the second place to mean Puman, 'soul' or 'spirit.'

^497:23 The same account of the origin of Krishna is given in the Mahabharata, Adi P., vol. I. p. 266. The white hair is impersonated as Balarama; the black, as Krishna. The commentator on our text maintains that this is not to be literally understood: 'Vishnu did not intend that the two hairs should become incarnate, but he meant to signify, that, should he send them, they would be more than sufficient to destroy Kansa and his demons: or the birth of Rama and Krishna was a double illusion, [p. 498] typified by the two hairs.' This seems to be a refinement upon an older and somewhat undignified account of the origin of Krishna and his brother. The commentator on the Mahabharata argues that they are to be understood merely as the media by which Devaki and Rohini conceived.

^498:24 Yoganidra is the sleep of devotion or abstraction, the active principle of illusion, personified, and also termed Maya and Mahamaya, also Avidya or ignorance. In the Durga Mahatmya of

the Markandeya Purana a she appears as Devi or Durga, the S'akti or bride of S'iva; but in our text as Vaishnavi, or the S'akti of Vishnu.

^499:25 Allusion is here made to the exploits of Durga, as celebrated especially in the Durga Mahatmya; and it must be posterior to the date of that or some similar composition. The passage may be an interpolation, as the Markandeya P. in general has the appearance of being a more recent compilation than the Vishnu.

^499:26 This refers to the Pitha sthanas, 'fifty-one places,' where, according to the Tantras, the limbs of S'ati fell, when scattered by her husband S'iva, as he bore her dead body about, and tore it to pieces, after she had put an end to her existence at Daksha's sacrifice. This part of the legend seems to be an addition to the original fable made by the Tantras, as it is not in the Puranas (see the story of Daksha's sacrifice). It bears some analogy to the Egyptian fable of Isis and Osiris. At the Pitha sthanas, however, of Jwalamukhi, Vindhyaasini, Kalighat, and others, temples are erected to the different forms of Devi or S'ati, not to the phallic emblem of Mahadeva, which, if present, is there as an accessory and embellishment, not as a principal, and the chief object of worship is a figure of the goddess; a circumstance in which there is an essential difference between the temples of Durga and shrines of Osiris.

CHAP. II

The conception of Devaki: her appearance: she is praised by the gods.

THE nurse of the universe, Jagaddhatri, thus enjoined by the god of gods, conveyed the six several embryos into the womb of Devaki [*1], and transferred the seventh after a season to that of Rohini; after which, Hari, for the benefit of the three regions, became incarnate as the conception of the former princess, and Yoganidra as that of Yas'oda, exactly as the supreme Vishnu had commanded. When the portion of Vishnu had become incorporate upon earth, the planetary bodies moved in brilliant order in the heavens, and the seasons were regular and genial. No person could bear to gaze upon Devaki, from the light that invested her; and those who contemplated her radiance felt their minds disturbed. The gods, invisible to mortals, celebrated her praises continually from the time that Vishnu was contained in her person. "Thou," said the divinities, "art that Prakriti, infinite and subtile, which formerly bore Brahma in its womb: then wast thou the goddess of speech, the energy of the creator of the universe, and the parent of the Vedas. Thou, eternal being, comprising in thy substance the essence of all created things, wast identical with creation: thou wast the parent of the triform sacrifice, becoming the germ of all things: thou art sacrifice, whence all fruit proceeds: thou art the wood, whose attrition engenders fire. As Aditi, thou art the parent of the gods; as Diti, thou art the mother of the Daityas, their foes. Thou art light, whence day is begotten: thou art humility, the mother of true wisdom: thou art kingly policy, the parent of order: thou art modesty, the progenitrix of affection: thou art desire, of whom love is born: thou art contentment, whence resignation is derived: thou art intelligence, the mother of knowledge: thou art patience, the parent of fortitude: thou art the heavens, and thy children are the stars: and from thee does all that exists proceed. Such, goddess, and thousands more, are thy mighty faculties; and now innumerable are the contents of thy womb, O mother of the universe. The whole earth, decorated with oceans, rivers, continents, cities, villages, hamlets, and towns; all the fires, waters, and winds; the stars, asterisms, and planets; the sky, crowded with the variegated chariots of the gods, and ether, that provides space for all substance; the several spheres of earth, sky, and heaven; of saints, sages, ascetics, and of Brahma; the whole egg of Brahma, with all its population of gods, demons, spirits, snake-gods, fiends, demons, ghosts, and imps, men and animals, and whatever creatures have life, comprised in him who is their eternal lord, and the object of all apprehension; whose real form, nature, name, and dimensions are not within human apprehension – are now with that Vishnu in thee. Thou art Swaha; thou art Swadha; thou art wisdom, ambrosia, light, and heaven. Thou hast descended upon earth for the preservation of the world. Have compassion upon us, O goddess, and do good unto the world. Be proud to bear that deity by whom the universe is upheld."

Footnotes

^500:1 It is mentioned in the preceding chapter that they were all put to death, in which the Hari Vans'a concurs. The Bhagavata makes Kansa spare them, and restore them to their parents, as he had nothing to apprehend from their existence.

CHAP. III.

Birth of Krishna: conveyed by Vasudeva to Mathura, and exchanged with the new-born daughter of Yas'oda. Kansa attempts to destroy the latter, who becomes Yoganidra.

THUS eulogized by the gods, Devaki bore in her womb the lotus-eyed deity, the protector of the world. The sun of Achyuta rose in the dawn of Devaki to cause the lotus petal of the universe to expand. On the day of his birth the quarters of the horizon were irradiate with joy, as if moonlight was diffused over the whole earth. The virtuous experienced new delight, the strong winds were hushed, and the rivers glided tranquilly, when Janarddana was about to be born. The seas with their own melodious murmurings made the music, whilst the spirits and the nymphs of heaven danced and sang: the gods, walking the sky, showered down flowers upon the earth, and the holy fires glowed with a mild and gentle flame. At midnight, when the supporter of all was about to be born, the clouds emitted low pleasing sounds, and poured down rain of flowers.

As soon as Anakadundubhi beheld the child, of the complexion of the lotus leaves, having four arms, and the mystic mark S'rivatsa on his breast, he addressed him in terms of love and reverence, and represented the fears he entertained of Kansa. "Thou art born," said Vasudeva, "O sovereign god of gods, bearer of the shell, the discus, and the mace; but now in mercy withhold this thy celestial form, for Kansa will assuredly put me to death when he knows that thou hast descended in my dwelling." Devaki also exclaimed, "God of gods, who art all things, who comprisest all the regions of the world in thy person, and who by thine illusion hast assumed the condition of an infant, have compassion upon us, and forego this thy four-armed shape, nor let Kansa, the impious son of Diti, know of thy descent."

To these applications Bhagavat answered and said, "Princess, in former times I was prayed to by thee and adored in the hope of progeny: thy prayers have been granted, for I am born thy son." So saying, he was silent: and Vasudeva, taking the babe, went out that same night; for the guards were all charmed by Yoganidra, as were the warders at the gates of Mathura, and they obstructed not the passage of Anakadundubhi. To protect the infant from the heavy rain that fell from the clouds of night, S'essa, the many-headed serpent, followed Vasudeva, and spread his hoods above their heads; and when the prince, with the child in his arms, crossed the Yamuna river, deep as it was, and dangerous with numerous whirlpools, the waters were stilled, and rose not above his knee.. On the bank he saw Nanda and the rest, who had come thither to bring tribute due to Kansa; but they beheld him not [*1]. At the same time Yas'oda was also under the influence of Yoganidra, whom she had brought forth as her daughter, and whom the prudent Vasudeva took up, placing his son in her place by the side of the mother: he then quickly returned home. When Yas'oda awoke, she found that she had been delivered of a boy, as black as the dark leaves of the lotus, and she was greatly rejoiced.

Vasudeva, bearing off the female infant of Yas'oda, reached his mansion unobserved, and entered and placed the child in the bed of Devaki: he then remained as usual. The guards were awakened by the cry of the new-born babe, and, starting up, they sent word to Kansa that Devaki had borne a child. Kansa immediately repaired to the residence of Vasudeva, where he seized upon the infant. In vain Devaki convulsively entreated him to relinquish the child: he threw it ruthlessly against a stone; but it rose into the sky, and expanded into a gigantic figure, having eight arms, each wielding some formidable weapon. This terrific being laughed aloud, and said to Kansa, "What avails it thee, Kansa, to have hurled me to the ground? he is born who shall kill thee, the mighty one amongst the

gods, who was formerly thy destroyer. Now quickly secure him, and provide for thine own welfare." Thus having spoken, the goddess, decorated with heavenly perfumes and garlands, and hymned by the spirits of the air, vanished from before the eyes of Bhoja raja [*2].

Footnotes

^503:1 The Bhagavata more consistently makes Vasudeva find Nanda and the rest fast asleep in their houses, and subsequently describes their bringing tribute or tax (kara) to Kansa.

^503:2 Chief of the tribe of Bhoja, a branch of the Yadavas: see <page 424>.

CHAP. IV.

Kansa addresses his friends, announces their danger, and orders male children to be put to death.

KANSA, much troubled in mind, summoned all his principal Asuras, Pralamba, Kes'in, and the rest, and said to them, "O valiant chiefs, Pralamba, Kes'in, Dhenuka, Putana, Arishta, and all the rest of you, hear my words. The vile and contemptible denizens of heaven are assiduously plotting against my life, for they dread my prowess: but, heroes, I hold them of no account. What can the impotent Indra, or the ascetic Hara, perform? or what can Hari accomplish, except the murder of his foes by fraud? What have we to fear from the Adityas, the Vasus, the Agnis, or any others of the immortals, who have all been vanquished by my resistless arms? Have I not seen the king of the gods, when he had ventured into the conflict, quickly retreat from the field, receiving my shafts upon his back, not bravely upon his breast? When in resentment he withheld the fertilizing showers from my kingdom, did not my arrows compel the clouds to part with their waters, as much as were required? Are not all the monarchs of the earth in terror of my prowess, and subject to my orders, save only Jarasandha my sire [*1]? Now, chiefs of the Daitya race, it is my determination to inflict still deeper degradation upon these evil-minded and unprincipled gods. Let therefore every man who is notorious for liberality (in gifts to gods and Brahmans), every man who is remarkable for his celebration of sacrifices, be put to death, that thus the gods shall be deprived of the means by which they subsist. The goddess who has been born as the infant child of Devaki has announced to me that he is again alive who in a former being was my death. Let therefore active search be made for whatever young children there may be upon earth, and let every boy in whom there are signs of unusual vigour be slain without remorse."

Having issued these commands, Kansa retired into his palace, and liberated Vasudeva and Devaki from their captivity. "It is in vain," said he to them, "that I have slain all your children, since after all he who is destined to kill me has escaped. It is of no use to regret the past. The children you may hereafter have may enjoy life unto its natural close; no one shall cut it short." Having thus conciliated them, Kansa, alarmed for himself, withdrew into the interior apartments of his palace.

Footnotes

^504:1 Jarasandha, prince of Magadha, was the father-in-law of Kansa.

CHAP. V.

Nanda returns with the infants Krishna and Balarama to Gokula. Putana killed by the former. Prayers of Nanda and Yas'oda.

WHEN Vasudeva was set at liberty, he went to the waggon of Nanda, and found Nanda there rejoicing that a son was born to him [*1]. Vasudeva spake to him kindly, and congratulated him on having a son in his old age. "The yearly tribute," he added, "has been paid to the king, and men of property should not tarry near the court, when the business that brought them there has been transacted. Why do you delay, now that your affairs are settled? Up, Nanda, quickly, and set off to your

own pastures; and let this boy, the son whom Rohini has borne me, accompany you, and be brought up by you as this your own son." Accordingly Nanda and the other cowherds, their goods being placed in their waggons, and their taxes having been paid to the king, returned to their village.

Some time after they were settled at Gokula, the female fiend Putana, the child-killer, came thither by night, and finding the little Krishna asleep, took him up, and gave him her breast to suck [*2]. Now whatever child is suckled in the night by Putana instantly dies; but Krishna, laying hold of the breast with both hands, sucked it with such violence, that he drained it of the life; and the hideous Putana, roaring aloud, and giving way in every joint, fell on the ground expiring. The inhabitants of Vraja awoke in alarm at the cries of the fiend, ran to the spot, and beheld Putana lying on the earth, and Krishna in her arms. Yas'oda snatching up Krishna, waved over him a cow-tail brush to guard him from harm, whilst Nanda placed dried cow-dung powdered upon his head; he gave him also an amulet [*3], saying at the same time, "May Hari, the lord of all beings without reserve, protect you; he from the lotus of whose navel the world was developed, and on the tip of whose tusks the globe was upraised from the waters. May that Kes'ava, who assumed the form of a boar, protect thee. May that Kes'ava, who, as the man-lion, rent with his sharp nails the bosom of his foe, ever protect thee. May that Kes'ava, who, appearing first as the dwarf, suddenly traversed in all his might, with three paces, the three regions of the universe, constantly defend thee. May Govinda guard thy head; Kes'ava thy neck; Vishnu thy belly; Janarddana thy legs and feet; the eternal and irresistible Narayana thy face, thine arms, thy mind, and faculties of sense. May all ghosts, goblins, and spirits malignant and unfriendly, ever fly thee, appalled by the bow, the discus, mace, and sword of Vishnu, and the echo of his shell. May Vaikuntha guard thee in the cardinal points; and in the intermediate ones, Madhusudana. May Rishikes'a defend thee in the sky, and Mahidhara upon earth." Having pronounced this prayer to avert all evil, Nanda put the child to sleep in his bed underneath the waggon. Beholding the vast carcass of Putana, the cowherds were filled with astonishment and terror.

Footnotes

^506:1 It is literally 'went to the cart' or 'waggon;' as if Nanda and his family dwelt in such a vehicle, as the Scythians are said to have done. The commentator explains S'akata 'the place of loosing or unharnessing the waggon.' In the Bhagavata, Vasudeva does not quit Mathura, but goes to the halting ground of Nanda, who has come to that city to pay his taxes: explained by the comment.

^506:2 In the Hari Vans'a this female fiend is described as coming in the shape of a bird.

^507:3 The Raksha, the preserver, or preservative against charms, is a piece of thread or silk, or some more costly material, bound round the wrist or arm, with an appropriate prayer such as that in the text. Besides its application to children, to avert the effects of evil eyes, or to protect them against Dains or witches, there is one day in the year, the Rakhi Purnima, or full moon in the month of S'ravan (July – August), when it is bound upon the wrists of adults by friendly or kindred Brahmans, with a short prayer or benediction. The Rakhi is also sent sometimes by persons of distinction, and especially by females, to members of a different family, or even race and nation, to intimate a sort of brotherly or sisterly adoption. Tod's Rajasthan, I. 312.

CHAP. VI.

Krishna overturns a waggon; casts down two trees. The Gopas depart to Vrindavana. Sports of the boys. Description of the season of the rains.

ON one occasion, whilst Madhusudana was asleep underneath the waggon, he cried for the breast, and kicking up his feet he overturned the vehicle, and all the pots and pans were upset and broken. The cowherds and their wives, hearing the noise, came exclaiming, "Ah! ah!" and there they found the child sleeping on his back. "Who could have upset the waggon?" said the cowherds. "This

child," replied some boys, who witnessed the circumstance; "we saw him," said they, "crying, and kicking the waggon with his feet, and so it was overturned: no one else had any thing to do with it." The cowherds were exceedingly astonished at this account; and Nanda, not knowing what to think, took up the boy; whilst Yas'oda offered worship to the broken pieces of pots and to the waggon, with curds, flowers, fruit, and unbruised grain.

The initiatory rites requisite for the two boys were performed by Garga, who was sent to Gokula by Vasudeva for that purpose: he celebrated them without the knowledge of the cowherds [*1]; and the wise sage, eminent amongst the wise, named the elder of them Rama, and the other Krishna. In a short time they began to crawl about the ground, supporting themselves on their hands and knees, and creeping every where, often amidst ashes and filth. Neither Rohini nor Yas'oda was able to prevent them from getting into the cowpens, or amongst the calves, where they amused themselves by pulling their tails. As they disregarded the prohibitions of Yas'oda, and rambled about together constantly, she became angry, and taking up a stick, followed them, and threatened the dark-complexioned Krishna with a whipping. Fastening a cord round his waist, she tied him to the wooden mortar [*2], and being in a great passion, she said to him, "Now, you naughty boy, get away from hence if you can." She then went about her domestic affairs. As soon as she had departed, the lotus-eyed Krishna, endeavouring to extricate himself, pulled the mortar after him to the space between two Arjuna trees that grew near together: having dragged the mortar between these trees, it became wedged awry there, and as Krishna pulled it through, it pulled down the trunks of the trees. Hearing the crackling noise, the people of Vraja came to see what was the matter, and there they beheld the two large trees, with shattered stems and broken branches, prostrate on the ground, with the child fixed between them, with a rope round his belly, laughing, and shewing his white little teeth, just budded. It is hence that Krishna is called Damodara, from the binding of the rope (dama) round his belly (udara) [*3]. The elders of the cowherds, with Nanda at their head, looked upon these circumstances with alarm, considering them as of evil omen. "We cannot remain in this place," said they; "let us go to some other part of the forest; for here many evil signs threaten us with destruction; the death of Putana, the upsetting of the waggon, and the fall of the trees without their being blown down by the wind. Let us depart hence without delay, and go to Vrindavana, where terrestrial prodigies may no more disturb us."

Having thus resolved, the inhabitants of Vraja communicated their intention to their families, and desired them to move without delay. Accordingly they set off with their waggons and their cattle, driving before them their bulls and cows and calves; the fragments of their household stores they threw away, and in an instant Vraja was overspread with flights of crows. Vrindavana was chosen by Krishna, whom acts do not affect, for the sake of providing for the nourishment of the kine; for there in the hottest season the new grass springs up as verdantly as in the rains. Having repaired, then, from Vraja to Vrindavana, the inhabitants of the former drew up their waggons in the form of a crescent [*4].

As the two boys, Rama and Damodara, grew up, they were ever together in the same place, and engaged in the same boyish sports. They made themselves crests of the peacocks' plumes, and garlands of forest flowers, and musical instruments of leaves and reeds, or played upon the pipes used by the cowherds: their hair was trimmed like the wings of the crow [*5], and they resembled two young princes, portions of the deity of war: they were robust, and they roamed about, always laughing and playing, sometimes with each other, sometimes with other boys; driving along with the young cowherds the calves to pasture. Thus the two guardians of the world were keepers of cattle, until they had attained seven years of age, in the cow-pens of Vrindavan.

Then came on the season of the rains, when the atmosphere laboured with accumulated clouds, and the quarters of the horizon were blended into one by the driving showers. The waters of the rivers rose, and overflowed their banks, and spread beyond all bounds, like the minds of the weak and wicked transported beyond restraint by sudden prosperity. The pure radiance of the moon was obscured by heavy vapours, as the lessons of holy writ are darkened by the arrogant scoffs of fools

(and unbelievers). The bow of Indra held its place in the heavens all unstrung, like a worthless man elevated by an injudicious prince to honour. The white line of storks appeared upon the back of the cloud, in such contrast as the bright conduct of a man of respectability opposes to the behaviour of a scoundrel. The ever-fitful lightning, in its new alliance with the sky, was like the friendship of a profligate for a man of worth. Overgrown by the spreading grain, the paths were indistinctly traced, like the speech of the ignorant, that conveys no positive meaning.

At this time Krishna and Rama, accompanied by the cow-boys, traversed the forests, that echoed with the hum of bees and the peacock's cry. Sometimes they sang in chorus, or danced together; sometimes they sought shelter from the cold beneath the trees; sometimes they decorated themselves with flowery garlands, sometimes with peacocks' feathers; sometimes they stained themselves of various hues with the minerals of the mountain; sometimes weary they reposed on beds of leaves, and sometimes imitated in mirth the muttering of the thundercloud; sometimes they excited their juvenile associates to sing, and sometimes they mimicked the cry of the peacock with their pipes. In this manner participating in various feelings and emotions, and affectionately attached to each other, they wandered, sporting and happy, through the wood. At eveningtide came Krishna and Balarama, like two cow-boys, along with the cows and the cowherds. At eveningtide the two immortals, having come to the cow-pens, joined heartily in whatever sports amused the sons of the herdsmen.

Footnotes

^{508:1} The Bhagavata describes Garga's interview with Nanda, and the inducements of the latter to keep the former's celebration of the Sanskaras, or initiatory rites of the two boys, secret from the Gopas. Garga there describes himself as the Purdhit, or family priest, of the Yadavas.

^{508:2} The Ulukhala, or mortar is a large [p. 509] wooden bowl on a solid stand of timber, both cut out of one piece; the pestle is also of wood; and they are used chiefly for bruising or threshing unwinnowed corn, and separating the chaff from the grain. As important agents in household economy, they are regarded as sacred, and even hymned in the Vedas.

^{509:3} Our text, and that of the Hari Vans'a, take no notice of the legend of Nalakuvera and Manigriva, sons of Kuvera, who, according to the Bhagavata, had been metamorphosed, through a curse of Narada, into these two trees, and for whose liberation this feat of Krishna was intended.

^{510:4} The Hari Vans'a, not satisfied with the prodigies which had alarmed the cowherds, adds another, not found, it is believed, any where else. The emigration, according to that work, originates, not with the Gopas, but the two boys, who wish to go to Vrindavana, and in order to compel the removal, Krishna converts the hairs of his body into hundreds of wolves, who so harass and alarm the inhabitants of Vraja, that they determine to abandon their homes.

^{510:5} The Kaka-paksha, or crow's wing, implies the hair left on each side of the head, the top being shaved.

CHAP. VII.

Krishna combats the serpent Kaliya: alarm of his parents and companions: he overcomes the serpent, and is propitiated by him: commands him to depart from the Yamuna river to the ocean.

ONE day Krishna, unaccompanied by Rama, went to Vrindavan: he was attended by a troop of cowherds, and gaily decorated with wild flowers. On his way he came to the Yamuna, which was flowing in sportive undulations, and sparkling with foam, as if with smiles, as the waves dashed against the borders. Within its bed, however, was the fearful pool of the serpent Kaliya, boiling with the fires of poison [*1]; from the fumes of which, large trees upon the bank were blighted, and by whose waters, when raised by a gale into the air, birds were scorched. Beholding this dreadful lake, which was like another mouth of death, Madhusudana reflected that the wicked and poisonous Ka-

liya, who had been vanquished by himself (in the person of Garuda), and had been obliged to fly from the ocean (where he had inhabited the island Ramanaka), must be lurking at its bottom, and defiling the Yamuna, the consort of the sea, so that neither men nor cattle could slake their thirst by her waters. Such being the case, he determined to dislodge the Naga, and enable the dwellers of Vraja to frequent the vicinage without fear; for it was the especial purpose he considered of his descent upon earth to reduce to subjection all such violators of law. "Here," thought he, "is a Kadamba tree, which is sufficiently near; I can climb up it, and thence leap into the serpent's pool." Having thus resolved, he bound his clothes tightly about him, and jumped boldly into the lake of the serpent-king. The waters, agitated by his plunge amidst them, were scattered to a considerable distance from the bank, and the spray falling upon the trees, they were immediately set on fire by the heat of the poisonous vapour combined with the water; and the whole horizon was in a blaze. Krishna, having dived into the pool, struck his arms in defiance [*3], and the snake-king, hearing the sound, quickly came forth: his eyes were coppery red, and his hoods were flaming with deadly venom: he was attended by many other powerful and poisonous snakes, feeders upon air, and by hundreds of serpent-nymphs, decorated with rich jewels, whose earrings glittered with trembling radiance as the wearers moved along. Coiling themselves around Krishna, they all bit him with teeth from which fiery poison was emitted. Krishna's companions, beholding him in the lake, encompassed by the snakes, twining around him, ran off to Vraja, lamenting and bewailing aloud his fate. "Krishna," they called out, "has foolishly plunged into the serpent's pool, and is there bitten to death by the snake-king! Come and see." The cowherds and their wives and Yas'oda, hearing this news, which was like a thunderbolt, ran immediately to the pool, frightened out of their senses, and crying, "Alas! alas! where is he?" The Gopis were retarded by Yas'oda, who in her agitation stumbled and slipped at every step; but Nanda and the cowherds and the invincible Rama hastened to the banks of the Yamuna, eager to assist Krishna. There they beheld him apparently in the power of the serpent-king, encompassed by twining snakes, and making no effort to escape. Nanda, as soon as he set his eyes upon his son, became senseless; and Yas'oda also, when she beheld him, lost all consciousness. The Gopis, overcome with sorrow, wept, and called affectionately, and with convulsive sobs, upon Kes'ava. "Let us all," said they, "plunge with Yas'oda into the fearful pool of the serpent-king. We cannot return to Vraja; for what is day, without the sun? what night, without the moon? what is a herd of heifers, without its lord? what is Vraja, without Krishna? Deprived of him, we will go no more to Gokula. The forest will lose its delights; it will be like a lake without water. When this dark lotus leaf complexioned Hari is not present, there is no joy in the maternal dwelling. How strange is this! And as for you, ye cowherds, how, poor beings, will you live amidst the pastures, when you no longer behold the brilliant lotus eyes of Hari? Our hearts have been wiled away by the music of his voice. We will not go without Pundarikaksha to the folds of Nanda. Even now, though held in the coils of the serpent-king, see, friends, how his face brightens with smiles as we gaze upon him."

When the mighty son of Rohini, Balarama, heard these exclamations of the Gopis, and with disdainful glance beheld the cowherds overcome with terror, Nanda gazing fixedly upon the countenance of his son, and Yas'oda unconscious, he spake to Krishna in his own character: "What is this, O god of gods! the quality of mortal is sufficiently assumed; dost thou not know thyself eternal? Thou art the centre of creation, as the nave is of the spokes of a wheel. A portion of thee have I also been born, as thy senior. The gods, to partake of thy pastimes as man, have all descended under a like disguise; and the goddesses have come down to Gokula to join in thy sports. Thou, eternal, hast last of all appeared below. Wherefore, Krishna, dost thou disregard these divinities, who, as cowherds, are thy friends and kin? these sorrowing females, who also are thy relations? Thou hast put on the character of man; thou hast exhibited the tricks of childhood: now let this fierce snake, though armed with venomous fangs, be subdued (by thy celestial vigour)."

Thus reminded of his real character by Rama, Krishna smiled gently, and speedily extricated himself from the coils of the snakes. Laying hold of the middle hood of their chief with both his hands, he bent it down, and set his foot upon the hitherto unbended head, and danced upon it in triumph. Wherever the snake attempted to raise his head, it was again trodden down, and many bruises were

inflicted on the hood by the pressure of the toes of Krishna. Trampled upon by the feet of Krishna, as they changed position in the dance, the snake fainted, and vomited forth much blood [*3]. Beholding the head and neck of their lord thus injured, and the blood flowing from his mouth, the females of the snake-king implored the clemency of Madhusudana. "Thou art recognised, O god of gods!" they exclaimed; "thou art the sovereign of all; thou art light supreme, inscrutable; thou art the mighty lord, the portion of that supreme light. The gods themselves are unable worthily to praise thee, the lord self-existent: how then shall females proclaim thy nature? How shall we fully declare him of whom the egg of Brahma, made up of earth, sky, water, fire, and air, is but a small portion of a part? Holy sages have in vain sought to know thy eternal essence. We bow to that form which is the most subtle of atoms, the largest of the large; to him whose birth is without a creator, whose end knows no destroyer, and who alone is the cause of duration. There is no wrath in thee; for thine is the protection of the world; and hence this chastisement of Kaliya. Yet hear us. Women are to be regarded with pity by the virtuous: animals are humanely treated even by fools. Let therefore the author of wisdom have compassion upon this poor creature. Thyself, as an oviparous, hooded snake, art the upholder of the world. Oppressed by thee, he will speedily perish. What is this feeble serpent, compared to thee in whom the universe reposes? Friendship and enmity are felt towards equals and superiors, not for those infinitely beneath us. Then, sovereign of the world, have mercy upon us. This unfortunate snake is about to expire: give us, as a gift of charity, our husband."

When they had thus spoken, the Naga himself, almost exanimate, repeated feebly their solicitations for mercy. "Forgive me," the murmured, "O god of gods! How shall I address thee, who art possessed, through thine own strength and essence, of the eight great faculties, in energy unequalled? Thou art the supreme, the progenitor of the supreme (Brahma): thou art the supreme spirit, and from thee the supreme proceeds: thou art beyond all finite objects; how can I speak thy praise? How can I declare his greatness, from whom come Brahma, Rudra, Chandra, Indra, the Maruts, the Aswins, the Vasus, and Adityas; of whom the whole world is an infinitely small portion, a portion destined to represent his essence; and whose nature, primitive or derived, Brahma and the immortals do not comprehend? How can I approach him, to whom the gods offer incense and flowers culled from the groves of Nandana; whose incarnate forms the king of the deities ever adores, unconscious of his real person; whom the sages, that have withdrawn their senses from all external objects, worship in thought, and enshrining his image in the purposes of their hearts, present to it the flowers of sanctity [*4]? I am quite unable, O god of gods, to worship or to hymn thee. Thy own clemency must alone influence thy mind to shew me compassion. It is the nature of snakes to be savage, and I am born of their kind: hence this is my nature, not mine offence. The world is created, as it is destroyed, by thee; and the species, form, and nature of all things in the world are thy work. Even such as thou hast created me in kind, in form, and in nature, such I am, and such are my actions: should I act differently, then indeed should I deserve thy punishment, for so thou hast declared [*5]. Yet that I have been punished by thee is indeed a blessing; for punishment from thee alone is a favour. Behold I am now without strength, without poison; deprived of both by thee. Spare me my life; I ask no more. Command me what I shall do."

Being thus addressed by Kaliya, Krishna replied, "You must not tarry here, nor any where in the stream of the Yamuna; depart immediately, with your family and followers, to the sea; where Garuda, the foe of the serpent race, will not harm you, when he sees the impressions of my feet upon your brow." So saying, Hari set the snake-king at liberty, who, bowing reverentially to his victor, departed to the ocean; abandoning, in the sight of all, the lake he had haunted, accompanied by all his females, children, and dependants. When the snake was gone, the Gopas hailed Govinda, as one risen from the dead, and embraced him, and bathed his forehead with tears of joy: others, contemplating the water of the river, now freed from peril, were filled with wonder, and sang the praise of Krishna, who is unaffected by works. Thus eminent by his glorious exploits, and eulogized by the Gopas and Gopas, Krishna returned to Vraja.

Footnotes

^512:1 The commentator says this means nothing more than that the waters of the pool were hot. I do not know if hot springs have been found in the bed or on the borders of the Jumna: the hot well of Sita-kund, near Mongir, is not far from the Ganges.

^513:3 Slapping the upper part of one arm with the hand of the other is a common act of defiance amongst Indian athletes.

^514:3 The expressions are and and Rechaka and Dandapata, which are said to be different dispositions of the feet in dancing; variations of the bhrama or pirouette; the latter is the a-plomb or descent. It is also read Dandapada-nipata, the falling of the feet, like that of a club.

^516:4 Bhava-pushpas: there are said to be eight such flowers, clemency, self-restraint, tenderness, patience, resignation, devotion, meditation, and truth.

^516:5 Both in the Vedas and in the institutes of law; where it is enjoined that every one shall discharge the duties of his caste and condition, and any deviation from them merits punishment; as by the texts 'In following prohibited observances, a person is punishable' and 'Who does acts unsuited to his natural disposition, incurs guilt.'

CHAP. VIII.

The demon Dhenuka destroyed by Rama.

AGAIN, tending upon the herds, Kes'ava and Rama wandered through the woods, and on one occasion came to a pleasing grove of palms, where dwelt the fierce demon Dhenuka, feeding upon the flesh of deer. Beholding the trees covered with fruit, and desirous of gathering it, the cowherds called out to the brothers, and said, "See, Rama; see, Krishna; in this grove, belonging to the great Dhenuka, the trees are loaded with ripe fruit, the smell of which perfumes the air: we should like to eat some. Will you throw some down?" As soon as the boys had spoken, Sankarshana and Krishna shook the trees, and brought down the fruit on the ground. Hearing the noise of the falling fruit, the fierce and malignant demon Dhenuka, in the form of an ass, hastened to the spot in a great passion, and began to kick Rama on the breast with his hinder heels. Rama, however, seized him by both hind legs, and whirling him round until he expired, tossed his carcass to the top of a palm tree, from the branches of which it struck down abundance of fruit, like rain drops poured upon earth by the wind. The animals that were of kin to Dhenuka came running to his aid; but Krishna and Rama treated them in the same manner, until the trees were laden with dead asses, and the ground was strewn with ripe fruit. Henceforward the cattle grazed unobstructed in the palm grove, and cropped the new pasturage, where they had never before ventured [*1].

Footnotes

^517:1 This exploit is related in the Bhagavata, Hari Vans'a, and other Vaishnava Puranas, much in the same strain, but not always in the same place: it more commonly precedes the legend of the discomfiture of Kaliya.

CHAP. IX.

Sports of the boys in the forest. Pralamba the Asura comes amongst them: is destroyed by Rama, at the command of Krishna.

WHEN the demon in the form of an ass, and all his tribe, had been destroyed, the grove of palms became the favourite resort of the Gopas and their wives, and the sons of Vasudeva, greatly pleased, repaired to the Bhandira fig tree. They continued to wander about, shouting and singing, and gathering fruits and flowers from the trees; now driving the cows afar to pasture; now calling them by

their names; now carrying the foot-ropes of the kine upon their shoulders; now ornamenting themselves with garlands of forest flowers, they looked like two young bulls when the horns first appear. Attired the one in yellow, and the other in sable garments, they looked like two clouds, one white, and one black, surmounted by the bow of Indra. Sporting mutually with frolics beneficial to the world, they roamed about like two monarchs over all the collected sovereigns of the earth. Assuming human duties, and maintaining the human character, they strayed through the thickets, amusing themselves with sports suited to their mortal species and condition, in swinging on the boughs of trees, or in boxing and wrestling and hurling stones.

Having observed the two lads thus playing about, the Asura Pralamba, seeking to devour them, came amongst the cowherd boys in the shape of one of themselves, and mixed, without being suspected, in their pastimes; for he thought, that, thus disguised, it would not be difficult to find an opportunity to kill, first Krishna, and afterwards the son of Rohini. The boys commenced playing at the game of leaping like deer, two and two together [*1]. Govinda was matched with Sridaman, and Balarama with Pralamba: the other boys were coupled with one another, and went leaping away. Govinda beat his companion, and Balarama his; and the boys who were on Krishna's side were also victorious. Carrying one another, they reached the Bhandira fig; and from thence those who were victors were conveyed back to the starting-ground by those who were vanquished. It being Pralamba's duty to carry Sankarshana, the latter mounted upon his shoulders, like the moon riding above a dark cloud; and the demon ran off with him, but did not stop: finding himself, however, unable to bear the weight of Balarama, he enlarged his bulk, and looked like a black cloud in the rainy season, Balarama beholding him like a scorched mountain, his head crowned with a diadem, and his neck hung round with garlands, having eyes as large as cart wheels, a fearful form, and shaking the earth with his tread, called out, as he was carried away, to his brother, "Krishna, Krishna, I am carried off by some demon, disguised as a cowherd, and huge as a mountain! What shall I do? Tell me, Madhusudana: the villain runs away with speed!" Krishna opened his mouth, smiling, for he well knew the might of the son of Rohini, and replied, "Why this subtle pretext of merely mortal nature? thou who art the soul of all the most subtle of subtle things. Remember yourself, the radical cause of the whole world; born before all cause, and all that is alone when the world is destroyed. Dost thou not know that you and I are alike the origin of the world, who have come down to lighten its load? The heavens are thy head; the waters are thy body; earth is thy feet; thy mouth is eternal fire; the moon is thy mind; the wind thy breath; thy arms and hands are the four regions of space. Thou hast, O mighty lord, a thousand heads, a thousand hands and feet and bodies; a thousand Brahmas spring from thee, who art before all, and whom the sages praise in myriads of forms. No one but I knoweth thy divine person. Thy incarnate person is glorified by all the gods. Knowest thou not, that, at the end of all, the universe disappears in thee? that, upheld by thee, this earth sustains living and inanimate things? and that, in the character of uncreated time, with its divisions of ages, developed from an instant, thou devourest the world? As the waters of the sea, when swallowed up by submarine flame, are recovered by the winds, and thrown, in the form of snow, upon the Himachala, where coming into contact with the rays of the sun, they reassume their watery nature [*2]; so the world, being devoured by thee at the period of dissolution, becomes of necessity, at the end of every Kalpa, the world again, through thy creative efforts. Thou and I, soul of the universe, are but one and the same cause of the creation of the earth, although, for its protection, we exist in distinct individuals. Calling to memory who thou art, O being of illimitable might, destroy of thyself the demon. Suspending a while your mortal character, do what is right."

Thus reminded by the magnanimous Krishna, the powerful Baladeva laughed, and squeezed Pralamba with his knees, striking him at the same time on the head and face with his fists, so as to beat out both his eyes. The demon, vomiting blood from his mouth, and having his brain forced through the skull, fell upon the ground, and expired. The Gopas, beholding Pralamba slain, were astonished, and rejoiced, and cried out, "Well done," and praised Balarama: and thus commended by his playfellows, and accompanied by Krishna, Bala, after the death of the daitya Pralamba, returned to Gokula [*3].

Footnotes

^518:1 Jumping with both feet at once, as deer bound, two boys together: the one that holds out longest, or comes to a given point first, is the victor, and the vanquished [p. 519] is then bound to carry him to the goal, if not already attained, and back again to the starting-post, on his shoulders. The Bhagavata does not specify the game, but mentions that the vanquished carry the victors on their backs.

^520:2 This passage is read and explained differently in different copies. In some it is, . And this is explained, 'The water of the ocean, devoured by the fire called Vadava, becoming condensed, or in the form of dew or snow, is seized by the wind called Kastaka, from which the Vadava fire has departed, consisting of a pipe of the solar rays, and being placed in the air, lies or is on the Himachala,' &c. This is rather an awkward and confused representation of the notion, and the other reading is somewhat preferable: it consists simply in substituting for that is, according to the commentary, 'The water devoured by the fire is thrown by the wind Ka, made of a solar ray &c., on the Himachala, where it assumes the form of snow;' and so on. However disfigured by inaccurate views of some of the instruments in operation, the physiology is in the main very correct, and indicates accurate observation of natural phenomena. The waters of the ocean, converted into vapour by solar heat, are raised by the same influence into the air, and thence borne by the winds to the summits of lofty mountain ranges, where they are arrested by a diminished temperature, descend in the form of snow, and again supply the streams that perpetually restore to the sea the treasures of which it is as perpetually plundered.

^521:3 According to the Hari Vans'a the gods themselves praised this proof of Rama's strength (bala), and hence he derived the name of Balarama.

CHAP. X.

Description of autumn. Krishna dissuades Nanda from worshipping Indra: recommends him and the Gopas to worship cattle and the mountains.

WHILST Kes'ava and Rama were sporting thus in Vraja, the rainy season ended, and was succeeded by the season of autumn, when the lotus is full blown. The small Saphari fish, in their watery burrows, were oppressed by the heat, like a man by selfish desires, who is devoted to his family. The peacocks, no longer animated by passion, were silent amidst the woods, like holy saints, who have come to know the unreality of the world. The clouds, of shining whiteness, exhausted of their watery wealth, deserted the atmosphere, like those who have acquired wisdom, and depart from their homes. Evaporated by the rays of the autumnal sun, the lakes were dried up, like the hearts of men when withered by the contact of selfishness. The pellucid waters of the season were suitably embellished by white water-lilies, as are the minds of the pure by the apprehension of truth. Brightly in the starry sky shone the moon with undiminished orb, like the saintly being, who has reached the last stage of bodily existence, in the company of the pious. The rivers and lakes slowly retired from their banks, as the wise by degrees shrink from the selfish attachment that connects them with wife and child. First abandoned by the waters of the lake, the swans again began to congregate, like false ascetics, whose devotions are interrupted, and they are again assailed by innumerable afflictions. The ocean was still and calm, and exhibited no undulations, like the perfect sage, who has completed his course of restraint, and has acquired undisturbed tranquillity of spirit. Every where the waters were as clear and pure as the minds of the wise, who behold Vishnu in all things. The autumnal sky was wholly free from clouds, like the heart of the ascetic, whose care's have been consumed by the fire of devotion. The moon allayed the fervours of the sun, as discrimination alleviates the pain to which egotism gives birth. The clouds of the atmosphere, the muddiness of the earth, the discoloration of the waters, were all removed by autumn, as abstraction detaches the senses from the objects of perception. The exercise of inspiring, suppressing, and expir-

ing the vital air, was as if performed daily by the waters of the lakes (as they were full, and stationary, and then again declined) [*1].

At this season, when the skies were bright with stars, Krishna, repairing to Vraja, found all the cowherds busily engaged in preparing for a sacrifice to be offered to Indra [*2]; and going to the elders, he asked them, as if out of curiosity, what festival of Indra it was in which they took so much pleasure. Nanda replied to his question, and said, "S'atakratu or Indra is the sovereign of the clouds and of the waters: sent by him, the former bestow moisture upon the earth, whence springs the grain, by which we and all embodied beings subsist; with which also, and with water, we please the gods: hence too these cows bear calves, and yield milk, and are happy, and well nourished. So when the clouds are seen distended with rain, the earth is neither barren of corn, nor bare of verdure, nor is man distressed by hunger. Indra, the giver of water, having drank the milk of earth by the solar ray, sheds it again upon the earth for the sustenance of all the world. On this account all sovereign princes offer with pleasure sacrifices to Indra at the end of the rains, and so also do we, and so do other people."

When Krishna heard this speech from Nanda in regard to the worship of Indra, he determined to put the king of the celestials into a passion, and replied, "We, father, are neither cultivators of the soil, nor dealers in merchandise; we are sojourners in forests, and cows are our divinities. There are four branches of knowledge, logical, scriptural, practical, and political [*3]. Hear me describe what practical science is. Agriculture, commerce, and tending of cattle; the knowledge of these three professions constitutes practical science. Agriculture is the subsistence of farmers; buying and selling, of traders. Kine are our support. Thus the knowledge of means of support is threefold. The object that is cultivated by any one should be to him as his chief divinity; that should be venerated and worshipped, as it is his benefactor. He who worships the deity of another, and diverts from him the reward that is his due, obtains not a prosperous station either in this world or in the next. Where the land ceases to be cultivated there are bounds assigned, beyond which commences the forest; the forests are bounded by the hills, and so far do our limits extend. We are not shut in with doors, nor confined within walls; we have neither fields nor houses; we wander about happily wherever we list, travelling in our waggons [*4]. The spirits of these mountains, it is said, walk the woods in whatever forms they will, or in their proper persons sport upon their own precipices. If they should be displeased with those who inhabit the forests, then, transformed to lions and beasts of prey, they will kill the offenders. We then are bound to worship the mountains; to offer sacrifices to cattle. What have we to do with Indra? cattle and mountains are our gods. Brahmans offer worship with prayer; cultivators of the earth adore their landmarks; but we who tend our herds in the forests and mountains should worship them and our kine. Let prayer and offerings then be addressed to the mountain Govardhana, and kill a victim in due form. Let the whole station collect their milk without delay, and feed with it the Brahmans and all who may desire to partake of it. When the oblations have been presented, and the Brahmans have been fed, let the Gopas circumambulate the cows, decorated with garlands of autumnal flowers. If the cowherds will attend to these suggestions, they will secure the favour of the mountain, of the cattle, and also mine."

When Nanda and the other Gopas heard these words of Krishna, their faces expanded with delight, and they said that he had spoken well. "You have judged rightly, child," exclaimed they; "we will do exactly as you have proposed, and offer adoration to the mountain." Accordingly the inhabitants of Vraja worshipped the mountain, presenting to it curds and milk and flesh; and they fed hundreds and thousands of Brahmans, and many other guests, who came to the ceremony, even as Krishna had enjoined: and when they had made their offerings, they circumambulated the cows and the bulls, that bellowed as loud as roaring clouds. Upon the summit of Govardhana, Krishna presented himself, saying, "I am the mountain," and partook of much food presented by the Gopas; whilst in his own form as Krishna he ascended the hill along with the cowherds, and worshipped his other self [*5]. Having promised them many blessings, the mountain-person of Krishna vanished; and the ceremony being completed, the cowherds returned to their station.

Footnotes

^{523:1} A set of very poor quibbles upon the terms of the Pranayama: or, Purana, drawing in the breath through one nostril; literally, 'filling:' Kumbhaka, closing the nostrils, and suppressing the breath; keeping it stationary or confined, as it were in a Kumbha, or waterpot: and Rechaka, opening the other nostril, and emitting the breath; literally, 'purging' or 'depletion.' The waters of the reservoirs, replenished in the beginning of the autumnal season by the previous rains, remain for a while full, until they are drawn off for irrigation, or reduced by evaporation: thus representing the three operations of Purana, Kumbhaka, and Rechaka.

^{523:2} No public worship is offered to Indra at present; and the only festival in the Hindu kalendar, the S'akradhwajotthana, the erection of a flag in honour of S'akra or Indra, should be held on the twelfth or thirteenth of Bhadra, which is in the very middle of the rainy season; according to the Tithi Tatwa, following the authority of the Kalika and Bhavishyottara Puranas. The S'akradhwajotthana is also a rite to be performed by kings and princes. It may be doubted, therefore, if the text intends any particular or appointed celebration.

^{524:3} Or, Anvikshiki, the science of inquiring by reasoning, Tarka, or logic: Trayi, the three Vedas collectively, or the doctrines they teach: Vartta, rendered 'practical,' is the knowledge of the means of acquiring subsistence: the fourth is Dandaniti, the science of government, both domestic and foreign.

^{524:4} These nomadic habits are entirely lost sight of in the parallel passages of those Puranas in which the juvenile life of Krishna is narrated. The text of the Hari Vans'a is in most of the other verses precisely the same as that of the Vishnu P., putting however into the mouth of Krishna a long additional eulogium on the season of autumn.

^{525:5} The Hari Vans'a says, 'an illusory Krishna, having become the mountain, ate the flesh that was offered.' Of course the 'personified' mountain is intended, as appears from several of the ensuing passages; as for instance, he says presently, 'I am satisfied; and then in his divine form he smiled.' The Hari Vans'a affords here, as in so many other places, proofs of its Dakhini origin. It is very copious upon the homage paid to the cattle, and their decoration with garlands and plumes of peacocks' feathers, of which our text takes no notice. But in the south of India there is a very popular festival, that of the Punjal, scarcely known in the north, when cattle are decorated and worshipped; a celebration which has no doubt suggested to the compiler of the Hari Vans'a the details which he describes.

CHAP. XI.

Indra, offended by the loss of his offerings, causes heavy rain to deluge Gokula. Krishna holds up the mountain Govardhana to shelter the cowherds and their cattle.

INDRA, being thus disappointed of his offerings, was exceedingly angry, and thus addressed a cohort of his attendant clouds, called Samvarttaka: "Ho, clouds," he said, "hear my words, and without delay execute what I command. The insensate cowherd Nanda, assisted by his fellows, has withheld the usual offerings to us, relying upon the protection of Krishna. Now, therefore, afflict the cattle, that are their sustenance, and whence their occupation is derived, with rain and wind. Mounted upon my elephant, as vast as a mountain peak, I will give you aid in strengthening the tempest." When Indra ceased, the clouds, obedient to his commands, came down, in a fearful storm of rain and wind, to destroy the cattle. In an instant the earth, the points of the horizon, and the sky, were all blended into one by the heavy and incessant shower. The clouds roared aloud, as if in terror of the lightning's scourge, and poured down uninterrupted torrents. The whole earth was enveloped in impenetrable darkness by the thick and volumed clouds; and above, below, and on every side, the world was water. The cattle, pelted by the storm, shrunk cowering into the smallest size, or gave up their breath: some covered their calves with their flanks, and some beheld their young ones carried

away by the flood. The calves, trembling in the wind, looked piteously at their mothers, or implored in low moans, as it were, the succour of Krishna. Hari, beholding all Gokula agitated with alarm, cowherds, cowherdresses, and cattle all in a state of consternation, thus reflected: "This is the work of Mahendra, in resentment of the prevention of his sacrifice, and it is incumbent on me to defend this station of herdsmen. I will lift up this spacious mountain from its stony base, and hold it up, as a large umbrella, over the cow-pens." Having thus determined, Krishna immediately plucked up the mountain Govardhana, and held it aloft with one hand in sport, saying to the herdsmen, "Lo the mountain is on high; enter beneath it quickly, and it will shelter you from the storm: here you will be secure and at your ease in places defended from the wind: enter without delay, and fear not that the mountain will fall." Upon this, all the people, with their herds, and their waggons and goods, and the Gopis, distressed by the rain, repaired to the shelter of the mountain, which Krishna held steadily over their heads; and Krishna, as he supported the mountain, was contemplated by the dwellers of Vraja with joy and wonder; and, as their eyes opened wide with astonishment and pleasure, the Gopas and Gopis sang his praise. For seven days and nights did the vast clouds sent by Indra rain upon the Gokula of Nanda to destroy its inhabitants, but they were protected by the elevation of the mountain; and the slayer of Bala, Indra, being foiled in his purpose, commanded the clouds to cease. The threats of Indra having been fruitless, and the heavens clear, all Gokula came forth from its shelter, and returned to its own abode. Then Krishna, in the sight of the surprised inhabitants of the forests, restored the great mountain Govardhana to its original site [*1].

Footnotes

^527:1 It seems not unlikely that this legend has some reference to the caves or cavern temples in various parts of India. A remarkable representation of it occurs upon the sculptured rocks of Mahabalipur. It is related much to the same purport in the Bhagavata, &c. S'is'upala, ridiculing the exploit, asserts that Govardhana was nothing more than an ant hill.

CHAP. XII.

Indra comes to Gokula: praises Krishna, and makes him prince over the cattle. Krishna promises to befriend Arjuna.

AFTER Gokula had been saved by the elevation of the mountain, Indra became desirous of beholding Krishna. The conqueror of his foes accordingly mounted his vast elephant Airavata, and came to Govardhana, where the king of the gods beheld the mighty Damodara tending cattle, and assuming the person of a cow-boy, and, although the preserver of the whole world, surrounded by the sons of the herdsmen: above his head he saw Garuda, the king of birds, invisible to mortals, spreading out his wings to shade the head of Hari. Alighting from his elephant, and addressing him apart, S'akra, his eyes expanding with pleasure, thus spake to Madhusudana: "Hear, Krishna, the reason why I have come hither; why I have approached thee; for thou couldest not otherwise conceive it. Thou, who art the supporter of all, hast descended upon earth, to relieve her of her burden. In resentment of my obstructed rites I sent the clouds to deluge Gokula, and they have done this evil deed. Thou, by raising up the mountain, hast preserved the cattle; and of a verity I am much pleased, O hero, with thy wondrous deed. The object of the gods is now, methinks, accomplished, since with thy single hand thou hast raised aloft this chief of mountains. I have now come by desire of the cattle [*1], grateful for their preservation, in order to install you as Upendra; and, as the Indra of the cows, thou shalt be called Govinda [*2]." Having thus said, Mahendra took a ewer from his elephant Airavata, and with the holy water it contained performed the regal ceremony of aspersion. The cattle, as the rite was celebrating, deluged the earth with their milk.

When Indra had, by direction of the kine, inaugurated Krishna, the husband of S'achi said to him affectionately, "I have thus performed what the cows enjoined me. Now, illustrious being, hear what farther I propose, with a view to facilitate your task. A portion of me has been born as Arjuna,

the son of Pritha: let him ever be defended by thee, and he will assist thee in bearing thy burden. He is to be cherished by thee, Madhusudana, like another self." To this Krishna replied, "I know thy son, who has been born in the race of Bharata, and I will befriend him as long as I continue upon earth. As long as I am present, invincible S'akra, no one shall be able to subdue Arjuna in fight. When the great demon Kansa has been slain, and Arishta, Kes'in, Kuvalayapida, Naraka, and other fierce Daityas, shall have been put to death, there will take place a great war, in which the burden of the earth will be removed. Now therefore depart, and be not anxious on account of thy son; for no foe shall triumph over Arjuna whilst I am present. For his sake I will restore to Kunti all her sons; with Yudhishtira at their head, unharmed, when the Bharata war is at an end."

Upon Krishna's ceasing to speak, he and Indra mutually embraced; and the latter, mounting his elephant Airavata, returned to heaven. Krishna, with the cattle and the herdsmen, went his way to Vraja, where the wives of the Gopas watched for his approach.

Footnotes

^{^528:1} Gobhischa chodita; that is, 'delegated,' says the commentator, 'by the cow of plenty, Kamadhenu, and other celestial kine, inhabitants of Goloka, the heaven of cows:' but this is evidently unauthorized by the text, as celestial cattle could not be grateful for preservation upon earth; and the notion of Goloka, a heaven of cows and Krishna, is a modern piece of mysticism, drawn from such sectarial works as the Brahma Vaivartta P. and Hari Vans'a.

^{^528:2} The purport of Indra's speech is to explain the meaning of two of Krishna's names, Upendra and Govinda. The commentators on the Amara Kosha agree in [p. 529] explaining the first, the younger brother of Indra, conformably to the synonyme that immediately follows in the text of Amara, Indravaraja; a name that occurs also in the Mahabharata: Krishna, as the son of Devaki, who is an incarnation of Aditi, being born of the latter subsequently to Indra. Govinda is he who knows, finds, or tends cattle; Gam vindati. The Pauranik etymology makes the latter the Indra (quasi) of cows; and in this capacity he may well be considered as a minor or inferior Indra, such being the proper sense of the term Upendra (Upa in composition); as, Upa-purana, 'a minor Purana,' &c. The proper import of the word Upendra has, however, been anxiously distorted by the sectarian followers of Krishna. Thus the commentator on our text asserts that Upa is here synonymous with Upari, and that Upendratwa, 'the station of Upendra,' means 'rule in the heaven of heavens, Goloka;' a new creation of this sect, above Satya-loka, which, in the uncorrupt Pauranik system, is the highest of the seven Lokas: see <page 213>. So the Hari Vans'a makes Indra say, 'As thou, Krishna, art appointed, by the cows, Indra superior to me, therefore the deities in heaven shall call thee Upendra.' The Bhagavata does not introduce the name, though it no doubt alludes to it in making the divine cow Surabhi, who is said to have come from Goloka with Indra, address Krishna, and say, 'We, instructed by Brahma, will crown you as our Indra.' Accordingly Krishna has the water of the Ganges thrown over him by the elephant of Indra, and Indra, the gods, and sages praise him, and salute him by the appellation of Govinda. The Hari Vans'a assigns this to Indra alone, who says, 'I am only the Indra of the gods; thou hast attained the rank of Indra of the kine, and they shall for ever celebrate thee on earth as Govinda.' All this is very different from the sober account of our text, and is undoubtedly of comparatively recent origin.

CHAP. XIII.

Krishna praised by the cowherds: his sports with the Gopis: their imitation and love of hire. The Rasa dance.

AFTER S'akra had departed, the cowherds said to Krishna, whom they had seen holding up Govardhana, "We have been preserved, together with our cattle, from a great peril, by your supporting the mountain above us; but this is very astonishing child's play, unsuitable to the condition of a herdsman, and all thy actions are those of a god. Tell us what is the meaning of all this. Kaliya has

been conquered in the lake; Pralamba has been killed; Govardhana has been lifted up: our minds are filled with amazement. Assuredly we repose at the feet of Hari, O thou of unbounded might! for, having witnessed thy power, we cannot believe thee to be a man. Thy affection, Kes'ava, for our women and children, and for Vraja; the deeds that thou hast wrought, which all the gods would have attempted in vain; thy boyhood, and thy prowess; thy humiliating birth amongst us; are contradictions that fill us with doubt, whenever we think of them. Yet reverence be to thee, whether thou be a god, or a demon, or a Yaksha, or a Gandharba, or whatever we may deem thee; for thou art our friend." When they had ended, Krishna remained silent for some time, as if hurt and offended, and then replied to them, "Herdsmen, if you are not ashamed of my relationship; if I have merited your praise; what occasion is there for you to engage in any discussion concerning me? If you have any regard for me; if I have deserved your praise; then be satisfied to know that I am your kinsman. I am neither god, nor Yaksha, nor Gandharba, nor Danava; I have been born your relative, and you must not think differently of me." Upon receiving this answer, the Gopas held their peace, and went into the woods, leaving Krishna apparently displeased.

But Krishna, observing the clear sky bright with the autumnal moon, and the air perfumed with the fragrance of the wild water-lily, in whose buds the clustering bees were murmuring their songs, felt inclined to join with the Gopis in sport. Accordingly he and Rama commenced singing sweet low strains in various measures, such as the women loved; and they, as soon as they heard the melody, quitted their homes, and hastened to meet the foe of Madhu. One damsel gently sang an accompaniment to his song; another attentively listened to his melody: one calling out upon his name, then shrunk abashed; whilst another, more bold, and instigated by affection, pressed close to his side: one, as she sallied forth, beheld some of the seniors of the family, and dared not venture, contenting herself with meditating on Krishna with closed eyes, and entire devotion, by which immediately all acts of merit were effaced by rapture, and all sin was expiated by regret at not beholding him: and others, again, reflecting upon the cause of the world, in the form of the supreme Brahma, obtained by their sighing final emancipation. Thus surrounded by the Gopis, Krishna thought the lovely moonlight night of autumn propitious to the Rasa dance [*1]. Many of the Gopis imitated the different actions of Krishna, and in his absence wandered through Vrindavan, representing his person. "I am Krishna," cries one; "behold the elegance of my movements." "I am Krishna," exclaims another; "listen to my song." "Vile Kaliya, stay! for I am Krishna," is repeated by a third, slapping her arms in defiance. A fourth calls out, "Herdsmen, fear nothing; be steady; the danger of the storm is over, for, lo, I lift up Govardhana for your shelter." And a fifth proclaims, "Now let the herds graze where they will, for I have destroyed Dhenuka." Thus in various actions of Krishna the Gopis imitated him, whilst away, and beguiled their sorrow by mimicking his sports. Looking down upon the ground, one damsel calls to her friend, as the light down upon her body stands erect with joy, and the lotuses of her eyes expand, "See here are the marks of Krishna's feet, as he has gone alone sportively, and left the impressions of the banner, fife thunderbolt, and the goad [*2]. What lovely maiden has been his companion, inebriate with passion, as her irregular footmarks testify? Here Damodara has gathered flowers from on high, for we see alone the impressions of the tips of his feet. Here a nymph has sat down with him, ornamented with flowers, fortunate in having propitiated Vishnu in a prior existence. Having left her in an arrogant mood, because he had offered her flowers, the son of Nanda has gone by this road; for see, unable to follow him with equal steps, his associate has here tripped along upon her toes, and, holding his hand, the damsel has passed, as is evident from the uneven and intermingled footsteps. But the rogue has merely taken her hand, and left her neglected, for here the paces indicate the path of a person in despair. Undoubtedly he promised that he would quickly come again, for here are his own footsteps returning with speed. Here he has entered the thick forest, impervious to the rays of the moon, and his steps can be traced no farther." Hopeless then of beholding Krishna, the Gopis returned, and repaired to the banks of the Yamuna, where they sang his songs; and presently they beheld the preserver of the three worlds, with a smiling aspect, hastening towards them: on which, one exclaimed, "Krishna! Krishna!" unable to articulate any thing else: another affected to contract her forehead with frowns, as drinking with the bees

of her eyes the lotus of the face of Hari: another, closing her eyelids, contemplated internally his form, as if engaged in an act of devotion. Then Madhava, coming amongst them, conciliated some with soft speeches, some with gentle looks, and some he took by the hand; and the illustrious deity sported with them in the stations of the dance. As each of the Gopis, however, attempted to keep in one place, close to the side of Krishna, the circle of the dance could not be constructed, and he therefore took each by the hand, and when their eyelids were shut by the effects of such touch, the circle was formed [*3]. Then proceeded the dance to the music of their clashing bracelets, and songs that celebrated in suitable strain the charms of the autumnal season. Krishna sang the moon of autumn, a mine of gentle radiance; but the nymphs repeated the praises of Krishna alone. At times, one of them, wearied by the revolving dance, threw her arms, ornamented with tinkling bracelets, round the neck of the destroyer of Madhu: another, skilled in the art of singing his praises, embraced him. The drops of perspiration from the arms of Hari were like fertilizing rain, which produced a crop of down upon the temples of the Gopis. Krishna sang the strain that was appropriate to the dance. The Gopis repeatedly exclaimed, "Bravo, Krishna!" to his song. When leading, they followed him; when returning, they encountered him; and, whether he went forwards or backwards, they ever attended on his steps. Whilst frolicking thus with the Gopis, they considered every instant without him a myriad of years; and, prohibited in vain by husbands, fathers, brothers, they went forth at night to sport with Krishna, the object of their affection. Thus the illimitable being, the benevolent remover of all imperfections, assumed the character of a youth amongst the females of the herdsmen of Vraja; pervading their natures, and that of their lords, by his own essence, all diffusive like the wind: for even as in all creatures the elements of ether, fire, earth, water, and air, are comprehended, so also is he every where present, and in all.

Footnotes

^{532:1} The Rasa dance is danced by men and women, holding each other's hands, and going round in a circle, singing the airs to which they dance. According to Bharata, the airs are various both in melody and time, and the number of persons should not exceed sixty-four.

^{532:2} The soles of the feet of a deity are [p. 533] usually marked by a variety of emblematical figures: this is carried to the greatest extravagance by the Buddhists, the marks on the feet of Gautama being 130: see Trans. R. As. Soc. III. 70. It is a decoration very moderately employed by the Hindus.

^{533:3} This is a rather inexplicit statement, but the comment makes it clear. Krishna, it is said, in order to form the circle, takes each damsel by the hand, and leads her to her place: there he quits her; but the effect of the contact is such, that it deprives her of the power of perception, and [p. 534] she contentedly takes the hand of her female neighbour, thinking it to be Krishna's. The Bhagavata is bolder, and asserts that Krishna multiplied himself, and actually stood between each two damsels: 'The Rasa dance, formed of a circle graced by the Gopis, was then led off by the lord of magic, Krishna having placed himself in the midst of every two of the nymphs.' The Hari Vans'a intimates the same, though not very fully: 'Then all the nymphs of the cowherds, placing themselves in couples in a row, engaged in pleasant diversion, singing the deeds of Krishna.' The Pankti, or row, is said by the commentator to mean here, the Mandala, or ring; and the couples' to imply that Krishna was between every two. He quotes a verse to this effect from some other Vaishnava work: 'Between each two damsels was Madhava, and between each two Madhavas was a nymph; and the son of Devaki played on the flute:' for, in fact, Krishna is not only dancing with each, but also by himself in the centre; for this the commentator on the Hari Vans'a cites a passage from the Vedas: . Literally, 'The many-formed (being) assumes (various) bodies. One form stood apart, occupying triple observance.' Now if the verse be genuine, it probably refers to something that has little to do with Krishna; but it is explained to apply to the Rasa; the form of Krishna being supposed to be meant, as wholly distinct from the Gopis, and yet being beheld by every one of them, on each side and in front of her. In the meditation upon Krishna, which is enjoined in the Brahma Vaivartta, he is

to be contemplated in the centre of the Rasa Mandala, in association with his favourite Radha; but the Mandala described in that work is not a ring of dancers, but a circle of definite space at Vrindavana, within which Krishna, Radha, and the Gopis divert themselves, not very decorously. This work has probably given the tone to the style in which the annual festival, the Rasa Yatra, is celebrated in various parts of India, in the month of Kartika, upon the sun's entrance into Libra, by nocturnal dances, and representations of the sports of Krishna. A circular dance of men and women, however, does not form any prominent feature at these entertainments, and it may be doubted if it is ever performed. Some of the earliest labourers in the field of Hindu mythology have thought this circular dance to typify the dance of the planets round the sun (Maurice, *Ancient History of Hindus*, I. 108. II. 356); but there is no particular number assigned to the performers by any of the Hindu authorities, beyond its limitation to sixty-four. At the Rasa Mandala of the Brahma Vaivartta, Radha is accompanied by thirty-six of her most particular friends amongst the Gopis, but they are each attended by thousands of inferior personages, and none [p. 535] of the crowd are left without male multiples of Krishna. The only mysticism hinted at in that Purana, is, that these are all one with Krishna: the varied vital conditions of one spirit being represented by the Gopis and the illusory manifestations of Krishna: he himself being supreme unmodified soul.

CHAP. XIV.

Krishna kills the demon Arishta, in the form of a bull.

ONE evening, whilst Krishna and the Gopis were amusing themselves in the dance, the demon Arishta, disguised as a savage bull, came to the spot, after having spread alarm through the station. His colour was that of a cloud charged with rain; he had vast horns, and his eyes were like two fiery suns: as he moved, he ploughed up the ground with his hoofs: his tongue was repeatedly licking his lips; his tail was erect; the sinews of his shoulders were firm, and between them rose a hump of enormous dimensions; his haunches were soiled with ordure, and he was a terror to the herds; his dewlap hung low, and his face was marked with scars from butting against the trees. Terrifying all the kine, the demon who perpetually haunts the forests in the shape of a bull, destroying hermits and ascetics, advanced. Beholding an animal of such a formidable aspect, the herdsmen and their women were exceedingly frightened, and called aloud on Krishna, who came to their succour, shouting and slapping his arm in defiance. When the Daitya heard the noise, he turned upon his challenger, and fixing his eyes and pointing his horns at the belly of Kes'ava, he ran furiously upon the youth. Krishna stirred not from his post, but, smiling in sport and derision, awaited the near approach of the bull, when he seized him as an alligator would have done, and held him firmly by the horns, whilst he pressed his sides with his knees. Having thus humbled his pride, and held him captive by his horns, he wrung his throat, as if it had been a piece of wet cloth; and then tearing off one of the horns, he beat the fierce demon with it until he died, vomiting blood from his mouth. Seeing him slain, the herdsmen glorified Krishna, as the companies of the celestials of old praised Indra, when he triumphed over the Asura Jambha [*1].

Footnotes

^536:1 This exploit is related a little more in detail in the Bhagavata and Hari Vans'a.

CHAP. XV.

Kansa informed by Narada of the existence of Krishna and Balarama: he sends Kes'in to destroy them, and Akrura to bring them to Mathura.

AFTER these things had come to pass, Arishta the bull-demon and Dhenuka and Pralamba had been slain, Govardhana had been lifted up, the serpent Kaliya had been subdued, the two trees had been broken, the female fiend Putana had been killed, and the waggon had been overturned, Narada went to Kansa, and related to him the whole, beginning with the transference of the child from Devaki to

Yas'oda, Hearing this from Narada, Kansa was highly incensed with Vasudeva, and bitterly reproached him, and all the Yadavas, in an assembly of the tribe. Then reflecting what was to be done, he determined to destroy both Krishna and Rama whilst they were yet young, and before they had attained to manly vigour: for which purpose he resolved to invite them from Vraja, under pretext of the solemn rite of the lustration of arms, when he would engage them in a trial of strength with his chief boxers, Chanura and Mushtika, by whom they would assuredly be killed. "I will send," he said, "the noble Yadu, Akrura the son of Swaphalka, to Gokula, to bring them hither: I will order the fierce Kes'in, who haunts the woods of Vrindavan, to attack them, and he is of unequalled might, and will surely kill them; or, if they arrive here, my elephant Kuvalayapida shall trample to death these two cow-boy sons of Vasudeva." Having thus laid his plans to destroy Rama and Janarddana, the impious Kansa sent for the heroic Akrura, and said to him, "Lord of liberal gifts [*1], attend to my words, and, out of friendship for me, perform my orders. Ascend your chariot, and go hence to the station of the herdsman Nanda. Two vile boys, portions of Vishnu, have been born there, for the express object of effecting my destruction. On the fourteenth lutation I have to celebrate the festival of arms [*2], and I wish them to be brought here by you, to take part in the games, and that the people may see them engage in a boxing match with my two dexterous athletae, Chanura and Mushtika; or haply my elephant Kuvalayapida, driven against them by his rider, shall kill these two iniquitous youngsters, sons of Vasudeva. When they are out of the way, I will put to death Vasudeva himself, the cowherd Nanda, and my foolish father, Ugrasena, and I will seize upon the herds and flocks, and all the possessions, of the rebellious Gopas, who have ever been my foes. Except thou, lord of liberality, all the Yadavas are hostile to me; but I will devise schemes for their extirpation, and I shall then reign over my kingdom, in concert with thee, without any annoyance. Through regard for me, therefore, do thou go as I direct thee; and thou shalt command the cowherds to bring in with speed their supplies of milk and butter and curds."

Being thus instructed, the illustrious Akrura readily undertook to visit Krishna, and, ascending his stately chariot, he went forth from the city of Mathura.

Footnotes

^537:1 Danapati: the epithet refers to Akrura's possession of the Syamantaka gem (see <page 433>); although, as here used by Kansa, it is an anachronism, the gem not becoming his until after Krishna's maturity.

^537:2 Dhanurmaha: the same phrase [p. 538] occurs in the different authorities. In its ordinary acception it would imply any military festival. There is one of great celebrity, which, in the south of India, closes the Dasahara, or festival of Durga, when military exercises are performed, and a field is ravaged, as typical of the opening of a campaign. Worship is paid to military implements. The proper day for this is the Vijaya das'ami, or tenth of the light half of As'win, falling about the end of September or beginning of October. Trans. Bombay Soc. III. 73; also Amara Kosha, under the word (Lohabhisara). Both our text and that of the Bhagavata, however, intimate the celebration of the feast in question on the fourteenth day of the fortnight (in what month is not specified), and an occasional 'passage of arms,' therefore is all that is intended. The fourteenth day of the light lutation of any month is commonly held appropriate for a holiday, or religious rite. It will be seen in the sequel, that the leading feature of the ceremonial was intended to have been a trial of archery, spoiled by Krishna's breaking the bow that was to have been used on the occasion.

CHAP. XVI.

Kes'in, in the form of a horse, slain by Krishna: he is praised by Narada.

KES'IN, confiding in his prowess, having received the commands of Kansa, set off to the woods of Vrindavana, with the intention of destroying Krishna. He came in the shape of a steed, spurning the earth with his hoofs, scattering the clouds with his mane, and springing in his paces beyond the or-

bits of the sun and moon. The cowherds and their females, hearing his neighings, were struck with terror, and fled to Govinda for protection, calling upon him to save them. In a voice deep as the roaring of the thundercloud, Krishna replied to them, "Away with these fears of Kes'in; is the valour of a hero annihilated by your alarms? What is there to apprehend from one of such little might, whose neighings are his only terrors; a galloping and vicious steed, who is ridden by the strength of the Daityas? Come on, wretch – I am Krishna – and I will knock all thy teeth down thy throat, as the wielder of the trident did to Pushan [*1]." Thus defying him to combat, Govinda went to encounter Kes'in. The demon ran upon him, with his mouth opened wide; but Krishna enlarging the bulk of his arm, thrust it into his mouth, and wrenched out the teeth, which fell from his jaws like fragments of white clouds. Still the arm of Krishna, in the throat of the demon, continued to enlarge, like a malady increasing from its commencement till it ends in dissolution. From his torn lips the demon vomited foam and blood; his eyes rolled in agony; his joints gave way; he beat the earth with his feet; his body was covered with perspiration; he became incapable of any effort. The formidable demon, having his mouth rent open by the arm of Krishna, fell down, torn asunder like a tree struck by lightning: he lay separated into two portions, each having two legs, half a back, half a tail, one ear, one eye, and one nostril. Krishna stood, unharmed and smiling, after the destruction of the demon, surrounded by the cowherds, who, together with their women, were filled with astonishment at the death of Kes'in, and glorified the amiable god with the lotus eyes. Narada the Brahman, invisible, seated in a cloud, beheld the fall of Kes'in, and delightedly exclaimed, "Well done, lord of the universe, who in thy sports hast destroyed Kes'in, the oppressor of the denizens of heaven! Curious to behold this great combat between a man and a horse – such a one as was never before heard of – I have come from heaven. Wonderful are the works that thou hast done, in thy descent upon the earth! they have excited my astonishment; but this, above all, has given me pleasure. Indra and the gods lived in dread of this horse, who tossed his mane, and neighed, and looked down upon the clouds. For this, that thou hast slain the impious Kes'in, thou shalt be known in the world by the name of Kes'ava [*2]. Farewell: I will now depart. I shall meet thee again, conqueror of Kes'in, in two days more, in conflict with Kansa. When the son of Ugrasena, with his followers, shall have been slain, then, upholder of the earth, will earth's burdens have been lightened by thee. Many are the battles of the kings that I have to see, in which thou shalt be renowned. I will now depart, Govinda. A great deed, and acceptable to the gods, has been done by thee. I have been much delighted with thee, and now take my leave." When Narada had gone, Krishna, not in any way surprised, returned with the Gopas to Gokula; the sole object of the eyes of the women of Vraja [*3].

Footnotes

^539:1 As Virabhadra did to Pusha or Pushan, a form of Surya, at the sacrifice of Daksha: see <page 67>. n. .

^540:2 Or Kes'i and va, 'who kills,' from vadh or badh, 'to kill:' but this is a Pauranik etymology, and less satisfactory than the usual grammatical one of Kes'a, 'hair,' and 'va' possessive affix: Krishna corresponding in this respect to the Apollo Crinitus. It is also derived from the legend of his origin from 'a hair' (see <page 497>. n.): and again, Kes'a is said to purport 'radiance' or 'rays,' whether of the sun or moon or fire; all which are the light of Krishna: whence he is called Kes'ava, 'the rayed' or 'radiant.' Mahabharata, Moksha Dharma.

^540:3 The legend is told by all the other narrators of Krishna's juvenile exploits.

CHAP. XVII.

Akrura's meditations on Krishna: his arrival at Gokula: his delight at seeing Krishna and his brother.

AKRURA, having set off in his quick travelling car, proceeded to visit Krishna at the pastures of Nanda; and, as he went along, he congratulated himself on his superior good fortune, in having an opportunity of beholding a descended portion of the deity. "Now," thought he, "has my life borne

fruit; my night is followed by the dawn of day; since I shall see the countenance of Vishnu, whose eyes are like the expanded leaf of the lotus. I shall behold that lotus-eyed aspect of Vishnu, which, when seen only in imagination, takes away the sins of men. I shall to-day behold that glory of glories, the mouth of Vishnu, whence proceeded the Vedas, and all their dependant sciences. I shall see the sovereign of the world, by whom the world is sustained; who is worshipped as the best of males, as the male of sacrifice in sacrificial rites. I shall see Kes'ava, who is without beginning or end; by worshipping whom with a hundred sacrifices, Indra obtained the sovereignty over the gods. That Hari, whose nature is unknown to Brahma, Indra, Rudra, the As'wins, the Vasus, Adityas, and Maruts, will this day touch my body. The soul of all, the knower of all, he who is all, and is present in all, he who is permanent, undecaying, all-pervading, will converse with me. He, the unborn, who has preserved the world in the various forms of a fish, a tortoise, a boar, a horse [*1], a lion, will this day speak to me. Now the lord of the earth, who assumes shapes at will, has taken upon him the condition of humanity, to accomplish some object cherished in his heart. That Ananta, who holds the earth upon his crest, and who has descended upon earth for its protection, will this day call me by my name. Glory to that being, whose deceptive adoption of father, son, brother, friend, mother, and relative, the world is unable to penetrate. Glory to him, who is one with true knowledge, who is inscrutable, and through whom, seated in his heart, the Yogi crosses the wide expanse of worldly ignorance and illusion. I bow to him, who, by the performers of holy rites, is called the male of sacrifice (Yajnapurusha); by pious worshippers is termed Vasudeva; and by the cultivators of philosophy, Vishnu. May he in whom cause and effect, and the world itself, is comprehended, be propitious to me, through his truth; for always do I put my trust in that unborn, eternal Hari; by meditation on whom, man becomes the repository of all good things."

His mind thus animated by devout faith, and meditating in this manner, Akrura proceeded on his road, and arrived at Gokula a little before sunset, at the time of the milking of the cows; and there he saw Krishna amongst the cattle, dark as the leaf of the full blown lotus; his eyes of the same colour, and his breast decorated with the Srivatsa mark; long armed, and broad chested; having a high nose, and a lovely countenance, brightened with mirthful smiles; treading firmly on the ground, with feet whose nails were tinted red; clad in yellow garments, and adorned with a garland of forest flowers; having a fresh-gathered creeper in his hand, and a chaplet of white lotus flowers on his head. Akrura also beheld there Balabhadra, white as a jasmine, a swan, or the moon, and dressed in blue raiment; having large and powerful arms, and a countenance as radiant as a lotus in bloom; like another Kailasa mountain, crested with a wreath of clouds.

When Akrura saw these two youths, his countenance expanded with delight, and the down of his body stood erect with pleasure: for this he thought to be supreme happiness and glory; this, the double manifestation of the divine Vasudeva; this was the twofold gratification of his sight, to behold the creator of the universe: now he hoped that his bodily form would yield fruit, as it would bring him in contact with the person of Krishna; and that the wearer of infinite forms would place his hand on his back; the touch of whose finger alone is sufficient to dispel sin, and to secure imperishable felicity: that hand which launches the fierce irresistible discus, blazing with all the flames of fire, lightning, and the sun, and slaughtering the demon host washes the collyrium from the eyes of their brides: that hand into which Bali poured water, and thence obtained ineffable enjoyments below the earth, and immortality and dominion over the gods for a whole Manwantara, without peril from a foe. "Alas! he will despise me, for my connexion with Kansa, an associate with evil, though not contaminated by it. How vain is his birth, who is shunned by the virtuous? and yet what is there in this world unknown to him who resides in the hearts of all men, who is ever existent, exempt from imperfection, the aggregate of the quality of purity, and identical with true knowledge? With a heart wholly devoted to him, then, I will approach the lord of all lords, the descended portion of Purushottama, of Vishnu, who is without beginning, middle, or end."

Footnotes

^541:1 The commentator explains this to mean Hayagriva, or Vishnu with the neck and head of a horse; who, it is said in the second book of the Bhagavata, appeared at the end of a great sacrifice performed by Brahma, and breathed from his nostrils the texts of the Vedas. The fourth Avatara is always elsewhere said to be the Vamana, or dwarf.

CHAP. XVIII.

Grief of the Gopis on the departure of Krishna and Balarama with Akrura: their leaving Gokula. Akrura bathes in the Yamuna; beholds the divine forms of the two youths, and praises Vishnu.

THUS meditating, the Yadava approached Govinda, and addressed him, and said, "I am Akrura," and bowed his head down to the feet of Hari; but Krishna laid upon him his hand, which was marked with the flag, the thunderbolt, and the lotus, and drew him towards him, and affectionately embraced him. Then Kes'ava and Rama entered into conversation with him, and, having heard from him all that had occurred, were much pleased, and led him to their habitation: there they resumed their discourse, and gave him food to eat, and treated him with proper hospitality. Akrura told them how their father Anakadundubhi, the princess Devaki, and even his own father, Ugrasena, had been insulted by the iniquitous demon Kansa: he also related to them the purpose for which he had been dispatched. When he had told them all these things, the destroyer of Kes'in said to him, "I was aware of all that you have told me, lord of liberal gifts: Rama and I will go to-morrow to Mathura along with you. The elders of the cowherds shall accompany us, bearing ample offerings. Rest here to-night, and dismiss all anxiety. Within three nights I will slay Kansa and his adherents."

Having given orders accordingly to the cowherds, Akrura, with Kes'ava and Rama, retired to rest, and slept soundly in the dwelling of Nanda. The next morning was bright, and the youths prepared to depart for Mathura with Akrura. The Gopis, seeing them about to set forth, were much afflicted; they wept bitterly, their bracelets were loose upon their arms, and they thus communed together: "If Govinda depart for Mathura, how will he return to Gokula? his ears will there be regaled with the melodious and polished conversation of the women of the city. Accustomed to the language of the graceful females of Mathura, he will never again endure the rustic expressions of the Gopis. Hari, the pride of the station, is carried off, and a fatal blow is inflicted upon us by inexorable destiny, Expressive smiles, soft language, graceful airs, elegant gait, and significant glances, belong to the women of the city. Hari is of rustic breeding, and, captivated by their fascinations, what likelihood is there of his returning to the society of any one amongst us? Kes'ava, who has mounted the car to go to Mathura, has been deceived by the cruel, vile, and desperate Akrura. Does not the unfeeling traitor know the affection that we all here feel for our Hari, the joy of our eyes, that he is taking him away? Unkind that he is, Govinda is departing from us, along with Rama: haste! let us stop him! Why talk of telling our seniors that we cannot bear his loss? What can they do for us, when we are consumed by the fires of separation? The Gopas, with Nanda at their head, are themselves preparing to depart; no one makes any attempt to detain Govinda. Bright is the morning that succeeds to this night for the women of Mathura, for the bees of their eyes will feed upon the lotus face of Achyuta. Happy are they who may go hence without impediment, and behold, enraptured, Krishna on his journey. A great festival will give pleasure to-day to the eyes of the inhabitants of Mathura, when they see the person of Govinda. What a blissful vision will be seen by the happy women, of the city, whose brilliant eyes shall regard, unchecked, the countenance of Krishna! Alas! the eyes of the Gopis have been deprived of sight by the relentless Brahma, after he had shewn them this great treasure. In proportion as the affection of Hari for us decays, so do our limbs wither, and the bracelets slip from our arms: and now the cruel Akrura urges on the horses: all conspire to treat unhappy females with unkindness. Alas! alas! we see now only the dust of his chariot wheels! and now he is far away, for even that dust is no longer to be seen!" Thus lamented by the women, Kes'ava and Rama quitted the district of Vraja [*1]. Travelling in a car drawn by fleet horses, they arrived at

noon at the banks of the Yamuna, when Akrura requested them to halt a little, whilst he performed the usual daily ceremonial in the river [*2]. Accordingly the intelligent Akrura bathed, and rinsed his mouth, and then entering the stream, he stood meditating upon the supreme being; but he beheld mentally [*3] Balabhadra, having a thousand hooded beads, a garland of Jasmine flowers, and large red eyes, attended by Vasuki, Rambha, and other mighty serpents, praised by the Gandharbas, decorated with wild flowers, wearing dark coloured garments, crowned with a chaplet of lotuses, ornamented with brilliant earrings, inebriate, and standing at the bottom of the river in the water [*4]. On his lap he also beheld, at his ease, Krishna, of the complexion of a cloud [*5], with full and copery eyes, having an elegant form, and four hands, armed with the discus and other weapons, wearing yellow clothes, decorated with many coloured flowers, and appearing like a cloud embellished with streams of lightning and the bow of Indra; his breast was marked with the celestial sign, his arms were radiant with bracelets, a diadem shone on his brow, and he wore a white lotus for his crest: he was attended by Sanandana and other holy sages, who, fixing their eyes upon the tips of their noses, were absorbed in profound meditation.

When Akrura beheld Balarama and Krishna in this situation, he was much amazed, and wondered how they could so quickly have got there from the chariot. He wished to ask them this, but Janardana deprived him of the faculty of speech at the moment. Ascending then from the water, he repaired to the car, and there he found them both quietly seated in the same human persons as before. Plunging again into the water, there he again beheld them, hymned as before by the Gandharbas, saints, sages, and serpents. Apprehending, therefore, their real character, he thus eulogized the eternal deity, who consists of true knowledge: – "Salutation to thee, who art uniform and manifold, all-pervading, supreme spirit, of inconceivable glory, and who art simple existence. Salutation to thee, O inscrutable, who art truth, and the essence of oblations. Salutation to thee, O lord, whose nature is unknown, who art beyond primeval matter, who existest in five forms, as one with the elements, with the faculties, with matter, with the living soul, with supreme spirit. Shew favour to me, O soul of the universe, essence of all things, perishable or eternal, whether addressed by the designation of Brahma, Vishnu, S'iva, or the like. I adore thee, O god, whose nature is indescribable, whose purposes are inscrutable, whose name even is unknown; for the attributes of kind or appellation are not applicable to thee, who art THAT [*6], the supreme Brahma, eternal, unchangeable, untreated. But as the accomplishment of our objects cannot be attained except through some specific form, thou art termed by us Krishna, Achyuta, Ananta, or Vishnu. Thou, unborn divinity, art all the objects of these impersonations; thou art the gods, and all other beings; thou art the whole world; thou art all. Soul of the universe, thou art exempt from change, and there is nothing except thee in all this existence. Thou art Brahma, Pas'upati, Aryaman, Dhatri, and Vidhatri; thou art Indra, air, fire, the regent of the waters, the god of wealth, and judge of the dead; and thou, although but one, presidest over the world with various energies, addressed to various purposes. Thou, identical with the solar ray, createst the universe; all elementary substance is composed of thy qualities; and thy supreme form is denoted by the imperishable term SAT (existence). To him who is one with true knowledge, who is and is not perceptible, I bow. Glory be to him, the lord Vasudeva, to Sankarshana, to Pradyumna, and to Aniruddha [*7]."

Footnotes

^545:1 In the Bhagavata, Hari Vans'a, &c. several adventures of Krishna, during his residence at Vraja, are recorded, of which our text makes no mention. Of these, the two most popular are Krishna's taking away the clothes of the Gopis whilst bathing, and his liberating the Gopas from the mouth of Aghasura, disguised as a vast serpent, into which they had entered, thinking it a cavern in a mountain. The omission of these two legends, or of any of the rest, is not much to be regretted.

^546:2 The noonday prayer, or Sandhya.

^546:3 By his Dhyana, or force of meditation, in which it is attempted to bring before the mind's eye some definite form of the object of adoration. In this case Akrura is compelled to see a form he did not anticipate. The Hari Vans'a very clumsily sets him to meditate upon the serpent S'esha, which spoils the story, intended as that is to exhibit the identity of Balarama and Krishna with the supreme.

^546:4 Balarama was thus visible in his real character of S'esha, the chief of serpents, the couch of Vishnu, and supporter of the world.

^546:5 Or rather, he beheld Ghanas'yama, an appellation of Krishna, who is so called from being as black (s'yama) as a cloud (ghana).

^547:6 Tad, 'that;' all that is, or that can be conceived.

^547:7 Akrura's piety is here prophetic; the son and grandson of Krishna (see <page 440>) are not yet born: but this is the Vaishnava style of addressing Krishna or Vishnu, as identical with four Vyuhas, 'arrangements' or 'dispositions,' Krishna, Balarama, Pradyumna, and Aniruddha. See As. Res. XVI. 35. In this, as in several other places, the Vishnu P. differs from some of the other narratives of Krishna, by the length and character of the prayers addressed to Vishnu. The Hari Vans'a, for instance, here has no prayer or panegyric at all: the Bhagavata inserts one.

CHAP. XIX.

Akrura conveys Krishna and Rama near to Mathura, and leaves them: they enter the town. Insolence of Kansa's washerman: Krishna kills him. Civility of a flower-seller: Krishna gives him his benediction.

THUS the Yadava Akrura, standing in the river, praised Krishna, and worshipped him with imaginary incense and flowers. Disregarding all other objects, he fixed his whole mind upon the deity; and having continued for a long time in spiritual contemplation, he at last desisted from his abstraction, conceiving he had effected the purposes of soul. Coming up from the water of the Yamuna, he went to the car, and there he beheld Rama and Krishna seated as before. As his looks denoted surprise, Krishna said to him, "Surely, Akrura, you have seen some marvel in the stream of the Yamuna, for your eyes are staring as if with astonishment." Akrura replied, "The marvel that I have seen in the stream of the Yamuna I behold before me, even here, in a bodily shape; for he whom I have encountered in the water, Krishna, is also your wondrous self, of whose illustrious person the whole world is the miraculous developement. But enough of this; let us proceed to Mathura: I am afraid Kansa will be angry at our delay; such is the wretched consequence of eating the bread of another." Thus speaking, he urged on the quick horses, and they arrived after sunset at Mathura. When they came in sight of the city, Akrura said to Krishna and Rama, "You must now journey on foot, whilst I proceed alone in the car; and you must not go to the house of Vasudeva, for the elder has been banished by Kansa on your account."

Akrura having thus spoken, left them, and entered the city; whilst Rama and Krishna continued to walk along the royal road. Regarded with pleasure by men and women, they went along sportively, looking like two young elephants. As they roamed about, they saw a washerman colouring clothes, and with smiling countenances they went and threw down some of his fine linen. The washerman was the servant of Kansa, made insolent by his master's favour; and he provoked the two lads with loud and scurrilous abuse, until Krishna struck him down, with his head to the ground, and killed him. Then taking the clothes, they went their way, clad in yellow and blue raiment, until they came to a flower-seller's shop. The flower-seller looked at them with astonishment, and wondered who they could be, or whence they could have come. Seeing two youths so lovely, dressed in yellow and blue garments, he imagined them to be divinities descended upon earth. Being addressed by them with mouths budding like lotuses, and asked for some flowers, he placed his hands upon the ground, and touched it with his head, saying, "My lords have shewn me great kindness in coming to my

house, fortunate that I am; I will pay them homage." Having thus spoken, the flower-seller, with a smiling aspect, gave them whatever choice flowers they selected, to conciliate their favour. Repeatedly prostrating himself before them, he presented them with flowers, beautiful, fragrant, and fresh. Krishna then, being much pleased with him, gave him this blessing; "Fortune, good friend, who depends upon me, shall never forsake you: never shall you suffer loss of vigour, or loss of wealth: as long as time shall last your descendants shall not fail. Having long tasted various delights on earth, you shall finally obtain, by calling me to recollection, a heavenly region, the consequence of my favour. Your heart shall ever be intent on righteousness, and fulness of days shall be the portion of your posterity. Your descendants shall not be subject to natural infirmities, as long as the sun shall endure." Having thus spoken, Krishna and Rama, worshipped by the flower-seller, went forth from his dwelling [*1].

Footnotes

^549:1 These incidents are told, with some unimportant differences, in the other accounts of Krishna's youth.

CHAP. XX.

Krishna and Balarama meet Kubja; she is made straight by the former: they proceed to the palace. Krishna breaks a bow intended for a trial of arms. Kansa's orders to his servants. Public games. Krishna and his brother enter the arena: the former wrestles with Chanura, the latter with Mushtika, the king's wrestlers; who are both killed. Krishna attacks and slays Kansa: he and Balarama do homage to Vasudeva and Devaki: the former praises Krishna.

As they proceeded along the high road, they saw coming towards them a young girl, who was crooked, carrying a pot of unguent. Krishna addressed her sportively, and said, "For whom are you carrying that unguent? tell me, lovely maiden; tell me truly." Spoken to as it were through affection, Kubja, well disposed towards Hari, replied to him also mirthfully, being smitten by his appearance; "Know you not, beloved, that I am the servant of Kansa, and appointed, crooked as I am, to prepare his perfumes. Unguent ground by any other he does not approve of: hence I am enriched through his liberal rewards." Then said Krishna, "Fair-faced damsel, give us of this unguent, fragrant and fit for kings, as much as we may rub upon our bodies." "Take it," answered Kubja.; and she gave them as much of the unguent as was sufficient for their persons; and they rubbed it on various parts of their faces and bodies [*1], till they looked like two clouds, one white and one black, decorated by the many-tinted bow of Indra. Then Krishna, skilled in the curative art, took hold of her, under the chin, with the thumb and two fingers, and lifted up her head, whilst with his feet he pressed down her feet; and in this way he made her straight. When she was thus relieved from her deformity, she was a most beautiful woman; and, filled with gratitude and affection, she took Govinda by the garment, and invited him to her house. Promising to come at some other time, Krishna smilingly dismissed her, and then laughed aloud on beholding the countenance of Baladeva [*2].

Dressed in blue and yellow garments, and anointed with fragrant unguents, Kes'ava and Rama proceeded to the hall of arms, which was hung round with garlands. Inquiring of the warders which bow he was to try, and being directed to it, he took it, and bent it; but drawing it with violence, he snapped it in two [*3], and all Mathura resounded with the noise which its fracture occasioned. Abused by the warders for breaking the bow, Krishna and Rama retorted, and defied them, and left the hall.

When Kansa knew that Akrura had returned, and heard that the bow had been broken, he thus said to Chanura and Mushtika, his boxers: "Two youths, cowherd boys, have arrived; you must kill them both, in a trial of strength, in my presence; for they practise against my life. I shall be well pleased if you kill them in the match, and will give you whatever you wish; not else. These two foes of mine must be killed by you fairly or unfairly. The kingdom shall be ours in common, when they have pe-

rished." Having given them these orders, he sent next for his elephant driver, and desired him to station his great elephant Kuvalayapida, who was as vast as a cloud charged with rain, near the gate of the arena, and drive him upon the two boys when they should attempt to enter. When Kansa had issued these commands, and ascertained that the platforms were all ready for the spectators, he awaited the rising of the sun, unconscious of impending death.

In the morning the citizens assembled on the platforms set apart for them, and the princes, with the ministers and courtiers, occupied the royal seats. Near the centre of the circle judges of the games were stationed by Kansa, whilst he himself sat apart close by upon a lofty throne. Separate platforms were erected for the ladies of the palace, for the courtesans, and for the wives of the citizens [*4]. Nanda and the cowherds had places appropriated to them, at the end of which sat Akrura and Vasudeva. Amongst the wives of the citizens appeared Devaki, mourning for her son, whose lovely face she longed to behold even in the hour of his destruction. When the musical instruments sounded, Chanura sprang forth, and the people cried, "Alas!" and Mushtika slapped his arms in defiance. Covered with must and blood from the elephant, whom, when goaded upon them by his driver, they had slain, and armed with his tusks, Balabhadra and Janarddana confidently entered the arena, like two lions amidst a herd of deer. Exclamations of pity arose from all the spectators, along with expressions of astonishment. "This then," said the people, "is Krishna! this is Balabhadra! This is he by whom the fierce night-walker Putana was slain; by whom the waggon was overturned, and the two Arjuna trees felled! This is the boy who trampled and danced on the serpent Kaliya; who upheld the mountain Govardhana for seven nights; who killed, as if in play, the iniquitous Arishta, Dhenuka, and Kes'in! This whom we see is Achyuta! This is he who has been foretold by the wise, skilled in the sense of the Puranas, as Gopala, who shall exalt the depressed Yadava race! This is a portion of the all-existing, all-generating Vishnu, descended upon earth, who will assuredly lighten her load!" Thus did the citizens describe Rama and Krishna, as soon as they appeared; whilst the breast of Devaki glowed with maternal affection; and Vasudeva, forgetting his infirmities, felt himself young again, on beholding the countenances of his sons as a season of rejoicing. The women of the palace, and the wives of the citizens, wide opened their eyes, and gazed intently upon Krishna. "Look, friends," said they to their companions; "look at the face of Krishna; his eyes are reddened by his conflict with the elephant, and the drops of perspiration stand upon his cheeks, outvieing a full blown lotus in autumn, studded with glittering dew. Avail yourself now of the faculty of vision. Observe his breast, the seat of splendour, marked with the mystic sign; and his arms, menacing destruction to his foes. Do you not notice Balabhadra, dressed in a blue garment; his countenance as fair as the jasmine, as the moon, as the fibres of the lotus stem? See how he gently smiles at the gestures of Mushtika and Chanura, as they spring up. And now behold Hari advance to encounter Chanura. What! are there no elders, judges of the field? How can the delicate form of Hari, only yet in the dawn of adolescence, be regarded as a match for the vast and adamant bulk of the great demon? Two youths, of light and elegant persons, are in the arena, to oppose athletic fiends, headed by the cruel Chanura. This is a great sin in the judges of the games, for the umpires to suffer a contest between boys and strong men."

As thus the women of the city conversed with one another, Hari, having tightened his girdle, danced in the ring, shaking the ground on which he trod. Balabhadra also danced, slapping his arms in defiance. Where the ground was firm, the invincible Krishna contended foot to foot with Chanura. The practised demon Mushtika was opposed by Balabhadra. Mutually entwining, and pushing, and pulling, and beating each other with fists, arms, and elbows, pressing each other with their knees, interlacing their arms, kicking with their feet, pressing with their whole weight upon one another [*5], fought Hari and Chanura. Desperate was the struggle, though without weapons, and one for life and death, to the great gratification of the spectators. In proportion as the contest continued, so Chanura was gradually losing something of his original vigour, and the wreath upon his head trembled from his fury and distress [*6]; whilst the world-comprehending Krishna wrestled with him as if but in sport. Beholding Chanura losing, and Krishna gaining strength, Kansa, furious with rage, commanded the music to cease. As soon as the drums and trumpets were silenced, a numerous band of

heavenly instruments was heard in the sky, and the gods invisibly exclaimed, "Victory to Govinda! Kes'ava, kill the demon Chanura!" Madhusudana having for a long time dallied with his adversary, at last lifted him up, and whirled him round, with the intention of putting an end to him. Having whirled Chanura round a hundred times, until his breath was expended in the air, Krishna dashed him on the ground with such violence as to smash his body into a hundred fragments, and strew the earth with a hundred pools of gory mire. Whilst this took place, the mighty Baladeva was engaged in the same manner with the demon bruiser Mushtika. Striking him on the head with his fists, and on the breast with his knees, he stretched him on the ground, and pummelled him there till he was dead. Again, Krishna encountered the royal bruiser Tomalaka, and felled him to the earth with a blow of his left hand. When the other athlete saw Chanura, Mushtika, and Tomalaka killed, they fled from the field; and Krishna and Sankarshana danced victorious on the arena, dragging along with them by force the cowherds of their own age. Kansa, his eyes reddening with wrath, called aloud to the surrounding people, "Drive those two cow-boys out of the assembly: seize the villain Nanda, and secure him with chains of iron: put Vasudeva to death with tortures intolerable to his years: and lay hands upon the cattle, and whatever else belongs to those cowherds who are the associates of Krishna."

Upon hearing these orders, the destroyer of Madhu laughed at Kansa, and, springing up to the place where he was seated, laid hold of him by the hair of his head, and struck his tiara to the ground: then casting him down upon the earth, Govinda threw himself upon him. Crushed by the weight of the upholder of the universe, the son of Ugrasena, Kansa the king, gave up the ghost. Krishna then dragged the dead body, by the hair of the head, into the centre of the arena, and a deep furrow was made by the vast and heavy carcass of Kansa, when it was dragged along the ground by Krishna, as if a torrent of water had run through it [*7]. Seeing Kansa thus treated, his brother Sumalin came to his succour; but he was encountered, and easily killed, by Balabhadra. Then arose a general cry of grief from the surrounding circle, as they beheld the king of Mathura thus slain, and treated with such contumely, by Krishna. Krishna, accompanied by Balabhadra, embraced the feet of Vasudeva and of Devaki; but Vasudeva raised him up; and he and Devaki recalling to recollection what he had said to them at his birth, they bowed to Janarddana, and the former thus addressed him: "Have compassion upon mortals, O god, benefactor and lord of deities: it is by thy favour to us two that thou hast become the (present) upholder of the world. That, for the punishment of the rebellious, thou hast descended upon earth in my house, having been propitiated by my prayers, sanctifies our race. Thou art the heart of all creatures; thou abidest in all creatures; and all that has been, or will be, emanates from thee, O universal spirit! Thou, Achyuta, who comprehendest all the gods, art eternally worshipped with sacrifices: thou art sacrifice itself, and the offerer of sacrifices. The affection that inspires my heart and the heart of Devaki towards thee, as if thou wast our child, is indeed but error, and a great delusion. How shall the tongue of a mortal such as I am call the creator of all things, who is without beginning or end, son? Is it consistent that the lord of the world, from whom the world proceeds, should be born of me, except through illusion? How should he, in whom all fixed and moveable things are contained, be conceived in the womb and born of a mortal being? Have compassion therefore indeed, O supreme lord, and in thy descended portions protect the universe. Thou art no son of mine. This whole world, from Brahma to a tree, thou art. Wherefore dost thou, who art one with the supreme, beguile us? Blinded by delusion, I thought thee my son; and for thee, who art beyond all fear, I dreaded the anger of Kansa, and therefore did I take thee in my terror to Gokula, where thou hast grown up; but I no longer claim thee as mine own. Thou, Vishnu, the sovereign lord of all, whose actions Rudra, the Maruts, the As'wins, Indra, and the gods, cannot equal, although they behold them; thou who hast come amongst us for the benefit of the world, art recognised, and delusion is no more."

Footnotes

^550:1 They had their bodies smeared in the style called Bhaktichheda; that is, with the separating or distinguishing (chheda) marks of Vaishnava devotion (bhakti): certain streaks on the forehead, nose, cheeks, breast, and arms, which denote a follower of Vishnu. See As. Res. XVI. 33.

^551:2 The story is similarly told in the Bhagavata, &c.

^551:3 The bending or breaking of a bow is a favourite incident in Hindu heroic poetry, borrowed, no doubt, from the Ramayana, where, however, it has an object; here it is quite gratuitous.

^551:4 The Bhagavata enters into even fewer [p. 552] particulars than our text of the place set apart for the games. The Hari Vans'a gives a much more detailed description, which is in some respects curious. The want of any technical glossary, and the general manner in which technical terms are explained in the ordinary dictionaries, render it difficult to understand exactly what is intended, and any translation of the passages must be defective. The French version, however, probably represents a much more splendid and theatrical scene than the text authorizes, and may therefore admit of correction. The general plan is nothing more than an enclosed space, surrounded by temporary structures of timber or bambus, open or enclosed, and decorated with hangings and garlands. It may be doubted if the details described by the compiler of the Hari Vans'a were very familiar even to him; for his description is not always very consistent or precise. Of two commentators, one evidently knows nothing of what he attempts to explain; but with the assistance of the other the passages may be thus, though not always confidently, rendered:

"The king, Kansa, meditating on these things, went forth from his palace to the place which had been prepared for the sight of the ceremonial (1), to inspect the scaffolds (2) which had been constructed. He found the place close set with the several platforms (3) of the different public bodies (4), strongly put together, and decorated with roofed pavilions of various sizes, supported by columns, and divided into commodious chambers (5). The edifice was extensive, well arranged, secured by strong rafters (6), spacious and lofty, and commodious and secure. Stairs led to the different galleries (7). Chairs of state (8) were placed in various parts of it. The avenues that conducted to it were narrow (9). It was covered with temporary stages and sheds (10), and was capable of sustaining the weight of a multitude.

"Having seen the place of the festival thus adorned, Kansa gave orders, and said, 'To-morrow let the platforms and terraces and pavilions (11) be decorated with pictures and garlands and flags and images (12), and let them be scented with fragrant odours, and covered over with awnings (13). Let there be ample heaps of dry, pounded cow-dung (14) provided on the ground, and suitable refreshment chambers be covered over, and decorated with bells and ornamented arches (15). Let large water jars be securely fixed in order, capable of holding a copious supply, and provided with golden drinking-cups. Let apartments be prepared (16), and various kinds of beverage, in appropriate vessels, be ready. Let judges of the games be invited, and corporations with their chiefs. Let orders be issued to the wrestlers, and notice be given to the spectators; and let platforms for their accommodation be fitted up in the place of assembly.'" (17)

When the meeting takes place, the site of the games is thus described: "Upon the following day the amphitheatre (18) was filled by the citizens, anxious to behold the games. The place of (19) was supported by octagonal painted pillars (20), [p. 553] fitted up with terraces and doors and bolts, with windows circular or crescent; shaped, and accommodated with seats with cushions (21), and it shone like the ocean whilst large clouds hang upon it, with spacious, substantial pavilions (22), fitted up for the sight of the combat; open to the front (23), but screened with beautiful and fine curtains (24), crowned with festoons of flowers, and glistening with radiance like autumnal clouds. The pavilions of the different companies and corporations, vast as mountains, were decorated with banners, bearing upon them the implements and emblems of the several crafts (25). The chambers of the inhabitants of the inner apartments shone near at hand, bright with gold and painting and net-

work of gems: they were richly decorated with precious stones, were enclosed below with costly hangings, and ornamented above with spires and banners, and looked like mountains spreading their wings in the sky; while the rays of light reflected from the valuable jewels were blended with the waving of white chowries, and the musical tinkling of female ornaments. The separate pavilions of the courtesans were graced by lovely women, attired in the most splendid dresses (27), and emulated the radiance of the cars of the gods. In the place of assembly there were excellent seats, couches made of gold, and hangings of various colours, intermixed with bunches of flowers: and there were golden vases of water, and handsome places for refreshment, filled with fruits of various kinds, and cooling juices, and sherbets fit for drinking (28). And there were many other stages and platforms, constructed of strong timber, and hangings by hundreds and thousands were displayed: and upon the tops of the houses, chambers fitted up with delicate jalousies, through which the women might behold the sports, appeared like swans flying through the air.

"In front stood the pavilion of Kansa, surpassing all the rest in splendour, looking like mount Meru in radiance; its sides, its columns, being covered with burnished gold; fastened with coloured cords; and every way worthy the presence of a king."

In justification of the rendering of the above, an explanation of the technical terms, taken either from dictionaries or from the commentators, may be subjoined. (1) Kansa went to the Prekshagara, literally 'house of seeing;' but it is evident, from its interior being visible to spectators on the tops of the houses, as subsequently mentioned, that it was not a theatre, or covered edifice. If a building at all, it was merely a sort of stockade. One commentator calls it, 'a place made for seeing the sacrifice;' (2) Manchanam avalokaka. The Mancha is commonly understood to signify a raised platform, with a floor and a roof, ascended by a ladder: see Dictionary. (3) Mancha-vata. Vata is either 'site' or 'inclosure,' and is used here without much affecting the sense of Mancha. The compound is explained by the commentators, 'prepared places', or 'the sites of the platforms'. (4) The S'renis', associations [p. 554] of artificers practising the same art. One of the commentaries understands the term to be here used to denote, not their station, but their labours: 'The structure was the work of the artificers.' (5) Several words occur here of technical import. The passage is, . Valabhi is said by the commentator to mean a structure with a pent roof, supported by six columns. Kuti, a circular one, having seven roofs – something perhaps like a Chinese pagoda – and four columns. The Eka-stambha is a chamber, supported by one column. (6) Saraniryuham. It is difficult to understand the necessity of rafters in an inclosure in which the platforms and stages seem to have been erected independently of any floor or wall: but the commentary explains Niryyuha, 'strong brackets, projecting from a house:' (7) Aslishta sushshta mancharohanam. The first epithet is explained, 'not contracted'; the second, 'well constructed'; and for the 'ascending' (Arohanam) we have 'where was a line of steps' or 'ladders' There is another reading of the text, however, which may be rendered, 'Having steps well secured in their ascent above'. (8) 'Seats for kings'. (9) Such is the literal purport of Sanchara-patha-sankulam; implying, possibly, the formation of passages by fences on either side. (10) This is doubtful: the phrase is Chhannam-tad-vedikabhi. Chhannam means, literally, 'covered,' and can scarcely be used in the sense of 'overspread or filled with.' Vedika means an elevated floor or terrace, with which a hall or edifice cannot well be 'covered;' and therefore requires the sense here given to Chhanna. The commentators are silent. (11) The Manchavatas and Valabhis, as above: the other term is Vithi, 'a shop,' 'a stall,' 'a terrace,' 'a road.' (12) Let them be Vapushmanta; 'having painted or sculptured figures'. The other commentary renders it merely 'pleasant' or 'agreeable'. (13) 'Covered above with cloths'. The use of the awning or Semiana is very common in India. (14) For the wrestlers to rub over their bodies to absorb the perspiration (15) This is all rather questionable: the passage is most usually, . Vali or Bali in one sense means 'the edge of a thatch,' and may be put for some sort of temporary structure, a kind of retiring or refreshment room for the boxers and wrestlers. In some copies it is read, 'beautiful with cloths spread,' on which the performers may sit when disengaged; perhaps a sort of carpet on the ground. (16) The expression is again Vali. Another sense of the word is, offering of viands, or of the remains of a sacrifice, to all beings; but that cannot be its purport here; nor is it ever used in the sense of viands in general. The verb Kalpa or Klrip also

usually [p. 555] implies 'making.' (17) Manchavata; 'in the Samaja,' or 'assembly.' (18) Maharanga, 'the great place of the performance.' Ranga is 'acting' or 'representation;' also the place or site of it. (19) All the copies consulted, except one, offer an irregularity of construction, which, although defended by the commentators, is a license scarcely allowable. The epithets of the first verse are all in the plural number; they then occur in the singular, to agree with the only substantive in the description, Samajavata. According to the commentaries, the plural term Manchas understood is the substantive to the epithets of the first stanza, and Samajavata the singular to those of the other verses. This awkwardness is however avoided by the reading of an old and very good copy, which puts it all in the singular; as (20) The expression is Charana, literally 'foot;' explained by the commentator, Stambha, 'post' or 'pillar' (21) The reading of most of the copies is S'ayanottama, which may be taken as the sense of Talottama, 'couches or benches with cushions.' (22) Manchagarais, 'temporary houses.' (21) Or 'fronting to the east'. (24) Nirmukhtais: explained by the commentator to mean 'fine threads,' 'network,' or 'gauze,' through which persons, females especially, may see without being seen. (25) (26) 'With ridges and projections'. The commentator explains this, 'with flags on the top of them.' (27) This appears to be intended for an epithet of the women, although Astarana is not usually applied to dress. (28) Phala, of course, is 'fruit.' Avadans'a is explained in lexicons, what is eaten to excite thirst: 'one comment gives it, what may be sucked,' as tamarinds, and the like. Changeri is explained, 'fluids for drinking, made with sorrel, or acid fruits;' that is, sherbets. (29) is an epithet of the Prekshagara, or look-out house of the women, situated on the tops of their houses, according to the commentators; an arrangement very compatible with the form of Indian houses, which have flat roofs, commonly enclosed by a trellis work, or jalousie of masonry. It is observable, that in the Vishnu Purana, and in the Mahabharata, on various public occasions, the women take their places on the platforms, or in the pavilions, without curtains or screens.

^557:5 The terms here used are technical, and refer to the established modes of wrestling amongst Hindu athleteae. 1. Sannipata is described 'mutual laying hold of.' 2. Avaduta, 'letting go of the adversary.' g. Kshepana, 'pulling to, and casting back.' 4. Mushtinipata, 'striking with fists.' 5. Kilanipata, 'striking with the elbow.' 6. Vajranipata, 'striking with the fore-arm.' 7. Janunirghata, 'pressing or striking with the knees.' 8. Bahuvighattana, 'interlacing the arms.' 9. Padoddhuta, kicking.' 10. Prasrishta, 'intertwining of the whole body.' In some copies another term occurs, As'manirghata, 'striking with stones,' or 'striking blows as hard as with stones;' for stones could scarcely be used in a contest specified as 'one without weapons'

^557:6 Krishna contended with Chanura, 'who through distress and anger shook the flowers of his crest;' The two last terms are explained, the flower of the wreath on his head.'

^558:7 Et latus mediam sulcus diducit arenam.

'The yielding sand being furrowed into a ditch or a water-course, by the dead bodies being dragged over it.

CHAP. XXI.

Krishna encourages his parents; places Ugrasena on the throne; becomes the pupil of Sandipani, whose son he recovers from the sea: he kills the marine demon Panchajana, and makes a horn of his shell.

HAVING permitted to Devaki and Vasudeva an interval of true knowledge, through the contemplation of his actions, Hari again spread the delusions of his power over them and the tribe of Yadu. He said to them, "Mother; venerable father; you have both been long observed by Sankarshana and myself with sorrow, and in fear of Kansa. He whose time passes not in respect to his father and mother, is a vile being, who descends in vain from virtuous parents. The lives of those produce good fruit, who reverence their parents, their spiritual guides, the Brahmans, and the gods. Pardon therefore, father, the impropriety of which we may have been culpable, in resenting without your orders, to which we acknowledge that we are subject, the oppression we suffered from the power and violence

of Kansa." Thus speaking, they offered homage to the elders of the Yadu tribe in order, and then in a suitable manner paid their respects to the citizens. The wives of Kansa, and those of his father, then surrounded the body of the king, lying on the ground, and bewailed his fate in deep affliction. Hari in various ways expressed his regret for what had chanced, and endeavoured to console them, his own eyes being suffused with tears. The foe of Madhu then liberated Ugrasena from confinement, and placed him on the throne, which the death of his son had left vacant. The chief of the Yadavas, being crowned, performed the funeral rites of Kansa, and of the rest of the slain. When the ceremony was over, and Ugrasena had resumed his royal seat, Krishna addressed him, and said, "Sovereign lord, command boldly what else is to be done. The curse of Yayati has pronounced our race unworthy of dominion [*1]; but with me, for your servant, you may issue your orders to the gods. How should kings disobey them?"

Thus having spoken, the human Kes'ava summoned mentally the deity of the wind, who came upon the instant, and said to him, "Go, Vayu, to Indra, and desire him to lay aside his pomp, and resign to Ugrasena his splendid hall Sudharman: tell him that Krishna commands him to send the royal hall, the unrivalled gem of princely courts, for the assemblage of the race of Yadu." Accordingly Vayu went, and delivered the message to the husband of S'achi, who immediately gave up to him the hall Sudharman, and Vayu conveyed it to the Yadavas, the chiefs of whom thenceforth possessed this celestial court, emblazoned with jewels, and defended by the arm of Govinda. The two excellent Yadu youths, versed in all knowledge, and possessed of all wisdom, then submitted to instruction, as the disciples of teachers. Accordingly they repaired to Sandipani – who, though born in Kas'i, resided at Avanti – to study the science of arms, and, becoming his pupils, were obedient and attentive to their master, exhibiting an example to all men of the observance of instituted rules. In the course of sixty-four days they had gone through the elements of military science, with the treatises on the use of arms, and directions for the mystic incantations, which secure the aid of supernatural weapons [*2]. Sandipani, astonished at such proficiency, and knowing that it exceeded human faculties, imagined that the sun and moon had become his scholars. When they had acquired all that he could teach, they said to him, "Now say what present shall be given to you, as the preceptor's fee." The prudent Sandipani, perceiving that they were endowed with more than mortal powers, requested them to give him his dead son, drowned in the sea of Prabhasa [*3]. Taking up their arms, they marched against the ocean; but the all-comprehending sea said to them, "I have not killed the son of Sandipani; a demon named Panchajana, who lives in the form of a conch shell, seized the boy: he is still under my waters. On hearing this, Krishna plunged into the sea; and having slain the vile Panchajana, he took the conch shell, which was formed of his bones (and bore it as his horn), the sound of which fills the demon hosts with dismay, animates the vigour of the gods, and annihilates unrighteousness. The heroes also recovered the boy from the pains of death, and restored him in his former person to his father. Rama and Janarddana then returned to Mathura, which was well presided over by Ugrasena, and abounded in a happy population both of men and women [*1].

Footnotes

^560:1 The curse pronounced on the elder sons of Yayati, on their refusing to take upon them their father's infirmities. See <page 414>.

^561:2 They read through the Dhanur-veda, which treats of military matters; with the Rahasya, 'the mystical part;' and the Sangraha, 'collection' or 'compendium,' said to be here the Astra-prayoga, the employment of weapons:

^561:3 Prabhasa is a place of pilgrimage in the west of India, on the coast of Guzerat, near the temple of Somanath, and town of Pattan Somanath. It is also known by the name of Soma-tirtha; Soma, or the moon, having been here cured of the consumption brought upon him by the imprecation of Daksha, his father-in-law. Mahabharata, S'alya P., vol. III. p. 249.

^{^562:1} The incidents of the two last chapters are related in the Bhagavata and Hari Vans'a, often in the words of the text, but with many embellishments and additions, especially in the latter. The Brahma Vaivartta, on the other hand, makes still shorter work of these occurrences than our text.

CHAP. XXII.

Jarasandha besieges Mathura; is defeated, but repeatedly renews the attack.

PARAS'ARA. – The mighty Kansa had married the two daughters of Jarasandha, one named Asti, the other Prapti. Jarasandha was king of Magadha, and a very powerful prince [*1]; who, when he heard that Krishna had killed his son-in-law, was much incensed, and, collecting a large force, marched against Mathura, determined to put the Yadavas and Krishna to the sword. Accordingly he invested the city with three and twenty numerous divisions of his forces [*2]. Rama and Janarddana sallied from the town with a slender, but resolute force, and fought bravely with the armies of Magadha. The two youthful leaders prudently resolved to have recourse to their ancient weapons, and accordingly the bow of Hari, with two quivers filled with exhaustless arrows, and the mace called Kaumodaki, and the ploughshare of Balabhadra, as well as the club Saunanda, descended at a wish from heaven. Armed with these weapons, they speedily discomfited the king of Magadha and his hosts, and reentered the city in triumph.

Although the wicked king of Magadha, Jarasandha, was defeated, yet Krishna knew that whilst he escaped alive he was not subdued; and in fact he soon returned with a mighty force, and was again forced by Rama and Krishna to fly. Eighteen times [*3] did the haughty prince of Magadha renew his attack upon the Yadavas, headed by Krishna; and was as often defeated and put to the rout by them, with very inferior numbers. That the Yadavas were not overpowered by their foes, was owing to the present might of the portion of the discus-armed Vishnu. It was the pastime of the lord of the universe, in his capacity of man, to launch various weapons against his enemies; for what effort of power to annihilate his foes could be necessary to him, whose fiat creates and destroys the world? but as subjecting himself to human customs, he formed alliances with the brave, and engaged in hostilities with the base. He had recourse to the four devices of policy, or negotiation, presents, sowing dissension, and chastisement; and sometimes even betook himself to flight. Thus imitating the conduct of human beings, the lord of the world pursued at will his sports.

Footnotes

^{^563:1} See page <page 456>.

^{^563:2} With twenty-three Akshouhunis, each consisting of 109,300 infantry, 65,610 horse, 22,870 chariots, and as many elephants. The Hari Vans'a enumerates, as the allies or tributaries of Jarasandha, a number of princes from various parts of India, but this is a gratuitous embellishment.

^{^563:3} The Bhagavata and Hari Vans'a say 'seventeen times.' The latter indulges in a prolix description of the first encounter; nothing of which occurs in the Bhagavata, any more than in our text.

CHAP. XXIII.

Birth of Kalayavana: he advances against Mathura. Krishna builds Dwaraka, and sends thither the Yadava tribe: he leads Kalayavana into the cave of Muchukunda: the latter awakes, consumes the Yavana king, and praises Krishna.

PARAS'ARA. – S'yala having called Gargya the Brahman, whilst at the cow-pens, impotent, in an assembly of the Yadavas, they all laughed; at which he was highly offended, and repaired to the shores of the western sea, where he engaged in arduous penance to obtain a son, who should be a terror to the tribe of Yadu. Propitiating Mahadeva, and living upon iron sand for twelve years, the deity at last was pleased with him, and gave him the desired boon. The king of the Yavanas, who

was childless, became the friend of Gargya; and the latter begot a son by his wife, who was as black as a bee, and was thence called Kalayavana [*1]. The Yavana king having placed his son, whose breast was as hard as the point of the thunderbolt, upon the throne, retired to the woods. Inflated with conceit of his prowess, Kalayavana demanded of Narada who were the most mighty heroes on earth. To which the sage answered, "The Yadavas." Accordingly Kalayavana assembled many myriads of Mlechchhas and barbarians [*2], and with a vast armament of elephants, cavalry, chariots, and foot, advanced impatiently against Mathura and the Yadavas; wearying every day the animal that carried him, but insensible of fatigue himself.

When Krishna knew of his approach, he reflected that if the Yadavas encountered the Yavana, they would be so much weakened by the conflict, that they would then be overcome by the king of Magadha; that their force was much reduced by the war with Magadha, whilst that of Kalayavana was unbroken; and that the enemy might be therefore victorious. Thus the Yadavas were exposed to a double danger. He resolved therefore to construct a citadel for the Yadu tribe, that should not be easily taken; one that even women might defend, and in which therefore the heroes of the house of Vrishni should be secure; one in which the male combatants of the Yadavas should dread no peril, though he himself should be drunk or careless, asleep or abroad. Thus reflecting, Krishna solicited a space of twelve furlongs from the ocean, and there he built the city of Dwaraka [*3], defended by high ramparts, and beautified with gardens and reservoirs of water, crowded with houses and buildings, and splendid as the capital of Indra, Amaravati. Thither Janarddana conducted the inhabitants of Mathura, and then awaited at that city the approach of Kalayavana.

When the hostile army encamped round Mathura, Krishna unarmed went forth, and beheld the Yavana king. Kalayavana, the strong-armed, recognizing Vasudeva, pursued him; him whom the thoughts of perfect ascetics cannot overtake. Thus pursued, Krishna entered a large cavern, where Muchukunda, the king of men, was asleep. The rash Yavana entering the cave, and beholding a man lying asleep there, concluded it must be Krishna, and kicked him; at which Muchukunda awoke, and casting on him an angry glance, the Yavana was instantly consumed, and reduced to ashes. For in a battle between the gods and demons, Muchukunda had formerly contributed to the defeat of the latter; and, being overcome with sleep, he solicited of the gods as a boon that he should enjoy a long repose. "Sleep long and soundly," said the gods; "and whoever disturbs you shall be instantly burnt to ashes by fire emanating from your body [*4]."

Having burnt up the iniquitous Yavana, and beholding the foe of Madhu, Muchukunda asked him who he was. "I am born," he replied, "in the lunar race, in the tribe of Yadu, and am the son of Vasudeva." Muchukunda, recollecting the prophecy of old Garga, fell down before the lord of all, Hari, saying, "Thou art known, supreme lord, to be a portion of Vishnu; for it was said of old by Garga, that at the end of the twenty-eighth Dwapara age Hari would be born in the family of Yadu. Thou art he, without doubt, the benefactor of mankind; for thy glory I am unable to endure. Thy words are of deeper tone than the muttering of the rain cloud; and earth sinks down beneath the pressure of thy feet. As in the battle between the gods and demons the Asuras were unable to sustain my lustre, so even am I incapable of bearing thy radiance. Thou alone art the refuge of every living being who has lighted on the world. Do thou, who art the alleviator of all distress, shew favour upon me, and remove from me all that is evil. Thou art the oceans, the mountains, the rivers, the forests: thou art earth, sky, air, water, and fire: thou art mind, intelligence, the unevolved principle, the vital airs, the lord of life – the soul; all that is beyond the soul; the all-pervading; exempt from the vicissitudes of birth; devoid of sensible properties, sound and the like; undecaying, illimitable, imperishable, subject neither to increase nor diminution: thou art that which is Brahma, without beginning or end. From thee the immortals, the progenitors, the Yakshas, Gandharvas, and Kinnaras, the Siddhas, the nymphs of heaven, men, animals, birds, deer, reptiles, and all the; vegetable world, proceed; and all that has been, or will be, or is now, moveable or fixed. All that is amorphous or has form, all that is subtile, gross, stable, or moveable, thou art, O creator of the world; and beside thee there is not any thing. O lord, I have been whirled round in the circle of

worldly existence for ever, and have suffered the three classes of affliction, and there is no rest whatever. I have mistaken pains for pleasures, like sultry vapours for a pool of water; and their enjoyment has yielded me nothing but sorrow. The earth, dominion, forces, treasures, friends, children, wife, dependants, all the objects of sense, have I possessed, imagining them to be sources of happiness; but I found that in their changeable nature, O lord, they were nothing but vexation. The gods themselves, though high in heaven, were in need of my alliance. Where then is everlasting repose? Who without adoring thee, who art the origin of all worlds, shall attain, O supreme deity, that rest which endures for ever? Beguiled by thy delusions, and ignorant of thy nature, men, after suffering the various penalties of birth, death, and infirmity, behold the countenance of the king of ghosts, and suffer in hell dreadful tortures, the reward of their own deeds. Addicted to sensual objects, through thy delusions I revolve in the whirlpool of selfishness and pride; and hence I come to thee, as my final refuge, who art the lord deserving of all homage, than whom there is no other asylum; my mind afflicted with repentance for my trust in the world, and desiring the fulness of felicity, emancipation from all existence."

Footnotes

^{565:1} This legend of the origin of Kalayavana is given also by the Hari Vans'a. The Bhagavata, like our text, comes once to the siege of Mathura by this chief; but the Hari Vans'a suspends the story, for more than thirty chapters, to narrate an origin of the Yadavas, and sundry adventures of Krishna and Rama to the south-west. Most of these have no other authority, and are no doubt inventions of the Dakhini compiler; and the others are misplaced.

^{565:2} So the Bhagavata describes him as leading a host of Mlechchhas, or barbarians, against Krishna; but in the Mahabharata, Sabha Parvan, vol. I. p. 330, where Krishna describes the power of Jarasandha, he admits that he and the Yadavas fled from Mathura to the west, through fear of that king, but no account is given of any siege of Mathura by Kalayavana. The only indication of such a person is the mention that Bhagadatta, the Yavana king, who rules over Muru and Naraka in the west and south, is one of his most attached feudatories. This king is in various other places called king of Pragjyotish, as he is in a subsequent passage of the same book, Sabha P., p. 374; and this name is always applied to the [p. 566] the west of Asam. His subjects are, however, still Yavanas and Mlechchhas, and he presents horses, caps set with jewels, and swords with ivory hilts; articles scarcely to be found in Asam, which cannot well be the seat of his sovereignty. It seems most likely therefore that the story may have originated in some knowledge of the power and position of the Greek-Bactrian princes, or their Scythian successors, although in the latter compilations it has been mixed up with allusions to the first Mohammedan aggressions. See As. Res. V. 506 and XV. 100.

^{566:3} According to the Mahabharata, he only enlarged and fortified the ancient city of Kus'asthali, founded by Raivata. Sabha P.: see also <page 356> of our text.

^{567:4} The name of Muchukunda, as one of the sons of Mandhatri, occurs <page 363>; but no further notice is taken of him. The Bhagavata specifies his being the son of that king, and relates the same story of his long sleep as the text. The same occurs in the Hari Vans'a. The general character of the legends in this chapter is that of reference to something familiar, rather than its narration. In the Hari Vans'a the opposite extreme is observable, and there the legends are as prolix as here they are concise. The Bhagavata follows a middle course; but it seems unlikely that in either of the three we have the original fables.

CHAP. XXIV.

Muchukunda goes to perform penance. Krishna takes the army and treasures of Kalayavana, and repairs with them to Dwaraka. Balarama visits Vraja: inquiries of its inhabitants after Krishna.

THUS praised by the wise Muchukunda, the sovereign of all things, the eternal lord, Hari, said to him, "Go to whatever celestial regions you wish, lord of men, possessed of might irresistible, honoured by my favour. When you have fully enjoyed all heavenly pleasures, you shall be born in a distinguished family, retaining the recollection of your former births; and you shall finally obtain emancipation." Having heard this promise, and prostrated himself before Achyuta, the lord of the world, Muchukunda, went forth from the cave, and beholding men of diminutive stature, now first knew that the Kali age had arrived. The king therefore departed to Gandhamadana, the shrine of Naranarayana, to perform penance.

Krishna having by this stratagem destroyed his enemy, returned to Mathura, and took captive his army, rich in horses, elephants and cars, which he conducted to Dwaraka, and delivered to Ugrasena, and the Yadu race was relieved from all fear of invasion. Baladeva, when hostilities had entirely ceased, being desirous of seeing his kinsmen, went to Nanda's cow-pens, and there again conversed with the herdsmen and their females, with affection and respect. By some, the elders, he was embraced; others, the juniors, he embraced; and with those of his own age, male or female, he talked and laughed. The cowherds made many kind speeches to Halayudha; but some of the Gopis spoke to him with the affectation of anger, or with feelings of jealousy, as they inquired after the loves of Krishna with the women of Mathura. "Is all well with the fickle and inconstant Krishna?" said they: "Does the volatile swain, the friend of an instant, amuse the women of the city by laughing at our rustic efforts (to please him)? Does he ever think of us, singing in chorus to his songs? Will he not come here once again to see his mother? But why talk of these things? it is a different tale to tell for him without us, and for us without him. Father, mother, brother, husband, kin, what have we not abandoned for his sake? but he is a monument of ingratitude. Yet tell us, does not Krishna talk of coming here? Falsehood is never, O Krishna, to be uttered by thee. Verily this is Damodara, this is Govinda, who has given up his heart to the damsels of the city, who has no longer any regard for us, but looks upon us with disdain." So saying, the Gopis, whose minds were fixed on Krishna, addressed Rama in his place, calling him Damodara and Govinda, and laughed and were merry; and Rama consoled them by communicating to them agreeable, modest, affectionate, and gentle messages from Krishna. With the cowherds he talked mirthfully, as he had been wont to do, and rambled along with them over the lands of Vraja [*1].

Footnotes

^570:1 This visit of Balarama to Vraja is placed by the Hari Vans'a anterior to the fall of Mathura; by the Bhagavata, long subsequent to the establishment of the Yadus at Dwaraka.

CHAP. XXV.

Balarama finds wine in the hollow of a tree; becomes inebriated; commands the Yamuna to come to him, and on her refusal drags her out of her course: Lakshmi gives him ornaments and a dress: he returns to Dwaraka, and marries Revati.

WHILST the mighty S'esha [*1], the upholder of the globe, was thus engaged in wandering amidst the forests with the herdsmen, in the disguise of a mortal – having rendered great services to earth, and still considering what more was to be achieved – Varuna, in order to provide for his recreation, said to his wife Varuni (the goddess of wine), "Thou, Madira, art ever acceptable to the powerful Ananta; go therefore, auspicious and kind goddess, and promote his enjoyments." Obeying these commands, Varuni went and established herself in the hollow of a Kadamba tree in the woods of Vrindavana. Baladeva, roaming about, came there, and smelling the pleasant fragrance of liquor, resumed his ancient passion for strong drink. The holder of the ploughshare observing the vinous drops distilling from the Kadamba tree, was much delighted, and gathered and quaffed them [*2] along with the herdsmen and the Gopis, whilst those who were skilful with voice and lute celebrated him in their songs. Being inebriated with the wine, and the drops of perspiration standing like

pearls upon his limbs, he called out, not knowing what he said, "Come hither, Yamuna river, I want to bathe." The river, disregarding the words of a drunken man, came not at his bidding: on which Rama in a rage took up his ploughshare, which he plunged into her bank, and dragged her to him, calling out, "Will you not come, you jade? will you not come? Now go where you please (if you can)." Thus saying, he compelled the dark river to quit its ordinary course, and follow him whithersoever he wandered through the wood. Assuming a mortal figure, the Yamuna, with distracted looks, approached Balabhadra, and entreated him to pardon her, and let her go: but he replied, "I will drag you with my ploughshare in a thousand directions, since you condemn my prowess and strength." At last, however, appeased by her reiterated prayers, he let her go, after she had watered all the country [*3]. When he had bathed, the goddess of beauty, Lakshmi, came and gave him a beautiful lotus to place in one ear, and an earring for the other; a fresh necklace of lotus flowers, sent by Varuna; and garments of a dark blue colour, as costly as the wealth of the ocean: and thus decorated with a lotus in one ear, a ring in the other, dressed in blue garments, and wearing a garland, Balarama appeared united with loveliness. Thus decorated, Rama sported two months in Vraja, and then returned to Dwaraka, where the married Revati, the daughter of king Raivata, by whom he had two sons, Nishatha and Ulmuka [*4].

Footnotes

^571:1 The great serpent, of whom Balarama is an incarnation.

^571:2 There is no vinous exudation from the Kadamba tree (*Nauclea Kadamba*), but its flowers are said to yield a spirit by distillation; whence Kadambari is one of the synonymes of wine, or spiritous. The grammarians, however, also derive the word from some legend, stating it to be so called because it was produced from the hollow of a Kadamba tree on the Gomantha mountain. The Hari Vans'a, which alone makes the Gomantha mountain the scene of an exploit of Krishna and Rama, makes no mention of this origin of wine; and the Bhagavata merely says that Varuni took up her abode in the hollow of a tree. There must be some other authority therefore for this story.

^572:3 The Bhagavata and Hari Vans'a repeat this story; the latter very imperfectly; the former adds, that the Yamuna is still to be seen following the course along which she was dragged by Balarama. The legend probably alludes to the construction of canals from the Jumna, for the purposes of irrigation; and the works of the Mohammedans in this way, which are well known, were no doubt preceded by similar canals dug by order of Hindu princes.

^572:4 See page <page 439>.

CHAP. XXVI.

Krishna carries off Rukmini: the princes who come to rescue her repulsed by Balarama. Rukmin overthrown, but spared by Krishna, founds Bhojakata. Pradyumna born of Rukmini.

BHISHMAKA was king of Vidarbha, residing at Kundina [*1]. He had a son named Rukmin, and a beautiful daughter termed Rukmini. Krishna fell in love with the latter, and solicited her in marriage; but her brother who hated Krishna, would not assent to the espousals. At the suggestion of Jarasandha, and with the concurrence of his son, the powerful sovereign Bhishmaka affianced Rukmini to S'is'upala. In order to celebrate the nuptials, Jarasandha and other princes, the friends of S'is'upala, assembled in the capital of Vidarbha; and Krishna, attended by Balabhadra and many other Yadavas, also went to Kundina to witness the wedding. When there, Hari contrived, on the eve of the nuptials, to carry off the princess [*2], leaving Rama and his kinsmen to sustain the weight of his enemies. Paundraka, the illustrious Dantavakra, Viduratha, S'is'upala, Jarasandha, S'alya, and other kings, indignant at the insult, exerted themselves to kill Krishna, but were repelled by Balarama and the Yadavas. Rukmin, vowing that he would never enter Kundina again until he had slain Kes'ava in fight, pursued and overtook him. In the combat that ensued, Krishna destroyed

with his discus, as if in sport, the host of Rukmin, with all its horse, and elephants, and foot, and chariots, and overthrew him, and hurled him on the ground, and would have put him to death, but was withheld by the entreaties of Rukmini. "He is my only brother," she exclaimed, "and must not be slain by thee: restrain your wrath, O divine lord, and give me my brother in charity." Thus addressed by her, Krishna, whom no acts affect, spared Rukmin [*3]; and he (in pursuance of his vow) founded the city Bhojakata [*4], and ever afterwards dwelt therein. After the defeat of Rukmin, Krishna married Rukmini in due form, having first made her his own by the Rakshasa ritual [*5]. She bore him the gallant Pradyumna, a portion of the deity of love. The demon Sambara carried him off, but he slew the demon.

Footnotes

^573:1 Vidarbha is the country of Berar, and the name remains in the present city of Beder: the capital however, Kundinapur, is commonly identified with a place called Kundapur, about forty miles north-east of Amaravati (in Berar).

^573:2 When she had gone forth from the city to worship Ambika: Bhagavata. Indrani, the wife of Indra: Hari Vans'a. Our text tells the circumstance more concisely than the others.

^574:3 After depriving him of his eyebrows and hair. In the Bhagavata, Balarama also interferes in favour of Rukmin, and reproves Krishna for disfiguring him.

^574:4 Of course this was somewhere in the neighbourhood of Kundina or Vidarbha, and is usually supposed to be situated on the Narmada.

^574:5 That is, by violence: thus Manu; "The seizure of a maiden by force, whilst she weeps and calls for assistance, after her kinsmen and friends have been slain in battle, or wounded, and their houses broken open, is the marriage called Rakshasa." III. 33. According to the Bhagavata, Rukmini sends to invite Krishna to carry her off, and instructs him how to proceed.

CHAP. XXVII.

Pradyumna stolen by Sambara; thrown into the sea, and swallowed by a fish; found by Mayadevi: he kills Sambara, marries Mayadevi, and returns with her to Dwaraka. Joy of Rukmini and Krishna.

MAITREYA. – How, Muni, happened it that the hero Pradyumna was carried away by Sambara? and in what manner was the mighty Sambara killed by Pradyumna?

PARAS'ARA. – When Pradyumna was but six days old, he was stolen from the lying-in chamber by Sambara, terrible as death; for the demon foreknew that Pradyumna, if he lived, would be his destroyer. Taking away the boy, Sambara cast him into the ocean, swarming with monsters, into a whirlpool of roaring waves, the haunt of the huge creatures of the deep. A large fish swallowed the child, but he died not, and was born anew from its belly [*1]: for that fish, with others, was caught by the fishermen, and delivered by them to the great Asura Sambara. His wife Mayadevi, the mistress of his household, superintended the operations of the cooks, and saw, when the fish was cut open, a beautiful child, looking like a new shoot of the blighted tree of love. Whilst wondering who this should be, and how he could have got into the belly of the fish, Narada came to satisfy her curiosity, and said to the graceful dame, "This is the son of him by whom the whole world is created and destroyed, the son of Vishnu, who was stolen by Sambara from the lying-in chamber, and tossed by him into the sea, where he was swallowed by the fish. He is now in thy power; do thou, beautiful woman, tenderly rear this jewel of mankind." Thus counselled by Narada, Mayadevi took charge of the boy, and carefully reared him from childhood, being fascinated by the beauty of his person. Her affection became still more impassioned when he was decorated with the bloom of adolescence. The gracefully-moving Mayavati then, fixing her heart and eyes upon the high-minded Pradyumna, gave him, whom she regarded as herself, all her magic (and illusive) powers.

Observing these marks of passionate affection, the son of Krishna said to the lotus-eyed Mayadevi, "Why do you indulge in feelings so unbecoming the character of a mother?" To which she replied, "Thou art not a son of mine; thou art the son of Vishnu, whom Kala Sambara carried away, and threw into the sea: thou vast swallowed by a fish, but wast rescued by me from its belly. Thy fond mother, O beloved, is still weeping for thee." When the valiant Pradyumna heard this, he was filled with wrath, and defied Sambara to battle. In the conflict that ensued, the son of Madhava slew the whole host of Sambara. Seven times he foiled the delusions of the enchanter, and making himself master of the eighth, turned it against Sambara, and killed him. By the same faculty he ascended into the air, and proceeded to his father's house, where he alighted, along with Mayavati, in the inner apartments. When the women beheld Pradyumna, they thought it was Krishna himself. Rukmini, her eyes dimmed with tears, spoke tenderly to him, and said, "Happy is she who has a son like this, in the bloom of youth. Such would be the age of my son Pradyumna, if he was alive. Who is the fortunate mother adorned by thee? and yet from thy appearance, and from the affection I feel for thee, thou art assuredly the son of Hari."

At this moment Krishna, accompanied by Narada, arrived; and the latter said to the delighted Rukmini, "This is thine own son, who has come hither after killing Sambara, by whom, when an infant, he was stolen from the lying-in chamber. This is the virtuous Mayavati, his wife, and not the wife of Sambara. Hear the reason. When Manmatha, the deity of love, had perished [*2], the goddess of beauty, desirous to secure his revival, assumed a delusive form, and by her charms fascinated the demon Sambara, and exhibited herself to him in various illusory enjoyments. This thy son is the descended Kama; and this is the goddess Rati, his wife [*3]. There is no occasion for any uncertainty: this is thy daughter-in-law." Then Rukmini was glad, and Kes'ava also; the whole city resounded with exclamations of joy, and all the people of Dwaraka were surprised at Rukmini's recovering a son who had so long been lost.

Footnotes

^575:1 The Bhagavata tells the story in the same manner, but the Hari Vans'a omits the part of the fish.

^576:2 When he was reduced to ashes by a fiery glance from S'iva, in resentment of his inflaming him with passion for Uma. This legend is a favourite with the S'aiva Puranas, and is told in the Linga and Kalika, also in the Padma P. and Kas'i Khanda of the Skanda P. They do not say much about his resuscitation however; S'iva, in pity of Rati's grief, restoring him only to a bodiless existence as Ananga, whose place is to be in the hearts of men. The Linga adds, that when Vishnu, in consequence of the curse of Bhrigu, shall be born as the son of Vasudeva, Kama shall be born as one of his sons.

^577:3 The daughter of Daksha, but not enumerated amongst those formerly specified (<page 54>): she was born from his perspiration, according to the Kalika P.

CHAP. XXVIII.

Wives of Krishna. Pradyumna has Aniruddha: nuptials of the latter. Balarama beat at dice, becomes incensed, and slays Rukmin and others.

RUKMINI bare to Krishna these other sons, Charudeshna, Sudeshna, Charudeha, Sushena, Charugupta, Bhadracharu, Charuvinda, Sucharu, and the very mighty Charu; also one daughter, Charumati. Krishna had seven other beautiful wives, Kalindi, Mitravrinda, the virtuous Nagnajiti, the queen Jambavati; Rohini, of beautiful form; the amiable and excellent daughter of the king of Madra, Madri; Satyabhama, the daughter of S'atrujit; and Lakshmana, of lovely smiles [*1]. Besides these, he had sixteen thousand other wives [*2].

The heroic Pradyumna was chosen for her lord, at her public choice of a husband, by the daughter of Rukmin; and he had by her the powerful and gallant prince Aniruddha, who was fierce in fight, an ocean of prowess, and the tamer of his foes. Kes'ava demanded in marriage for him the granddaughter of Rukmin; and although the latter was inimical to Krishna, he betrothed the maiden (who was his son's daughter) to the son of his own daughter (her cousin Aniruddha). Upon the occasion of the nuptials Rama and other Yadavas attended Krishna to Bhojakata, the city of Rukmin. After the wedding had been solemnized, several of the kings, headed by him of Kalinga, said to Rukmin, "This wielder of the ploughshare is ignorant of the dice, which may be converted into his misfortune: why may we not contend with him, and beat him, in play?" The potent Rukmin replied to them, and said, "So let it be:" and he engaged Balarama at a game of dice in the palace. Balarama soon lost to Rukmin a thousand Nishkas [*3]: he then staked and lost another thousand; and then pledged ten thousand, which Rukmin, who was well skilled in gambling, also won. At this the king of Kalinga laughed aloud, and the weak and exulting Rukmin grinned, and said, "Baladeva is losing, for he knows nothing of the game; although, blinded by a vain passion for play, he thinks he understands the dice." Halayudha, galled by the broad laughter of the Kalinga prince, and the contemptuous speech of Rukmin, was exceedingly angry, and, overcome with passion, increased his stake to ten millions of Nishkas. Rukmin accepted the challenge, and therefore threw the dice. Baladeva won, and cried aloud, "The stake is mine." But Rukmin called out as loudly, that he was the winner. "Tell no lies, Bala," said he: "the stake is yours; that is true; but I did not agree to it: although this be won by you, yet still I am the winner." A deep voice was then heard in the sky, inflaming still more the anger of the high-spirited Baladeva, saying, "Bala has rightly won the whole sum, and Rukmin speaks falsely: although he did not accept the pledge in words, he did so by his acts (having cast the dice)." Balarama thus excited, his eyes red with rage, started up, and struck Rukmin with the board on which the game was played, and killed him [*4]. Taking hold of the trembling king of Kalinga, he knocked out the teeth which he had shewn when he laughed. Laying hold of a golden column, he dragged it from its place, and used it as a weapon to kill those princes who had taken part with his adversaries. Upon which the whole circle, crying out with terror, took to flight, and escaped from the wrath of Baladeva. When Krishna heard that Rukmin had been killed by his brother, he made no remark, being afraid of Rukmini on the one hand, and of Bala on the other; but taking with him the newly wedded Aniruddha, and the Yadava tribe, he returned to Dwarka.

Footnotes

^578:1 The number specified, however, both in this place and in c. 32, is nine, instead of eight. The commentator endeavours to explain the difference by identifying Rohini with Jambavati; but in the notices of Krishna's posterity, both in this work and in the Bhagavata, she is distinct from Jambavati. She seems, however, to be an addition to the more usually specified eight, of whose several marriages the Bhagavata gives the best account. In addition to the three first, respecting whom particulars are found in all, Kalindi, or the Yamuna, is the daughter of the sun, whom Krishna meets on one of his visits to Indraprastha, and who claims him as the reward of her penance. His next wife, Mitravinda, is the daughter of his maternal aunt, Rajadhidevi (<page 437>), and sister of Vinda and Anuvinda, kings of Avanti: she chooses him at her Swayambara. The Hari Vans'a calls her Saudatta, daughter of S'ivi; and she is subsequently termed S'aivya by our text. Nagnajiti or Satya, the next wife, was the daughter of Nagnajit, king of Kausala, and was the prize of Krishna's overcoming seven fierce bulls, whom no other hero had encountered with success. Bhadra, princess of Kekaya, also Krishna's cousin, the daughter of S'rutakirti (<page 437>), was his next: and his eighth wife was Madri, the daughter of the king of Madra; named, according to the Bhagavata, Lakshana; and to the Hari V., Saubhima; distinguishing, as does our text, clearly Lakshmana from Madri, and like it having no satisfactory equivalent for Bhadra. The Hari Vans'a does not name Rohini, but specifies other names, as Vrihati, &c. In the life of Krishna, taken from the Bhagavata through a Persian translation, published by Maurice, there is a curious instance of the barbarous distortion of Sanscrit

names by the joint labours of the English and Persian translators: the wives of Krishna are written, Rokemenee (Rukmini), Seteebhavani (Satyabhama), Jamoometee (Jambavati), Kalenderee (Kalin-di), Lechmeena (Lakshmana), Soeta (Satya?), Bhedravatee (Bhadra), Mihrbenda (Mitravinda).

^{^578:2} These, according to the Mahabharata, [p. 579] Adi P., were Apsarasas, or nymphs. In the Dana Dharma they become Krishna's wives through a boon given him by Uma.

^{^579:3} The Nishka is a weight of gold, but according to different authorities of very different amount. The commentator here terms it a weight of four Suvarnas, each about 175 grains troy.

^{^580:4} The Bhagavata and Hari Vans'a, which both tell this story, agree in the death of Rukmin; but in the Mahabharata he appears in the war, on the side of the Pandavas. The occurrence is a not very favourable picture of courtly manners; but scenes of violence have never been infrequent at the courts of Rajput princes.

CHAP. XXIX.

Indra comes to Dwaraka, and reports to Krishna the tyranny of Naraka. Krishna goes to his city, and puts him to death. Earth gives the earrings of Aditi to Krishna, and praises him. He liberates the princesses made captive by Naraka, sends them to Dwaraka, and goes to Swarga with Satyabhama.

S'AKRA, the lord of the three worlds, came mounted on his fierce elephant Airavata to visit S'auri (Krishna) at Dwaraka. Having entered the city, and been welcomed by Hari, he related to the hero the deeds of the demon Naraka. "By thee, Madhusudana, lord of the gods," said Indra, "in a mortal condition, all sufferings have been soothed. Arishta, Dhenuka, Chanura, Mushtika, Kes'in, who sought to injure helpless man, have all been slain by thee. Kansa, Kuvalayapida, the child-destroying Putana, have been killed by thee; and so have other oppressors of the world. By thy valour and wisdom the three worlds have been preserved, and the gods, obtaining their share of the sacrifices offered by the devout, enjoy satisfaction. But now hear the occasion on which I have come to thee, and which thou art able to remedy. The son of the earth [*1], called Naraka, who rules over the city of Pragjyotisha [*2], inflicts a great injury upon all creatures. Carrying off the maidens of gods, saints, demons, and kings, he shuts them up in his own palace. He has taken away the umbrella of Varuna, impermeable to water, the jewel mountain crest of Mandara, and the celestial nectar-dropping earrings of my mother Aditi; and he now demands my elephant Airavata. I have thus explained to you, Govinda, the tyranny of the Asura; you can best determine how it is to be prevented."

Having heard this account, the divine Hari gently smiled, and, rising from his throne, took Indra by the hand: then wishing for the eater of the serpents, Garuda immediately appeared; upon whom his master, having first seated Satyabhama upon his back, ascended, and flew to Pragjyotisha. Indra mounted his elephant, and, in the sight of the inhabitants of Dwaraka, went to the abode of the gods.

The environs of Pragjyotisha were defended by nooses, constructed by the demon Muru, the edges of which were as sharp as razors; but Hari, throwing his discus Sudars'ana amongst them, cut them to pieces. Then Muni started up, but Kes'ava slew him, and burnt his seven thousand sons, like moths, with the flame of the edge of his discus. Having slain Mum, Hayagriva, and Panchajana, the wise Hari rapidly reached the city of Pragjyotisha: there a fierce conflict took place with the troops of Naraka, in which Govinda destroyed thousands of demons; and when Naraka came into the field, showering upon the deity all sorts of weapons, the wielder of the discus, and annihilator of the demon tribe, cut him in two with his celestial missile. Naraka being slain, Earth, bearing the two earrings of Aditi, approached the lord of the world, and said, "When, O lord, I was upheld by thee in the form of a boar, thy contact then engendered this my son. He whom thou gayest me has now been killed by thee: take therefore these two earrings, and cherish his progeny. Thou, lord, whose aspect is ever gracious, hast come to this sphere, in a portion of thyself, to lighten my burden. Thou art the eternal creator, preserver, and destroyer of the universe; the origin of all worlds, and one

with the universe: what praise can be worthily offered to thee? Thou art the pervader, and that which is pervaded; the act, the agent, and the effect; the universal spirit of all beings: what praise can be worthily offered to thee? Thou art the abstract soul, the sentient and the living soul of all beings, the imperishable: but since it is not possible to praise thee worthily, then why should the hopeless attempt proceed? Have compassion, O universal soul, and forgive the sins which Naraka has committed. Verily it is for the sanctification of thy son that he has been killed by thee." The lord, who is the substance of all creatures, having replied to the earth, "Even so," proceeded to redeem the various gems from the dwelling of Naraka. In the apartments of the women he found sixteen thousand and one hundred damsels [*3]: he also beheld in the palace six thousand large elephants, each having four tusks; twenty-one lakhs of horses of Kamboja and other excellent breeds: these Govinda dispatched to Dwaraka, in charge of the servants of Naraka. The umbrella of Varuna, the jewel mountain, which he also recovered, he placed upon Garuda; and mounting him himself, and taking Satyabhama with him, he set off to the heaven of the gods, to restore the earrings of Aditi [*4].

Footnotes

^581:1 By Vishnu, as the Varaha Avatara; but found and adopted by Janaka. Kalika P.

^581:2 In the centre of the country of Kamarupa, inhabited by Kiratas; the site of the shrines of Devi, as Dikkaravasini and Kamakhya. Kalika P.

^583:3 These were captive princesses, according to the Bhagavata; Apsarasas, or celestial nymphs, according to the Kalika P.; and these upon their rescue by Krishna became his wives.

^583:4 The legend of Naraka is related in more detail in the Bhagavata and Hari Vans'a, but is still more fully narrated in the Kalika Upa-purana. It may be considered as one of the various intimations that occur in the Puranas of hostilities between the worshippers of Vishnu and S'iva; Naraka being in an especial degree favoured by the latter.

CHAP. XXX.

Krishna restores her earrings to Aditi, and is praised by her: he visits the gardens of Indra, and at the desire of carries off the Parijata tree. S'achi excites Indra to its rescue. Conflict between the gods and Krishna, who defeats them. Satyabhama derides them. They praise Krishna.

GARUDA, laden with the umbrella of Varuna and the jewel mountain, and bearing Hrishikes'a on his back to the court of Indra, went lightly, as if in sport, along. When they arrived at the portals of Swarga, Hari blew his shell; on which the gods advanced to meet him, bearing respectful offerings. Having received the homage of the divinities, Krishna went to the palace of the mother of the gods, whose turrets resembled white clouds; and on beholding Aditi, paid his respects to her, along with S'akra; and, presenting to her her own earrings, informed her of the destruction of the demon Naraka. The mother of the world, well pleased, then fixed her whole thoughts upon Hari, the creator, and thus pronounced his praise: "Glory to thee, O god with the lotus eyes, who removest all fear from those that worship thee. Thou art the eternal, universal, and living soul; the origin of all beings; the instigator of the mental faculty, and faculties of sense; one with the three qualities; beyond the three qualities; exempt from contraries; pure; existing in the hearts of all; void of colour, extension, and every transient modification; unaffected by the vicissitudes of birth or death, sleep or waking. Thou art evening, night, and day; earth, sky, air, water, and fire; mind, intellect, and individuality. Thou art the agent of creation, duration, and dissolution; the master over the agent; in thy forms which are called Brahma, Vishnu, and S'iva. Thou art gods, Yakshas, Daityas, Rakshasas, Siddhas, Punnagas, Kushmandas, Pis'achas, Gandharbas, men, animals, deer, elephants, reptiles, trees, shrubs, creepers, climbers, and grasses; all things, large, middling, small, immense, or minute: thou art all bodies whatsoever, composed of aggregated atoms. This thy illusion beguiles all who are ignorant of thy

true nature, the fools who imagine soul to be in that which is not spirit. The notions that "I am – this is mine," which influence mankind, are but the delusions of the mother of the world, originating in thy active agency. Those men who, attentive to their duties, diligently worship thee, traverse all this illusion, and obtain spiritual freedom. Brahma and all the gods, men and animals, are alike invested by the thick darkness of fascination, in the gulf of the illusions of Vishnu. That men, who having worshipped thee, should seek the gratification of their desires, and their own preservation, this, O lord, is also thy delusion. It is the sport of thy fascinations that induces men to glorify thee, to obtain thereby the continuance of their race, or the annihilation of their enemies, instead of eternal liberation. It is the fault of the impure acts of the unrighteous (to proffer such idle requests to one able to confer such more important benefits), like asking for a rag to cover one's nakedness from the tree that bestows whatever is solicited. Be propitious then, imperishable author of all the error that deceives the world; and dispel, O lord of all creatures, the conceit of knowledge, which proceeds from ignorance. Glory to thee, grasper of the discus, wielder of the bow, brandisher of the mace, holder of the shell; for such do I behold thee in thy perceptible form: nor do I know that form of thine, which is beyond perception! Have compassion on me, supreme god."

Vishnu, thus hymned by Aditi, smiled, and said to the mother of the gods, "Mother goddess, do thou shew favour unto me, and grant me thy blessing." "So be it," replied Aditi, "ever as thou wilt; and whilst thou dwellest amongst mortals, the first of men, thou shalt be invincible by gods or demons." Then Satyabhama, accompanied by the queen of Indra, addressed Aditi respectfully, and solicited her benedictions: and Aditi in reply said to her, "Fair-browed dame, thou shalt never suffer decay, nor loss of beauty: thou shalt be the asylum of all loveliness, dame of faultless shape." With the assent of Aditi, Indra then respectfully saluted Janarddana in all due form, and conducted him and Satyabhama through Nandana and other pleasant gardens of the gods; where Kes'ava, the destroyer of Kes'i, saw the Parijata tree, the favourite of S'achi, which was produced when the ocean was churned for ambrosia: the bark was of gold, and it was embellished with young sprouting leaves of a copper colour, and fruit-stalks bearing numerous clusters of fragrant fruit. When Satyabhama noticed this tree, she said to her beloved lord, Govinda, "Why should not this divine tree be transported to Dwaraka? If what you say is true, and I am really dear to you, then let this tree be taken away from hence, and planted in the gardens of my dwelling. You have often said to me, 'Neither Jambavati nor Rukmini is so dear to me, Satya, as you are.' If you have spoken the truth, and not mere flattery, then let this Parijata tree be the ornament of my mansion. I long to shine amidst my fellow queens, wearing the flowers of this tree in the braids of my hair."

Thus solicited by Satyabhama, Hari smiled upon her, and taking the Parijata plant, put it upon Garuda. The keepers of the garden remonstrated, and said, "This Parijata tree belongs to S'achi, the queen of the sovereign of the gods: it is not proper, Govinda, for you to remove it. At the time when the ocean was churned for the beverage of immortality, this tree was produced, for the purpose of providing S'achi with flowery ornaments. You cannot be suffered to depart with it. It is through ignorance that this is sought for by any one, as it is the especial property of her on whose countenance the king of the gods delights to look; and who shall go away with impunity, who attempts to carry it off? Assuredly the king of the gods will punish this audacity; for his hand launches the thunderbolt, and the immortals attend upon his steps. Forbear then, Krishna, nor provoke the hostility of all the gods. The wise will not commence actions that can be productive only of unpleasant consequences." Satyabhama, on hearing these words, was exceedingly offended, and said, "What right has S'achi – what has Indra – to the Parijata tree? it was produced at the churning of the ocean as the common property of all worlds. Wherefore, gods, should Indra alone possess it? In the same manner, guardians of the grove, as nectar, as the moon, as the goddess S'ri herself, so the Parijata tree is the common property of all the world: and since S'achi, confiding in the strength of her husband's arm, would keep it to herself, away with submission to her: Satya takes away the tree. Go quickly, and let Paulomi be told what I have said: repeat to her this contemptuous message from Satyabhama; 'If you are the beloved wife of your lord, if your husband is obedient to your authority, let him

prevent my husband from carrying off this tree. I know your husband S'akra; I know the sovereign of the divinities; and I, who am a mortal, take this Parijata tree away from you."

Accordingly the warders of the garden went and reported to S'achi the message of Satyabhama. S'achi appealed to her husband, and excited the king of the gods to resent this affront: and Indra accordingly, attended by the army of the celestials, marched to attack Hari, in defence of the Parijata tree. The gods were armed with clubs, swords, maces, and darts; and Indra wielded the thunderbolt. As soon as Govinda saw the king of the gods advancing against him on his elephant, attended by the immortals, he blew his shell so that the sound filled all the regions, and he showered smilingly myriads of arrows upon his assailants. Beholding the air in all directions overspread with his darts, the celestials in return hurled innumerable missiles; but every one of these the destroyer of Madhu, and lord of all worlds, cut playfully into a thousand pieces with his shafts. The devourer of serpents, Garuda, laid hold of the noose of the sovereign of the waters, and tore it to fragments with his beak, as if it had been a little snake. The son of Devaki threw his mace at the club of Yama, and cast it broken upon the ground: he cut in bits the litter of the lord of wealth with his discus: a glance of his eye eclipsed the radiance of the sun: he severed Agni into a hundred parts with his arrows, and scattered the Vasus through the realms of space: with his discus he cut off the points of the tridents of the Rudras, and cast themselves upon the earth: and with the shafts shot from his bow he dispersed the Sadhyas, Vis'was, Maruts, and Gandharbas, like fleeces of cotton from the pods of the Simel tree, through the sky. Garuda also diligently plied his beak and wings and nails, and bit and bruised and scratched the deities who opposed his lord.

Then the king of the gods and the foe of Madhu encountered and overwhelmed each other with countless shafts, like rain-drops falling from two heavy clouds. Garuda in the conflict engaged with Airavata, and Janarddana was opposed to all the deities. When all the other weapons had been cut to pieces, Indra stood armed with his thunderbolt, and Krishna with the discus Sudars'ana. Beholding them thus prepared for fight, all the people of the three spheres exclaimed, "Alas! alas!" Indra launched his bolt, but in vain, for Hari caught and arrested it: he forbore, however, to hurl his discus, and only called out to Indra to stay. Satyabhama seeing Indra disarmed, and his elephant disabled by Garuda, and the deity himself about to retreat, said to him, "King of the triple sphere, it ill becomes the husband of S'achi to run away. Ornamented with Parijata garlands, she will approach you. Of what use is the sovereignty of heaven, embellished with the Parijata tree, no longer beholding S'achi meet you with affection as of yore? Nay, S'akra, fly not; you must not suffer shame: here, take the Parijata tree; let the gods be no longer annoyed. Sachs, inflated with pride of her husband, has not welcomed me to her dwelling with respectful presents. As a woman, I am light of purpose, and am anxious for my husband's fame; therefore have I instigated, S'akra, this contest with you. But I do not want the Parijata tree, nor do I wish to take that which is another's property. S'achi is proud of her beauty. What woman is not proud of her husband?" Thus spoken to by Satyabhama, the king of the gods turned back, and said to her, "Desist, wrathful dame, from afflicting your friend by further reproaches. I am not ashamed of being vanquished by him who is the author of the creation, preservation, and destruction of the world; who is the substance of all things; in whom, without beginning or middle, the universe is comprised; and from whom, and by whom, identical with all things, it proceeds, and will cease to be. What disgrace is it, O goddess, to any one to be discomfited by him who is the cause of creation, continuance, and dissolution? His form is the parent of all worlds, though infinitely subtle, and known to those only by whom all that may be known is known. Who is able to overcome the unborn, unconstituted, eternal lord, who has willed to become a mortal for the good of the world [*1]?"

Footnotes

^{^588:1} The Bhagavata merely says, "Incited by his wife, Krishna took away the Parijata tree, having subdued the gods, and planted it in the garden of Satyabhama." The Hari V. makes a long story of it, and tells it with some variations, especially in the commencement; Satyabhama's desire for the

Parijata tree having been excited by Narada's presenting a flower from it to Krishna's other spouse, Rukmini.

CHAP. XXXI.

Krishna, with Indra's consent, takes the Parijata tree to Dwaraka; marries the princesses rescued from Naraka.

KES'AVA, being thus eulogized by the king of the gods, smiled, and spake gravely to him in reply. "Thou art Indra," said he, "the king of the celestials: we are but mortals, O lord of the world: thou must pardon therefore the offence that I have committed. Let this Parijata tree be taken to its appropriate situation. I removed it in compliance with the words of Satya. Receive back also this your thunderbolt, cast at me; for this is your proper weapon, the destroyer of your foes." Indra answered and said, "Thou beguilest us, O lord, in calling thyself a mortal; but we know thee to be the lord, although not endowed with subtlety of discernment. Thou art that thou art, engaged in the active preservation of the earth; thou extractest the thorns implanted in her bosom, destroyer of the demon race. Let this Parijata tree be transferred to Dwaraka, and it shall remain upon earth as long as thou abidest in the world of mortals." Hari, having assented to the proposal of Indra, returned to earth, hymned by attendant sages, saints, and quiristers of heaven.

When Krishna arrived over Dwaraka, he blew his shell, and delighted all the inhabitants with the sound. Then alighting from Garuda, he proceeded with Satyabhama to her garden, and there planted the great Parijata tree, the smell of which perfumed the earth for three furlongs, and an approach to which enabled every one to recollect the events of a prior existence; so that, on beholding their faces in that tree, all the Yadavas contemplated themselves in their (original) celestial forms. Then Krishna took possession of the wealth, elephants, horses, and women, which he had recovered from Naraka, and which had been brought to Dwaraka by the servants of the demon; and at an auspicious season he espoused all the maidens whom Naraka had carried off from their friends; at one and the same moment he received the hands of all of them, according to the ritual, in separate mansions. Sixteen thousand and one hundred was the number of the maidens, and into so many different forms did the foe of Madhu multiply himself; so that every one of the damsels thought that he had wedded her in his single person; and the creator of the world, Hari, the assumer of universal shape, abode severally in the dwelling of each of these his wives.

CHAP. XXXII.

Children of Krishna. Usha, the daughter of Bana, sees Aniruddha in a dream, and becomes enamoured of him.

PARAS'ARA. – I have enumerated to you Pradyumna and the other sons of Rukmini. Satyabhama bore Bhanu and Bhairika. The sons of Rohini were Diptimat, Tamrapakshi, and others. The powerful S'amba and other sons were born of Jambavati. Bhadravinda and other valiant youths were the sons of Nagnajiti. S'aivya (or Mitravinda) had several sons, of whom Sangramajit was the chief. Vrika and others were begotten by Hari on Madri. Lakshmana had Gatratvat and others: and S'ruta and others were the sons of Kalindi [*1]. Krishna had sons also by his other wives, in all one hundred and eighty thousand. The eldest of the whole was Pradyumna, the son of Rukmini: his son was Aniruddha, from whom Vraja was born: his mother was Usha, the daughter of Bana, and granddaughter of Bali, whom Aniruddha won in war. On that occasion a fierce battle took place between Hari and S'ankara, in which the thousand arms of Bana were lopped away by the discus of the former.

MAITREYA. – HOW happened it, venerable Brahman, that a contest on account of Usha arose between S'iva and Krishna? and in what manner did Hari cut off the thousand arms of Bana? This, illustrious sir, thou art able to narrate.

PARAS'ARA. – Usha, the daughter of Bana, having seen Parvati sporting with her lord, S'ambhu, was inspired with a wish for similar dalliance. The beautiful Gauri, who knows the hearts of all, said to Usha, "Do not grieve; you shall have a husband." "But when will this be?" thought Usha to herself, "or who will be my lord?" On which Parvati continued; "He who shall appear to you, princess, in a dream on the twelfth lunation of the light half of Vais'akha, he will be your husband." Accordingly, as the goddess had foretold, on that lunar day a youth appeared to Usha in a dream, of whose person she became enamoured. When she woke, and no longer perceived him, she was overcome with sorrow, and, unrestrained by modesty, demanded of her companion whither he had gone. The companion and friend of the princess was Chitrlekha, the daughter of Kubhanda, the minister of Bana. "Of whom do you speak?" inquired she of Usha. But the princess, recollecting herself, was ashamed, and remained silent. At length, however, Chitrlekha conciliated her confidence, and she related to her what had passed, and what the goddess had foretold; and she requested her friend to devise some means of uniting her with the person whom she had beheld in her dream.

Chitrlekha then delineated the most eminent gods, demons, spirits, and mortals, and shewed them to Usha. Putting aside the portraits of gods, spirits, snake-gods, and demons, the princess selected those of mortals, and amongst them the heroes of the races of Andhaka and Vrishni. When she came to the likenesses of Krishna and Rama, she was confused with shame; from the portrait of Pradyumna she modestly averted her eyes; but the moment she beheld the picture of his son, the object of her passion, her eyes wide expanded, and all her bashfulness was discarded. "This is he! this is he!" said she to Chitrlekha; and her friend, who was endowed with magic power, bade her be of good cheer, and set off through the air to Dwaraka.

Footnotes

^{591:1} The Bhagavata says, each of his eight queens had ten sons, and gives the ten names of each set, with one or two exceptions.

CHAP. XXXIII.

Bana solicits S'iva for war: finds Aniruddha in the palace, and makes him prisoner. Krishna, Balarama, and Pradyumna come to his rescue S'iva and Skanda aid Bana: the former is disabled; the latter put to flight. Bana encounters Krishna, who cuts off all his arms, and is about to put him to death. S'iva intercedes, and Krishna spares his life. Vishnu and S'iva are the same.

BEFORE this took place, Bana had been engaged in the adoration of the three-eyed god, and had thus prayed to him: "I am humiliated, O lord, by the possession of a thousand arms in a state of peace; let some hostilities ensue, in which I may derive some advantage from their possession. Without war, what is the use of these arms? they are but a burden to me." S'ankara replied, "When thy peacock banner shall be broken, thou shalt have war, the delight of the evil spirits that feast on the flesh of man." Bana, pleased by this promise, proffered his thanks to S'ambhu, and returned to his palace, where he found his standard broken; at which his joy was increased.

At that time the nymph Chitrlekha returned from Dwaraka, and by the exercise of her magic power brought Aniruddha along with her. The guards of the inner apartments discovering him there with Usha, reported it to the king who immediately sent a body of his followers to seize the prince; but the valiant youth, taking up an iron club, slew his assailants: on which Bana mounted his car, advanced against him, and endeavoured to put him to death. Finding, however, that Aniruddha was not to be subdued by prowess, he followed the counsel of his minister, and brought his magical faculties into the conflict, by which he succeeded in capturing the Yadu prince, and binding him in serpent bonds.

When Aniruddha was missed from Dwaravati, and the Yadavas were inquiring of one another whither he had gone, Narada came to them, and told them that he was the prisoner of Bana, having

been conveyed by a female, possessed of magic faculties, to S'onitapura [*1] When they heard this, they were satisfied; for they had imagined he had been taken away by the gods (in reprisal for the Parijata tree). Krishna therefore immediately summoned Garuda, who came with a wish; and mounting upon him, along with Bala and Pradyumna, he set off for the city of Bana. On their approach to the city they were opposed by the spirits who attend on Rudra, but these were soon destroyed by Hari, and he and his companions reached the vicinity of the town. Here mighty Fever, an emanation from Mahes'wara, having three feet and three heads [*2], fought desperately with Vishnu in defence of Bana. Baladeva, upon whom his ashes were scattered, was seized with burning heat, and his eyelids trembled: but he obtained relief by clinging to the body of Krishna. Contending thus with the divine holder of the bow, the Fever emanating from S'iva was quickly expelled from the person of Krishna by Fever which he himself engendered. Brahma beholding the impersonated madya bewildered by the beating inflicted by the arms of the deity, entreated the latter to desist; and the foe of Madhu refrained, and absorbed into himself the fever he had created. The rival Fever then departed, saying to Krishna, "Those men who call to memory the combat between us shall be ever exempt from febrile disease."

Next Vishnu overcame and demolished the five fires [*3], and with perfect ease annihilated the army of the Danavas. Then the son of Bali (Bana), with the whole of the Daitya host, assisted by S'ankara and Kartikeya, fought with S'auri. A fierce combat took place between Hari and S'ankara; all the regions shook, scorched by their flaming weapons, and the celestials felt assured that the end of the universe was at hand. Govinda, with the weapon of yawning, set S'ankara a-gape; and then the demons and the demigods attendant upon S'iva were destroyed on every side; for Hara, overcome with incessant gaping, sat down in his car, and was unable longer to contend with Krishna, whom no acts affect. The deity of war, Kartikeya, wounded in the arm by Garuda, struck by the weapons of Pradyumna, and disarmed by the shout of Hari, took to flight. Bana, when he saw S'ankara disabled, the Daityas destroyed, Guha fled, and S'iva's followers slain, advanced on his vast car, the horses of which were harnessed by Nandis'a, to encounter Krishna and his associates Bala and Pradyumna. The valiant Balabhadra, attacking the host of Bana, wounded them in many ways with his arrows, and put them to a shameful rout; and their sovereign beheld them dragged about by Rama with his ploughshare, or beaten by him with his club, or pierced by Krishna with his arrows: he therefore attacked Krishna, and a fight took place between them: they cast at each other fiery shafts, that pierced through their armour; but Krishna intercepted with his arrows those of Bana, and cut them to pieces. Bana nevertheless wounded Kes'ava, and the wielder of the discus wounded Bana; and both desirous of victory, and seeking enraged the death of his antagonist, hurled various missiles at each other. When an infinite number of arrows had been cut to pieces, and the weapons began to be exhausted, Krishna resolved to put Bana to death. The destroyer of the demon host therefore took up his discus Sudars'ana, blazing with the radiance of a hundred suns. As he was in the act of casting it, the mystical goddess Kotavi, the magic lore of the demons, stood naked before him [*4]. Seeing her before him, Krishna, with unclosed eyes, cast Sudars'ana, to cut off the arms of Bana. The discus, dreaded in its flight by the whole of the weapons of the demons, lopped off successively the numerous arms of the Asura. Beholding Krishna with the discus again in his hand, and preparing to launch it once more, for the total demolition of Bana, the foe of Tripura (S'iva) respectfully addressed him. The husband of Uma, seeing the blood streaming from the dissevered arms of Bana, approached Govinda, to solicit a suspension of hostilities, and said to him, "Krishna, Krishna, lord of the world, I know thee, first of spirits, the supreme lord, infinite felicity, without beginning or end, and beyond all things. This sport of universal being, in which thou takest the persons of god, animals, and men, is a subordinate attribute of thy energy. Be propitious therefore, O lord, unto me. I have given Bana assurance of safety; do not thou falsify that which I have spoken. He has grown old in devotion to me; let him not incur thy displeasure. The Daitya has received a boon from me, and therefore I deprecate thy wrath." When he had concluded, Govinda, dismissing his resentment against the Asura, looked graciously on the lord of Uma, the wielder of the trident, and said to him, "Since you, S'ankara, have given a boon unto Bana, let him live: from respect to your promises, my

discus is arrested: the assurance of safety granted by you is granted also by me. You are fit to apprehend that you are not distinct from me. That which I am, thou art; and that also is this world, with its gods, demons, and mankind. Men contemplate distinctions, because they are stupified by ignorance." So saying, Krishna went to the place where the son of Pradyumna was confined. The snakes that bound him were destroyed, being blasted by the breath of Garuda: and Krishna, placing him, along with his wife, upon the celestial bird, returned with Pradyumna and Rama to Dwaraka [*4].

Footnotes

^593:1 The synonymes of S'onitapura in the Trikanda S'esha are Devikota, Banapur, Kotivarsham, and Ushavana. The first is usually considered to be the modern Devicotta in the Carnatic, which is commonly believed to be the scene of Bana's defeat. The name, however, occurs in other parts of India; in the Dekhin, on [p. 594] the banks of the Godavari, according to Wilford the capital of Munja (As. Res. IX. 199); and in Asam, near Gwalpara, as the city of the Daityas. As. Res. XIV. 443 Hamilton notices the remains of a city so called in Dinajpur. In the Kalika P., Bana is described as the friend, and apparently neighbour, of Naraka, king of Pragjyotish or Asam.

^594:2 Alluding to the three stages of febrile paroxysms, or to the recurrence of tertian ague. A contest with this enemy, in the course of military operations, is an allegory which the British armies in India too often illustrate.

^594:3 The Ahavaniya, Garhapatya, Dakshina, Sabhya, and Avasathya, are the five fires; of which the three first have a religious, and the other two a secular character. The first is a fire prepared for oblations at an occasional sacrifice: the second is the household fire, to be perpetually maintained: the third is a sacrificial fire, in the centre of the other two, and placed to the south: the Sabhya is a fire lighted to warm a party: and the Avasathya the common domestic or culinary fire. Manu, III. too, 185, and Kulluka Bhatta's explanation.

^595:4 Kotavi is said to be an eighth portion of Rudrani, and the tutelary goddess of the Daityas, composed of incantations. The Hari V. calls her also Lamba, and intimates her being the mother of Bana, and as identical with Durga. The word in the lexicons designates a naked woman, and is thence applicable to Durga, in some of her forms.

^596:4 There can be little doubt that this legend describes a serious struggle between the S'aivas and Vaishnavas, in which the latter, according to their own report, were victorious; and the S'aivas, although they attempt to make out a sort of compromise between Rudra and Krishna, are obliged to admit his having the worst of the conflict, and his inability to protect his votary. The Bhagavata tells the story much as the text. The Hari V. amplifies even more than usual, the narrative occupying nearly seventy pages of the French translation. The legend is to be found to the same purport, but in various degrees of detail, in the Agni P., Kurma P., Padma P. (Uttara Khanda), Vamana P., and Brahma Vaivartta P. (Krishna Janma Khanda).

CHAP. XXXIV.

Paundraka, a Vasudeva, assumes the insignia and style of Krishna, supported by the king of Kas'i. Krishna marches against, and destroys them. The son of the king sends a magical being against Krishna: destroyed by his discus, which also sets Benares on fire, and consumes it and its inhabitants.

MAITREYA. – Of a truth the divine S'auri, having assumed a mortal body, performed great achievements in his easy victories over S'akra and S'iva, and all their attendant divinities. I am now desirous to hear from you, illustrious sage, what other mighty exploit the humiliator of the prowess of the celestials performed.

PARAS'ARA. – Hear, excellent Brahman, with reverent attention, an account of the burning of Varanasi by Krishna, in the course of his relieving the burdens of the earth.

There was a Vasudeva who was called Paundraka [*1], and who, though not the Vasudeva, was flattered by ignorant people as the descended deity, until he fancied himself to be the Vasudeva [*2] who had come down upon earth. Losing all recollection of his real character, he assumed the emblems of Vishnu, and sent an ambassador to the magnanimous Krishna with this message; "Relinquish, thou foolish fellow, the discus; lay aside all my insignia, my name, and the character of Vasudeva; and come and do me homage; and I will vouchsafe thee means of subsistence." At which Janarddana laughed, and replied, "Go, messenger, back to Paundraka, and say to him from me, 'I will dispatch to thee my emblem the discus without fail. Thou wilt rightly apprehend my meaning, and consider what is to be done; for I shall come to thy city, bringing the discus with me, and shall undoubtedly consign it to thee. If thou wilt command me to come, I will immediately obey, and be with thee to-morrow; there shall be no delay: and, having sought thy asylum, I will so provide, O king, that I shall never more have any thing to dread from thee.'" So saying, he dismissed the ambassador to report these words to his sovereign; and summoning Garuda, mounted him, and set off for the city of Paundraka [*3].

When the king of Kas'i heard of the preparations of Kes'ava, he sent his army (to the aid of Paundraka), himself bringing up the rear; and with the force of the king of Kas'i, and his own troops, Paundraka, the false Vasudeva, marched to meet Krishna. Hari beheld him afar off, standing in his car, holding a discus, a club, a mace, a scimitar, and a lotus, in his hands; ornamented with a garland of flowers; bearing a bow; and having his standard made of gold: he had also the Srivatsa mark delineated on his breast; he was dressed in yellow garments, and decorated with earrings and a tiara. When the god whose standard is Garuda beheld him, he laughed with a deep laugh, and engaged in conflict with the hostile host of cavalry and elephants, fighting with swords, scimitars, maces, tridents, spears, and bows. Showering upon the enemy the shafts from his S'aranga bow, and hurling at them his mace and discus, he quickly destroyed both the army of Paundraka and that of the king of Kas'i. He then said to the former, who was foolishly wearing his emblems, "Paundraka, you desired me by your envoy to resign to you all my insignia. I now deliver them to you. Here is my discus; here I give up my mace; and here is Garuda, let him mount upon thy standard." Thus speaking, he let fly the discus and the mace, by which Paundraka was cut to pieces, and cast on the ground; whilst the Garuda on his banner was demolished by the Garuda of Vishnu. The people, beholding this sight, exclaimed, "Alas! alas!" but the valiant king of Kas'i, adhering to the imposture of his friend, continued the conflict, till S'auri decapitated him with his arrows, shooting his head into the city of Kas'i, to the marvel of all the inhabitants. Having thus slain Paundraka and the king of Kas'i, with all their followers, S'auri returned to Dwaraka, where he lived in the enjoyment of heavenly delights.

When the inhabitants of Kas'i saw the head of their king shot into their city, they were much astonished, and wondered how it could have happened, and by whom the deed could have been done. Having ascertained that the king had been killed by Krishna, the son of the monarch of Kas'i [*4], together with the priest of the family, propitiated S'ankara; and that deity, well pleased to be adored in the sacred place Avimukta, desired the prince to demand a boon: on which he prayed, and said, "O lord, mighty god, through thy favour let thy mystic spirit arise to destroy Krishna, the murderer of my father." "It shall be so," answered S'ankara: and from out of the southern fire upsprang a vast and formidable female [*5], like flame out of fire, blazing with ruddy light, and with fiery radiance streaming amidst her hair. Angrily she called upon Krishna, and departed to Dwaraka; where the people, beholding her, were struck with dismay, and fled for protection to Madhusudana, the refuge of all worlds. The wielder of the discus knowing that the fiend had been produced by the son of the king of Kas'i, through his adoration of the deity whose emblem is a bull, and being engaged in sportive amusements, and playing at dice, said to the discus, "Kill this fierce creature, whose tresses are of plaited flame." Accordingly Sudars'ana, the discus of Vishnu, immediately attacked the fiend,

fearfully enwreathed with fire, and wearing tresses of plaited flame. Terrified at the might of Sudars'ana, the creation of Mahes'wara awaited not his attack, but fled with speed, pursued by him with equal velocity, until she reached Varanas'i, repelled by the superior might of the discus of Vishnu.

The army of Kas'i, and the host of the demigods attendant upon S'iva, armed with all kinds of weapons, then sallied out to oppose the discus; but, skilled in the use of arms, he consumed the whole of the forces by his radiance, and then set fire to the city, in which the magic power of S'iva had concealed herself [*6]. Thus was Varanas'i burnt, with all its princes and their followers, its inhabitants, elephants, horses, and men, treasures and granaries, houses, palaces, and markets. The whole of a city, that was inaccessible to the gods, was thus wrapped in flames by the discus of Hari, and was totally destroyed. The discus then, with unmitigated wrath, and blazing fiercely, and far from satisfied with the accomplishment of so easy a task, returned to the hand of Vishnu [*7].

Footnotes

^597:1 From being, the commentator says, king of Pundra. The Bhagavata calls him chief of the Karushas; the Padma, king of Kas'i; but the Bhagavata, as well as our text, makes the king of Kas'i his friend and ally.

^597:2 According to the Padma P., he propitiates S'iva, and obtains from him the insignia which constitute a Vasudeva. The different authorities for this legend all use the term Vasudeva in the sense of a title.

^598:3 The Hari V. and Padma P. send Paundraka to Dwaraka. According to the latter, Narada incites Paundraka to the aggression, telling him he cannot be a Vasudeva till he has overcome Krishna: he goes, and is killed. The former work, as usual, enters into particulars of its own invention. Krishna is absent on a visit to S'iva at Kailasa, and during his absence Paundraka, assisted by Ekalavya, king of the Nishadas, makes a night attack upon Dwaraka. They are resisted by the Yadavas under Satyaki and Balarama; by the former of whom Paundraka is repeatedly overthrown, and all but slain: he requires so much killing, however, that he is likely to obtain the victory, when Krishna comes to the aid of his kinsmen, and after a protracted encounter, described in language employed a hundred times before, kills his competitor. The whole of the sections called the Kailasa Yatra, or Krishna's journey to Kailasa, must have been wanting in the copy used by M. Langlois, as they are not included in his translation. The chapters of the Hari V. according to his enumeration of them are 261: my copy has 316.

^599:4 The Bhagavata names him Sudakshina; the Padma, Dandapani.

^599:5 A personified Kritya, a magical creation. The Padma has the same. The Bhagavata makes the product of the sacrificial fire a male, and sends him to Dwaraka, accompanied by a host of Bhutas, Suva's attendant goblins.

^600:6 According to the Bhagavata, the magical being himself destroys Sudakshina and his priest; but Sudars'ana consumes the people and the city. The Padma ascribes the destruction of the king and all his city to the discus. The Hari V. closes its narrative with the death of Paundraka, and makes no mention of the destruction of Benares. The circumstance is alluded to in a preceding section (s. 159) by Narada, when detailing the exploits of Krishna.

^600:7 In this legend, again, we have a contest between the followers of Vishnu and S'iva intimated, as, besides the assistance given by the latter to Paundraka, Benares – Varanas'i or Atimukta – has been from all time, as it is at present, the high place of the S'aiva worship. There is also an indication of a Vaishnava schism, in the competition between Paundra and Krishna for the title of Vasudeva, and the insignia of his divinity.

CHAP. XXXV.

S'amba carries off the daughter of Duryodhana, but is taken prisoner. Balarama comes to Hastinapur, and demands his liberation: it is refused: in his wrath he drags the city towards him, to throw it into the river. The Kuru chiefs give up S'amba and his wife.

MAITREYA. – I have a great desire to hear, excellent Brahman, some further account of the exploits of Balarama. You have related to me his dragging the Yamuna, and other mighty deeds, but you can tell me, venerable sir, some other of his acts.

PARAS'ARA. – Attend, Maitreya, to the achievements performed by Rama, who is the eternal, il-limitable S'asha, the upholder of the earth. At the choice of a husband by the daughter of Duryodhana, the princess was carried off by the hero S'amba, the son of Jambavati. Being pursued by Duryodhana, Karna, Bhishma, Drona, and other celebrated chiefs, who were incensed at his audacity, he was defeated, and taken prisoner. When the Yadavas heard of the occurrence, their wrath was kindled against Duryodhana and his associates, and they prepared to take up arms against them; but Baladeva, in accents interrupted by the effects of ebriety, forbade them, and said, "I will go alone to the sons of Kuru; they will liberate S'amba at my request." Accordingly he went to the elephant-styled city (Hastinapur), but took up his abode in a grove without the town, which he did not enter. When Duryodhana and the rest heard that he had arrived there, they sent him a cow, a present of fruits and flowers, and water. Bala received the offering in the customary form, and said to the Kauravas, "Ugrasena commands you to set S'amba at liberty." When Duryodhana, Karna, Bhishma, Drona, and the others, heard this, they were very angry; and Bahlika and other friends of the Kauravas, who looked upon the Yadu race as not entitled to regal dignity, said to the wielder of the club, "What is this, Balabhadra, that thou hast uttered? What Yadava shall give orders to the chiefs of the family of Kuru? If Ugrasena issues his mandates to the Kauravas, then we must take away the white umbrella that he has usurped, and which is fit only for kings. Depart therefore, Balarama; you are entitled to our respect; but S'amba has been guilty of improper conduct, and we will not liberate him either at Ugrasena's commands or yours. The homage that is due to us, their superiors, by the Kukura and Andhaka tribes, may not be paid by them; but who ever heard of a command issued by a servant to his master? Elevation to an equal seat has rendered you arrogant. We have committed a great mistake in neglecting, through our friendship for you, the policy (that teaches the danger of treating the abject with deference). Our sending you to-day a respectful present was an intimation of (personal) regard, which it was neither fit for our race to have proffered, nor for your's to have expected."

Having thus spoken, the Kuru chiefs, unanimously refusing to set the son of Hari at large, immediately returned into the city. Bala, rolling about with intoxication, and the wrath which their contemptuous language had excited, struck the ground furiously with his heel, so that it burst to pieces with a loud sound that reverberated through the regions of space. His eyes reddened with rage, and his brow was curved with frowns, as he exclaimed, "What arrogance is this, in such vile and pithless creatures! The sovereignty of the Kauravas, as well as our own, is the work of fate, whose decree it also is that they now disrespect or disobey the commands of Ugrasena. Indra may of right give his orders to the gods; and Ugrasena exercises equal authority with the lord of S'achi. Fie upon the pride that boasts a throne, the leavings of a hundred mortals! Is not he the sovereign of the earth, the wives of whose servants adorn themselves with the blossoms of the Parijata tree? Ugrasena shall be the undisputed king of kings; for I will not return to his capital until I have rid the world wholly of the sons of Kuru. I will destroy Karna, Duryodhana, Drona, Bhishma, Bahlika, Duhsas'ana, Bhurisravas, Somadatta, S'alya, Bhima, Arjuna, , the twins, and all the other vile descendants of Kuru, with their horses, elephants, and chariots. I will rescue the hero S'amba from captivity, and carry him, along with his wife, to Dwaraka, where I shall again behold Ugrasena and the rest of my kin. Or, authorized by the king of the gods to remove the burdens of the earth, I will take this capital of the Kauravas, with all the sons of Kuru, and cast the city of the elephant into the Bhagirathi."

So saying, the wielder of the club, Baladeva, his eyes red with rage, plunged the blade of his ploughshare downwards, beneath the ramparts of the city, and drew them towards him. When the Kauravas beheld Hastinapura tottering, they were much alarmed, and called loudly on Rama, saying, "Rama, Rama! hold, hold! suppress your wrath! have mercy upon us! Here is S'amba, and his wife also, delivered up to thee. Forgive our sins, committed in ignorance of thy wondrous power." Accordingly, issuing hurriedly from the city, the Kauravas delivered S'amba and his bride to the mighty Balarama, who, bowing to Bhishma, Drona, and Kripa, who addressed him in conciliatory language, said, "I am satisfied;" and so desisted. The city bears the marks of the shock it received, even to the present day – such was the might of Rama – proving both his strength and prowess. The Kauravas then offering homage to S'amba and to Bala, dismissed the former with his wife and a bridal portion [*1].

Footnotes

^603:1 This adventure is related in the Bhagavata, and very briefly noticed in the Hari Vans'a; but I have not found any mention of it in the Mahabharata. It may have been suggested originally by Hastinapura having sustained some injury either from an earthquake or from the encroachments of the river, which, as is recorded, compelled the removal of the capital to Kausambi (<page 461>).

CHAP. XXXVI.

The Asura Dwivida, in the form of an ape, destroyed by Balarama.

HEAR also, Maitreya, another exploit performed by the mighty Balarama. The great Asura, the foe of the friends of the gods, Naraka, had a friend of exceeding prowess in the monkey named Dwivida, who was animated by implacable hostility against the deities, and vowed to revenge on the whole of them the destruction of Naraka by Krishna, at the instigation of the king of the celestials, by preventing sacrifices, and effecting the annihilation of the mortal sphere. Blinded by ignorance, he accordingly interrupted all religious rites, subverted all righteous observances, and occasioned the death of living beings: he set fire to the forests, to villages, and to towns: sometimes he overwhelmed cities and hamlets with falling rocks; or lifting up mountains in the waters, he cast them into the ocean: then taking his place amidst the deep, he agitated the waves, until the foaming sea rose above its confines, and swept away the villages and cities situated upon its shores. Dwivida also, who could assume what shape he would, enlarged his bulk to an immense size, and rolling and tumbling and trampling amidst the corn fields, he crushed and spoiled the harvests. The whole world, disordered by this iniquitous monkey, was deprived of sacred study and religious rites, and was greatly afflicted.

On one occasion Hala.yudha was drinking in the groves of Raivata, along with the illustrious Revati and other beautiful females; and the distinguished Yadu, in whose praises songs were sung, and who was preeminent amidst graceful and sportive women, resembled Kuvera, the god of riches, in his palace. Whilst thus engaged, the monkey Dwivida came there, and stealing the ploughshare and the club of Baladeva, grinned at and mocked him, and laughed at the women, and threw over and broke the cups filled with wine. Balarama, becoming angry at this, threatened the monkey; but the latter disregarded his menaces, and made a chattering noise: on which Bala, starting up, seized his club in wrath; and the monkey laid hold of a large rock, which he burlled at the hero. Bala casting his club at it, as it neared him, broke it into a thousand fragments, which, together with the club, fell upon the ground. Beholding the club prostrate, the monkey sprang over it, and struck the Yadava violently on the breast with his paws. Bala replied with a blow of his fist upon the forehead of Dwivida, which felled him, vomiting blood, and lifeless, to the earth. The crest of the mountain on which he fell was splintered into a hundred pieces by the weight of his body, as if the thunderer had shivered it with his thunderbolt. The gods threw down a shower of flowers upon Rama, and approached him, and praised him for the glorious feat he had performed. "Well has the world been

freed," said they, "by thy prowess, O hero, of this vile ape, who was the ally of the enemy of the gods." Then they and their attendant spirits returned well pleased to heaven. Many such inimitable deeds were wrought by the illustrious Baladeva, the impersonation of S'esha, the supporter of the earth [*1].

Footnotes

^605:1 This exploit of Balarama is also similarly, but more vulgarly, related in the Bhagavata. It is simply said in the Hari Vans'a, and erroneously, that Menda and Dwivida were conquered by Krishna.

CHAP. XXXVII.

Destruction of the Yadavas. S'amba and others deceive and ridicule the Rishis. The former bears an iron pestle: it is broken, and thrown into the sea. The Yadavas go to Prabhasa by desire of Krishna: they quarrel and fight, and all perish. The great serpent S'esha issues from the mouth of Rama. Krishna is shot by a hunter, and again becomes one with universal spirit.

IN this manner did Krishna, assisted by Baladeva, destroy demons and iniquitous monarchs, for the good of the earth; and along with Phalguna [*1] also did he relieve earth of her load, by the death of innumerable hosts. Having thus lightened the burdens of the earth, and slain many unrighteous princes, he exterminated [*2], by the pretext of an imprecation denounced by Brahmans, his own Yadava race. Then quitting Dwaraka, and relinquishing his mortal being, the self-born reentered, with all his emanations, his own sphere of Vishnu.

MAITREYA. – Tell me how Janarddana effected the destruction of his own race under the plea of Brahmanical imprecation, and in what manner he relinquished his mortal body [*3].

PARAS'ARA. – At the holy place Pindaraka [*4], Viswamitra, Kanwa, and the great sage Narada, were observed by some boys of the Yadu tribe. Giddy with youth, and influenced by predestined results, they dressed and adorned Sumba, the son of Jambavati, as a damsel, and conducting her to the sages, they addressed them with the usual marks of reverence, and said, "What child will this female, the wife of Babhru, who is anxious to have a son, give birth to?" The sages, who were possessed of divine wisdom, were very angry to find themselves thus tricked by the boys, and said, "She will bring forth a club, that shall crush the whole of the Yadava race." The boys, thus spoken to by the sages, went and related all that had occurred to Ugrasena; and, as foretold, a club was produced from the belly of S'amba. Ugrasena had the club, which was of iron, ground to dust, and thrown into the sea; but the particles of dust there became rushes [*5]. There was one part of the iron club which was like the blade of a lance, and which the Andhakas could not break: this, when thrown into the sea, was swallowed by a fish; the fish was caught, the iron spike was extracted from its belly, and was taken by a hunter named Jara. The all-wise and glorious Madhusudana did not think fit to counteract what had been predetermined by fate.

Then there came to Kes'ava, when he was private and alone, a messenger from the gods, who addressed him with reverence, and said, "I am sent to you, O lord, by the deities, and do thou hear what Indra, together with the Vis'was, Maruts, Adityas, Sadhyas, and Rudras, respectfully represents. More than a hundred years have elapsed since thou, in favour to the gods, hast descended upon earth, for the purpose of relieving it of its load. The demons have been slain, and the burden of earth has been removed: now let the immortals once again behold their monarch in heaven. A period exceeding a century has passed: now, if it be thy pleasure, return to Swarga. This is the solicitation of the celestials. But should such not be thy will, then remain here as long as it may be desirable to thy dependants [*6]." To this Krishna replied, "All that thou hast said I am well aware of. The destruction of the Yadavas by me has commenced. The burdens of the earth are not removed until the Yadavas are extirpated. I will effect this also in my descent, and quickly; for it

shall come to pass in seven nights. When I have restored the land of Dwaraka to the ocean, and annihilated the race of Yadu, I will proceed to the mansions of the immortals. Apprise the gods, that, having abandoned my human body, and accompanied by Sankarshana, I will then return to them. The tyrants that oppressed the earth, Jarasandha and the rest, have been killed; and a youth, even of the race of Yadu, is, no less than they, an incumbrance. When therefore I have taken away this great weight upon earth, I will return to protect the sphere of the celestials. Say this to them." The messenger of the gods, having received this reply, bowed, and took his heavenly course to the king of the gods.

The mighty Krishna now beheld signs and portents both in earth and heaven, prognosticating, day and night, the ruin of Dwaraka [*7]. Shewing these to the Yadavas, he said, "See; behold these fearful phenomena: let us hasten to Prabhasa, to avert these omens." When he had thus spoken to the eminent Yadava, the illustrious Uddhava saluted and said to him, "Tell me, O lord, what it is proper that I should do, for it seems to me that thou wilt destroy all this race: the signs that are manifest declare nothing less than the annihilation of the tribe." Then Krishna replied to him, "Do you go by a celestial route, which my favour shall provide you, to the holy place Badarikas'rama, in the Gandhamadana mountain, the shrine of Naranarayana; and on that spot, sanctified by them, thou, by meditating on me, shalt obtain perfection through my favour. When the race of Yadu shall have perished, I shall proceed to heaven; and the ocean shall inundate Dwaraka, when I have quitted it." Accordingly Uddhava, thus instructed by Kes'ava, saluted him with veneration, and departed to the shrine of Naranarayana [*8].

Then the Yadavas ascended their rapid cars, and drove to Prabhasa [*9], along with Krishna, Rama, and the rest of their chiefs [*10]. They bathed there, and, excited by Vasudeva, the Kukkurus and Andhakas indulged in liquor. As they drank, the destructive flame of dissension was kindled amongst them by mutual collision, and fed with the fuel of abuse. Infuriated by the divine influence, they fell upon one another with missile weapons, and when those were expended, they had recourse to the rushes growing nigh. The rushes in their hands became like thunderbolts, and they struck one another with them fatal blows. Pradyumna, S'amba, Kritavarman, Satyaki, Aniruddha, Prithu, Vipri-thu, Charuvarman, Charuka, Akrura, and many others, struck one another with the rushes, which had assumed the hardness of thunderbolts [*11]. Kes'ava interposed to prevent them, but they thought that he was taking part with each severally, and continued the conflict. Krishna then enraged took up a handful of rushes to destroy them, and the rushes became a club of iron, and with this he slew many of the murderous Yadavas; whilst others, fighting fiercely, put an end to one another. The chariot of the holder of the discus, named Jaitra, was quickly carried off by the swift steeds, and swept away by the sea, in the sight of Daruka the charioteer. The discus, the club, the bow, the quiver, the shell, and the sword of Kes'ava, having circumambulated their lord, flew along the path of the sun. In a short time there was not a single Yadava left alive, except the mighty Krishna and Daruka [*12]. Going towards Rama, who was sitting at the root of a tree, they beheld a large serpent coming out of his mouth. Having issued from his mouth, the mighty snake proceeded towards the ocean, hymned by saints and by other great serpents. Bringing an offering of respect, Ocean came to meet him; and then the majestic being, adored by attendant snakes, entered into the waters of the deep. Beholding the departure of the spirit of Balabhadra, Kes'ava said to Daruka, "All this is to be related by you to Vasudeva and Ugrasena. Go and inform them of the departure of Balabhadra, and the destruction of the Yadavas; also that I shall engage in religious meditation, and quit this body. Apprise Ahuka and all the inhabitants of Dwaraka [*13], that the sea will inundate the town: be ready therefore in expectation of the coming of Arjuna, and when he quits Dwaraka, no longer abide there, but go whithersoever that descendant of Kuru shall repair. Do you also go to the son of Kunti, and tell him, that it is my request that he will grant what protection he can to all my family. Then depart with Arjuna and all the people of Dwaravati, and let Vajra be installed sovereign over the tribe of Yadu."

Daruka, being thus instructed, prostrated himself again and again before Krishna, and walked round him repeatedly, and then departed as he had been desired; and having conducted Arjuna to Dwara-vati, the intelligent servant of Krishna established Vajra as king. The divine Govinda then, having concentrated in himself that supreme spirit which is one with Vasudeva, was identified with all beings [*14]. Respecting the words of the Brahman, the imprecation of Durvasas [*15], the illustrious Krishna sat engaged in thought, resting his foot upon his knee. Then came there a hunter, named Jara [*16], whose arrow was tipped with a blade made of the piece of iron of the club, which had not been reduced to powder; and beholding from a distance the foot of Krishna, he mistook it for part of a deer, and shooting his arrow, lodged it in the sole [*17]. Approaching his mark, he saw the four-armed king, and, falling at his feet, repeatedly besought his forgiveness, exclaiming, "I have done this deed unwittingly, thinking I was aiming at a deer! Have pity upon me, who am consumed by my crime; for thou art able to consume me!" Bhagavat replied, "Fear not thou in the least. Go, hunter, through my favour, to heaven, the abode of the gods." As soon as he had thus spoken, a celestial car appeared, and the hunter, ascending it, forthwith proceeded to heaven. Then the illustrious Krishna, having united himself with his own pure, spiritual, inexhaustible, inconceivable, unborn, undecaying, imperishable, and universal spirit, which is one with Vasudeva, abandoned his mortal body and the condition of the threefold qualities [*18].

Footnotes

^606:1 A name of Arjuna, the great friend of Krishna, to whom the latter served as charioteer in the war between the Pandus and Kurus.

^606:2 With Balarama, Pradyumna, Aniruddha, and the rest.

^606:3 The legend of the destruction of the Yadava race, and the death of Krishna, appears probably in its earliest extant form in the Maus'ala Parva of the Mahabharata. It forms the narrative portion of the eleventh book of the Bhagavata, having been previously briefly adverted to in the first and third books; and it is summarily told in the Uttara Khanda of the Padma P.

^606:4 The village of Pindaraka, still held in veneration, is situated in Guzerat, about twenty miles from the north-west extremity of the Peninsula. Hamilton, II. 664.

^607:5 The term is Eraka, which is explained in some medical lexicons, 'a kind of grass.' The commentator also calls it a kind of grass: and in the text of the Mahabharata the term subsequently used, and as synonymous with it, is Trina, 'grass.' The Mahabharata, when describing the affray which follows, mentions that the grass or rushes, on being plucked by Krishna and the Yadavas, turn to clubs. The text, and that of the Bhagavata, here say, that the powdered particles, floating on the sea, became rushes; or the latter may imply, that they fastened upon grass or weeds. The commentator, however, explains that the particles of iron being borne to land, they were so transformed. The Mahabharata says nothing of the piece which could not be pounded, and this seems to be an embellishment either of our text or the Bhagavata. The Mahabharata, however, adds another precaution, which the two others have left unnoticed. Ugrasena causes a proclamation to be made, that none of the inhabitants of Dwaraka shall thenceforth drink wine, on pain of being impaled alive: and the people for some time observe the prohibition.

^608:6 Nothing of this kind occurs in the Mahabharata: our text therefore offers an embellishment. The Bhagavata, again, improves upon the text; for, not content with a messenger, it makes Brahma with the Prajapatis, S'iva with the Bhutas, Indra with the other divinities, all come in person; indicating evidently a later date, as plainly as the addition of the text shews it to be subsequent to the date of the legend in the Mahabharata.

^608:7 The Mahabharata, which delights in describing portents and signs, does not fail to detail them here. A dreadful figure, death personified, haunts every house, coming and going no one knows how, and being invulnerable to the weapons by which he is assailed. Strong hurricanes blow;

large rats multiply, and infest the roads and houses, and attack persons in their sleep; Sarikas, or starlings, utter inauspicious screams in their cages; storks imitate the hooting of owls, and goats the howling of jackals; cows bring forth foals, and camels mules; food, in the moment of being eaten, is filled with worms; fire burns with discoloured flames; and at sunset and sunrise the air is traversed by headless and hideous spirits. There is more to the same effect, which neither our text nor the Bhagavata has ventured to detail. The whole passage has been published in Maurice's Ancient History of Hindustan, II. 463; translated apparently [p. 609] by the late Sir Charles Wilkins. The names have been much disfigured either by the copyist or compositor.

^609:8 In the Mahabharata it is said merely that Uddhava, who was versed in Yoga, foreseeing the destruction of the Yadavas, went away; that is, according to the commentator, he practised penance, and went to heaven. The Bhagavata, taking the hint, makes much more of it than our text, and expands it into a long course of instruction given by Krishna to Uddhava, occupying 150 leaves.

^609:9 See <page 561>. n. . By sending the Yadavas to Prabhasa, the commentator asserts, Krishna prevented purposely the Yadavas from obtaining Mukti, 'final liberation,' which would have been the consequence of dying at Dwaraka. Death at Prabhasa conferred only Indra's heaven.

^609:10 The Mahabharata describes them as going forth with horses, elephants, and cars, and their women, and abundance of good cheer, and varieties of wine and meat.

^610:11 The Bhagavata, like the text, adverts only in this general manner to the conflict; but the Mahabharata gives the particulars. Yuyudhana reproaches Kritavarman with having aided Aswatthaman in his night attack on the Pandu camp, and killing warriors in their sleep. Pradyumna joins in the abuse. Kritavarman retorts. Krishna looks at him angrily. Satyaki repeats the story of the S'yamantaka gem, by which he accuses Kritavarman of being an accomplice in the murder of Satrajit (<page 428>). Satyabhama, the daughter of the latter, then mixes in the quarrel, and incites Krishna to avenge her; but Satyaki anticipates him, and murders Kritavarman. Saineya and the Bhojas attack Satyaki; the Andhakas defend him; and the affray becomes general. Krishna attempts to part the combatants, until Pradyumna is killed; and then taking up a handful of rushes, which become an iron club, he kills indiscriminately all that come in his way. The conflict continues until the greater part of the combatants have fallen, including all Krishna's sons, and he then in wrath sweeps off all the survivors, except Babhru and Daruka, with his discus.

^610:12 The Mahabharata, as observed at the end of the last note, adds Babhru, but it presently gets rid of him. Krishna sends him to take care of the old people, the women, and children, in Dwaraka, whilst Daruka goes to bring Arjuna to their aid: but as he goes along, overcome with grief for the loss of his kindred, and approaching separation from Krishna, he is killed by a club that is cast from a snare or trap set by a hunter. Krishna then goes to Dwaraka, and desires Vasudeva to await the coming of Arjuna; after which he returns to Rama, and sees the phenomenon described in the text; the serpent being S'essa, of whom Balarama was the incarnation. The Bhagavata does not mention this incident, [p. 611] merely observing that Rama, by the power of Yoga, returned into himself; that is, into Vishnu.

^611:13 The women, the elders, and the children, amongst whom, as we shall presently see, was Vajra, the son of Aniruddha, who was established as chief of the Yadavas at Indraprastha, and who therefore escaped the destruction which overwhelmed their kinsmen, the Vrishnis, Kukkurus, and Andhakas, of Dwaraka. This was a fortunate reservation for the tribes which in various parts of Hindustan, both on the Ganges and in the Dakhin, profess to derive their origin from the Yadavas.

^611:14 The process is explained by the commentator: 'By the force of Dhyana, or abstraction, Krishna satisfies himself that he is Brahma, or universal spirit; and is next convinced that he is therefore all things; by which his individuality ceases.'

^611:15 The story is told in the Mahabharata, Durvasas was on one occasion hospitably [p. 612] entertained by Krishna, but the latter omitted to wipe away the fragments of the meal which had fal-

len on the foot of the irascible sage, who thereupon foretold that Krishna should be killed as in the text.

^612:16 This is an allegorical personage, however, for Jara signifies 'infirmity,' 'old age,' 'decay.'

^612:17 The Bhagavata explains how this part of the foot became exposed. Krishna had assumed one of the postures in which abstraction is practised: he had laid his left leg across his right thigh, by which the sole of the foot was turned outwards.

^612:18 He became Nirguna, 'devoid of all qualities.'

CHAP. XXXVIII.

Arjuna comes to Dwaraka, and burns the dead, and takes away the surviving inhabitants. Commencement of the Kali age. Shepherds and thieves attack Arjuna, and carry off the women and wealth. Arjuna regrets the loss of his prowess to Vyasa; who consoles him, and tells him the story of Ashtavakra's cursing the Apsarasas. Arjuna and his brothers place Parikshit on the throne, and go to the forests. End of the fifth book.

ARJUNA having found the bodies of Krishna and of Rama, performed for them, and the rest of the slain, the obsequial rites. The eight queens of Krishna, who have been named, with Rukmini at their head, embraced the body of Hari, and entered the funeral fire [*1]. Revati also, embracing the corpse of Rama, entered the blazing pile, which was cool to her, happy in contact with her lord. Hearing these events, Ugrasena and Anakadundubhi, with Devaki and Rohini, committed themselves to the flames [*2]. The last ceremonies were performed for all these by Arjuna, who then made all the people leave the city, and took Vajra with him. The son of Kunti conducted the thousands of the wives of Krishna, with Vajra, and all the people, from Dwaraka, with tenderness and care, and travelled slowly away. The Sudharman palace and the Parijata tree, which had been brought to earth by Krishna, both proceeded to heaven; and on the same day that Hari departed from the earth the powerful dark-bodied Kali age descended [*3]. The ocean rose, and submerged the whole of Dwaraka, except alone the dwelling of the deity of the race of Yadu. The sea has not yet been able to wash that temple away, and there Kes'ava constantly abides, even in the present day. Whoever visits that holy shrine, the place where Krishna pursued his sports, is liberated from all his sins [*4].

The son of Pritha, Arjuna, halted the people he had brought from Dwaraka in the Panchanada country [*5], in a rich and fertile spot; but the desires of the robbers (of the neighbourhood) were excited, when they observed so many widowed females, also such great riches, in the possession of Arjuna alone. Inflamed by their cupidity, they assembled the villainous Abhiras [*6], and said to them, "Here is this Arjuna, immensely rich, and having numerous women, whose husbands have been slain, passing confidently amongst us; a disgrace to all brave men. His pride is raised by the death of Bhishma, Drona, Jayadratha, Karna, and others, whom he has slain: he does not know the prowess of simple villagers. Up, up; take your long thick staves: this stupid fellow despises us. Why should we not lift up our arms?" So saying, they rushed, armed with cudgels and clods of earth, upon the people, who were without their lord. Arjuna encountered them, and said to them in derision, "Retire, wretches, ignorant of what is right, unless ye are desirous of dying." But they disregarded his menaces, and seized his treasures and his women, the wives of Viswaksena. Thereupon Arjuna began to brace his heavenly bow Gandiva, irresistible in battle; but it was in vain; for, in spite of all his efforts to tighten it, it continued flaccid: neither could he call to recollection the incantations of the superhuman weapons. Losing all patience, he launched, as best he might, his shafts upon the enemy; but those shot from Gandiva merely scratched the skin. The arrows given him by Agni to carry certain destruction now were themselves destroyed, and were fatal to Arjuna in his contest with herdsmen. He endeavoured to recall the might of Krishna; animated by which, his numerous arrows had overthrown mighty kings; but he tried in vain, for now they were put aside by the peasants, or they flew at random, wide of their aim. His arrows being expended, he beat the

banditti with the horn of his bow; but they only laughed at his blows: and the barbarians, in the sight of Arjuna, carried off all the women of the Vrishni and Andhaka tribes, and went their way [*7].

Then Jishnu was sorely distressed, and lamented bitterly, exclaiming, Alas! alas! I am deserted by my lord!" and he wept: and in that instant the bow and heavenly arms, his car and steeds, perished entirely, like a donation to an unlearned Brahman. "Resistless," said he, "are the decrees of fate, by whom feebleness has been inflicted upon me, deprived of my illustrious friend, and victory given to the base. These two arms are mine; mine, is this fist; this is my place; I am Arjuna: but without that righteous aid all these are pithless. The valour of Arjuna, the strength of Bhima, was all his work; and without him I am overcome by peasants: it cannot be from any other cause." So saying, Arjuna went to the city of Mathura, and there installed the Yadava prince, Vajra, as its king. There he beheld Vyasa, who was living in a wood, and he approached the sage, and saluted him respectfully. The Muni surveyed him for some time, as he lay prostrate at his feet, and said to him, "How is it that I see you thus shorn of your lustre? Have you been guilty of illicit intercourse with women, or of the death of a Brahman? or have you suffered some grievous disappointment? that you are so dejected. Have your prayers for progeny, or other good gifts, proved fruitless? Or have you indulged improper passions? that your lustre is so dim. Or are you one that devours the meal he has given to the Brahmans? Say, Arjuna, have you seized upon the substance of the poor? Has the wind of a winnowing basket lighted upon you? or has an evil eye gazed upon you, Arjuna? that you look thus miserable. Have you been touched by the water of a finger-nail? or has the water of a water-jar sprinkled you? or, what is most probably the case, have you been beaten by your inferiors in battle?"

Arjuna, having sighed deeply, related to Vyasa all the circumstances of his discomfiture, and continued; "Hari, who was our strength, our might, our heroism, our prowess, our prosperity, our brightness, has left us, and departed. Deprived of him, our friend, illustrious, and ever kindly speaking, we have become as feeble as if made of straw. Purushottama, who was the living vigour of my weapons, my arrows and my bow, is gone. As long as we looked upon him, fortune, fame, wealth, dignity never abandoned us: but Govinda is gone from amongst us. That Krishna has quitted earth, through whose power Bhishma, Drona, the king of Anga, Duryodhana, and the rest, were consumed. Not I alone, but Earth, has grown old, miserable, and lustreless, in the absence of the holder of the discus. Krishna, through devotion to whom Bhishma and other mighty men perished like moths in the flame of my valour, is gone; and I am now overcome by cowherds. The bow Gandiva, that was famed throughout the three worlds, has been foiled, since he has departed, by the sticks of peasants: the myriads of women over whom I was lord have been carried off from me by thieves, armed but with cudgels: the whole household of Krishna, O Krishna [*8], has been forcibly carried away by peasants, who with their staves have put my strength to shame. That I am shorn of my lustre I do not marvel: it is wonderful that I live. Surely, grandsire, I alone am so shameless as to survive the stain of indignity inflicted by the vile."

Vyasa replied to Arjuna, and said, "Think no more, my son, of your disgrace: it does not become you to grieve. Know that time subjects all beings to similar vicissitude. Time effects the production and dissolution of all creatures. All that exists is founded on time. Know this, Arjuna, and retain your fortitude. Rivers, seas, mountains, the whole earth, gods, men, animals, trees, insects, are all created, and all will be destroyed, by time. Knowing that all that is, is the effect of time, be tranquilized. These mighty works of Krishna, whatever they have been, have been performed to relieve earth of its burdens: for this he has come down. Earth, oppressed by her load, has had recourse to the assembly of the immortals; and Janarddana, who is one with time, has descended on that account. This object has been now accomplished: all the kings of the earth are slain; the race of Vrishni and Andhaka is destroyed: no more remained for him to accomplish. Therefore has the lord departed whither he pleased, his ends being all fulfilled. At the period of creation the god of gods creates; in that of duration he preserves; and at the end of all he is mighty to annihilate. Now all is

done. Therefore, Arjuna, be not afflicted by thy defeat: the prowess of mortals is the gift of time. Bhishma, Karna, and other kings, have been slain by thee alone; this was the work of time: and why, therefore, should not thy discomfiture, by those less than thou art, occur? In like manner as through thy devotion to Vishnu these were overthrown by thee, so at last has thy defeat by miserable thieves been wrought by time. That divinity, assuming various bodies, preserves the world; and in the end the lord of creatures destroys it. In the birth of thy fortunes Janarddana was thy friend; in their decline, thy enemies have been favoured by Kes'ava. Who would have believed that thou shouldst slay all the descendants of Kuru, and kindred of Ganga? Who would have believed that peasants should triumph over thee? Be assured, son of Pritha, that it is but the sport of the universal Hari that the Kauravas have been destroyed by thee, and that thou hast been defeated by herdsmen. With respect to the women whom thou lamentest, and who have been carried off by the thieves, hear from me an ancient story, which will explain why this has happened.

"In former times a Brahman, named Ashtavakra [*9], was pursuing his religious penances, standing in water, and meditating on the eternal spirit, for many years. In consequence of the overthrow of the Asuras, there was a great festival on the summit of Meru: on their way to which, Rambha, Tilotama, and hundreds and thousands of beautiful nymphs, saw the ascetic Ashtavakra, and they praised and hymned him for his devotions. They bowed down before him, and eulogized him, as he was immersed up to his throat in water, his hair twisted in a braid. So they sang in honour of him whatever they thought would be most agreeable to that most eminent of Brahmans. Ashtavakra at last said to them, 'I am well pleased with you, illustrious damsels; whatever you wish for, ask of me, and I will give it you, however difficult it may be of attainment.' Then all those nymphs, Rambha, Tilottama, and others, recorded in the Vedas, replied, 'It is enough for us that thou art pleased; what need we aught else, venerable Brahman?' But some amongst them said, 'If, exalted sir, you are indeed pleased with us, then grant us a husband, the best of men, and sovereign of the Brahmans.' 'So be it,' replied Ashtavakra, and thereupon came up from the waters. When the nymphs beheld him coming out of the water, and saw that he was very ugly, and crooked in eight places, they could not restrain their merriment, but laughed aloud. The Muni was very angry, and cursed them, and said, 'Since you have been so impertinent as to laugh at my deformity, I denounce upon you this imprecation: through the grace I have shewn unto you, you shall obtain the first of males for your husband; but in consequence of my curse, you shall afterwards fall into the hands of thieves.' When the nymphs heard this uttered by the Muni, they endeavoured to appease him; and they so far succeeded, that he announced to them they should finally return to the sphere of the gods. It is in consequence, then, of the curse of the Muni Ashtavakra that these females, who were at first the wives of Kes'ava, have now fallen into the hands of the barbarians; and there is no occasion, Arjuna, for you to regret it in the least. All this destruction has been effected by the lord of all; and your end is also nigh at hand, since he has withdrawn from you strength, splendour, valour, and preeminence. Death is the doom of every one who is born: fall is the end of exaltation: union terminates in separation: and growth tends but to decay. Knowing all this, wise men are susceptible of neither grief nor joy; and those who learn their ways are even as they are (equally free from pleasure or pain). Do you therefore, most excellent prince, understand this truth, and, along with your brothers, relinquish every thing, and repair to the holy forest. Go now, and say from me to Yudhishtira, that he tomorrow, with his brethren, tread the path of heroes."

Thus instructed by Vyasa, Arjuna went and related to the other sons of Pritha all that he had seen, had experienced, and had heard. When he had communicated to them the message of Vyasa, the sons of Pandu placed Parikshit on the throne, and went to the forest.

I have thus narrated to you, Maitreya, in detail, the actions of Vasudeva, when he was born in the race of Yadu.

Footnotes

^613:1 The Mahabharata takes the wives of Krishna first to Indraprastha, and there Rukmini and four others burn; but Satyabhama and others become ascetics, going to perform Tapasya in the forest.

^613:2 It is merely said in the Mahabharata that Vasudeva expired; on which four of his wives burnt themselves.

^613:3 The Kali age commenced from the death of Krishna, according to the usual notions; but it is commonly supposed to commence a little later, or with the reign of Parikshit.

^613:4 The Bhagavata agrees with the text in [p. 614] excepting the temple of Dwaraka, and asserting that it still remains, in direct contradiction of the Mahabharata, which declares that the sea did not spare any part whatever. It is clear, therefore, that when the latter was compiled the temple was not standing, and that it was erected between the date of the compilation and that of the two Puranas. The present shrine, which is held in great repute, stands at the extremity of the peninsula of Guzerat. It is still an object of pilgrimage; it was so in the reign of Akbar (Ayin Akbari); and has been so, no doubt, from a remote period. The image formerly worshipped there was carried off 600 years ago, and this was most probably subsequent to the date of both the Puranas; for the idol was a form of Krishna, called Rana chor, a popular divinity, unknown in the Pauranik pantheon. Another image was substituted in place of that which was taken away. Notwithstanding the testimony of our text, and that of the Bhagavata, the originality of the temple is disputed, and a place thirty miles south from Purbandar is said to be the spot where Dwaraka was swallowed up by the ocean. Hamilton, from Macmurdo, &c. I. 662.

^614:5 'The country of the five rivers,' the Panjab: rather an out of the way route from Dwaraka to .

^614:6 Abhiras mean 'herds,' and they are afterwards called by Arjuna, Gopalas, 'herdsmen' The pastoral tribes of the west of India, and particularly those of Afghanistan, almost always combine the character of freebooter with that of shepherd.

^615:7 The principal wives of Krishna, however, according to the Mahabharata, escaped. The occurrence is described there much in the same way, but more briefly. It is not detailed in the Bhagavata.

^616:8 A name of Vyasa.

^617:9 The story of Ashtavakra is related in the Mahabharata. He was the son of Kahora, who neglecting his wife, was rebuked for it by his yet unborn son. The [p. 610] father angrily cursed him, that he should be born bent in every part; and he was accordingly brought forth crooked (vakra) in eight limbs (ashta). He became nevertheless a celebrated sage. See also Hindu Theatre, I. 293, note.