

ARICHANDRA,

THE MARTYR OF TRUTH

A Tamil Drama,

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH BY

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MUDELIAR,

BARRISTER-AT-LAW, OF LINCOLN'S INN; MEMBER OF HER MAJESTY'S
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL OF CEYLON; AND MEMBER OF THE
ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY OF GREAT BRITAIN.

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Dramatis Personæ.



GODS.

Siva—The first of the Hindu Triad.

Indra—The King of the Gods, and the President of Paradise.

Agni—The God of Fire.

Yama—The God of Death.

Nârada—The God of Music.

Other Gods.

GODDESSES.

Durga—The Patron Goddess of Heroes.

The Goddess of Virtue.

MEN.

Arichandra—The King of Ayòdiah.

Devadâsa—His Son, a Child.

Sattyakirti—His Prime Minister.

Pilgrim Brahmins.

Mathetheyan—The King of Cannamàpoori.

Kehaya—A King.

The King of *Mègadha*.

The King of *Kàsi*.

Vasitta—A Sage, and the Family Priest of Arichandra.

Wis Wàmitra—A Sage, the enemy of Vasitta.

Sali and }
Sitta } Wis Wàmitra's Disciples.

Nekshetru—His Messenger.

Kalakanda—An aged Brahmin of *Kàsi*.

Veravakoo—A *Pariah*; the Burner of Corpses and the Public Executioner at *Kàsi*.

Sesha }
Coopa } Brahmin Boys.
Supa }

The Guards of *Kàsi*.

Their Captain.

Other Brahmins, Priests, Sages, Hermits, Ascetics; Kings, Chiefs, Ministers, Officers of State, Commanders of Armies, a Court Scribe, Messengers, Heralds, Lookers-on, Citizens, Cultivators of Lands, Huntsmen, their Chief, and other Attendants.

WOMEN.

Sandramati—Queen Consort of Arichandra and Daughter of *Mathetheyan*.

Savoonthi—Her Companion.

The Chief Attendant of *Sandramati*.

Other Attendants, Maidens and Damsels.

Apsara Girls—Songstresses and Dancing-Women.

Kalakandi—Wife of Kalakanda.

Veravakoo's Wife.

GOBLINS.

The King of the Goblins.

His Followers.

ANIMALS.

Wild Beasts and Birds.

A Boar.



Scene.

First, on *Earth*, in Ayòdiah and Cannamàpoori, and thereabout ; then, in *Heaven*, in Indra's Paradise ; again on *Earth*, at and near Ayòdiah ; on the road thence to *Kàsi* ; and lastly, at *Kàsi* itself.

Time.

Several months.

ARICHANDRA,
THE MARTYR OF TRUTH:
A TAMIL DRAMA.

ACT THE FIRST.

SCENE I.

*The Palace in Ayòdiah.*¹

THE HERALD² OF THE PALACE.

KNOW ye that the sovereign of this sea-girt earth is *Arichandra*, the son of *Trisanku*? Where is the man that has not heard of the benignant rule and the transcendent virtues of the Lord of *Ayòdiah*? What scion of the *Solar*³ dynasty has shed greater lustre on his royal lineage? Ah

friends, look around : this is his audience-hall. In magnificence it equals even that of the King of the Gods—*Indra*.⁴ Here wait numberless princes of India to pay homage to their Lord Paramount;—sages, devotees, and Brahmins,⁵ ready to shower benedictions on their august protector. These are his ministers and state officers. Yonder glitter the pikes, the scimitars, and the burnished bucklers of the warriors guarding the colossal gates of this crystal hall. Around us we see doughty cavaliers mounted on princely steeds, curvetting in all directions. Richly caparisoned elephants—their protruding tusks armed with keen sabres—are driven about by skilful riders. Gay cars and war-chariots are running hither and thither: their high-mettled horses seem to move with wings! The people of the land are crowding to see their beloved King. Their contented look and mirthful conversation betoken prosperity and happiness. Ah! what have we to complain of under the sway of such a merciful ruler as Arichandra?

Lo! the auspicious moment has come: the echoes of the trumpets resound: the din of the drums is deafening. Groups of lovely *Apsara*⁶ girls appear, sing, and dance before the throne.

Hush!—hush! I hear a noise within. Yes; it is the King on his way to the audience-hall, followed by his retinue. [*Proclaims*] Our monarch comes: rise, all here, to receive him.

[*ARICHANDRA and his retinue come from an inner apartment. The ministers and officers present themselves before him, and the audience pays homage to the King. He mounts the throne.*]

ARICHANDRA.

Praise be to Him who is the God of Gods!
 Let Him make the soul-saving Vedas⁷ flourish!
 By His grace let the Sciences⁸ thrive! Let our
 fields and gardens be fruitful! let rain descend
 from above; let our lands be saturated at least
 thrice a moon; and let the men of the four
 castes⁹ live in peace, plenty, and prosperity!
 Let us all adore Him, the Giver of all blessings!

SATTYAKIRTI (*Prime Minister*).

Obeisance—obeisance to thee, O King! who
 rulest this earth with vigour tempered by mercy.
 Adoration to thee, valiant hero! Praise to thee,
 Arichandra, the strict votary of Truth!

THE SECOND MINISTER AND OTHER OFFICERS OF
STATE, AND CHIEFS.

King of the Solar race, we humble ourselves
before thee. Satrap, who art the undisturbed
ruler of the country watered by the sacred stream,
*Sarayu*¹⁰—salutation to thee.

ARICHANDRA.

Minister Sattyakirti, does our land continue to
receive its due supply of rain? Do the clouds
give forth their contents thrice at least every
month?

SATTYAKIRTI.

Yes, sire; there is no lack of rain on the earth,
even as the fountain of justice is never dry in
thy heart.

ARICHANDRA.

Have our subsidiary states sent in their tributes?

SATTYAKIRTI.

Yes; the princes and chieftains are regardful of
their obligations to thee; thy authority is duly
recognized.

ARICHANDRA.

Are the almshouses and other institutions of charity in our state properly cared for? Are the temples of the various deities well tended?

SATTYAKIRTI.

Your Majesty's orders have been strictly complied with.

ARICHANDRA.

Do our subjects continue to pay one-eighth¹¹ of the produce of their fields?

SATTYAKIRTI.

Yes, sire; and the people are prosperous, as your Majesty levies but so slight a tax.

[*A pause. Some Apsara girls advance, sing, and dance before the King.*]

ARICHANDRA.

Sattyakirti, order valuable presents to be awarded to those who are dancing, and dismiss them.

SATTYAKIRTI (*addressing a subordinate Officer*).

Let gold, silks, and gems, be given to the
Apsara girls. [*Exeunt the girls.*]

THE HERALD (*entering the Audience-hall*).

Most excellent Majesty, I come to announce
the arrival of some travellers at thy palace. They
are pilgrim¹² Brahmins, from a distant land, and
request an audience. May I admit them?

ARICHANDRA.

Yes, let the holy men be at once introduced
into my presence: rulers of states should never be
difficult of access. [*Enter the Brahmins.*] I feel
overjoyed to welcome to my court such sacred
persons as yourselves, who must have visited many
of the favoured haunts of the Gods, and bathed
in the sin-healing¹³ waters of numerous divine
springs and streams. Be seated.

THE BRAHMINS.

Govinda!¹⁴ let thy favour attend us always.
Arichandra, accept our blessings. Be thou ever
wise, wealthy, and happy. Let thy sceptre become
yet more splendid; let the four¹⁵ divisions of thy

redoubtable army be the terror of the haughty and the wicked, the solace of the humble and the good.

ARICHANDRA.

Learned men! I derive much pleasure from your visit: assuredly it must be the merit due to my ancestors' acts of charity and virtue that enables me to see men of your standing and learning. To what country do you belong?

THE BRAHMINS.

To Caumpeli. We are on a pilgrimage: on our return from the far north we were attracted hither by your great fame.

ARICHANDRA.

You must have traversed various countries. If you have observed anything rare or good in them, I should feel thankful to hear your description of it.

THE BRAHMINS.

King Arichandra, our pilgrimage extends from the frothy waves which dash in fury against the sacred rock whereon towers the time-hallowed sanctuary of the Goddess Coomàri,¹⁶ even to

beyond Gangotri,¹⁷ whence the holy Ganga meanders amidst the snowy Imaian¹⁸ hills to the abode of the Gods in Kailasa.¹⁹ Some news that may perhaps interest you we can furnish. In the course of our travels, O King! we met with a lovely maiden, whose beauty and virtues would make us bold to declare her worthy to grace your throne as your Consort and Queen. You are aware that the Sciences declare that the rulers of kingdoms ought not to remain unwedded.

ARICHANDRA.

This news pleases me: let me hear more of her. Who are her parents? Where does she live?

THE BRAHMINS.

We were at Kàsi,²⁰ visiting the temple of Vis Wanàth: thence we went to Cannamàpoori, where reigns a king of the name of Mathètheyan. We learnt that, as the reward of great self-denial and austerities²¹ performed by him, he has been blessed by the Gods with an only daughter. We saw her: but vain would be the endeavour to describe to you her personal charms or mental

attractions. Suffice it to say, that beauty like hers has never been beheld; nor does the fish-bannered²² and cane-bowed God of Love wield a mightier instrument of torture than that which is found in the gazelle-like eyes, the flowing tresses, the heaving bosom, and the slender waist of this queen of women, Sandramati. Her fair face and brilliant glances cast into the shade even Santra,²³ the God of Night. Oft he peeps out in the heavens, and as oft he hides his orb, shamed by this rising moon of India. Her virtues have secured to her the especial favour of her patron god, Siva.²⁴ She stands peerless on the earth. And if our understandings direct us aright, you alone, O Monarch! are her fit compeer.

ARICHANDRA.

Is such, then, Sandramati? Strange, strange! I have never seen her, and yet, O Brahmins! I love her already! Can you render me any aid towards effecting my union with her? I implore your help.

THE BRAHMINS.

Your wish is our duty.

ARICHANDRA.

Pray, then, proceed directly to King Mathe-
theyan's court, and, as my accredited agents,
solicit his daughter in marriage.

THE BRAHMINS.

We go without delay. King Arichandra, be
free from care: we undertake to see your heart's
wishes fulfilled. [*Exeunt.*]

ARICHANDRA.

Should what the Brahmins have related to me
prove false, I shall be not merely disappointed,
but also rendered perfectly inconsolable and mise-
rable. It is mysterious: I have never seen
Sandramati; yet my thoughts constantly revert to
her.

SATTYAKIRTI.

The mind, indeed, is the best judge of its own
feelings. If it were a mere tale that you have
just heard, have faith, my lord, that your heart
would never have so doted upon that princess.
The channels of information are not our senses
alone: between mind and mind also there exists

a communion—be it walls, or forts, or lands, or seas that separate them. I believe that Sandramati is destined to be your Majesty's bride. A little patience, and our messengers will return with an auspicious reply.

SCENE II.

Court of Mathetheyan at Cannamàpoori.

MATHEHEYAN (*to his Minister*).

My faithful minister! it is not unknown to you that our princess has now reached a marriageable age; perhaps, strictly, she should have been married before this. Yet it has not been so. We cannot pry into the secrets of the god Siva, whose gift she was.

THE MINISTER.

Worthy scion of the Lunar^s race, anxiety or sorrow would be premature. Sandramati cannot long remain unsought-for or unwedded, as her fame has spread far and wide.

MATHETHEYAN.

True; but in order that my daughter may be happy in wedlock, it is requisite that she should espouse a husband worthy of her. Has not one of our ancient poets said death were better than divided hearts? An insuperable difficulty also presents itself in an injunction imposed on me by Siva.

THE MINISTER.

Cast away thy grief, O King! the daughter whom thou hast obtained of Siva as the reward of great devotion to him is fated to become the object of contention amongst the princes of our land; the selfsame god who entrusted to thee the conditions of her marriage will also provide the means of their fulfilment. Be cheerful. Time works marvels.

MATHETHEYAN.

[Enter some Brahmins conducted by officers; he addresses them.]

Welcome to you, who are alike skilled in the Vedas as in the Sciences!⁸ Welcome to men whom the holy ashes²⁵ have purified — who

swerve not from the duties prescribed by holy writ! 7

THE BRAHMINS.

Blessed be thou, O King! profound in thy knowledge of equity and peerless in thy practice of virtue! Salutation to the heroic commander of invincible armaments! Every felicity awaits him who promotes the study of the sacred writings! Chief of the Lunar race, be thy happiness unmarred!

MATHETHEYAN.

I appreciate your benedictions, and am grateful for your kindness, Brahmins. Can I be of any service to you? Command me.

THE BRAHMINS.

We are pilgrims, and have no wants. We come on a mission from Ayòdiah: Arichandra, its magnanimous sovereign—who has not heard of him, the brightest gem of the Solar race?—commissions us to convey to your Majesty his great wish to make your incomparable daughter, Sandramati, the Queen of his realms.

MATHETHEYAN.

Glory to the gods! Sandramati indeed is as yet unbetrothed, but a mystery hangs over her. Can Arichandra, great and good as he undoubtedly is, unravel it?

THE BRAHMINS.

The gods could not bestow a fitter husband on your daughter than Arichandra. All the world proclaims his virtues, and we believe he will satisfy all your requirements. We beg that your Majesty may deign to fix a Suyam Varam,²⁶ and invite the Kings of India.

MATHETHEYAN.

I consent. Indeed I am anxious that my daughter should become the bride of so distinguished a sovereign as he who is the successor to the throne of the world-famed Ràma.²⁷ Go, inform Arichandra that I have appointed a Suyam Varam, and, acting as my messengers, request him to honour us with his presence.

THE BRAHMINS.

You are truly wise: we return to Ayòdiah, and Arichandra may soon be expected in your capital.

SCENE III.

The Court of Sandramati, in King Mathetheyan's Palace.

SANDRAMATI.

Savoonthi, my ever-agreeable companion, where have you been loitering all this while? I have been quite alone.

SAVOONTHI.

I was listening to what has just been discussed in the Court of your father: it relates to you. Did you know, my sweet, sweet girl, that you are soon to wed the all-perfect Arichandra? I have run hither to convey to you the glad tidings.

SANDRAMATI.

I know you delight to tease me. You imagine that my thoughts are concentrated on matrimony. But, simpleton, you are ignorant of the obstacle to my marrying at all. Learn this, and cease to annoy me. Yet, let me hear who is Arichandra, if he be not, indeed, the creation of your own frivolous and fertile fancy.

SAVOONTHI.

My darling Sandri, your over-mirthful mind cannot distinguish between fact and fiction. Princesses never can. When the subject becomes more generally known, may you then condescend to believe me. Yet why so coy? Why blush?

Care you then to hear of Arichandra? Listen. I recite but a tithe of what is told.

This youthful warrior is the King of Ayòdiah, the land where the all-wise Rama was born. He is of the Solar race: his ancestors were distinguished alike for deeds of valour as of virtue. He surpasses in beauty even Madana,²² the God of Love; for his radiant face resembles the bright red-lotus in full blossom before the God of Morning.²³ His shoulders are broad, his limbs exquisitely moulded, his chest deep, his whole form the perfection of symmetry and grace. He has a melodious voice and gracious manners. He smiles, and his pearly teeth flash forth a brilliancy like that of lightning. In learning, great—in morals, pure—in heroism, unrivalled—Arichandra is the friend of the gods, the terror of the vicious, and the refuge of the good. *Manu*²⁹ is his guide—love, liberality, and justice his never-

failing attributes. A paragon of mortals, and the possessor of all earthly and heavenly blessings, who but Arichandra can be your husband?

Now, then, Mangalam, Mangalam: ³⁰ may endless happiness attend Sandramati—my own lovely lute-toned ³¹ Goddess of the fair sex.

SANDRAMATI.

Savoonthi! my invaluable companion, in whose excellent counsel and conversation I have ever found unwearying solace, pardon your friend's ignorance and incredulity. What reward can I offer for your kind anxiety to augment my happiness? Yes, girl, I believe you—nay, it is more than mere belief now—for your account of Arichandra has stirred in my heart a passion hitherto unknown to it. Arch-enchanted! how potent your spell! Oh! there is a storm within me. My head swims—my senses grow dim. Arichandra! Arichandra!

SAVOONTHI.

Princess! it ill becomes thy dignity to betray thyself in this manner. Control thyself and curb thy passions. Love is grief,—love is torture. Yet love is life,—love is happiness. Sooner or

later we fall victims to Ananga,²² the God of Love, as late or soon we fall victims to Yama,³² the God of Death. His car drawn by green paroquets is everywhere—he leaves none untouched—gods or men, they all succumb. But be comforted, O Sandri, thy wishes will soon be gratified: rouse thyself; become not the subject of ridicule.

SANDRAMATI.

Savoonthi! whom but yourself am I to blame for this? You alone can now give me consolation. Go not away. Stay. Sit beside me.

SCENE IV.

The Court of Mathetheyan.

MATHEHEYAN.

Ours is now the duty, Minister, duly to proclaim to all the kings of our land the Suyam Varam of Sandramati.

MINISTER.

Your Majesty has anticipated what I was just venturing to suggest: we have no time to lose.

I will send for the Court scribe. [*Orders a subordinate officer to fetch the Court scribe; he enters.*]

My lord, he awaits your instructions.

MATHETHEYAN.

Scribe, indite a friendly message to all the magnates of India, informing them that the Suyam Varam and marriage of our daughter, the Princess Sandramati, are to take place on the seventieth day from this, and that we shall feel honoured by their presence on the occasion. [*The Scribe writes.*]

THE SCRIBE.

I submit, O King, the epistle written in my best style and caligraphy.

MATHETHEYAN.

Read it. [*It is read.*] Now tinge the document with saffron,³³ and sprinkle it over with fragrant powder. [*It is done.*] Minister! entrust it to the hands of one of our faithful and swift-footed messengers. Let him immediately start on his journey to the different states, and read the message before their rulers. Inform me of his return.

MINISTER.

I obey.

SCENE V.

First, the Palace in Ayòdiah ; then the Road from it to Cannamàpoori.

Enter the PILGRIM BRAHMINS from Cannamàpoori.

ARICHANDRA.

I am happy to see you again, sirs. Let me learn the result of your interview with King Mathethyan. I am all impatience.

THE BRAHMINS.

Can any object desired by so good a monarch as yourself remain long unattained? Success awaits the virtuous. Mathethyan, readily acquiescing in your proposals, requests you to join the Suyam Varam of Sandramati.

ARICHANDRA.

I shall ever feel grateful for your intercession on my behalf. Yes; let us journey together to Cannamàpoori. [*Addresses the Commander-in-Chief of his army in attendance.*] General!

I leave Ayòdiah for Cannamàpoori at sunrise to-morrow: let the force under your command accompany me. Let all those who form my retinue be ready.

THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF.

Your Majesty's orders will be duly fulfilled.

(On the morning of the next day.)

ARICHANDRA.

Our equipments are here; let us move on. Brahmins, be near me. Sages and devotees, let us pray to the Powers above, that our mission may be crowned with success. [*They proceed on their way.*] We are now in the midst of a barren desert, suffering from the intense heat of the noonday sun. I descry yonder the temple of a patron deity of the woods embowered in the dense foliage of some venerable trees. Let us seek shelter there: I will precede you—follow me. Let the army halt. [*Proceeds.*] I find it to be the shrine of the Goddess Durga³⁴—let me hasten and offer my prayers.

THE ATTENDANTS.

Be your Majesty's will done.

ARICHANDRA (*at the shrine of Durga—prays to the Goddess*).

I adore the incomparable feet of the Goddess, who, mounted on a lion, and bearing aloft in her arms the trident, the skull, and the scimitar, pervades the universe. I worship at the shrine of the sister of Vishnu²⁴ and the consort of Siva. Thou, O Goddess, art beyond the ken of all words and thoughts. Is it for me, a puny mortal, to recount thy innumerable deeds of valour and might? Deign, Durga! to favour me with thy divine presence.

[*The Goddess, riding a lion, appears before*
ARICHANDRA.]

ARICHANDRA (*falling at her feet*).

Hail! all hail! to thee, O Goddess! Thy favour to me surpasseth all bounds.

DURGA.

O King! who art descended from a noble race, live long! Persevere in thy virtuous career. But

answer promptly. What aid dost thou require of me?

• ARICHANDRA.

Passing thy sanctuary on my way to the Suyam Varam of Princess Sandramati, at Cannamàpoori, I felt it my duty to offer my prayers, and, approaching, I saw there [*pointing to a part of the temple*] a chariot and bow of stone. How is it, O Goddess! I pray thee, that they now appear to me to be made of polished gold, dazzling my eyes with their splendour?

DURGA.

Well done! The chariot and bow are of gold, and are perceived to be such only by him who is entitled to possess them. To the rest of the world they look as if made of stone. One Varuna, a renowned monarch of yore, left them in my custody to be delivered to their lawful possessor, whenever he should present himself here. Ages have passed since then. To-day you have proved yourself their rightful owner. Take them. Drive, O King! in this very chariot to Cannamàpoori. You are destined to wed Sandramati. Be ye both happy!
[*Vanishes.*]

SCENE VI.

*First, the Road to the City of Cannamàpoori; and
then the Palace of the King.*

THE LOOKERS-ON.

Lo! King Arichandra is coming on a visit to our King. The pious Vasitta, his spiritual preceptor,³⁵ is beside him; other learned men, ministers, and councillors of state, surround him. Are they discoursing on religion and philosophy? These are his troops. The horses and elephants move side by side. The serried ranks of the foot soldiers appear interminable. The chariots, with their banners sweeping as it were the skies, precede all. The generals ride on leisurely. Such an army would make even the giants shudder with fear; such a force would soon lower the pride of its enemies. Numerous trumpets peal forth the voice of ocean. The heavens re-echo the thundering roll of the drums. Countless canopies, flags, standards, and *alavatties*,³⁶ hide the skies from our view. Arichandra is mounted on a mighty elephant, which carries aloft on its back a gold *ambarie*,³⁷ radiant with splendour. On either side of him, two elephants fan with their

trunks the snow-white tuft of the *Sámara*.³⁸ Can even the Rhemba³⁹ or Menika of Indra's paradise above be more beautiful than those lovely damsels who are dancing before him?

We are now within the city. Has it ever before presented such a gorgeous spectacle? It is one blaze of diadems and crowned heads. The unrivalled beauty of Sandramati has attracted hither a larger assemblage than we have ever witnessed. Note the costumes of different lands; observe the various nations that are here represented. How gay the place looks! Along the streets the citizens have hung garlands of all varieties of fragrant flowers. The *banana*⁴⁰ and the *areca* palms trained along the roadside, and the festoons of the red, white, and blue lotus entwined with them, would make one fancy that he had wandered unawares into some fairy garden. There are lights everywhere. The smoke of the incense burnt in honour of this event links the earth to the skies. Gay damsels, carrying trays of silver filled with *saffron-water* and phials of gold containing the *attar*⁴¹ of sandal, disport themselves by besprinkling them on the merry crowds. Yonder ride princes on high-spirited chargers, which look as if capable of moving faster than the

wind or man's mind. The ebon-black elephants push on briskly, bearing jauntily superb *pagodas*⁴² wherein are seated the chieftains of important states. How well they mimic fury? At times they trumpet forth, twirl and untwirl their trunks in wantonness: at times they throw them over their gold and silver inlaid tusks to reach other elephants. See those teams of horses, managed by skilful charioteers, conveying hither, with almost lightning speed, royal personages. They are all now near.

THE HERALD

(Coming into the Court of MATHETHEYAN).

May the gods shower blessings on our King! Profound submission at thy feet, O monarch! The Sovereign of Ayòdiah and the Kings of other lands are in the city. Some are already at the gates of the palace.

MATHETHEYAN.

Ministers and officers, accompany me. Let us make all haste and meet our guests.

[They go and meet the visitors.]

Welcome, welcome to you all! Salutation to the flower of the *Kshetriya*⁹ race! Kings of India,

come in. Let us enter the Suyam Varam hall.
Allow me to lead you into it.

THE KINGS.

It affords us, O Mathetheyan ! infinite pleasure
to be of service to thee either in war or peace.

[*They enter the Suyam Varam hall.*]

SCENE VII.

The Suyam Varam Hall.

THE HERALD.

This is the Suyam Varam of Princess Sandramati. Mark ! this hall has sprung up as if called into existence by the architect⁴³ of the Gods himself. Its gilt roof and dome rest on numberless images of the lion, which serve as its pillars. Observe how exquisite is the carving of the ceiling. Ah ! all our ancient legends are there depicted. Suspended from it by gold and silver chains hangs many a brilliant lamp, twinkling with its starry light, amidst garlands and wreaths of flowers which, festooned into fanciful network, shed their

rich perfumes around, and display all their gorgeous hues. Costly carpets cover the floor — in the centre is the dais for the Princess. The King is on his throne: the guests are around. Both young and old are there—all warriors. Their hands grasp the bow, their shoulders support the quiver—in their girdles rests the sword. Admire the valorous guardians of our land, who court death with delight; whose backs enemies have never seen. How handsome are some — how venerable others! Note their magnificent attire—many a sparkling diamond, ruby, sapphire, and emerald, shines in their diadems, their breastplates, their wrist and arm-rings; whilst numerous strings of fine pearls are thrown carelessly about their bodies. This palace of crystal, with its million mirrors, reflects all this blaze of jewellery in thousands and thousands of fantastic shapes. How attentive they look! And well they may be so: for some are anxious on their own account; others on behalf of their sons and brothers. Fate alone knows who the winner shall be.

Ah! I see the Court astrologer: ⁴⁴ he bows before the assembly. The auspicious moment is approaching; soon the result will be known.

Silence! silence! silence! Great is the chief of the Lunar dynasty.

MATHETHEYAN.

Prime Minister! the Kings assembled here are awaiting the Suyam Varam. Do you, therefore, direct one of the damsels in attendance to hasten to the palace of the Princess Sandramati, to request her to come hither.

THE PRIME MINISTER.

Thy message shall be transmitted instantly, my lord [*speaking to a female attendant belonging to SANDRAMATI'S retinue*]. Sweet maid, run to that princess, whose prattle entertains you even more than that of the gentle paroquet, and inform her that the King desires her immediate presence.

THE FEMALE ATTENDANT.

I go. [*Exit. Reaches SANDRAMATI'S palace.*]
Dear Sandramati, the Kings have met in your father's Court for your Suyam Varam. Will you be now pleased to proceed thither? This your sire wishes. You will be accompanied by a splendid retinue, and will move under a pearl-inlaid canopy; carry that garland of *Semboka*⁴⁵ flowers

in your royal hand: you will soon have occasion for it.

SANDRAMATI.

Apprised of this by the kind attendants and friends who have taken such infinite pains in decorating me this morning, I have been long ready, so that I might not be behind the time fixed by the astrologer. I obey my father's order most cheerfully: come, let us go into the hall. [*Goes in state, accompanied by a magnificent retinue.*]

SANDRAMATI (*bowing to her father*).

Obeisance to thee, august father! who hast bestowed on me so much care and kindness. My revered parent, what are thy commands?

MATHETHEYAN.

My beloved daughter! you behold assembled here the Kings of various states, and this day is your Suyam Varam. Sweet child, the right of selection rests with you: exercise your own free will, and declare who shall be your husband. When you have resolved, pray indicate your decision by twining that garland, now so gaily held in your vermilion-tipped⁴⁶ and delicate fingers, around

the neck of that monarch, prince, or chief, on whom your choice falls.

SANDRAMATI.

Father! who art ever dear to me, for whose kindness I can never make any adequate return, I obey thy behest. [*Turning round, surveys the assembly of Kings, and addresses her Chief Attendant.*] Chief of my faithful companions! you have heard my father: assist me, therefore, in the performance of the duty assigned to me. Let me know the names of these Kings, as well as the distinguishing traits of the character of each of them. This dazzling galaxy of crowns bewilders me; my hitherto secluded life was ill prepared for an abrupt introduction before so many men, and those, too, kings.

THE CHIEF ATTENDANT.

Princess! be calm, be resolute. This is an auspicious occasion, where your happiness is trusted to your own hands. None dare disturb your whim or wish. Know you not how lithe, how gay are the gazelles and fawns which are our partners in play? Act as they. I shall now conduct you around this amphitheatre, and afford all the information you require. As your chief

attendant, this duty devolves on me to-day. [*Goes round, leading SANDRAMATI.*]

Listen! charming girl! Before you sits Vis Vakerma, the King of Kàsi, he is mighty in his knowledge of the Vedas. By him is Samperna, the Chief of Caumpeli; his fame is stainless, his liberality unbounded. There you see Caya Theeran, the ruler of Maghada—the equal of the gods in valour. Yonder, again, princess, is the noble Vajiran, the pious ruler of Scindu. Beyond him is seated the eloquent and ever mirthful King of Bengala, Campeera. Beside him is Pandia, the Tamil King of Madura, the owner of wide-spread lands, and the patron of learning and literature. Now your javelin-shaped eyes meet the god-like figure of Arichandra, the youthful monarch of Ayòdiah—one in whom all virtues have found a lasting home——

SANDRAMATI.

Stay, my friend; is this Arichandra? Is this he whom my revered father would wish that I should marry? Is this the prince of the Solar race who has formed the subject of the eulogies of the pilgrim Brahmins? Maiden, who excellest even the peacock in grace, let me hear thee again. Speak.

THE CHIEF ATTENDANT.

Princess! it is he beyond a doubt. A swan amongst many birds is easily distinguished; a lion amidst other animals soon makes its presence felt; so does the son of Trisanku amongst men. The brightest ornament of the Solar line is there. In that breast behold the asylum of truth and equity. Perchance a raging fire might become icy cold; perchance a limpid stream from the snowy hills might scald one; yea, *Méru*,⁴⁷ the king of mountains, shake and totter; the God of Day rise in the west and set in the east; but never, never, even in dreams, will Arichandra, the man of truth, tell a lie. He is the lord paramount of India; his beauty you now witness. Hesitate not; it is he, it is Arichandra.

SANDRAMATI.

Friend, my obligations to you are manifold. My mind was made up long ago; Arichandra shall be the husband of my own choice. My father's judgment is in perfect unison with my wishes. Lo! here I proclaim him my lord. May Siva, the Supreme, favour me!

THE CHIEF ATTENDANT.

Be it so, dear child !

[SANDRAMATI *approaches* ARICHANDRA, and *raises her hands to invest him with the flower garland.*]

ARICHANDRA (*starting up abruptly and in a great passion*).

Pause, Princess ! Pause.—Kings of India ! Oh ! What a delusion ! How surprising, how perplexing is this ! Observe ye not the resplendent *manglya*,⁴⁸ the chain⁹ of marriage, glistening round the neck of Sandramati—this would-be maiden daughter of the King of Cannamàpoori. Once married, is it consonant with the usage⁴⁹ of either the Solar or Lunar dynasty, that she should be permitted to seek a husband again ? Ah ! who could have imagined that our host was such a knave, or this royal female so full of guile ? O God ! How sinful this ! How iniquitous !

[SANDRAMATI, *hearing this, swoons away, and is held in the arms of her Attendants—great excitement in the assembly—the Kings look enraged at ARICHANDRA.*]

KING KEKAYA.

Valorous Arichandra! such language ill befits you. We see no cause for complaint, we accuse neither the Princess nor her august sire of foul conduct: we discern no trace of deception. But your behaviour is indeed most strange. Is it fair that one even of your high standing should by word or deed insult a royal maiden of spotless fame and unrivalled virtues? Forget you that men are the protectors of women? Explain. Where is the *manglya*? Explain. Up, warriors! string your bows! Draw your swords!

THE KING OF MĀGADHA.

Patience! patience! brother monarchs! Condemn not Arichandra hastily. It is easier by far to plumb the depths of the deepest seas—yea, easier to walk unscathed through the scorching flames of a fire spreading aloft to the skies—than to probe the hearts of women. To scan the mischief therein harboured is indeed beyond the power of man. I know not whether our guest is to blame; I impute nothing to Princess Sandra-mati. There may not be fault either in her or in her father, or even in Arichandra. We may all be

the victims of some plot, and its authors rival kings, or gods, or demons. Investigate before you decide.

MATHETHEYAN (*addressing* ARICHANDRA).

Your conduct, I grieve to say, is unlike your habitual meekness and charity. Neither myself nor my daughter is responsible for that which has only momentarily disturbed your equanimity—this mystery will soon be solved. Listen! You may have known that I obtained Sandramati as the reward of arduous rites of devotion performed by me—a childless monarch I remained long indeed—in honour of the god Siva. When he bestowed this child upon me, he ordained that, as she would be possessed of all virtues, she should wed only a strictly virtuous prince. But how was blind man—the slave of his passions—a worm of iniquity—to judge of another man? How was I to know who was virtuous and who not? Great Siva foresaw this, and willed that the *manglya* round Princess Sandramati's neck should be invisible to all—to herself—to me—to every other being but him who, from his spotless character, was destined to be her consort. You have shown yourself to be the favoured man. She has been betrothed to you long ere this. Fate has done it.

Satisfy yourself now by questioning this assembly, whether any of them perceives the *manglya*, the sight of which has roused your anger; does its celestial lustre dazzle any other eyes but yours?

. THE KINGS (*all together*).

It is surprising. Yea, none of us see the *manglya*.

KING KEKAYA.

King Arichandra! as we do not see the *manglya*, which you alone have seen, Mattheyan is right. You could require no better proof. If you continue to insult this most virtuous princess with suspicions, your sin will certainly be inexpiable. We are perfectly convinced of her innocence. Yea; we adore her as the Goddess of Chastity herself. She is, in truth, another Arundadi.⁵⁰

A VOICE FROM ABOVE.

Son of Trisanku! Arichandra! hearken to me, the Goddess of Virtue—I who now address thee.

Sandramati, the daughter of King Mattheyan, is a virgin of strict chastity and virtue—her character is irreproachable. Marry her!

SANDRAMATI (*now recovering from her swoon, and reassured by her Attendants*).

Prince of Ayòdiah! O monarch, the first mention of whose name wrought a revolution in my thoughts, and stirred up a love in my heart towards thee! deign to hear me!

If it be the truth, that he alone who was preordained to be my husband possesses the power of seeing the *manglya* on my neck, and if, too, this unknown yearning in my mind towards thee arises from the will of my god Siva, then and then alone, know thou, this garland now lying motionless in my hands, will spring off them, of its own accord, unassisted by me, and encircle thy neck.

THE BRAHMINS, THE SAGES, AND THE PRIESTS—ALL.

So be it! We pray to God to remove all difficulties.

THE KINGS.

Most virtuous Princess! thy proposal is fair—quail not; the gods will guard thy honour, even though men fail to appreciate it.

SANDRAMATI (*praying to Siva*).

O thou! wreath of the sweet-scented *semboka* flower! though thou art inanimate, may not the sobs of a woman in distress awake thee? Yes, O wreath, I trust in thee—I pray to thee. If I be chaste and my character stainless, wilt not thou, then, O wreath! go forth from these unworthy hands and twine thyself around the neck of the son of Trisanku?

[*The garland springs off her hands, and is seen on ARICHANDRA'S breast.*]

ARICHANDRA.

Princess! I crave thy pardon. I am completely in the wrong, and I confess I have offended thee without just cause. King Mathetheyan! I offer my apologies also to thee, for never has man acted more precipitately than myself. Gods! forgive the sins of an erring mortal.

SANDRAMATI.

Prince! I forgive thee.

MATHEHEYAN.

Arichandra! who can blame you for being circumspect? Let us all be friendly and merry

again. My daughter is your wife now, and we will attend to the marriage being solemnized. [*Addressing his Prime Minister*] Minister! our anxiety is at an end, for the worst is past, and the conditions of Siva are fulfilled. Our Princess shines now more resplendent than ever—even as the gold which has been cleansed of its rust. Let us hasten the performance of the ceremonies prescribed by the holy books.

THE PRIME MINISTER.

Sire, Vasitta, the spiritual preceptor of the royal family of Ayòdiah, is in attendance on King Arichandra. All allow that his knowledge is infinite, and, as one of the seven⁵¹ elect sages of the universe, his station, both among mortals and immortals, is pre-eminent. Pray request him to perform the marriage ceremony.

MATHEHEYAN.

Be it so, Minister! [*Addressing VASITTA, who is seated at the head of the Brahmins in the assembly*] Most holy *Guru*! ³⁵ wisest of sages! I humble myself before thee. Who can excel thee in the conquest which thou hast obtained over

thy mind? At thy fiat, and in the most difficult stages of the mystic *Yokam*⁵² daily performed by thee, do not the wicked powers of the Mind, the cause of all man's misfortunes, abdicate their rebellious rule, whilst the erring Soul, released from the bondage of Evil and freed from all its sinful incrustations, becomes the willing slave of Divine Wisdom and the heir to everlasting bliss? To thee, thus accustomed to the purest delights springing from the union of the Soul with *Brahm*,²⁴ can sights like these be interesting? Yet thou condescendest to favour us with thy presence. I beg that thou mayst be pleased to preside over the nuptials of my daughter Sandramati, and of thy disciple, King Arichandra?

VASITTA.

King Mathetheyan! I comply with thy request; it pleases me much. May Arichandra and his bride be the *Indra* and *Indraani*⁵³ of the earth!

MATHEHEYAN.

Let us all, then, adjourn to the marriage hall.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE VIII.

*The Marriage Hall. The Kings, Sages, Brahmins,
and all those invited present.*

ARICHANDRA and SANDRAMATI seated side by side on
a throne, and VASITTA beside them.

VASITTA (*addressing the Brahmins there*).

Brahmins! kindle the sacred fire. Pour the oblations on it, and invoke Agni, the God of Fire, to witness this ceremony. Some of you go through the usual ritual, and let others sing the sacred hymns.

THE BRAHMINS.

We obey.

[*All the ceremonies are performed.*]

VASITTA.

King Arichandra! this royal maid, Sandramati, whose little finger I knit⁵⁴ with your own, is now your wife. You espouse her in the presence of these kings, these holy men, and the Gods above. The Sun and Moon are also witnesses to your nuptials. May you both live long, and enjoy a

life of uninterrupted happiness; may you be the parents of docile children!

ALL PRESENT.

Be it so! Be it so! May the Gods be their guardians!

THE KINGS.

Arichandra! your fortune in marrying this most noble Princess is unparalleled. May all your undertakings be ever crowned with success! We are your friends in war and peace. Now, King Mathetheyan, let us have your permission to depart.

ARICHANDRA AND MATHETHEYAN.

We are overwhelmed by our obligations to you all for your great kindness in responding so cheerfully to our invitation. To you who are above all wants, what adequate return can we make? We are always at your service, and await your summons. May your journey be prosperous!

[*Exeunt Kings.*]

MATHETHEYAN.

Minister! give rich presents to all who are here; let the Brahmins be duly feasted.⁵⁵

MINISTER.

I obey.

VASITTA.

King of Cannamàpoori! since your daughter is married and your wishes are gratified, it is time now that you should give leave to your son-in-law to return with his bride to his kingdom.

MATHETHEYAN.

Assuredly, let them repair to Ayòdiah, and attend to the wants of that State.

SANDRAMATI.

Father! to whom I owe everything; in whose affectionate care I have hitherto been nurtured—thy kindness I can never forget. This day thou hast given me away to be the bride of the Prince of Ayòdiah—let me crave permission to go to my new home.

ARICHANDRA.

King! grant me leave also!

MATHETHEYAN.

Daughter! we must now part. Arichandra is

your lord; let all your affection be centred in him.
Go with him.

King Arichandra! your State requires your
presence. Go thither. [Exeunt.]

SCENE IX.

Arichandra's Palace.

A MAID IN ATTENDANCE ON SANDRAMATI.

Our Queen, O Sire! underwent great sufferings: happily her travail is now over, and she has been delivered of a male⁵⁶ child—the heir and successor to this throne. May the Solar dynasty be ever paramount!

ARICHANDRA.

Sattyakirti, I receive glad tidings! I am the father of a son. This maid is the first to convey to me this most pleasant news. Give her jewels and silks; her service must be recompensed.

Yes, I am happy; for my race will not now end with me. Minister! let the poor and the aged be fed and clothed—let largesses also be given

to Brahmins and mendicants for the ensuing eight days. Let prayers be offered in the temples of all our Gods, and let devotees have presents of lands, fields, and cows. Order an elephant⁵⁷ out. Let it traverse the city, while its rider announces this great event to our subjects by the roll of the drum.

SATTYAKIRTI.

I hasten to fulfil thy orders, O King!

[Exit, and some maids enter the Court from the inner apartments, carrying the infant child.]

THE MAIDS.

Most glorious Monarch! this is thy son. He has been anointed in holy water and clothed in silks. Behold the new King of the Solar dynasty—receive him into thine arms, and bestow on him a name⁵⁸ that befits his high station.

ARICHANDRA (*taking the child*).

I see, maidens, that you have acted in accordance with the ancient customs of the Court; your attention shall be rewarded. I feel beside myself—my happiness is great in beholding this

infant. But we owe everything to the gods—let him, therefore, be their servant. Call him Deva Dàsa—the servant of the gods. May they protect him!

ALL IN COURT.

Devadàsa! Devadàsa! Devadàsa! May his life be long! May his rule be merciful!

END OF ACT I.

ACT THE SECOND.



SCENE I.

*Indra Loka,*⁵⁹ *the Abode of the Gods; and the Palace of Indra, the King of the Gods. Present: INDRA, his Attendants, Gods, and Sages. The Chief of the Gods is supposed to come in state from the interior of his Palace to the Audience Hall.*

THE HERALD.

VICTORY! victory! There comes Indra, the Chief of the Immortals! The Lord of Heaven is there. A hundred equine⁶⁰ sacrifices did he perform on earth to attain this station. The God of Fire⁶¹ is by him. The God of Water is in attendance.

The God of the Winds is also present. The God of the Skies, the God of Day, the God of Night, all walk by him. Yonder, too, is the mighty God of Death. The husband of Indraani, the Queen of Heaven, the beauty of beauties, comes there. —All the rarities of the universe Indra owns. Before him goes the white elephant, *Ayrvadam*; and with him, too, we behold the snow-white charger *Swatham*.⁶² Pause and note the majestic gait of the former, the wondrous agility of the latter. Where could their equals be seen? The first of gems, the jewel of all jewels, *Sintamani*,⁶³ shines resplendent on the breast of Indra. What! Is that the Sun of Heaven? Look again. Where in the universe could we find more enchanting women than yon troop of damsels, who dance before Indra? *Rembha*,³⁹ *Menika*, *Urvasi*, and all the *houris*⁶⁴ of the Gods, are singing: such charms as theirs who can resist? Many an anchorite's resolutions — many a Sage's virtues have they corrupted. The God of Music, even *Narada*,⁶⁵ is performing on the lyre—hear you not the entrancing strains? Loud peals the conch; the trumpet resounds; the drum rolls. Lo! before them our enemies flee, even as snakes⁶⁶ disappear before the voice of the thunder.—Mighty

is the Lord of the Clouds,⁶⁷ the Lord of Rain, even Indra, the first of the Gods.

[INDRA and his assembly are seated. INDRA prays to SIVA.]

INDRA.

Immortals ! are you now exempt from the annoyance of our enemies, the *Asùras* ?⁶⁸ Has war ceased ?

THE GODS.

Routed in the last battle by thy awe-inspiring army, commanded by thy son *Sayanda*, the *Asùras* have never shown themselves again. Our happiness in this heavenly paradise is unmolested. And who dare disturb us, when thou, O Indra ! art our ruler and protector ?

[*Enter some Sages and VASITTA.*]

INDRA.

Holy Sage ! learned Vasitta ! thy presence does me infinite honour. May I ever resort to thee for advice and counsel ! Mayest thou continue to favour me !

VASITTA.

Indra! be thou ever happy! Let victory attend thee!

[*Enter WIS WÀMITRA,⁶⁹ with great precipitation.*]

WIS WÀMITRA.

Indra! I am here! I am here! Wis Wàmitra, the first and fiercest of sages! I am here! Know you not the austerities I practised of yore, nor the great powers with which I was invested by Siva? Is there my equal in all existence—who dare oppose my wishes? I can convert all these infinite systems of worlds into cinders in a trice; yea, I can place under duress even the great Triad⁷⁰—Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva. I am the destroyer of him who displeases me—I am the patron of him who pleases me. All virtues and power I possess—such is Wis Wàmitra, the royal sage; such am I.

INDRA.

Sage Wis Wàmitra! none can surpass thee in the performance of sacred austerities. A king by birth, thou didst renounce all kingly pomp

and power, to become a devotee. Whilst ages rolled past—whilst worlds ceased to be and renewed their existence — whilst the earth was swept over by repeated deluges, or devastated by ever-recurring fires—hast not thou, O great Being! continued undisturbed in a state of solemn meditation in the caves of Mount Meru, thy mind concentrated on God, thy frame reposing in a state of sleepless sleep and deathless⁷¹ death? Well may all dread the wrath of one endowed with such prowess—well may all court his favour. The hero is not he whom victory crowns on the field of battle; the hero of heroes is even the man of God who has conquered his own mind.

WIS WÀMITRA.

Champion of the Gods! may thy power be ever dreaded by the chiefs of the *Asuras* — may all happiness await thee!

INDRA.

Holy men! as gifted with supernatural attributes you roam⁷² the universe with marvellous speed, there is no place unknown to you. I am curious to learn who, in the present times, is the most virtuous Sovereign on the earth below?

What chief of mortals is there who has never told a lie—who has never strayed from the straight course of justice and equity?

VASITTA.

King of the Gods! such is Arichandra, the ruler of Ayòdiah. Great in war, profound in learning, he is equally strict in the practice of virtue. Never has he swerved from the laws of *Manu*—not once in his life has he uttered a falsehood. This first of terrestrial potentates all mankind adore—all gods favour.

INDRA.

Is it so? I am pleased to hear this.

VASITTA.

Yes; he is ever ready to assist the poor, to protect the weak, and to humble the wicked. Charitable to all, he has injured none. He is enthroned in the hearts of his subjects, as their never-failing friend; rarely, indeed, has the earth been blessed with so magnanimous a ruler. I am proud to claim him as my disciple.

INDRA.

Verily, such a king deserves to be thy pupil :
Arichandra should be the model for all monarchs.

WIS WÀMITRA (*standing up in a rage*).

Well done! well said! Indra! art thou so easily duped? Knowest thou not how wicked, how false is Arichandra? Learn then that in his heart dwells all iniquity—that fraud, lust, greediness, and malice are his grand characteristics. He is as cruel as the God of Death—as ignorant as a beast of the forest. Never even once has a benevolent thought crossed his mind. Vasitta, why hast thou so misrepresented the character of Arichandra? Didst thou wish to praise thyself by belauding thy disciple? How darest thou recount such an idle tale in the presence of the Gods?

VASITTA.

Wis Wàmitra! thy great misfortune has ever been thy undue arrogance, and thou hast yet to learn to control thy unruly mind. What avail thee the austerities performed of yore, if thou art yet the sport of passion? Truth is everlasting; the true can never be untrue. That tongue

of thine, which has told so foul a lie, should be burnt to ashes. Thou hast wronged Arichandra. Hasten, O Sage of *Kosala*!⁷³ to repair the injury which thou hast so wantonly inflicted. Recant! Recant! There is a God—a governor of us all.

WIS WÀMITRA.

Vasitta! vice is not virtue—nor falsehood, truth. Why shouldst thou wax angry with me when I have given Arichandra his true character? Must thy disciple be necessarily perfect? Begone! begone! May the head, which has fabricated such falsehoods, explode into atoms!

VASITTA.

My statement is true. Establish the reverse if thou canst. The Vedas might lie, the sun and moon might exchange places, but Arichandra could never be false.

WIS WÀMITRA.

Devoid of sincerity, thou art equally destitute of all shame. Thy story can never be credited. Arichandra has told lies—will tell lies—is the greatest liar in all existence! His wickedness

exceeds all bounds. This meeting of the Gods should not have been disgraced by the presence of so vile a being as thou art. Dost thou desire to feel the weight of my power or suffer from the consequences of my wrath?

VASITTA.

Mad Wis Wàmitra! thinkest thou a fox can intimidate a lion? Cease to brag. Cease!

INDRA.

Stay, sirs, stay! When persons of your order and standing stoop to quarrel, who is to be the peace-maker? Are we to consider this unseemly behaviour as a proof of the conquest which you have obtained over your passions? In the worlds above, as in the worlds below,⁷⁴ you will form the subject of derision. Sage Vasitta! Sage Wis Wàmitra! let your anger be calmed!

WIS WÀMITRA.

Indra! dost thou imagine that I shall ever succumb to this Vasitta? Is the tiger⁷⁵ to conceal itself in the bush in dread of only a cow?

INDRA.

Enough; pray pacify thyself. (*Addressing both*) Sacred men! you are both great—you are both wise. It is not for us to say which of you has spoken the truth, and which not. Let this matter, therefore, be determined thus; lay a wager; let him who proves himself to have been correct become the winner thereof.

VASITTA.

Indra! thy proposition meets with my approbation. If my disciple Arichandra be shown to have ever told a lie, or be made hereafter to do so, I declare that the fruit of my lifelong devotion and sacrifices to the Gods shall become forfeited for the benefit of Wis Wàmitra. Hold this certain.

NÀRADA (*God of Music*).

Wis Wàmitra, speak! What sayest thou to this?

WIS WÀMITRA.

Nàrada! arch-sower of dissension! wishest thou that I should prattle to no purpose, like thy friend

Vasitta? But hearken. I, too, lay a wager. If I fail to make Arichandra utter numberless falsehoods, and violate every rule of morality, consider that I make Vasitta a present of half the fruit of the austerities which I performed, in ages gone by, seated in the midst of a raging fire.⁷⁶ I beseech all here present to consider themselves the faithful repositories of the pledge now entered into by us. Soon shall it be known whether the much-vaunted constancy of Arichandra is proof against trials and temptations.

VASITTA.

Indra and the holy Triad are witnesses of this compact. Wis Wàmitra! employ any means thou thinkest proper to attain thy object; I shall not interfere. Here I await thy return—nay, I shall go into voluntary confinement, to remove all suspicion. Treacherous one! depart on thy mission.

INDRA.

Yes; let there be no delay. Sage Wis Wàmitra! it is time for thee to act. (*Addressing*

one of his Attendants) Detain Sage Vasitta in your custody.

WIS WÀMITRA.

I return to the earth, Indra! But little time do I require to effect my purpose.

END OF ACT II.

ACT THE THIRD.



SCENE I.

Wis Wàmitra's Hermitage in the Forest.

WIS WÀMITRA and his Disciples, SITTA and SÀLI.

WIS WÀMITRA.

HALLOA! Sitta, where are you? Come here! bring a seat.

SITTA (*speaking in a low voice to his brother SÀLI*).

Brother! what is the matter? It looks as if our preceptor were suddenly struck blind—for though he is close to a seat, he yet asks for

one; though we are near him, he yet observes us not.

SÀLL.

Sitta! know you not that his mind is fully occupied with a grave affair—how to win the wager which he has just made in the assembly of the Gods above? Perhaps he is about to sit and weep for his folly.

WIS WÀMITRA.

Wicked boys! what are you doing? Where is the seat?

SITTA and SÀLL.

We bring one. Great preceptor! excuse our faults.

[*A seat is brought, and WIS WÀMITRA sitting on it soliloquizes.*]

WIS WÀMITRA (*by himself*).

Yes, perhaps I have fallen into a trap—perchance it is not easy to shake Arichandra's resolution.—Would that I had not gone to Indra's audience to-day; I should have been free from the anxiety which now overwhelms me. Yes, Vasitta is my eternal enemy; there can be no end to

the feud⁷⁷ between us. . . . It is late—late—too late now—I must not allow him to triumph over me. Cost what it will, my purpose shall be achieved, or I am not Wis Wàmitra.

[*Enter some Hermits from the neighbouring forest.*]

WIS WÀMITRA.

Come in, friends; your advent gladdens my heart.

THE HERMITS.

Royal sage! we ever rely on thee for advice and assistance, since thou art to us even as dear as the life-prolonging⁷⁸ elixir. Our salutations. Having heard that thou hast returned from a visit to Indra, we hasten to welcome thee, and learn what occurred in the world above.

WIS WÀMITRA.

There was a large gathering in Indra's palace, and a question arose as to who was the most virtuous sovereign amongst mortals. Vasitta said Arichandra was. I contradicted him, placed him under restraint there, and have come hither to

prove to the Gods the correctness of my counter-assertion.

THE HERMITS.

A mistake indeed! Wis Wàmitra, thou hast unawares slipped into a grievous error; slight not Vasitta, nor his disciple Arichandra. Thinkest thou it possible to wring a falsehood from his lips?

WIS WÀMITRA.

Ignorant wretches! dare you speak thus! Quick as thought succeeds thought, will I reduce earth and heaven to ashes. Dread you not my wrath? Know you not the extent of my power?

THE HERMITS.

Wis Wàmitra! excuse our ignorance. We crave pardon. Wreak not thy vengeance on such humble beings. We are thy servants, and await thy commands.

WIS WÀMITRA.

I forgive you. I require your services at present. I am about to perform a great sacrifice, and have need of a large amount of gold; go forthwith to Arichandra, and ascertain whether

he will assist me. Observe silence as to what happened above.

THE HERMITS.

Be thy will done! We go.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

Arichandra's Court.

Enter HERMITS.

THE HERMITS (*speaking among themselves as they go into the Hall*).

In this universe not even a straw shakes with the wind unless it were so willed before. Fate⁷⁹ rules supreme—what avails man's will? Who is weak, who strong, who good, who bad, except the man predestined to be so? Mortal men and immortal gods fancy that much is in them—nothing is beyond them. Verily, verily, they are puppets, under the control of strings

in the hands of One above. Yes! this world is a stage: in it we act as we are bidden: the Power that directs us is invisible. He alone know-why we dance, cease to dance, and dance again;⁸⁰ to Him alone is it plain why some are oppressors, others oppressed; why this quarrel arose between Vasitta and Wis Wàmitra; and why Arichandra is to suffer for his innocence and purity of heart. Let His will be done!

[*They enter, and behold ARICHANDRA seated on the throne.*]

ARICHANDRA.

Hermits! I rejoice at your arrival. Be seated. What aid can I render you?

THE HERMITS.

Arichandra! we have been directed by Wis Wàmitra to inquire whether you will furnish him with some gold, to enable him to perform a sacrifice? He impatiently awaits an answer.

ARICHANDRA.

Certainly; he shall have as much gold as he wishes; it is the duty of kings to assist devotees

who have renounced the world. Hasten to inform him of this.

THE HERMITS.

We convey this message to Wis Wàmitra, who himself proposes to visit you shortly.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

Wis Wàmitra's Hermitage.

THE HERMITS (*as they enter the Hermitage*).

Ah! how it rends our hearts to think what sufferings the King has to endure? Yet how can we assist him? Life is misery: ⁸¹ all men are unhappy—only seemingly happy. To be born is to suffer; to cease to exist, is alone to be happy. Deluded man! he must know himself ⁸¹ to know aught beyond himself. Then may he find that all is delusion—that happiness and unhappiness are the same; life and death but one; the whole universe a dream—aye, not even a dream; for there is nothing to dream of, and

none to dream. As others, so also must Arichandra pay the penalty of existence, till the holy light shines in his understanding,—till he knows and feels that pleasure and pain exist in idea alone; in fact never! Why sorrow we? Let what will be done be done. (*Coming before WIS WÀMITRA*) We have seen Arichandra. He declares he will give thee any amount of gold. Go thou to receive it.

WIS WÀMITRA.

Is it so? You may now return to your hermitages. I thank you for your services. I start at once for Ayòdiah.

SCENE IV.

The Court of Arichandra.

Enter WIS WÀMITRA.

ARICHANDRA.

Great Wis Wàmitra! thou conferrest great distinction on me by coming hither to accept a

contribution in gold towards so sacred an undertaking as a sacrifice. In this world it is ever easy to give, though that alone is a gift which is given to the deserving. How seldom it happens to a man to be of assistance to a sage so great in devotion as thyself!

WIS WÀMITRA.

Arichandra! thy generosity is far greater than even that of *Carna*⁸² of yore. Be thou ever blessed and happy! Continue to be the renowned patron of sages.

ARICHANDRA.

What amount of gold dost thou wish to have?

WIS WÀMITRA.

My wants are small. High as a missile⁸³ would ascend if hurled from a sling by a man standing on the back of an elephant, should the mound of gold I require rise in height; its other dimensions must be commensurate; and I ought to have it directly.

ARICHANDRA.

I will endeavour to give thee to thy heart's content. (*Addresses his Minister*) Sattyakirti, order

an elephant hither forthwith. Go, unlock the door of our treasury.

SATTYAKIRTI.

This is a praiseworthy act, O King! The poor and the needy have a claim upon us. The wealth of kings is the wealth of the community held in trust; and thou art fortunate to have it in thy power to aid so mighty a sage⁶⁹ as Wis Wàmitra. I hasten to open the vaults. (*Orders a subordinate officer*). Go, fetch an elephant from the King's stables.

WIS WÀMITRA.

Wait! I rejoice, O Arichandra! to observe the promptness which thou hast evinced. Yet I find there will be some delay before I begin the sacrifice: it were well that the gold should be with thee till then.

ARICHANDRA.

If it so please thee, O sage! I will be the custodian of thy gold. It shall be delivered whensoever thou requirest it.

WIS WÀMITRA.

Arichandra! I have certainly never seen one like thee. No mortal is thy equal. Thou hast acceded to all my wishes; yet before I depart, I wish that thou shouldst complete the gift of gold to me by performing the customary ceremony of transfer.

ARICHANDRA.

Wis Wàmitra, thy suggestion is good. (*Pours⁸⁴ water mixed with sesamum seed into the palms of WIS WÀMITRA'S hands, and speaks aloud.*) Let all here present listen! Sage Wis Wàmitra has this day deposited with me a large mound of gold. I promise to deliver it to him whensoever he demands it.

WIS WÀMITRA.

Son of Trisanku! who but thee can be so liberal?

ARICHANDRA.

It is no burden to me to be of any service to thee; to promote acts of piety is, indeed, the duty of kings.

WIS WÀMITRA.

Yes! thou art the incarnation of beneficence itself.

ARICHANDRA.

No merit is due to me. I owe all to Providence.

WIS WÀMITRA.

What greater reward can devotees wish for as the fruit of the oblations which they daily offer to the Gods than to have a monarch like thee as their never-failing patron?

ARICHANDRA.

Reverence, reverence to thee, Wis Wàmitra. I deserve not this commendation.

WIS WÀMITRA.

'Tis well. Arichandra, I depart now. Day or night, late or soon, when I return, be thou ready to deliver the gold. Live on—prosper!

SCENE V.

Wis Wamitra's Hermitage in the Forest.

WIS WÀMITRA.

Arichandra is ensnared. Yes, he must now yield to my designs. Let me adopt further measures. (*Meditates, performs some incantation,*⁸⁵ *and calls out in a loud voice*) Beasts and birds of this forest, attend my summons! Lions, elephants, tigers, bears, boars, bison, deer, elks, jackals, hyænas, present yourselves before me instantly! Eagles, vultures, peacocks, fowls, quails, partridges, fly in hither, with every other winged tenant of the wilderness. (*They all congregate before him, and make a frightful noise.*) Good. But make not such a clamour. Await my orders.

SÀLI, *the disciple (running in great fear).*

My lord, my lord! what may this mean? Why are these beasts here? There are impious men in this world who fare on the flesh of animals; but no hermit does so. Imitatest thou the huntsmen of our wilds? Thinkest thou to kill these foxes and hyænas for thy food?

WIS WÀMITRA.

Begone, blockhead! begone! Why meddle you in matters you comprehend not? I am about to despatch these beasts and birds to devastate the fields and gardens of fertile Ayòdiah.

SITTA (*another disciple*).

Lord, lord! how ungrateful would that be! May a man ever be unfaithful to him in whose house he has been fed⁸⁶ though but once? Who can grasp thy plans? Act as thou wilt.

WIS WÀMITRA.

Tut, tut! Malapert boys, attend to your duties. (*Addressing the animals*) Ye wild creatures! confide in me and proclaim my power. Rush into the territories of Arichandra, and leave them not till you have laid waste all the cultivated lands. Let not plant, nor tree, nor grass survive your raid; but let the work of destruction be complete. Depart.

SCENE VI.

Arichandra's Court.

Enter the CULTIVATORS and OWNERS OF FIELDS.

CULTIVATORS, &c.

Sire, we humble ourselves before our ruler.

ARICHANDRA.

Loyal subjects! what evils oppress you? Why are you so careworn? Let me hear. You shall have speedy relief. Do the fields suffer from want of rain?⁸⁷ or do the chieftains of neighbouring States disturb your quiet? or is it that our own officers ill-treat you?

THE CULTIVATORS.

King! our wealth consists in the crops of the fields and gardens; they are now being destroyed by an immense horde of wild beasts and birds that have made an inroad into the country; our efforts to expel them have proved futile. Royal guardian, we fly to thee for protection; let thy valour befriend us!

ARICHANDRA.

It must be that I have committed some heinous sin, to find my subjects thus overborne by great evils.—Has the grace of Siva deserted me? Is this the reward of my devotion? If I have done aught wrong, pardon me, O Supreme Being! Subjects! be not cast down. I will remit the taxes on your lands for the next two years, and start with you presently on a hunting excursion. The wild animals shall either fall an easy prey to my arrows and those of my followers, or flee back to their native haunts. Minister Sattyakirti, summon my huntsmen.

SATTYAKIRTI.

Yes, my lord (*instructs a messenger to fetch them*). The huntsmen are in attendance.

ARICHANDRA.

Minister! accompanied by these huntsmen, I proceed at once. Let the Queen, escorted by the army and yourself, follow me,

SCENE VII.

The Fields and Gardens of Ayòdiah.

ARICHANDRA.

Huntsmen! Mark! there roam the beasts bursting with fury, and trampling the tender grain and corn. They spare nothing. All vanishes before them. Dare they enter Ayòdiah? Not one of them shall survive long. The beaters are driving them towards us. Hear you the noise of the horns and drums? There they come. Nor beasts nor birds shall awe us. Seize your spears, snatch your clubs, spread the nets, bend the bows: fall on them, my men; fall on them.

THE HEAD HUNTSMAN.

My fellows! let us win the King's approbation. Form a circle—quick—form a circle. There rush the elephants! In vain they trumpet and rage; what care we? Capture or kill them we must. Hedge them in; soon Arichandra's unerring arrows will quiet them for ever. Comrades! observe yon herd of lions. Their eyes flash forth

fire, their tails stand on end; they spring in gigantic leaps; they approach. Meet them with your pikes. Tigers! crouch you there? companions, cut them in twain. The bears stand in dismay, with fore-legs upraised, with mouths wide open; drive your spears into those frantic groups. Antelopes, deer, elks, attempt ye to slip through our cordon? wolves, jackals, and hyænas, where learnt ye this unheard-of daring? Set the hounds on them! free the hawks! there they go. Let all the birds perish.

Aha, aha! what a wonder! note this flight of arrows—the skies are overcast by them—the earth is hidden from our view. In disorder all birds and beasts flee; lo, what a majestic lion falls there, stung to death; a roaring cub tumbles by his side. Here drops down a fierce elephant; his companion deserts him. As he flees, a death-dealing shaft pierces him through. There a brilliant javelin travels with lightning speed, working its way through the heart of many a tiger, boar, and bear. Ah, what a carnage! This is the feast of Death. Well may that god be satiated with his spoils to-day. Arichandra is his votary now; is here, there, everywhere, ever and anon offering to him endless sacrifices. Abate your

ardour, friends; rest; the victory is won, beasts and birds have disappeared, the lands are cleared, the grounds strewn with heaps of corpses. Fall in now. Our champion comes. Let us bow to him, the mighty Arichandra.

[They approach ARICHANDRA and fall at his feet, and bow to him.]

ARICHANDRA.

Huntsmen! you have performed your duty to my satisfaction; and the country is rid of its pest: let us join our army and the Queen. Lead the way.



SCENE VIII

Wis Wàmitra's Hermitage.

Enter the only two surviving animals from Ayòdiah, uttering mournful cries.

THE ANIMALS.⁸⁸

Wis Wàmitra! save us! Wis Wàmitra! save us! We two are the only remnants of those

whom thou didst send to Ayòdiah; the rest have perished — rent asunder by Arichandra's arrows. Sage, what a snare didst thou lay for us there! Does this become thy greatness? Where is thy vaunted power? Little did Arichandra's weapons dread thy wrath or might.

WIS WÀMITRA.

Has it been so? Wait and see. The fire of my anger is potent enough to dry up even the ocean.

[Meditates, and performs some incantation. A Boar of immense size and of frightful appearance comes before him.]

SITTA (*addressing his fellow disciple*).

Brother! brother! what is to become of us? Oh, I tremble with fear. A boar really as large as a mountain⁸⁹ is there. Look! How hideous he appears! His legs are white, his body brownish black. Shaggy hair covers him; a red tail stands out on end. His eyes are balls of fire; his tusks, curved sabres. Brother, he shrieks, and there is thunder — he laughs, and

there is lightning! He frolics, he leaps, he jumps; he comes, he nears our preceptor. Brother, brother! hold me closely, else I die of fright.

SÀLL.

Have no fear; this is only another freak of our master. Come, sit by me.

THE BOAR.

Sage Wis Wàmitra! my creator! of what service can an object of such insignificance as myself be to thee? What are thy commands?

WIS WÀMITRA.

Hearken to my orders. A while ago I sent some wild beasts and birds to devastate Ayòdiah. My plan has failed; the animals have perished by the hand of Arichandra; yet before you, O boar! even he must succumb. He is now encamped with his army in a forest adjoining his territories. Go there; destroy his retinue first, and then bring him hither a prisoner.

THE BOAR.

Be it so, great sage!

[*Exit.*]

SCENE IX.

Arichandra's Encampment in the Forest.

Enter some Messengers.

THE MESSENGERS.

We come, O Sire, to apprise thee of a great disaster which has befallen the troops. A boar of extraordinary size and terrible shape—fiercer than the devil, stronger than the lion, and nimbler than the antelope—has made its appearance amongst thy men, and destroyed many a soldier—many a leader. The whole army is astir with commotion and fear. For this is no denizen of the wilds; it is some evil spirit in disguise:

ARICHANDRA.

Fear not. I go. So long as the Gods favour me, so long as I can wield a bow, no affliction shall befall my army. Sattyakirti! order the chariot and bow presented to me by the Goddess Durga to be brought hither.

[They are brought, and ARICHANDRA, grasping the bow, enters the chariot.]

Messengers! in what direction is that wild boar?

THE MESSENGERS.

Not far away, sire. Beyond that wood, over that copse, thy troops are encamped, and amidst them is the savage creature.

ARICHANDRA (*speaking to his Charioteer*).

Drive on. Press the horses forward.

Yes, I behold the boar. His appearance might frighten any one. But kill or die is the motto of our race. Unless I triumph over this beast, how can I deserve to be a king of men! He sees me; with fury he flies towards me. Let this arrow welcome him! (*Shoots his arrow—it strikes the animal, which turns back and vanishes*). Well! it has proved an easy victory. Let me rejoin the Queen and her retinue.

[*He drives on, and encounters on his way a charming garden with water, in the midst of the wilderness.*]

My beloved Minister! how enchanting is the scene before us! This sylvan lake, and its adjoining grove of fruit and flowering trees, form a delicious retreat in the midst of so wild a country. How came they here? Is this the resort of gods or nymphs? Observe, over the limpid water of this

magnificent lake, float the white, the red, and the blue lotus. On the velvet leaves of the tender lily the water-drops glisten like so many brilliants. Their slender stems rise above the water-level, bearing aloft many a peaked bud and full-blown blossom; while hovering over them wild bees, drunk with honey or drowned in love, chase their mates in ceaseless revolutions. Nor is the bank less gorgeous. The majestic bamboo, with its fluted stem, yellow as if bathed in saffron-water, and rich in feathery foliage, leans over the lake. The *banana* is there, heavy with its golden-tinted fruit. Up shoots the tall and tender *areca*,⁴⁰ its emerald tufts waving to the winds, its delicate stem entwined by the *betel* creeper. The *champac* and the *mellica*⁹⁰—flowers, indeed, of all hues and forms, redolent with rich perfumes—scent the atmosphere. The clouds emit a gentle shower: bright look the trees. And as genial zephyrs blow, the outstretched branches rustle with tremulous motion—their radiant leaves throwing off the moisture in a profusion of pearly drops. Birds sing. How sweet is their melody! How handsome the peacocks! Parrots, mainas,⁹¹ and green doves flit from bough to bough. How joyous they seem!—Not even the noon-day sun can make

itself felt within this bower. I descry a small palace. Let us go in.

SATTYAKIRTI.

Sire! This is a fitting spot for thee to pass the night. The God of Day has run his course, and will soon disappear. We already see the God of Night. The Queen and the army are here.

ARICHANDRA.

Yes, Minister! Let us encamp here to-day. Issue the necessary orders.

SATTYAKIRTI.

I will do so, King. [*Gives instructions to some Messengers in attendance.*] I observe some ascetics⁹² wending their way hither. Note their naked and attenuated frames, and the tangled locks of hair which descend to their feet: the nails of their fingers, long unpared, have grown round their wrists. In caves of the mountains and hollows in the trunks of the gigantic trees which cover the forest is their home. Yams, roots, and leaves form their food. Clothing have they none, unless it be tiger-skins or deer-hides. What wants have they, who have renounced all wants? King and slave, gold and stone, are the same to

them. All their desires have been rooted out by the one great desire of being merged in the love of God. They seldom visit men; but thy excellent conduct, O King! draws even the recluses to thee. [*They enter.*]

ARICHANDRA (*falling at their feet*).

I am the happiest of mortals, to be able to welcome you to my encampment.

THE ASCETICS.

Our calling thou knowest. In the affairs of the world we never meddle—yea, as thou understandest, we seldom break silence, as speech⁹³ excites the mind. Yet as thy virtuous career is known to us, we come hither to warn thee of the evils which are about to beset thee. Quit this place forthwith. Tarry till daylight and thou art ruined. Cruel Wis Wàmitra is enraged. He will presently be here; when he meets thee, it will be either to curse or condemn thee to long-lived sufferings. Be wise. Hasten, hasten hence.

ARICHANDRA.

My obligations for your kind counsel are great.

Yet this surprises me. Wis Wàmitra! he dislike me! he angry with me! Have I not ever been his friend? What have I done, either in thought or word or deed, to offend that sage? I can think of nought. No; I cannot fly from him—I will wait and see him; if I have in any way offended him, I must obtain his pardon.

THE ASCETICS.

The course of destiny, O King! not even the Gods can alter or check. We go. [*Exeunt.*]

ARICHANDRA.

Minister! I retire to rest—I feel fatigued after to-day's hunt.

SCENE X.

An inner Apartment.

ARICHANDRA and his QUEEN.

ARICHANDRA (*starting from his bed*).

It is daybreak; awake, Sandramati, awake, and hear the dream⁹⁶ which I dreamed this night. I

tremble with fear, for it forebodes evil. O God!
befriend thy votary.

SANDRAMATI.

Husband! the spring of my life and the stay
of my existence! what has startled thee? Let
me hear thy dream. Be consoled. What harm
can come to thee, who hast never harmed any?

ARICHANDRA.

Sandramati! my ever-devoted wife! my dream
is ominous; I dread to relate it to you. I com-
prehend not its exact purport.

SANDRAMATI.

My lord! if thou canst not unravel this dream,
much less can I, an untaught woman. Summon
thy Prime Minister. His knowledge is unlimited.
He will readily explain it to us.

[ARICHANDRA orders the Chamberlain to
fetch the Minister. SATTYAKIRTI is in-
troduced.]

ARICHANDRA.

Sattyakirti, I have been this night sorely
troubled by a dream which perplexes me much.
Can you decipher its meaning?

SATTYAKIRTI.

I will endeavour, my lord, to do so, so far as my poor understanding enables me.

ARICHANDRA.

Listen. My vision is this. Methought I saw my father die, and that in succession I mounted his throne and married five wives. Shortly after, one of these I gave to a devotee, and a second accompanied the last against my wish. Of the other three, one ran away. The fourth was struck blind, and she too deserted me. One alone stood fast by me. Here the dream broke off. What evil does this forebode?

SATTYAKIRTI.

Sire, it grieves me to tell thee of the awful purport of this dream. My heart quakes to think of the consequences. Yet soon, I fear, they are to take place. Know then, monarch, the first wife whom thou didst present to a devotee is the town of Ayòdiah. Of this thou shalt soon be deprived by a devotee. Along with it thou wilt lose also the kingdom and country of Ayòdiah. This is the wife who accompanied the first.

She who ran away is Sandramati, thy Queen, from whom thou art destined to be soon parted. The one who was stricken blind and left thee is Devadāsa, thy son. He too will leave thee. Though all these deserted thee, yet one remained behind. And who is she, but thy never-failing friend—thy constancy, thy virtuous conduct, and thy love of Truth?

O Gods! Is such then to be the lot of my King? Is this the end of all human glory? May Siva protect Arichandra, and avert these evils from his head!

SANDRAMATI.

My lord, if such be our fate, who can avert it? If our Maker wills it, so must it be. Yes, my husband, this life is a bubble—human prosperity a phantom. Grieve not to lose such trifles. But let thy virtue remain ever untarnished, let nothing shake thy veracity: a man dies, but his fame lives to eternity.

SCENE XI.

Wis Wàmitra's Hermitage.

[The wounded Boar having returned and complained to him, he consoles the beast — meditates, and performs some incantation—and two APSARA GIRLS of the lowest caste appear.]

THE APSARA GIRLS.

Mighty Wis Wàmitra! what service can we, thy most humble slaves, render thee?

WIS WÀMITRA.

Maidens! I ordain that you become endowed with incomparable beauty; I will also that you become skilled in the knowledge of music and the art of dancing. My fiat endows you both with these accomplishments. Retire hence to where King Arichandra is now sojourning, and exhibit your performances before him. Let the melody of your voices and the grace of your motions be such as to draw down the Gods to witness them.

When you have charmed Arichandra, beg of him as a reward either to give you his silver canopy⁹⁵ of state, or, as an alternative, to admit you into his *zenana*.⁹⁶

THE APSARA GIRLS.

We will endeavour to gain thy approval, O sage! we take leave of thee.

 SCENE XII.

Arichandra's Encampment.

Enter a Messenger.

THE MESSENGER.

I come to announce the arrival of two Apsara girls of amazing beauty. Their creation must have cost even *Brahma*⁹⁴ infinite pains. For, Sire, their forms are models of symmetry and grace. Their plaited tresses are as dark as the rain-clouds. Their arched foreheads are as handsome as the crescent moon. Such may, perhaps, be the bow which the God of Love

handles. His flower-tipped shafts are not more keen or cruel than their almond-shaped black eyes, fatal as death-dealing javelins and lustrous as the source of light itself. The comeliness of their countenances equals that of the full-blown lotus, which, refreshed by the night dews, spreads out its pink-coloured petals in the morning to welcome the God of Day²⁸ as he rises over the orient hills and diffuses the warmth of his golden rays over earth, sky, and water. Their pouting lips are coral-hued—their heaving bosoms are shaped like the young king-cocanut—their waists are slender as the tendril—their gait that of the peacock—their perfections unrivalled—their accomplishments untold. Will your Majesty see them? They pray for an interview.

ARICHANDRA.

Admit them.

THE APSARA GIRLS.

Valiant chief! who art as affable and complaisant as the moon, on whose beauty our eyes are now feasting! let thy grace attend us poor girls. By birth, O Sire, we are *Pariahs*—by profession, songstresses and dancers. We live

not far away—our humble homes are at the foot of yonder hills. Will your Majesty condescend to see us perform?

ARICHANDRA.

Philosophers teach, O maids! that in woman we behold the incarnation of evil itself. Well may they dread beauty and fascinations like yours. I will see you perform.

[*They sing and dance.*]

Pause. Fatigue not yourselves. You have done enough to convince me of your exquisite skill in every branch of your profession; your merit deserves ample reward. Minister, present these damsels with gold, silks, and jewels.

THE APSARA GIRLS.

Sire, riches in abundance we have. The trifles of the world we appreciate not. Distinguished monarch of the Solar race, accord us the gift of that silver-made canopy, whereunder thou sittest to sway this world.

SATYAKIRTI.

Damsels! know you not that what you have asked forms part of the inseparable insignia of sovereignty? You are guilty of great impropriety.

Yet you are excused by your ignorance. Accept what was offered you and depart.

THE APSARA GIRLS.

"Tis well, Sire! If your Majesty could not part with the canopy, wouldst thou, we pray, permit us to make of thee another request? Love, O Prince, has been torturing us ever since we saw thy royal features. In his grasp we now writhe. Condescend, O Monarch—and this is a gift which we value beyond all other presents—condescend, we implore thee, to receive us into thy *antapurra*,⁹⁶ and to soothe the fire which rages within us. What greater boon can man confer on poor woman than heartily to respond to her love? What greater sin could he commit than to cruelly break her heart, or let her sink unrescued—unheeded—in the surging waves of an unrelenting passion? O King, the fire of the infernal regions is cooler than the heat of the affection which melts our frames. Pour on us the waters of mercy: pity us—we perish.⁹⁷

SATTYAKIRTI.

Vile women! have you the audacity to speak thus in the august presence of King Arichandra? Unsparringly may you have land, or gold, or gems,

or garments ; but such lascivious prate can never be tolerated.

THE APSARA GIRLS.

King! we asked of you but insignificant reward for our pains. But the treatment we have met with shows us that we were entirely misinformed as to your true character, and well may we now say no greater miser than Arichandra ever existed. Yet, in the world to come, greater punishment awaits the man who has prevented another from giving to the needy than even him who, though possessed of ample means, is yet niggardly in assisting the poor. It is truly difficult to say which is the worse, you or your impudent Minister.

ARICHANDRA.

Guards! remove these women hence. Drive them away from my encampment.

[*The women are forcibly taken away. Some time after enters WIS WÀMITRA, feigning rage, and accompanied by the APSARA GIRLS.*]

ARICHANDRA (*falling at WIS WÀMITRA's feet*).

Sacred being! why art thou so angry?
Obeisance, obeisance to thee!

WIS WÀMITRA.

Hypocrite! Sinner! Defile not my feet. Stand aloof. What havoc have you been making amongst the innocent beasts and birds! What disturbance have you been creating amidst the sacred haunts devoted to the retirement of ascetics and sages! Why have you so maltreated these poor girls? Tyrant! See in what plight you have driven them away hence, whither they had come unawares to exhibit their skill in music and dancing.

ARICHANDRA.

Sage, relent! Wax not so angry with so humble a being. Is the lion to wreak his wrath on the sparrow? It is not unknown to thee that it is the duty of kings to protect the lands and fields under their rule from the inroads of wild animals. When Ayòdiah was devastated by beasts and birds, I exterminated them with my arms. Neither does it become a *Kshetriya*⁹ to consort with *pariah* women; nor is it proper that I should even in dreams associate in my mind the thought of any other women with that of my own lawful wife—Sandramati. My state canopy I could not give away without forfeiting with it my authority

as the sovereign of these realms. I expelled these women because they grew insolent and addressed sinful and unlawful language to me. And, my lord, I was not aware that thou wert the patron of wild beasts, or of vile Apsara girls.

WIS WÀMITRA.

Yes, I know I can find nowhere a greater adept than yourself in the art of dissimulation. In this world it is always so; a man cuts the throat of another, and anon he declares, "Ah, I did it unconsciously!" I came not hither to waste words upon you. Villain, your sins must be expiated; you must have your reward. Presently I shall anathematize you.

ARICHANDRA.

My lord, pardon me! To forgive the faulty, the ignorant, and the erring, is the part of the wise and the great. Should thy kindness desert me for the sake of these low creatures?

WIS WÀMITRA.

Sir, my anger is roused! Nothing but the destruction of the object which stirred it could now allay it. Thus, unless you gratify the desires

of these *Pariah* girls, you yourself shall soon be transformed into a *Pariah* slave.

SANDRAMATI.

Great Wis Wàmitra! to whom can we fly for protection when thou condescendest to injure us? Spare us, my lord, spare!

SATTYAKIRTI.

If kings fail to prosper, the earth and all in it must suffer. Even devotees must cease to perform sacrifices for want of guardians⁹⁸ to protect them from the inroads of demons and giants. Arichandra has done no harm: prithee drive evil thoughts away.

WIS WÀMITRA.

Nothing shall wheedle me from my purpose. Arichandra! be ready to receive the anathema.

ARICHANDRA.

Have mercy, Wis Wàmitra! Has a Kshetriya ever wedded a *Pariah* woman? Is virtue to be thus disregarded?

WIS WÀMITRA.

Sir, obey my behests. Utter no idle words. Refuse to fulfil the wishes of these damsels, and you are ruined for ever!

ARICHANDRA.

No, never! Cleave my body asunder,—curse me, kill me, as you will. Yes, I shall cheerfully endure all this; but never will I swerve from virtue.—Yet a word more: I shall willingly give you, in irrevocable gift, my State, my throne, my wealth, all that I possess, if you will not compel me to transgress the path of rectitude.

WIS WÀMITRA.

I assent. Adhere to your word.

ARICHANDRA.

My word never fails. Accept them. I give thee my kingdom, my army, my officers, my exchequer—all that I now own. Wear the signet ring. Take it (*gives it over*). Gods above and men below, be witnesses to this transfer. I depart from this place forthwith.

WIS WÀMITRA.

Arichandra ! be you ever blessed. Your name is a synonym for Truth and Liberality. (*Addressing the people present*) Proclaim me Sovereign of Ayòdiah : Arichandra is no longer its ruler.

[*The proclamation is made.*]

But before you leave me, Arichandra, you should also give over the crown that you wear, and the chains and bracelets that now adorn your arms and wrists. To be a king, I must be dressed like a king ; therefore let me have your ornaments. Remove those from your wife and son also.

ARICHANDRA.

I obey. (*He removes the jewels from himself, his wife and son, and delivers them to WIS WÀMITRA.*) Give me leave to go, great sage !

WIS WÀMITRA.

You can now depart. (*They move on.*) But, Arichandra, tarry—tarry. True, you have given me your State and all that it comprised : you have also given me the State jewels. This is not all. Please strip yourself and your family of the rich apparel wherewith you are clothed.

ARICHANDRA.

Wis Wàmitra! we have to journey to some distant country to eke out the remaining days of our existence on this earth. We have given away everything: now thou demandest also our garments. Is it proper that we should be thus denuded of all attire? Have compassion on thy poor slaves!

WIS WÀMITRA.

Arichandra! do you grudge me my due? Well, I will deal by you mercifully. Here, take these three pieces of ochre-tinged⁹⁹ cloth; wear them, and let me have the valuable apparel with which you are decked.

ARICHANDRA.

Let thy wish be gratified. (*Delivers his, his wife's, and his son's rich clothing, substituting for it three pieces of cotton cloth tinged with ochre.*) May we now retire, sage?

WIS WÀMITRA.

Yes, leave this place.

ARICHANDRA.

Devadāsa, my son! Sandramati, my wife! accompany me: we should no longer stay in this country. *[They proceed some way.]*

WIS WĀMITRA.

Arichandra! come back, come back! Arch-deceiver! stay. I have yet an account to settle with you. Have you thus taken advantage of my failing memory? Is this, then, your vaunted virtue? Shame on you! Deliver up, rogue, the gold which I left in your custody some time ago, and which you undertook to hand to me when I should call for it: pretend you to have forgotten this?

ARICHANDRA.

The vaults of the exchequer, of which thou hast become the sovereign owner, hold, carefully locked up in them, the gold which I gave to assist thee in performing a sacrifice. All that I ever possessed I have given thee; and thou hast taken away even my apparel. What more can I do?

WIS WĀMITRA.

True; you have deprived yourself of all that

you had. Hence you have no right to say that the gold which is now mine should be set against that which you promised me, but never gave me. Away! away with your sophistry!

I will yet be charitable, and forgive your deceitful conduct. Declare, then, that you never pledged yourself to give me the gold, or that having done so, yet you do not now consider yourself bound to pay it. Can I treat you more leniently?

ARICHANDRA.

Such a declaration I can never make. Though hung by a chain¹⁰⁰ hooked into the flesh of my back, I be twirled round and round—though I be made to pass through all conceivable tortures—a lie I will never tell. Yes; I owe thee gold and pay it I shall. Let a messenger accompany me and leave me not till I have given him thy due.

WIS WĀMITRA.

They say that when one loses his horse, his loss ends not there; for he must incur expenses in digging a trench and burying him. So you have not only deprived me of the gold due to me, but you wish also that I should provide you

with a travelling companion. Am I to blame your treachery or my cruel fate? You promised to deliver me the gold upon my demanding it; but you now ask for time to do so. Well; I never treat men harshly—I will not be hard with you. Take twenty days' time, and before the twentieth day expires, see that my messenger has the money paid into his hands.

ARICHANDRA.

The distance between this and Kàsi, whither I am bound, is, as you know, great, and it is after my arrival there I must procure the gold. I beg thee, therefore, to grant me a respite of forty-eight days.

WIS WÀMITRA.

You feign to be very sorry, and imagine that I have been cruel towards you; but this is not singular. Such is ever the case in this wicked world. When one lends you money, you are happy, and you adore him as your kind friend; but when he insists on repayment, you imagine that he is inflicting on you a great hardship, and treat him as your greatest enemy. The money-lender is the sweet sugar-cane at first—he becomes a branch of the bitter *margosa*¹⁰¹ tree at last. Well,

take your own time, but be punctual in your payment. Go. [*He proceeds.*]

Ah, ah! I have forgotten yet one thing—stay. True you have given me your kingdom, but I cannot view myself as its lawful sovereign until I am duly installed on the throne. Accompany me, therefore, to Ayòdiah and crown me yourself. Walk in thither with your wife and son; I will ride in your chariot, surrounded by the troops and state officers.

ARICHANDRA.

I abide by thy commands.

SCENE XIII.

The Road leading to the Palace in Ayòdiah.

ARICHANDRA, his Wife, and Son, walk on foot, and in threadbare garments. WIS WÀMITRA enters in state, with the retinue following him.

THE CITIZENS (*weeping*).

Alas! alas! was it, then, so ordained that he who but a short time ago rode out in a triumphal

car on a hunting excursion should so soon be deprived of all his state and glory? Our eyes are aflame.—Oh, who can endure such a spectacle? Wis Wàmitra, we confided in thee, as if thou wert even our father, mother, and tutelary deity, and thought not that thou wouldst have deceived us so! Ah! it breaks our hearts to behold that King, so good, so kind, so innocent, reduced to this awful plight. Look. They walk barefoot on that hard road—Arichandra, Sandramati, and Devadàsa. We see no crown on him—his ear-pendants are removed—his shoulders bear no jewelled epaulets—his breast is bare—no golden chains, or gemmed medals, or strings of lustrous pearl shine there; his sword is lost—his sceptre gone. No embroidered silk or velvet forms his clothing now: yea, only a few shreds of ochre-dyed clothes cover his person. Those feet of our gracious Queen, which are now wearing out on the hard pavement, once showered gems from their ankle-rings wherever they moved. The infant Devadàsa, a child as yet unused to walking, is also there lagging along by the side of his parents. When even the rocks would melt with grief at this soul-rending scene, will not trickish Wis Wàmitra relent? Oh! Where are the gods? Can they tolerate this?

What sins has our royal family committed?—
Is it that the world approaches its end? or do
our senses deceive us?

[*They surround ARICHANDRA and his family.*]

Our king! our lord! what hast thou done?
Why dost thou walk in this forlorn condition,
and permit those wild men to ride on elephants,
on horses, and in cars? How can we submit our-
selves to be ruled by the ash-besmeared²⁵ and
unclean men of the woods. Wilt thou desert us
thus?

ARICHANDRA.

Kind friends, I have ceased to be your king, and
am now but a mendicant. Sorrow not for me, a
sinner; but be cheerful. Of my own free will
have I given to sage Wis Wāmitra this kingdom
of Ayòdiah: he is your ruler. I pray you, obey
him; live and prosper.

WIS WĀMITRA.

Incite not, Arichandra, your subjects to plague
me thus, but be quick; crown me king over them.

ARICHANDRA.

There need be no delay to thy coronation. The well-behaved inhabitants of this land will be ever faithful to thy rule.

SCENE XIV.

The Palace.

WIS WÀMITRA.

Arichandra! I am waiting to be made a king.

ARICHANDRA.

Mount that throne, and seat yourself facing the east.¹⁰²

WIS WÀMITRA.

Disciples and friends! sit you also.

SITTA (*whispering to SÀLI*).

Brother, these lanky hermits, with their tiger and deer-skin coverings, look like so many monkeys. What business have they here?

SÀLL.

You are right, Sitta. These men having wasted all their lives in the forest, as if they were so many wild animals, essay now, nevertheless, to begin a new life, and rule the world. But can these beggars do it? See our master there. What a baboon he looks! How he stares at this and that with his goggle eyes!

SITTA.

Our preceptor was once a king; and, therefore, he may perhaps be excused for his hankering after sovereignty. But what reason can the other shaggy devils assign for their appearance here? Tired of their wild life and meagre fare, do they come hither to repose in ease, and to get fattened at Arichandra's expense?

ARICHANDRA.

Tributary chiefs, prime minister, state officers, commanders of my army—all you who are present here—silence! Wis Wàmitra, the new King of Ayòdiah, ascends the throne. I crown him with my diadem (*sets the crown on his head*), and transfer to him my power and rights. Acknow-

ledge his sovereignty, and be his obedient subjects. Adieu ! adieu ! my kind friends.

THE CHIEFS, MINISTERS, AND OTHERS.

We obey the injunctions of Arichandra, and hail thee as our king.

ARICHANDRA.

Wis Wàmitra, you can let me go now. Let your messenger accompany me.

WIS WÀMITRA.

Yes ; quit this place forthwith. I will despatch a messenger to-morrow.

ARICHANDRA.

I will go instantly, and await your messenger beyond the gates of this city. Permit me, however, to beg of you a single favour before I leave Ayòdiah. The people of this land have been ever loyal and well conducted, and never had I occasion to complain of them. Let, therefore, your sway over them be mild and benignant. Extend, I pray, your forbearance and charity, if perchance they should commit any fault.

WIS WÀMITRA.

That, sir, is my business ! Will you now quit my palace ? But, madman, before you thus desert your country, I will afford you yet another opportunity of redeeming all that you have lost. Not only are you ruining yourself, but also your wife and child. Why are you so foolhardy ? Accede, I counsel you, to the wishes of those Apsara girls, and I will restore you to your state and power.

ARICHANDRA.

Sage, your kindness is great, but never can I comply with your request. What I have given you I shall never take back. I go hence to rest on the banks of the river Sarayu, and shall not depart thence till your messenger joins me.

WIS WÀMITRA.

Who can arrest a blockhead from impending ruin ? Have, then, your own way ! Go hence. Go.

END OF ACT III.

ACT THE FOURTH.



SCENE I.

The Road to Sarayu.

ARICHANDRA.

LET us now, Sandramati, retire to the banks of the Sarayu, and seek shelter for the night under the umbrageous trees which grow there. Sorrow not, dear girl. Grief avails nothing; it removes not even one atom of our sufferings. Births and deaths form an unfathomable ocean. No soul caught in its waves can escape from the tornado of evils which upheaves its waters. When station, power, and glory, such as I possessed, have vanished before us like the phantoms of a dream, why should we wish to retain such fleeting trifles?

The glitter of gold and authority enslaved our minds for a while; but from their fetters we are happily freed for ever, and we can henceforward attend to higher objects. Yield not to the agonies of maternal affection, at seeing your infant son, Devadāsa, fainting with fatigue: nor be enraged with Wis Wāmitra. He is not to blame: for we are only eating¹⁰³ the fruits of the sins attaching to our former births. Even he is the tool of Fate, as great a slave to inexorable Destiny as ourselves.

My son, Devadāsa, I once fondly imagined you would become my successor; but this is not to be; for the evils of life overtake you at your very birth. Heed them not, child; walk on.

THE CITIZENS.

[*Following them.*] Arichandra! Arichandra! Dost thou abandon us thus? Is this the reward for our fidelity to thee? Have we offended thee in any way that thou shouldst resort to self-exile? No; we will follow thee whithersoever thou goest—we care not for our lives, or families, or fields, or lands. [*They weep.*]

ARICHANDRA.

Citizens! weep not. Voluntarily have I pre-

sented Wis Wàmitra with my throne: no fault attaches to him. I must leave you; return to your homes, and live contented under his rule. May all prosperity attend you!

THE CITIZENS.

Art thou then so cruel? and must we stay behind?

ARICHANDRA.

Aye, my friends. Conspire not, I beseech you, to make me break my pledge with Wis Wàmitra: Return, return! [*Exeunt citizens.*]

My darling wife! my sweet child! observe afar the silvery spray of the noble Sarayu, hemmed in by verdant banks. [*They walk on.*]
Here we are—let us rest.

SCENE II.

The Banks of the River Sarayu.

Enter Officers of State, Commanders of Armies, and Chieftains.

THE OFFICERS, COMMANDERS, AND CHIEFTAINS.

Sire, we follow you; we cannot live away from you. Having eaten your salt, can we now

prove unfaithful to you? Why desert Ayòdiah through dread of Wis Wàmitra? Is his might so great? The deception he has practised is unworthy of a holy man; he merits death. Yes, sire, it is no sin to kill even a cow,¹⁰⁴ should she attempt to kill her keeper.

ARICHANDRA.

Ah, no, my men. Spend no thoughts on an unworthy being like myself. Go—live in peace under Wis Wàmitra's sway.

THE OFFICERS, COMMANDERS, AND CHIEFTAINS.

Sire! what regard can we have for him, who has treated you so foully? Has he not juggled you out of all that you possessed? Has he not stripped you even of your clothing? Does he not demand the gold which you no longer own? and is he not about to send a messenger to make prisoners of you all? Such inhumanity is not to be tolerated. Did we grow to manhood to prove cowards in your service? Give us permission, we pray, to slay Wis Wàmitra forthwith, and restore you to your lawful rights. This, sire, is no crime—hinder us not.

ARICHANDRA.

My friends ! my friends ! what cruel thoughts possess your minds ! Cease to harbour such wicked intentions. I can never countenance your diabolical attempts. Yea, it is a sin to hear them discussed. Kingdoms are trifles when men like Wis Wàmitra desire them : return, obey him.

THE OFFICERS, COMMANDERS, AND CHIEFS.

If such be your resolution—if such be your order—we cannot transgress it. We go. May the great God extend His mercy to you and your family !

[WIS WÀMITRA *approaches* ARICHANDRA'S *resting-place, keeps himself invisible, overhears all that has just transpired, and soliloquizes.*]

WIS WÀMITRA.

What more can I do to attain my object ? As yet I am far from having achieved it. I asked for immense wealth—Arichandra readily gave it : I wiled him away into the wilderness, and exposed him to repeated trials—he felt them not, but destroyed the beasts and birds,

and wounded the boar: I attempted to win him over by the fascinations of fair women—his constancy was proof against them. At last I snatched away his kingdom, turned him adrift a beggar in the streets, and disgraced him by depriving him of even his raiment—still this proud man bent not. He witnesses the agony of his wife and child, and yet changes not his dogged resolution. What avail all my machinations after this!

[*Appears before ARICHANDRA, and takes him by surprise.*]

Arichandra! have you been then conspiring against my life with your men? Must you add iniquity to iniquity? Are you not content with having slain the dumb and harmless creatures of the forest? Can you not rest satisfied with having ruined those poor women? Must you also now decide upon assassinating me? O Gods! what am I to do with such a man? How can I place confidence in you? Wicked wretch! let me alone. I want neither your territory nor your throne; take them back. I cannot be safe in Ayôdiah; I return to my humble hermitage: surely my life is of more value to me than all the paraphernalia of kingly sway.

ARICHANDRA.

I am not guilty of the crime thou imputest to me; yet if I have by any measure offended thee, I crave thy pardon. What has become thine can never become mine again. Go, rule thy state: thy messenger's absence alone detains me here.

WIS WÀMITRA.

Fool! you shall soon reap the reward of your obstinacy. Blame me no more; I have shown you every consideration.

[Meditates and performs some incantation; a messenger, by name NEKSHETRA, appears.]

MESSENGER.

Godly sage, Wis Wàmitra! I am here. I obey thy summons. What mission dost thou assign me? Thy creature awaits thy commands.

WIS WÀMITRA.

Nekshetra, listen! I give in charge of you as your prisoners this man Arichandra, his wife Sandramati, and his son Devadàsa. They are my debtors; a mound of gold, whose altitude equals

that which the missile hurled from a sling by a man standing on an elephant's back would attain is what these people owe me, and have long unlawfully detained from me—your duty is to recover it. Use any means you choose. Only let me have my gold returned before the expiration of forty-eight days. Beat them, slash them, chain them, do whatsoever pleases you.

NEKSHETRA.

I shall faithfully fulfil thy instructions—I am, indeed, no respecter of persons. Though his wife moan—though the child weep—though friends intercede—it matters not; no rest will I give the debtor till he delivers the gold. Should he delay the payment, I will spare him no punishment; but make him walk with his back loaded with a ponderous mass of granite, his hands pressed down with the *kiddy*;¹⁰⁵ I will pluck out the hair of his moustache, and tie his head up with only a span's length of rope.¹⁰⁶ Wait awhile; I will easily screw the gold out of him.

WIS WAMITRA (*speaking aside to the Messenger*).

Nekshetra! this, however, is not the most important part of your errand. Press him hard,

and put him to all kinds of ordeals. Should he, unable to endure his sufferings, implore mercy, ask him to utter a falsehood. If he comply, treat him with the greatest condescension and kindness, and lead him back to me.

NEKSHETRA.

Be it so, my lord.

WIS WAMITRA.

Arichandra! you and your family are Nekshetra's prisoners. Pray, practise no fraud upon that simple-minded Brahmin youth, but show him due respect and abide by his orders. See that his journey is made pleasant, and provide him with food at seasonable times.

ARICHANDRA.

So long as life is in me, so long also will I not fail to treat Nekshetra with all attention.

NEKSHETRA.

Now, sir, before I take charge of you, let me warn you as to what I expect of you. First, be duly apprized I am a sacred Brahmin. Let,

therefore, your demeanour to me be deeply respectful. Never desert me, nor counsel your wife or child to run away, nor grumble whenever I think it proper to punish you. Finally, expect not a moment's delay when the forty-eight days have expired.

ARICHANDRA.

As thou hast full control over us, what occasion is there, Nekshetra, to talk to me of terms? We will do all in our power to please thee. Shall we, then, depart?

SCENE III.

The Road to Kási.

SATTYAKIRTI, *the Prime Minister, overtakes*

ARICHANDRA.

SATTYAKIRTI.

Has it come to this? Is partiality, then, the true character of the Gods? But why complain? for even they have not escaped the blighting

influence of *Sani*.¹⁰⁷ All of us, the astrologers declare, must be brought some time or other under his sway. Arichandra is now in the hold of that dire planet, and smarts under these misfortunes. But was it for me to witness this scene of woe; why survived I Arichandra's glory? Fed by his bounty, have I grown fat, only to prove utterly unworthy of his kindness? He and his family are dragged away prisoners, and, nevertheless, here I stand mimicking grief. Yet, O blind Gods! what is in my power? Ye hills, ye dales, ye trees, ye streams, do you stand still—can you look unmoved at such atrocities? Mother¹⁰⁸ earth, on whom I now rest, canst thou not help this King? That goddess of chastity—Sandra-mati—the Queen of this land, walks in mud and mire, with mere rags to cover her person; while the heir to this great kingdom—the Royal infant—Devadāsa—is led on foot. All order is destroyed; everything is upset. Yet who heeds them? Am I also to desert them? [*Running up before ARICHANDRA.*] Sire, whither goest thou?

ARICHANDRA.

Sattyakirti! why betray so much concern?

Wherefore neglect your duties in the palace, and stray hither? Think not of me: do you deem it necessary that a man should drown himself because his friend is dead? You are well read and need no advice. Return.

SATTYAKIRTI.

Speak not thus, my lord. Power I heed not—riches I value not—my life is a straw—my wealth is thy affection towards me; thee alone I adore—thou alone art my all. Thinkest thou I am sold in bondage to Wis Wàmitra? No; of thee alone am I the inalienable slave, and from thee must I never be parted.

ARICHANDRA.

Minister, you are endowed with unparalleled wisdom! Give, I beg you, no cause of displeasure to your master, nor plunge unconsciously into interminable difficulties. He alone who has sinned must suffer for his sins—why should you bear my burdens on your back? Stay away, stay; adieu, friend, adieu!

SATTYAKIRTI.

Sire, I have resolved; not even Fate itself

can alter my purpose. Let it cost my life—let the thunderbolt¹⁰⁹ of Indra strike me—let me be hurled into flames—let the wicked Wis Wàmitra deal out the worst of anathemas on me—come what may—I shall not go back. Thee I will follow; thy sufferings, thy troubles, I must share and alleviate. Was I thy minister only in prosperity? And have I become thy enemy in adversity?

ARICHANDRA.

Minister! wise man! wish you to augment my perplexities? Must you disobey me? My wife and son alone shall accompany me. Go back; desert not your family.

SATTYAKIRTI.

Am I then a stranger to thee? And are thy wife and child alone dear to thee? Dost thou thus distrust me? Did I attach myself to thy service to be now cast away?—Sire, a wife lost or a child dead may be replaced—wealth be re-acquired and health recruited—but friendship once forfeited is never regained. Rather than stay here and see thee depart alone, I will hang myself to the boughs of this *ala*¹¹⁰ tree, and end this wretched life.

[*Attempts to commit suicide.*]

ARICHANDRA.

My friend! my friend! pause, hear me. If your determination be such, come with us; perhaps you, too, are doomed to suffer. Who can avoid it? Be not rash; do no violence to your person.

SATTYAKIRTI.

My lord, if the soul perishes, the body must likewise perish. Wherever the King goes, his minister must also go.

NEKSHETRA.

Well, idlers, what are you about? Walk on.
 [*Beats them with a cane.*] How relish you that?
 [*They proceed, and presently a zahara¹¹¹ spreads out before them on the way.*]

DEVADĀSA.

Father! I cannot endure the heat; this ground is as hot as fire. Mother! can you not help me?

SANDRAMATI.

My darling boy! has it fallen to my lot to see

you thus writhing in pain? Have these burning sands been substituted for the velvet cushions and garlanded mattresses on which you used to run and disport yourself? Child! what can I do?

[*Weeps.*]

ARICHANDRA.

Alas! alas! the fiery surface of the earth we now tread oppresses us heavily. My child is fainting, Sandramati is weeping for assistance, and yet I stand here like a statue.

SATTYAKIRTI.

Devadāsa, my child, you can no longer endure these torments; come here; I will carry you.

[*He takes up DEVADĀSA in his arms.*]

ARICHANDRA.

Sandramati! my wife, kill not yourself with fatigue. I will bear you in my arms.

SANDRAMATI.

My ever-loving husband! that should not be. I cannot desecrate those arms¹¹² wherein dwells the Goddess of Valour. No; a wife is not to be held superior to her lord.

NEKSHETRA.

Arichandra! Arichandra! how is this? Why have you set fire to these sands? I cannot walk on them, unless you help me; I shall presently die.

ARICHANDRA.

No harm shall befall thee, Nekshetra: I will carry thee.

[He takes NEKSHETRA on his shoulders.]

NEKSHETRA.

This gladdens my heart. Proceed—proceed.

[As they cross the zahara with difficulty, they enter a road swarming with venomous insects and reptiles.]

SANDRAMATI.

My husband! how are we to find our way in the midst of these snakes and scorpions? They pursue us. Child, keep close to me. Wild hornets sting us: our bodies have turned black: the pain is intense.

ARICHANDRA.

Cruel Gods! have I not expiated my sins yet?

Can you not spare me? Death, why dost thou not come?

NEKSHETRA.

Prisoners! you have plotted together to some purpose, as I not only suffer from the heat and glare of a burning sun and a parched desert, but am also exposed to the bites of venomous insects. Added to all, I cannot get even a drop of water to appease my thirst. Villains! why did you bring me here? But oh! look yonder.

[A herd of wild beasts obstruct their way.]

There the elephant trumpets; the tiger crouching awaits our arrival; the lion is ready to spring on us; now an awful wild buffalo tears the earth with his horns, and bellows forth in thundering tones. How dare we go through them? I cannot—I return. I care not for the gold.

ARICHANDRA.

Nekshetra! fear not; stand beside me; I will protect you.

SATTYAKIRTI.

Brahmin! torture us not thus. Your conduct

may well be compared to that of the courtesan who, regardless of the pangs of death under which her gallant is groaning, insists that he should rise from his death-bed to make provision for her future comfort. See you not that we are sufferers like yourself? We shall take a different route, and avoid these beasts. We are near the river Gaumadi ;¹¹³ there, sir, we can refresh ourselves.

NEKSHETRA.

Your insolence is past rebuke. Yet if a man's clothes be entangled in a thorny bush, gently must they be extricated from it. I am in your hands ; treat me as you please : but walk on. I find these animals show me some regard ; look ! they disperse.

[They reach the river Gaumadi.]

SATTYAKIRTI.

Worthy messenger, here we have abundance of water : wash yourself, and rest a little. I will go into the wilderness, and gather some fruits, edible roots, and leaves.¹¹⁴ *[Exit.]*

NEKSHETRA.

Well, Arichandra, have you not, after all, told a lie? You prayed to the Gods to take away your life, you courted death. Yet I behold you still alive.

ARICHANDRA.

Forgive me, sir; my prayer is unheeded by them, and, if not actually dead, I am nearly so. We all require repose: let me sleep on this bank, and under the shade of these trees.

[The Minister enters with a bag of fruits, roots, and leaves.]

Let me offer you, sacred Brahmin, the choicest of these fruits, roots, and leaves; eat them, and appease your hunger.

NEKSHETRA.

Insane fellow! think you that I am a wild beast to fare on such things? No; I must have well-boiled rice, rich milk, and delicious honey. Go, fetch them, or I will punish you.

SANDRAMATI.

Holy man! why art thou so pitiless? Seest

thou not that we are helpless—in the midst of a great desert—far, far from any human habitation? Whence can we procure rice, or milk, or honey? Accept these things; be not indignant. Hast thou no heart, and art thou brotherless, or sisterless,¹¹⁵ to treat us so harshly?

NEKSHETRA.

Away, away, hussy! Women are ever the pest of men. I want nothing—I die.

[Falls asleep. ARICHANDRA, his family, and his Minister swoon away. They are awakened by the noise of water and thunder.]

NEKSHETRA.

Ah! vile men! sinners! look what is before us! The skies are overcast; a storm rages; the clouds pour forth their contents in torrents: the flashes of lightning are terrific—the peals of distant thunder tremendous. Lo! the beasts flee in all directions. What an inundation!¹¹⁶ The river is swollen; the waters surge high, roll in immense waves, and carry everything before them. Corpses of wild men, beasts, and birds, caught by the trunks of trees, are washed away.

Ah me! Who dare cross this stream? Death
impends. Save me, save me!

ARICHANDRA.

Reverend sir, let us take refuge on that hill;
presently, when the storm ceases and the flood
of waters abates, we will cross over.

*[They flee to the hills, wait for the fall of
the river, and then wade through the
waters—ARICHANDRA and SATTYAKIRTI
bearing NEKSHETRA, SANDRAMATI, and
DEVADÀSA on their shoulders.]*

NEKSHETRA.

Ah! happiness! we are at last here. Dunder-
head! crack-brained Arichandra! why do you
draw us all into these perils? Can you not tell
even a single lie, and save us from the necessity of
thus jeopardizing our valuable lives? After all,
what is in a lie?

ARICHANDRA.

Pardon me, good sir. Let us hasten now. The
day is waning.

[They proceed, and night sets in.]

SATTYAKIRTI.

My lord! the hour is late: the night is dark, and above not even the stars twinkle. It seems as if we had lost our way. But lo! we descry something afar. Lights glitter—noises are heard. Pause; what can this be?

[*Enter demons.*]

Sire, we have wandered into the habitation of goblins. There they approach us. How frightful they look! Who can face them? They come in battalions—young and old, small and great—all welcome us. They disport themselves with a wild dance; flames shoot from their mouths; ¹¹⁷ their feet touch not the earth; they move in the ether. Observe you the bleeding corpses of human beings in their hands? They crunch them and feed on the flesh. The place is one mass of gore and filth. Wolves and hyænas bark at them: jackals and dogs follow them. ¹¹⁸ They are near. May Siva protect us!

NEKSHETRA.

How dreadful! Arichandra, what is this? Look! evil demons stare at me—I tremble for my life. Protect me now, and I ask you no more for the gold.

• ARICHANDRA.

Have no fear, Nekshetra. Come, place thyself in the midst of us.

[*He does so, and the Goblins see them, and leap about with joy.*]

THE CHIEF OF THE GOBLINS.

Men! little men! human vermin!¹¹⁹ intrude ye thus into my presence? Know that, save only the Brahmin standing in the midst of you, you all are my prey to-night.

ARICHANDRA.

Goblin! certainly thou art not an evil-doer, for thou hast excepted this holy Brahmin. As for ourselves, we know that the bodies, which begin to exist on the earth, must also cease to exist on it. What matters it when Death comes? If he spares us now, he reserves us only for another season. Good, kind demon! destroy us then together; here we await our doom.

NEKSHETRA.

[*In a tremor.*] Arichandra! Arichandra! before

you thus desert me, make the goblin promise you that he will not hurt me.

ARICHANDRA.

Thou hast no cause for alarm ; thou art safe.

THE CHIEF OF THE GOBLINS.

Listen ! I find that all four of you are very thin ; it is not worth my while to kill you. On examining closely, I perceive that that young Brahmin is plump and fat as a wild boar. Give him up to me—I want not the rest.

NEKSHETRA.

[*Crying aloud in great fear.*] O Gods ! O Arichandra ! you are a great monarch ! Have mercy on me ! Save me, save me ! I will never trouble you for the gold, but treat you most considerately hereafter.

ARICHANDRA.

Sir, thy life is safe—stand still.

NEKSHETRA.

Allow me, sirs, to come closer to you, and to

hold you by the hand. [*He grasps ARICHANDRA'S and SATTYAKIRTI'S hands.*]

ARICHANDRA.

King of the Goblins! I address thee in all sincerity: thou wilt confer on us a great favour indeed by despatching us speedily to the Judgment Hall¹²⁰ of the God of Death. The Brahmin must not be touched; devour us.

THE GOBLIN.

[*Grinding his teeth in great fury.*] What! dare you disobey me? Will you not deliver the Brahmin?

ARICHANDRA.

No; we cannot. We alone are thy victims.

[*Day breaks, and the goblins disappear.*]

NEKSHETRA.

Men! but for my presence, you all would have been slain long ago. Mighty is my power; see how the goblins have vanished, dreading me. [*Gets very angry.*] No more will I be trifled with. I must have the gold—I can forbear no

further. Advance not a step—not even an inch—without paying the money.

ARICHANDRA.

Extend some compassion to thy humble servants. Kāsi is not far from here; when I am once there the money shall be counted out into your hands. *[They proceed.]*

[WIS WĀMITRA appears before ARICHANDRA.]

ARICHANDRA.

I salute thee, royal sage! What brings thee hither? Have the inhabitants rebelled against thy rule? What commands dost thou give?

WIS WĀMITRA.

Away, dullard! I seek no counsel from you. I can no longer neglect my devotional duties to attend to the administration of your state. Go, therefore, and rule it yourself.

ARICHANDRA.

What I have done I cannot now undo: thou, O Sage! art the lawful sovereign of Ayòdiah.

WIS WĀMITRA.

Are you yet obstinate? Has experience produced no effect on your unruly mind? And must you ever groan under pain? No, Arichandra! be wise. Have pity on the poor girls who are perishing through love of you. Will you be the murderer of women? Wed them; or if this be disagreeable to you, I entreat you, tell a lie—but one lie—declare that you owe me no gold, and I will instantly reinstate you on your throne.

ARICHANDRA.

Sir, I can never consent to do evil. Pardon thy servant.

WIS WĀMITRA.

Madman! fancy you that there is some person awaiting you at Kāsi—to present you with a treasure?

[WIS WĀMITRA rebukes NEKSHETRA for having been lenient towards his prisoners, orders him to be strict with them, and disappears, and anon the wilderness they have to pass through catches fire.]

NEKSHETRA.

Ah! where is this to end? As debtors you suffer; but why must I, an innocent Brahmin, be exposed to these risks and hardships? Scarcely has one evil abated, when another appears. The whole forest is ablaze with fire. Are the elements also warring against you? A high wind blows the flame to the skies, and spreads it out in all directions. Yes, sirs, we are hemmed in—there is no egress. Arichandra! be you all consumed, but let me be saved.

ARICHANDRA.

The God of Fire will cease to afflict us, and this conflagration subside, should one of us be offered in sacrifice to him. As I am the most deserving of death, I shall be his victim. Minister, I entrust to your hands the safety of my family and of this Brahmin.

SATTYAKIRTI.

If thou survivest, O monarch! the world will prosper, all virtues flourish, and the debt due to Wis Wāmitra be paid. But I live to no purpose. Let me, therefore, I implore thee, die, and enjoy the merit of having saved my king.

ARICHANDRA.

No, Sattyakirti; live you, and be of help to my wife and child. Detain me not; grant me leave. Sandramati, Devadàsa, our companionship in this world ceases now. May the Gods protect you all! The flames are nigh; I must go.

SANDRAMATI (*holding him by the hand*).

King, thou knowest full well that the wife should not survive ¹²¹ her husband; for what is life worth to her, when he for whom she lived lives no longer? The love of wedded wives is indeed not the fleeting passion of giddy courtesans. Do not even the birds of the air perish with grief when once their partners are killed by the savage huntsmen? Sovereign, let me, thy worthless wife, be sacrificed.

DEVADÀSA.

Father! mother! since you have resolved to die, what is to become of me? Have I not been taught that the debt due from a child to its parents is beyond calculation? Let me die, and show myself duly grateful for all the affection with which I have been reared by you. Oh, let me be the victim!

SANDRAMATI.

My darling boy! where did you learn so much wisdom? Ah! child, has adversity been your tutor? But I did not rear you to be offered a victim to the God of Fire; no, live you: let your mother die.

NEKSHETRA.

Prisoners! slaves! thieves! are you then devising means to destroy me? Be open, declare it is so. Throw me into these flames, and save your own lives. Am I not generous?

SANDRAMATI.

No! Husband! impede me not. Child! let me go. [*Runs into the fire.*] Agni! I come to thee. O great God of Fire, spare me not—if I or my husband ever injured others or coveted their goods; if ever we despised the wise, the great, the good, the aged, or the poor; if ever we neglected our duties to our guests, our friends, or our relations; if ever we disdained our *guru*³⁵ or blasphemed the Gods; if ever we were unjust or inequitable—if ever cruel, or harsh, or false—spare me not. And if ever we were unfaithful

to each other, all-knowing deity, accept me as thy prey—burn me to ashes; but hurt not, I entreat thee, my lord, my child, or my friends.

[*Disappears.*]

DEVADÀSA.

Mother! mother! whither hast thou fled?

[*Runs after her into the flames, and disappears.*]

ARICHANDRA.

Sandramati! my love! hast thou forsaken me thus? But I too follow thee to the other world.

[*Rushes into the flames, and disappears.*]

SATTYAKIRTI.

Agni! I am also thy victim. O Gods! permit me to seek Arichandra whithersoever he be now gone.

[*Disappears in the flames.*]

NEKSHETRA.

Rogues! have you then thus run away from my charge? But escape you cannot: here I come to capture you.

[*Goes through the fire, and finds, on the other side of the forest, the King, his family, and his friend standing unhurt, the fire having subsided.*]

Well! I have rescued you once more from peril. I can, however, no longer wait, nor idle away my time. Pay the gold, or perish of the tortures which I shall not hesitate to apply to you.

ARICHANDRA.

Condescend, sir, to grant me a little time. As we are already in Kàsi, the gold shall be soon delivered into thy hands.

END OF ACT IV.

ACT THE FIFTH.



SCENE I.

*The approach to Kāsi, and then Kāsi, its Temple,
and Streets.*

ARICHANDRA.

MY love! lo! yonder rise the lofty walls that encircle the holiest²⁰ of the holy cities of the earth. See there its splendid turrets, its princely mansions, and its millions of pinnacles, whereon repose the clouds of heaven. Above them all tower the golden dome and the jewelled *goper*¹²² of the renowned temple of *Vis Wanāth*,¹²³ with the banner of the Goddess of Charity streaming over it. Sandramati, salute the God of Gods. Adore this, his sacred shrine. As the winds

disperse the clouds, so even the mere sight of Kàsi cleanses men from the sins of this and previous births. By it roll the silvery wavelets of the divine Ganga, hemmed in between banks of golden sand, whereon the emerald-tinted *maruda*¹²⁴ and the javelin-leaved *vilva* trees grow in profusion. Soon the waters of this godly stream will sanctify our persons and purify our erring souls.

Ah! here we are near the gate. Troops of guardsmen are on duty, with brilliant sabres and iron-bound clubs firm in their hold. Let us go in. [*They enter, and walk through the streets.*] Even *Kuvera*,¹²⁵ the God of Wealth, has not a richer city. Look! these are the dwellings of the Brahmins. Loud rise the voices of the *pandits*¹²⁶ and students reciting the Vedas in the halls of learning. *Mantras*¹²⁷ are heard, oblations offered to the Gods, and sacrifices ceaselessly performed at the family hearths. Schools of philosophy flourish—here *Saraswati*,¹²⁸ the Goddess of Learning, has her votaries.—Proceed.¹²⁹ The twang of the bows and the clash of the swords bespeak the royal residences of the *Kshetryas*. There the martial youth obey the directions of their masters, and cultivate the arts of war. Pitted against each other, they try their valour and test their skill

in archery. Showers of arrows counteract showers of arrows—dart meeting dart. Behold the bow-string of one is now cut; anon it is replaced, and a cruel barb careers from it as fast as lightning, and rends in twain the stem and string of the rival bow. The vanquished youth shakes his head, tramples the ground, and shouts forth in fury, like an untamed bull of the fields; then suddenly he seizes a stronger bow, aims a steadier arrow, and strips the late victor of his bow and quiver. The war is resumed. But look again. Two young warriors there challenge each other, and fence with scimitars. Soon they are lost in the rapidity of their evolutions—their swords seem but a gleam of light, and their persons are seen but as one. They are tired and rest, whilst two youths again leap out into the arena, and grapple each other in a hand-to-hand fight. Locked in a mutual grasp, they fall—they rise—they fall—they stand again. They run apart awhile—they clap¹³⁰ their shoulders—roar with the voice of the lion—rush in—and rage in fight again. Some learn to ride the horse—others to mount the elephant—many to drive the chariot.

Here we approach the precincts of the wealthy mansions of the merchants — the *Vaisyas*.¹³¹

Their shops and stalls extend in endless rows. The produce of all lands and the wealth of all cities are exposed there. Money-changers are busy, and the constant clink of the great heaps of gold and silver coin that are counted out makes its metallic chorus heard even amidst the din and commotion caused by the numberless buyers and sellers. We now come amidst the humble homes of the *Shudras*—the labouring class. They are busy in the fields—some irrigate their lands, others drive teams of oxen and plough the ground, while others again are engaged in sowing the grain. Cowherds are tending the cattle—their shrill pipes, resounding with a pathetic melody, draw together the cows and calves scattered in every direction.— Ah! here we are in front of the shrine of Vis Wanàth.

SANDRAMATI.

Let us enter, and pray.

[*They enter the temple and pray.*]

ARICHANDRA.

Great Vis Wanàth! mercy, mercy to us, thy humble servants! Heavily crushed by misfortunes; having lost our kingdom, and undergone

great sufferings, we repair to this city to earn some gold and pay our debts. Show us the way—help us, O comforter of the weak! Help us, O curer of all evils!

NEKSHETRA.

What are you about, fool? How much longer am I to wait? Will you deliver the gold, or say that you do not owe it? Am I thus to be starved to death on your account?

ARICHANDRA.

Sir, I owe the gold, and will give it to you. Let us rest under the portico of this temple, for only a few seconds, to recover from the fatigues of our long journey; presently I will go to beg of some wealthy citizen of Kàsi to commiserate our wretched condition, and pay the gold we owe Wis Wàmitra.

NEKSHETRA.

Am I to be imposed upon for ever? No, sir, this will not do. Deliver the gold immediately, or say no. Else I will treat you to some of the sweet things I have in store for you. No deception! I cannot endure this delay any longer. You are already in Kàsi; yet you refuse to give the

money. Now, thief, first bend your back; how like you this spine-bender.¹³²

[Puts on that instrument of torture, which causes ARICHANDRA to bend his spine down very painfully.]

ARICHANDRA.

[In great agony.] Spare me, spare me. I have not refused to give the gold. O God! who dwellest in this temple, protect thy humble votary.

[Sits down on the floor.]

NEKSHETRA.

Of what use can be any appeal to this deity, when you have so adroitly defrauded us of our gold? Shame on you, liar! cheat! Pay up the money. Pay!

ARICHANDRA.

I am anxious to pay; only relieve me from this agony. Thus situated, how can I procure the money?

NEKSHETRA.

Fellow, are you impertinent? Come, I will

remove the stricture from your back and straighten it a little. [*Removes the spine-bender, makes him stand, and ties his neck up tightly to a low roof.*] Now, you shall remain in that posture till the gold is forthcoming—till sage Wis Wàmitra is satisfied.

ARICHANDRA.

[*Standing with his head close to the roof, unable to move it in any direction.*] O Brahma! why didst thou create me? What have I done to merit all these tortures?

NEKSHETRA.

Well, Arichandra, have you not now told a lie? You promised me at first never to grumble at my treatment; yet you are murmuring.

ARICHANDRA.

No; I only appealed to the deities.

NEKSHETRA.

Is it so? Very well. Try this. [*Applies the instrument of torture called kiddy¹⁰⁵ to ARICHANDRA'S*

fingers, whereby they are pressed together closely.]
 Bear it also patiently, if you please.

SANDRAMATI.

[*Weeping and in great anguish.*] O Brahmin! is thy heart made of adamant? Why dost thou oppress us thus? Relieve my husband, I entreat thee, and substitute me in his place. I will cheerfully endure the pain inflicted by all your instruments of torture, rather than see him suffer.

SATTYAKIRTI.

Dost thou think it magnanimous, O Nekshetra! to treat so cowardly a King who is brave as a lion in the battle-field? When thus detained by thee here, how is it possible for us to earn the gold which we owe thee?

NEKSHETRA.

Fool! Yes, it is true your King is a hero; hence it is that I have twined a flower-garland around his neck [*pointing to the rope with which he was tied to the roof*], and put a signet on his finger [*pointing to the kiddy*]. Now, he shall have something more. He has not had his face shaved during his travels;

and, as it also befits a hero to look smart, I will become his barber—even his menial. Can I be more considerate of royalty? Answer.

[*Applies pincers, and pulls out the hair of ARICHANDRA'S moustache and whiskers.*]

ARICHANDRA.

What hast thou in reserve? I submit to all thy cruelties. Be expeditious, pray. Take my life, if thou wilt. [*Weeps.*] What greater punishment could the tyrants of this wicked world glory in inflicting on their victims beyond depriving them of life? Slay me.

NEKSHETRA.

Dullard! when you were in prosperity, you boasted, saying that you would do this and that; in adversity you find it inconvenient to fulfil your engagements. Who is to blame for this? If you will all thus weep together, create a disturbance, and frighten me away, there is no help for it—we must lose the money. But, obstinate wretch! why do you not tell a lie, and save yourself from all this misery?

ARICHANDRA.

Messenger, I suffer for my sins; I wish not

to heap sin upon sin. Though, therefore, you grind my body to the consistency of pulp, and squeeze all the blood out of it, yet you shall not succeed in forcing a false statement from my lips. Go on, torture me in any way you like. I value not life more than truth.

[NEKSHETRA *applies all the instruments of torture with greater severity, and ARICHANDRA again appeals to the Gods.*]

SANDRAMATI.

Brahmin! spare my husband, spare him, and persecute me in his stead. [*Addressing ARICHANDRA.*] Monarch, faint not—revive—have courage—sell me into slavery and pay this debt.

ARICHANDRA.

O Sandramati! who art dearer to me than even the pupils of my own eyes, didst thou think that I could exist separated from thee? Wert thou so cruel as to fancy that I could have the boldness to disgrace my own wife?

SANDRAMATI.

Truth is everlasting, and life a bubble, a lie,

a juggle. I beg thee—I implore thee; hesitate not. I am a worthless being—sell me and my child; pay thy debt, and fulfil thy promise. Live happily with thy faithful minister, Sattyakirti. There is no other means of escape from the wrath of the dire sage. Sell me, husband; am I not thy slave?

NEKSHETRA.

Arichandra! Arichandra! how much longer am I to stand here, and await your pleasure? Is it my lot to go even without food or drink for your sake? Declare, man, will you or will you not give the gold?

[Applies the instruments of torture with greater force.]

ARICHANDRA.

[Weeping.] Pray forgive me, sir — forgive. I purpose to sell my wife and child to pay Wis Wamitra's debt before the sun sets this day.

NEKSHETRA.

Wise man! Do you think it more honourable to sell your wife and child than to tell a lie?

ARICHANDRA.

Question me not thus, holy Brahmin! But secure only the payment of your money.

NEKSHETRA.

Do as you will; only let me have the money.

[Relieves him from the tortures, and they all walk again along the streets of Kàsi, offering SANDRAMATI and her child for sale.]

SANDRAMATI.

My lord! delay not. Act as our salesman; here we wait to be disposed of.

ARICHANDRA.

Is there, then, my dear wife, no other way of avoiding this awful alternative? Must you and my son be sold as slaves to restore me to liberty? *[Weeps.]* Ah! has it come to this?—My beloved Sandramati, I place on your head and on that of Devadàsa some pieces of straw;¹³³ walk on—this will indicate to the world that you are led out for sale.

[Places pieces of straw on their heads, and shouts out.]

Wealthy citizens of Kàsi! I offer my wife and child for sale. Deign, good sirs, to buy them, and pay the debt which I owe to sage Wis Wàmitra. They are free from all faults and will willingly serve you. It matters not who are their purchasers—Brahmins or Pariahs? [*A crowd gathers.*] Inquire you who I am? Know, then, I am the worst of all the sinners this world contains—through my misdeeds I have lost a kingdom, and am now about to lose even my wife and child. Benevolent men! pity me, and buy my wife and child.

NEKSHETRA.

Why are you, crazy fellow, dragging these poor creatures from street to street, and from lane to lane? Know you not if they were saleable articles, they would have fetched a price in their own country? Of what use can these wretches be to any man? Arichandra, toil not in vain; cease to be foolhardy—yield to reason—tell a lie and be saved.

ARICHANDRA.

Pray, sir, torment me not thus. Your cruel words impart a hundredfold intensity to the

tortures you inflict, even as pouring oil on flames causes them to rage higher and higher. I cannot disregard virtue—can never utter a falsehood. Presently your gold shall be delivered.

NEKSHETRA.

If you respect not my advice, it is no fault of mine; act as you wish, but I cannot continue to promenade with you any farther. Stay there, man; stir not—sell or kill your wife and child, but pay me the money. Imagine you that our money bears no interest?

ARICHANDRA.

Good men of this holy city! hearken to my prayers! I offer my wife and child for sale; buy them, I beg you. Have mercy on us.

[*Enter KALAKANDA, an aged Brahmin.*]

KALAKANDA.

Halloa! what is this noise? Who is it that has been imploring us to purchase a cow and a calf? [ARICHANDRA goes before him.] Was it you, man? What have you to sell? Let me see them.

ARICHANDRA.

What I have to sell are these human beings—a mother and her child. Kind sir, purchase them ; you will thereby perform an act of charity.

KALAKANDA.

What ! are you speaking seriously ? Have I made money, scraping it together little by little, to throw it away on this wretched woman and wan child ? How dare you attempt to deceive me, an old man ? [*Meditates for a while.*] Well, suppose I buy them, will they serve me cheerfully ? And at what price will you sell them ? If you do not ask much, I may perhaps buy them, to assist you.

ARICHANDRA.

Student of the Vedas ! I owe a heavy debt to sage Wis Wāmitra, even a mound of gold as high as the missile hurled from a sling by a man standing on the back of an elephant would ascend. If you will consent to give this to his messenger, Nekshetra, who retains us now in his custody, this woman and boy shall become your slaves.

KALAKANDA.

Indeed, they are not worth so much gold ; yet, to relieve you, I will buy them. Should I undertake to pay your debt to Nekshetra, will that be a sufficient satisfaction ? will you then deliver this woman and boy to me, and enter into a pledge that they will be faithful and diligent servants ?

ARICHANDRA.

I will be content with that : and this woman and boy will become your menials, ever ready to obey your instructions.

KALAKANDA.

Messenger Nekshetra ! what say you ? Will you agree to receive payment from me ?

NEKSHETRA.

Yes, sir ; I consider your undertaking to pay the debt as good as my receiving ready money. Lead this woman and boy away ; they are your property.

KALAKANDA.

Well, Arichandra! write the bond of sale and deliver it to me.

ARICHANDRA.

Here it is. [*Writes one.*]

KALAKANDA.

I am purblind, and cannot read it. Recite aloud what you have written.

ARICHANDRA (*reads*).

“ I, Arichandra, the son of Trisanku, once a King of the Solar dynasty, have, through necessity, sold this day, in bondage to the reverend Brahmin Kalakanda of Kàsi, my wife Sandramati, and my child Devadàsa, as witnessed by the Messenger Nekshetra and the Minister Sattyakirti.”

The bond is here, holy Brahmin; take it, and my wife and child will accompany you. [*Weeps.*]

SANDRAMATI (*sobbing*).

Alas! alas! Cruel Destiny! Is this, then, the end of our wedded happiness? Did the Monarch

of Ayòdiah seek me at my father's court and win me there, to be thus cruelly torn from him? When, O blind gods! shall we be united again? When, O my darling husband! shall I see your face again?

DEVADÀSA.

Father! father! go not from me!

[*Clings to ARICHANDRA.*]

ARICHANDRA.

O Vis Wà'nath! guardian deity of this sacred city! the sciences declare that men are joined in matrimony with women, in order that their happiness may increase and their issue be of assistance to them when they are infirm or old. But, O sweet-tempered Sandramati! I married thee only in order to sell thee as a slave; O Devadàsa! I begat thee only in order to sell thee as a slave-boy! Thus terminates the illustrious Solar race! Oh! how much better it were that I had never existed—or, existing, had never wedded thee, my love! (*Weeps.*) My wife! my wife! in what future births shall we be reunited?

SATTYAKIRTI.

Most noble King! succumb you then to misfortune? Is this, after all, the fruit of your knowledge and wisdom? Oh, no! Forget not that Truth is more precious than all earthly happiness—that it must be maintained anyhow, at the risk of life, even in the face of Death himself. Sire, by far easier is it to count the number of the sands which cover the shores whence rebound the mighty waves of the Ocean, or to ascertain the number of the atoms which constitute *Meru*, the loftiest mountain of the universe, than to enumerate the number of the births¹³⁴ which our sins have already necessitated, and which we shall yet be compelled to pass through before final rest awaits us. Poor souls! we are tossed hither and thither, washed by the waves of Destiny from world to world, sphere to sphere, age to age, bounding from death to life, and from life rebounding to death; children once—fathers again—a husband now—a wife anon—now a king—now a slave—now a man—now a beast—till our merits and demerits are cancelled off—till the heavenly *Sâyucchya*¹³⁵ welcomes us to eternal bliss. Foolish man clings to this earth, and cries

out, "Oh, this is my land, this my field, this my home—who dare take it from me? How can I part with it?" Knows he how many worlds have already owned him and disown him now? He hugs his wife closely, and proclaims, "Oh, this is my partner, this my love! who dare remove her from me? How can I exist separated from her?" Know you how many thousands of women have called themselves your wives, and how many millions of children have cried out to you, "Father! father?" When such is life, why weep you? Battle with Fate itself. What must be done will be done. Grieve not because evils beset you and unhappiness is your lot; but grasp the sword of wisdom, demolish the wild phantasies of the wicked mind, then mount the winged horse of reason, scale the heights of knowledge, and learn that where happiness is, there also unhappiness must necessarily be.¹³⁶ Seek the one and you seek the other as well; for pleasure ever ends in pain, whilst pain ever leads to pleasure. Such is the common lot of humanity.

Give leave, O King Arichandra! to your wife and child—let them go. I shall be your never-failing companion.

KALAKANDA.

Well, men, why are you disputing so boisterously? When a horse is sold, does it not become the property of the purchaser? Its seller may, if he so choose, become its grass-cutter.¹³⁷ What other right can he have to be hovering about it? Come,—I cannot tolerate this. Woman! boy! follow me.

[*Forces SANDRAMATI and her son from ARICHANDRA'S hold, and drives them before him. Exeunt.*]

SATTYAKIRTI.

Messenger Nekshetra! grant us leave to go.

NEKSHETRA.

What! Think you there remains nothing more? Arichandra! I have undergone great hardships in taking care of you—is it fair that I should go without my wages?

ARICHANDRA.

Well, Nekshetra! how much more do I owe

NEKSHETRA.

I claim not much; ten thousand pieces of gold will content me.

ARICHANDRA.

Thou shalt be given that. Sattyakirti! the heavy rain has now ceased, but a slight drizzle yet falls. I possess no gold—all that I own now is myself. Sell me as a slave, and pay Nekshetra.

SATTYAKIRTI.

I should lose the very power of speech, if I attempted to commit so great a sin, and proclaimed myself as the seller of my king. No; sell me, great monarch! and pay this messenger his due. To what purpose do servants like me exist, if they are to be of no use to their masters in time of need?

ARICHANDRA.

Let each suffer for his own misdeeds; I implore thee, minister, dispose of me at once.

NEKSHETRA.

Sattyakirti! why can you not advise that fool to behave like a sensible man? Ask him of what avail is Truth? Does he imagine that to be thus fanatic is the way to reach heaven? Has Truth saved him from any of his afflictions? Has it prevented his separation from his wife and only child? And is it not Truth that now coerces him to sell himself as a bondman? Alas! what a cruel demon that Truth must be! A truce to Truth. He has been worshipped from the first—he has shown himself a perfect cheat. Come, numskull, offer even now—at this last moment—your prayers to the Goddess of Lies, and propitiate her favour. She waits to bless you—to shower on you all benedictions. Man! vacillate not; come near me, utter only within my hearing a single falsehood—a little lie—and you shall be restored to your wife, to your child, to your kingdom, and to your people.

SATTYAKIRTI.

Stay, sir! stay! Speak not thus. I was once loth to sell my king, but I have resolved to do so now—he were better a slave than a liar.

ARICHANDRA.

Waste not words, Sattyakirti, on that worthy man. Place a straw on my head, and expose me for sale. [SATTYAKIRTI *does so.*]

SATTYAKIRTI (*crying out*).

Inhabitants of Kàsi! run in here, run! Give up your meals, cease to allay even your thirst, and run in here; for such a sight as this you can seldom witness—so great a prize as I have to offer, you can never win. [*A crowd gathers.*] In this mortal behold a fallen king! in him behold the changes which unrelenting Fate has wrought! in him behold the victim of Wis Wàmitra! in him behold the man who has sold his wife and child to pay a debt! in him behold the slave now exposed for sale! Rather than contravene the dictates of Virtue, he condescends to be a menial. Admire his constancy; pity his forlorn condition; become the owner of a royal slave. I am his ungrateful minister—fattened on his bounty—glorying in his misfortunes—unwilling to help him—acting only as his auctioneer.

Kind sirs, be charitable; pay ten thousand pieces of gold, and purchase this king.

[*Enter a Pariah of the name of VERAVAKOO, the burner¹³⁸ of the corpses in the cemetery of Kàsi.*]

VERAVAKOO (*speaking loudly, and tossing his head aloft*).

Yes! I am Veravakoo, the first of Pariahs! I am a Pariah—but what of that? Did not Vasitta¹³⁹ marry a Pariah woman? Did not even *Scanda*, the God of War, marry a Pariah maid? Who is the great *Tiruwallever*?¹⁴⁰ Is he not a Pariah? Yes; I feed on the flesh of bulls, but what does that matter? Brahmins may despise me, kings may hoot me, merchants may think themselves polluted by my touch, *shudras* may avoid me; but one and all come to me at last. I am their last friend in this world—aye, their last enemy too! When I burn them, I know how to wreak my vengeance on these proud men. The mightiest of monarchs are at my mercy, the fairest of females require my services. Yes, yes! I am the lord of all creation! But—halloa! what is this—whence proceeds the noise?

[*Sees ARICHANDRA, &c.*]

My lords, I am a Pariah! My lords, may I make bold to offer to purchase this lord?

ARICHANDRA.

The wealthy of even the lowest castes must be respected; for if the Goddess of Prosperity disregard them not, why should we men despise them? Let me be sold to this man without delay.

SATTYAKIRTI.

Is, then, a king to become the slave of a Pariah? Yet be it so, for the great are great even in adversity—burn the *white* conch, and still it produces but *white* ashes. The lustrous pearl lies imbedded only in the slimy oyster.

VERAVAKOO.

My lords! my lords! I pray, pardon me, if I have in any way offended your lordships!

ARICHANDRA.

No, worthy sir; you are our friend. Pay ten thousand pieces of gold to this Messenger Nekshetra, and I shall become your menial.

VERAVAKOO.

If your lordship would deign to obey mine and my wife's orders faithfully, I would do so.

ARICHANDRA.

I bind myself to give you every satisfaction. Sattyakirti! write without delay the bond of sale.

[SATTYAKIRTI *writes, reads, and then delivers it to VERAVAKOO.*]

SATTYAKIRTI.

Veravakoo! pay the money to that messenger.

VERAVAKOO (*producing an earthen pot*¹⁴¹).

Here, my lord, this vessel contains the money, which I have acquired as fees for burning corpses. Pollute not your lordship's fingers with it: I pour the gold out. [Does so.]

NEKSHETRA.

Vile fellow! talk not thus! Gold is gold, whencesoever it comes. The coins obtained as the price for a dog do not bark, nor does the money paid for the purchase of flowers emit perfume.

VERAVAKOO.

May the lord who has not been sold, pardon me, his slave. May the lord who has been sold, carry the bundle of ox-hides lying there on his lordship's head, and follow me to the quarter of the Pariahs. [ARICHANDRA *does so.*]

NEKSHETRA.

Arichandra! I give you even now a chance. Tell a lie, and be saved! Do so, and you shall become the ruler of a greater State than ever king governed!

ARICHANDRA.

Enough, sir, enough! I salute thee.

[*Walks on.*]

NEKSHETRA.

Yet a word, ere we part. Mighty sovereign! listen. Neither in the worlds above nor in those below have I ever known or heard of a king more regardful of truth and virtue than thyself. Let all blessings attend thee. Blame me not, Arichandra! I was only the tool of another. Adieu! adieu! [*Exit.*]

SCENE II.

The Hamlet of the Pariahs, near Kàsi; and the Cemetery of Kasi.

VERAVAKOO'S WIFE.

Veravakoo! my husband, have you arrived at last? What has detained you so long? Is it that you have become so fond of your young wife at the other end of the village as to neglect your duties and to be always at her home? Chief of the Pariahs! have you removed the corpse of the calf which died last night in the Brahmin's house? Why, man, know you not that the inhabitants of the sacred city can neither take any meal, nor taste even water, till that object of pollution¹⁴² is carried beyond the gates? Whom have you left in charge of the cemetery? And where is the money which you have earned to-day? [*Sees ARICHANDRA.*] Ah! who is this lord? What brings him into these profane lanes?

VERAVAKOO.

Hussy! wife! cease annoying me thus, and let there be an end to your chattering. I have

attended to all my work, and out of my great love towards you, I have brought this man as a servant to work under your orders.

THE WIFE.

Old man! where, then, is the hide of the dead calf? Have you left it in your young wife's house? Unless you instantly hand it to me, I declare I will kill you. Fool! why did you throw your money away on this lordly-looking being, who is hardly able to walk, much less to work? I want him not. Take him away—away! Disgrace not my family by the introduction of a new-comer. Did I marry you to be thus ruined? Did I make money to be thus wasted? Blockhead! we were once reputed to be rich, but you have made us beggars. Approach me, and I will strike you down with this broom-stick.

[*Raves and dances about.*]

VERAVAKOO.

My wife! my first love! fear not; I have not neglected you. How can I forget that enchanting face of yours? Are you not prettier than even a she-devil? I have the hide here; I have also brought the flesh of the corpse; it will form

nice eating for us and our friends. Here are the bones—preserve them. [*Produces them.*] I swear that I have not been to my new wife's to-day.

THE WIFE (*running up to VERAVAKOO, and embracing him*).

Ah! is it so?—you are a good boy. Come, eat your food, and take a little rest. [*Looks again at ARICHANDRA.*] Oh!—oh! this lord frightens me! He is not a Pariah. He must not be here. I can do nothing with him. Remove him hence—remove him at once!

ARICHANDRA.

Madam! I am thy servant, and will diligently obey thy orders.

VERAVAKOO.

Wife! be not timid. This fellow is no longer our lord, but our slave. If you decline to employ him at home, I can find work for him in the cemetery grounds.

Arichandra! hasten hence to yonder hill; below it lies the place where the corpses are burnt.

Your business hereafter is to receive them into the grounds and burn them, duly securing the fees paid you by the people. These consist of some rice, a cubit's length of cloth, and a copper coin. Bring them all carefully over here: take no portion of them for yourself. Be mindful to discharge your duties diligently. If any complaint arise, I shall castigate you severely.

ARICHANDRA.

I obey, my lord. As thou hast ordered me to deliver at thy house all the fees, may I beg to know what means thou wouldst suggest for allaying the cravings of my hunger?—How am I, thy slave, to live?

VERAVAKOO.

Yes; you must surely have something to eat. I give you permission, Arichandra, to appropriate for your meals the rice with which the corpses' mouths¹⁴³ are filled.

ARICHANDRA.

Master! I await thy pleasure—I go. [*Leaves the house of VERAVAKOO, and reaches the cemetery*]

grounds.] Here I am already in the burning-grounds; let me construct a small hut to shelter me from the rain and the night dew.

[*Enter Minister SATTYAKIRTI, weeping.*]

SATTYAKIRTI.

I have traversed all the streets of this great city; I have inquired of every person, and yet there is no clue for finding him. Nowhere is he to be seen. What am I to do now? My King! whither hast thou fled? I observe an inclosure here—I will go in. [*Entering it, discovers ARICHANDRA.*] Monarch! is this, then, the last freak of cruel Destiny? The King of Kings now the slave of a slave!—the ruler of living men now the burner of dead bodies!

[*Falls down and weeps.*]

ARICHANDRA.

Friend! why come you hither also? Return—return to Ayòdiah, and live there in all happiness with your family. Verily, you have suffered much for your unwearied attachment to me. I pray you, delay not—go back to your house: it is time that you should think of your children and

relations. I am the sinner, not you, Sattyakirti! Those who sowed the seed, even they must reap the fruit—not others.

SATTYAKIRTI.

Sire! be not so cruel; deal not with me as with a stranger. No, my lord, I cannot—I will not leave thee. Let us both pass our lives together in this one spot, under this one humble shed till death separate us. Mine be the duty of relieving thee from the work which has been assigned to thee by Veravakoo. Permit me to become thy menial, and dress thy meals.

ARICHANDRA.

If my words are inefficient to persuade you to return home, what can I do beyond begging you to stay, to share my hut, and to fare on the few grains of rice which have been allotted me by my kind patron?

SCENE III.

Kasi.—The Brahmin Kalakanda's House.

KALAKANDI (*the wife of KALAKANDA*).

My beloved husband ! I have been longing for your return.—But, ha ! what is this ? Whence come the cow and the calf behind you ? Who presented them to you ?

KALAKANDA.

Ah ! my darling wife ! I purchased and brought them hither in order that they might assist you in your household duties. The woman's name is Santi, the boy's Dàsa.

KALAKANDI.

I did not ask you to bring these *Shudras* into my house. Of what use can they be ? You have not only squandered your money in buying them, but you will also have to waste it in providing their meals and clothing.

SANDRAMATI.

Holy matron! I am ready to perform any work thou assignest to me, thy humble slave.

KALAKANDI.

Well, Santi! you appear to be an obedient girl; know, then, what I wish you to do daily in my house. You must rise at the third watch of the night, sweep well the house and the adjoining enclosures and sprinkle the floor with saffron¹⁴⁴ water. This done, you must next go to the stall of the cattle, cleanse the place of all dirt, draw milk from our cows, and bring it home early. Before the day breaks, the brass utensils should be polished, and every preparation made for my husband to offer his morning oblations to the Gods. After this, my slave, your task will be to pound ten *kalams*¹⁴⁵ of rice, removing carefully the husk from the grain, and attend to the cooking of our meals.

SANDRAMATI.

Madam, I obey. I shall execute with my hands the directions which you make to me with your feet.

KALAKANDA.

Dāsa, as your mother has her duties apportioned to her by your mistress, so I must tell you what I expect of you. Your work, boy, consists in tending the cattle and in collecting flowers, leaves, and *kusa-grass*¹⁴⁶ for the performance of my *pujah*.¹⁴⁷ Go now, little fellow, and look after those young calves till you are summoned here.

DEVADĀSA.

Be it so, my lord.

[*Exit.*]

Enter a group of Brahmin boys, amongst them three leading boys, SESA, COOPA, and SUPA.

SESHA.

Brother Coopa, do you know the way to the forest, where we are to gather the sacred leaves and the *kusa-grass*? Some of our friends have not come to-day; what keeps them away? Here we are opposite Kalakanda's house; let us go in and ask his termagant wife whether she will accompany us to the forest. You are aware that the cruel Brahmin is not blessed with children, and is obliged to send his wife to collect the leaves.

She has often shown us the tortuous path which leads to the spot where the *kusa* grows in profusion and the sacred foliage abounds. (*They enter.*) Reverend Kalakanda! may we ask, sir, who goes with us to the forest to-day, thou or thy wife?

KALAKANDA.

Villanous boys! What! have you the impudence to command the services of my wife? Fellows! I have a little slave; he shall go with you—not my sweet wife.

THE BOYS.

Pardon us, sir; we have never seen him. Who is he? where is he? Let him go with us.

KALAKANDA.

Slave-girl Santi! order the slave-boy who is now busy looking after the cattle to accompany these youngsters to the forest to fetch *kusa-grass* and sacred leaves.

SANDRAMATI.

My little child, Devadāsa, is, my lord, scarcely weaned; it would be, therefore, exceedingly cruel,

master, to send him to the forest, where savage beasts and evil spirits roam. Pity him, I implore thee! and let me go for the *kusa*.

KALAKANDA.

That is no concern of yours, slave-girl. True, I have paid too much gold for the sickly urchin; if he be lost it is I who will be damaged, not you. He must work, be he a child of the nobles or a son of the kings: despatch him at once, before these boys depart. [*Exit.*]

SANDRAMATI.

How can I displease thee, my lord? I receive thy commands on my head. (*Weeps, and calls in DEVADĀSA.*) My darling child! unrelenting Destiny compels you, an infant, to proceed on an errand to the forest: accompany thither these your young friends, and return in safety.

DEVADĀSA.

Mother! weep not. I have learnt that it is good to serve the sacred Brahmins: therefore give me leave; I shall be back soon.

SANDRAMATI.

Oh! heart-rending thought! Am I thus to expose this child to danger? My sweet boy, come here. Bear in mind my counsel; forget not what you hear from me, your mother. Keep to the path which these young Brahmins take; loiter not, I pray, behind them, nor fall into the cross roads and lose your way. Demean yourself humbly before your companions, readily comply with their orders, be guided by their counsel. Should they ill-treat you, heed it not, nor think of retaliating on them. Destroy not the young shoots¹⁴⁸ of tender plants, nor attempt to climb trees which glisten with fruits or flowers. Fancy not, my child, that the wild beasts which lie motionless along your path are dead, nor throw any stones at them, for if you rouse their anger they will spring on you. Attracted by the noise emanating from ant-hills, the boys may, perchance, run near them; but follow them not. Those, my darling, are the abodes of venomous reptiles. Take due care of yourself; be expeditious, and return hither before it grows dark. Give no cause for grief to your mother. I pray, O Gods! protect this only child of mine!—I pray to you, let your

merciful eyes watch over this little babe, in whom my life itself is now centred! Go then, Devadāsa, go!

DEVADĀSA.

Mother! banish all anxiety from thy mind. Ere long, I shall return and quiet thy fears.

THE BOYS.

We cannot tarry any longer. On, on! for look! the charioteer of the God of Day is pressing his horses towards the western hills, and night will set in presently.

SANDRAMATI.

My young masters! I entrust to your kind charge this child, and beg that you will take care of him and restore him to me unhurt. He is my only child—my only friend—my only treasure—my last hope. [Sobs.]

THE BOYS.

Oh madam! grieve not! We will treat the boy as one of us, apportion to him some of our own collection of leaves and grass, and lead him back hither in safety. (*Aside.*) How piteous this woman looks! What a charming little fellow is the *Shudra* boy!

KALAKANDA (*coming out of the house*).

Well, Santi! have you fallen in love with these young men? Why have you neglected your duties? Is the little slave gone? What! is he yet here?

[*Runs up to DEVADÀSA, and drives him, with the boys, to the forest, sending SANDRAMATI into the house.*]

SCENE IV.

The Forest adjoining Kàsi.

SESHA.

Companions! we have travelled far into the wilderness. It is late; let us be quick in cutting the *kusa* and in gathering the leaves. Let each of us give some share of his collection to this youngster. [They do so.]

DEVADÀSA.

My kind friends! your attention to me is great, and I have already received from you a goodly supply of the sacred leaves; yet I have

not enough of the *kusa-grass*. I descry on yonder mound a luxuriant growth of it: permit me to run thither to fetch some more.

COOPA.

Little boy! what you have is ample; we must flee home now. Take, my friends! take the bundles in your hands, for when it grows a little darker we shall certainly miss our path and be lost in the wilds. This fellow persists in having some more of the *kusa*. Well, we can wait only a few seconds: go, Dàsa, and return with the grass instantly.

[DEVADÀSA runs up to the mound, and, as he cuts the *kusa*, a snake, issuing from a hole there, bites him.]

DEVADÀSA (*crying out*).

Hari! hari! My friends! my friends! Come hither! come hither!

COOPA.

Ah! what is that fellow crying for? what evil has befallen the poor child? Let us go and see.

[*They arrive at the spot, and find DEVADÀSA lying on the ground.*]

DEVADĀSA.

Friends, who tended me, even as affectionately as the tutelary deities of my family, hear me! A dark-coloured serpent creeping out of that hole has stung my right foot with his pointed fangs. Ah! I feel the pain increases—the poison is spreading fast through me. Comrades! who will help me?

THE BOYS (*sitting around him and weeping*).

Oh! Siva! what a wonder is this! Did we escort this child hither to be offered a victim to the Spirits of the woods? Wicked snake! why hast thou disappeared? Return—restore the life of this innocent babe! Draw ¹⁴⁹ the poison out of his frame, wherein thy cruel fangs have infused it. What is in the power of us ignorant boys? We know of no antidote against thy venom. We conjure thee, O serpent! come out, show thyself!

DEVADĀSA.

Ah! I feel my chest oppressed with heaviness—my arms and legs ache as if their bones were being broken with a hatchet—my head reels, my eyes see not, my ears hear not. It

is all over with me now. Kind friends! before I die, I crave one favour of you: when you return to the city, go, I pray, inform that good mother of mine, who is longing impatiently for my return, of my end. Tell her to be consoled — not to sorrow for an unworthy child. Brahmins! tell her that I embrace the feet of my God Siva, and escape the woes of this world!

SESHA.

The poor fellow is mute—now he mumbles in a low voice: “Siva! Siva!” He is silent again. The spark of life is yet not quite extinguished. I perceive he breathes slowly. But that, too, fails; the body is motionless and still. Friends! Dàsa is dead! Come, examine him, Coopa.

THE BOYS (*yet weeping*).

Yes! his soul sped its way upwards while our eyes were on him! What beautiful lineaments that princely countenance exhibits! Who that beholds such a sweet face, who that has heard but awhile ago his melodious voice, would venture to hurt him? Ought not even the devils to become his guardians?

COOPA.

My comrades! why weep we in vain? It is not in our power to restore life to him, nor can we carry his corpse into the city. Let us hasten hence and tell his mother of his death. Were we to stay any longer, I dread that we ourselves might become the easy prey of the beasts that roam here during the night. If we, strangers to him, are affected with so much grief, ah, me! how great will be the anguish of his fair parent when she hears of the untimely death of her only child!

[*They return.*]

SCENE V.

Kalakanda's House.

SANDRAMATI (*standing in the street-door, waiting for DEVADÀSA'S return*).

It is late and dark; yet the boys have not returned. I wot not what cruelties Wis Wàmitra may yet perpetrate—what evils he may even now bring on us. I feel a pain in my breast,—

a tremor creeps over me; there are bad omens about. Oh! what can have happened to Devadāsa! (*Sees the boys coming, her child not among them.*) Young sirs! where is my son? Why has he not come with you? Did you forget my entreaties, and leave him behind you? Answer! I pray you all.

THE BOYS.

Pardon us, madam! your son disregarded our advice, and left us to cut the *kusa-grass*, and was killed by a snake concealed in a bush.

SANDRAMATI (*falls down, faints away, and gradually returns to consciousness*).

Devadāsa! hast thou, then, forsaken me and fled to the world above? Didst thou forget my warning? hast thou no affection for me? Tell me, young Brahmins, where my child is lying! Direct my path, I implore you, to the spot!

THE BOYS.

Madam! as you proceed to the forest, you will find a large *ala-tree*; ¹⁵⁰ go thence in a southerly

direction; a narrow path will lead you to the rising ground, whereon rests the corpse of Dàsa hidden by a thick bush of *kusa-grass*. We take leave of you—we have been sorely harassed this day, and can no longer endure this agonizing spectacle. [Exeunt.]

KALAKANDA (*rushing out of the house*).

Well, young vixen! why loiter you in the highway? Expect you any of your gallants?

SANDRAMATI.

My son, sir, whom you so mercilessly sent to the forest, is dead, bitten by a snake! The Brahmin boys came to tell me of his untimely end. I crave permission to go in search of him.

KALAKANDA.

Ah! is it so? is my money then lost? Wretched beings! why was I ever induced to purchase you? I am a poor Brahmin, and am now totally ruined. It is enough—the boy is lost; but I am not so mad as to expose you also to danger; go, attend to your work. I much fear that you

purpose to run away by practising a deception on me, an old man.

SANDRAMATI.

Such an order ill befits a reverend Brahmin, my lord ! I require but a few hours to search for the corpse, and to see the customary rites performed. I swear by the Gods that I will faithfully return before the day breaks !

KALAKANDA.

Foolish slave-girl ! what matters it what befalls a man when he is dead ; what if he lie with his head facing¹⁰² the east, or west, or north, or south ; what if his funeral rites be performed or not ; what if he be left above the ground or be buried under it ; what if you burn him to ashes, or offer him as food to hungry vultures and wolves ?—all—all is the same ! When the pearl is removed from the oyster, why make so much ado about the worthless shell which covered it ? When the soul has vanished, woman, why take trouble about its earthly tenement ?—It is pitch-dark, and late in the night ; I cannot consent to your going.

SANDRAMATI.

Speak not thus, my lord! Let me go to take but one look at the corpse of my only child!

KALAKANDA.

Unruly slave, if you thus pester me with your entreaties, I must yield, for I wish not to pain a woman. Be quick, Santi, and return before dawn.

SANDRAMATI.

I abide by thy commands, master.

SCENE VI.

The Forest adjoining Kāsi, and the Cemetery and Streets.

SANDRAMATI (*weeping on the way*).

I have been long treading my way in this wilderness. I see no trace of the child. My legs now fail me. The ground is strewn with thorns,

the darkness has become intense. Yet I discover not the *ala*-tree. Oh! where may be that bush of the sacred *kusa*? Who could have hidden Devadāsa from my sight? Was there ever a woman born into this world who has had to endure more than myself? Ye animals that roam here! why only frighten me? Bears! why only grin at me? Hyænas! why only howl at me? Come; snatch my life away—save me from these sorrows. Ye antelopes that move about me, with your fair mates and young fawns! will you not pity my forlorn state, and show me where Devadāsa lies—for you bound over this forest and penetrate into all its nooks? Peacocks! swans! pigeons! is there any place unknown to you? Tell me, then, whether in your rambles you have not visited the spot where my son now lies dead? (*She reaches the mound where the corpse lies, and tramples on it unawares.*) My son! my son! are you here? Sleep you content on this bed of sharp stones—you, who of yore found it difficult to rest even on silken cushions covered with soft and fragrant flowers? Did I, then, nourish you with my milk to be thus immolated at an ant-hill? (*Takes the corpse in her arms.*) O venomous reptile! had you the heart to kill a child of such

tender years? What! could you not spare even an infant so delicate as this? Have you no eyes? Are you devoid of feeling? Treacherous snake! appear before me, I implore you. Kill me, the mother, as you have so wantonly killed this, my child! Send me to join Devadāsa in that hallowed place where his pure soul now reposes in bliss! Then, O snake! no injustice will have been done by you—then will I adore you as my God and Saviour! (*Weeping—sits down.*) Oh! there is none to aid me! What avail my cries? Who cares for a wretch like me? Let me seek the cemetery.

[*Comes to the grounds where ARICHANDRA keeps watch, and places the child on the ground.*]

ARICHANDRA (*rushing up to her and kicking the corpse out of the grounds*).

Woman! woman! how dare you act the part of a thief, and intrude so boldly into the precincts of this cemetery at so unseasonable an hour? Imagined you that there was no person guarding this place, or, that, taking advantage of his absence

or negligence, you could have burnt that corpse here, and fled without paying the fees due to us. Begone—bear away that dead child; else I must send you forcibly hence. Beware!

SANDRAMATI.

I am, sir, quite ignorant of the customs of this place. Else I would not have come hither without having first obtained your permission. Excuse me, kind man; allow me to burn the corpse of this child within the cemetery.

ARICHANDRA.

As you state that you are a stranger, I readily forgive your fault. But I cannot allow you to perform the ceremony of cremation here, without first receiving payment of the usual fees. These, woman, consist of a quantity of rice, a piece of cloth, and a small copper coin.

SANDRAMATI.

I am, sir, only the slave-girl of a Brahmin; and this my child has perished to-day of the bite of a snake. I come hither direct from the forest, whither I went to remove the corpse. I possess

no money; am worth nothing. I entreat you, therefore, waive your claim in the case of a beggar like myself: God assists those who assist the poor.

ARICHANDRA.

Your lamentations can serve no purpose; the fees you must pay. They are not mine; but belong to my employer, and I have no power to remit them. I will gladly forego what is due to myself, namely, the rice with which the mouth of the dead body is filled; the rest you must bring. Depart!

SANDRAMATI.

I have leave to be absent from my master's house only till dawn, and have, therefore, hardly time to go there and return. You observe that I have nothing with me. What can I do? Assist me, I beseech you.

ARICHANDRA.

Excellent! Woman! I never in my life saw a greater impostor; you told me that you had no object of value about you. Thought you I was

blind, and perceived not that superb chain of brilliants which formed part of your wedding necklace? Why can you not sell it, or pledge it, and bring the money due to my master? Away, deceiver! away!

SANDRAMATI.

What! Pariah! Have you seen the *manglya* encircling my neck? Has my degradation become, then, so great? That chain which is the symbol of Siva's favour to me—that chain which has received the blessing of sages and devotees—that mystic chain which none but my husband, the noble son of Trisanku, had as yet seen—even that sacred chain, have you, O outcast! profaned by your vile eyes? Yes; I am an exile from my country, have been separated from my beloved king and husband, and have now lost this my only child. Yet, I vow to you, O Gods! you blind and cruel beings above! no greater affliction has befallen me than this present exposure.—My life must now cease.

[*Weeps.*]

ARICHANDRA.

Ah! Sandramati, my love, is it you? Is that my son Devadāsa? Has he come to a pre-

mature death? Has not even that infant child been spared? Of what transgression is he guilty? Whom has he offended? Heartless snake! why didst thou kill a harmless babe?

[*Takes his child, and sobs.*]

SANDRAMATI.

Oh! my husband! art thou here? Have I wandered hither to witness your sufferings, and add fuel to the flames which now consume thee? But, pray, give not way to grief. Let us bear up under these evils; let our constancy never fail us. Deign now, Monarch, to burn thy own child. As thou art his progenitor, so be his destroyer.

ARICHANDRA (*placing the child down*).

Sandramati! true you are my wife, true this child is mine, yet I dare not and will not be unfaithful to my master Veravakoo, whose slave and servant I am. Unless, therefore, his dues are paid, I must yet forbid the burning of the corpse in this cemetery. Return, therefore, to the Brahmin Kalakanda, and beg of him to furnish you with the fees.

SANDRAMATI.

My lord, Kalakanda, who declined to allow me even to go in quest of my dead child, will he, that pitiless Brahmin, provide me with money for performing the last rites over this babe? Yet, my husband, it is not for me to disobey thy orders. I return, leaving this corpse in thy charge. (*She leaves the cemetery; and as she goes towards KALAKANDA'S house, stumbles over the corpse of another child lying in the street, and takes it up.*) Ah! how like my child is this? Whose infant can this be? I find, too, marks of violence on its neck, as if it had been strangled to death.

[*Enter the night guards of the city, patrolling the streets.*]

THE GUARDS.

Hail, King of Kāsi! Hail, Vis Wanāth! We are the night guards of the city. Let nō thief appear in this town, for he can never escape us. We will track him by his footmarks, whether he leap over fence or bush. He can never deceive us; for we have studied all the arts of theft. We understand how thieves lie in wait to break into

the dwellings of the rich; we know where they conceal their booty. Thieves! leave Kàsi at once, if you have entered it unawares; for this is no place for you so long as we prowl here like wolves. If you are caught, beware, you meet certain death; beware, we shall pour boiling liquid into your nostrils; beware, we shall tear out your eyes, and cut off your hands. Here we come. Flee hence—flee. Hail, King of Kàsi! Hail, Vis Wanàth!

THE CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD.

Silence, men! Hear you not a low whisper wafted hither by the breeze? This looks a suspicious locality. Be vigilant. It may be here perhaps that we shall encounter the brigands who last night so audaciously entered our sovereign's palace, and carried away the infant prince from his bed-chamber. Companions! our mission tonight is pregnant with importance; for even the heir-apparent to the throne of these realms has been stolen. We must capture the thief. Our king, you know, is inconsolable. All are awake in the palace, and await the result of our search. Secrete yourselves in this thicket. I will precede

you and reconnoitre. (*Proceeds a little way, and discovers SANDRAMATI on the side of the road bearing the corpse of an infant in her arms.*) Ah! are you then the giantess who had the temerity to perpetrate so foul, so irreparable a crime? (*Looks at the child, and discovers it to be the infant Prince of Kāsi.*) Frantic woman! why did you kill this babe? Who are you? Stand—answer. Comrades, hasten. Behold in this female the murderer and the thief. Come, lose no time, seize her. Let your cudgels fall heavily on her body. Punish her unsparingly. She who was so cruel-hearted as to strangle this tender child—she, indeed, can expect no mercy from us. Squeeze the neck of this cannibal until the blood she sucked out of this child is pressed out of her own throat.

THE GUARDS.

Captain! thy commands shall be strictly fulfilled.

[*They punish her mercilessly, and tie her hands behind her very tightly; she cries out in great agony.*]

SANDRAMATI.

Forbear, sirs! I pray, forbear. I have not killed

this child; I have not even seen it before. I am only a poor woman, the slave of a Brahmin of this city. I am unable to endure the pain inflicted by these tortures. The tight bandaging of my arms has already cracked the bones.—Oh, soul! why dost thou not instantly disconnect thyself from this foul frame of mine, and wend thy way heavenwards?—Is such, then, sirs, the law of holy Kàsi? Is this justice, this equity?

THE CAPTAIN.

Impostor! speak not, but walk on. Has fortitude only now deserted you? Is there any crime greater than that of taking away the life of harmless and helpless infants?

SCENE VII.

The Palace of the King of Kàsi.

THE KING.

Well, minister! is nothing yet known of the murderer of the infant Prince? What have I done to merit such diabolical treachery? What

avails my power now, when even my own household is not safe from such terrible ravages? What trust can I repose in my officers, when thieves have entered my palace, and carried away my own child—though warriors kept guard, though armies surrounded it? Who but God can assuage my grief?

[*Enter the Guard, escorting SANDRAMATI to the palace of the KING OF KÀSI, bringing the dead child with them.*]

THE CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD.

Monarch! obeisance to thy sacred feet. We have at length succeeded in capturing the offender; the thief who entered the palace and carried away the young Prince is this woman (*produces her*). We found her with the child in her arms. Unhappily, before we traced her out she had strangled the Prince; his corpse we have brought hither.

THE KING.

Ah! is, then, this delicate-looking female the murderer of my infant? Woman! woman! what cause have I given you to lacerate my feelings in this cruel manner? Answer. Who are you? to what country do you belong?

SANDRAMATI (*in a state of frenzy*).

King! why inquirest thou all that? I belong to the race of elves; and I have killed thy child, in order that I might feed on his delicate flesh.

THE KING.

I feel sorely grieved at the death of my son, but I feel yet more perplexed at being informed that this handsome and gentle-looking damsel is his destroyer. Minister! her appearance bespeaks not guilt. A murderer is known by his words, his looks, and demeanour. This woman stands composed, and declares that she is guilty of this awful crime. What means have I of testing the truth of her confession? I must pause to investigate fully before I decide; for it is infinitely better that all my family should be murdered, than that I should condemn to death even a single innocent person.

THE MINISTER.

Who can unravel the machinations of this woman's heart? yet who can say that these guardsmen, unable to discover the real delinquent,

have not conspired together to fix upon this innocent female as an easy victim to be offered at the shrine of the Goddess of Justice?

THE KING.

Captain of the guard! declare, is your statement strictly true? Did you find the child in the arms of this girl? Attempt not to win my favour by accusing guiltless persons!

THE CAPTAIN.

How dare we tell a falsehood in thy august presence! Thy child, O monarch! was found in this woman's hands.

THE KING.

Woman! speak, are you indeed guilty of this crime? It may be that you have been hardly dealt with by these my officers; and through fear, you may have told them that you had killed my child. But before me cast away all apprehension. For know, as this is the abode of the Goddess of Justice, so it is also the asylum of the oppressed. Declare the truth,—I will protect you.

SANDRAMATI (*yet in a state of frenzy*).

King! entertain no doubt of my guilt. I did slay thy child. Order me to be executed.

THE KING.

Minister! I have grave misgivings as to the guilt of this woman. True, my child is dead, but what good can accrue to us by depriving a poor woman of her life? Will my son be restored to me thereby? Oh, no! Order this prisoner to be banished the city before morning.

THE GUARDS.

Sire! sire! if thou believest us not, it is proper that we should at once resign our functions.

THE KING.

Wait, there is yet room for inquiry. Prime minister! repair to the spot where this woman was apprehended, examine whether any foot-prints are traceable thence to our palace; and if such be the case, whether they correspond in size or shape with the feet of this misguided woman.

[*He goes out with the Guard and SANDRAMATI, and returns after some time.*]

THE PRIME MINISTER.

There need now be no hesitation, my lord, in deciding that this woman is the actual slayer of thy infant son. There are footmarks leading from the bedchamber of the Prince to the spot where this prisoner was first seen, and, strange to say, sire! they all correspond with her own.

THE KING.

Woman! declare again, I entreat you, are you the real murderer? I am prepared to judge you by your own words.

SANDRAMATI.

I solemnly declare I am guilty of this murder; condemn me, sovereign! to condign punishment.

THE KING.

O God! my duty is trying, yet I must discharge it. Minister! order the public executioner hither.

[VERAVAKOO *is led in.*]

Veravakoo! remove this female hence to the cemetery. Strike her head off with your sabre, and return hither instantly.

VERAVAKOO.

Thy Majesty's commands will be duly obeyed.
 [*Seizes SANDRAMATI by her hand, and drags her to the cemetery.*] Woman! devil! get on. Your end is come; presently Yama's messengers will escort you to his audience. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE VIII.

The Cemetery of Kàsi.

VERAVAKOO (*leading on SANDRAMATI*).

Slave Arichandra! this woman has been sentenced by our king to be executed without delay. Draw your sword and cut her head off. [*Exit.*]

ARICHANDRA.

I obey, master.

[*Draws the sword, and approaches SANDRAMATI.*]

SANDRAMATI (*coming to consciousness again*).

My husband! What! do I see thee again? I applaud thy resolution, my lord. Yes; let me die by thy sword. Be not unnerved, but be prompt, and perform thy duty unflinchingly.

ARICHANDRA.

My beloved wife! the days allotted to you in this world are numbered; you have run through the span of your existence. Convicted as you are of this crime, there is no hope for your life; I must presently fulfil my instructions. I can allow you only a few seconds; pray to your tutelary deities, prepare yourself to meet your doom.

WIS WÀMITRA *appears*.

WIS WÀMITRA.

Arichandra! Arichandra! what! are you going to slaughter this poor woman? Wicked man! spare her! Tell a lie even now, and be restored to your former state.

ARICHANDRA.

I pray, my lord, attempt not to beguile me from the path of rectitude. Nothing shall shake my resolution; even though thou didst offer to me the throne of Indra,⁴ I would not tell a lie. Pollute not thy sacred person by entering such unholy grounds. Depart! I dread not thy wrath; I no longer court thy favour. Depart!

[WIS WAMITRA *disappears.*]

My love! Lo! I am thy executioner: come, lay thy head gently on this block with thy sweet face turned towards the east.

Sandramati! my wife! be firm, be happy. The last moment of our sufferings has at length come; for to sufferings, too, there is happily an end. Here cease our woes, our griefs, our pleasures. Mark! yet awhile, and thou wilt be as free as the vultures that now soar in the skies.

This keen sabre will do its duty. Thou dead, thy husband dies too—this selfsame sword shall pierce my breast. First the child—then the wife—last the husband—all victims of a sage's wrath. I the martyr of Truth—thou and thy son martyrs for me, the martyr of Truth. Yes; let

us die cheerfully and bear our ills meekly. Yea; let all men perish, let all gods cease to exist, let the stars that shine above grow dim, let all seas be dried up, let all mountains be levelled to the ground, let wars rage, blood flow in streams, let millions of millions of Arichandras be thus persecuted; yet let Truth be maintained—let Truth ride victorious over all—let Truth be the light—Truth the guide—Truth alone the lasting solace of mortals and immortals. Die, then, O Goddess of Chastity! Die, at this the shrine of thy sister Goddess of Truth!

[Strikes the neck of SANDRAMATI with great force; the sword, instead of hurting her, is transformed into a string of superb pearls, which winds itself around her: the Gods of Heaven, all Sages, and all Kings, appear suddenly to the view of ARICHANDRA.]

SIVA (*the first of the Gods*).

Arichandra! be you ever blessed! You have borne your severe trials most heroically, and have proved to all men that virtue is of greater worth than all the vanities of a fleeting world.

Be you the model of mortals. Return to your land, resume your authority, and rule your State.

Devadāsa! victim of Wis Wāmītra's wrath! rise! *[He is restored to life.]*

Rise you also! son of the King of Kāsi, with whose murder you, Sandramati, were charged, through the machinations of Wis Wāmītra.

[He comes to life also.]

ARICHANDRA.

All my misfortunes are of little consequence, since thou, O God of Gods! hast deigned to favour me with thy divine presence. No longer care I for kingdom, or power, or glory. I value not children, or wives, or relations. To thy service, to thy worship, to the redemption of my erring soul, I devote myself uninterruptedly hereafter. Let me not become the sport of men. The slave of a Pariah cannot become a king; the slave-girl of a Brahmin cannot become a queen. When once the milk has been drawn from the udder of the cow, nothing can restore the selfsame milk to it. Our degradation, O God! is now beyond redemption.

Enter WIS WĀMITRA.

WIS WĀMITRA.

I pray, O Siva! that thou wouldst pardon my folly. Anxious to gain the wager laid by me before the Gods, I have most mercilessly tormented this virtuous king; yet he has proved himself the most truthful of all earthly sovereigns, triumphing victoriously over me and my efforts to divert him from his constancy. Arichandra! king of kings! I crave your forgiveness.

Enter VERAVAKOO.

VERAVAKOO (*throwing off his disguise*).

King Arichandra! think not that I am a Pariah, for you behold in me even Yama, the God of Death. Regardful of your spotless character and high state, and anxious to rescue you from disgrace, I assumed the incarnation of the Pariah Veravakoo. Look; here is the bond of slavery which your minister Sattyakirti gave me.

Enter KALAKANDA.

KALAKANDA (*throwing off his disguise too*).

Queen Sandramati! rest not in the belief that you were the slave of a Brahmin. No; he to

whose service you devoted yourself am even I the God of Fire—Agni.

Enter VASITTA.

VASITTA.

Arichandra! no disgrace attaches to thee, nor to the Solar race of which thou art the incomparable gem. Even this cemetery is in reality no cemetery; for, look, the illusion lasts not, and thou beholdest here a holy grove, the abode of hermits and ascetics. Like the gold which has passed through successive crucibles, devoid of all impurities, thou, O King of Ayòdiah, shinest in greater splendour than even yon god of light now rising to our view on the orient hills. [*It is morning.*]

SIVA.

Arichandra! let not the world learn that Virtue is vanquished and that its enemy, Vice, has become the victor. Go, mount your throne again—proclaim to all that we, the Gods, are the guardians of the good and the true.

Indra! Chief of the Gods, accompany this sovereign with all your retinue to Ayòdiah, and re-crown him Emperor of Ayòdiah. May his

reign be long—may all bliss await him in the other world!

[First the Gods disappear; then ARICHANDRA, INDRA, the Kings of the earth and their retinue, who all proceed in great state to Ayòdiah and re-crown ARICHANDRA king of his wide-spread dominions.]