

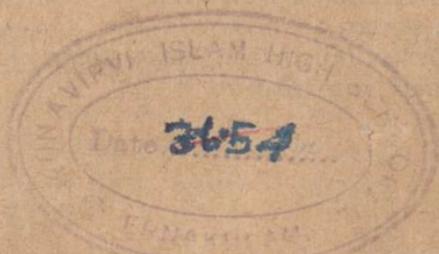
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49403

STORIES OF VIKRAMADITYA

BY

Mrs. RAJAMBAL GOVINDARAJAN, M.A., L.T., Praveen,

AND

C. S. VENKATESWARAN, M.A., L.T.

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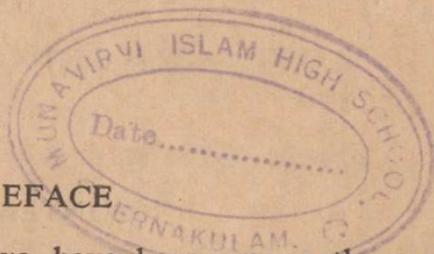
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PREFACE

TALES of King Vikramaditya have been among the most popular folk tales in South India. These tales abound in adventure, romance and the supernatural element. It is therefore no wonder that they are dear to the hearts of young and old alike. The authors hope that this English version will make the tales known to a wider circle of readers.

This book has been written to serve as a Supplementary Reader for the Fifth Form of High Schools. The vocabulary is mostly limited to the 2000 words laid down by the English Syllabus prescribed by the Education department. Some additional words, that had unavoidably to be used, are given in the word list at the end of the book.

The authors have also adhered, as far as possible, to the sentence structures laid down in the syllabus. Questions based on the New Model Papers given in the companion to the S. S. L. C. English Text, 1957, and questions intended to test the comprehension of pupils have been given at the end of each chapter.

The authors hope that this little book of tales will receive a warm welcome at the hands of the readers.

MADRAS }
6-8-1956. }

Mrs. R. GOVINDARAJAN
C. S. VENKATESWARAN

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STORIES OF VIKRAMADITYA

CHAPTER I

VIKRAMADITYA'S BIRTH AND PARENTAGE

MANY hundreds of years ago, there was a king called Bhoja, who ruled over the kingdom of Dharmapuri. He was wise and just, learned and pious. He had a wise minister named Needhivakya. During his reign, the people were happy and contented and the land was prosperous.

One day the king went out hunting. He was accompanied by his ministers. They were followed by groups drawn from the four wings of his army—infantry, cavalry, the elephant force and the chariot force. On their way to the forest the party had to pass by a field of corn. This cornfield was guarded by a man named Saravanabatta. He was seated on a loft. The day was hot. He noticed that the king's soldiers looked tired. He therefore invited them to rest in the field, and refresh themselves by tasting the corn and the cucumber.

The men were pleased with his words. They entered the field and began to pluck the corn. Saravanabatta got down from the loft and shouted, 'Oh, men, why are you laying waste my cornfield?' On hearing these words the men were surprised and withdrew. Saravanabatta climbed up the loft. Once again he invited them to his field.

King Bhoja was astonished at the strange behaviour of the man. Turning to his minister he said, 'Oh, Needhivakya, can you account for the strange behaviour of this man? One moment he

invites our men, but the next moment he gets angry with them and drives them away. When he is on the loft he is kind and generous. But when he gets down, his nature changes completely and he gets angry and mean.'

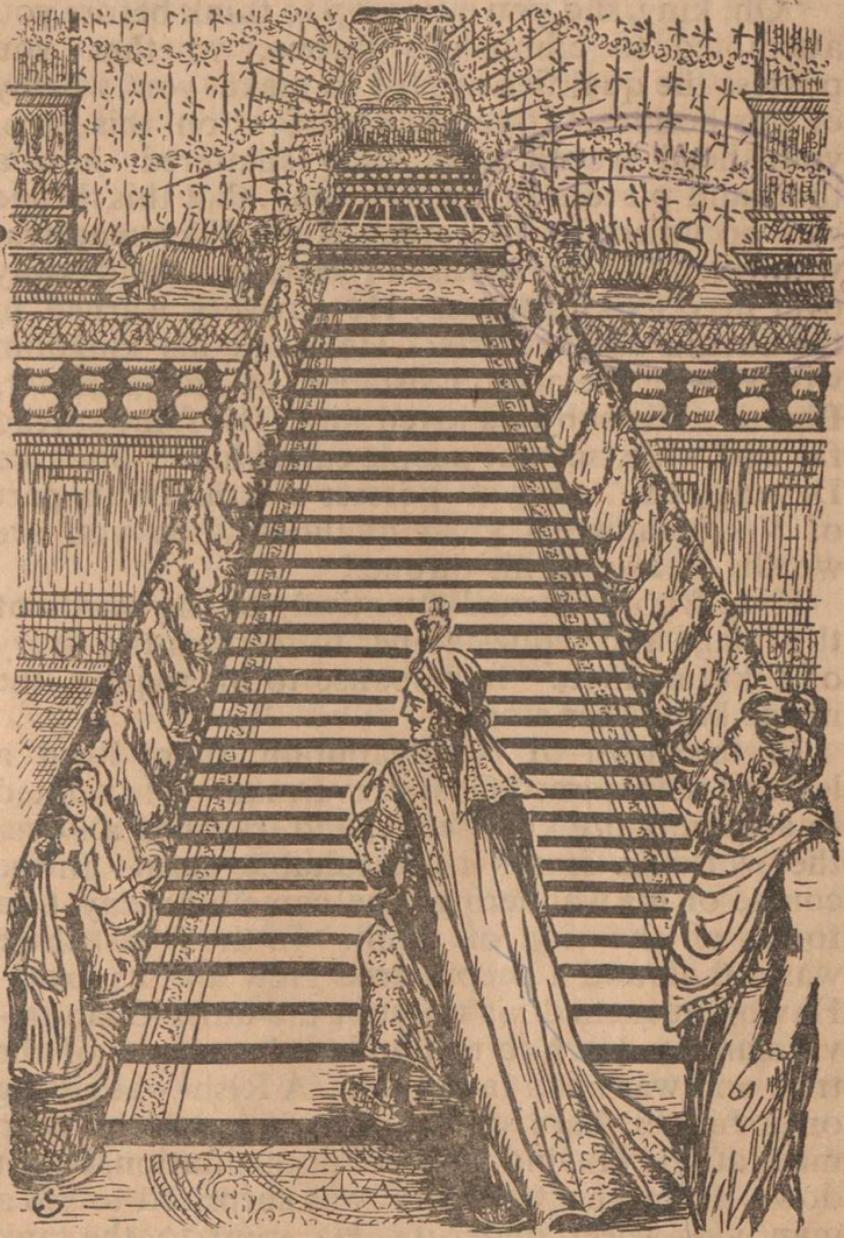
The minister thought for a while and then replied, 'Oh, king, it seems to me that there is something under the loft that explains this unusual behaviour. Let us examine the place.'

The king then sent for Saravanabatta and said, 'A short while ago, you raised an outcry that my men were laying waste your field. I wish to buy your field. I shall give you instead a few villages and an equally good field. Are you willing to sell?' Saravanabatta was very pleased and sold the field to the king.

The king sent a batch of workmen to dig up the ground under the loft. They unearthed a magnificent gold throne set with precious stones. The throne was carried to the palace at Dharmapuri. It was cleaned and decorated with flowers. An auspicious day was chosen for the king to take his seat on this throne. On that day, prayers were offered to the Gods and the poor were fed. With the blessings of the holy men, the king proceeded to ascend the throne.

When he set foot on the first step, the thirty-two female images guarding the throne came to life, clapped their hands, and burst into mocking laughter.

The king was astonished. He said, 'Oh, images, why did you laugh at me just now?' Immediately the image guarding the first step, who bore the name Vinotharanjitham, addressed King Bhoja as follows :



Vikramaditya's throne and the thirty-two images.

‘ Oh, king, did you ever stop to think before you attempted to climb this throne, whether you possess the qualities needed to make you worthy of this honour ? If you had set foot on this step, your head would have been shattered into a thousand pieces. Learn, Oh, king, that this throne was occupied by the great King Vikramaditya, who ruled for two thousand years and held sway over fifty-six kingdoms. He was very learned in the Sastras and the arts. He ruled his kingdom wisely, with the able assistance of his minister, Bhatti. His subjects loved him. His fame spread far and wide, so that people called him “ Booloka Devendiran ”. If you possess a thousandth part of Vikramaditya’s great qualities, then you are worthy to ascend his throne.’

King Bhoja listened attentively to the words of the image and requested her to tell him the story of Vikramaditya. In response to his request, the image began her story.

In the town of Nandyapuram, there lived a learned man named Chandravarman. He wanted to acquire more knowledge, and travelled all over the world in search of a suitable guru. In the course of his wanderings, he came one day to a forest on the side of a hill. In the forest there was a tank and a peepul tree grew on its bank. Having quenched his thirst at the tank, Chandravarman lay down to rest under the shade of the tree, and was soon fast asleep. A Rishi was sitting on a branch high up the tree, engaged in deep meditation. Having finished his meditation, he got down from the tree, and was surprised to see a man lying asleep under it. He went to the tank and finished his ablutions.

Returning to the tree, he woke up the sleeping man and asked him what had brought him there. Chandravarman told him how he had travelled all over the world in search of a proper guru. If the Rishi could fulfil this desire of his, he would feel highly grateful. The Rishi replied, "Very well, if you are prepared to satisfy certain conditions, I am willing to teach you all that you wish to know. For six months you must remain under this tree without food or sleep. I shall teach you a mantra which will help you to do so. Every day I shall write out on a peepul leaf certain arts, which you should read and practise. This leaf I shall drop down."

Chandravarman readily agreed. The Rishi went back to his place in the tree. Every day a peepul leaf fell into the hands of the disciple. He took it, read it and practised the arts written on it. At the end of six months the Rishi finished his 'tapas' and went to heaven in a Pushpagavimanam.

Before leaving, he blessed Chandravarman and advised him to go back to his own country and marry and start a fresh life. On his way home, Chandravarman had to pass through a town known as Kanyapuri. As he walked along one of the main streets of the town, he noticed an imposing house. He was feeling very tired, for he had remained without food or sleep for six months. He therefore entered the house and sat down to rest at the entrance. In a few moments he fell fast asleep. The owner of the house was a woman named Alangaravalli. She had been to the temple that evening. When she returned home, she found a stranger lying unconscious at the entrance. She got alarmed and sent for the doctors.

They examined the unconscious man and said that his condition was explained by the fact that he had been starving for months. They advised her to treat the invalid by a course of massage with cooked rice and ghee. This she did for eight days. At the end of that period, Chandravarman regained consciousness. Finding himself amidst strange surroundings, he made up his mind to run away. As he was leaving the house, Alangaravalli saw him and said, 'Is this the way to show your gratitude for all that I have done for you? I restored you to life and you are leaving without even a word of farewell.' She then told him that she desired to marry him. Chandravarman was unwilling to marry her. She therefore took him to the king's presence and demanded justice. The king, who was named Suddhavarman, listened to her complaint and referred the dispute to his minister for decision. The minister decided that Chandravarman was bound in honour to marry Alangaravalli. On an auspicious day, Chandravarman was wedded to four brides. They were: Kalyani, the minister's daughter; Chitrareka, the king's daughter; Komalangi, the daughter of a merchant; and Alangaravalli. The wedding took place in the presence of the king with due religious ceremonies. The king gave valuable presents to Chandravarman. He took home his four brides and led a very happy life with them. In due course four sons were born to him. Kalyani's son was named Vallabharishi, Chitrareka's son was named Vikramaditya, Komalangi's son was named Bhatti, and Alangaravalli's son was named Bhadragiri. The four brothers grew up strong and healthy and were

taught all the arts suitable for the princes and noblemen. King Suddhavarman died and left his kingdom to his son-in-law, Chandravarman.

Chandravarman ruled over Kanyapuri well and wisely and won the love of his subjects. As his end drew near, he summoned his four sons to his bedside. He said to them, 'It is my desire that Bhadragiri, the son of my fourth wife, Alangaravalli, should succeed to my kingdom after I am gone.' Bhadragiri's three brothers readily agreed to the king's proposal. The king died shortly after and Bhadragiri ascended the throne. After ruling over the kingdom for several years he felt a desire to go to the forest and perform 'tapas'. He therefore installed his beloved brother Vikramaditya on the throne and left for the forest. Vallabharishi also gave up the world and became a sage. Vikramaditya ruled over the kingdom with the help of his brother Bhatti, whom he made the chief minister.

One day Vikramaditya called Bhatti to his side and said, 'This capital city of ours is too small. Find for me a new site on which a worthy capital can be built. It must cover a wide area and be watered by rivers. There must be temples on the site.'

Bhatti took leave of his brother, and started on his journey. After wandering over many lands he came at last to an uninhabited country. In the middle of a valley, he saw a big tank. A tall banyan tree grew on its bank. Close by these was a stone pillar. On it he read the words, 'He who can cut down at a single stroke of the sword the seven pots hanging from the banyan tree, and can dive with his head foremost so as to alight on

the point of the spear, which is in the middle of the tank, will be able to have darshan of the goddess Kali. She will bless him and make him the ruler of fifty-six kingdoms.'

When he read these words, Bhatti was very pleased. He returned to Vikramaditya and told him that he had found a suitable place.

Vikramaditya and Bhatti together proceeded to that spot. The king carried out successfully the conditions written on the pillar. The goddess appeared before him and blessed him.

On that spot a town sprang into being, under the king's orders. It was called Ujjaini Kalipattanam. Later it was known as Ujjain. Vikramaditya moved his capital to the new town and continued to rule over his kingdom.

Questions and Exercises

(Answer questions 1 to 8 each in a short paragraph.)

1. 'King Bhoja was astonished at the strange behaviour of the man.' Who was the man? What was his strange behaviour?
2. What made king Bhoja decide to buy the field? What did the king's workmen find on digging up the field? What did they do with their find?
3. What did the image on the first step say to king Bhoja?
4. Write, in the form of a short dialogue, the conversation between Chandravarman and the Rishi.
5. What service did Alangaravalli render to Chandravarman?
6. Give a short account of the marriage of Chandravarman.
7. Write, in the form of a short dialogue, the conversation between Vikramaditya and Bhatti regarding the choice of a new capital city.

8. How was the capital city of Ujjain founded ?
9. Write a short essay about King Vikramaditya's birth and parentage. (1½ to 2 pages.)

CHAPTER II

VIKRAMADITYA IN INDRALOKA

In the Court of Indira there were four beautiful dancers—Urvasi, Ramba, Menaka and Thilotthama. One day there was a dispute between Urvasi and Ramba as to who was the better dancer. They carried the dispute to Devendra, the God of gods, and asked him to decide between them.

Indira ordered them to adorn themselves and to dance before him and the Devas and Saptha Rishis in his court. Ramba and Urvasi accordingly gave a brilliant performance of Bharatha Natyam. Both of them danced so well that neither Indira nor the Devas were able to decide who danced better.

The sage Narada then rose and said to Indira, 'None of the Devas is able to say whether Ramba or Urvasi is the better dancer. There is but one person who can judge this matter correctly. He is king Vikramaditya, who rules over Ujjain. He is well versed in all the arts. He is wise, just and impartial. Send for him and let him judge between Ramba and Urvasi.'

Indira was pleased with Narada's words. He sent for his charioteer Mathali and said, 'Take my chariot down to the Earth and seek out king Vikramaditya in Ujjain. Tell him that I desire to see him and bring him here.'

Mathali drove Indira's golden chariot down to the Earth, and met Vikramaditya at his palace.

He gave Indira's message to the king. The king looked inquiringly at Bhatti, who was standing by his side, as though to ask, 'Shall I accept the invitation?' Bhatti understood the king's unspoken question and answered, 'You must accept this invitation. It is plain that your fame has spread to Indraloka. It seems to me that some great good will come out of this trip. So prepare to start with Mathali.'

Vikramaditya adorned himself as befitted a great king. He then armed himself fully and went with Bhatti to the temple of Kali. They worshipped the goddess, who blessed them.

The king then went to the waiting chariot and set foot on it. Mathali disliked the idea of taking a mortal man to the abode of the Devas. He therefore wanted to put Vikramaditya to shame and tried to start the chariot at a furious speed. The king guessed Mathali's intention and pressed his foot firmly down on the chariot. The chariot could not start. Mathali grew ashamed and asked pardon of the king, for having thought low of him.

Soon the chariot carried Vikramaditya to Indraloka. The Lord Indira received him with great honour. Vikramaditya was treated with great courtesy during his stay in Indraloka. He used to go to Indira's Court every day and watch the dances. One day Indira called him aside and said, 'Your mastery over the arts is well known to us. We know, too, that you are a keen judge of the finer points in the art of dancing. You would be doing me a great favour by being present in the court and giving your decision as to who is the better dancer—Ramba or Urvasi.'

Vikramaditya said that he would judge the

performance of the dancers the next day. That evening he went to Indira's garden and gathered some choice flowers. He made two bouquets out of them. Inside the two bouquets he placed scorpions and wasps.

The next evening the court of Indira presented a grand appearance. Ramba and Urvasi came beautifully dressed and began their performance. Both of them danced divinely and it was hard to choose between them. Vikramaditya called them to his seat and presented a bouquet to each. He then said, 'Your dance would appear more attractive if you hold a bouquet in the hand.' They were both pleased.

The dance was continued. In the excitement of the competition, Ramba crushed the bouquet in her hand. The insects came out and stung her hand. She was forced to throw away the bouquet, and the remaining part of her performance suffered as a result of this. Urvasi, however, continued her dance holding the bouquet lightly in her hand.

The performance came to a close and Vikramaditya declared Urvasi the winner. At Indira's request the king explained how he had used the bouquet to help him in deciding the merit of the dancers.

Indira was very pleased with Vikramaditya's wisdom. He gave orders to his servants to bring out the golden throne, which had been used for his coronation, and presented it to the king with the blessing that he would rule over his kingdom illustriously for two thousand years. He gave the king many other presents and ordered Mathali to take the king and the golden throne to Ujjain. Mathali carried out Indira's orders. Vikra-

maditya returned to Ujjain and was warmly greeted by Bhatti.

Questions and Exercises

(Answer questions 1 to 4 each in a short paragraph.)

1. What was the dispute between Urvasi and Ramba? How did the Devas attempt to decide the dispute?
2. Write, in the form of a short dialogue, the conversation between Narada and Indira.
3. Write, in the form of a short dialogue, the conversation between Vikramaditya and Bhatti when Indira's invitation was conveyed to Vikramaditya.
4. How did Mathali try to humiliate King Vikramaditya? Did he succeed?
5. Write a short essay describing the manner in which Vikramaditya resolved the dispute between Urvasi and Ramba.

CHAPTER III

VIKRAMADITYA AND THE DEMON

On the second day king Bhoja and his minister got up early in the morning, finished their bath and prayer and went to the throne room. When Bhoja was about to set foot on the second step, the guardian image bade him halt and repeated the words of the first image as to Bhoja's unworthiness to ascend Vikramaditya's throne.

Bhoja thereupon requested the image to tell him of some remarkable feat performed by Vikramaditya. The image agreed and began her story.

In a certain forest there was a temple of Kali. About half a mile in front of the temple there was a tall thorn tree. From a branch of that tree, a demon was hanging with its head downwards. In that same forest a Rishi named Gnanaseela was performing 'tapas'.

He desired to get the demon into his power and to rule over Vikramaditya's kingdom. The goddess Kali appeared before him and said that his wishes would be fulfilled if he performed a 'yaga', and threw into the sacrificial fire a thousand crowned heads. The Rishi accordingly killed nine hundred and ninety-nine kings and required one more royal head to complete the sacrifice. Accordingly he laid a trap and invited Vikramaditya to the forest.

Vikramaditya arrived at the forest in response to the Rishi's invitation. The Rishi praised the king for his strength and skill and requested him to capture the demon living on the thorn tree and bring him as a captive. Vikramaditya agreed to do so. He went to the tree, caught the demon, bound him securely and proceeded to carry him to the Rishi's abode.

The demon offered to tell the king a story to relieve the tedium of their journey. He made it a condition that the king must answer a question put to him after he had listened to the story. If he failed to answer correctly, the demon said that he would curse him and make his head burst. The king agreed to that condition.

The demon then began his tale.

Questions and Exercises

1. What did the Rishi Gnanaseela desire? What was the condition imposed on him by the goddess Kali in order to attain his desire?
2. Write, in the form of a short dialogue, the conversation between the Rishi and Vikramaditya when the latter went to see the Rishi.

CHAPTER IV

TALES OF THE DEMON

THE GNANI, THE MECHANIC AND THE WARRIOR.

In the town of Machili there lived a man named Arjun. He had a beautiful daughter. The fame of her beauty spread far and wide. Three young men sought her hand in marriage.

One of them was very learned, the second was a skilled mechanic and the third was noted for his courage.

At that time a Rakshasa came and carried off the girl. Her parents were filled with sorrow. The learned youth by his insight was able to learn where the Rakshasa had taken her. The second offered to fit out a chariot that would take one to the abode of the Rakshasa. The third youth volunteered to go and fight the Rakshasa, defeat him and rescue the girl.

Accordingly a chariot capable of flying through the air was made by the mechanic. The hero armed himself, mounted the chariot and sought out the Rakshasa. He fought with him and killed him. He seated the girl in the chariot, flew back to Machili and restored her to her parents.

The demon asked Vikramaditya to state which of these three young men the girl ought to marry.

Vikramaditya replied that finding out the abode of the Rakshasa and fitting out a chariot were not so meritorious as defeating and killing the Rakshasa. He therefore said that the girl ought to marry the young hero.

When the demon heard this, he freed himself from his bonds, and ran back to the thorn tree, and took up his former position.

Questions and Exercises

1. What question did the demon put to Vikramaditya after relating the story? What was the King's answer?
2. Relate in your own words the story of the Gnani, the Mechanic and the Warrior.

CHAPTER V

TALES OF THE DEMON (*Continued*)

VEERAVARDHANA

Vikramaditya again went to the thorn tree, caught hold of the demon, bound him and brought him away. On their way the demon began to tell the king another story.

In a certain town there was a king named Sugriva. One day a strong man named Veeravardhana came to the king and requested him to take him into his service. The king agreed and offered to pay him a thousand pieces of gold as salary. Veeravardhana gave away three-fourths of his salary for religious and charitable purposes and used the remaining one-fourth to maintain his wife and children.

One day at the hour of midnight, a loud wailing sound was heard from the outskirts of the town. When the sound fell on the king's ears, he inquired whether any one would volunteer to go and find the cause. Veeravardhana readily undertook the task.

On reaching the spot whence the sound came, he saw a woman wailing bitterly. Veeravardhana went up to her and asked her who she was and what was the cause of her grief. She answered that she was the goddess of the Earth. Her distress was caused by the knowledge that king

Sugriva was due to die in three days. If he died she would be compelled to leave that country and seek a new home.

Veeravardhana asked her if there was no way of preventing that calamity. The goddess said, 'There is but one way. If a youth of sixteen were sacrificed to the goddess Durga, whose temple lies at a short distance from the town, the king's life would be saved.' Now Veeravardhana had a son aged sixteen. Without the slightest hesitation he took his son to the temple, cut off his head and placed it at Durga's feet. On hearing the news of her son's death, the mother killed herself. When her daughter learned that her brother and mother were both dead, she also killed herself. Veeravardhana did not wish to live when his wife and children were dead. He too put an end to his life.

King Sugriva had secretly followed Veeravardhana when the latter went to find the cause of the wailing. He observed all that happened. When he came to know how an entire family had sacrificed their lives in order to save his life, he too went to the Durga temple and killed himself. The goddess Durga was touched by these acts of sacrifice, and restored all the dead persons to life.

The demon asked Vikramaditya, 'Of all these sacrifices, which would you consider the most worthy of praise?' The King replied, 'Veeravardhana gave his life, as in duty bound, out of loyalty to his master. There was no need at all for King Sugriva to sacrifice his life. Therefore his sacrifice is the most praiseworthy.'

The demon kicked off his bonds and ran back to his thorn tree, where he remained hanging, head downwards, as before.

Questions and Exercises

1. Write in your own words the story of Veeravardhana's sacrifice.
2. Answer each of the following in one or two sentences :—
 - (a) What kind of man was Veeravardhana ?
 - (b) How did he spend the salary paid to him by the king ?
 - (c) Where did the wailing sound come from ?
 - (d) What did Veeravardhana decide to do ?
 - (e) What was the demon's question and what was Vikramaditya's reply to the question ?
3. Write, in the form of a short dialogue, the conversation between Veeravardhana and the Goddess of the Earth.

CHAPTER VI

TALES OF THE DEMON (*Continued*)

1. THE TIGER RESTORED TO LIFE

In Brahmapuram there lived a man named Vishnuswami. He had four sons. They all set out on a journey. In the course of their travels, they met a Sanyasi, and for a time they served him as disciples. He taught them various arts. He instructed them in the Sanjeevi Mantra, by the help of which the dead could be restored to life. At length they took leave of the Sanyasi and continued their travels.

On their way they saw the skeleton of a tiger. They wanted to test the power of the Sanjeevi Mantra. So one of the brothers gathered the bones



The four brothers restore the tiger to life.

and fitted them together; another supplied the nerves and tissues, the third supplied the blood; the fourth uttered the Sanjeevi Mantra and restored the tiger to life. The moment the tiger found itself alive, it pounced upon the four brothers in turn and killed them all.

The demon asked Vikramaditya which of the four brothers was responsible for their tragic end. The king replied that the fault lay with the fourth brother, who gave life to the tiger, knowing its cruel nature.

3. THE GARUDA AND THE SNAKES

The town of Padmapuram was ruled by a good and just king, named Amudavahanan. In his kingdom, there was a forest inhabited by snakes. A Garuda was in the habit of killing the snakes as he pleased and eating them. One day the snakes gathered together and decided to approach the Garuda with a request. They begged him not to kill them recklessly, but to be content with killing and eating them at the rate of one per day. They themselves would draw lots as to which of them would serve for his food each day. The Garuda agreed.

From that day a snake was sent by turn each day to become the food of the Garuda. One day it was the turn of a young snake, who was its mother's only son. The mother was crying aloud.

At that time, King Amudavahanan was passing by the forest. He heard the cries of the mother snake. He went near her and asked the cause of her grief. She told him that she had to offer her only son as food to a Garuda that day.

The king sympathised with her grief. He comforted her and said that he would take the place

of the young snake. The mother snake replied, 'It is my fate that I should lose my only son in this manner. Why should you sacrifice your life for our sake?'

As they were talking, the Garuda came there in great anger, for he was very hungry. The king said to him, 'You may feed on me in the place of the young snake.'

The Garuda was pleased with the king's righteousness and said, 'I admire your action. Ask for any favour and I shall grant it.' The king replied, 'It is my prayer that in future you should feed on dead snakes and not on live ones.' The Garuda granted the favour. The king took leave of the snakes—mother and son—and returned to the palace.

The demon asked Vikramaditya, 'Of these two—the king and the Garuda—whose sacrifice is greater?' Vikramaditya replied, 'The king's offer to sacrifice his life is not to be wondered at; but the Garuda is a bird who feeds on whatever he can get. He is the sworn enemy of the snake tribe. For him to give up this vow is indeed praiseworthy. His sacrifice is therefore the greater.'

The demon accepted the king's answer and returned to his tree as usual.

In the same manner the demon related to Vikramaditya twenty-four stories, each followed by a question. To all these questions, the king gave satisfactory answers.

The demon then knew that he was face to face with King Vikramaditya. He told the king his earlier history and how he was cursed by God Siva to take on the form of a demon. He would

be freed from the curse after he had served Vikramaditya for two thousand years.

The demon then informed the king of the plot of Gnanaseela Rishi to kill him. He told the king how he could frustrate the plot.

Vikramaditya then took the demon before the Rishi, who was very pleased. He wanted the king to bathe and prostrate himself before the goddess Kali. The king told him that he was not in the habit of prostrating before any one. He asked the Rishi to show him how to do it. The Rishi prostrated before the goddess. At that time Vikramaditya drew his magic sword, cut off the Rishi's head and threw it into the sacrificial fire.

The goddess Kali appeared before the king and asked him what favour he wanted. He prayed to the goddess to restore the life of all the nine hundred and ninety-nine kings, whose heads the Rishi had cut off. The favour was granted.

The second image having finished her story, asked King Bhoja whether he possessed the qualities that would make him worthy to ascend Vikramaditya's throne. Bhoja understood his unworthiness, and sadly returned to his palace.

Questions and Exercises

1. Write in your own words the story of 'The Tiger Restored to Life.'
2. Answer each of the following in one or two sentences :—
 - (a) What was the Garuda in the habit of doing?
 - (b) What did the assembly of snakes decide upon?
 - (c) What was the cause of the mother snake's lamentations?
 - (d) How did the king show his sympathy for the mother snake?

- (e) What was the demon's question to Vikramaditya and what was the answer given by the latter?
3. Write, in the form of a short dialogue, the conversation between the king and the mother snake.
 4. Relate, in a short paragraph, how Vikramaditya frustrated the Rishi's plot against him.

CHAPTER VII

THE ADVENTURE WITH THE FISH

On the third day, after sunrise, King Bhoja and his minister finished their morning prayers and proceeded to the throne room. When the king was about to set foot on the third step, the image guarding it laughed at him, and prevented him from ascending. She too questioned his worthiness and told him the following story.

In Ujjain there lived a man named Govindan. For a long time he had no children. He prayed to the Gods and performed 'tapas'. At last a son was born to him. His father loved him very much.

When he was seven years old, his father took him to bathe in the sea. A giant fish came up and swallowed the boy. The father was stricken with grief. He ran to King Vikramaditya's palace and rang the Bell of Justice.

The king was surprised when he heard the sound of the bell, for no one had rung the bell during the long years of his reign. He therefore sent his minister Bhatti to make inquiries.

Bhatti brought Govindan before the king. The man said, 'Oh, king, your people believe that no one in your kingdom will die before reaching the

age of hundred. Neither my son nor myself have done any wrong. Why then should my son die at the early age of seven? You must have committed some act of injustice for such a thing to happen.'

The king comforted the grief-stricken father and said, 'I shall find your son and restore him to you alive. Take me to the place where the tragedy occurred.'

Govindan took the king to the sea-shore and showed him the place. The king dived into the water, and he too was swallowed by the giant fish. When he opened his eyes inside the body of the fish, great was his wonder to find that he was in the heart of a busy town. He saw the son of Govindan playing in a street with some other boys. He took the boy with, cut open the body of the fish with his magic sword and returned to Ujjain. He then sent for Govindan and restored the boy to him.

King Bhoja listened to the story attentively and then retired to his palace.

Questions and Exercises

1. Answer each of the following in one or two sentences:—
 - (a) What was the misfortune that overtook Govindan?
 - (b) How did the misfortune occur?
 - (c) What complaint did Govindan make to Vikramaditya?
 - (d) What was the king's reply to Govindan?
 - (e) What did the king ask Govindan to do?
 - (f) Where did the king meet Govindan's son?
 - (g) How did the king rescue the boy?
2. Write, in the form of a short dialogue, the conversation between Govindan and King Vikramaditya.

CHAPTER VIII
THE STORY OF THE GIRL WHO
WOULD NOT SPEAK

In Patalipuram there was a king. He had an only daughter named Pesamadhanthai. She grew up to be a most beautiful princess. Many kings desired to marry her.

The king, her father, being dead, her mother kept her in a palace in the centre of a fort with ten walls. It was announced that the princess would marry the person who reached the palace after overcoming the obstacles at each of the ten gateways, and made her speak thrice.

King Vikramaditya decided to win Pesamadhanthai for his wife. He took with him his minister, Bhatti, and his companion the demon, and set out on this adventure. When they arrived at the first gate, an officer of the queen came and demanded one thousand gold pieces as a condition for letting them in. They paid the money. They were invited to a feast. They were served with partly cooked and partly uncooked rice. The second course consisted of meat. The next course consisted of fruits, partly ripe and partly unripe and of sugar cane. The king ate the cooked rice and ripe fruits. The minister bundled up the remains of the food.

They took the officer with them and approached the second gate. Three maidens appeared. One of them seated the king on a stool while the second disfigured him by shaving his head.

Then they reached the third gate, which was

guarded by two wrestlers. The king pushed the officer between the wrestlers. While they were knocking him about, Vikramaditya and his companions went past them and reached the fourth gate.

This gate was guarded by a black gorilla. Bhatti threw the uncooked rice before it, but the creature did not eat it. From that they knew that the creature was not a real gorilla, but a mechanical figure. The demon thereupon broke it in pieces.

They next passed on to the fifth gate. This was guarded by a tiger. The minister threw the raw meat in front of it but the tiger would not touch it. This again proved that they were dealing with a mechanical tiger. By the king's orders the demon smashed this figure also.

At the sixth gate they saw an elephant. Bhatti offered it the unripe fruits and the sugar cane. But the elephant, which was also a mechanical figure left the fruits alone. It shared the same fate as the gorilla and the tiger.

At the seventh gate, they found a wide open well in front of them. They wondered how they were to get across. Bhatti lifted up a big stone that lay near and dropped it into the well. Immediately two planks came up, as if by magic, and closed the mouth of the well. They walked on the planks and entered the eighth gate.

They found themselves in a hall, the floor of which was of polished marble. If a person were to set foot on the floor, he would slip and break his head. The king sent the demon to get wax and fire. They smeared wax on the soles of their feet, and managed to cross the hall without any accident.

When they reached the ninth gate they found a muddy stream barring their way. Bhatti crossed it on the back of the demon, while Vikramaditya waded across it on foot. On the other side of the stream there was a shell filled with fresh water. The king washed off the mud from his feet and they walked on.

Beyond the tenth gate, there was a huge, dark mantap with stout pillars. If a person went that way, he ran the risk of dashing his head against a pillar. Bhatti took the form of a bee and advised the king to follow him with care as he flew ahead with a humming sound.

Having thus conquered all the ten obstacles, Vikramaditya and his companions at last reached the palace of Pesamadhanthai. The king sent word to the princess about his arrival and his desire to meet her.

She tried to deceive the king by sending first a maidservant and secondly a kitchen maid, dressed like herself. The king, however, was not taken in by the tricks sought to be played on him. The princess finally agreed to meet him.

The queen arranged for the last test, namely, making the princess speak. She told the king that if before dawn he was successful in making the princess speak thrice, he would win her for his wife. The king made the demon tell three interesting stories. At the end of each tale the demon asked the king to answer a question. The king purposely gave wrong answers. The princess grew impatient and gave the correct answers.

Thus Vikramaditya succeeded in making Pesamadhanthai speak thrice. The queen was pleased and gave her daughter in marriage to the king.

Accompanied by his bride he left Patalipuram for Ujjain.

Questions and Exercises

1. Write brief answers to the following questions :—
 - (a) What were the suitors asked to do in order to win the hand of the princess in marriage?
 - (b) How did King Vikramaditya and his companions overcome the wrestlers?
 - (c) How did they overcome the gorilla, the tiger and the elephant?
 - (d) How did they cross the open well?
 - (e) How did they get past the dark mantap?
 - (f) What tricks did the princess play on Vikramaditya in order to deceive him?
 - (g) How did Vikramaditya succeed in making the princess speak?
2. Relate in your own words how Vikramaditya succeeded in winning the hand of the princess who would not speak. (1½ to 2 pages.)

CHAPTER IX

A FAMILY OF THIEVES

The city of Kuntala was ruled by a king named Gopala. He had a minister named Kolahala. About two miles outside the city, there was a village named Madagipuram. In that village there was a pucca thief named Karthikeya. He had four sons. He called them by the nicknames—Full-thief, Three-quarters-thief, Half-thief and Quarter-thief.

One day the father called Quarter-thief to him and said, 'I wish you to show yours kill as a thief to-day. Go to Kuntala and come back with valuable booty before nightfall.'

The youth agreed. He cut out a piece of tile and shaped it to look like a rupee. This piece

he tied to one end of his upper cloth. He walked towards the city and arrived at a barber's shop.

He told the barber that he was in a hurry to go and therefore desired to be shaved first. At that moment, the barber was engaged in shaving a farmer, and he was half-way through his job. The barber asked the farmer to wait for a while and attended to the new customer. When Quarter-thief had been shaved, he asked the barber whether he had change for a rupee. The latter replied in the negative. Thereupon, Quarter-thief requested the barber to send his little son with him to the bazaar.

While walking along the bazaar, Quarter-thief was attracted by the goods in a cloth shop. He entered the shop and asked the man at the counter to show his goods. He chose some costly silks, whose value ran into thousands of rupees. All the while he kept the little boy on his lap so as to give the impression that the boy was his son.

Having made the choice, he told the owner of the shop that he would like to show the silks to his wife. She was camping under the shade of a tree near a tank just outside the city. He requested the shopman to send one of his men with him to take back the pieces of cloth not required and to receive the money for the pieces of cloth chosen. The thief made this proposal knowing full well that there was nobody in the shop who could go with him. When the merchant mentioned this, the thief said that he would leave his little son in the shop as security for the goods. The merchant agreed.

The thief bundled up the pieces of cloth and

made his way home as fast as he could. More than an hour passed and the customer did not return. The shopman asked the little boy where his father had gone. The boy innocently answered that his father would be busy shaving his customers. The shopman thought that the boy was making fun of him. He therefore bound the boy to a pillar and sent men in search of the missing customer. After a fruitless search they returned and said that the thief could not be traced.

In the meanwhile, the barber became anxious about his son and came to the city in search of him. He saw the boy in the cloth shop and began to quarrel with the shopman. From words they came to blows. At last the police came on the scene and took the two men before the king. Each of them told the king what had happened to him. Then everyone realized that a clever thief had outwitted both the barber and the shopman.

The king called his magistrates and ordered them to make a thorough search for the thief. If they failed to find the thief, they would be severely punished.

Meanwhile, Quarter-thief had reached home. He showed his father what he had brought. The father praised him for his cleverness. He then called his third son, Half-thief, and asked him to go to the same city and prove his skill as a thief. Half-thief agreed and went to the city.

On reaching the city, he enquired whether anything exciting had occurred in the city recently. He learnt about the theft in the cloth shop and the king's orders to his magistrates to catch the thief.

Half-thief made special enquiries about the personal affairs of the chief magistrate. He learnt that the magistrate had an only daughter, who had been married early. The bridegroom had gone to a foreign land and had not returned even after half a dozen years.

Half-thief went to the bazaar and bought clothes suited to the son-in-law of a rich man. He dressed himself in those clothes. He then bought many valuable presents and went to the chief magistrate's house. On arriving there, he introduced himself as the absent bridegroom, returning after his travels in foreign lands. He then showed the presents he had brought. His story was accepted and he was received with all the respect due to the son-in-law of the house.

At night, after dinner, the magistrate was making preparations to go out. When his supposed son-in-law asked him about it he said that he was going out to catch the thief who had robbed the cloth shop the previous day. Half-thief said that he desired to see the city again after his long absence and would like to accompany the magistrate.

They went round the city together and finally came to one of the gates. Close to the gate there was a post. Half-thief asked his companion what it was for. He was told that criminals were punished by having their arms and legs fastened to the post with pegs. Half-thief wished to know how it was done and offered to get himself fastened. But the magistrate would not hear of it. Half-thief then requested the magistrate to put his arms and legs through the holes in the post so that he might see how it worked. The magis-

trate agreed and Half-thief fastened his companion's limbs firmly to the post with the pegs. But when he tried to remove the pegs with his hands he could not do so. The magistrate therefore asked him to go back to the house and fetch the tools required to set him free.

Half-thief immediately ran to the house and said to the magistrate's wife, 'O aunt! have you heard the news? The king has ordered uncle to be fastened to the criminal's post for some crime that he is supposed to have committed. What will happen next we cannot say. Therefore hand over to me all the valuables in the house, and I shall keep them in a safe place.'

The magistrate's wife and daughter brought out their jewels and other valuables. Half-thief bundled them all up. When mother and daughter were inside, he quickly slipped out of the house, carrying the bundle with him. On reaching home he placed the booty in front of his father and told him what he had done. The father was extremely pleased and praised him for his skill in robbing the magistrate who had set out to catch the thief.

The next morning when the men of the watch were going round the city walls they noticed the chief magistrate fastened to the criminal's post. They released him and took him before the king and his minister. He told them all that had happened. The minister grew angry at the thief's boldness and vowed that he would catch the thief himself.

Karthikeya called his second son, Three-quarters-thief, and desired him to go to the city that night and show that he was no less skilled than his brothers. The second son then took leave of his

father and went to the city. He enquired of some people whether anything interesting or exciting had happened in the city recently. He received an account of the exploits of his two brothers. He was also informed of the minister's vow to catch the thief.

By means of skilful questions, the thief learned that the minister was in the habit of visiting a dancing girl's house every night. The thief went to the bazaar and bought clothes suitable for a minister. He then disguised himself as the minister and went to the dancing girl's house at dusk. The woman was surprised to see the minister arrive at so early an hour, and asked him the reason. He told her that a thief would visit her that night in the dress of the minister and that he should be caught. He asked her to bring him a lasso and a stout stick.

When the real minister came to the house, the thief flung the lasso over him and beat him soundly with the stick. He then gagged the minister and bound him to a post outside the house. He further threatened to kill him if he made the slightest noise.

The thief then went inside the house and asked the dancing girl to take off her jewels and hand them over to him, saying that the jewels were small in size and he would make larger jewels for her. The foolish woman handed her jewels to him.

He next asked her to get him some water to drink. She went to the backyard to draw water from the well. The thief followed her and bound her to the pillar of the draw-bridge on the platform of the well. He then collected all the valuables in the house and also stripped the

minister of his costly dress. He bundled all his booty together, walked out of the city and reached home before day-break. Karthikeya felt very pleased on seeing the proof of his son's skill.

In the morning the inhabitants of the town were astonished to find the minister bound to a post in front of the dancing girl's house and the woman herself bound to the draw-bridge of the well at the back of the house. The two were set free and they reported what had happened to them. When the king heard of this, he swore that he himself would capture the thief.

That morning Karthikeya called his eldest son, Full-thief, and said to him, 'You must go to the city tonight and bring us a proof of your skill.' Full-thief readily agreed. He took leave of his father and went to Kuntala. There he met some cowherds and asked them if anything exciting had taken place in their city recently. They gave him an account of the bold deeds of his three brothers. They also told him of the king's oath to capture the thief.

Full-thief went to the bazaar and purchased betels, nuts, tobacco, a pair of mats, an oil lamp and some eatables. He dressed himself like a shop-keeper and went after dusk to a place which was a quarter of a mile outside the city. He erected a stall near the roadside, lighted the lamp, spread the mats on the ground and displayed the articles he had purchased in the city.

Shortly after, the king came riding by, accompanied by thirty officers. He saw the thief's light and approached the stall. He asked the shop-keeper why he kept a shop in such a strange place at night. The shop-keeper replied that he enjoyed

the custom of thieves, who paid him well. That night he expected a visit from a thief who had robbed the minister the previous night, and the chief magistrate the night before.

The king told the shop-keeper that if he caught the thief and handed him over, he would be richly rewarded. The pretended shop-keeper readily agreed. But he made it a condition that the king's thirty men should scatter in groups of ten in three different directions. They were to remain hidden until they were summoned by a pre-arranged signal. The king alone must stay with him. If the thief saw a large number of persons he would not visit the shop.

The king ordered his men to scatter. The shop-keeper then suggested that the king should take off his royal dress and jewels and disguise himself like a common man. The king did so. The shop-keeper next requested the king to hide himself inside a bag. As soon as the thief came he would open the bag and release the king.

The king got into the bag. Full-thief fastened the mouth of the bag. He then inverted a big mud-pot over the bag and the king was made a prisoner. Full-thief then put out the light, bundled up the king's clothes and jewels and slipped away from that place.

When the king's men noticed that the light was put out, they took it as a signal that the thief had come. They rushed to the stall. In the darkness they mistook one another for the thief and began to fight among themselves. In the course of the disturbance the mud-pot was broken and they noticed the bag. When they opened

the bag, they were astonished to find the king himself in the bag.

The king was too much ashamed of himself to speak. The party therefore quietly made their way back to the city.

Full-thief reached home and showed his father the booty that he had brought. The father was extremely pleased with the skill shown by his eldest son.

Questions and Exercises

- (a) How did Quarter-thief deceive the cloth merchant?

(b) What trick did Half-thief play on the magistrate?

(c) How was the minister made a laughing-stock by Three-quarters-thief?
- Write, in the form of a dialogue, the conversation between Full-thief and the king.
- Relate briefly the exploits of the four brothers.

CHAPTER X

VIKRAMADITYA TURNS HIMSELF INTO A PARROT

It was king Vikramaditya's custom to spend six months in his capital and six months in the forest alternatively. He knew the art of making his soul enter the body of a beast or a bird. An artisan named Vijaya, who lived in Ujjain, had become a close friend of Vikramaditya. The king had taught this art to Vijaya. The King's minister, Bhatti, distrusted Vijaya and did not approve of the king's friendship with him. He had even warned the king against Vijaya, but the king did not pay heed to his words.

Once during Vikramaditya's stay in the forest, Vijaya joined him and kept him company. Bhatti had remained behind at Ujjain, looking after the affairs of the kingdom. On a certain day the king was resting under the shade of a tree, with his head on the lap of Vijaya. He noticed two parrots—a male and a female—on a branch of the tree overhead. Suddenly the male parrot fell dead and his mate broke out into loud cries of grief. The king took pity on the female parrot and caused his soul to enter the lifeless body of the male parrot. The female parrot was overjoyed when it found its partner restored to life. The two parrots spent the days happily together.

Vikramaditya had left his lifeless body lying beside his friend Vijaya. The latter thought that this was an excellent opportunity to take the place of the king. He therefore caused his soul to enter the body of Vikramaditya. To prevent the king from resuming the human form, he burnt his own body, that he had cast aside. He then left the forest and returned to Ujjain.

The king was not due at Ujjain for another month. Bhatti therefore suspected some foul play. He made enquiries about Vijaya and learned that he had gone away from the city some weeks previously.

On his return to the capital, the false king sent word to the queens about his arrival and bade them be ready to receive a visit from him. Acting under Bhatti's instructions, the queens sent a message that they were observing a religious vow for a year, and two months still remained for the completion of the vow. Till then the king should

not enter that part of the palace in which the queens resided.

Meanwhile the king forgot his kingdom and his duties and led a happy life in the forest in the form of a parrot. He gathered all the parrots together and taught them to live in harmony. He became their king and they obeyed him willingly in all things.

One day a group of a thousand parrots flew through the air and settled on a huge banyan tree. A hunter had spread nets on the tree to capture the parrots. He hoped to make a big profit by selling the parrots in the neighbouring town of Magadha. The parrots were all caught in the nets.

The parrot king realised their danger. He advised them to remain motionless and pretend to be dead. The hunter would throw them on the ground thinking they were dead. At a pre-arranged signal they could all fly away.

Acting on their king's advice the parrots all escaped, but he alone was left as a captive in the hands of the hunter. The latter grew very angry when he realised the trick played on him. He threatened to wring the neck of the parrot. But the king parrot begged the hunter to spare his life, promising a reward of a thousand gold pieces.

The king parrot asked the hunter to take him to the town of Magadha and offer him for sale at a price of a thousand gold pieces. Accordingly, he went to the bazaar with the parrot and offered him for sale. When he mentioned the price, the people laughed at him. At last a rich young merchant named Somasundaram came up to the hunter and enquired the price of the parrot. The parrot told the merchant that if he bought him, he (the

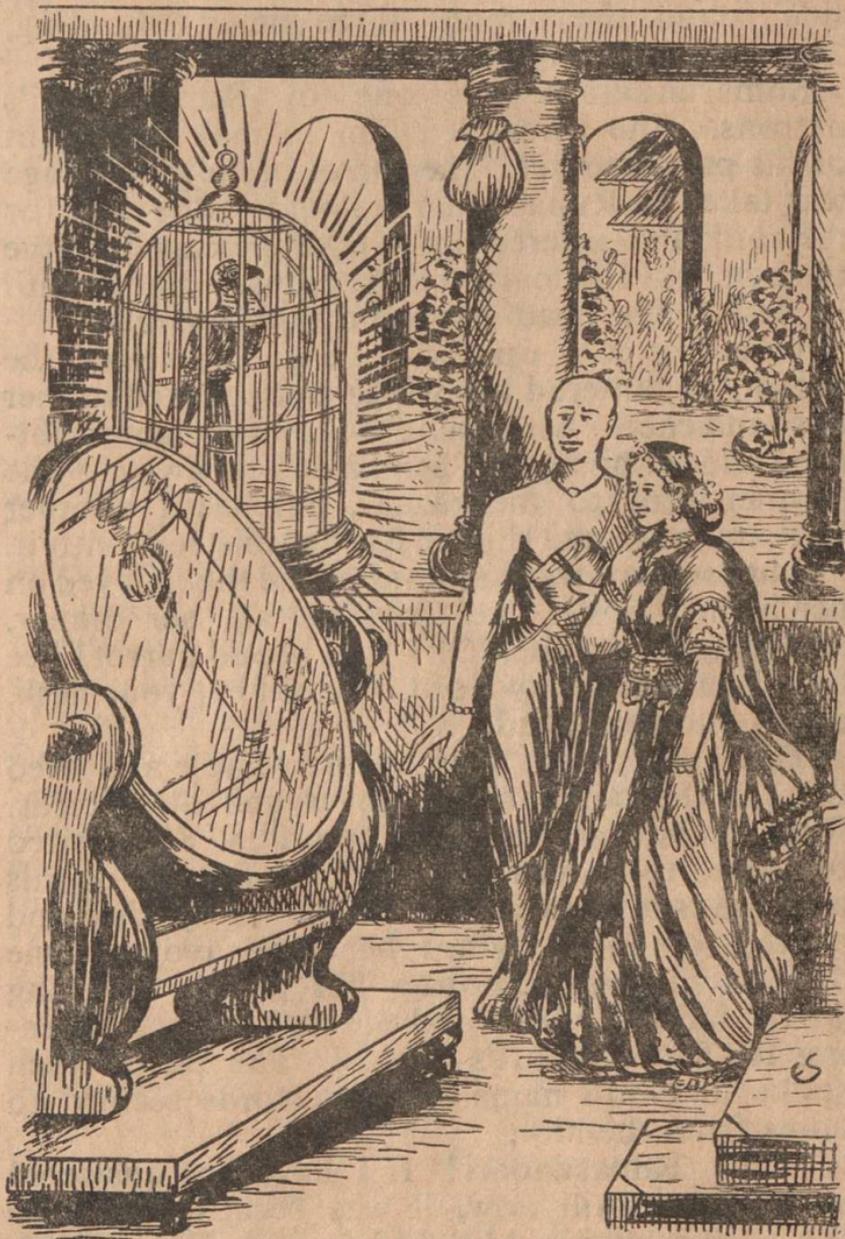
parrot) would look after his trade dealings and help him to get within a year ten times the purchase price, by way of profit. The merchant agreed and bought the parrot from the hunter for a thousand gold pieces.

The parrot was put in a gilded cage and taken to the merchant's shop. He conducted the sales with such great skill that he soon brought big profits to his master. Many people came to see him at work. He settled disputes between people to the entire satisfaction of the parties. Soon the fame of the parrot spread far and wide.

In that town there was a beautiful dancing girl named Rupasundari. One day a poor brahmin met a friend near the bathing ghat and spoke to him of a strange dream he had the previous night. In that dream he had visited Rupasundari's house and spent a pleasant time with her. Rupasundari's maid-servant listened to this conversation and repeated it to her mistress. The latter claimed a thousand gold pieces from the brahmin, who refused to pay the sum. The case was taken before the king of Magadha. The king could not decide the case. He therefore referred it to Somasundaram's parrot.

The parrot listened to both sides carefully. He then gave orders for a bag of gold to be tied to a pillar. A large mirror was placed before it in such a way that the bag was reflected in it. He then asked the dancing girl to take the bag which was inside the mirror.

Rupasundari realised that she was put to shame by the parrot. She therefore swore that she would get the parrot into her power and bite its head. The parrot in turn swore that he would make



The parrot asked Rupasundari to take the bag which was inside the mirror.

Rupasundari shave her head, mount an ass and ride round the temple three times, shouting, 'Govinda! Hari Narayana!'

Somasundaram was one of Rupasundari's patrons. She persuaded him to make a present of his parrot to her. The parrot in the gilded cage was taken to Rupasundari's house. She sent for the cook and ordered her to take the cage into the kitchen, kill the parrot and prepare dinner with its flesh. The head was to be kept separate.

When the cook opened the cage and seized the parrot, he fluttered his wings and pecked at her nose and cheeks with such force that she got frightened and let him go. The parrot flew away. The woman went to the bazaar, purchased another bird and prepared dinner for her mistress with it.

Rupasundari was ignorant of the trick played on her by her cook. She therefore ate her dinner, exclaiming the while, 'Oh! You proud parrot! See how I have kept my word. Now I eat your flesh, now I bite your head.'

The king parrot flew to the temple and lived there in the company of doves and other birds. Rupasundari had one great ambition. She desired to ascend to heaven in her human form. For this purpose she visited the temple every day and prayed to God to grant her this favour. One day, as she was repeating her prayer, the king parrot hid himself behind the idol and was listening to Rupasundari's words. The parrot then spoke in God's name and the words seemed to come from the idol.

'Oh! Rupasundari! If I have not answered your prayers till now, it was because the time for your attaining Mukthi has only just arrived.

You must carry out my instructions faithfully, if you wish to have your desire fulfilled. You must give away all your wealth in charity. You must then come into my presence with your head shaved. Then you must go to the temple tank, bathe in it and come back dressed in saffron robes. Next you must mount an ass and ride round the temple thrice, shouting, 'Govinda! Hari Narayana!' Then you will find a gold chariot coming down from the skies to take you to heaven.'

Rupasundari was overjoyed at these words. She went to the king of Magadha and told him of the good fortune that awaited her. She requested him to send messengers to all the kings and princes inviting them to be present at Magadha on the day fixed, to watch this wonderful spectacle.

The king agreed and sent his messengers in all directions. Many people came to Magadha on hearing the news. Among them was Bhatti. All of them assembled in front of the temple to watch Rupasundari ascend to heaven in her mortal form. She appeared clad in saffron, with her head shaved. Then she mounted an ass and rode thrice round the temple. She then prostrated in front of the idol, got up and prayed with folded hands, 'Oh! Lord! Send your gold chariot to take me to "Vaikuntam".' There was no sign of the chariot.

Meanwhile, Vikramaditya, the king parrot, flew down and settled on Bhatti's shoulder. He addressed Rupasundari and said, 'Oh! You proud woman! Have you kept your oath? Where is your boast? Do you still wish to live after this disgrace?' The parrot then turned to the assembled kings and related what had happened. Rupasundari was

jeered at and became an object of ridicule. Unable to bear the shame, she fell down and died on the spot. The spectators went back to their respective homes.

Bhatti and the king parrot left for Ujjain. On arriving at the capital, Bhatti informed the false king that the vow made by the queens would come to an end that day. To celebrate the event a fight between he-goats would take place in front of the Kali temple. He requested the king to witness the fight. One of the goats was backed by the queens, while the other was backed by the false king. The king's goat was beaten and killed in the fight. The queens clapped their hands and laughed. Vijaya, the false king, was provoked by their laughter. He therefore caused his soul to enter the body of the dead goat. Immediately Vikramaditya caused his soul to quit the parrot's body and re-enter his own body. Bhatti gave orders to the guards to capture the goat, in which Vijaya's soul had entered, and kill it. Bhatti's orders were immediately carried out.

King Vikramaditya, accompanied by Bhatti, went back to the palace and resumed his duties as king.

Questions and Exercises

Write brief answers to the following questions :—

1. What custom did Vikramaditya observe throughout his long reign ?
2. What was the wonderful art known to the king ?
3. Why did the king turn himself into a parrot ?
4. What was Vijaya's treacherous act towards the king ?

(Answer questions 5 to 7 each in a short paragraph.)

5. How did the king parrot save the lives of the other parrots ?

6. How did the king parrot save his own life ?
7. How was Vijaya punished for his treachery to the king ?
8. Write in your own words the story of the king parrot and the dancing girl Rupasundari (1½ to 2 pages.)

CHAPTER XI

VISWAMITRA, THE RAJARISHI

On the slopes of the Mandaragiri hills, and by the side of the river Sarayu, there was a city known as Umapathi. It was ruled by a king named Chakravarthi. He had a minister named Vibutha and a hundred sons.

One day the king went out hunting, accompanied by his minister, his sons and a part of his army. After hunting in the forest all day, they felt extremely thirsty. They had come far from the city. The king ordered his minister to take some men with him and look for drinking water.

They searched far and wide but could not find any tank or stream. While they were returning, disappointed, they saw the Sage Vasishta doing 'tapas'.

The minister approached the Sage and offered his respects. He then said, 'Oh, Sage! The king and his party are feeling very thirsty after hunting all day. I beg you to use your spiritual powers and get us water to drink.'

The Sage was pleased and summoned Ganga from Devaloka. The minister went at once to the king and told him of this wonder. The entire party went to the Ganga and quenched their thirst.

The king then said to his minister, 'Go back to the Sage and say that we are very hungry and

are far from the city. Beg him to use his divine powers again and get food for us.'

Vibutha went back to Vasishtha and repeated the king's request to him. Vasishtha thereupon summoned Kamadhenu from Devaloka and asked that divine cow to feed the king and his party. Kamadhenu carried out the wishes of the Sage and went back to his side.

The king and his men were greatly pleased with the wonderful food that had been provided for them. An evil thought entered the mind of the king. He desired to capture Kamadhenu and take her back with him to the city. He therefore gave orders to his army to surround the cow and capture her.

Kamadhenu saw the soldiers approaching her and grew angry. From her breath there flew arrows, spears and other weapons. In a moment the greater part of the army were killed and the rest fled back to the king. Kamadhenu then returned to Devaloka.

When the king learned what had happened, he thought that the Sage was responsible for the death of his soldiers. He therefore went with his hundred sons and the remaining soldiers to the place where Vasishtha was seated. They began to hurl their weapons at the Sage. The latter, by his divine power, planted a Danda in front of him. The weapons aimed at the Sage were scattered and destroyed by the Danda.

The king then decided to take the Sage captive by physical force, and then kill him. With this object the king and his sons surrounded Vasishtha. The Sage looked up in anger and, in a moment, all except the king were reduced to ashes.

The king was filled with sorrow at the death of his sons. He decided to give up his kingdom and his wealth and retire to the forest to perform 'tapas'.

He put on the dress of a sanyasi and walked hundreds of miles through the forests until he came to a hill named Narasimhagiri. He sat down there on the banks of a stream and began a severe penance. He remained thus for many years. At last the Gods were pleased. They appeared before him and blessed him with divine powers. They gave him the names Rajarishi, Viswamitra and Kausika.

Questions and Exercises

1. Why did Vasishta call down Ganga from Deva-loka?
2. What part does Kamadhenu play in this story?
3. What did the king attack the Sage?
4. Write in your own words the story of Viswamitra, the Rajarishi. (1½ to 2 pages.)

CHAPTER XII

THE CROWNING OF THANGESWARA

There was once a city known as Thangamapuri. It was ruled by a king called Thangeswara. His queen was named Swarnakantha. One day the Rishi Viswamitra arrived in the city and took up his quarters in a mutt. He sent for the sanyasi who was the head of the mutt and said to him, 'Go and tell your king that Viswamitra Rishi is here.' The sanyasi went to the palace and told the king about the Rishi's arrival. The king sent word to his queen, minister and officers of state, to accompany him to the mutt, so that they might pay their respects to the great Rishi. All this took a little time.

Viswamitra grew angry at this delay and cursed the king and all living creatures in his kingdom. They were to become lifeless wherever they were at that moment. A terrible change came over the city and all living creatures became lifeless objects. The queen saw this wave of death spreading over the city, rushed to the Rishi and fell at his feet. She begged him to pardon the king and herself, saying that they did not intend any disrespect to him.

The humility of the queen won the regard of the Rishi. He said to her, 'Ask me a favour and I shall grant it.' The queen replied, 'Let the people of this kingdom be restored to life.' Viswamitra said that he would not recall his curse. The queen then said, 'In my next birth let me become again the wife of my Lord Thangeswara. Let a horse from Devaloka come at my summons and bear me to Thangamapuri, so that I can worship at the shrine of Sundaramurthi. Grant me these two favours, Oh, Rishi!' Viswamitra granted her the boons and left the city, which soon became a city of the dead.

In her next birth Swarnakantha was born as the daughter of the king of Prathithapuri, situated on the banks of the river Tamaraparni. Thangeswara was born in the same town as the son of the king's priest. He was named Adimulam. The princess was named Sanjivi. When the princess came of age, her parents discussed the question of her marriage. She said that she would marry only that man who discovered the city of Thangamapuri and came back and told her about the wonders of the city. The king agreed to her wishes and sent out a proclamation to that effect.

Many noble princes set out to discover Thangamapuri. But no one succeeded in finding that city. Adimulam, the priest's son, wished to marry the princess Sanjivi. He came to the palace and sent word to the princess that he had discovered that city. But when the princess questioned him, he was unable to give any description of that city. The princess ordered her guards to take Adimulam outside the walls of the town and throw him out.

Adimulam was advised by some men in the town to seek the help of the king Vikramaditya. He therefore went to Ujjain and prayed to the king to help him to discover Thangamapuri. If the king refused he would give up his life at the king's feet and the king would have to bear the sin of his death.

Vikramaditya agreed to carry out the wishes of the brahmin youth. It was time for him to begin his six months' life in the forest. He therefore summoned the demon Vedalam. He ordered the demon to carry Adimulam and himself to Prathithapuri.

Vikramaditya left the youth there. He then went in search of Thangamapuri, mounted on the shoulders of the demon. They travelled many thousands of miles, across lands and seas. At last they saw in the middle of a forest a group of seven Rishis, seated round a fire.

The king approached them and enquired whether they could tell him the way to Thangamapuri. They directed him to go to an island, three hundred miles to the east. On this island there grew a very tall banyan tree, which was the home of thousands of birds. If the king went there and listened to the talk of the birds, he would learn

where the city lay. Vikramaditya thanked the Rishis and went to the island of the birds. He changed himself into a beetle and sat on a branch of the banyan tree. At dusk the birds came back from their flight and settled on the tree. He heard a couple of birds talking about their visit to Thangamapuri that day and of the delicious fruit on which they had fed.

The next day the king in the form of the beetle attached himself to a wing of one of the birds and was carried by it to that city. He then summoned the demon and resumed his own form. They spent the day walking round the streets of the city and admiring its wonders. They were particularly struck by the beauty of the temple of Sundaramurthi, which was one mass of gold.

As they waited near the temple, they saw a strange sight. Shortly before midnight a beautiful damsel came flying through the air on a divine horse and alighted in front of the temple. She had with her all the articles required for puja. She went inside the temple and performed puja. Then she made a round of the city and flew back in just the same way as she had come.

Vikramaditya went back to Prathithapuri and told Adimulam all that he had seen in Thangamapuri. Adimulam went to the palace and sought an audience of the princess Sanjivi. He told her that he had visited the city and described its wonders. He also described the visit to the city at night of a damsel, mounted on a divine horse. The princess was convinced that Adimulam was, in his former life, king Thangeswara. She directed Adimulam to meet her at Thangamapuri, three months from that date.

King Vikramaditya, accompanied by Adimulam, journeyed to that city on the shoulders of the demon. On their way they had to pass by the Himalayas, where they met the Rishi Viswamitra. The king got down and paid his respects to the Rishi. He informed the Rishi about his visit to Thangamapuri and entreated him to remove the curse he had laid on that city. Viswamitra then recalled the curse and blessed Vikramaditya and Adimulam.

They continued their journey and arrived at last at the city of Thangamapuri. The princess Sanjivi joined them there. In a short while Adimulam was changed into king Thangeswara and Sanjivi into queen Swarnakantha. At the same time the dead city came back to life. The ministers and officers of the court came to the palace to greet the king and queen.

Vikramaditya placed crowns on the heads of the king and queen amidst great rejoicings. He then took leave of them and departed for Ujjain, where he was warmly welcomed by Bhatti, his six months' life in the forest having come to an end.

Questions and Exercises

1. Why did Viswamitra get angry with Thangeswara?
2. What was Viswamitra's curse on the city?
3. What were the suitors of princess Sanjivi called upon to do in order to win her hand?
4. What strange sight did Vikramaditya see in the city of the dead?
5. Relate how Vikramaditya helped Thangeswara to win back his kingdom. (1½ to 2 pages.)

CHAPTER XIII

VIKRAMADITYA AND THE WILD BOAR

In a certain town in Vikramaditya's kingdom, the people were much troubled by a wild boar. It destroyed the crops in the fields; attacked and killed the cattle; and caused damage to the public tanks.

The people of the town assembled together to plan the means of dealing with this nuisance. They armed themselves with sticks and other weapons and prepared to attack the boar, but when the boar came near them, it looked so fierce that they dropped their weapons and fled in all directions.

The people then decided to summon the aid of hunters. The hunters came with many weapons and surrounded the boar. The animal attacked them and killed a great many of them.

The inhabitants of the town then dug pits and spread nets in the places where the boar often came. This also proved useless, for the boar forced its way through these nets and ran off to the mountain side.

Then the townsfolk decided to approach king Vikramaditya and seek his help. They went to the king and begged him to save them from the boar. When the king heard their tale of distress, he was deeply moved. He then ordered a part of his army to go with him to the place with hunting dogs, so that they could capture the boar and destroy it.

When they arrived there, they beat drums and shouted. The hunting dogs were put on the scent

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King Vikramaditya chasing the wild boar.

of the boar. The animal rushed furiously out of its den. It attacked and killed many of the soldiers and dogs. Vikramaditya armed himself with his spear, mounted on his swiftest horse, and pursued the boar. Seeing Vikramaditya the animal grew afraid and fled as fast as it could.

It crossed forests and hills, but the king did not give up the chase. The soldiers were not able to keep pace with the king and were soon left behind. Finally the boar disappeared into a cave on the side of a hill.

The king alighted from his horse and awaited the arrival of his troops. He told them to wait for him there, while he entered the cave alone with the magic sword in his hand. He travelled many miles into the heart of the mountain, but saw no sign of the boar. At last the path branched in two directions. He went along the wider path. After he had gone some distance, he saw a brilliant light coming from the other end. As he approached closer, he was astonished to find himself in a strange town, where the buildings glittered like gold. In the centre of the town stood a magnificent palace.

Vikramaditya entered the palace fearlessly. The town was peopled by rakshasas. Their king was seated on a golden throne. The wild boar was in reality a rakshasa in disguise. He had now resumed his original rakshasa form. He went up to his king and said, 'The person who is now approaching the throne is no other than king Vikramaditya, whose fame is well known to you. He has pursued me down to this Pathalalokam.'

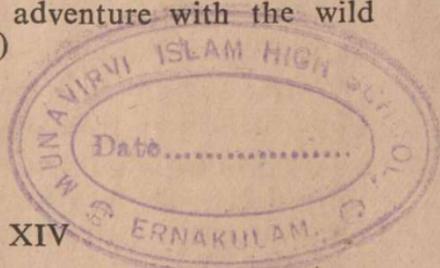
The rakshasa king was overjoyed and greeted Vikramaditya with great respect. He told

Vikramaditya that he was very anxious to meet him and he had therefore sent one of his subjects to Boolokam in the form of a boar.

Vikramaditya spent a few days pleasantly in the company of the rakshasa king. During his stay there, he met Mahabali Chakravarthi, who also received him warmly. When he was about to return home they presented him with ten pots containing nectar. Then Vikramaditya took leave of his hosts and returned to Boolokam.

Questions and Exercises

1. In what ways did the wild boar trouble the people?
2. How did the people try to overcome the trouble?
3. What request did the people make to king Vikramaditya?
4. What steps did Vikramaditya take to save the lives and the property of his subjects?
5. What did the rakshasa king present to Vikramaditya?
6. Describe Vikramaditya's adventure with the wild boar. (1½ to 2 pages.)



CHAPTER XIV

SANEESWARA PURSUES VIKRAMADITYA

King Vikramaditya had to leave for the forest for his usual six months' stay. On the day previous he entrusted the affairs of the kingdom to his minister Bhatti and went to the temple of Kali. The Goddess gave him darshan and warned him that the God Saneeswara would exercise his sway over him for seven and a half years from that date.

She advised him to submit to the God. Vikramaditya left the temple with the blessings of the Goddess.

As the king was going on his way, the God Saneeswara appeared before him. The king prostrated at the feet of the God and asked him to let him know what had brought him there. The God replied that he had come to exercise his sway over the king for a period of seven and a half years. The king then begged the God to be merciful towards him. 'This is what I desire you to do', the God said to him. 'Go to Madurapuri and take service under its ruler, Madurendra. Serve him faithfully for seven and a half years. At the end of the period, you must stand before him for three hours, with a box containing betels and nuts in your hands, and await his pleasure. King Vikramaditya agreed to that condition; gave his signet ring to the God and requested him to look after the welfare of his kingdom in his absence. Accompanied by the demon, the king left for the forest. When darkness fell, the king lay down to rest under a banyan tree.

In the court of Indira, there were two maidens named Ratnamala and Muthumala. At the time when Vikramaditya visited Indraloka, Ratnamala had seen him and had fallen in love with him. After the king's return to the earth, she went to Indira and said, 'I have long been in love with Vikramaditya. Please grant me permission to go down to the earth and meet the king'. Indira answered 'Listen, maiden; if you go and meet Vikramaditya at his palace, you will find there his many wives, who excel you in beauty; and he will not therefore desire to make you one of his

queens. Wait till he goes to the forest. Then if you meet him, he will love you.'

When the king came under the sway of Saneeswara, Indira summoned Ratnamala and said to her, 'Now is the time for you to seek out Vikramaditya. He is now on his way to Madurapuri. When you meet him, this is my advice to you. During the day, you must assume an ugly figure; but during the night you can resume your usual lovely form. Be his companion for seven and a half years and then return to Indraloka.'

Ratnamala took leave of Indira, came down to the earth and approached the king in the form of an ugly maiden. On seeing her, the king asked the demon, 'Who is this woman? What brings her here? Is she a human being or a rakshasi?'. The demon replied, 'She is a maiden from Indira's court. She has come here out of love for you. Indira has sent her here to be your companion. She will appear ugly during the day and will be lovely during the night.' Ratnamala greeted the king and told him the purpose of her visit. The king readily agreed to take her as his wife.

The king then dressed himself in the clothes of a servant. Accompanied by the demon and Ratnamala, he went to Madurapuri. On the way, they stopped for a rest in a grove of trees. Beside the grove was a tank. A snake named Ananthan and a frog named Salandiran lived in that tank. The snake was hungry. He caught hold of the frog and was about to eat him up. Then the frog said to the snake, 'Have you forgotten that we were both kings once and that we were compelled to assume our present forms as a result of the curse of the sage Narada? If the mighty Vikramaditya comes

to know of your present deed, will he not punish you?' The king, who knew the language of all animals, listened to this speech. He immediately drew his sword, cut off some flesh from his thigh and threw it to the snake. He thus satisfied the snake's hunger.

After finishing his bath Vikramaditya resumed his journey to Madurapuri along with his two companions. Ananthan and Salandiran realised that the person who fed Ananthan with his own flesh must be the king Vikramaditya. So they came and prostrated before him. Then they told him of their curse and how their curse would be lifted after serving Vikramaditya for the seven and a half years that he was to spend under the sway of Saneeswara. The king told them that he was going to Madurapuri and asked them to meet him at a rest-house on the outskirts of the city. They promised to do so and then took leave of him.

Shortly after his arrival in the city, Vikramaditya presented himself at the king's court and took service under him, calling himself Aditya. The king was pleased with him and gave him a post in the royal household, paying him a salary of a thousand gold coins a day. The king also gave him a suitable house to live in. The house was guarded by Ananthan, the snake, and Salandiran, the frog, to whom Vikramaditya had been kind. They had now assumed human forms.

While Aditya was serving Madurendra, king of Madurapuri, he made friends with two prominent citizens. They frequently visited Aditya at his house and came to know about Ratnamala. They told the king about her great beauty. The king was eager to see her. He went to the house

of Aditya in disguise and saw Ratnamala. He fell in love with her and determined to make her one of his queens. Therefore he decided to send Aditya out of the kingdom on a mission from which he would not return alive.

MUTHUNAGAI

In the kingdom of Valavanthalpuram, there lived a beautiful princess named Muthunagai. Every time she laughed, pearls dropped from her mouth. These were of immense value and were much sought after. They were sold by a merchant at Mudaganagar. For some time past, these pearls had not been available in the market. The king ordered Aditya to go to Mudaganagar and buy for him a few dozens of those pearls. He asked him to take as much gold as he wanted. Aditya promised to return with the pearls within forty days. He then set out on his journey with the demon, after entrusting Ratnamala to the care of his friends, the snake and the frog.

Aditya and the demon journeyed to Mudaganagar and sought out the merchant. The merchant informed Aditya that he had no pearls of that variety in stock. Aditya asked him the reason. The merchant answered that a great misfortune had overtaken Valavanthalpuram and its inhabitants. A Rishi had fallen in love with the princess of Valavanthalpuram. In order to marry the princess, the Rishi had cursed the king and his subjects, so that they remained lifeless at their posts.

Aditya took leave of the merchant and journeyed to Valavanthalpuram, accompanied by the demon. On reaching the place they found it to be a city of

the dead. Aditya asked the demon to find out the whereabouts of the Rishi and Muthunagai.

The demon carried out the orders of his master and returned shortly with the desired information. He informed his master that the Rishi was engaged in performing a great 'yaga'. It was his custom to spend the night with the princess. When he left her in the morning, he would sever her head from her body. On his return in the evening, he would rejoin the severed parts and restore her to life. He did this because he was afraid that king Vikramaditya would carry her away if he came to know about her state. The Rishi was performing this 'yaga' in order to become the ruler of the seven worlds.

Aditya asked the demon to find out how the Rishi restored Muthunagai to life in the evenings. The demon replied that there was a magic cane in the room of the princess. If the top of the cane was unscrewed, an oily fluid came out of it. The Rishi placed the severed head on the neck and smeared the oil round the joint. He then tapped her with the cane and she came back to life.

The next day, when the Rishi was away from the palace, Aditya and the demon went to the room of the princess. Then Aditya repeated the actions of the Rishi and Muthunagai came back to life. She was surprised and pleased to see him. She wanted to know who he was and what had brought him there. On hearing that he was Vikramaditya, she remarked that no one could conquer fate and laughed. A few pearls fell from her mouth, which Aditya collected and put safely in his pocket.

The princess said she was ready to accompany Vikramaditya then and there. But the king said

that he could marry her and take her away with him only after he had killed the Rishi and restored her father and his subjects to life. Meanwhile, he suggested a plan to her to gain possession of the Rishi's secret and thereby destroy him. When the Rishi came to her room in the evening she was to put on an air of dejection. He would enquire the cause. Then she must tell him that she could never be happy unless her parents came back to life. The princess carried out the instructions of Vikramaditya. The Rishi informed her that in three days time his 'yaga' would end and he would gain his object. He would then restore to life her father and his subjects and then marry her with her father's consent. She wanted to know how he would restore life to the dead. He told her that their souls were imprisoned in a copper pot which was buried under the altar of the Kali temple. If a person caught hold of an elephant which was roaming in the sugar-cane field nearby, and sacrificed it on the altar of the Goddess, he could open the pot and release the souls.

The princess then wanted to know whether it was possible for any person to slay him. He replied that if anyone wished to kill him he must cut off his head without shedding a drop of blood and throw the head into the sacrificial fire.

The next day, when Vikramaditya came to see the princess, she told him the secrets revealed to her by the Rishi. With the help of the demon, Vikramaditya succeeded in killing the Rishi and bringing back to life the king of Valavanthalpuram and his subjects.

King Varanakesari, the father of Muthunagai, was pleased with Vikramaditya and gave the

princess to him in marriage. Vikramaditya then set out for Madurapuri, accompanied by the demon and his newly-won bride. He reached the city exactly forty days after he had left it. He went home and presented Muthunagai to Ratnamala, who gave her a cordial welcome.

Before sunrise the next day, Aditya presented himself at the court of king Maḍurendra and handed to him the pearls that he had brought. The king pretended to be overjoyed and complimented Aditya on the success of his mission.

NAGARATNAM

Shortly after Aditya's return to Madurapuri with the pearls, his two friends from the city called on him at his house. They were astonished to see Muthunagai there, and lost no time in telling king Maḍurendra about her. The king again went to Aditya's house in disguise, and was struck with the beauty of the princess. He therefore longed to make both Ratnamala and Muthunagai his queens. He sought the advice of his minister. The latter suggested that the king might send Aditya to Nagaloka to fetch a few of the precious gems known as 'nagaratnam'.

These gems fell from the mouth of the princess, Nagakannigai, whenever she laughed. In order to reach Nagaloka one would have to cross the seven seas. Even if a person succeeded in doing so, there was another obstacle which he would find impossible to get over. The capital city of Nagaloka was surrounded by fields of poison, several miles wide. If a man set foot on this field he would immediately die of poison.

The minister said if Aditya was sent on this mission, he was unlikely to return alive. The king could then take Ratnamala and Muthunagai away to his palace.

Acting on the minister's advice, the king sent for Aditya and said, 'I desire to obtain a few naga-ratnams to make a royal jewel. I want you, therefore, to go to Nagaloka and fetch me some of these gems. Take as much gold as you like and come back with the gems.' Aditya agreed to carry out the orders of the king and promised to be back in sixty days.

He first went home and took counsel of his friends, Ananthan and Salandiran. He said to them, 'I could inform the king that I will not go on this expedition. But it is not right to do so, for I am his servant and eat his salt. What is your advice, my friends?'

Salandiran said, 'Do not lose heart, Oh, king! We are here to help you and we shall see that you succeed in your quest. When we reach the sea-shore I shall take the form of a frog and carry you on my back across the seven seas.' Ananthan spoke next. 'When we reach Nagaloka, I shall get past the poison fields and tell king Nagendira of your arrival. As I am a snake, the poison will not harm me.'

Aditya took leave of Ratnamala and Muthunagai, and started on his journey, mounted on the demon's back. They arrived at land's end. Aditya thought of Salandiran, who immediately appeared before him in the form of a huge frog. The frog carried Aditya on his back and swam across the seven seas. They reached Nagaloka.

Aditya then thought of Ananthan, who appeared before him at once in the form of a snake. He went to king Nagendra and told him that king Vikramaditya had arrived at his kingdom. He desired an audience of king Nagendra in order to seek the hand of the princess Nagakannigai.

King Nagendra was very pleased and asked Ananthan to fetch Vikramaditya at once. Ananthan thereupon said, 'Oh, king, the way to the court is across the poison fields. How then can Vikramaditya come to the court?' Nagendra at once gave orders to a few of his snakes to clear a way for Vikramaditya. This was done and Vikramaditya presented himself at the court.

Nagendra received his guest with honour and expressed his willingness to give him the princess Nagakannigai in marriage. The wedding was celebrated with great pomp. When the bridal couple had retired to their room, the bride laughed and a few gems fell from her mouth. Vikramaditya immediately picked up the gems and put them in his pocket.

The days passed pleasantly. On the fifty-ninth day after he had left Madurapuri, Vikramaditya approached the king of Nagaloka and told him that he must start on his return journey that day. King Nagendra gave his consent and agreed to send the princess with him. Salandiran—the frog—carried them back across the seas. From thence the demon took them on his shoulders and the party reached Madurapuri the same night. Vikramaditya presented Nagakannigai to Ratnamala and Muthunagai.

Before day-break the next morning, Aditya appeared before king Madurendra and presented

to him the gems that he had brought. The king again pretended to be pleased and praised Aditya for his skill and courage.

THE MAGIC WELL

Shortly after the return of Aditya from Nagaloka, his two city friends called on him at his residence. They were very much surprised to see the princess of Nagaloka there. They went and told King Madurendra about her exquisite beauty. The king paid a visit to Aditya's house in disguise, saw Nagakannigai and fell in love with her. He longed to get rid of Aditya by some means, so that he could take the three maidens as his queens. Once again he consulted his minister. The latter told him that it was foolish to plot against a mighty hero like Aditya. However, he suggested another plan.

A few miles from the city of Madurapuri, there was a well known as the Magic Well. The king possessed a steed which could run as fast as the wind. The minister suggested that the king should ask Aditya to accompany him on a ride into the country. When they approached the Magic Well, the king should look down into it. He must drop his ring into the well and pretend that it was an accident. He should then ask Aditya to bring up the ring from the well. The water of the well contained strong poison. If Aditya stepped into the well, he would die. The king could then return to the city and gratify his wish.

The next morning, the king summoned Aditya and told him to be ready to go for a ride with him into the country that evening, as he wished to see

the Magic Well. Aditya agreed and went home. He summoned the demon and asked him what he thought of the king's latest proposal. The demon used his powers of insight and came to know of the king's treacherous plan. He told Aditya about the details of the plan and warned him not to let go the reins of the king's horse, when they came to the well. He must tell Salandiran (the frog) to conceal himself inside the well and catch the ring as soon as the king dropped it inside. He must at once hand over the ring to Aditya, unnoticed by the king. Aditya must return to the city with the king. Aditya promised to follow the demon's advice and gave instructions to Salandiran to go to the well in advance.

That evening the king, accompanied by Aditya, rode out to the Magic Well. He dropped the ring into the well and asked Aditya to go down and get it for him. Aditya got down into the well. Salandiran, meanwhile, had caught the ring and he now passed it up to Aditya. He came out of the well and the king asked Aditya whether he had taken the ring from the well. In answer Aditya took out the ring from his pocket and handed it to the king. The king was astonished.

Shortly after the episode of the Magic Well, king Madurendra was seated on his throne surrounded by his courtiers. Aditya came and offered his respects to the king. At that time, Saneeswara, in the disguise of an old man, came up to Aditya and handed to him his signet ring, enclosed in a lemon. Then they went out together to a mutt outside the city. There Aditya dropped his disguise and resumed the form of king Vikramaditya.

The king and the court watched the exit of Aditya and the old man with great surprise. He asked his minister whether he could explain what had happened. The minister was unable to answer the king's question. Therefore the king, accompanied by his minister and the courtiers, followed Aditya and the old man to the mutt.

Saneeswara expressed his admiration for Vikramaditya's heroic deeds and felt sorry for having subjected him to great hardships for seven and a half years. He also said that he would punish Madurendra for his cruel treatment of Vikramaditya. The latter, however, pleaded with the God to show mercy to Madurendra. The king and his courtiers were listening to their conversation. They fell at the feet of the God and Vikramaditya and asked pardon for the wrongs they had done. Vikramaditya readily forgave them.

Madurendra took Vikramaditya in procession through the streets of the city. The procession ended at the palace. For three days he was royally entertained by Madurendra. He then took leave of his host and returned to Ujjain, after an absence of seven and a half years.

Questions and Exercises

Answer questions 1 to 4 each in a short paragraph:—

1. What did Saneeswara ask Vikramaditya to do during the seven and a half years' period of his sway?
2. Write, in the form of a short dialogue, the conversation between Indira and Ratnamala.
3. Describe the meeting between Ratnamala and Vikramaditya.
4. Relate how Ananthan and Salandiran entered the service of Vikramaditya.

5. Relate in your own words the story of Vikramaditya and the princess Muthunagai. (1½ to 2 pages.)
6. Relate in your own words the story of Vikramaditya and the princess Nagakannigai. (1½ to 2 pages.)

CHAPTER XV

THE DEATH OF VIKRAMADITYA

King Vikramaditya and Bhatti had obtained from the Goddess Kali the gift of living for two thousand years. Their life on earth was drawing to a close.

About that time a man named Ramakrishna lived in a town on the banks of the river Kaveri. He was learned in the sastras and in the arts. He had married a girl named Chintamani. It was foretold that a son would be born to him, who would become the ruler of the world. His reign would last for a thousand years.

Ramakrishna decided to go on a pilgrimage to Banaras and other holy places for a period of twelve years. After his visits to those places, he turned his steps homewards. He arrived on the bank of the Kaveri, opposite his home town. He found the river in floods. The water was too deep for him to wade across. There was no boat available at that hour. The period of twelve years would end that night. So Ramakrishna grew impatient. He did not know what to do. His state of mind was pitiable. Instead of the floods subsiding, the level of the water was getting higher and higher.



Rama Velalan offering his daughter in marriage to Ramakrishna.

He walked to and fro, wringing his hands in despair. At a short distance from that place, a potter named Rama Velalan was at work mixing the clay. He noticed that Ramakrishna was in distress and asked him the reason. Ramakrishna told the potter all about himself and his desire to meet his wife that night. The potter sympathized with him and tried his best to comfort him. He told him, 'I would feel honoured, if you spent the night in my house. I have a daughter named Annapoorani. She is of marriageable age. I am willing to give her in marriage to you.' Ramakrishna accepted the potter's offer and accompanied him to his house. That night the marriage was solemnised.

The next day the floods subsided and Ramakrishna returned home.

Ten months later Annapoorani gave birth to a boy child. The child was handsome. There was a brightness about his features which gave promise of his future greatness. He was named Salivahan. His grandfather brought him up with loving care. The boy went to school at the age of five and in course of time became an accomplished scholar. When he was twelve he would sit with his grandfather and fashion out of clay the figures of soldiers, horses, camels and elephants. He made any number of these clay dolls and arranged them in circles about his house.

At that time there was a king called Viswanath who was paying tribute to Vikramaditya. Salivahan had then become a minister in the court of Viswanath. The youth impressed the king by his learning and skill. Therefore the king consulted him on all matters of state.

When the time for paying the tribute came, the king instructed his young minister Salivahan to arrange for its prompt payment. Salivahan then said, 'Why should we pay tribute to him? If he dares to make war on us on that account, I solemnly swear to destroy him and his army and make you emperor in his place.' King Viswanath and his other ministers were taken aback and remained speechless.

When the treasury officials informed king Vikramaditya that king Viswanath had not sent in his tribute, the former grew very angry. He therefore ordered his messengers to go and collect the tribute.

When the messengers went to the court of king Viswanath, Salivahan spoke on behalf of the king, 'Oh, messengers! go and tell your king that I, Salivahan, the second minister of Viswanath, challenge him to fight a battle with us. If he wins, we shall pay him the tribute.' When the messengers went back to Ujjain and conveyed the message of Salivahan, Vikramaditya became furious. He summoned Bhatti, informed him of Viswanath's defiance and instructed him to make preparations for war.

Vikramaditya's army invaded Viswanath's kingdom. Salivahan assumed the command of the army and went to meet the forces of Vikramaditya. He arranged his clay soldiers, horses, camels and elephants round his city walls. Vikramaditya and Bhatti laughed at the sight of these clay figures and at the same time wondered what they were for. But they were not left long in doubt. By uttering a mantra Salivahan invested these dolls with life. This mighty army

put to flight Vikramaditya's forces and caused great destruction in his ranks. Vikramaditya was astonished. He then asked Bhatti, 'Has our allotted span of two thousand years come to an end?' Bhatti answered, 'The period ends to-morrow.'

Vikramaditya and Bhatti mounted on the shoulders of the demon and returned to Ujjain. Immediately on their return to the city, they went to the throne room. Then Vikramaditya spoke to its images! 'Divine images of this divine throne, a thousand years from now a king called Bhoja will discover this throne and will want to ascend it. At that time it shall be your duty to relate to him the story of the exploits of Bhatti and myself. You shall therefore remain buried under the earth till then.'

Vikramaditya and Bhatti afterwards dug a deep pit and buried the throne in it. Then they went to the temple of Kali accompanied by the demon. After worshipping the Goddess, Vikramaditya informed the demon that the period of his curse had ended. The demon then resumed his human form and departed with the king's blessings.

Bhatti did not wish to die at the hands of the enemy and therefore put an end to his life. A little later, the wheel of destruction sent by Salivahan came flying through the air and cut off the head of Vikramaditya, as he stood in prayer before the Goddess.

Salivahan returned victorious to the court of king Viswanath and crowned him emperor in the place of King Vikramaditya.

King Bhoja listened to the tales of Vikramaditya, narrated each day by the thirty-two images one

after the other. On the thirty-third day the images told him that they must return with the throne to Indraloka.

Bhoja said to them, 'Oh images! you have praised Vikramaditya for his qualities of pity, sympathy and kindness, but you have shown yourselves pitiless and unkind towards me. Can you not permit me to sit on this throne and rule my kingdom at least for a year?'

The image on the topmost step answered, 'Oh, king! your wish shall be granted, but on one condition.' You must not take your seat on the throne but you can place your right hand on it. At the end of the year, we shall depart with the throne.' The king agreed. On an auspicious day king Bhoja invited all the chief men in his kingdom and ascended Vikramaditya's throne. He ruled the kingdom wisely and justly. After a year the images flew away with the throne to Indraloka.

Questions and Exercises

1. Give a brief account of the birth of Salivahan.
2. What advice did Salivahan give to king Viswanath about the payment of tribute to king Vikramaditya?
3. Write, in the form of a short dialogue, the conversation between Vikramaditya and Bhatti when the messengers returned from the court of king Viswanath.
4. Give a brief account of the death of Vikramaditya and the part played in it by Salivahan. (1½ to 2 pages.)

LIST OF NEW WORDS

<p style="text-align: center;">A</p> <p>Ablution Abode Accompany Accomplished Acquire Adorn Alarmed Allot Alight Alter Announce Ascend Ashes Assume Attain Audacity Audience Auspicious Available</p>	<p>Contend Contest Coronation Counsel Courtesy Criminal</p> <p style="text-align: center;">D</p> <p>Defiance Dejection Demon Disciple Disguise Disperse Display Divined Dove</p> <p style="text-align: center;">E</p> <p>Enterprise Entrusted Episode Excitement Exhibit Exploit Exquisite</p> <p style="text-align: center;">F</p> <p>Fasten Foul Frustrate</p> <p style="text-align: center;">G</p> <p>Gag Gratify</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">H</p> <p>Humility Humming</p> <p style="text-align: center;">I</p> <p>Illustrious Images Impartial Imposing Incident Insight Install Intention Invalid Inverted Invested</p> <p style="text-align: center;">J</p> <p>Jeered</p> <p style="text-align: center;">L</p> <p>Lasso Loft Lots</p> <p style="text-align: center;">M</p> <p>Magnificent Massage Mastery Marble Meditation Meritorious Mission Motionless</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">B</p> <p>Bade Befitted Boar Boast Booty</p>		
<p style="text-align: center;">C</p> <p>Calamity Cautioned Cavalry Challenge Charioteer Chastise Consulted</p>		

N	R	Span
Nerves	Ranks	Spear
O	Realized	Spectator
Oath	Reckless	Subsiding
Obstacle	Refresh	Sway
Opportunity	Release	T
Outskirts	Relieve	Task
Outwit	Respective	Tedium
P	Response	Tissues
Pegs	Resume	Traced
Penance	Retire	Tragedy
Persuade	Reveal	Tribute
Planks	Roaming	U
Pounced	S	Unearth
Proclamation	Sage	Uttered
Prompt	Scholar	W
Prosperous	Sever	Wade
Prostrate	Shatter	Wailing
Provoked	Signet	Wring
Q	Smashed	
Quench	Solemnise	
	Soles	

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GLOSSARY

Sastras—Sacred books of the Hindus.

Bhoolokam—The earth.

Rishi—A Sage.

Pushpagavimanam—A divine chariot that could fly in the sky.

Tapas—Deep meditation on God.

Kali—Another form of the Goddess Parvati, wife of Siva.

Indira—A God ruling in Devaloka.

Devas—Heavenly beings.

Saptharishis—The seven Sages mentioned in the Hindu sacred
[books.]

Narada—Son of the God Brahma.

Rambha—

Urvasi—

Thilothama—

} Dancers at the Court of Indira.

Indraloka—The Kingdom of Indira.

Rakshasas—A tribe of giants, given to evil deeds.

Durga—Another name for Kali.

Sanjivi Mantra—A Mantra (words with divine power in them) that brings the dead back to life.

Siva—One of the Hindu Trinity—Brahma, Vishnu, Siva.

Mantap—A stone-pillared hall.

Vaikuntam—The abode of Vishnu.

Sanyasi—An ascetic (one who has renounced the world).

Kamadhenu—The divine cow of Indira that gives whatever
[one wishes for.]

Danda—The staff carried by Rishis.

Pathalaloka—The under-world.

Mahabali Chakravathi—An Asura Emperor, whom the God Vishnu sent to the under-world in Vamana Avatar.

Saneeswara—One of the Gods ruling over the destinies of men.

Yaga—A sacrifice.

Nagaratnam—A precious gem, supposed to be found in the [heads of some serpents.

Nagaloka—The world of serpents.

Nagendra—The ruler of Nagaloka.

Mutt—The abode of a religious head (monastery).

Garuda—The sacred bird who is Vishnu's Vahana.

Puja—Worship of God in a particular manner.

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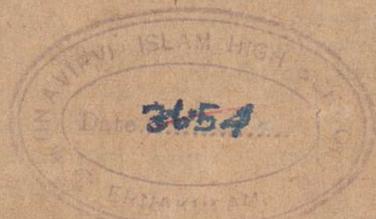
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STORIES OF VIKRAMADITYA

BY

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AND

C. S. VENKATESWARAN, M.A., L.T.

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ORIENT LONGMANS
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