

CHANAKYA AND CHANDRAGUPTA

BY

PANCHAPAKESA AYYAR, M.A., (OXON), I.C.S.,

BAR-AT-LAW

*Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature of the
United Kingdom.*



V. RAMASWAMY SASTRULU & SONS

292, Subhash Chandra Bose Road

E, 13 22

ADRAS

rights Reserved

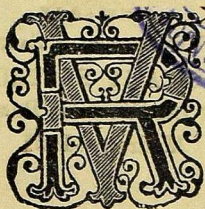
CHANAKYA AND CHANDRAGUPTA 1322

BY

A. S. PANCHAPAKESA AYYAR, M.A., (OXON.), I.C.S., -

BAR-AT-LAW

*Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature of the
United Kingdom.*



V. RAMASWAMY SASTRULU & SONS

292, Subhash Chandra Bose Road

MADRAS.

1951

Copyright.]

{ Price Rs. 4
{ or 6 Shillings.

PRINTED BY
V. VENKATESWARA SASTRULU
of V. RAMASWAMY SASTRULU & SONS
AT THE 'VAVILLA' PRESS
Madras.—1951

Dedicated
To My Wife
Without Whose
Constant Encouragement
this work would never
have been completed.

A. S. P. AYYAR.

113

113

Dedicated
To My Wife
Without Whom
Constant Encouragement
This Work would never
have been completed.

A. S. R. L. Y. 113

CONTENTS

PAGE.

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER I.	The Son of Sages	...	1
CHAPTER II.	Teacher and Pupil Meet Again		13
CHAPTER III.	Chanakya's Vow	...	23
CHAPTER IV.	Jeevasiddhi's Wiles	...	35
CHAPTER V.	Escaped!	...	46
CHAPTER VI.	Maurya's Story	...	54
CHAPTER VII.	A Premature Attempt	...	65
CHAPTER VIII.	The Nandas Left Behind		70
CHAPTER IX.	Alexander and Chandragupta		78
CHAPTER X.	The Durbarat Boukephala	...	102
CHAPTER XI.	Satrapa without a king	...	108
CHAPTER XII.	The Fall of the Nandas	...	135
CHAPTER XIII.	Chandragupta Crowned at last		156
CHAPTER XIV.	Traitors Pay	...	176
CHAPTER XV.	The Net is Spread	...	184
CHAPTER XVI.	A Morning in Rakshasa's Camp	...	205
CHAPTER XVII.	The Quarrel	...	211
CHAPTER XVIII.	Chanakya's Master Stroke	...	220
CHAPTER XIX.	Conquists Everywhere	...	234
CHAPTER XX.	The Grand Council Meets		255
CHAPTER XXI.	The Conqueror Conquered		269
CHAPTER XXII.	The Convocation of the University of Takshasila		282

CHAPTER XXIII.	The Admiral Returns	...	295
CHAPTER XXIV.	Megasthenes at Pataliputra		309
CHAPTER XXV.	Facts and Fables	...	326
CHAPTER XXVI.	A Prosperous Empire	...	341
CHAPTER XXVII.	The King in his Court	...	351
CHAPTER XXVIII.	The Romance of Subhadrangi		366
CHAPTER XXIX.	Chanakya Instructs the Prince		370
CHAPTER XXX.	Chandragupta Abdicates	...	384
CHAPTER XXXI.	An Emperor Fasts To Death		401
CHAPTER XXXII.	From Never-ceasing work to Everlasting Peace	...	421

Glossary of Characters in the Novel

MEN

Abhayadatta : Court Physician of Magadha.

Agnisarma : Son-in-law of Chanakya.

Alexander the Great : King of Macedon, and world-Conqueror.

Ambarisha : Chanakya's Teacher.

Antiochos : Son of Seleukos, and King of Syria after him.

Asokavardhana : Son of Bindusara, and grandson of Chandragupta ; Emperor of India after Bindusara.

Atikrura : A lieutenant of Chandagirika.

Badhasala : Commander-in-Chief of the Nandas.

Balagupta : Kinsman of Chandragupta, and later on Viceroy of Takshasila.

Bhadrabhata : Commander of Magadhan Elephantry.

Bhagela : A princeling of the Punjab who, later on, colonised Bhagelkhand in Central India.

Bhagirathi : A Spy of Chandragupta.

Bhagurayana : A Spy of Chanakya : later on, Viceroy of Ujjaini.

Bhasa : A great Dramatist at Chandragupta's Court.

Bhutapala : A Nanda prince : Son of Mahapadma.

Bibhatsaka : A hired assassin.

Bindusara : Son of Chandragupta, and Emperor of India after him.

Bribaspati Misra : Chief Justice of Magadha under Chandragupta.

Bundela : A princeling of the Punjab who, later on, colonised Bundelkhand in Central India.

Chanakya or Vishnugupta or Kautilya : Prime Minister of Chandragupta.

- Chandagirika** ; The merciless Superintendent of Police, Pataliputra.
- Chanadanadasa** : A big merchant ; later on, Mayor of Pataliputra.
- Chandrabhanu** : Minister of Transport, Magadha.
- Chandragupta Maurya** : Emperor of India.
- Chitravarman** : King of the Kulutas, or of the Kulu valley.
- Dandapasika** : Chief City Magistrate of Pataliputra.
- Daruvarman** : Head of the Carpenters' Guild, Magadha.
- Dasasiddhaka** : A Nanda prince : Son of Mahapadma.
- Demetrios** : A General of Seleukos.
- Devasarma** : Father of Subhadra.
- Dhanananda** : A Nanda prince : Son of Mahapadma
- Dharmaratna** : Head of Takshasila University.
- Dingarata** : Commander of Chariots, Magadhan Army.
- Dirgharakshaka** : A General of Malayaketu.
- Govishanaka** : A Nanda prince : Son of Mahapadma.
- Jajali** ; Chamberlain of Malayaketu.
- Jeevasiddhi** : A spy of Chanakya ; later on, Head of the Intelligence Department, Magadha.
- Kaivarta** : A Nanda prince : son of Mahapadma.
- Kalapasika** : Head Assistant Magistrate, Pataliputra.
- Karabhaka** : A spy of Rakshasa.
- Khondoveera** : Chief of the Khonds.
- Krateros** : A General of Alexander.
- Kumarapala** : King of Kamarupa.
- Lohitaksha** : Prince of Malwa.
- Mahakaya** : A lieutenant of Chandagirika.
- Malayaketu** : Son of Poros Senior, and King of Jhelum Valley after him.

Megasthenes : Ambassador of Seleukos to Chandragupta's Court.

Meghanada or Magas : Persian Ruler of Kutch and Saurashtra.

Nabhaga : A spy of Chanakya.

Nakranasa : A Minister of Magadha.

Narada : A spy of Chanakya.

Naradamuni. A sage who initiates Chanakya into *Ram Nam Japa*.

Nearchos : Admiral of Alexander the Great.

Nipunaka : A spy of Chanakya.

Pandugati : A Nanda prince : son of Mahapadma.

Peithon, son of Agenor : Satrap of the Indus Delta under Alexander.

Perdikkas : A Companion of Alexander.

Philippos : A Satrap of the Upper Indus Valley under Alexander.

Pisuna : A spy of Chanakya.

Poros Senior or Pooru or Parvataka or Parvateswara : King of the Jhelum valley.

Poros Junior : Nephew of Poros Senior and a Prince of the Punjab.

Pramodaka : Bed-room attendant of Chandragupta.

Priyamvadaka : A spy of Rakshasa.

Purushadatta : Cavalry General in Magadhan Army : later on, Viceroy of Suvarnagiri.

Pushkaraksha : King of Kashmir.

Pushkaradatta : son of Pushkaraksha and later on, King of Kashmir.

Pushyagupta : Governor of Saurashtra under Chandragupta.

Radhagupta : Grandson of Chanakya.

Rajasena: Aide-de-camp of Chandragupta.

Rakshasa or Subuddhisarman: Prime Minister of the Nandas,
and, later on, of Chandragupta
and Bindusara.

Rashtrapala: A Nanda prince: son of Mahapadma.

Sakatadasa: A Kayastha petition-writer.

Sakatala: A Minister of Magadha.

Samiddharthaka: A spy of Chanakya.

Samudranatha: Admiral of the Magadhan Fleet.

Sarangarava: Chanakya's pupil.

Sarvarthasiddhi: Mahapadmananda (when demented) as an
ascetic.

Sasigupta: A Captain of mercenaries.

Satyasri Satkarni: King of the Andhras.

Sekbarasena: Commander-in-Chief of Malayaketu.

Seleukos Nicator: Alexander's General, and, later on, King
of Syria and Babylon.

Siddharthaka: A spy of Chanakya.

Simhabala: Infantry Chief of the Magadhan Army.

Simhanada: King of Malaya or Garhwal.

Subandhu: The Rajaguru of the Nandas.

Sukalpa: The Nanda King after Mahapadma. Called also
Sumalya, Agramesa or Chandramesa.

Sumana or Susima: Son of Bindusara and brother of Asoka-
vardhana.

Stbanakalasa: A Bard.

Syama Sastri: A Pundit.

Tribhuvana Malla: King of Manjupatan and Nepal.

Udumbara: A spy of Chanakya.

Vaihinari: Chamberlain of Chandragupta.

Vairantya: Chief of the Savaras.

- Vairavaraka** : Head Mahout of Magadha.
Vijayapala : Superintendent, Pataliputra Central Jail.
Vijayavarman : A Captain of mercenaries.
Vijayasimha : King of Simhapura.
Visalaksha : A spy of Chanakya.
Vrishabhadatta : Chief Justice of the Nandas.

WOMEN

- Bahudanti** : Captain of Chandragupta's Women Bodyguard.
Devabhranta : Daughter of Seleukos and Queen of Chandragupta.
Devaki : Mother of Chanakya.
Durdhara or Chandrakanta : A Nanda princess and Queen of Chandragupta.
Gautami : Wife of Chanakya.
Lajjavati : A princess of Kalinga and Queen of Bindusara.
Meenakshi : Wife of Syama Sastri.
Rajarajeswari : Daughter of Chanakya and wife of Agnisarma.
Santavati : Niece of Poros and Queen of Chandragupta.
Sonottara : Woman aide-de-camp of Chandragupta.
Subhadraangi : Daughter of Devasarma and Queen of Bindusara and mother of Sumana and Asoka.
Suryakanta : Princess of Ujjain and Queen of Bindusara.
Swarnamayi : Chief Queen of Poros Senior.
Vijaya : Woman aide-de-camp of Malayaketu.
Virasena : Court Dancer at Pataliputra.
-

INTRODUCTION

"The East bow'd low before the blast
In patient, deep disdain ;
She let the legions thunder past,
And plunged in thought again."

wrote Matthew Arnold, and the Indians of the 19th century, emasculated by a thousand years of conquest, and embracing the very chains which bound them, and ignorant of their glorious and independent political past, acclaimed the sedative lines with warmth, and quoted them over and over again, about Alexander's invasion of India, in their uncritical and defensive pride in Ancient Indian *thought*, not knowing that every line contained a historical untruth, however unintentional.

GOOD POETRY BUT FALSE HISTORY

India, the land of the Kshatriyas and the Mahabharata, never bowed low before the blast at any time, much less in the days of Alexander. It stood up to him, and tackled him, from the small but compact army of Poros on the banks of the Hydaspes to the vast hordes of the Nandas massed on the Jumna to meet the world-conqueror and beat him. Alexander, who had proudly proclaimed to Parmenio at Gaugamela, "I will not steal a victory," and had refused to attack the immense army of Darius, numbering a million men, had to eat his words and "steal a victory" over Poros, a small Indian prince with an army of less than thirty thousand and no greater dominions or status than modern Patiala, by a night attack. He had found mercenaries elsewhere glad to forsake their former masters and follow his flag and promise of loot. In India alone, he found, at Masika, mercenaries

who refused to be untrue to their salt and refused to bow even before his Chenghiz-Khan-like fury though it meant their wholesale slaughter. While Darius's wife and daughters sought asylum with Alexander and were glad to accept his hospitality and protection, no queen or princess of India proper ever sought asylum with him, or accepted his hospitality and protection. Nor had any Indian king to be killed by his generals for his refusal to fight against Alexander, like Darius by Bessos. Indeed, in India, kings, like Mushikassena, had to be hanged by Alexander owing to their repeated revolts against him despite utter defeats and the hopelessness of all further resistance. Alexander got in India more blows than bows or sixpence. Never had he met with such determined resistance in all his career. Plutarch, the celebrated Greek biographer and historian of the 1st Century A.D., writes:—"But this last combat with Poros took off the edge of the Macedonians' courage, and stayed their further progress into India. For having found it hard enough to defeat an enemy who brought but twenty thousand foot and two thousand horse into the field, they thought they had reason to oppose Alexander's design of leading them on to pass the Ganges, too, which they were told was thirty furlongs broad and a hundred fathoms deep, and the banks of the further side covered with multitudes of enemies. For they were told the kings of the Gangaridae¹ and the Prasians² expected them there with eighty thousand horse, two hundred thousand foot, eight thousand armed chariots and six thousand fighting elephants. Nor was this a mere vain report spread to discourage them." He also says, about Alexander, later on:—"He resolved himself to sail out of the Euphrates with a great fleet with which he designed to go round by Arabia and

1. The Gangaputras, or the Kosalas, Kasis, etc.

2. The Prachayas or Easterners, a name of the Magadhan.

Africa, and so by the Heracles' Pillars into the Mediterranean : in order for which he directed all sorts of vessels to be built at Thapsacus, and made great provisions everywhere of seamen and pilots. But the tidings of the difficulties he had gone through in his Indian expedition, the danger of his person among the Mallians¹, the reported loss of a considerable part of his forces, and a general doubt as to his own safety, had begun to give occasion for revolt among many of the conquered nations."

ALEXANDER UNHINGED IN TWO WAYS

Alexander's pride, prestige and power met with a serious check here for the first time in his life, and unhinged him in two ways. Here, in India, he took systematically to ferocious deeds of cruelty towards the vanquished, forsaking his general rule of clemency to the defeated, and indulged in "acts of frightfulness", like the massacre of the mercenaries at Masika, the wholesale slaughter of every man, woman and child at Malavakot and other cities of the brave Malavas and Kshudrakas, whose very breath of life was liberty, and the numerous hangings of Brahmans, in his deep anger and chagrin at their daring to stand up to him. He forgot that, for these brave men, as for their great comrade Appar in South India, death had no terrors, and they would stand up against any conqueror on earth, be he Alexander or Mahendravarman.

What is even more significant, he took to undignified exaggeration and boasting of his and his soldiers' prowess, contrary to his usual habit. In India, on seeing men like Poros nearly seven feet tall, and animals like the elephant, driven to an inferiority complex by all this, he got prepar-

1. The Malavas.

ed armour much bigger than that required for his men, and buried it in Indian soil in a vain attempt to deceive future generations of Indians and make them think of him and his men with awe. The Indians were not taken in by this puerile act. They have always measured men by their souls rather than by their bodies.

DIGNIFIED SNUB

Disgusted by the senseless acts of this warrior, who denied the right of his opponents to fight him, and massacred innocent men, women and children by thousands, for the mere sin of not prostrating before his unholy might, they ignored him and his invasion with a silent protest too deep for tears. No Indian book, Hindu, Buddhist or Jain, mentions anything about him and his ruthless invasion. It is not a case of no voice coming from the grave, for he lost his hold, over the small piece of Indian territory he had forcibly overrun, in less than four years. It is a case of a dignified snub to a man who had broken the rules of war observed in India from the Mahabharata days.

It is clear, therefore, that there was no bowing low to Alexander, let alone an abject submission to him. His army was made to lose the greater part of its effective strength in India. His troops refused to advance from the Hyphasis, terrified at the fierce resistance in the Punjab and of the fiercer resistance in store by the great Magadhan armies beyond. He had to leave India and retreat across the waterless deserts of the Mekran, losing three-fourths of his troops. He attributed this disastrous retreat, comparable to Napoleon's retreat from Moscow, or the German retreat from Stalingrad, to the vengeance of Bacchus, the guardian of the city of Thebes which he had destroyed with the same calculated and heartle ferocity as he had used

towards Malavakot whose guardian deity was the terrible Ujjaini Maha Kali (*Uchimakkali* of later times). He was glad to reach Poura, the headquarters of Gedrosia, with its welcome feasts and drinks.

DRIVEN OUT IN RECORD TIME

Hardly had he turned his back on India than Philippos was murdered, and the other satraps attacked and, in due course, driven out or extirpated along with their men. He got no gold or jewels or coined money or other loot from India, as in Persia. His soldiers complained that even Ambhi, the suppliant, was taking more from him than he gave, and Alexander had to plead to them policy and necessity for explaining away his apparent generosity! The truth of the matter was that Ambhi was being subsidised, even as the tribes of the North-west frontier tribal territories have been subsidised in later days.

So, India did not bow low before the blast or allow the legions to thunder past except when they were thundering back westwards through the desert. Nor did India have any "patient deep disdain" of Alexander or of the Greeks. It had, no doubt, no patience with his methods. It violently disliked them and retaliated with vigour, meeting force with force, guile with guile. For the murder of Mushikasena by the Greeks, there was the murder of Philippos at the instance of the Indians. For the massacre of the Indians at Tulumba and Malavakot there were the massacres of the Greeks at Multan, Patala and Taxila. For the occupation of the Punjab and Sind by the Greeks for four years, there was the occupation of Arachosia, Gedrosia and Parapamisadai for sixty years by the Mauryas. Other lands, like Egypt, remembered and cherished the Alexandrias the great conqueror founded. India re-named them all, the greatest, at

the confluence of the five rivers with the Indus, being re-named Mulasthana, or Multan, less than three years after he left! Roxana and Statira enhanced their status by consorting with Alexander. Kalavani (Kleophis) lost all status the moment she consorted with him.

ASSIMILATION OF GREEK CULTURE

But the Indians did not disdain to assimilate useful ideas and arts from the Greeks. Chandragupta, most probably, conceived the idea of founding a great Empire from Alexander, and the Mauryan Empire was the model for all Indian Empires down to the British Empire in India. He re-organised the Mauryan army on the Macedonian model, giving far greater importance to the infantry, cavalry, and catapults (artillery) than to the elephants and chariots, which occupied the pride of place in the immemorial Hindu warfare. No wonder, Chandragupta had 600,000 infantry with which he overran and conquered all India, in the words of Plutarch. Chandragupta also imitated Alexander in having several generals for various expeditions, unlike earlier Hindu Kings who had only one General, the Commander-in-Chief. Indians, evidently, learnt of the pyramids of Egypt from Alexander and Ptolemy, and filled India with their adaptations, the *gopurams* of temples, from Pasupatinath and Budh Gaya in the north to Madura and Cape Comorin in the South.

Greek astronomy and astrology were quietly assimilated and quoted with respect. Days of the week, which were apparently not at all in use among the Indians till then, were bodily taken over from the Greek names. Many were the ideas in medicine and sculpture borrowed by the Indians from the Greeks. Even in drama, some ideas were

borrowed from the Greeks. Bhasa wrote a tragedy, *Uru-bhanga*, contrary to all Indian ideas and rules till then, perhaps on hearing of the plays of Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides, carried about with him by Alexander. And, of course, the Greeks too borrowed many ideas in religion, philosophy, mythology, folklore, mathematics, sculpture, astronomy and astrology from the Indians. Great races cannot meet without exchanging ideas in such matters. Nay, Indians even converted the Greeks to their own religion, strange as it may sound to ears accustomed to the static Hinduism of today. The famous Heliodorus Pillar at Besnagar, with its adoration of Vasudeva, is a silent testimony to the absence of all disdain of the Greeks on the part of the Indians, let alone the generous praise of the Greeks by great Indians like Varahamihira in their monumental books.

No wonder, Alberuni says: "We can only say folly is an illness for which there is no medicine. The Hindus believe that there is no country but theirs, no nation like theirs, no science like theirs. They are haughty, foolish, vain, self-conceited and stolid. If they travelled and mixed with other nations, they would soon change their mind, for their ancestors were not so narrow-minded as the present generation is. One of their scholars, Varahamihira, in a passage where he calls on the people to honour learned Brahmins, says:— 'The Greeks, though impure, must be honoured since they were trained in science and therein excelled others. What then are we to say of a Brahmin if he combines with his purity the height of science?'"

Finally, India was not plunged solely in thought before Alexander's invasion. Nor did it merely plunge in thought again after that invasion. The Ramayana and the Mahabharata (with the *Gita*, the unique gospel with its immortal

theory of "least action" for world welfare) were already there. Chanakya's *Arthasastra*, a terrible incitement to action, even violent action, followed! It is only by seeing the stagnant and decadent India of the nineteenth century with its leaders boasting of their country's past thought, and utterly incapable of the least resistance or energetic action, that Matthew Arnold could have written his last line quoted above.

MATERIAL REGARDING THE INVASION

Plenty of material is available about Alexander's invasion of India, though only from the Greek side, Alexander himself having been accompanied by historians like Aristoboulos and Callisthenes, and chroniclers and anecdote-collectors like Onesikritos, Ptolemy and several others. Most of this material has been collected in that excellent book "Alexander's Invasion of India" by Mc Crindle.

LATER WESTERN REFERENCES TO ALEXANDER'S INVASION

Chief among the later authors who refer to the Invasion are Strabo, the Geographer of the 1st Century B.C.; Diodoros of the 1st Century B.C.; Curtius of the 1st Century A.D.; Pliny the Elder who wrote his *Natural History* in the 1st Century A.D.; Plutarch of the 1st Century A.D., who wrote a *Life of Alexander* also in his *Lives*; Arrian of the 2nd Century A.D.; and Justin of the 2nd Century A.D.

REFERENCES TO CHANDRAGUPTA BY WESTERN AUTHORS

Justin says :—"India after the death of Alexander had shaken, as it were, the yoke of servitude from its neck and put his Governors to death. The author of this liberation was

Sandrocottus¹. But, after his victory, he forfeited, by his tyranny, all title to the name of Liberator, for he oppressed with servitude the very people whom he had emancipated from foreign thralldom. He was born in humble life, but was stimulated to aspire to regal power by supernatural encouragement; for, having offended Alexander by his boldness of speech, and orders being given to kill him, he saved himself by swiftness of foot, and while he was lying asleep after his fatigue, a lion of great size having come up to him licked off with his tongue the sweat that was running from him, and after gently waking him, left him. Being first prompted by this prodigy to conceive hopes of royal dignity, he drew together a band of robbers and solicited the Indians to support his new sovereignty. Some time after, as he was going to war with the Generals of Alexander, a wild elephant of great bulk presented itself before him of its own accord and, as tamed down in gentleness took him on its back and became his guide in the war and conspicuous in fields of battle. Sandrocottus, thus acquired a throne when Seleukos was laying the foundations of his future greatness."

And Plutarch writes:—"And not long afterwards Androkottos, who had by that time mounted the throne, presented Seleukos with 500 elephants, and overran and subdued the whole of India with an army of 600,000 men."

1. Sir William Jones identified the names Sandrocottos and Androkottos, given in Justin and Plutarch, with Chandragupta, and gave us "the sheet-anchor of Indian chronology". Later attempts to dislodge this identification have proved unsuccessful. Thus, one critic has attempted to identify Sandrocottos with Samudragupta, but this will not hold good as the Nanda King was not uprooted by Samudragupta but by Kautilya and Chandragupta, as we know from the Hindu *Puranas*, the Buddhist *Mahavamsa*, *Mahavamsa Tika*, *Dipavamsa* and *Mahabodhivamsa*, and the Jain *Kalpasutra* and *Parisishtaparvan* and the *Arthasastra* and *Mudrarakshasa*.

Again, Plutarch says:—"Androkottos himself, who was then but a youth, saw Alexander himself."

CHANDRAGUPTA OFFENDED ALEXANDER

Some historians have made an emendation in Justin's account of Chandragupta quoted above, and have asserted that Chandragupta did not offend Alexander and did not escape death at his hands by a timely flight. They pretend that he only offended the Nanda king and escaped death at his hands by fleeing from him. But this will be, in my opinion, taking an unwarranted and unnecessary liberty with Justin. There is no account, Hindu, Jain, Buddhist or Greek, regarding *Chandragupta's* having offended Nanda by his boldness of speech, and therefore his being ordered to be killed, and escaping by a flight, and of a lion's having licked off his perspiration when he was tired and sleeping after the flight. Indian accounts show that *Chanakya* offended Nanda by his boldness of speech, and was ordered to be put to death, and that he escaped the punishment through the intervention of Rakshasa. Nobody can *assume* such a quarrel of Chandragupta with Nanda and emend Justin. The very fact that lions did not exist near Pataliputra, where Nanda was, but abounded in the desert close to the Punjab, where Alexander was, also shows that the quarrel was really with *Alexander*, as Justin says. Chandragupta admittedly met Alexander, as stated expressly by Plutarch. If he did not quarrel with him and was not ordered to be killed, and escaped death only by flight, why did he attack and kill his Captains? The statement of Justin quoted above, read as a whole, shows beyond reasonable doubt that the quarrel was with Alexander, and that the escape too was from death at Alexander's hands. The emendation of "*Alexandrum*" to "*Nandrum*" made by Gutschmid, and accepted by Mc Crindle, Vincent Smith and

others, is not justified by inevitable necessity. Nobody need wonder at a proud young Indian prince like Chandragupta irritating Alexander at the very first meeting with him. Alexander was a highly irritable man when his phenomenal vanity was wounded, and was quite capable of killing or ordering to be killed the unfortunate individuals who thus wounded his insane pride. His killing even his intimate friend Kleitos for such a reason, his heartless and insensate killing of Kallisthenes, Philotas and Parmenion afford ample Proof of this.

HINDU REFERENCE TO CHANAKYA AND CHANDRAGUPTA

The *Bhagavata Purana* says.—“The Brahmin crowned Chandragupta King after destroying the *Navanandas*. After Chandragupta, his son Varisara (a mistake for Bhadrāsara or Bindusara) and, after him, Asokavardhana ruled the world.”

The *Vayu Purana* says:—

“Kautilya crowned Chandragupta king, and Chandragupta reigned for twenty four years.”

The *Matsya Purana* says:—

“Kautilya crowned Chandragupta King.”

The *Brahmanda Purana* says:—

“Kautilya crowned Chandragupta King.”

The *Bhavishya Purana*, *Kaliyuga Rajavrittanta*, says:—

“The best of Brahmins, named Chanakya, will rescue the earth from the *Navanandas*, and this Kautilya will crown Chandragupta King.”

In the *Arthasastra*, written by Kautilya himself at about the time of Chandragupta, he says:—

“Having perused all the sciences and having fully observed the forms of writs in vogue, these rules of writing royal writs have been laid down by Kautilya for the sake of Narendra” (Book II, Chapter X).

Again, in Book XV, he says:—

“This *Sastra* has been made by him who, from intolerance of misrule, quickly rescued the scriptures and the science of weapons and the earth which had passed to the Nanda king.”

The Mudra Rakshasa, A famous Play, the *Mudra Rakshasa*, probably of the eighth Century A D, by Visakhadatta, deals with a portion of the life of Chandragupta and Chanakya, and describes the final rooting out of the Nandas and the coronation of Chandragupta. Though the play is more than a thousand years later than Chandragupta, it represents a living tradition and has certainly used much authentic earlier material.

BANA, KATHASARITSAGARA, BRIHATKATHA,
CHANAKYA SUTRA ETC.

Besides, there are numerous references to Chandragupta and Chanakya in the *Kathasaritsagara*, *Brihatkatha*, *Chanakya Sutra*, *Bana's works*, etc.

BUDDHIST REFERENCES

DIPAVAMSA, MAHAVAMSA, MAHAVAMSA TIKA, ETC

The *Mahavamsa Tika* says that Chanakya lived with his father Chanaka in Takshasila and was known for his devotion to his mother for whose sake he had his wisdom teeth destroyed because she feared in them signs of sovereignty

which would make him neglect her. It also says that he was known for his proficiency in the Vedas, *mantras*, stratagems, intrigue and policy, but that he was noted for his physical ugliness, his disgustingly black complexion, deformity of legs and disproportioned limbs. It mentions about Chanakya's going to Pushpapura in quest of disputation, his occupying the seat reserved for the chief of the Brahmins, his being ejected with blows under the King's orders, his cursing the King, and his escape as an Ajivaka, and alliance with the Crown Prince promising to make him King. It goes on to mention his flight into the Vindhyan regions, coining of *Kahapanas*, finding Chandragupta playing the *Rajakila* and buying the boy's freedom by paying 1000 *Kahapanas* to the huntsman, putting him to school at Takshasila for "six or seven years" and rendering him "highly accomplished and profoundly learned." It also mentions his equipping an army, the premature attempt, the caustic remark of the mother to the son trying to eat the central portion of the gruel, and the final capture of Pataliputra, with the help of Pabbato (Parvataka), the putting of the Nandas to death, and the coronation of Chadragupta as sole ruler of Magadha. It mentions too the crushing of a wave of revolt by Chanakya by sending a *Jatilian Maniyatappo* (*Manna tapasvin*). It also mentions the marriage of Chandragupta to Durdhara, who bore Bindusara to him. Much the same account is given in the other Buddhist books mentioned above.

THE ARYA MANJUSRI MULA KALPA

The *Arya Manjusri Mula Kalpa*, or the Imperial History of India, from the Buddhist point of view, has the following passage:—

"Then we come to V (Vishnugupta), the Brahmin at Pataliputra. He will be the soul of anger, and a miracle-

worker, and will destroy kings for an insult suffered by him owing to his poverty. He is called the 'King of Anger' and the 'Incarnation of Death.' He subdued the wicked and removed much evil, and augmented what was good. But, all said and done, that fool of a poverty-stricken Brahmin, carried away by his anger, took the king's life in revenge."

Again, "After Nanda, Chandragupta will become king. He will rule without a rival. He will enjoy all the good things of life and will be very prosperous. He will be true to his coronation oath and to *Dharma*. On the bad advice of his minister (Chanakya), he killed many people on account of which he was afflicted with poisonous carbuncles which brought an unconsciousness and death after he had weepingly placed on his throne, at midnight his son Bindusara, who was still a boy (that is, below 25, the Hindu age for coronation). Bindusara's Prime Minister (Chanakya) was wicked. As Bindusara had in childish play made a *Chaitya*, he was rewarded by being born in the royal Nanda house of Chandragupta. When a minor, he enjoyed great comforts. When he became an adult, he was bold, eloquent and tactful. His Prime Minister was Chanakya, 'the Soul of Anger', 'the Incarnation of Death.' This bad Brahmin lived a long time and covered three reigns (that is, of Sukalpa Nanda, Chandragupta and Bindusara). When he finally left this body, he was consigned to Hell to undergo all kinds of tortures there for a *Kalpa*."

TARANATHA

Taranatha says :—"Chanakya accomplished the destruction of the nobles and kings of sixteen towns and made Bindusara master of all the territory between the eastern and western seas."

JAIN SOURCES

The Jain *Parisishtaparvan*, an appendix to the lives of the 36 great personages who control the history of the world, namely, the 24 *tirthankaras*, or Prophets, the nine *Chakravartins*, or Emperors, the nine *Vasudevas*, the nine *Baladevas*, and the nine *Prativasudevas*, mentions that Chanakya was the son of the Brahmin Chanaka or Chani, in the village Chanaka, in the *vishaya* or District of Golla (*Kollam* in Travancore—Cranganore was then in Kollam, Quilon District). The Jain story also deals with Chanakya's finding Chandragupta playing the *rajakila*, his taking and educating him, the old woman's comment, the alliance with Parvataka the uprooting of the Nandas, the coronation of Chandragupta after the death of Parvataka in an "accident," the ruthless suppression of revolts and disorder, and the marriage of Chandragupta with Durdhara who bore him Bindusara. It goes on to say that Chandragupta began showing Jain leanings owing to the teachings of the Jain teacher Susthita and Bhadrabahu and that Chanakya was very much upset by these heretical tendencies (*Chandraguptam tu mithyadrikpashandamatabhavitam*) and told Chandragupta that these Jains were all morally corrupt. Chandragupta challenged Chanakya to prove his charge. Chanakya proved it against some of the Jain teachers but failed to prove it against others, and Chandragupta finally took a Jain teacher as his *guru* and abdicated and went south when a twelve years famine broke out in Magadha. Chanakya made a cruel weaver, who was killing bugs by applying fire to those parts of his house where there were their nests, the Superintendent of the City Police at Pataliputra (*Nagardhyaksha*), and that cruel man inveigled many robbers to houses on the pretext of aiding them to secure loot and burnt them down in those houses or hacked them to pieces.

INDIAN LEGENDS

The Hindu, Buddhist and Jain legends about Chandragupta and Chanakya are certainly very old. Despite their apparent incredibility, it is possible for Indians to make out the meaning of the wild legends by discounting their hyperbole. Thus, when Maurya is said to have had a hundred sons it is probable that what is meant was that he had a hundred clansmen who followed him about, and were regarded by him like sons. A highland Chieftain of old, a Rajput ruler and a Hindu Caste-head, all used to regard their followers as their sons. This is found even now in the Malayalam or Kanarese expression of "*Makkale*" (sons) applied by a Chief to his followers. It is akin to the use of the expression "*brother*" by the "Society of friends." So too, Chandragupta, though called a "son" of Maurya in the legend, may very well be a "grandson," as, among the Hindus, the word "*son*" may mean "son's son," or "son's son's son" even in law, for purposes of inheritance. I also consider it very probable, from a scrutiny of the available materials, that Chandragupta was descended from Mahanandin, of the old and reputable Nandas, and that he was of nobler origin than the usurping *Nava-nandas* (new Nandas) whom he replaced.

CHANAKYA & CHANDRAGUPTA

It is also quite clear that too much credit has been given in Hindu, Buddhist and Jain legends to Chanakya, and too little to Chandragupta, whereas I have no doubt that both formed an ideal combination, Chanakya being Warwick and Bismarck combined, and Chandragupta, Wilhelm I and Moltke combined. The Greek and Roman accounts, as usual, give the necessary corrective, by ascribing the conquest of India solely to Chandragupta and by saying nothing at all about Chanakya.

ARGUMENTUM EX SILENTIO

The omission of the name of Chanakya by the classical writers, and the omission to mention Chandragupta, or Pataliputra, or Alexander, or Seleukos in the whole of Kautilya's *Arthasastra* have made some Western scholars doubt the very existence of Chanakya himself. But this *Argumentum ex Silentio* is, of course dangerous and inconclusive. As Professor Macdonnel, says, (Pages 150-151 of his "Sanskrit Literature."),

"A good illustration of the dangers of the *Argumentum ex Silentio* is furnished by the fact that salt, the most necessary of minerals, is never once mentioned in the *Rigveda*. And yet the Northern Punjab is the very part of India where it most abounds. It occurs in the Salt Range, between the *Indus* and the *Jhelum*, in such quantities that the Greek Companions of Alexander, according to Strabo, asserted the supply to be sufficient for the wants of the whole of India.

This point is illustrated also by another equally remarkable fact. Asoka does not mention his father Bindusara, or his grandfather, Chandragupta, in any of his inscriptions. Can this show that he was not aware of them, or was not descended from them? Even his own name is mentioned by him only once in all his inscriptions, namely, in the Maski inscription discovered very much later than the rest. The modern habit of referring to personal names was not so common in ancient times.

It is even now quite unusual for Indians living in the Indian States to name their kings by their personal names. So it was but natural for Chanakya to refer to Chandragupta as 'Narendra,' instead of as Chandragupta, especially when he calls himself 'Vishnugupta.' He did not mention Pataliputra by name in his *Arthasastra*, possibly because the book

was intended to be a text-book on Politics and Economics for all countries and for all time, and was not a description of the Mauryan Empire or of Pataliputra. Again, in those days people were fond of quoting the names of famous kings, of old and of very ancient cities, and not of reigning kings or recently-founded towns. Pataliputra was but a parvenu among India's ancient cities like Benares, Ayodhya, Kausambi, Kanyakubja, Indraprastha, Hastinapura, Ujjaini, etc. The fort there was built only in the time of the Buddha, by the Brahmin minister Vassakara (*Varshakara* or Rain-Maker) under the orders of Ajatasatru, as a defence against the Lichchhavis of Vaisali. Even Rajagriha in Magadha was much older.

DID CHANAKYA EXIST?

That Chanakya is a real historical person is clear from his mentioning Kusadhvaja and the Ambhiya (named after Ambhi or Omphis) school of Politics in his *Arthashastra*. Kusadhvaja was razed to the ground by Alexander, and Ambhi disappears from history after 321 B. C. So, the author of the *Arthashastra*, Chanakya, must have lived and written the book before 300 B. C. Again there is the unanimous testimony of Hindus, Buddhists and Jains. These three rival groups had no motive to agree about such a person, if he did not exist. Even the Hindus had no special reason to take away the credit of Chandragupta's achievement by inventing a Brahmin, Chanakya, who exterminated the Nandas and had him crowned. The Buddhists and Jains, who did not love Brahmins overmuch, had still less reason to do. To add to this unanimous testimony, there is the express claim by Kautilya in his *Arthashastra* that he uprooted the Nandas, and wrote a certain chapter of the book for the sake of "Narendra," who is found to be no other than Chandragupta.

Maurya from the *Brahmanda Purana*. Nobody in India dared to dispute this proud claim. All accepted it as true.

ARTHASASTRA

Some Western scholars have tried to attack the *Arthashastra* as a southern forgery, or at least as not the work of any Prime Minister of Chandragupta Maurya. They rely on the failure of Megasthenes to mention Chanakya to prove that Chanakya never existed. This is ridiculous, as already shown. Besides, the complete work of Megasthenes is not available, only quotations and extracts being preserved. So it is unsafe to assert that he did not mention Chanakya at all. Even if he did not, it might be due to Chanakya's having been absent from Pataliputra during his visit, leaving Rakshasa, a very hum-drum Minister, in charge. The fact that Asoka's inscriptions contain whole passages from Kautilya's *Arthashastra*, and that several terms therein can only be explained by referring to the *Arthashastra* show the earlier chronology of the *Arthashastra* compared to those inscriptions which undoubtedly belong to the third century B. C. So, the *Arthashastra* must have been the work of Chanakya or Kautilya, the destroyer of the *Navanandas* and the Prime Minister of Chandragupta Maurya, and of his son Bindusara Amitraghata, and must have existed in its present form at least by 300 B. C., and was therefore compiled by Kautilya according to the orders of 'Raja Narendra' or Chandragupta, as stated therein.

PLENTY OF EVIDENCE ABOUT AUTHENTICITY KAMANDAKA'S TESTIMONY

Kamandaka says in his *Nitisastra*:—

"To him who shone like a thunderbolt and before the stroke of (the thunderbolt of whose witchcraft the rich mountain-like Nandas fell down root and branch ; who alone with

the power of diplomacy, like Indra with his thunderbolt, bestowed the earth on Chandragupta, the moon among men ; who churned the nectar of the science of polity from the ocean of political sciences—to him the wise and Brahma-like Vishnugupta, we make salutation. From the scientific work of that learned man, who had reached the limits of knowledge, the favourite learning of the kings, brief yet intelligible, and useful in the acquisition and maintenance of the earth, we are going to extract and teach things in the manner acceptable to those learned in the science of polity."

Dandi says, in his *Dasakumaracharita*:—

"Learn then the Science of Polity. Now this has been abridged into six thousand slokas by the revered teacher Vishnugupta in the interests of the Mauryan King that, when learnt and well-observed, it can produce the results expected from it."

Vishnuserman, the author of the *Panchatantra* says:—

The *Dharmasastras* are those of Manu and others, the *Arthasastras* of Chanakya and others, the *Kamasutras* of Vatsyayana and others."

Bana says in his *Kadambari*:—

"Is there anything that is righteous for those for whom the science of Kautilya, merciless in its precepts, rich in cruelty, is an authority? whose teachers are priests habitually hard-hearted with practice of witch-craft; to whom ministers, always inclined to deceive others, are councillors; whose desire is always for the goddess of wealth that has been cast away by thousands of kings;—who are devoted to the application of destructive sciences; and to whom brothers, affectionate with natural cordial love, are fit victims to be murdered?"

The teachings of the *Arthasastra*, bluntly revealing all the terrible crimes committed by politicians and spies at all times, will shock pious souls like Bana, but will not surprise men acquainted with the murders and other deeds organised by unscrupulous members of the secret services even now. (see *Ashenden and Secret Service Manual*)

CHANAKYA, A WEST COAST TAMILIAN

Chanakya was in all probability a Southerner. His name "*Dramila*" shows him to be a Tamilian. Till the Andhra Empire fell in the third century A. D. "*Dramila*" or "*Dravida*" meant only a Tamilian. Even now the Andhras mean by "*Dravida*" a Tamilian. The *Arthasastra* shows an intimate knowledge of the South. The worship of *Kumara* and *Kumari* advocated there shows Chanakya to be a Tamilian from near Cape Comorin (*Kanya Kumari*). The mention of products from obscure hills and rivers now in Cochin State makes it probable that he was from Muyirikkodu, or Muchiri, or Muziris, or Cranganore of the present day in the Cochin State, but then part of the Tamil country and a great centre of Tamil culture. *Malayalam* (the younger sister of Tamil married to Sanskrit) had not yet been born. Kerala or the Malayalam country is the stronghold of *Atharva Veda* lore and of sorcerers, physicians and astrologers. It is quite easy to find there even to-day people who claim that they can kill others by incantations and that they can make themselves were-wolves or *Odiyans* or become even invisible. All the strange and wonderful things mentioned by Kautalya in the Fourteenth Book of his *Arthasastra* for injuring an enemy, such as making wonderful and delusive contrivances, oneself becoming invisible, causing death, blindness, consumptive diseases,

madness, etc., by *Mantras* and medicines, will find ready believers in the Kerala country. Thousands there believe even now in the feasibility and efficacy of those magic rites. The Tamils of Tanjore threaten "*to do malayalam*", to their opponents, meaning "*to do rites of Black-magic*." So, it is more likely that Chanakya, the adept in *Atharva Veda* and the arch-exponent of magic and Black-art, was from Keralaputra, and not from the present Tamil Nadu. This is also the inference from the significant fact that even to-day the word "*Vastu*" means in Malabar and Cochin "houses, fields, gardens, buildings and tanks" as in the *Arthasastra*, and that this use is apparently not found in other parts of India. So too, in Kerala, even now, *Adi-aruthi* and *Avani-pirappu*, the end of *Ashadh* and the beginning of *Sravan*, are important as the end and beginning of the Hindu financial year, as in the *Arthasastra*. The proverb "*Chozhiyan Chindu Summa Iradu*" (A Chozhiyan's tuft will always be after some mischief or other) certainly refers to the mischief done by Chanakya's dangling tuft, and is an additional argument for Chanakya's being a Tamil. Of course, it is no argument against his being a native of Cranganore, as several *Chozhiya* (Chola Brahmin) colonies have existed in the Keralaputra country from time immemorial, and exist even now in Malabar, Cochin and Travancore. No wonder, the Jain accounts bluntly say that Chanakya's parents were from the Golla (*Kollam* or Quilon,) *vishaya* (or District). The description of Chanakya in some places in Buddhist or Jain books as a Brahmin of Takshasila or as a Brahmin of Pataliputra need not bother us. It is only a natural description owing to his long stay at Takshasila and Pataliputra. His black colour, short stature etc, will reinforce the conclusion that he was from South India, let alone the name *Dramila* or *Tamizsha*.

MAURYAN INVASION OF SOUTH INDIA

Some scholars, European and Indian, have also doubted the fact of a Mauryan invasion of South India. They have not cared to explain what motive the three ancient Tamil poets, Mamulanar, Parankorranar and Attiraiyanar had to invent an invasion by the new Mauryas in aid of the Kosar and Vadugar and the defeat of the king of Mohur (Mayuram) in Tanjore after the Mauryas, with their sky-kissing flags and sky-touching umbrella, had crossed the lofty Podiyil hill in their golden chariots by constructing a chariot-road across it. These poets were proud of their Tamil kings and troops, and would not have invented a defeat for them by the Mauryas. They knew about the *Nava-Nandas* and their hoarded wealth. Again, the *Arthashastra* deals with the construction of chariot-roads. Several ancient inscriptions in South India mention the Nanda and Mauryan rule in Kuntala, etc. The fact that some early South Indian Kings claimed descent from the Mauryas also supports the truth of this Mauryan invasion of the extreme South of India. So too, the significant fact that in "Rock Edits" II and III of Asoka the kings of the Chola, Pandya, Keralaputra and Satyaputra countries are not named whereas the kings of Syria, Egypt, Macedonia, Cyrene, and Epirus are named as Antiochos, Ptolemy, Antigonus, Magos and Alexander. This suggests that the four southern kings and the king of Ceylon were feudatories of the Mauryan Emperor, who thus referred to them familiarly, without mentioning their names, as the Maharajas of Mysore, Cochin and Travancore were mentioned by the Viceroy or King before India became free.

PARVATAKA IS POROS SENIOR

Some scholars have identified "*Parvataka*" in the *Mudrarakshasa* with some assumed king of Nepal; others have identified him with Seleukos; and some have identified him with Poros Senior. I am of opinion that it was Poros Senior. He alone was powerful enough at that time to have the kings of Kashmir, Malaya, Kuluta, Sind and Saurashtra as his feudatory allies and to have Yavana, Parsika, Kirata, Kambhoja and Bablika mercenaries. No king of Nepal could have had these as followers. Besides, the statement that the kings of Kashmir, Malaya and Kuluta coveted the territory of Parvataka shows that his territory was in between theirs, and this fits in with Poros's known territories. The fact that Parvataka was accustomed to have Hindu funeral ceremonies disposes of Seleukos as a possibility besides the fact that Seleukos received only some powerful aphrodisiacs from Chandragupta and not a poison-maid! The name "*Parvataka*" for Poros, or Paurava, need not disturb us. Abhisara and Arsakes, the lords of the mountains between Kashmir and the Punjab, were vassals of Poros Senior. So he might have rightly called himself *Parvateswara* ("lord of the mountains") or *Parvataka* ("the man of the mountains"). Of course the Hindus of the Gangetic valley were only too glad to call him "*Parvataka*" or mountaineer, punning on his proud claim to be a "*Paurava*." By the Mauryan times the Punjab and the north-west, the land of the *Vedas*, had come to be regarded by the arrogant Hindus of the Gangetic valley as anything but sacred, while the people were looked upon either as low Hindus, or even as *Mlechchhas*. This opinion is reflected in many *Puranas* and *Dharma Sastras*. The Persian conquest of the north-west made this position even worse. For

the Persians and the Hindus, first cousins, hated one another with the proverbial hatred of first cousins. The Gods (*asuras*) of the Persians became the demons of the Hindus, and the gods (*devas*) of the Hindus became the demons of the Persians. The term "*Aryas*," applied proudly by the Hindus to themselves as meaning "gentlemen," was used by the Persians to mean "low fellows!". No wonder, then, that the Hindus of the northwest fell still lower in the estimation of their eastern brethren by their contact with the Persians. That Parvataka and Malayaketu had a lady Aide-de-camp (Vijaya), a Chamberlain (Jajali), and a Commander in chief (Sekharasena) just like the Nanda and Maurya kings, also shows that they could not be rulers of the then backward Nepal, and must have been rulers of the Punjab. *Malayaketu* means "the destroyer of Malaya," and perhaps refers to some warlike exploits of that prince when he made the king of Malaya, Poros's and his vassal.

POROS JUNIOR

The last authentic mention of Poros Senior in Greek accounts is in 321 B. C. when he was confirmed in his territories in the Punjab and Sind at the Second Partition of Alexander's Empire at Triparadeisos. So, there is nothing improbable in his having been killed at Pataliputra late in 321 B. C. when he went there lured by Chanakya's tempting offer. The Poros murdered by Eudemos treacherously in 317 B. C. could have been, and in my opinion was, Poros Junior, the nephew of Poros Senior, as he had only 120 elephants whereas Poros Senior had 200 elephants even at the battle of the *Hydaspes* and must have vastly increased their number after the great augmentation of his territories by Alexander. Besides, Poros Senior,

who held his own with Alexander, could not have been tricked so easily by Eudemos. Nor could a giant like him, with the marvellous and impervious coat-of-mail described by the Greek writers, have been murdered so suddenly by Eudemos. The other Poros, a far feebler character, could, of course, have been tricked and murdered.

OMPHIS

Now a word about Omphis. The last time we hear of him authentically is in 321 B. C., when he was confirmed in his dominions between the *Indus* and *Hydaspes* at the Second Partition at Triparadeisos. Then we hear nothing of him at all. When the curtain rises again, Takshasila is the headquarters of the Mauryan Viceroy of *Uttarapatha*, and is directly administered by him. All trace of Omphis and his relatives has gone. Though the citizens of Takshasila were in revolt both under Bindusara and under Asoka, owing to alleged insults to them by wicked Ministers (*dushta amastyas*) they take care to explain that they are loyal to the Mauryan Emperor and Viceroy, and have grievances only against the wicked Ministers who were heaping insults on them. This shows that Omphis' line was extinct and, even if some branches survived, evoked no loyalty or even fond memories. So it is but appropriate to make Omphis childless, and to make him commit suicide after all the Greeks had left him, and so could not record that picturesque event which they did not witness.

CHANDRAGUPTA'S END

In view of the unanimous testimony of Jain books that Chandragupta became a Jain and followed the *Srutakevalin* Bhadrabahu in his great migration to Sravana Belgola with 12,000 *Digambaras* from Ujjain, corroborated by the inscriptions at Sravana Belgola from 600 A. D. commemorating the

sallekhana of the pair, Bhadrabahu along with Chandragupta Muni, and the names of Chandragupta near the place like Chandravali, Chandrarayapatna, etc, and the evidence of books like *Brihat Katha Kosa*, *Bhadrabahu Charita*, *Munivamsa-bhyudaya*, and *Rajavalikathe*, uniformly recording that the Chandragupta who committed *sallekhana* at Sravana Belgola was Chandragupta "the King of Pataliputra," and Asoka's inscription at Brahmagiri close by, I accept this tradition, especially as Indian Kings are apt to become *sannyasis* suddenly because of disease or calamity, all the more so as Chanakya's bitterness against Jains, Buddhists and Ajivakas, in his *Arthasastra*, making them never live near high caste Hindu quarters, and placing drastic restrictions on people becoming monks, or being invited to *sraddhas*, shows a heart lacerated by the conversion of the king whom he got crowned to another religion.

RESULT OF WANTON INVASION BY ALEXANDER AND SELEUKOS

Peaceful India, with its cult of non-violence, was rudely woken up by the wanton invasions of Alexander and Seleukos (and, later on, by Demetrios and Menander, Sakas and Huns, and Muslims and Europeans). The effect on her is neatly summed up in the following lines of Matthew Arnold, slightly adapted :

"The brooding East with awe beheld
Her impious younger world ;
The western tempest swell'd and swell'd
And on her head was hurled.
So she woke, and the morning broke
Across her spirit grey ;
A conquering new-born joy awoke
And filled her life with day. "

A NOVELIST'S LIBERTY

In writing this novel, I have tried, as far as possible not to go against proved historical facts of any importance. But, where History is silent, or speaks with no certain voice, I have taken a novelist's liberty. The writer of a historical novel may allow his fancy to roam at will in the realm of the unknown.

Nothing is more appropriate in the present glorious period of India's renaissance and regaining of her independence, when Eastern and Western ideas are stirring the people into various kinds of poetic, artistic and religious expression peculiarly their own, than depicting the story of the time when India came first into contact with the greatest and most civilised nation in Europe then, the Greeks, and, in their train, with the four greatest and most civilised nations of Asia and Africa, the Persians, the Phoenicians, the Jews and the Egyptaians. The picture from the Sanchi Tope, in the Frontispiece, shows Chandragupta and Seleukos after they became friends, after the Treaty in 303 B C., and speaks for itself. The Lotuses of India (symbolizing the *saddaharmapundarika*, and spiritual ideals), held in his hands by Chandragupta, mingle there harmoniously and on equal terms with the grapes of Greece (symbolizing the wine of life, and ideals regarding a happy life here below), held in his hands by Seleukos. Both the heroes were seated appropriately on legendary lions. Is it too fanciful to wish that the Lotuses of Asia and Africa and the Grapes of Europe, Australia and America will mingle now, harmoniously and equally, through representatives of all the countries of the world seated at the United Nations Conference table, in these great times when Kings are but names, and the peoples are the powers to reckon with, and both the atom and the *atma* count?

"GITA", KILPAUK
INDEPENDENCE DAY
15th August 1951. }

A. S. P. AYYAR.

CHAPTER I

THE SON OF SAGES

RAIN was falling one afternoon in August 327 B.C. in the city of Kasi. The narrow streets were getting slushy and slippery. Giant bulls stood blocking the streets and lanes, unconcerned at the rain or the passers-by who edged themselves in between them as if they were rocks or posts. Nobody interfered with them, any more than with the rains or the wandering *sannyasis*¹ of different kinds, for they were Siva's messengers just as the rains were Indra's messengers and the *sannyasis* were God's messengers.

In a house on the Hanuman Ghat facing the Ganges, Janeswari, the mother of Chanakya, was anxiously awaiting the result of a gigantic contest in Vedic recitation and disputation in which her son was competing that day. She was aged forty-five and was dark in complexion, wiry in features, and bristling with energy. With her was her friend and hostess Meenakshi and her grand-daughter Gautami. Meenakshi was 56 years old, was brown in colour, and had a cheerful smile on her lips. Gautami was just past 11 and was a fair well-built handsome girl.

"I wonder how he is faring in this contest to-day, Jana.² It seems to be very keen as it has not ended yet,

1. Hindu monks.

2. A contraction of 'Janeswari.'

I hear that scholars of repute have come from all over *Jambudvīpa*.¹ The King of Kasi is giving a pair of costly shawls as the prize, besides taking the victor in a triumphal procession round the town to the beating of drums and cymbals," said Meenakshi.

"He will come off all right," said Jana. "This is not his first contest. He has all the retentive memory of his father with the subtlety and originality of his paternal grandfather and the uncanny intuition of his maternal grandfather."

"No wonder, he is called 'the son of sages.' He is said to have cut his wisdom-teeth at the age of fourteen," said Meenakshi. "I heard that he had two milk-teeth even when he was born, and that astrologers said that this indicated that he would rule over *Jambudvīpa* from a far-off city, and that his father, Chanaka, had these pulled out in order to prevent this, as a Brahman like Chanakya should not do the many cruel things a ruler would have to do and go to hell, and also in order to allay your fear that your only child would be leaving you."

"Yes, but even his regular teeth came on very quickly including the wisdom teeth. By that time, his father was no more. The astrologers persisted in saying that he would rule over *Jambudvīpa* at least as a minister of the emperor of *Jambudvīpa*. I again got perturbed. But my boy told me that he would always keep me with him and leave off the ministership, even if he became a

1. In this context, it means India.

minister, as soon as he could. These predictions soon got bruited about in the locality. Chanakya's class-mates ragged him about them. They also jeered at his black colour and bandy legs and short stature and called him '*Angula*' or 'one-inch dwarf' and asked him if no handsomer man was available to rule over *Jambudvīpa*. He got enraged, and swore that he would make good the predictions and become a great man one day. He took to his studies with zest. Soon he became a great Vedic scholar and also a past master in secret and delusive contrivances and in medicines and *Mantras*, metallurgy, economics, politics, psychology and mesmerism and entered every contest in Takshasila. He got the title '*Mallanaga*' or 'the elephant among the wrestlers' owing to his victories in even the greatest contests. He was also called *Pakshilaswami* by some because of his prodigious memory, as he could remember for a *paksha* or fortnight everything heard once, and by some others because he was the master of hundreds of birds, carrier-pigeons and hoopoes, which he employed for carrying secret messages."

"So, be careful," said Meenakshi to Gautami. "Any husband is hard to please, and this one ought to be even harder."

"She need have no fear," said Jana. "He is most affectionate and considerate. He has never said an unkind word to me yet. The blazing fire of his anger is always reserved for fit objects of his wrath, and is never directed against the weak and the helpless."

"He has some other names. What do they all mean?" asked Meenakshi. "Vishnugupta, of course, is his own

name which he was given after his paternal grandfather. What about the rest? "

"He is called *Kautalya* because of our *gotra*, the Kutala gotra, though some call him *Kautilya* or 'the crooked' because of his¹ bandy legs and the endless intricacies of his plans and the convolutions of his brain. He has made fun of these uncomplimentary critics by referring to himself as *Kautilya*, just as Uddhava called himself *Vatavyadhi* or Narada called himself *Pisuna*, or Bhishma called himself *Kaunapadanta*. He is called *Vatsyayana* after my father's *gotra*, the *Sri Vatsa gotra* as he is the *dwamushyayana*¹ son of my father also. Of course he is called *Dramila* or *Tamila* as we are Tamils like you from Muchiri in *Kollam Vishya*². He is referred to as Chanakya after his father."

"Well, Gautami, now you have the answer to your question to me the other day," said Meenakshi.

Gautami promptly fled into the kitchen.

"She will make an excellent daughter-in-law," said Meenakshi. "She is an obedient girl and can cook well. She keeps the kitchen clean and free of mice, rats, roaches and other Pests."

"My son likes her cooking," said Jana.

"That is why I have asked her to cook today her special dish, *dosais*, our favourite rice-cakes," said Meenakshi. "When this marriage is over, we shall be

1 An agreement by the father of a girl that her son shall be treated as his adopted son also, besides being the son of his son-in-law.

2. Quilon District of Kerala.

free. Ever since her parents died, we have been bringing her up here. We are growing old, and my husband is suggesting that we should migrate to *Suklathirtha* on the banks of the *Narmada*, so that we might spend our last days in that holy place. You know how absolutely indifferent he has become to worldly things."

"I know," said Jana, "Syama Sastri's learning and disinterestedness are both well-known."

Gautami now brought two nice rice-cakes on plantain leaves, one for her grand-mother and one for Jana. There was also cocoanut *chutney* as sauce.

"Have you kept some for your grand-father?" asked Jana. "He will be hungry when he returns from this contest."

"She is sure to have done that. She is his favourite and will never forget him. But I am sure she has kept the nicest ones for Chanakya," said Meenakshi.

Gautami fled into the kitchen once more.

"Are there not such contests at Takshasila?" asked Meenakshi.

"There are, but the king of Takshasila has no tradition of patronage of Vedic learning behind him as the Kings of Kasi and Magadha. The place is on the borders of *Jambudvīpa* near the land of the *Yavanas* and *Kambhojas*. Medicine and surgery prosper more than the Vedas there. Foreigners of every description abound there, *Yavanas*, *Nyseans*, *Bahlikas*, *Asvakas*, *Kambhojas*, *Aspasians*, *Parsikas* and others, and they

wield great influence. Indeed, the King and the Crown Prince have gone to do homage to a great *Yavana* chief who has conquered the Persian Empire and is advancing on Takshasila. Chanakya advised them to seek the help of the king of *Magadha* first, as it would be dangerous for our *Dharma* if they became vassals of this unknown *Yavana*. They rejected his advice. So he is now on his way to Pataliputra to get the first prize in the learned contests here and meet the Nanda king and publish his great book '*Arthasastra*' under his auspices, just as Panini, Vararuchi and Varsha published their famous books there."

"There is some difference between those days and now," said Meenakshi. "You know, Mahapadma Nanda, who overran all North and Central India, like a new Parasurama, and defeated and exterminated the Aikshvakus, Panchalas, Kasis, Haihayas, Kalingas, Asmakas, Kurus, Maithilas, Surasenas and Vitihotras, and uprooted all their dynasties with the sole exception of the King of Kasi, and became *Ekrat* or Emperor, and patronised learning on even a greater scale than Bimbisara and Ajatasatru, suddenly had a nervous break-down; and, on his partial recovery, felt an aversion for the world and, became a hermit under the name of Sarvarthasiddhi making his eight sons virtually the ruling monarchs, though they associated him also with themselves and called it the rule of the *Navanandas*, the Nine Nandas or the New Nandas. These sons of Mahapadma, who rule *Magadha* now, are mean and do not appreciate learning or

reward it by merit. The youngest, Dhanananda, is notorious for inventing new taxes and taking the last copper out of the subjects. The brothers simply like to hoard their money and listen to endless flattery."

"Hm!", said Jana. "Perhaps that is why Chanakya said that he would go alone to Pataliputra, leaving me here. He has evidently heard something about the present king from his innumerable spies some of whom are from Magadha."

"Good Heavens ! Does he keep a host of spies, like a king?" asked Meenakshi. "And where are they now?"

"His spies are everywhere and nowhere. Even I don't know them always. He is a man of mystery and terror for his enemies, but is the soul of simplicity and love for his friends. At Takshasila he got such a tremendous reputation for learning and proficiency in the occult arts that many of his fellow students took him as their *guru*. So, at the age of 30 he is already an *Acharya* with many disciples. Even the king of Takshasila used to respect and fear 'the black Brahmin' as he was known there owing to his dark complexion, because of his thorough mastery of secret and delusive contrivances and of medicines and *mantras* of astonishing power."

"What are they?" asked Meenakshi.

"He has an ointment, prepared from owls, fishes and fire-flies which is said to enable a man to see in pitch-dark nights as in broad daylight. He can by a similar ointment prepared from frogs, iguanas, etc, walk over fire, as over a bed of grass and put flaming fire over his head or into his mouth without the least harm. He can make most

people do what he wants by his mesmeric power. He can read people's minds like an open book. He claims to know deadly poisons which can cause instant death or in a month or two, without leaving a trace of the poison behind. His disciples say that he is able to manufacture powders which will cause madness, leprosy, consumption, blindness and death to whole armies if sprayed through bamboo reeds. He has drugs which will enable men to fast for a fortnight or a month running. He has a medicine which will enable a fire to burn brightly in the greatest rain or storm. He is said to have a poison which, if smeared on arrows, will cause havoc among the enemy troops. His disciples say that he has an ointment which will enable people to become invisible if smeared over the body like oil. He has devices to change a man's appearance completely at will. And he has medicines to counteract any such contrivances of the enemy."

"Wonderful! He must be an adept in the *Atharva Veda* and the black arts," exclaimed Meenakshi. "But, how does he get money for all these researches and for paying his spies?"

"Money is no problem to him. Eight years back, he brought silver worth ten thousand *satamanas*¹ from a merchant, whose son he was teaching, and had the whole lot coined into *satamanas* and *karshapanas*² and *rupyas*,³

1. An ancient Indian coin weighing 100 *rattis* or about 180 grains and worth a rupee.

2. An ancient Indian coin weighing 40 *rattis* and worth about six annas.

3. Our present rupee. 'Rupya' means 'the beautiful' or 'silver'.

a new coin he made though he called them *panas* to keep the old term, with five beautiful punch-marks, the sun god, the six-armed *bhagavathi*,¹ an elephant, a rhinoceros and a mountain, and increased the value five-fold at one stroke. He returned the ten thousand *satamanas* to the merchant and kept the rest. He has done similar mintings whenever he required money. He has stored in secret places nearly a million *panas* for future needs according to his disciples, "said Jana.

"An *easy* way of making money," said Meenakshi.

"Yes, it is the *royal* way of making money," said Jana. "But he spends as lavishly as he earns, for he holds that money is only for sacrifice. '*Yajnartham artham*', he says ten times a day. He paid a thousand *panas* to Chandragupta's master to release him and has spent ten thousand *panas* to give Chandragupta an education worthy of a prince at Takshasila as he is convinced, like the astrologers, 'that Chandra will become King of all *Jambudvipa* one day.'

"He is good at astrology too?" asked Meenakshi.

"Yes, very good," said Jana.

"Who is this Chandragupta?" asked Meenakshi.
'How did Chanakya discover him?'

"He has an unerring eye for merit. Shortly after minting the first coins, he was going along the foot-hills of the Himalayas near Pippalavana. He saw a small cowboy of fourteen playing *Rājakila* or the "Royal game" with fellow-cow-boys, taking the part of King and having the other boys as ministers, officers, chariot-men,

1. Mother Goddess.

elephant-troops, horsemen and infantry. The boy had the thirty-two marks of royalty on him and was acting the part of King so naturally that Chanakya asked him for a gift to him as a learned Brahman. The boy showed some cows belonging to a neighbouring chieftain and said, 'Take them.' When Chanakya asked him whether they belonged to him, the boy replied, 'Not as cowherd but as king. The world belongs to the brave.' Chanakya was so struck by this reply and by the boy's bearing and auspicious marks that he forthwith took the boy from the huntsmen, after paying a thousand *karshapanas*, and brought him to Takshasila and put him through an intensive course of education in archery and general knowledge, along with the 103 princes in that class, for seven years at his own expense, stating, 'He is born to be a King and ought to be trained for it.' That boy is Chandragupta. He picked up everything rapidly. He is of the *Moriya* clain and is now at Pataliputra as one of the officers of the Nanda King. It also turns out that he is a descendant of the ancient Magadhan royal family, through Mura, the Vrishala wife of Mahanandin and her son Maurya," said Jana.

"Will Chanakya win in this contest?" asked Meenakshi.

"He cannot but win in this. His teacher, Ambarisha, who is here now, assured me that he would win, and has gone to watch the contest. He cannot go wrong, His disciples, Indusarma, Siddharthaka and Nipunaka are also sure about his success, and they too are men who ought to know," said Jana.

"Siddharthaka is coming. I wonder what news he brings," said Meenakshi.

Siddharthaka, a young man of 21, went to Jana, saluted her, and said, "He has won! He has won! He is being taken in a procession round the town. Come along, all of you. We shall go and watch it near the *Dasasvamedh*¹ ghat!".

"Oh, I am ever so glad," said Jana. "How many competed?"

"Seventy-four. One after another they committed some mistake or other and dropped out. Finally only an old man and our *Acharya* were left. The old man committed a slip, and, our *Acharya* was declared victor by the assembled committee of *pundits*. 'He has rolled all the four Vedas into one,' said the old man, 'it is not fair to pit me against him, an old bull against a young elephant.' Our *Acharya's* *Acharya*² shouted in joy at the success of his erstwhile pupil. Now, come quick."

Devaki, Meenakshi and Gautami soon set out with Siddharthaka and reached the *Dasasvamedh* ghat which was crowded to its utmost capacity. The procession arrived at last. Chanakya was on a gaily caparisoned elephant which was surrounded on all sides and almost hidden from view by an admiring crowd. After an imposing fanfare of trumpets, the king's herald cried out, "Here rides the victor Chanakya, the son of sages, the lamp among

1. A famous ghat where ten horse sacrifices are said to have been celebrated.

2. Ambarishah.

the learned, the chief among the debaters, the ocean of knowledge. He who dares to challenge his title, let him come forward!" Nobody stirred. Jana's face was radiant with joy. Meenakshi too was very happy. Gautami gazed at her future lord and husband with unmistakable admiration. Chanakya saw them all and bowed to his mother and Meenakshi amidst universal applause. Then the King of Kasi presented the pair of costly shawls, and spoke a few words about the great contest, and the assembly dispersed.

Chanakya went with his shawls to his mother and said, "Mother, your blessings."

"Oh, how I wish your father were alive now to see this!" said Janesevari, and shed a tear.

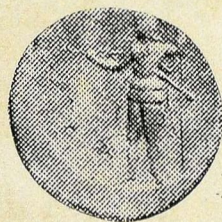
"All of us rejoice over your triumph," said Meenakshi. "Now let us go home! Gautami has prepared some nice rice cakes for you."

"You go in advance. I shall follow in a few minutes," said Chanakya.

They did accordingly. Soon afterwards, Chanakya reached the house with Ambarisha and a dozen friends and disciples. Syama Sastri had returned home in advance. He received them all with unassumed joy.

"It is the greatest contest ever held in Kasi for the last thirty years," Ambarisha told every one proudly.

"Now bring the cakes, mother," said Chanakya. "Our friends require something solid after those Vedic disputations."



The Porus Medal P. 12

Meenakshi and Jana looked embarrassed as they had not counted for so many guests and thought that Gautami would have prepared only a few cakes for Chanakya and Syama Sastri. But their surprise was great when Gautami took a huge pile of rice cakes, more than sufficient for all the visitors. Syama Sastri told the friends of Chanakya, "He is to marry Gautami in next *Pushya*.¹ You must all bless the occasion with your presence."

"Of course, we will," said one and all.

CHAPTER II

TEACHER AND PUPIL MEET AGAIN

IT was nine O'clock one morning in February 326 B.C. The city of Pataliputra was rousing itself to its usual hectic and varied activity despite the fast-mounting sun and the steadily increasing heat. All its sixty-four gates were open, and the five hundred and seventy towers on the city walls were guarded by the sentries on duty. Innumerable bullock carts were coming into the Imperial city laden with all kinds of articles of luxury and necessity. Frankincense, corals, pearls and rhinoceros teeth from

1. A month from about the 13th January to 13th February.

Arabia and the Persian Gulf coming through Bharukacha¹, Sopara and Ujiaini; rubies and sapphires from Simhala; diamonds from Kalinga, Kosala, Vidarbha, Vajrakarur and the Vedotkata mountain; beryls from the Satyaputra country; the finest pearls and cotton fabrics from the Pandya country²; silks from Tibet, Kashmir and Benares; gold from Sind, Suvarnagiri and the Darada³ country; rock-salt from the Salt Range; sea-salt from Tamralipti; sandalwood from Kamarupa and Mahishamandala;⁴ crocodile and tiger skins from Vanga⁵ and Kamarupa; bear skins and panther skins from the Himalayas and the Vindhya; skins of sea animals from Saurashtra; pepper, ginger, cardamoms and cloves from Kerala; blankets from Nepal, Vanga and the Pandya country, and rice and all kinds of cereals, oil, cumin, cinnamon, cassia, coriander, fish, charcoal, firewood, straw, weapons, mud pots, iron articles, vegetables, flowers, and plantain leaves, were being brought in by the patient bullocks, the main carriers of India through the ages. Inland customs officers were closely scrutinising the goods and levying the royal and municipal dues and affixing the red seals in token of payment. They were also demanding to see the passports of foreigners, wild tribes and suspicious-looking strangers, as they crossed one of the four bridges across the vast moats, six hundred feet broad and forty-five feet deep, surrounding the city

1. Bhrikukachha or Broach.

2. Mangalore and Satyamangalam country.

3. Near Gilgit.

4. Assam and Mysore.

5. Bengal.

wall throughout its length of nine miles and breadth of two miles and approached one of the gates set among the high wooden palisades and ramparts. The moats were filled with water from the lake formed in the *Hiranyavaha* or *Sona* river by a dam. They extended even to the southern side between the *Sona* and the walled city.

Thousands of citizens were bathing in the *Sona*. Many more were returning in chariots and bullock carts after a bath in the sacred Ganges a few miles to the north-east of the city. Many were bathing also in the Ganges canal just north of the city. An aqueduct was carrying the Ganges water over the moat from this canal to the Gangasagar, a vast sheet of crystal water outside the Suganga palace. Hundreds of people were bathing in that tank also. On the banks of the tank were temples dedicated to Siva, Indra, Krishna, Subrahmanya, Sankarshana, Kubera and the Asvins. There was also a temple of Durga Aparajita, the Goddess Kumari and the Goddess Madira.

The palace had extensive pleasure grounds and gardens.

There were shady banyan and *peepul* trees, jack and *jambu*, deodar, babul, *Bel* and *sal*, palms and mango trees, and huge clumps of bamboos and reeds and creepers of various kinds forming beautiful bowers.

Trees full of *Patali* or trumpet flowers, from which Pataliputra got its name, were planted in these grounds which contained besides sweet-smelling flowers of other kinds like jasmine and champak in such abundance that the town itself was called alternatively Kusumapura or the city of flowers. Rhododendrons and orchids added colour

and glory. Peacocks and *mynas* strutted about the grounds, secure in the protection afforded by the King and various other birds chirped from the dense foliage.

Inside the palace grounds there were several pools filled with water from the Ganges, one exclusively for the king and his queens, one for the princes, one for the ladies of the royal family, one for the ladies in waiting and one for the officers of the royal household. White swans swam gaily on them. The palace building itself was a masterpiece of the Hindu architecture of those days. Though built entirely of wood, it was of surpassing splendour and magnificence. It stood in the centre of extensive gardens, and had three storeys, and vast halls with gilded pillars adorned with golden vines and silver birds. The royal rooms and the audience chambers were luxuriously fitted. Basins and goblets of gold, some measuring six feet in width, richly carved tables and chairs of state made of teak, ebony and rosewood, and covered over with gold and silver embroidered cloth, the most exquisitely made copper and brass articles, huge vessels of glazed and ornamental pottery filled with cool water, the most delicate pieces of ivory carving, and huge brass and crystal mirrors with polished surfaces decked those rooms. Even the ordinary rooms had an appearance of luxury and wealth befitting such a great ruler's palace. The palace with the gardens occupied a vast square and had four main entrances. Six horsemen and twelve infantrymen stood guard at each of the entrances and were changed every three hours. Several more were guarding the inner apartments, the ladies' enclosure, the

arms magazine and the treasury. Men and women servants were constantly moving in and out on various errands.

In a detached building adjoining the palace was the grand banqueting hall where brisk arrangements were in progress for the feasting of a thousand Brahmins in the presence of the King and the royal princes. That being new moon day, the banquet was to be on a grander scale than on ordinary days. The King and the princes were expected to arrive there at 10 o'clock. So there was great bustle. Though the Superintendent was on leave, owing to a ceremony in his house, he had stepped in for a few minutes to see that every arrangement was made properly. for he loved to see all things done well. He now emerged out of the hall, and the sentries saluted him respectfully, and yet affectionately. For they loved Chandragupta who was the ablest and most popular captain in the army and was the grandson of their late commander-in-chief Maurya whose memory they cherished.

Chandragupta returned their salute and went through the spacious palace gardens towards the northwestern corner of the palace enclosure where his own quarters were located. He was twenty-two years old, of medium height, well-built and muscular, and looked every inch a soldier. His face was outwardly cheerful, smiling and captivating, but a close observation revealed an inward seriousness and sadness. His chin indicated grim determination and an iron will. He wore a fine muslin cloth of the famous Gangetic brand. It was tucked up at his waist and came

half way down to his ankles. He had also a silk coat fastened at the front with tassels, a gold-laced upper cloth over his shoulders and a laced turban. Half-way through the gardens, he reached a neglected part overgrown with jungle trees, thorns and brambles on either side of the path. A kind of deep-rooted grass had also spread over portions of the pathway. He found a man sitting on the path a hundred yards away assiduously uprooting some of the invading grass.

The man arrested his attention at once. He was about 30 years old, short in stature, and very dark in complexion. He wore a holy thread and castemark showing him to be a *Sama Veda Srotriya* Brahmin¹, and was evidently on his way to the banqueting hall to take part in the feast after having had already a bath in the Ganges. He had by his side a small copper vessel and tumbler, and a cloth bundle. Why was this Brahmin digging that grass with all his might and main like a gardener till the last root had been pulled out? Chandragupta's curiosity was roused by this unusual sight. He went some fifty yards further and discovered him to his utter surprise to be his *guru* Chanakya. So, he watched fascinatedly. Chanakya gathered up all the dry grass he had dug up, opened his cloth bundle, took from it two flints and cotton, made a fire, set fire to the dry grass, poured out some water from the copper vessel into the small tumbler, dissolved the ashes of the burnt grass in it, and drank the solution with great relish and satisfaction. Then he washed the tumbler, replaced it in the copper vessel and

1. A high-born Brahmin following the third Veda.

put back the flints in the cloth bundle. Wonderstruck, Chandragupta approached him reverently, and said, "I prostrate myself at the lotus feet of my *guru*, Arya Chanakya". "Blessing" said Chanakya, genuinely pleased, "I wanted to give you a surprise. So, I did not send word to you about my coming here. Hope you are getting on well here."

"With your blessings, sir. May I know the name of that herb which you dug up just now?"

"It was no herb. It was just ordinary grass, the variety that spreads and trips down unwary pedestrians. It caught my feet today and made me fall down. It made a fool of me. But, now, you see what has happened. For the momentary humiliation it was able to inflict on me it has been destroyed, root and branch. So will all Chanakya's enemies perish!" said the stranger.

"Reverend sir, does an inanimate thing like that grass deserve to be punished?" asked Chandragupta.

"Of course, though I should prefer not to use the term *punishment*. I should rather say that such things have to be set right. Indeed, this comes under the heading 'removal of thorns.' Don't we bite off the point of a thorn which pierces our foot? We owe a duty to the public to destroy such noxious things. In addition, I have got a private benefit also by this action. The anger which welled up in me at my fall has now ceased after this act of retaliation. So a double purpose has been served by this simple act."

"You said just now that all your enemies will perish like this, sir? What will happen if some powerful king were to insult your reverence?"

"The very same thing that you saw me do now" said Chanakya coolly. "What can a king do to me? Elephants, cavalry, chariots, and infantry are nothing to me. My intellect can easily get the better of all these. Nothing is impossible for me. Don't look incredulous—surely you know me too well to take me to be a boaster. I am so confident because I never do anything which is opposed to *Dharma*¹. He who upholds *Dharma* is upheld by it. He who destroys it is destroyed by it."

"But will *Dharma* be able to assert itself in this iron age,² sir?"

"Certainly. It will assert itself in any age. The fools who complain of the powerlessness of *Dharma* in this age do not know what *Dharma* is; they complain only because their pet schemes and plots, which they confuse with *Dharma*, fail."

"Reverend Sir, your recent resounding victory at Benares has made all the *Pandits* here afraid of you. Your extraordinary learning and occult powers are a subject of constant wonder and awe to them," said Chandragupta.

"I am glad to hear that," said Chanakya.

"What brings your reverence here now?" asked Chandragupta.

"I want to win the first prize in the learning contest here. Besides, my monumental work on economics

1. Righteousness.

2. The Hindus consider this to be the Kali or Iron Age.

and politics, the *Arthasastra*, is half finished. I have come here to show it to the King of Magadha."

"Have you shown it to the King of Takshasila, sir?" asked Chandragupta.

"No. It is a book meant for the guidance of great kings who are not likely to use the many secret and dangerous contrivances described there against the four castes or our ancient *Dharma*. The King of Takshasila has gone to swear allegiance to a *Yavana* Chieftain called Alikasundara or Alexander, disregarding my advice. Like Panini and Vararuchi I want to show my learning in the famous city of Pataliputra."

"You have crossed the ocean of learning, sir," said Chandragupta.

"Pooh!" said Chanakya, "People who have not seen the Ganges and see a man carrying a vessel of Ganges water, like me, are struck by the large quantity. Only those who have seen the Ganges, like you and me, will realise the utter insignificance of the quantity in the vessel. The ocean of knowledge can never be wholly crossed. The man who pretends to have done it has only crossed some miserable brook which falls into the ocean and has mistaken it for the ocean in his ignorance and incompetence, like an ant mistaking a tank for an ocean."

"You are very modest," said Chandragupta.

"Modest!" said Chanakya. "I am only speaking the truth. Truth must be spoken even against oneself. Of course, it can be spoken even when it is in favour of oneself. That is why I said that I am a match for any

king on earth who deviates from *Dharma* and insults me. Now, *Vrishala*¹, tell me where is this banqueting hall." He stopped and looked shamefaced. "I apologise for the unintentional insult," said he, "I never meant to offend you."

"Call me *Vrishala* always," said Chandragupta, "There is nothing more agreeable to one than that one's *gurus* should call one by a familiar epithet. I request you to be ever my friend and well-wisher, and never to be estranged from me whatever I chance to do in my ignorance."

"Never can a Brahmin do without a Kshatriya, or a Kshatriya without a Brahmin. And Maurya's grandson must certainly be a Kshatriya," said Chanakya. "Now I must be going to the banqueting hall. Will you be coming there soon?"

"No, sir, I am on leave today in connection with the annual ceremony of my mother's death. But the Manager will be in charge. Pray, come, after the feast is over, to my humble house near by. There, that is the building," said Chandragupta. "I want to talk such a lot to you."

"Capital" said Chanakya. "Nothing will please me better. Leave a man at the gate of the banqueting hall to guide me to your house after the banquet."

1. Here, it means a Kshatriya who had abandoned the orthodox caste customs owing to the conversion of his family at one time to Buddhism or Jainism and was therefore regarded as a Sudra by the orthodox masses, though he himself had now become a Hindu. The Moriyas were a branch of the Sakyas, Kshatriyas converted to Buddhism.

"I shall," said Chandragupta, and left for his house, while Chanakya walked briskly towards the banqueting hall.

As soon as he reached his house, Chandragupta called his expert spy, Bhagirathi, told him about Chanakya's arrival in the city and asked him to watch outside the banqueting hall unostentatiously and to lead Chanakya, whom he described to him, to his house when he came out. "He will, I am afraid, land himself in some trouble there," said he to Bhagirathi. "He is too great a believer in *Dharma* for this iron age. Anyway, his experience today will be a test of his doctrine that *Dharma* triumphs even in this age. Go now, and keep your eyes and ears open."

CHAPTER III

CHANAKYA'S VOW

CHANAKYA entered the spacious banqueting hall. He saw ten gold plates and a thousand silver plates before most of which the learned Brahmins had already sat. The Manager in charge told him, in answer to his question, that the nine gold plates were for the eight Nanda brothers and their father Sarvarthasiddhi, that the tenth gold plate was for the most learned Brahmin of the day, while the silver plates were for the other learned Brahmins and ministers and guests and asked him if he had the necessary permit to sit at one of the silver plates. "I am Chanakya, acknowledged to be the most learned

Brahmin alive by the *Pundits* of Benares and Takshasila. So I am entitled to sit before the tenth gold plate," said Chanakya. At the mention of his name there was a general stir. All eyes were turned on the man whose recent triumph at Benares was known to every one and whose fame for learning had become legendary. "Reverend sir," said the Manager, "all of us have heard of your tremendous learning. But this seat is reserved. The *Rajaguru*,¹ the venerable Subandhu, sits there always".

"How can that be allowed? How can one man be the most learned Brahmin every day? Besides, I hear that he is not so very learned," said Chanakya. All the assembled Brahmins laughed, as Subandhu's learning was the object of many a joke at these feasts.

Chanakya soon entered into conversation with them and delighted them by talking on different topics with equal ease and authority. The leading Brahmins said to the Manager, "Fame has not exaggerated his prowess. He is assuredly the most learned Brahmin we have ever seen."

Chanakya then went and sat before the tenth gold plate, saying, "This *parishad*² has elected me to this seat."

The dismayed Manager said to him, "Reverend sir, it is not safe for you to sit there."

"Why not? I shall not move from here till a more learned man ousts me," said Chanakya.

1. The King's chaplain and preceptor.

2. An assembly of learned men.

The Nandas arrived at that very moment, accompanied by Rakshasa, Nakranasa, Sakatala and other ministers. Chanakya rose from his seat to honour them. They and Subandhu stared at this poverty-stricken, dark ugly Brahmin clad in a coarse home-spun loin cloth and upper cloth presuming to occupy the tenth gold plate.

"I say," said Subandhu, at last, breaking into a laugh, "do you know for whom that gold plate is?"

"Yes, it is for the most learned Brahmin of the day," said Chanakya, "and I am he. I am Chanakya, acknowledged to be the most learned Brahmin alive by the *Pundits* of Benares and Takshasila."

Subandhu shrank back like one stung. He did not dream of entering into any learned discussion with this far-famed scholar.

"Ha! Ha! I like it," said Sukalpa. "Is this some joke staged by you, Dhana?" he asked turning to his youngest brother.

"No, brother, I don't stage jokes at the expense of our palace priest," said Dhanananda.

"Then it is something serious," said Sukalpa. "Ask the man to move from the gold plate."

"My good man, rise up," said Dhanananda.

"I am the most learned Brahmin here, O king, and under your own rules, I am the person entitled to sit here," said Chanakya to Sukalpa, ignoring Dhanananda.

"Are not my orders enough for you?" asked Dhanananda.

"No, the king alone should pass orders," said Chanakya.

"We have decided that Subandhu is to occupy that seat. So, go and sit before a silver plate at once," said Sukalpa.

"How can you arrive at a decision without hearing me or testing our respective merits? Kings are to do justice according to the sacred laws and the evidence of the case. Let us have a contest in learning, and let these learned men here act as experts and give their opinion. Then, O King, give your decision, and I shall obey it," said Chanakya. "Your very name Sukalpa shows that you should decide things only according to *Dharma*."

"Dare you dictate to us, young man?" asked Sukalpa angrily.

"A king should listen to wisdom even from a child," said Chanakya, "Subandhu cannot occupy this seat as the most learned Brahmin till he is proved to be such. Let the seat be declared to be one for the palace priest, or for Subandhu, and I shall gladly vacate it forthwith and go to a silver plate. But so long as it is for the most learned Brahmin, I must refuse to leave this seat without proper proof of his superiority in learning."

Sukalpa became furious. "Look here, you fool. I don't want to be harsh on you as you appear to be a stranger not well acquainted with our usages and customs. Move yourself at once to a silver plate, lest you be thrust out of the hall altogether," said he.

"Are there no ministers here?" asked Chanakya. "Can't they advise their king as to the proper course?"

"We have the best ministers on earth, but they will not dare to go against our wishes. This is not a country where ministers rule kings but where they carry out the king's orders," said Sukalpa with a significant look at Nakranasa and Sakatala.

"Let Subandhu argue with me on the Vedas or *Sastras* or politics or economics or on any other matter, and I shall soon vanquish him as I have vanquished many a greater man in Takshasila and Benares," said Chanakya.

"My dear man, go to Takshasila and Benares and vanquish more men. Now, get out of this place for good" said Sukalpa.

"The kings of Magadha are reputed to be great patrons of learning and upholders of our Aryan *Dharma*. So I have a right to expect better treatment at your hands, O king, I am not only the most learned Brahmin present here to-day but am also a great authority on politics¹ and will not be intimidated. I cannot abdicate my duty of defying the unjust orders of kings," said Chanakya.

"Drag him by his tuft and throw him out of here!" roared Sukalpa. "Are there none here who will do this at once?"

A dozen armed men went at once to eject Chanakya by violence.

Then the prime minister, Subuddhisarman, popularly known as Rakshasa for his superhuman energy and industry, intervened and asked them to keep quiet. He went to Chanakya and said, "I am a Brahmin like you. I

¹ He is the author of the *Arthashastra*.

hate to see a renowned Brahmin scholar ejected from the banqueting hall of this great king like a common beggar. Please go and sit before a silver plate as I do and as the ministers Nakranasa and Sakatala have done. Surely, you don't expect to be honoured more than the prime minister?"

"Subuddhisarman," said Chanakya, "It is not arrogance or vanity or a desire for luxury that makes me insist on sitting here. I eat out of a plantain leaf at home. I have eaten even out of earthen plates on some occasions. Because this seat is reserved for the most learned Brahmin of the day, I am claiming it. It is wrong on the King's part to allow a man like Subandhu, whose title to be the most learned Brahmin present will not be admitted by anybody, to sit here."

"A King's orders must be obeyed even if they are wrong. For, is not a king the representative of God on earth?" asked Rakshasa.

"Subuddhisarman, I admire your loyalty to your king. But Brahmanas and Sramanas¹ have a higher duty than nodding assent to all that a king does. We have to disobey unjust commands even if they come from the king. Only the common people have to obey them unquestioningly as they are not yet fit for disobeying them discriminatingly," said Chanakya.

"If we disobey the king's orders, we become traitors and have to be punished" said Subuddhisarman.

"No, because our object is to secure the king's own good and the good of his subjects. We only want him to

1. Monks and ascetics of various kinds,

act justly. Even in Janaka's court a woman, Gargi, was allowed to challenge the great Yagnavalkya's claim to be the most learned Brahmin. How can I be denied the right to challenge the claim of this man who has not yet opened his mouth to utter one word of learning?" said Chanakya.

The assembled Brahmins laughed again.

Sukalpa said to Subuddhisarman, "There is no use talking to him. Force is the only thing he understands. Drag him out by his ridiculous tuft. Such monkeys and thieves have no place here."

"Monkey or thief, is there anybody among the Brahmins here equal to me in learning? If there is, I shall vacate it. Not for any other reason shall I vacate it. Not for your angry words or threats shall I budge. We Brahmins have to protect learning and the scriptures even from kings. So, let anybody learned in the Vedas or *Sastras* come and oust me from this seat, and not men armed only with swords and sticks. I refuse to be unseated for the mere caprice of a king," said Chanakya.

"Look at Subandhu. He is tall and has got goodly clothes on. You are black like a monkey, and have got mean clothes on," said Dhanananda.

"Sir" said Chanakya, "Scholars are esteemed for what is in them and not for what is on them. It is difficult for rich men to realise this."

Again, there was laughter among the Brahmins.

"Enough of this wrangling. Push the fellow out," said Sukalpa.

Then Chanakya was caught hold of by a dozen men. One caught him by the tuft, and three shoved him from behind, inflicting some blows on him. Chanakya fell down in front of the assembly with his tuft dangling confusedly and his clothes all disarranged. Subandhu then went and sat by the gold plate in high glee. The assembled Brahmins kept an ominous silence.

Chanakya rose in terrible anger and said to the Nandas, "You have this day heaped the grossest insults on the greatest Brahmin alive and dragged the scriptures into the mire, in the pride of your power. O princes, I shall quickly rescue the scriptures and the world from you. A far better man shall be crowned king of Magadha before I tie up this tuft made to dangle by your insolent men. You don't know the power of Chanakya. Hundreds here know that my cause is just, but they keep quiet because of their unmanly fear of your tyrannical might. They will all rejoice when I come back and uproot you."

"Catch the wretch and put him to death," said Sukalpa.

Several men were about to run after Chanakya with sticks and swords when there were protests from the assembled Brahmins. Subuddhisarman sensed the feeling of the Brahmins and rose and said, "Sire, this is an act which will ill besit your dignity. Shall the sons of Mahapadma, who conquered the earth like a second Bhargava, fear the idle threats of a demented Brahmin scholar impotent to do anything? Am I not here to counter anything this man can do? Shall we, who feed a thousand Brahmins every day and sixty thousand Brahmin-

on the king's birthday, stain our hands with Brahmin blood, however unworthy the Brahmin may be? Shall we give our subjects cause to accuse us of slaying an unarmed Brahmin? We are strong enough to treat this braggart's words with contempt. We, who curbed the lordly Maurya and his hundred lieutenants, shall we confess to fear of this black Brahmin? Take not the least notice of him. Let him go where he likes and do what he likes and realise that his anger with such mighty kings will only make him burst in impotence like a mustard seed getting angry with its frying pan."

Sukalpa laughed and said, "You are always level-headed, Subuddhisarman. Let us forget him and remember our breakfast which is getting cold."

Then the party began the feasting, completely ignoring Chanakya.

Chanakya went out in a raging fury, and assumed as soon as he turned a corner the disguise of an Ajivaka¹ monk for greater safety. Bhagirathi watched the whole incident with wonder and dismay and marvelled at the foresight of Chandragupta. He made a secret sign to Chanakya and proceeded towards his master's house. Chanakya followed him at a distance, and, unnoticed by anybody, went into Chandragupta's house.

Chandragupta took Chanakya into his private room and expressed his great sorrow at the gross insult meted out to him.

1. The Ajivakas were a set of heretical monks.

"I was afraid that *Dharma* would not triumph in this age," said he.

"Have no fear" said Chanakya. "It will triumph all right. Rejoice, for I have resolved to make you king of Magadha and to be your prime minister till you are firmly established on the throne. They know not my power, these fools!"

"But was it wise to take such risks?" asked Chandragupta. "Your escape was more or less due to Rakshasa's interference. Should a wise man depend on unforeseen acts for his safety?"

"No," said Chanakya. "I admit that I might appear to have somewhat miscalculated the situation. But I had not really done so. I knew that I would not be killed in that assembly of Brahmins. No Hindu King will risk that. If not Rakshasa, some other person, who had heard about my fame, would have interfered. I shall soon have my revenge, I shall uproot them as I did that piece of grass. I shall go to work at once. Listen. I have, as you know, a large number of spies of all kinds. I shall keep in touch with you through them. They will meet you at all kinds of places and times and in all conceivable disguises. I see that you too keep spies. I have three watchwords which my spies use. The first is, 'I bow to all ascetics.' The second is, 'I bow to all serpents and goddesses.' The third is, 'I bow to the god Brahma and to Kusadhwaaja.' Be thoroughly satisfied about the *bona-fides* of the spies before confiding anything to them. In case of doubt, do not pay any heed to them, till they

utter, 'Oblation to the Moon.' You had also better adopt the same watchwords. Whatever you tell spies till you know them to be thoroughly reliable, should have an apparent everyday meaning, besides the inner and concealed meaning intended to be conveyed, so that even if they are frauds they will not profit in any way or get any damning evidence against you." "It is a great and perilous enterprise you have taken in hand," said Chandragupta.

"Yes, but not so perilous as some may think. A king who has abandoned *Dharma* is already on the way to ruin. Have no fear," said Chanakya.

"Fear and I are strangers," said Chandragupta. "I was only thinking of you, Sir."

"I am not surprised to hear that," said Chanakya. "You have the thrity-two signs of a *Mahapurusha*¹. I noted this when I took you from the huntsmen. You are also born to be a king. A King without courage and a Brahmin without learning, both are despicable. But listen to this carefully. Nobody should know about our resolution regarding the Nandas till the proper time comes. Courage is as much required to conceal a thing as to flaunt it about. In other words, a brave man should be bold enough to risk people's mistaking him for a coward when it suits him. That is politics. Rash courage is of no more use to a king than *sarasaparilla* which, swallowed raw, makes a man sick instead of improving his health.

Chandragupta said, "Has not my conduct proved it?"

1. Great man.

Do I not appear to be a loyal subject of the Nandas? I shall carry out your directions implicitly."

Then he went out for a few minutes, returned and said to Chanakya, "Sir, it is unsafe for you to remain in this city. These mean men, who have listened to Subuddhisarman's advice, may soon change their minds and send their armed men against you. So it is better that you go to some distant place at once. A fast chariot with two excellent horses, belonging to a friend known for his frequent journeys, is ready outside in charge of a most trustworthy servant. I have also placed in it a bag of gold coins for your expenses. You need not worry about this. I have inherited my grandfather's properties. He has left enough and has urged me to use it for accomplishing his dying wish, namely, to extirpate the entire race of these usurping Nandas."

"You are far-sighted and are sure to succeed," said Chanakya. "Tell me, have you already got any promise of help?"

"I have explored the possibilities of getting reliable allies. The King of Kalinga, anxious to shake off the yoke of Magadha imposed on him by Maurya, has promised to help me with fifty thousand troops if I could get together an army of two hundred thousand myself."

"That is something," said Chanakya. "But it is a case of helping when the help is not so much needed. Any other promise of help?"

"A Savara chieftain, Vairantya, and a Khond chieftain, Khondoveera, have promised to follow me with 5,000

Savaras and Khonds in gratitude for my grandfather's compelling the Kalinga King to recognise the internal independence of the Savaras and Khonds."

"Ten thousand members of these hill tribes will be nothing at all in a fight with the Nandas. Still, they will come in handy when the need comes. These hill tribes are very trustworthy unlike the men of the plains. I shall now go to Vardhamanapura¹ and think out plans for achieving our objects. It may take some years before we can uproot the Nandas, but uproot them we shall. Ask the charioteer to take me to Vardhamanapura," said Chanakya.

Chandragupta went out and gave instructions to the charioteer accordingly. Then Chanakya took his breakfast, and got into the chariot which rattled away in the direction of Vardhamanapura.

CHAPTER IV

JEEVASIDDHI'S WILES

On the evening of the same day, Subuddhisarman and Dhanananda had a talk about Chanakya.

"I do not congratulate myself on this incident," said Subuddhisarman. "The sympathy of the assembled Brahmins was with Chanakya. His fame as a scholar is unequalled. He seems to have impressed them as the greatest scholar they have ever seen. They told me that he explained to them how to conquer a kingdom, how to

1. Modern Burdwan.

keep it contented, how to administer it, how to sow dissensions, and how to lead an army. He struck them as one knowing everything that is known regarding men, minerals, manufactures, gems, animals, places and things, in short, as an encyclopaedic genius. What is more, he seemed to be as deep in the Vedas and the spiritual science as in things of worldly import. Beyond all, he was a fanatical advocate of the most ascetic mode of life for himself. He seems to have shown also a complete knowledge of Atharva Veda and black-magic thus bearing out his reputation in this respect. They said that his only fault was an overweening arrogance, but added that in him they felt that the claims were justified by a corresponding ability to realise them."

"They are not fools enough to believe that he could do anything to us?" asked Dhanananda.

The minister replied, "I am afraid that many of them have taken his threat as not altogether an empty boast."

"Do you think he will be foolish enough to try to realise his boast?" asked Dhanananda.

"I think he will try to realise it. The man is reputed to be a past master in black-magic. He is also an adept in *Yoga*. These *Yogis*¹ fear nothing and have an astonishing reserve of energy. I must now be on the look-out for a competent person to counter his machinations," replied Rakshasa.

1. Philosophers who seek union with God and do all acts without attachment, dedicating them to God,

"Do you believe that there are any secret arts known to black-magic by which people can destroy others?" asked the prince.

"Yes. All arts of destruction are secret till they are revealed, and, when they are revealed, others still more deadly are discovered and kept secret. Take the case of the *Sataghni* and the many kinds of poison gas said to cause instantaneous death or blindness or diseases like those of the lungs, cholera, etc. Who can disbelieve in their existence with safety?" said Rakshasa.

"I see. Yes, you had better find out one competent to undo the harm likely to be done by Chanakya. Perhaps it might have been as well had we allowed the man to sit before the gold plate for a day. From what I hear he seems to have been an adept at increasing the king's revenues. I have been able to amass in our treasury so far only eight hundred million gold *panas*³ even by levying taxes on skins, gums, trees, and stones. He might have been able to increase it ten-fold. Increasing he king's wealth is not one of Subandhu's virtues, his only activity being to deplete the treasury as much as he can by useless ceremonies. I wonder whether we cannot yet induce Chanakya to return and be our man," said Dhanananda.

"It is too late now. We have made him our enemy for life. He is not the kind of man who can be won over."

1. A hideous pillar-like weapon with innumerable spikes hurled on the enemy by a machine from the walls of a fort.

2. Each gold *pana* was worth about seven rupees eight annas. A silver *pana* was equal to twelve annas.

He seems to me to be one of those men arrogant and poor, yet free from love of gold or money. So we shall have to fight him to the bitter end and counter all his plans. I have already sent my trusted spies to get me the most efficient occultist and black-magic man alive," replied Rakshasa.

"You are far-seeing," said Dhanananda. "So long as you are here, what need is there for the Nandas to worry about anything? I wonder if the man you secure will be able to turn base metals into gold."

"If he can do that, why should he serve the demons or us?" asked Rakshasa.

"That argument will apply to all such persons. Yet, tales have been narrated by credible persons of such people working for kings and others," said the prince.

"I am more concerned with countering the effects of Chanakya's black-magic than with finding a man able to turn base metals into gold," said Rakshasa.

"Go ahead," said Dhanananda.

Then they parted.

Chanakya reached Vardhamanapura safely. He stopped the chariot at the outskirts of the town and went to the house of a rich merchant, followed by Chandragupta's man carrying the bag of gold. Then he sent away the man and had his bath and meal. As the sun was about to set, he went to the house of his disciple, Indusarman, a profound student of medicine, sorcery, astrology and psychology, and told him of the incidents at the

banqueting hall and his vow, and all about Chandragupta. He then asked him to go to Pataliputra as a fanatical Jain monk and to earn the implicit confidence of Subuddhisarman and the Nandas by trick astrology and black-magic and do all things necessary to bring the Nandas to ruin, promising at the same time to give him suitable directions from time to time. "You can take Chandragupta into your confidence at once, but must meet him only secretly. You can gather intimate facts about the past lives of the Nandas from him and pretend to have discovered them by means of your astrological skill. You can administer secret drugs in milk, water and food and induce ailments and palm them off on me, and then cure them by administering antidotes while pretending to effect the results by incantation. Abuse the Brahmins to your heart's content and give it out as your life's mission to expose their fraud. Refuse all kinds of gifts from the Nandas. Whatever money you want will always be supplied to you."

Indusarman was wild with joy. "My dull and lonely life will hereafter become interesting," said he. "Nobody working under your directions can ever fail. I shall start even tomorrow with medicine and magic box complete, in the disguise of a Jain monk. Jeevasiddhi shall be my assumed name, and I shall abuse you and the Brahmins in unmeasured language. In a week I shall be the trusted counsellor of Rakshasa and the Nandas, and your opponent."

Chanakya embraced him, gave him the bag of gold for his expenses, and discussed plans with him late into the night.

A fortnight after Chanakya's taking of the vow, all Pat aliputra was agog with the news of a Jain monk, Jeevasiddhi, a most wonderful doctor, astrologer, sorcerer, black arts man and occultist, and yet a man of simple habits who had consented to serve the Nandas free in order to counter the wiles of Chanakya whom he denounced as the Brahmin arch—scoundrel and pretender whom he was determined to frustrate and expose. The Nandas and Rakshasa were captivated by him from the very outset. He had, in a secret consultation with Chandragupta, ascertained intimate personal details about them and the other members of their family, and had given them out as if he had discovered them by means of his astrological skill. Maurya had told Chandragupta in secret, just before his death, the story of how Mahapadma had secretly killed and buried under the flooring of an inner room of the palace an influential Brahmin, the son of the minister Sakatala who, without the knowledge of his father or any other body, had dared to go to Mahapadma's private room alone and condemn his usurpation of the kingdom and his murder of the king and the princes. Even the sons did not know about this closely guarded secret which was known only to Mahapadma and Maurya. They too believed, like the rest, that Sakatala's son had run away to the Himalayas and become a *Sannyasi*. Sakatala too believed in this report. Jeevasiddhi got this secret information from Chandragupta and was jubilant. "This is the very thing I want for impressing the Nandas and Rakshasa," he said.

The third day after his talk with Chandragupta, he

went round the palace with Dhanananda and Rakshasa saying, "I feel an occult force working against us here. Something here is helping that wretch Chanakya. Let me see. Ah! What is this! There are evidently some Brahmin's bones buried in one of the rooms. The dead man's spirit is working against us. A dead Brahmin is helping a living Brahmin!"

"There are no bones of any Brahmin inside the palace," said Dhanananda and Rakshasa.

"There must be; I sense them," said Jeevasiddhi, and wandered from room to room uttering the queer nostrum: "I bow to Bali, the son of Vairochana, to Sambara, acquainted with a hundred kinds of magic, and to Nikumba, Naraka, Kumbha, and Tantukacha, the great demon. O Chandali, Kumbhi, Tumba, Katuka, Saraga, reveal to me the bones." Finally, in the room named by Chandragupta he halted and said, "Ah, don't you feel the occult anti-magnetic waves? The bones must be here."

Dhanananda and Rakshasa scoffed at the idea. "There are no waves or bones here," said Dhanananda.

Jeevasiddhi staked his reputation on the truth of what he said. "If I am wrong in this, I have overrated my abilities. If there are no occult anti-magnetic waves, I had better resign all pretensions to higher knowledge and leave the field to the Brahmins. But I have never yet been wrong. Do dig and see," he implored them.

When the room was dug up, lo! the skeleton of a man was found there along with a gold coin¹ to show that it was a Brahmin's. The result was that Jeevasiddhi

1. It is a deadly sin among the Hindus not to put some gold or silver coin when burning or burying Brahmins and Cobras.

scored an unparalleled triumph. The Nandas and Rakshasa acclaimed him as the greatest occultist alive.

"You are certainly a greater occultist and astrologer than any Brahmin I have seen yet," said Rakshasa. "None of the Brahmin occultists suspected the existence of these bones here. And yet you felt their presence at once."

Jeevasiddhi thus won the immediate and implicit confidence of the Nandas and Rakshasa, and became their trusted friend and counsellor. At his instance, the bones were thrown into the Ganges, secretly, after the prescribed ceremonies and incantations were conducted. "Now we are free from these anti-magnetic waves of hostility," he exclaimed with satisfaction after this, "Chanakya's demons cannot now get any help from inside the palace of the Nandas."

A week later, he gave some incantated milk to the Nandas stating that it was to prevent the evil effects of a great act of sorcery performed by Chanakya to make them contract a deadly fever and die. He had himself mixed in the milk a medicine inducing a rise of temperature. So the Nandas got slight fever. "Don't be alarmed," said Jeevasiddhi, who had begun his counter incantations, "the force of Chanakya's incantations has been broken. He has only been able to bring on you a slight fever, and that too will pass away. I shall finish it off now," and he went on vigorously with his incantations. After an hour, he gave them some milk containing a hidden remedy for the fever. The princes got rid of the fever, and thanked Jeevasiddhi for saving them.

A fortnight after this, Jeevasiddhi began his incantations again and gave the princes some milk in which he had mixed a minute quantity of powdered *dhatūra* seeds to induce temporary lunacy. All of them began to rave like maniacs some time after drinking the milk. Jeevasiddhi continued his incantations and gave them some more milk, this time mixed with a remedy for the raving. They drank it and gradually recovered their senses. "The wretch wanted to make all of you mad. I have prevented it," said Jeevasiddhi. The grateful princes gave him a handful of precious gems, diamonds, sapphires, rubies, pearls and emeralds of inestimable value. Jeevasiddhi received them and then threw them all over the place, exclaiming to the astounded princes, "If I am possessed of this demon of desire for wealth, I cannot cope with any of the demons of Chanakya's black-magic at all." All the princes and Rakshasa were greatly impressed by this act of Jeevasiddhi indicating an utter disregard for wealth. Their confidence in Jeevasiddhi's greatness, trust-worthiness and loyalty became unshakeable.

Three months after Jeevasiddhi's advent, he asked the Nandas and Rakshasa why they were feeding a thousand Brahmins every day though they were all secretly sympathising with Chanakya.

"We have all along fed Brahmins," said Rakshasa.

"Why should you go on doing what you once began doing for no convincing reason?" asked Jeevasiddhi.

"But Brahmins are holy men, and the *Sastras*¹ say that to feed them is a meritorious act," said Rakshasa.

1. Sacred law-books of the Hindus.

"All Brahmins cannot be holy men, seeing that the wretch Chanakya also is a Brahmin. As for the *Sastras*, the Brahmins themselves wrote them. I hold that there is no difference between Brahmins and others. Let the palace physician Abhayadatta take samples of the blood of Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas, Sudras, Chandalas, Buddhists, Jains, Ajivakas and Kapalikas and examine them. He will not find any difference in the blood."

The astounded Nandas promptly asked Abhayadatta to perform the experiment. He said, "Of course, the blood will be alike, just as the acts of conception, birth, puberty and death are processes common for all human beings." Still they insisted on his performing the experiment in their presence. He did so and satisfied them that the blood of every human being was fundamentally alike and that the caste could not be determined by looking at it. That settled it. "Why waste money on this senseless Brahmin feeding?" asked Dhanananda. The feeding of the Brahmins was stopped from the next day onwards, and Jain monks were fed instead. The Brahmins were discontented, and each became an underground volcano fomenting discontent and anxious to overthrow the Nandas. Jeevasiddhi was naturally glad. He wrote to Chanakya, "The fire has started. It is only a question of time when the whole forest of this usurping Nanda race will be one heap of ashes and charcoal."

After the Brahmin-feeding was stopped, there was no need for a Superintendent of the Banqueting Hall. "A Manager will do," said Dhanananda. So Chandragupta was reverted to his regiment, and his post as Superintendent

abolished. But he was popular with the Brahmins and the other discontented elements in the city. He was also fast becoming the idol of the army. Wherever he went he was cheered and welcomed. The Nandas were, on the contrary, received with a chilling silence born of sullen hatred. They did not like this at all. So, two months after Jeevasiddhi had reached Pataliputra, the Nandas and Rakshasa held a secret midnight council to decide on what should be done with Chandragupta, who was now living in a house in the city.

Jeevasiddhi was for exiling him for life, as killing him might lead to a rebellion by his supporters. "No," said Rakshasa, "for once, I must disagree with you. A cobra must either be worshipped or killed. There is no safe middle course. Exiling him would be allowing him to join forces with Chanakya and create danger to the State. We shall seize him suddenly to-morrow morning, and formally charge him with high treason, give him a nominal hearing, to redeem our promise to him, and then condemn him to death and carry out the sentence at once in the palace dungeon itself instead of in the public execution place. There is a greater danger of a serious rebellion by him when alive than by his supporters after his death. He will act as the rallying point for all the malcontents, and the Brahmins will whip up support for him as the friend of Hindu *Dharma* and the real descendant of Mandhata, Bimbisara, and Ajatasatru, the last of whom he is said to resemble closely in features. Once he is dead, there will be nobody with his military ability to lead the malcontents who will be therefore forced to keep quiet."

"A very wise counsel!" exclaimed Jeevasiddhi. "I freely confess that my advice was not so sound, and so I withdraw it and vote for Rakshasa's course."

All the rest also agreed. Bhaddasala was directed to arrest Chandragupta quickly early in the morning, without creating a hubbub and to take him at once to the council hall, where all the councillors were directed to be present. Then the council broke up.

CHAPTER V

ESCAPED!

At 3 a.m. on a morning in April 326 B.C. there was a soft knock at Chandragupta's door. Chandragupta too had already woke up and was busy packing. He went to the door and found Chanakya's spy, Siddharthaka, waiting outside dressed like a cartman.

"Your honour had better start at once," said Siddharthaka. "There is a cloth cart waiting. I shall be the cartman. Pray disguise yourself as a cart attendant. There is no time to lose. We have to escape to Vardhamanapura. Great tact has to be used, and your honour's identity carefully concealed."

"I shall be ready in ten minutes," said Chandragupta.

"Your honour is already aware of the council's decision!" said Siddharthaka in surprise.

Chandragupta simply smiled in reply. Then he asked Siddharthaka, "Tell me, do you feel anxious and excited?"

"We are accustomed to be in danger always. So, we rarely experience any excitement or anxiety. We know that no place is so safe as under the nose of the enemy," said the spy.

Chandragupta smiled again. He went in and got ready in ten minutes. So natural did he look as the attendant on the bales of cloth that even Siddharthaka gaped with astonishment. "Your honour can adopt a disguise as well as we can," said he.

"And why not?" asked Chandragupta. He got into the cart, put all his hoarded treasure in gold and gems inside a bale of cloth, sat on the bales, and studied the inventory given to him by the spy. Then the cart proceeded towards Vardhamanapura.

At the south-eastern gate of the city, the seals of the bales were duly examined and the cart allowed to go out. It began to proceed on its way. Hardly had it gone five miles before the sound of horsemen galloping from behind was heard. It was daybreak. Turning round, Chandragupta found ten armed horsemen coming. Their captain reined in his horse as he passed the cart and asked Siddharthaka, "Cartman, did you see any horseman come from the town?"

"No, your worship," replied Siddharthaka.

"The men at the gate told me that they saw none. We are out searching for Chandragupta," said the

Captain. "A proclamation has issued offering ten thousand gold *panas* for anybody giving information leading to his capture."

"I have never seen him, your worship, and so can't say whether it was he, but I saw a young man mount a horse near the temple of *Agni*¹ outside the south-eastern main gate and gallop fast in the direction of Vardhamanapura," said the cartman.

"Ah, how long ago was this?" asked the captain.

"About two hours ago, your worship. But he must be a long way off by now. Your worship knows how slow bullock carts are," said Siddharthaka.

"All right, thank you. Now we must be off," said the captain. And the horsemen galloped past, raising a cloud of dust.

"No place so safe as under the nose of the enemy," chuckled Siddharthaka as he drove on.

Fifteen miles further, they saw the party of horsemen resting under a tree near the rest-house and allowing their horses to graze. Siddharthaka too stopped his cart and watered the bullocks.

"Did you see him?" Siddharthaka asked the captain.

"Not a sign of him. What is more, this *gopa*² swears that he has been here since morn and that no horseman has passed this way," replied the captain.

1. The god of fire, the guardian deity of the south-eastern direction.

2. The administrator of a group of villages.

"The prince is reputed to be cunning. His taking a horse at that lonely temple, instead of passing through the gate on horseback, shows it. He must have espied the *gopa* at a distance and dismounted and taken a path across the fields. The ability and loyalty of our *gopas* are well known," replied Siddharthaka.

The *gopa* beamed. "Yes, that must have been the case," said he emphatically.

"But, till we came, you didn't know that we wanted him. So, you would not have detained him. Why should he have evaded you?" asked the captain.

The *gopa* blinked.

"The reason is obvious," said Siddharthaka. "Chandragupta would not have, in his position, liked his movements to be observed by a popular, able and influential *gopa* who would be quite capable of mobilising his men and overtaking him when the hue and cry was raised."

"That is it," said the *gopa*.

"I say, you are wiser than the majority of cartmen," said the captain. "Anyway, the bird has flown".

"But you are not going to leave it at that?" asked Siddharthaka.

"Oh, no. A party like ours has been sent along all the eight main roads. All of us have instructions to go to every town up to the very limits of the empire and warn all the officials to keep a sharp look-out for him," said the captain. "There will be thousands of others also looking out for him, hoping to get the reward,"

"Why, what is he up to now?" asked the cartman.

"We don't know the details," said the captain, "but that monkey-faced Brahmin, Chanakya, is supposed to be doing some horrible black-magic to kill our king and princes, and is also said to be moving heaven and earth to get some neighbouring kings and forest and mountain tribes to fight against our king. It has come out that he wants to crown Chandragupta king!"

"Pooh! That seems to be simply impossible with such good princes and such an able prime minister like Subuddhisarman," said Siddharthaka.

"Yes, that is so. But, on the other hand, look at it the way that man Chanakya does. 'How long did it take for Maharaja Mahanandin to be deposed?' he seems to have asked some one," said the captain.

"But, does your honour think that Chanakya can do such a difficult thing?" asked Siddharthaka.

"Certainly not," said the captain. "I don't fear the man's hill tribe friends at all. What disturbs me is his alleged capacity to become invisible. How can you fight a fellow who can become invisible whenever he wants?"

"But, do you believe that Chanakya can become invisible?" asked Siddharthaka.

"I don't know. People say he can. Give me a visible enemy, and I can fight him. It is these sorceries which are beyond me," replied the captain.

"But you don't think that even if he can become

invisible he can make Chandragupta invisible ? " asked the cartman.

" Ah, that is also possible, I forgot that possibility," said the captain.

" But what about the *horse* ? " asked the *gopa*.

" Surely, he who can make a man invisible can make a horse invisible too," said Siddharthaka.

" I say, you are a very clever man. I never saw you pass this way before though I am almost always at this resthouse. What have you inside the cart ? Cloth ? Good, I wanted to buy some. Have you some Madura cloth ? " asked the *gopa*.

" Yes " said Siddharthaka opening a bale and handing over a small piece of fine home-spun as a souvenir.

" Give me a piece too," said the captain.

Chandragupta gave him a fine piece. The Captain was highly pleased. " This attendant of yours is more generous than you are," said he to Siddharthaka, " See what a big piece he has given me. "

" That is because you are a bigger man than the *gopa*," replied Siddharthaka.

By this time the bullocks had drunk their fill from the trough and eaten some straw. Siddharthaka took leave of the *gopa* and the captain and proceeded on his way. After going a mile, he told Chandragupta, " It is difficult for princes to make small gifts. "

Chandragupta laughed. " What about Arya Chanakya ? " he asked.

"None can excel the venerable Chanakya in generosity," said Siddharthaka. "If we are to consider the proportion between the gifts made and the things retained by the giver for himself, he will be the prince of givers, for he retains nothing and gives us everything."

Chandragupta was pleased to hear this spontaneous outburst of praise from such a spy. "What is your estimate of him otherwise?" he asked.

"I can measure the ocean with an *ollock*¹ or the Himalayas with my cubit easier than give an estimate of him. He is so great and so unfathomable. Nobody can say what he will do and why. But never does Chanakya fail to keep his word. Nor will he let down his proteges," replied Siddharthaka.

The next day, in the afternoon, Siddharthaka and Chandragupta were at a well in a lonely wayside resthouse, when they saw Viradhagupta, a well-known spy of Rakshasa and a man who knew Chandragupta. The newcomer alighted from a chariot and went towards the very same well. Chandraguptha promptly got into the hollow of a banyan tree near the well and remained concealed there. Viradhagupta went to the well and asked Siddharthaka to give him some water.

After giving it, Siddharthaka asked him, "Where is your honour coming from?"

"From Vardhamanapura after a useless search for Chandragupta," replied the spy. "We have to rectify the follies of big men, cartman. First, they allowed that

1. A small measure; roughly half a pint.

devil Chanakya to go unscathed. Now they have allowed Chandragupta to slip through. One of them would have been formidable enough. A combination of the two is like famine and pestilence combined."

"Where is the wretch Chanakya now, sir ?" asked Siddharthaka.

"Don't ask me ! What do I know ? The man is so cunning that he may be even in this resthouse now without any one being the wiser for it ! " said Viradhagupta.

" And Chandragupta, sir ?"

" Oh, he is simpler proposition. I can catch him if he is anywhere within a circumference of a hundred miles. Now I must hurry. The chariot is waiting here and Rakshasa is waiting at Pataliputra," said Viradhagupta. He quenched his thirst, hurried to the road, got into the chariot and drove off.

" No place so safe as under the nose of the enemy, eh ?" said Chandragupta to Siddharthaka as he came out of the hollow. " But it was stuffy."

" Banyan tree holes were not made for princes," said Siddharthaka.

After four days of journeying night and day, they reached Vardhamanapura at 7 P. M. and went to the house of the merchant where Chanakya was. Chanakya embraced Chandragupta warmly and said to him, when alone, " Of course, you must have heard that at the midnight council that day the decision was taken to seize you suddenly. the next morning, have a mock trial, and

execute you for high treason. Hence all this hurry and inconvenience."

"Yes, Jeevasiddhi sent word to me even before Siddharthaka came. A man engaged in a dangerous enterprise must be prepared for any inconvenience. The only way to grow crops is by making the ground wet and muddy at first" said Chandragupta.

"Well said," replied Chanakya. "Now go and have a bath and something to eat. Afterwards we shall talk."

CHAPTER VI.

MAURYA'S STORY

CHANDRAGUPTA had a refreshing bath and a sumptuous dinner. The effects of the weary journey were all gone. After finishing his dinner he went and joined Siddharthaka and Chanakya who were in a jovial mood.

"So, that is the way Nanda's secrets are kept," said Chanakya to him, "See how they filter through."

"Only through that grand filter Jeevasiddhi," said Chandragupta, "And that is due to you. What comparison is there between the ministers of the Nandas and yourself? My grandfather Maurya used to say, 'Granite breaks mud pots. Mud pots don't break granite'."

"A very correct observation," said Siddharthaka, smiling. "Ah, that reminds me. Tell me about the great Maurya's end. No, tell me the whole story. I long to hear it."

"Well," said Chandragupta. "As you know, Maurya, my grandfather, was the son of Mahanandin by his wife Mura, the only daughter of the chief of the Moriyas of Pippalavana. Being the son of a *Vrāta Kshatriya*¹ mother, he was not considered eligible for succession as against the two boys of the orthodox Kshatriya wife, Queen Sunanda. But poor Mahanandin had a favourite called Mahapadma who was born to a Kshatriya by a Sudra mother. He was so poor as to have to take to a barber's profession to eke out his livelihood. As he was of higher caste than the other barbers, he was taken as the royal barber. He was dissatisfied with his humble status and meagre earnings. But he was an extraordinarily strong and brave man. One night, a band of robbers entered the house of a very rich neighbour of his and got away with a lot of valuable gems and jewels. A number of citizens chased them for some distance but desisted from fear of the threats. Mahapadma alone pursued them regardless of all their threats and killed the leader of the robbers with one blow of his sword and recovered from him the box of priceless gems and jewels he was having with him. The followers of the robber-chief fled in all directions. At first Mahapadma intended to restore the jewels to their owner, but, on seeing the invaluable gems and thinking over his own poverty and the fact that no one had seen him recover the gems, he resolved to keep them for himself. The robber chief's

1. A Kshatriya who abandoned his caste customs by his caste becoming Buddhist, and was therefore regarded as a Sudra by the orthodox Hindus, though he himself had reverted to Hinduism,

lieutenant soon got to know of this and went and begged of him to be their chief. Mahāpadma agreed. Many were the thefts, robberies and burglaries he organised in secret and vast the treasures he got for his share. He began to dress in costly clothes and had himself trained as a soldier under the greatest master of the art. He soon ingratiated himself with the feeble Mahanandin and his young Queen Sunanda. He was made a captain in the army and had a phenomenal rise. In a few years he became the commander-in-chief. He became the idol of the army by reducing recalcitrant provinces like Kalinga into submission. Queen Sunande became infatuated with his handsome features and winning ways and costly presents. After a year of intimacy, she conspired with him to do away with the unsuspecting king. One night, the all-powerful Mahapadma smothered the king and the two princes to death in their beds and had himself crowned king of Magadha.

As he had been practically king even before and as the whole army was for him, there was not the slightest opposition or even outcry except from a Brahmin, the minister Sakatala's son, whom Mahapadma secretly killed and buried within the palace. After his coronation, Mahapadma openly married Sunanda, and had by her eight sons, the present king Sukalpa and his seven brothers.

"He was a strong and vigorous ruler, and put down with an iron hand the robbers, thieves and malefactors though he himself had led them in the weak reign of Mahanandin. He curbed the big nobles and the innumerable kinsmen of the royal family who had been allowed to

become petty tyrants preying on the people. He overran Aryavarta¹ and the Deccan like a new Bhargava², uprooted many ruling dynasties and made the whole country between the Himalayas and Kuntala, the Jumna and the Brahmaputra subject to his authority. He pitched his camp at Nandadera³ on the Godavari, and at Nandadrug⁴ in the Kuntala country. He at first patronised Brahmins and men of learning, like Vararuchi, Vyadi and Varsha, and was tolerant towards all other sects from motives of policy. The army was brought to a high pitch of efficiency, the taxes were all regularly collected, canals were dug everywhere, a new set of weights and measures was introduced, and the land became rich and peaceful. His power was felt more by the nobles and big men than by the humble folk who liked him and did not worry about his early crimes. He recognized merit and tried to encourage it whenever it was not contrary to his own interests. So he trained up my grandfather Maurya, the infant son of Mura, as a captain on seeing his precocious genius for war, and made him his trusted lieutenant. Great were the victories won by these two together.

“Maurya rose to such high favour that he finally became the commander-in-chief. He came to look upon Mahapadma like a father. He and his band of hunderd Moriya classmen formed the *corps d' elite* of Mahapadma's bodyguard. So long as Mahapadma ruled, everything

1. North India.

2. Parasurama ; An Avatar of Vishnu.

3. Modern Nander in Hyderabad State.

4. Modern Nandidrug in Mysore State.

went well, though latterly he became unmindful of his council of ministers and thus caused great discontent among them and the wise men and also among the Brahmins whom he hated for regarding him only as a Sudra, refusing to treat him as a Kshatriya. The Brahmins too hated him for his low origin and his favouring the Jains.

When he was sixty, he had a nervous break-down. Even when he recovered from it partially, he continued to be semi-idiotic. To the surprise of all, this man, who had been most energetic before, become a hermit, taking the name of Sarvarthasiddhi, and abdicated in favour of his eight sons. The sons, however, continued to associate his name with theirs, owing to its great prestige, and the new regime was known as that of the *Navanandas* or Nine Nandas.

"Sukalpa was crowned king in the place of his father, and his seven brothers became sub-kings and governors of provinces. The efficiency of the administration suffered at once. These sons are as autocratic as Mahapadma, but lack his military and administrative ability. All the princes went on living at the capital instead of going and administering their provinces as advised by Nakranasa, the home minister. They resented the advice and made Subuddhisarman prime minister, causing heart-burning to Nakranasa and Sakatala. They wanted also to supplant the universally respected commander-in-chief, Maurya, by their own nominee Bhaddasala, a well-dressed man with no military ability at all, and secretly corrupt to the core. This was not an easy thing to accomplish openly in view of Maurya's great popularity with the

army and the people. So, they plotted against Maurya for long.

"One day nine years ago, on the evil advice of Rakshasa and Bhaddasala, Maurya was trapped with his hundred lieutenants in the impregnable and secret underground council chamber on the banks of the Ganges by the side of the treasure house where Dhanananda has hidden his eight hundred million gold coins. The pretext was a secret conference to consider an invasion of the Punjab and other important military matters. When the great Maurya had gone there, unsuspecting and unarmed, with his hundred lieutenants, and me, Bhaddasala closed all the seven trap-doors constructed one above the other at different levels, and left us all to perish of starvation. As if to mock us, provisions for one sumptuous meal were left for each of us to eat our last meal and die. There was also a great heap of fire-wood in the next room for burning our corpses.

"Maurya showed his greatness and resourcefulness even in that extremity. He allayed the resultant panic, and said to us, 'There is no denying the fact that we are trapped for good, and that we cannot escape unless the Nandas themselves open the doors. I know the place well, and indeed, took part in its construction. It is hopeless to try to escape by ourselves.' 'Won't the army and the people rise on our behalf?' I asked. "Oh, no, the army and the people generally follow the victors," said he. 'Do not hope for anything from them. Our only hope, and a very faint one, is that perhaps the Nandas themselves may open this charnel-house some months

hence and may let out the survivors if any. So, we have to devise a plan for avenging this act of treachery. If all of us eat even scantily, we shall exhaust all the provisions in three days, and then perish with none left to avenge us. Let us select one of us to survive and avenge us, and then let the rest of us die, leaving all the available provisions for the survivor. Choose the survivor.' All cried out, 'You shall survive and avenge us. We shall all die.' 'No!' said he 'A leader should never survive. If I survive, I can only lead you to death. Besides, the Nandas are powerful, and it will require years of persistent work to uproot them. So a young boy is the proper choice. Again, I have already told you that the Nandas alone must free the survivor. Do you dream that they will free me for whose sake they have trapped us all? So, I suggest that little Chandragupta, aged 13, is selected to survive as he is the youngest of us, and is an intelligent boy who is not also unpopular with the Nandas and Rakshasa, and has also been predicted by able astrologers to be certain to become an Emperor.' All agreed. Then they made me solemnly swear that I would not commit suicide and that, should I become free, I would spare no pains to avenge them all by exterminating Mahapadma and his race.

"After I had taken the vow, the rest adjourned to another chamber, and Maurya killed them all. He then gave me his final instructions, kissed me on both my cheeks, and killed himself by falling on his sword. Then, as directed, I burnt their bodies and deferred the funeral ceremonies till I should become free and could get the services of Brahmins.

"Four months passed. My provisions too were being exhausted despite my sparing use of them. Slowly despair began to possess me. Would I ever get free, or had I eaten up the provisions of my beloved kinsmen only to die a lingering death after all this slow starvation? I regretted my fate. A quick death on the sword, like theirs, was far better than death, inch by inch, by starvation.

"After twenty more days of agonized worry, I heard with my sharpened ears the sound of the opening of the locks. I listened with rapt attention and soon leapt with joy. The locks were really being opened, and I might become free once more, might see the streets, and the sun and the moon, and the stars, and trees and flowers, and men and women. But I resolved not to exhibit too much desire to be free lest I should thereby defeat my own object. Finally, people opened my door, Rakshasa came in with Dhanananda. I was sitting in a corner weeping and desolate. They exclaimed, 'Chandragupta is alive!', and Sukalpa and the other brothers and Baddhasala also rushed in. Then they saw the heap of bones I was keeping in a corner of the room to remind me of the beloved ones whose provisions I had been eating and keeping myself alive. They questioned me. I said, 'They are the bones of the other hundred. They died on their swords the very day they were imprisoned, Maurya exclaiming, "Once we have forfeited the confidence of our king, what is the use of our living? Let us all die on our swords, leaving only Chandragupta alive. He is liked by the king and princes, and is a minor and has shared our fate only because of

association with us. Let him therefore survive and take his chance of rescue by the King's grace." 'Oh, he was nobler than I thought,' said Rakshasa, and shed tears. Then Sukalpa said to me, 'Chandra, you are set free. Come with us. The King of Simhala has sent a lion in a cage. It moves about and is looked after by its keeper. He challenges us to let the lion out without opening the cage, and says that if we fail to do so in three days, Magadhas must concede the superiority of the Simhalas in wisdom. That we hate to do. And none of us could do this thing. We came here to see if you were available, and if you could do it as you were always clever at such things.' 'Leave me alone,' said I, effectively concealing my inward joy, 'let me die here like my kinsmen. I do not want to live after their death.' 'But they wanted you to live,' said Rakshasa. 'I do not want to come out and again be treated like this,' said I. Then Sukalpa swore that nothing would be done to me thereafter, and that I would be treated like a member of the royal family, and punished for any act only after being heard in open council.

"On this assurance and on permission being accorded to take the bones of my kinsmen out and do their funeral ceremonies properly, I agreed to go out of the prison. I examined the lion for an hour and found out that its movements in the cage were mechanically regular. So, I concluded that it was not a real lion but an artificial one made of wax. Calling for a red-hot iron, I thrust it into the lion which promptly melted and flowed out, to the astonishment of the assembled princes, ministers and

populace, and vindicated the intellectual prestige of the Magadhas. The Nandas and Rakshasa and Baddhasala were all astonished at my achievement. But, instead of being pleased, they became filled with insane jealousy and fear. My mother's cousin, whose sister is one of the queens of Sarvarthasiddhi, and in whose house I was living, heard from his sister that the Nandas were likely to order my seizure and detention again. So, he sent me away secretly that very night to the son of a trusted follower of Maurya in Pippalavana, and gave it out that that I had run away from his house. The Pippalavana friend was afraid to keep me with him and was also hard up for funds. He sent me as a servant to a Kirata chief in Nepal who had many hunters under him, taking from him a thousand *panas*. I remained with that hunter chief for six months, learning to capture bears, tigers and elephants. I also got an excellent training in archery and endurance which has stood me in good stead later on. One day, when I was playing the *Raja Kila*, or the Royal game, with my fellow herdsman, Arya Chanakya passed that way, saw me, put some questions to me and took a fancy for me, and you know the rest. He took me from the huntsmen, paying them a thousand *panas*, brought me to Takshasila and put me to school with a hundred and three princes and made me learn all the arts of war and peace for seven years. I left Takshasila only last year, after finishing my course, to see my dying great grandmother Mura. She asked me to live with her in Pataliputra till she died. She begged of Sarvarthasiddhi to ask his sons to restore at least part of Maurya's

estates to me. Most unexpectedly, he showed some genuine interest in her, and interceded for her with his sons who gave me half of Maurya's estates. I was also made a captain in the army. But, finding that I was loved and respected by all the soldiers, I was taken away from the army and made the superintendent of the banqueting hall in which capacity Arya Chanakya found me on that memorable day," said Chandragupta.

"A very interesting story," said Siddharthaka. "It will become even more interesting when the astrologer's prophecy referred to by your grandfather comes true."

"How can we rely on such predictions?" asked Chandragupta.

"We should try and make them true: there is no harm in exploring the existence of such predictions in an effort to make them come true," said Chanakya. "I have already taken the preliminary steps. Word has been sent to Vairantya and Khondoveera to keep their Khonds and Savaras ready. An emissary has also gone to the king of the Kalingas to send us an expeditionary force to march on Gaya. Mercenaries are also being recruited rapidly from among the warlike tribes of Kambhoja, Saurashtra, Lichchhavika, Vrijiika, Mallaka, Madraka, Kukura, Kuru and Panchala, let alone the criminal tribes and forest and hill tribe recruits. You will be the commander-in-chief, and I the chief of Staff. Bhadrabhata, Purushadatta, Dingarata, Rajasena, Lohitaksha and Vijayavarman will be the Division Commanders, and Balagupta will be chief of your Body-Guard, and Adjutant-General of Allied Forces. The march on Gaya will begin in a month," said Chanakya.

"*Hara Hara Mahadev!*" cried out Chandragupta in ecstasy. "This is grand! Now there is no need to hide from spies like Viradhagupta. I felt so small when I hid from him."

"But that idiot's boast, that he could capture you if you were anywhere within a hundred miles, when you were not even a hundred inches from him, is priceless. It is such things that add spice to life," said Chanakya "Now to sleep. We shall think over in detail our plan of action to-morrow morning."

CHAPTER VII

A PREMATURE ATTEMPT

A month later, the citizens of Gaya woke up early in the morning, at 3 A. M., on hearing a terrific noise of war drums and the wild shouts of hill and forest tribes. They found a section of the town on fire, and alien troops in the streets. They had looked to the Nanda governor for protecting the city. But he himself had been surrounded in the citadel by Chandragupta and Chanakya with the mercenary troops, the subjugation of the town proper being left to Vairantya and Khondoveera and their forest hordes. The Kalingas had failed to turn up by the appointed date, and Chandragupta had been too impatient to wait for them especially as Vairantya and Khondoveera had appeared with their men, and several hundred tried warriors from among the mercenaries too had been recruited.

The governor and his men put up an unexpectedly stiff resistance. The forest tribes had acted brutally against the townsmen they had captured beheading many, burning down houses, and doing other acts of atrocity. They and the criminal tribe recruits had begun mercilessly plundering the city, and had, in the process, not only alienated the citizens and made them put up a fierce resistance but had also begun quarrelling over the spoils and fighting among themselves. A section of the mercenaries fighting under Chandragupta against the governor had also deserted him for the more profitable job of plundering the town. Hard blows were not to their taste and the easy spoil attracted them.

Time was pressing. "If we do not make the governor surrender in twelve hours, there is no hope of victory," said Chanakya to Chandragupta, "as an express messenger has gone to Pataliputra with an urgent request for help, and the Nandas will be here soon." Chandragupta and his captains fought with great courage, but the governor of Gaya, encouraged by the resistance of the townsmen and the expected speedy arrival of reinforcements from headquarters, held out in the citadel. By nightfall, the Nanda war drums were heard.

Chanakya made a last attempt to turn the tide. He left Chandragupta and went to the plundering forest and criminal tribes and appealed to them to desist from their senseless acts and concentrate on the capture of the entire town first. His words fell on deaf ears. The Khonds and Savaras had entered three great sweetmeat shops and were busy eating the delicacies. The criminal tribes were

fighting one another with terrible ferocity at the shops of the goldsmiths over the jewels found there. The mercenary deserters were coolly engaged in searching for cash and valuables in the captured houses. The citizens, whose houses were burning, were heaping curses on Chandragupta and the forest and criminal tribes. Finding the situation hopeless and the Nanda troops from Pataliputra about to surround the town on all sides, Chanakya asked Chandragupta and his captains to escape, while there was a chance, leaving the disobedient mercenaries and forest and criminal tribes to their fate. Chandragupta demurred. "It is far better to die fighting than run away," said he.

"That is foolish heroism. It is behaving wooden-headedly. A tree refuses to bend before a flood or storm and is uprooted, never more to rise. A reed, on the other hand, bends before the flood or storm and rises up again. If you fight and die today, you cannot fight tomorrow. If you run away today you can fight tomorrow and fulfil the sacred mission entrusted to you by your grandfather Maurya. Policy achieves success where mere courage fails. Come, let us make good our escape while there is time. You and I will go together, Bhagurayana and the rest will make good their escape singly in different directions. I shall keep in touch with them through my spies," said Chanakya.

His advice was acted on, and he and Chandragupta and Bhagurayana and the rest managed to slip out of the city before the Nanda army under Bhaddasala, Rakshasa and Dhanananda completely surrounded the city. As they

were leaving the doomed city, they heard the trumpetings of the war elephants and the neighings of the war horses led to the charge by Rakshasa and Bhaddasala. "Great will be the slaughter today," said Chanakya to Chandragupta. "These simple forest folk have no discipline and so fall an easy prey to less brave men. The criminal tribes are naturally cowards. Their courage is greatest in the absence of the enemy. They will not put up a fight and will be exterminated. The mercenaries too, having no unified command, and having lost the incentive of pay and loot, will be overwhelmed by the regulars. I tell you, Vrishala, when we get into power, we must have a whole-time army, paid regularly by the State and well disciplined. Then alone can we expect to enforce our commands, prevent looting and alienation of our own citizens and thus to succeed and be respected."

The Nanda troops soon relieved the beleaguered garrison. Though Rakshasa was for granting amnesty to those mercenaries who surrendered and offered to serve the Nanda army, Bhaddasala would not agree to it. Dhana-nanda agreed with Bhaddasala and the Nanda governor that the mercenaries should be killed to a man. The mercenaries put up a desperate resistance for several hours, giving time for Vairantya and Khondoveera to retreat with the majority of their men, cutting through the small Nanda forces in the south and fighting their way to their native hills and forests. The criminal tribe levies had no leader or policy. They were all caught hold of by the enraged citizens and either killed off-hand or thrown into the flames of the burning houses. After the defeat

and extirpation of the mercenaries, Rakshasa made the Nanda troops and the citizens stop the fires from spreading.

The next day, Dhanananda held an inquiry as to who were all the citizens who had helped Chandragupta and Chanakya in the attack on the city. Several innocent people were executed, and several more tortured, by Dhanananda and Bhaddasala against the advice of Rakshasa who wanted to leave no potential enemies of the Nandas behind in the town by following a generous policy of amnesty.

Chanakya and Chandragupta reached an old woman's hut in Vyaghraghat¹ 20 miles away, at nightfall the next day. They were very hungry, and cautiously peeped in to see what kind of people were in the house and whether they could get any food there. They saw a small boy being served by the old woman with a dish of rice gruel. The boy put his fingers into the centre of the steaming gruel in his eagerness to eat, and burnt his fingers and bawled out in pain. "You foolish boy," said the old woman, chiding him, "why do you behave like those fools, Chanakya and Chandragupta, who attacked the heart of the Nanda Kingdom and burnt their fingers, instead of beginning with the frontiers and slowly advancing to the centre, consolidating their conquests on the way?" Chanakya listened wonderingly, and said to Chandragupta, "That woman knows more of strategy than we do". Then they went in and begged for some food. "I have only some gruel to offer, thanks to the rapacity of Dhanananda who taxes us to the very skin. You are welcome

1. Modern Sherghat.

to the humble fare," said the old lady, as she put two plates of gruel before them. The two were very glad to eat the homely and nourishing food. Then, thanking the old woman, they left, as Chanakya did not want to waste a night there when it could be utilized for getting away from the Nandas to a place of safety.

CHAPTER VIII

THE NANDAS LEFT BEHIND

FOR a month Chandragupta remained with Chanakya in a Pandit's house in Chatrapur, a big village on the *Sona*. Bhagurayana and the rest also had joined them there. By that time the vigour of the search had abated though there were standing instructions to all officers throughout the Empire to arrest Chandragupta, wherever found, and the reward for his capture alive or dead had been increased.

"We can be quite safe here for the rest of our lives if we had no other object but to live in safety," said Chanakya to Chandragupta. "But as we want to do something more than drag on an inglorious existence, it is essential that we should go to some place where we can get together a little army to fight the Nandas. It is not impossible to defeat them. Even the great Persian Empire has been overthrown by a Yavana chieftain, Alikasundara, who is now with his army near the Gandhara country. So I suggest that we go across the Satadru¹ and get the

1. The Sutlej.

help of the Aratti,¹ The Valhikas,² and Kambhojas,³ and of the kings of Kashmir, Abhisara,⁴ Takshasila and the Vitasta⁵. If necessary, we can also get the aid of the Sakas, Yavanas, Parsikas, and other *Mlechchhas*⁶. Parvataka or Parvateswara, the King of the Vitasta country, is a very ambitious man. He wants to conquer as many lands as possible and has already conquered some. He has also begun to call himself Puru or Paurava, fancying himself to be a great Aryan prince of the ancient and famous house of Puru instead of being a local chieftain of the Punjab of comparatively recent origin. He has a very ambitious brother called Vairochaka and several sons to be provided for. The kings of Abhisara and Kashmir have been defeated by him and are now his allies. They are equally ambitious and will be ready to help us if we promise them plenty of gold. So too the barbarous tribes and even the Aratti."

"But, reverend sir," said Chandragupta, "don't you think that these chieftains, and especially Parvataka and Vairochaka, will try to rule Magadha themselves if called in to help us? I would like much rather that these usurping Nandas ruled than that my beloved Magadha should be ruled by those chieftains."

1. The Arasñtri or kingless, that is, the republican nations of the Punjab south of the Chenab.

2. Bactrians.

3. The people of Ladakh and Little Tibet.

4. Abhisara is the mountainous district south of the Kashmir Valley.

5. The Jhelum, that is, of Poros, the king of that region.

6. Non-Hindu barbarians.

"Have no fear," said Chanakya. "The chieftains shall only aid us. They shall not rule Magadha. Like a donkey carrying gold, like the razor shaving the chin, like the *Asuras*¹ preparing *amrita*², these chieftains shall be only our tools, not our masters. Leave all that to me. I know how to deal with them."

"But, reverend sir," said Chandragupta, "How can you control their brute force?"

"Like the snake-charmer controlling the snakes, like the mahout controlling the elephants," said Chanakya.

"I have one request to make," said Chandragupta, "I beg of you to do all the diplomacy. I am no good at it. I shall do whatever fighting there is."

"Very well," said Chanakya, "But, never contradict what I do, or show your knowledge or disapproval thereof."

"All right," said Chandragupta.

The next day Chanakya and Chandragupta set out on their long journey to the Punjab. Chanakya disguised himself as an *Ajivaka* monk and Chandragupta as a disciple of his. Chanakya's spies Siddharthaka, Samiddharthaka, Udumbara and Nipunaka, and Bhagurayana and the rest also went along with them, though not in their company. After several days they reached Gaya. There one of the *Kayastha*³ officers of the Nandas stopped them and asked Chanakya who the person with him was.

1. Demons.

2. Nectar.

3. One of the castes among the Hindus, below the Brahmins in status.

"My disciple," replied Chanakya.

"But he does not look a Brahmin," said the *Kayastha* officer.

"The times when Brahmins could be recognised by their looks have gone," said Chanakya, "Nowadays, many a Brahmin looks a Sudra¹, and many a Sudra looks a Brahmin. Why, you are a *Kayastha*, and yet you look a far better Brahmin than I."

The officer smiled and let them pass. Chanakya did not want to take any more risks in that place. He took Chandragupta to a rest-house. Both were very hungry. Chanakya went to the holy river-bed where many pilgrims were performing *Sraddhas*². Large quantities of cooked food-stuffs had been left untouched by the priests who had many *Sraddhas* to perform, and so could only eat a few things from each feast. Chanakya wrapped up a plentiful supply of food and went to the rest-house where he and Chandragupta feasted on it.

"Sir," said Chandragupta, "is it proper for us to eat the offerings to dead persons?"

"Nothing is more proper," said Chanakya "than to eat food offered to the gods and the ancestors. Of course, even forbidden food can be taken in times of calamity and need. A great sage of old ate two handfuls of food from the eating bowl of an outcaste in order to save himself from death by starvation. And the sage Viswamitra went and stole and ate dog's flesh to save himself from death."

1. The fourth caste among the Hindus.

2. Annual funeral ceremonies to the manes of the departed ones.

At Benares, Chandragupta and Chanakya were bathing in the Ganges at the Manikarnika ghat when a Nanda captain went round having a look at all the bathers. Chandragupta knew this captain and espied him from a distance. He told Chanakya of this. Chanakya at once made him dive into the water while he himself went and quarrelled with a Mahratta Brahmin who was bathing ten yards ahead. Chanakya pulled that Brahmin by the tuft and asked him what he meant by splashing water on him. The other replied equally angrily, and pulled Chanakya too by the tuft. The Nanda captain rushed to the scene of the quarrel leaving the place where Chandragupta was. He pacified the quarrelling Brahmins and proceeded on his rounds. Chanakya then left the Mahratta Brahmin (who was Siddharthaka in disguise) and finished his bath in peace.

On the road to Prayag, in a lonely spot adjoining a jungle, a beggar asked Chandragupta for alms. Chandragupta took and gave him a gold coin unthinkingly. The astonished beggar exclaimed, "Ah, you must be Prince Chandragupta for whose capture a hundred thousand gold *panas* are offered," and went to catch him. Chandragupta at once killed the man with his concealed dagger. "Too much avarice ends in death," said Chanakya, as Siddharthaka and Samiddharthaka came to the spot, dressed as casual wayfarers, and took the corpse and threw it into the thick bushes close by.

Mathura was reached several days later. Chanakya and Chandragupta had just sat down for a meal in a Brahmin's house there when Rakshasa's spy Priyam-

vadaka went along the street towards that house to take his meal. At that very moment, a snake-charmer, who was exhibiting his snakes in the front of the house, lost control over one of his cobras, which rushed into the house. There was wild panic, and Chanakya and Chandragupta ran away by the back door. The snake-charmer entered the house and, after fifteen minutes, caught the snake, and put it back into his basket. The grateful hotel-keeper gave him plenty of milk and food free. The man put them in a basket, thanked the donor, and went away, leaving Priyamvadaka to eat his meal in peace. Then he joined Chanakya and Chandragupta under a lonely banyan tree away from the village, and all the three had their meal. When he took out the pot of milk, Chanakya took a small mud pot, poured a generous quantity of milk into it and said, "Siddharthaka, feed your fangless cobra with it. It saved us."

Three months after they started, Chanakya and Chandragupta, with Siddharthaka going in advance and Nipunaka following behind, and Samiddharthaka and Udumbara hovering about in the vicinity, reached Indraprasta on the Jumna. All the six went into a rest-house, though the spies occupied different portions. Chanakya sauntered out alone into the streets. Crowds of Magadhan troops, elephantry, cavalry, chariots and infantry, were in the city. Near Takshasila gate, Chanakya was stopped by General Balagupta, the officer in command of the chariots.

"Where are you going, sir?" asked Balagupta.

"We are a party of six. We want to go to Holy Amarnath," said Chanakya.

"Don't you know that the way is blocked by ferocious barbarians and *Mlechchhas* under a man called Alikasundara?¹ He has defeated the powerful Parvataka calling himself Paurava. The king of Takshasila let the man into our country through the passes and is even now helping him. Parvataka too is assisting him now. The Kalachuris and the valiant Kshatriyas of Sangala have been smashed by the combined forces of this barbarian aided by our own kings of the Punjab calling themselves Ambasthas, Pauravas and what not. That is why our army has been mobilised here for the last one month ready for the enemy. I am told that the barbarian troops will not dare to meet our troops."

"Who is in command of our troops?" asked Chanakya.

"Baddhasala is in command, under the directions of the King and the princes.

"Is prince Chandragupta commanding his division?" asked Chanakya.

"Oh, no, the prince is now fleeing from justice. There is a price on his head. A hundred-thousand gold *panas* await him who takes him alive or dead."

"A hundred-thousand gold *panas*!" said Chanakya.

"I see that your greed is roused. Well, let me tell you, I never hanker after such blood-money," said Balagupta.

1. Alexander,

"Why, what is the harm in taking it, Sir, when the king offers it?" asked Chanakya.

"None, perhaps. But I served Maurya when he was commander-in-chief, and I should not like to betray his grandson for all the gold in the world," said Balagupta,

"You seem to be Chandragupta's friend."

"Yes, I am ready to die for him, sir. He is not only my relative but my former chief's grandson," said Balagupta.

Seeing how staunch a friend he was of the family, Chanakya told him about their flight and secured all the help he wanted for his stay there and a safe pass across the Jumna past the Nanda lines.

As they were crossing the Jumna, leaving the serried troops of Magadha behind them, Chandragupta's eyes watered, and he whispered to Chanakya, "I feel sorry at my not being able to fight shoulder to shoulder with these men. Many of my companions are there at the head of their divisions though they have not recognised me in my disguise."

"Well, one day, you will be at their head. Indeed, you will, God willing, be at the head of a mightier army than ever man saw in this country since the Mahabharata war. But, first let us overthrow these usurping Nandas and make you king," said Chanakya.

The boat landed them on the other shore. They bade farewell to Balagupta's men who took them to be mere pilgrims, and proceeded on their way,

"This is the first time I have left Magadha," said Chandragupta sadly as he proceeded, "God knows when I shall return."

"We shall return as soon as we have gathered together an army strong enough to fight the Nandas. It may take some time, but there is no doubt that we leave Magadha only to return," said Chanakya.

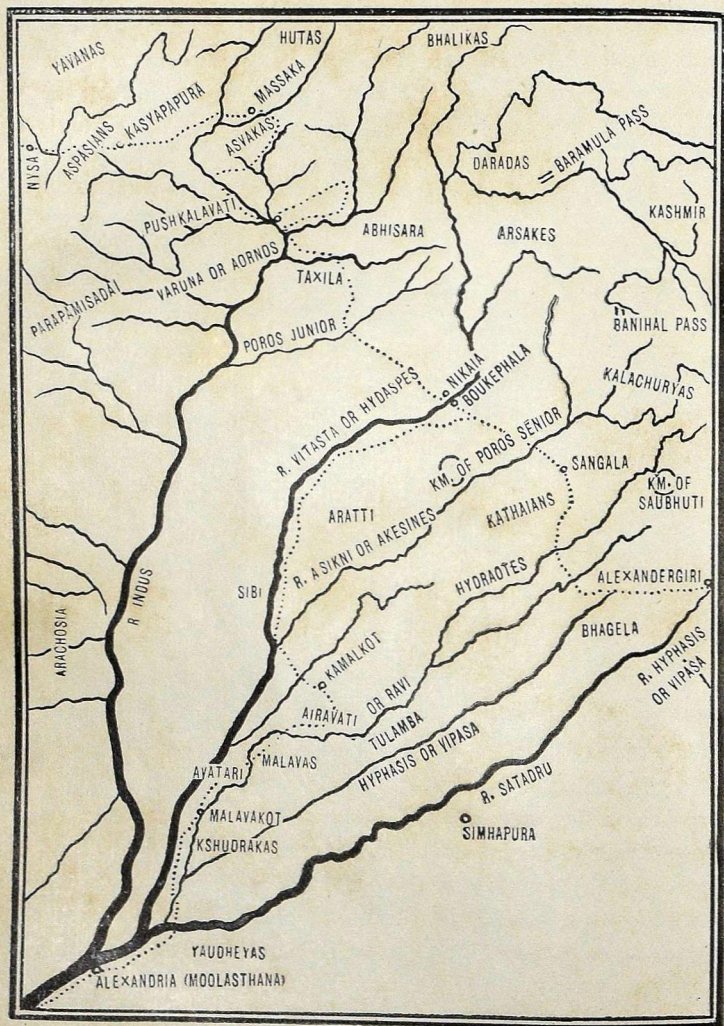
CHAPTER IX

ALEXANDER AND CHANDRAGUPTA

When Chandragupta and Chanakya and the four spies reached the Satadru¹, they heard many glowing accounts of the prowess of Alexander, and his freedom from racial or national pride, and his fine treatment of Omphis, Poros, Saubhuti, and Bhagela. They also heard that he was camping with his formidable army on the banks of the Hyphasis ready to cross over and fight the Nandas.

Chanakya said to Chandragupta, "He appears to be a greater man than I had thought. He is a more suitable person to be approached by us for help than the barbarous hill and forest tribes or the now powerless Poros and Kathaians. He has a great army and is anxious to overrun the whole world in a mad thirst for adventure, glory and booty, and will be glad of our help. He is also, from what we hear, a great general and organiser of victory. He has uprooted the mighty Persian Empire which seemed

1. Sutlej.



ALEXANDER'S PUNJAB CAMPAIGN

to be firmly rooted like a banyan tree. He has now promised his soldiers splendid booty from Magadha. You can satisfy his avarice by promising him twenty or twenty-five million gold *Panas* and large numbers of diamonds, pearls, rubies, sapphires and emeralds which he has been coveting ever since he saw the gems which that fool Saubhuti always wears on his person."

"What if he makes a request that I should recognise his suzerainty, as in the case of Ambhi and Parvateswara?" asked Chandragupta.

"Tell him that it will be impossible for you to recognise him as suzerain, and that, if you do so, the Nandas, who are now hated by the Magadhans, will become national heroes and the upholders of the nation's liberties and you, the would-be liberator, would become a hated and despised traitor."

"And quite rightly too," said Chandragupta. "My soul revolts at submitting to any man's suzerainty, least of all to a foreigner's. That is why I doubt the wisdom of seeking his help."

"Let us seek his help only on our own terms," said Chanakya. "What is the harm in trying?"

"I am only wondering whether it will not be dangerous to call in an ally of such great strength. He may prove too powerful for us to control or use. We should not repeat the story of the stupid frog which quarrelled with his cousin and called in the cobra, which came and swallowed both. I do not want Magadha to be conquered by a *Yavana* king who may finally treat us like his

vassals. It is quite a different thing if we conquer Magadha with the aid of hill and forest tribes, who will never succeed in overshadowing us or looking down on our people," said Chandragupta.

"Of course, there is that danger. But a wise man does not fear to use a razor, simply because it may cut him," said Chanakya. "There is no harm in trying to secure his help on a purely monetary basis. If he demands anything more than money for his help, you can always refuse."

Chandragupta agreed.

When they reached the Hyphasis, they learnt that Alexander had retreated to the Hydaspes, his army having refused to march further on hearing the alarming reports of Bhagela and Poros about the numbers of the Nanda army, and especially of the elephants.

"What use is there in seeking his help now?" asked Chandragupta.

"His army may recover its courage and change its mind when he hears from you the real facts, the unpopularity of the Nanda King, the existence of excellent fords on the Jamna, Ganges and other rivers, the attachment of the Magadhan army and people to you, and your mastery of the terrain, and tells them. Indeed, he will now really value your help. There is no more danger of his asking you to recognise his suzerainty. So, send Siddharthaka at once with a message to Alexander asking for an interview, and with a message to Parvataka seeking his hospitality for a day or two. Parvataka will be

very proud to have the future King of Magadha as guest. He is quite a nice man, though he has got puffed up of late, and calls himself Paurava, Parvateswara and what not. The recent defeat must have taken off quite a bit of this conceit. Even Ambhi is not without his points. Though he apes the *Yavanas*, he wants to be honoured among the Aryas also, as his pretensions to be an Ambastha show. Besides, he is more anxious not to lose what he has got, than to secure other people's lands or treasures. He had great respect for my wisdom. He rejected my advice not to go and submit to Alexander at once, but to seek the aid of the Nanda king in the first instance, only because he feared that Alexander might destroy his city as he did Kusadhvaja and Kasyapapura. And, now, I think I was wrong in asking him to prefer the Nanda king to Alexander. But, then, I didn't dream that such a degeneracy had overtaken the King of Magadha."

Siddharthaka was sent to Boukephala with the two messages.

After bathing in the Hyphasis and taking their food, Chandragupta and Chanakya and the other three went and had a look at the altars and bronze pillar set up by Alexander. The twelve great altars, each as high as a tower, stood in a row on the river bank, six on each side of the burnished bronze column.

"What fine structures these altars are!" said Chanakya. "What a pity that none of our sacred symbols are there!"

He forthwith sent Samiddharthaka and got a local painter, and made him paint pictures of a cow, bull, eagle, peacock, lion, elephant, monkey, snake, lotus, banyan tree, *Dharmachakra* and *Svastika* on those altars. Then all of them worshipped at the altars.

"Is it permissible to convert other people's temples, sir?" asked Chandragupta.

"Certainly, when there are no competing worshippers. A land must not be left untilled because the owner dies, a temple must not be left without worship because its devotees died. Gold jewels, when worn out, are melted and made into new jewels; doctrines, when worn out, are restated to express the new truths. Life must always be made to prevail over death, and no trouble is to be considered too great to serve such a desirable end. These Yavanacharyas have constructed these altars with great skill, and it will be a pity to leave them without worship, like tombs. They themselves will rejoice at our converting them into popular places of worship."

They reached Boukephala on the day before the grand Durbar. Siddharthaka met them along with one of Poros's ministers, and conducted them to the palace, where Poros himself received Chandragupta and assigned him special quarters near the ladies' apartments. He told him also that Alexander would see him the next morning at 10 a. m., but hinted that the prospects of Alexander's marching to Pataliputra were not very bright, although he might try his chance, especially as Memnon had brought strong reinforcements.

The next morning, at nine, Princess Santavati was sitting with queen Swarnamayi, at the window of the inner apartments of Poros; she slyly threw a jasmine flower into the court-yard below. Swarnamayi, however, noticed this, and also her satisfied smile a second later, and went to the window and looked out, and saw Prince Chandragupta hurrying back to his room.

"Santa," said she smiling, "so your romance too has begun. He is a very handsome prince. There is no doubt about it. He looks also refined."

Santavati blushed.

"That black Brahmin with him, he is so different, and yet, somehow, fits in with him," said Swarnamayi.

"Oh, I won't trust that Brahmin," said Santavati. "He is too deep for me. Uncle says that he is one of the most dangerous men alive, and that he is also deeply versed in sorcery and magic."

"Such a man can be very useful," said Swarnamayi. "I am more interested in him than in the prince."

"Is it true that these two have come here to seek the aid of Alexander against the usurping Nandas?" asked Santavati.

"Yes, your uncle himself told me so."

"But, auntie, don't you think it is silly to expect others to win empires for you, as Prince Chandragupta seems to do? If they can win them, they will win them for themselves and not for others."

"Go and tell Chandragupta about it."

"I may, when I get the chance."

"At this rate, the chance will come soon."

"You yourself told me yesterday that he would not be a bad match for any princess."

"I still think so. But it is your father, the king of Simhapura,¹ who has to arrange your marriage. There will be hundreds of princes seeking your hand and the kingdom which goes along with it.

"I hate the idea of any one marrying me for the sake of the kingdom. I shall marry only the man of my choice," said Santavati.

"All right. Go and put a garland round Chandra's neck then, and give him the advice you gave just now."

Santa blushed again. "Auntie," said she. "How I wish I could do so without breaking all our proprieties. But, seriously, don't you agree with me about the futility of expecting others to win empires for you?"

"In general, yes. But there may be exceptions; a king with a noble soul, like Sivi, for instance."

"Yes, but Alexander is not one of those," said Santa.

"You don't like him, do you?" asked Swarnamayi

"How can I?" asked Santa. "Did he not kill my cousins?"

Swarnamayi's eyes filled with tears. She embraced Santa and said, "Darling, I forgot. You would have been my daughter-in-law had Arjun lived."

1. A town in Rajputana desert Pariyatra or Bairat of later days.

Santa too shed tears.

"Yours is a loving nature," said Swarnamayi.

"I will die for those I love," said Santa.

"So, young Chandra is safe enough here," said Swarnamayi.

"Auntie, he is going now for the interview. Let us go to the room behind Alexander's audience-chamber and listen to the conversation between him and Alexander. Something within me tells me that the prince's proud spirit and Alexander's arrogance will clash. So, let us watch the fun."

"Right," said Swarnamayi. "That will be quite interesting."

Then they went to the room behind the audience-chamber and listened.

"Well, young man, what can I do for you?" asked Alexander of Chandragupta. Both were sitting in the audience-chamber of Poros's palace. Alexander looked gracious and patronising. Chandragupta looked embarrassed and uncomfortable. "Tell me something about yourself. I am afraid that I am not well acquainted with the affairs of your part of the world," said Alexander.

"The rulers of Magadha for a long time past have been the lordly Nandas, from whom I trace my descent. The present king and princes are, however, usurpers, the descendants of a vile barber, who seduced the lascivious queen of Maharaja Mahanandin, put the king and all the princes to death with the exception of my grand-father

Maurya, and ascended the throne under the title of *Mahapadma Nanda*. Maurya he spared as he was held to be harmless, being the son of a Maurya princess and considered unlikely to be made king by the people of Pataliputra. My grandfather too served Mahapadma, who was a great soldier and vigorous ruler, faithfully, as commander-in-chief, and helped him to extend his dominions up to Nander on the Godavari in the south, Jumna in the west, Goubati and Kamakhya in the east, and Nepal in the north. But he had finally a nervous breakdown and became semi-idiotic. He then abdicated in favour of his sons. These mean sons replaced Maurya by Bhaddasala and, on his advice, they shut up Maurya and all his clansmen, including me, in an underground chamber with one day's food for each, and Maurya and ninety-nine of his lieutenants killed themselves willingly in pursuance of a compact to let me live to avenge their deaths. I was the favourite grandson of Maurya, the son of his only son who had predeceased him. I lived on for some months in that dungeon, and was released in order to solve a riddle and uphold Magadha's pride of learning against Simhala, whose king had sent a lion in an iron cage and wanted it to be let loose without opening the cage. I found its movements to be mechanical, concluded that it was of wax, applied a red-hot iron bar to it, and made it melt and flow out without opening the cage. I was highly praised then. But mean men soon forget their promises and also the services rendered to them. After various adventures, the present king and princes tried to seize me suddenly and to put me to death after the

mockery of a trial. But I have managed to escape from them.'

"Well," said Alexander, "your story is even more gruesome than the stories of the royal houses of Epirus and Macedon. What do you want me to do now?"

"I want to march on Pataliputra. I want your help to depose the Nandas and become king."

"But, don't you see that we have turned back, as the omens were unfavourable?"

"That was a mistake. You could have easily faced the army of the present Nandas if you had my help."

"My men were home-sick," said Alexander.

"Perhaps they were also frightened at the numbers of the Nanda hosts, the rivers to be crossed and the distances to be traversed. There might have been good reasons for the fear if it were the old Nandas, or if my grandfather was the commander-in-chief, or even if Mahapadma in his heyday were leading the army, or if you were not leading them. The Magadhan army consists of brave and tried men, and I saw their gallant show as I came along. They will strike terror into any person not acquainted with the real state of things. But the present Nandas are hated by the people and by the army, who are sure to support me if I march against Pataliputra with a powerful army. So I request you to resume your eastward march and help me with your troops. Your men too would have been encouraged greatly by the recent arrival of arms and reinforcements."

"I shall have to think it over seriously and consult with my generals. I suppose that Magadha will, in that case, take a Greek Satrap for advice on foreign affairs and military matters, and will also pay tribute, like Omphis and Poros?" said Alexander.

"Oh, no. That is impossible. There is no comparison between Omphis and Poros, petty kings of the Punjab, and the king of Magadha, the overlord of Ind. Besides, Takshasila was once subject to Persia, and is now subject to you as you have become the Emperor of Persia. Poros was defeated and conquered by you. But Magadha was never the vassal of Persia, and you never defeated and conquered her king. I shall pay you all your expenses and twenty-five million gold *Panas* to boot. But I will be independent, and my own master. I do not want any Satrap to curtail the liberties of Imperial Magadha and to earn for myself the well-merited curses of my people, who would then regard me as a traitor and these usurping princes as patriots," said Chandragupta.

"Then you should have gone to a leader of mercenaries, and not approached the Supreme Lord of Asia," said Alexander. "As for my not defeating Magadha, that is a trivial detail which can be supplied whenever I want. Of course, a prince without a kingdom or army cannot be fought and defeated, and cannot for that reason claim to be greater than Poros. I intend to conquer and unite the whole world under my sway. So, I have no use for the past history of Magadha any more than I had for the past history of the Persian Empire. It may interest you to know what I wrote to Darius, the Great King, when he

presumed to write to me as to an equal. I sternly asked him not to write to me as to an equal, but as to the Supreme Lord of Asia and the master of all his possessions. I also told him, 'I need no money from you. Nor will I accept a part of the country in place of the whole, for all the country and all its treasure are already mine.' Surely you don't claim a higher status than the Great King."

"I do. You defeated him, and so he had perforce to put up with all this. Among the Indians, a rightful heir to the throne, if kept out of his heritage by usurpers, goes and seeks the help of a brother king to regain his kingdom. He gets such help without being required to surrender his independence. As an equal from an equal he demands help, and gets it. He never dreams of becoming the vassal of the other. Nor does the other dream of demanding such vassalage. He considers it to be dishonourable to do so. I came to you like that for help, as I had heard that the Yavanas were like us in many respects. I see now that your code in such matters is not as high as ours," said Chandragupta.

"How dare you say that your code is higher than ours?" roared Alexander. "How can it be?"

"Because I find it to be so," said Chandragupta. "I shall now go to the savage Kiratas, Khonds and Savaras, and get their help on easier terms than yours. They understand and follow our code."

"Do! Meanwhile, we shall march on Magadha and conquer it," said Alexander.

"That is a vain dream. With me as your ally it may be easy to conquer Magadha. Without my aid it will be like attempting to cross the Himalayas with a pair of crutches."

"We shall, in that case, take you with us as a hostage."

"And violate your safe conduct and all rules of hospitality!"

"Necessities of State often require deviation from ideal rules of conduct," replied Alexander.

"I fear you not, O Alexander, or anything you can do to me. I am not pusillanimous like Darius. The descendant of Mandhata fears no man. So, you will never succeed in making me aid you in conquering Magadha," said Chandragupta. "I shall die first."

"Death may come earlier than you dream," said Alexander.

"Death is more welcome to me than servitude. Do your worst," said Chandragupta.

Alexander got into a rage, and called Hephaistion and Philippos and asked them to take Chandragupta at once to the private dungeon of Poros, and to keep him there till further orders. Chandragupta was caught unawares, and also deemed it inadvisable to resist then as it would have meant certain death. As he was taken away, he shouted out to Alexander, "Though the present Nandas are my enemies, I wish them a complete triumph over your barbarians. I pity Poros, Omphis and the other

Indian Kings who follow you about and are your vassals. What a master have they got ! ”

“ Don't forget that you are talking to the son of Ammon,” said Alexander.

“ Don't forget that you are talking to a descendant of Sri Rama,” said Chandragupta.

“ Take him away ! He shall get a fitting sentence after the Durbar is over. Till then, keep him in the private dungeon without food or water,” said Alexander.

Santavati and Swarnamayi had listened with wonder, admiration, indignation and dismay to every word of the conversation between Alexander and Chandragupta. “ Ah,” said Santa, “ he is as brave as I thought. I shall marry none but him. This barbarous Yavana wants to break all the laws of war and hospitality, and to imprison and even kill a guest. And in our palace too ! We must prevent this.”

“ How ? ” asked Swarnamayi. “ We are women. What can we do ? ”

“ What can't we do ? Uncle is his slave, not we, You know there is a trap-door opening into the dungeon. I shall enter through it, and rescue the prince and send him to Chanakya who will be ready for all emergencies.”

“ Darling, but will not Alexander find out the fraud in the evening, after the Durbar ? What will your uncle say then ? ”

“ Let him say what he will. We shall not allow such a shameful act of imprisonment and murder here. Alexander does not know of the existence of a trap-door.”

"It is a dangerous thing to do," said Swarnamayi
"Even your father will not approve of it".

"He will surely approve of it," said Santa. "He never disapproves of anything that I do. My uncle will, of course, be put out. But I shall appeal to his better nature, and his anger will blow over. I must rescue the prince, or die. You are also a princess of *Simhapura*, 'the house of the lion.' Shall we become sheep to-day? Aunt, leave all that to me. Have two swift horses waiting outside with a messenger, and five other horses ready in the wood outside the city, and send word to Chanakya to go to the wood and wait for Chandragupta. Oh, my heart is trembling for the fate of the prince. I can't rest till I rescue him."

"Santa, you remind me of my maiden days. I felt as excited about your uncle then as you do about Chandragupta now. I shall certainly help, my dear. I hope he will marry you for thus saving his life," said Swarnamayi.

"Love demands no reward. Nor does it go a-begging," said Santavati. "If he loves me, as I hope he does, let him do so. Else, Santa will lose her peace of mind for ever, but will not breathe a word to anybody."

Swarnamayi nodded proudly, and went in.

Chandragupta was taken by Hephæstion and Philippos, and a dozen Greek soldiers, and some men of Poros into the private dungeon. It was a room 24 feet by 24 feet, and had walls 24 feet high and 6 feet thick. There were only four slits, two inches wide, two on each side

and nearly at the top. Chandragupta was put there, and the massive doors closed and locked behind him, leaving him in almost complete darkness and uncertain as to what was in store for him. He had been in the under-ground prison of the Nandas, and had passed through many a peril, and so took the imprisonment coolly. He did not give up hopes of rescue. He had implicit confidence in Chanakya's ability to meet any situation, and had seen from the audience-chamber Chanakya watching from outside and going away with that determined look which came on him when facing any desperate situation. "What a marvellous man!" said Chandragupta to himself. "And how fortunate that he is my *guru* and is so attached to me! There is nothing too difficult for him to tackle. These stout walls can't keep him out." The heavy morning meal made him drowsy.

When half asleep he was astounded to see a portion of the wall of his dungeon slowly revolving in the middle causing that portion of the wall to stand edgewise leaving a free space on either side. And, yet, such had been the massive appearance of the wall before, that he could not have suspected such an arrangement. He concluded that Chanakya must be the author of this miracle, and said in a soft voice, "Reverend sir, nothing is impossible for you." What was his astonishment when instead of Chanakya's form coming through the newly opened doorway, it was the fascinating form of Santavati. He wiped his eyes to make himself sure that he was not dreaming. Still the vision lingered. "Am I dreaming?" he muttered half aloud,

"Prince," said Santavati, "it is no dream. Seeing the shameful treatment meted out to you, I resolved to come to your rescue. Whom were you addressing just now?"

"My preceptor, Chanakya. I expected him to save me from this situation. I never dreamt that you would come to my rescue."

"Are you sorry?" asked she.

"Oh, no, I am twice blessed," said he, "being relieved from two maladies. Ever since I saw you and read the message in your eyes, I knew that my heart was no longer mine. And, O Santa, here is the flower you dropped for me this morning." He took out the jasmine flower from his bosom and held it out.

Santavati blushed deeply and said, "I liked your manly replies to Alexander. I like courage."

"Then, I shall take courage to tell you Santa that I love you," said Chandragupta. "Become my wife and make me happy for ever!"

Santa stood silent. A tremor passed through her. She was about to faint when Chandragupta held her in his arms and said, "I marry you in the *Gandharva*¹ way allowed to us Kshatriyas," and kissed her, pressing her to his bosom.

Santa's face was suffused with joy as she returned his embrace. Soon, recovering herself, she said, "First, we must get out of this place. The workmen operating

1. A love-marriage without any ceremonies

this hidden door are waiting to put it back into position. Come, let us go."

"I should never have thought that this wall had an opening," said Chandragupta.

"Nor did the barbarian Yavana think so. Thank God, there is an opening," said she.

So saying, she took Chandragupta to her room in the ladies' apartments, and the trap-door was closed. Swarnamayi met them in her room, and was told by Santavati about the *Gandharva* marriage.

"Good luck to you both," said she. Turning to Chandragupta, she said, "Don't betray the trust reposed in you. Treat her always lovingly."

He promised to do so. Swarnamayi said to Santavati:—"Keep the marriage a secret till it is formally celebrated. Now let the prince join the other five. I got a message just now from Chanakya that the five were waiting in the wood with the horses ready to start for Simhapura. So the prince had better put on the dress of one of our messengers and ride away. Chanakya is a very clever man. He was a classmate of your father's high priest, and feels no difficulty at all in having the marriage approved by your father. Indeed, he says that he will have it celebrated in a most romantic way. I am sending a letter to Vijayasimha with the messenger to-day, strongly recommending the marriage. Your uncle too will send another letter in due course. So, you may not have to wait long before the marriage is formally celebrated. Have patience till then. Now, the prince had better change and go."

Chandragupta expressed his gratitude to Swarnamayi. He then gave a ring to Santavati in token of their secret marriage, and asked her to be in Simhapura soon. "I shall start even to-morrow," said she. Then Swarnamayi and Santavati left the room to enable Chandragupta to change into his clothes. When they returned, they were astonished to see how very much like one of Poros' messengers he looked in his smart turn-out.

"You are a quick-change artist, my lord," said Santavati admiringly. "I hope your heart changes less quickly than your appearance."

"Indeed, the prince looks so much like our messengers that, if you were caught making love to him now, your uncle would die of shame at the thought that his niece was making love to one of his humble messengers," said Swarnamayi.

Santavati laughed. "Thank God he is a prince," said she. "If he were a messenger, I should love him still."

Swarnamayi went in to fetch a small cloth-bag to put Chandragupta's clothes in. Taking that opportunity, Chandragupta took Santavati in his arms and bade her a tender farewell.

"Here is the bag," said Swarnamayi returning.

Chandragupta put his clothes into the bag. Santavati dropped a scented handkerchief of Gangetic muslin. He quietly picked it up and put it in the bag. Then he mounted the horse held in readiness for him by a messenger of Poros waiting outside, and galloped off to join Chanakya's party. They soon joined the other five in the wood outside Boukephala.

"So, you have got freedom and bondage at one and the same time," said Chanakya to Chandragupta smiling.

"The bondage is even more welcome than the freedom," said Chandragupta.

"A better match will be hard to find," agreed Chanakya.

All the seven then proceeded in the direction of Simhapura led by Poros's guide who knew the route well.

On the ninth day after they started, they were camping, one afternoon, in some tents in a desert in the outskirts of the kingdom of Simhapura. All of them were taking an afternoon siesta owing to the excessive heat. Chanakya opened his eyes and saw a big lion close to Chandragupta. He rushed towards it suddenly, and it ran away. Chandragupta too woke up just then. Chanakya made political capital out of this episode. He woke up the entire party and told them that the lion was affectionately licking the body of Chandragupta when he woke up, and that it had then quietly walked away. He said that the incident was a sure sign that Chandragupta would become a great Emperor, and that he would be the son-in-law of the king of Simhapura and would be reclining one day on the lion-emblem throne of the Nandas in Suganga palace. Every one of them saw the retreating lion. The news of this marvellous event spread like wild-fire throughout the country, and Chandragupta became thereafter known as "The Man Born To Be A King."

When the king of Simhapura heard about the episode from Poros's messenger, who had seen the lion

with his own eyes, he readily agreed with the opinion expressed by Swarnamayi in her letter, handed to him by the messenger, that a fitter man than Chandragupta could not be found as Santavati's husband. He accommodated Chandragupta and Chanakya in a large palace in Simhapura. He became even more convinced of the suitability of the marriage after a talk with Chandragupta and Chanakya and his own palace priest. Chanakya suggested a *Swayamvara*, as he considered that a Kshatriya princess should choose her husband in that way. Vijayasimha readily agreed to this.

On the seventh day after the arrival of Chandragupta, Santavati arrived at Simhapura escorted by a party sent by Poros. Poros too had sent a letter strongly recommending the marriage. Santavati was highly tickled at the idea of the *Swayamvara*. "Nothing is more pleasing than a public expression of one's private choice," she wrote to Chandragupta secretly.

In due course, there was a grand *Swayamvara* at Simhapura. Princes and chieftains from all over the Punjab, Malava, Sind, Kanauj, Saurashtra, Maharashtra and other places came in large numbers. They were all received and accommodated with pomp and ceremony.

The great event was celebrated on a Monday morning early in the month of *Pushya* (January, 325 B.C.). Even before the *Swayamvara* the other eighty-seven candidates had given up hopes of being selected in preference to the handsome Chandragupta of the Imperial House of

Magadha, whom the desert lion had unmistakably proclaimed as the future emperor of *Jambudvīpa*. The people were with one voice for this free, open, genial prince who was an expert rider, an unequalled archer, a rare controller of elephants and an unrivalled charioteer. Above all, his winsome smile and hearty laughter endeared him to one and all. Even the chiefs of the Kathaians and other Republican tribes who had taken refuge in Simhapura were so deeply impressed with Chandragupta that they promised to make him their king, if he would lead them against Alexander, a proposal to which he readily agreed. Chanakya took the opportunity of the assemblage of thousands of Brahmins from all over the Punjab and the Malava, Kshudraka, and Sindhu country to make them fanatical enemies of Alexander and great friends of Chandragupta. He exhorted them to see to it that everything was done to make the foreign invader feel as uncomfortable as possible.

“Let him find no peace in our land. Encourage those who have revolted to persist in their revolt. Stir up those who have submitted to revolt again. Cause so much trouble to him that he will be glad to flee from our country. He is not invincible. Nor is he unafraid. His retreat from the *Vipasa*¹ is enough to show that a sufficient show of force will make him retreat from the *Sindhu*² too!” The Brahmins promised to do as desired. He gave them the “*Song of Freedom*” composed and sung

1. The Hyphases, or Beas,

2. The Indus.

by the heroic Malavas and Kshudrakas to serve as a war cry against the Greeks who were about to invade their territory. The whole audience then sang together:—

“ For Freedom will we live,
For Freedom will we die,
For Freedom will we sing,
For Freedom will we swing !

Tyrants shall not quell us,
Favours shall not buy us,
Treaties shall not fool us,
Weapons shall not rule us !

Defeats shall not beat us,
Sages shall not dope us,
Envy shall not split us,
Passions shall not blind us !

Prisons shall not scare us,
Losses shall not break us,
Races shall not part us,
Princes shall not cheat us !

Hunger we shall kill out,
Suffring we shall root out,
Worthless leaders blot out,
With hearts honest and stout !

On, on, Ye comrades on,
Till Slav'ry's fort is breached,
On, on, Ye comrades on,
Till Freedom's goal is reached !

On, Sons of Freedom, on,
And never mind the cost,
On, Children of the Dawn.
And nothing will be lost.

Nobody's subjects are we,
We are for ever free !
Let us break these bonds of Hell,
And all will yet be well.

What though the journey's long,
To Freedom's distant shore,
What though the thorns athrong,
And we are all footsore ?

A whiff of Freedom comes,
And makes us hale and whole,
The Song of Freedom hums,
And Thraldom leaves our soul."

Chanakya asked them to popularise the song among all the Indians down to the mouths of the Indus, and to organise resistance unto death.

On the appointed day, the eighty-eight chiefs and princes assembled in the great council hall of Simhapura which had been splendidly decorated for the occasion. Chandragupta was seated in the front row. Every one of the suitors would have voted for Chandragupta next to himself. Princess Santavati came to the hall, her natural beauty enhanced by a charming *saree* and suitable ornaments. They were astounded at the wonderful sight of innocent beauty personified. She did not keep them long in suspense. Taking a quick survey round, she went straight

to Chandragupta, put the garland round his neck, and touched his feet with her hands. The blare of the trumpets announced the choice of Santavati. Amidst loud applause, the Simhapura high priest said, "Among these stars she has chosen the moon, on this Monday. Long live the couple!"

"Long live King Chandragupta and Queen Santavati!" cried out the assembled people.

CHAPTER X

THE DURBAR AT BOUKEPHALA

The pavilion of Alexander at Boukephala was gorgeous in the extreme. Bright streamers and buntings and flags waved gaily in the brilliant sunlight. Costly Persian carpets were spread on the floor. Settees and sofas of graceful and comfortable designs were set for the princes and ambassadors. Soldiers in shining armour of different kinds were standing all over the place. A magnificent throne had been set for Alexander. All his companions wore golden armour. Alexander himself wore armour made of pure gold and set with costly gems, presented by Saubhuti of the Salt Range. Among the *Durbarees* were Poros, Omphis, Saubhuti, Arsakes and Baghela, and the ambassadors of Abhisara, the Nyseans, Kathaians, Kalachuryas, etc., and all the generals and captains of the brigades.

Alexander was not in the best of moods when he came to the Durbar after his stormy interview with Chandra-

gupta. But soon, he recovered his good spirits in the extremely laudatory atmosphere of the Durbar. Countless poems in Greek and Sanskrit and Prakrit were read by the authors themselves hailing him as the Son of Zeus, the Conqueror of the World, and the Unconquerable Hero. He was also crowned with wreaths of pearls, diamonds and garlands of flowers put round his neck. Some Brahmin priests gave him consecrated pots of water, and waved lights in front of him. Alexander was delighted with all this, and was in an expansive and generous mood. He had also been highly pleased with Poros and Omphis, because of their hearty co-operation and steadfast loyalty. He called them to his side and confirmed them in the sovereignty of their dominions and of the territories recently added on to them. He had already advised these two erstwhile enemies to be reconciled, warning them of the common danger to their new dominions from the Aratti and the Asvakani. The appeal had fallen on fruitful ground. Now he announced their reconciliation and also the fact that this friendship was to be cemented by a matrimonial alliance, Omphis marrying a daughter of Poros's brother, Vairochaka. Loud applause greeted this announcement. Phillippos, the political agent attached to Omphis, and Peithon and Eudemos, the political agents attached to Poros, warmly congratulated Omphis and Poros on their alliance and new relationship.

Saubhuti, Arsakes, Abhisara, and others were confirmed in the sovereignty of their principalities. Various honours, badges and rewards were conferred upon the generals and captains.

Then Alexander made a speech: "O Macedonians, allies and princes, and peoples gathered in this magnificent assembly, I warmly return your greetings. This is a remarkable day when the West and East have united on terms of unity and friendship under my sway. Do not be grieved that I have not advanced to the Ganges and the end of the world. I will return to India after giving the soldiers a brief holiday nearer home. It is sad that people should feel weary just before the last lap, should quit the game when the goal is near. But I have to recognise human limitations, however free I may be from them. Well, if only you, my soldiers, had heard the words of that young Prince Chandragupta, how mean and hated the present ruler of the Prachyas and Gangaputras is, and how easy it would have been for us to have defeated him you would not have insisted on turning back. But that prince has a vile tongue. He uttered insolent words of defiance to me. I have therefore confined him in the private dungeon of Poros. He shall be brought here now. If he apologises and swears allegiance to me, he shall be forgiven. Else, he shall be sentenced to death for his insolence."

There was loud applause and many expressions of admiration at the unmerited generosity of Alexander to the graceless prince. "Great men can afford to forgive and be generous," said Omphis, with a side-long glance at Poros, who blushed.

Hephaistion and Philippos and the dozen soldiers who had consigned Chandragupta to the dungeon were ordered to produce him at the Durbar. In half an hour, they came back in dismay, and reported that the prisoner had escaped

though there were no signs of breaking out of the dungeon. This news caused a great sensation at the Durbar, especially among the Indians.

Alexander was in a rage. "Bring his associate, that black Brahmin," said he to Philippos. "He shall either bring back Chandragupta or himself meet with death."

A wild search was made for Chanakya. He and his men too were found to have gone, leaving no trace behind.

"That Brahmin is a magician," said Omphis to Alexander. "He must have let the prince out of the dungeon by his black magic, and escaped with him. He was in Takshasila before, and was renowned for his proficiency in the black art."

"I don't believe any such art exists," said Alexander. "This country is full of odd beliefs. But let us not spoil this Durbar by worrying about the escape of this princeling. Let the Durbar proceed!"

This was greeted with tremendous applause. The Durbar proceeded for an hour more, and broke up at 5 p.m. to meet again for a sumptuous banquet at night.

Poros returned to his palace. He took Swarnamayi and Santavati aside and said to them, "Prince Chandragupta could have escaped only through the secret passage opened by somebody with your knowledge. Speak the truth at once."

"Yes," said Santavati. "I opened it, in order to allow our guest to escape unhurt, and our honour to remain untarnished."

Poros was speechless with rage. "I have sworn to be faithful to Alexander. How can I hide this gross act of betrayal from him?" asked he.

"Your immemorial loyalty to the traditions of your race, to protect your guest at all costs, must prevail over your new-born loyalty to Alexander," said his queen.

"Or, hand me over to Alexander to be punished; instead of Chandragupta," said Santavati. "I would love to die for his sake. Three of your sons, O King, died so that our race may live with honour: do you want to live so that our race may live in dishonour, perpetually subject to these barbarians? Alas, has the Lion of the Punjab become a circus lion dreading its keeper?"

Poros sat down, stung to the quick. "Oh, that this girl should twit me thus after what I did by the banks of the *Vitasta*!" said he.

His queen touched him affectionately on the shoulder and said, "Don't mind her, dearest. I know how brave you are. She spoke in a rage, and you should forgive her."

Santavati too begged to be forgiven for hurting him to the quick, and then withdrew to her room.

"I cannot understand these young people," said Poros. "Here is this girl from Simhapura ready to die for that strange young man from Pataliputra, more than a thousand miles away."

"It is no wonder at all. He is no longer a stranger from a city more than a thousand miles away. He is her lord and master," said Swarnamayi.

"Is that true?" asked Poros astounded.

"Yes. He married her according to the *Gandharva* rites in the private dungeon itself," said Swarnamayi.

"Well," said Poros, "quick work that! I wonder if Vijayasimha will approve of it!"

"She is leaving for Simhapura to-morrow with your letter supporting this match, of course not revealing that the marriage has already taken place. The bridegroom has left with my letter."

"I doubt whether I should give my support to it. Still, the prince comes of an imperial house of blue-blooded Kshatriyas, and has assuredly a future. That very clever Brahmin with him will also see that he becomes a king."

"Here is a draft letter for your signature," said Swarnamayi.

Poros took the letter, read it and signed it, and said "These young people settle their own matches now-a-days. It was not so in our time."

"But love is the same then and now. Forms change, the fundamental emotions are the same. Come to my room. We shall go and talk there alone," said Swarnamayi.

Poros called Santavati, playfully pinched her cheek, asked her to behave herself thereafter, and went with Swarnamayi to her room.

CHAPTER XI.

SATRAPS WITHOUT A KING

Chandragupta was crowned *Yuvaraj*¹ of Simhapura soon after his marriage and was put in command of ten thousand Jats who claimed to be of *Yadu* race of Sri Krishna. Ever since their flight from Boukephala, he and Chanakya had resolved to organise resistance to Alexander among the conquered Indians, and the tribes yet to be attacked by him, and to see that the Greeks were driven out of the country. Siddharthaka, Samiddharthaka, Udumbara, Narada, Nipunaka, Nabhaga and Pisuna had been sent to the Malavas and Kshudrakas, and they had contributed greatly to the patching up of the disputes between these kindred but hostile tribes and the cementing of their new-found friendship with the marriage of Talajhanga, the young Malava chief, and Rupamanjari, the Kshudraka chief's daughter, and of five hundred other youths and maidens of each tribe with five hundred maidens and youths of the other tribe. Alexander himself was so impressed with this mass marriage that he resolved to imitate it by marrying his Macedonian soldiers to Persian maidens and thus realise his dream of East-West union.

But Chanakya and Chandragupta were greatly disappointed to note the defeat of the Malava-Kshudraka armies by Alexander and the capture of Kamalkot, Harappa, Tulamba and Avatari Rampuri and the terrible slaughter of innocent men, women and children at each of these places. They were indignant at the most heartless

1. Crown Prince and junior Ruler.

massacre of all the inhabitants of Malavakot simply because Alexander had been wounded by an arrow discharged by Rupamanjari after the fall of Talajhanga. "Why does such a great man do such mean things?" asked Chandragupta.

"Many great men do such mean things when they are piqued by personal reasons," said Chanakya. "Only, their admirers hide these mean acts from posterity if they can. It is all like our traders hiding the rotten fruits from view when exhibiting the fine ones to us. The foundations of great men, and even of saints, will not bear scrutiny."

For some time there were rumours that Alexander was fatally wounded and was unlikely to survive. But soon news came that Critobulus, the great Greek surgeon, had saved his life by a skilful operation and that Alexander was sailing down the Indus with a formidable fleet of boats and with his army marching on both sides of the river striking terror into the hearts of every one who resisted, but that, nevertheless, the Yaudheyas and Kashatris were putting up a fierce resistance. The Yaudheyas had said, in answer to his call for surrender, "We are dedicated to righteous war, *dharmayuddha*. So, if we do not fight you, who invade our country without reason, how can we keep our name?". Chandragupta suggested to Chanakya that they should rush to the aid of the Yaudheyas and Kashatris, instead of allowing them to fight Alexander single-handed and perish. "We have now twenty thousand front-line troops," said he, "consisting of our ten thousand Jats, a thousand Magadhans

under Rajasena who have joined us recently, three thousand Kathaians or Kathis who have resolved never to live in slavery and have come over here in order to settle down in a land to be given by me¹, and six thousand Malavas similarly resolved.²" Chanakya smiled and said, "Where ninety thousand brave Kshudrakas and Malavas failed, will these twenty thousand indifferent troops succeed? Besides, the King of Simhapura is a kinsman and henchman of Parvateswara, the enthusiastic ally and hanger-on of Alexander now, and will not allow his troops to be used against Alexander. Even if he allowed it, by the time our camel corps moves to the Yaudheya country the battle will be over. Alexander is a master of lightning tactics. He will always strike before his enemy is ready. And his force is a disciplined unit acting under his sole command, unlike the indisciplined hordes of our Kings or the ill-assorted units deployed by us at Gaya. A premature attempt will mean another failure as at Gaya."

"Why does Alexander command such loyalty from his troops?" asked Chandragupta.

"He is a born leader of men. His soldiers are ready to die for him. There are some men *O Vrishala*, for whom others will joyfully give up their lives, and some for whom no man will willingly die. And this Alexander has a fine phalanx, excellent cross-bowmen, and undaunted bravery, besides being a master of tactics and strategy. He is one of those military geniuses born once in 500

1. They eventually settled down in Kathiawar, or the land of the Kathis.

3. They settled down in modern Malwa (Malava)

years. No wonder he has conquered the known world. I don't believe any one now living can defeat him. He will perish only of one of three things, drink, disease or drought. He drinks hard, and his natural temperament also is fiery. He can conquer the world but cannot conquer himself. His murder of his best friend, Clitus, when drunk, shows this. I must however say that he has lost control only once. And he has never advanced beyond the *bellicose* stage in drink. As you know, a drunkard passes through four stages. He is first *jocose*, then *bellicose*, then *lachrymose*, and, finally, *comatose*. Alexander has never become comatose or even lachrymose so far, by what I have heard. So, though drink is the father and mother of all sins, and outweighed all other sins when once God had them weighed, even drink is, in Alexander's case, not enough to bring about his downfall. Drought is a more likely thing. If Alexander advances into the deserts of Rajasthan or Gedrosia¹ he and his troops may die of thirst. But he is wise. He keeps to the river valleys so far. Disease is, therefore, the only hope. Disease is common to all men born. And, ultimately, man dies of some disease or other. This hard-drinking man will fall a victim to disease far earlier, as drinking weakens resistance to disease."

"So, we must wait till he dies of disease, sir?" asked Chandragupta. "What a heroic programme for a Kshatriya!"

"Heroism yields few dividends. So too an ill-timed war" said Chnakya. "A King should unhesitatingly run away, even abandoning his central fort and all his belong-

1. Baluchistan.

ings if the enemy's army is very strong and his own is very weak, and neither strength nor intrigue can succeed. For, if he lives, his return to power is certain, as in the case of Suyatra and Udayana ¹. A wise man waits on events and turns them to his profit. He never challenges Fate. Don't be dejected. I shall make you the Emperor of *Chakravartikshetra*, the land stretching from the Himalayas to the sea, from Saurashtra and the mouths of the Indus to Kamarupa and the mouths of the Ganga and Brahmaputra, from Kashmir to *Kanya Kumari*. Ramana, the great astrologer, has said that you will, with my aid, win an Empire like that and rule over it all including the lands rendered kingless by Alexander and his hordes, and that your grandson and my grandson will earn undying fame as Soldiers of Peace."

"You believe in this prediction?" asked Chandragupta. "I wonder sometimes at your credulity in spite of your phenomenal shrewdness. It seems to me like a combination of impervious rock and porous sand."

"Any soil must be like that if it is to grow crops," said Chanakya. "Mere rock grows no crops. Nor does mere sand either. Various combinations of both grow crops."

Day after day, news came of Alexander's triumphal marches. Chandragupta was very sad. He sounded his father-in-law, the King of Simhapura, and found that Chanakya was right. That King was all for Porus and

1. Udayana, King of Vatsa, regained his Kingdom,

2. Emperor Asoka and his Prime Minister Radhagupta.

Alexander. His loyalty to them almost amounted to a disease. Even the Magadhans, Kathis and Malavas were none too eager to go to Sind, where Alexander now was, and fight the Yavanas. They preferred to eat the good food at Simhapura and wait till Alexander left India before attacking the Greeks, and praised Chanakya for his suggesting this course. Chandragupta discussed this strategy with Chanakya. Chanakya told him, "Yes, that is the best course we can follow with our limited resources. Alexander, remember, is retreating to Persia. Despite all his triumphal attacks, *it is a retreat*. He is cutting his way to the sea and safety. To attack him now will be like attacking a retreating tiger without even a well-filled quiver of arrows. But fighting his second-rate *satraps* after he has left our country will be as easy as burning stubble. That is why I have confined myself, so far, to stirring up revolt after revolt in Sind through our spies. Every king who is defeated and reinstated will revolt the moment Alexander leaves his kingdom, and will necessitate his sending some troops back to deal with him. The idea is to make him sick of the whole affair and to leave our country as quickly as he can. He must realise that Ambhis and Poroses, so devoted to the foreign conqueror, are exceptions, and that the typical Indian ruler will throw off a foreign yoke the moment he can possibly do so."

Chanakya was greatly dejected at the failure of the revolts of Sambos and Astikasena and Mushikasena. He was very indignant on hearing about Alexander's killing Sambos and Astikasena and selling their soldiers and

subjects as slaves. He was furious at the capture of Brahmasthala and at a Brahmin's revealing the snake charm to Alexander. But he was proud that out of the twelve Brahmins hanged by Alexander at Brahmasthala was Pisuna, his disciple, who had volunteered himself in order to make the other eleven die calmly, praying to God, and with not a trace of fear on their faces. Even Alexander had been forced to remark, "Men who can die thus must have a sinless conscience." Paulomi's famous meeting with Alexander and her facing his wrath with not the slightest tremor or fear made Chanakya exclaim over and over again to Chandragupta, "I bow to the venerable Paulomi. It is such women who make our land a veritable heaven on earth and make the gods visit our land so often. She is my ideal of a *viramata*.¹" Chanakya was glad to hear of the replies the Brahmins gave Alexander. He spent a whole day in fasting and prayer on hearing about the hanging of Mushikasena and the eleven Brahmins, including his spy Narada, by Alexander. "I am proud of Narada and Pisuna, my disciples," he said to Chandragupta, who at once ordered handsome pensions to be given to their dependants.

At last, early in September 325 B.C., news came of Alexander's leaving India for Persia *via* the Gedrosian desert, along with Hephaestion, directing Krateros to go with his division and all the elephants by an easier route and meet him in Karmenia, and Nearchos to sail from Kirata island on the mouth of the Indus to the mouths of the Euphrates exploring the sea passage. Chanakya exclaimed

1. A hero's mother.

with joy, "He has committed the very blunder I expected but did not dare to hope for. At least three-fourths of his troops will die of thirst in the inhospitable Gedrosian desert. His satraps, left alone to deal with the revolting chiefs and missing all luxuries, will not stay here long. Every one of them will go westwards as soon as he can. Only fear of Alexander keeps them here. The moment he dies, they will all rat. Even now they are like empty gunny bags which cannot stand. We can attack them now with every chance of success. I have already asked Siddharthaka to arrange for the destruction of Philippos, the ablest of the satraps left behind. He will soon follow Nicanor, the Satrap of Pushkalavati, who was assassinated by patriotic *Astayanaks* a year ago."

"Sir, are such things permissible in a righteous war?" asked Chandragupta.

"This is not a *dharmayuddha*, a righteous war," said Chanakya. "It is an *asuric* war, where these foreigners have invaded our dear Motherland without any just cause, but with the sole intent of depriving us of our freedom and appropriating our lands and riches, and have won over some of our kings, like Ambhi and Poros, to their side; in this most unholy enterprise, by giving them part of the loot, as the lion gives the jackal or the hyena. So, in self-defence, in order to drive them out, we can use all possible methods. We can create trouble in their forts, camps and occupied territory. We can murder them with weapons, fire or poison, or any other means, at our pleasure. We can cut off their supplies and make them starve to death unless they surrender. Remember,

Alexander wanted to murder you offhand because you would not also become his tool for the enslavement of our Motherland, like Poros and Ambhi, and that you escaped only by an act of Providence. I tell you, *Vrishala*, there is nothing so horrible as foreign rule, *Vairajya*. It is the worst form of exploitation. The accursed foreigner never considers the conquered country as his Motherland. He oppresses it by over-taxation and exactions and drains it of its wealth, treating the country as an article of merchandise. When the country ceases to obey him, and rises in revolt, he retires, abandoning the country and leaving it impoverished. Anything is permissible in an attempt to establish *Swarajya*, by getting rid of this *Vairajya*, which is an unmitigated evil, let alone the rule that all is fair in love and war."

When Alexander left India, he had left behind him Philippos as the Satrap of all his conquests in India above the confluence of the *Indus* with its tributaries. He was a kind of Resident and Political Agent supervising Abhisara, Arsakes, Omphis, and Poros Senior and Junior, who had been confirmed in their kingdoms and the territories added on to them, but had been directed to take his advice. He was in addition full Ruler of the other territories. He had been given a powerful army of Macedonians and mercenaries, besides all the Thracians. He had also a general command over Eudemos with his regiment in the upper valley of the *Indus*, over the Captains and garrisons of the forts established by Alexander at Masakavati (Massaka). Varuna (Aornos), Pushkalavati, Udashbandapura, Takshasila, Nikaia, Boukephala, Pimprama, Sangala, Alexandria

on the *Akesines*, Kamalkot, Multan and Alexandria at the confluence of the *Indus* with its tributaries.

Philippos was not remarkable for intelligence or tact. He was a very ordinary man who had none of the personal magnetism of Alexander. Yet, he was behaving as if he was a second Alexander. While Alexander had a genuine respect for great men of any race, as evidenced by his regard for Poros Senior and Kalanos, and had kept his preference for Macedonians within control, Philippos openly preferred the Macedonians, and treated the mercenaries and other Greeks with ill-concealed contempt. For the Indians he had both contempt and hatred, contempt for their dark skins and different codes of honour and morals, and hatred because of his inability to subdue the Asvakani completely after their revolt, and because of his own insignificance beside people like Poros Senior who towered above him and considered him, he fancied, to be nothing better than a *mleccha* or a barbarian. So, like all petty men clothed in brief authority, he began to lord it over Poros Senior and Omphis by interfering with their internal affairs and championing the cause of their subjects who sought his help. Poros Senior resented this, and told Philippos frankly that he would be forced to refer the matter to Alexander if it continued. But, Philippos forestalled Poros and wrote to Alexander a letter praising Omphis for his loyalty and exemplary obedience, and vaguely hinting that Poros was not quite loyal or obedient. Alexander believed this story, and resolved to prefer Omphis to Poros Senior for any future post of responsibility and power. He had been badly shaken by

the assassination of Nicanor and had resolved to support his satraps and go by their advice.

Peithon, son of Ageanor, had been made the Satrap of all the countries below the confluence of the *Indus* with its tributaries, and had been given a powerful army of Macedonians and mercenaries, besides being in command of the forts and garrisons of Saindhavavana, Maha-Urdha, Alor and Patala. Oxyartes, the father of Roxana and the Satrap of Parapomisadai, was directed to aid him when necessary. Peithon was Resident and Political Agent for the kingdoms of Mushikasena, Sambos, Astikasena, and Patala, and direct Ruler of the remaining territories. He was a man of more than average ability, but fancied that he had been unnecessarily left behind in a remote and troublesome Satrapy, instead of being kept nearer to the centre of things. Still, so long as Alexander had kept him there, he had to remain there, preventing the colonists from leaving the colonies, and putting down the insurrection of the Indians.

Chanakya and Chandragupta carefully considered which part of the territory occupied by the Greeks should be attacked first. The Kathaian exiles were for attacking and re-taking Sangala. But these territories were now part of the kingdom of the elder Poros who was sure to resist, and Chanakya did not want to offend him as he wanted his alliance for attacking the Nandas.

"Besides," said he to Chandragupta, "he is now receiving a subsidy from the Nandas for keeping on friendly terms with them. It is good of him not to attack us, because of your new relationship to him. But, if we

were to attack him, the Nandas too would help him, and he would be too difficult a foe for us to subdue. Even a sudden attack on him is not advisable. If we fail, we shall be ruined. Even if we succeed, we shall be doing a foolish thing, as we shall not have his help in fighting the Nandas, and he is the only considerable Prince, besides the Kalinga and Andhra Kings, who will have the courage to pit himself against the Nandas. His lust for territory and the inducement of his ambitious brother Vairochaka will in time induce him to join us in attacking the Nandas. Again, the troops of Simhapura will not be willing to fight Poros, the kinsman of their King. So, we shall first attack the Yavanas in Sind. The people of Alor, Saindhavavana, Maha-Urdha, Brahmasthala and Patala are ready to revolt. The hanging of Mushikasena has created a deep feeling of disgust and hatred against Alexander and the Greeks. So too the massacre of all the inhabitants of Malavakot. Alexander is a great General; but Peithon, Eudemos and the Captains who are left behind in the forts are third-rate men. So, we shall attack the Greeks in Sind. Now, which town shall we attack first?"

"We need not attack any town to begin with. We shall go through Sind rousing disaffection everywhere and gathering adherents. Instead of attacking Peithon or the Captains at first, we shall go and attack the men under Nearchos, waiting peacefully near Kirata island to sail for the Persian Gulf after the monsoon completely subsides. This third army of Alexander we shall send shifting westwards before their time, after the first and second

armies which have already left under Alexander and Krateros. This will not only have a tremendous moral effect all over Sind and the Punjab, but will also send away from India the only Greek of probity and great ability left here, Nearchos. Nearchos is without selfish or personal ambition, and is a man of iron resolution. But, he has already promised Alexander to take the ships safely to the shores of Persia, 'if the sea were navigable and the thing feasible for mortal man.' To keep this promise, he will at once sail away with his men on our attacking him, instead of fighting us and taking risks," said Chandragupta.

"Excellent," said Chanakya. "You have the eye of a true General for strategy. We have our Udumbara in their camp as a faithful Indian pilot, aping the Greek customs. The man is an expert pilot, and learnt the art at Tamaralipiti. He will scare Nearchos's men all right at the proper time with his picturesque words and fine acting.

Alexander had asked Nearchos to wait at the Kirata or Killouta island-harbour on the western mouth of the *Indus*, till the monsoon had quite subsided. Peithon was to see to the convenience and safety of Nearchos and his fleet. But, the moment Alexander had left India the Indians lost all fear of the Greek army.

On receiving a secret message from Udumbara, ten thousand horse under Chandragupta and Chanakya rushed into Sind like an avalanche on 5th September 325 B.C., as soon as Alexander had left. They were joined on the way by hordes of Malava, Kshudraka and Saindhava

horsemen. In fifteen days the whole of Sind was in revolt, and Peithon had to defend every fort. Distracted, he could not go to the help of Nearchos, and sent word to him to shift for himself. Chandragupta and his horsemen swooped on Nearchos on the 20th of September.

"They have come through. But this is only the advance guard. More will be coming soon. They are as numerous as the leaves of the forest. We shall not be able to tackle them any more than a farmer a swarm of locusts, or a canoe the waves of the Indian ocean. I can however take you to a safe Bay further away," said Udumbara to the Greeks.

Nearchos's men were panic-stricken. Nearchos found it hopeless to put up a fight. He resolved to accept the kind offer of Udumbara and sail at once. On the 21st of September 325 B.C., while the monsoon was still raging, he sailed away westwards with his ship under the expert guidance of Udumbara, as his men considered the stormy sea safer than the land with Chandragupta's men attacking them. The last ship had just sailed out of reach, when Chandragupta's men occupied the camp and discharged a shower of arrows.

"Let them shower as many arrows now as they like," said Udumbara. "The sea will not be wounded by them."

After some days of skilful sailing in the face of the raging monsoon winds, he piloted them into a safe Bay which Nearchos named "*Alexander's Haven*."¹ Then

1. The Bay near Karachi.

Udumbara took leave of the Greeks, and was sent away with profuse thanks and many rewards.

News of Chandragupta's successful attack on Nearchos spread through the whole countryside like wild fire. Soon there was not a single village in Sind which was not in revolt against the Greeks. The people took their spears hatchets, clubs and even firewood-sticks, and rushed to join Chandragupta's army.

Chandragupta invested Patala. The Captain and garrison put up a stout resistance. Peithon himself was in charge. The Macedonians were still, man to man equal to the Indians, and had also stored enough of provisions. Saindhavavana, Alor, and Maha-Urdha too were invested by Vijayasimha, Chanakya and Rajasena, but were also defended vigorously. The Greeks were confident that Alexander would be sure to come to their help soon when he learnt of their plight, and did not want to incur his displeasure by unmanly surrenders. The whole countryside was now in the hands of the Indians, and the forts alone were in the hands of the Greeks. Chandragupta feared that Peithon might induce Nearchos to go to his help. So, he at once rushed to *Alexander's Haven* with five-thousand horse, leaving Vijayavarman, who had now joined him, in charge of Patala. As soon as Nearchos saw the Indians approaching to attack him, he resumed his voyage on the 23rd of October 325 B.C., and left the Indian shores for good.

The Asvakani had revolted even before the departure of Alexander, and closed the passes which they had opened only once to let Memnon enter India with his strong army,

as they knew by then that Alexander had decided to return to Babylon by a different route, and so did not want to lose a single man by resisting these fresh and well-equipped Macedonians eager for a fray. Philippos had not been able to tackle them effectively. Vijayavarman too joined them now, and made them indulge in a series of guerilla attacks, which made the Greeks terribly afraid of venturing out alone after dark. So long as they were in battle-array, they would not find a single group of Asvakani to oppose them. But, when they were a little off their guard, the tribesmen would fall on them and kill them, and then abscond. The country was not rich, the hills were hard to climb, and the people uniformly hostile. The Greek mercenaries of Philippos became disgusted and angry at their being made to bear the brunt of the campaign in the Asvakani country, whereas the Macedonians lived a luxurious life in Udabhandapura, Takshasila and the settled country. When some of them protested, Philippos had them whipped. This made all of them resolve to do away with him, a decision secretly encouraged by Chanakya's spies and Vijayavarman and the Indian mercenaries.

One day in November 325 B.C., when Philippos was inspecting one of the Greek mercenary regiments, eight men of that regiment at once attacked him treacherously and killed him, as resolved upon at a conspiracy the previous night. The Macedonian bodyguard of Philippos at once caught hold of four of the murderers, and put them to death. They also pursued the remaining four, and caught and killed them too. The Captain next in command sent

an urgent letter to Alexander about all this. It was when Alexander was in Karmania that the letter reached him in February 324 B.C. It read: "Incited by the black Brahman and Chandragupta and their spies, and their gifts of gold, and their slogans, 'The Thunderbolt has gone west. Fear not, He will never come back. Kill this man of clay, this Philippos,' eight Greek mercenaries plotted and treacherously murdered Philippos, when he was inspecting their regiment, and were caught and executed on the spot by our Macedonian guards." Alexander gnashed his teeth and said to Eumenes, "The Thunderbolt goes west, no doubt, but will soon return to the east and burst there over the Black Brahman and Chandargupta and all the revolting and unsubdued nations. Let them beware!" He then sent a letter to Eudemos and Omphis, asking them to assume the administration of the Satrapy previously governed by Philippos, till he could send a Satrap to govern it. This made the elder Poros bitter, as his claims had been overlooked and his erstwhile rival Omphis had been preferred. He grew very lukewarm towards Eudemos and Omphis and the Greeks, and began to rejoice inwardly at the growing successes of Chandragupta and his followers in Sind. His nephew, the younger Poros, because of his enmity to his uncle, became, on the contrary, an intimate friend of Eudemos.

Chanakya and Chandragupta were delighted to hear of the end of Philippos, as that meant confusion for some time in that area and the impossibility of aid being sent from there to the Greeks in Sind.

Chandragupta returned to Patala. He had no proper

siege materials, and found that all the forts in Sind had been rendered impregnable by the Greeks. He consulted with Chanakya.

"There are only five ways of capturing forts," said Chanakya, "namely, by intrigue, through spies, by winning over the enemies people, by siege, and by assault. Intrigue is impossible here as no Greek Captain will dare to take a bribe and betray a fort so long as Alexander is alive, seeing that he will meet with swift death like Tyriaspes. Spies are of no use against a powerful and determined foreign foe, who can easily detect them by their very colour. Winning over the whole body of the the Greeks is impossible so long as Alexander lives. Taking a fort by assault or storm requires a powerful army, many elephants, and a force vastly superior to the defending garrison. So, the only thing to do is to sit down in front of these forts, and reduce them by slow starvation when their provisions are exhausted. That will take at least a year!"

Chandragupta too agreed. Some elephants were essential for the siege and general fighting. Simhapura had only three elephants, and all the elephants of the kings of Sind had been taken away from them by Alexander through Krateros. An invasion of Magadha also would require a large number of trained war-elephants. An appeal to Poros Senior for even fifty elephants was unsuccessful. Poros replied that he dared not send any elephants, as Peithon would at once know about it and write to Alexander who would consider him as a man devoid of honour. He added that so long as Alexander was alive, he

would keep his word and be his friend and ally, and so he would be even obliged to aid the Greeks in Sind against Chandragupta, should he receive a letter from Alexander to that effect. He said that he would take his orders only from Alexander, and not from Peithon or Eudemos.

Chandragupta was furious. "This man is only moved by purely selfish reasons. He is afraid of Alexander, and will fight for him even against us Indians. His fighting Alexander at the *Vitasta* was only to vindicate his own personal courage and independence, and was not from any desire to defend his race or culture. I wonder how such a man will help us against Magadha or the Greeks."

"Well," said Chanakya, "One part of him is in mortal fear of Alexander. Another, and even more significant part, has an unlimited lust for territory. Even before Alexander came he wanted to annex Pimprama and Sangala, but failed. Now that he has got his kingdom extended up to the *Hyphasis*, he is dreaming of becoming the overlord of India. Simply because Alexander embraced him as a Brother, the fool has taken himself to be another Alexander. He has taken the subsidy paid to him by the Nandas as a tribute and as a sign of weakness, and thinks that he can easily defeat them. He has, I hear, very recently demanded that it be raised from a hundred-thousand *Suvarnas* to five-hundred-thousand *Suvarnas* per year. Nakranasa and Sakatala were against giving him anything at all. I have asked Jeevasiddhi to induce the Nandas not only to refuse the increase, but also to stop the previous payment and send an insulting

reply. This will infuriate Poros and Vairochaka, who will be tactfully handled by our Visalaksha, who is already there. They will then agree to join us in an expedition against the Nandas on our promising half of Magadha to Poros, and on our giving our conquests in Sind to him as an additional sop. They are also quite capable of trying to usurp the whole of Magadha. But, of course, after defeating the Nandas with their aid, we shall find some method of quietly finishing them off. Leave all that to me."

"But, will it not be treacherous on our part to take their help and then extirpate them?" asked Chandragupta.

"I shall so arrange it that morally we appear to be free from blame. Assassination of individuals is bad in private morality, but is inevitable in present-day politics. They will murder us if we do not murder them earlier. So, it is defensive murder. It is also better for the country to kill a few such leaders than kill thousands of innocent rustics, who follow them from motives of loyalty."

"But, the thousands will be killed openly, and not secretly," said Chandragupta.

"Not always. What about the massacre of the Madrakas? What about the attack by Alexander and his armed Greeks on the unarmed Malavas working in the fields at Kamalkot, and on women and children fleeing for safety? What about ambushes? Even Rama, the Soul of Righteousness, killed Vali by shooting at him unseen. Even Krishna, God-incarnate, had Jayadratha killed by a trick. Don't be squeamish about such things, for, if you are, you will never be King. Mind you, trade

and agriculture will not suffer by the course I advocate. The civil population in general will not mind in the least such leaders alone being killed secretly. Why should the common people suffer for the ambitions and follies of kings and politicians, if that can be helped?" asked Chanakya.

"All right, I leave it to you. Let us leave our Lieutenants in charge here, and go to Kalinga accepting the King's recent invitation, and get five-hundred good war-elephants and come back. Our power and prestige will increase a hundredfold with these elephants, and Parvate-swara will be tempted to join us against the Nandas," said Chandragupta.

"Very good," said Chanakya. "Samiddharthaka also, writes from there that the King is really in earnest."

Chandragupta and Chanakya left for Kalinga leaving Vijayasimha, Vijayavarman, Rajasena and others in charge of the blockades. The King of Kalinga received them most hospitably, and gave them 300 trained elephants and a party of his expert elephant-catchers to catch some more elephants from the forests. The party caught no less than 300 more elephants in six months of persistent trapping. One of the elephants caught under Chandragupta's own direction was a majestic animal, 12 feet high, with fine tusks protruding three feet. It was tamed quickly by Chandragupta who called it *Chandralekha*. It became deeply attached to the King who took it as his personal elephant. Everybody admired the stately elephant worthy of an Emperor. Chanakya improved the

occasion by spreading a story that the wild elephant had, at the very sight of Chandragupta, approached him and knelt submissively before him and received him on its back, having recognized him as the Emperor for whom it had been born on the earth as his *Hastiratna*¹. The Indians readily believed the story.

The King of Kalinga was convinced, on hearing this story and seeing this marvellous elephant, that Chandragupta would certainly become the Emperor of Magadha one day. So, he entered into a secret treaty with him under which he agreed to attack Magadha from the south with fifty-thousand troops and 10,000 wild tribesmen, as soon as Chandragupta and Chanakya had advanced with their army to Pataliputra; in return, he was to be exempted from paying tribute for sixty years, so that he might be enabled to defray the approximate cost of this military aid he was to render. He was, even after the lapse of the sixty years, to be merely subjected to the tribute without any interference in the internal affairs. He added, "Your grandfather riveted the chains on Kalinga. He was treacherously killed by his ungrateful masters. May it be given to his grandson to free Kalinga! Of course, we are too weak now to help, till you are powerful enough to attack Pataliputra. Else, my country will be invaded by the Nandas and devastated." Chanakya and Chandragupta agreed that this stipulation was reasonable, and took leave of the King and went to Simhapura with six-hundred war-elephants and one-thousand horses, and five-thousand Savara and Khond warriors, who had

1. Elephant-evel.

agreed to follow Chandragupta under their leaders Vairantya and Khondoveera. It was late in July 323 B.C. by the time they reached Simhapura again. They and their elephants were received with the most rapturous welcome by the people of Simhapura and the neighbouring countries.

Meanwhile Poros had received an insulting letter from the Nandas. It ran thus: "Your letter begging for an increase of the allowance paid to you till now by us graciously, taking pity on your poverty, has been received and rejected. The present allowance itself is stopped owing to your insolent tone. It will, however, be resumed, if you come to Pataliputra and beg for it from the King on bended knees." Jeevasiddhi had been at the bottom of this letter, to which Rakshasa too had finally agreed at the instance of Nakranasa and Sakatala, who had asked him to vindicate the King's dignity, and of Badhasala who had boasted that he could bring a dozen Poroses in chains if ordered to do so. Poros had gone into a frenzy of rage on reading this letter. He showed it to his trusted confidant Visalaksha, who perused it and remarked, "Even Alexander was forced by you to treat you like a King. Shall this barber's son be allowed to treat you like his slave?" Poros was stung to the quick by this remark, and resolved at once to join Chandragupta in his attack on Magadha. He said to Swarnamayi, "I shall go to Pataliputra, all right, but not to beg for money from this barber's son on bended knees. He shall beg of me on bended knees for his very life. I would have marched alone against him but for my

ignorance of the country, and especially of the rivers. Besides, it is good to have some claimant to the throne as our ally. When Chanakya and Chandragupta come back from Kalinga, I shall enter into an alliance with them against Magadha."

Soon after Chanakya and Chandragupta returned, news reached India of Alexander's death at Babylon in June 323 B.C., at the early age of 33, of fever and suspected poisoning. This had an electric effect. The Indians were jubilant. Peithon, Eudemos and the Greek Captains and garrisons were depressed in the extreme. Chandragupta, Chanakya and Vijayavarman stormed Alor. The citizens also aided them from within. The fort was captured after a desperate fight, and 800 Greek soldiers were killed, and their Captain and of his Lieutenants hanged at the very place where Mushikasena and the Brahmins had been hanged. Peithon and Eudemos appealed to Poros Senior to go to the help of the other beleaguered garrisons in Sind. Poros turned a deaf ear at first. Mahaurdha fell to Vijayavarman and Chandragupta, and a thousand more Greeks were killed. The Captain and eleven select Greeks were hanged there also. Vijayavarman vowed that he would have 7,000 Greeks killed like the 7,000 Madrakas massacred by Alexander. Peithon and Eudemos were in despair. There was no use appealing to Omphis, who was himself hard beset by the Asvakas. The Kings of Abhisara and Kashmir and Arsakes had ceased to pay heed to their appeals. Poros Junior was too weak to be of much help. So Peithon and Eudemos appealed to Poros Senior to come and take the country east of the

Indus for himself as part of his Satrapy, and allow the Greek garrisons of Patala and Saindhavavana to retire to the west of the *Indus* with their arms and flags.

Poros's cupidity and vanity were roused. He promised to enter into an alliance with Chandragupta agreeing to join him in an invasion of Magadha with his entire army and with the Greek, Persian, Saka and other mercenaries, if he was promised half the entire kingdom, and if the blockades of Saindhavavana and Patala were raised and the whole of Sind evacuated and allowed to be under his over-lordship. Else, he threatened to join the Greeks with his entire army, and to annihilate Chandragupta's army, and to hand over Chandragupta and Chanakya to the Greeks.

"You see now what a wretch this Poros is," said Chanakya to Chandragupta. "He has become an *Atatayin*¹ by this base threat, and should be killed without the least compunction when the proper time comes. We shall now agree to his rascally terms, just as a helpless citizen agrees to a robber's terms till the Police and Magistrates appear on the scene. Nipunaka writes to say that the Kings of Manjupatan and Kamarupa have agreed to join us, as soon as our armies enter Magadha. That means more troops for us to fight and crush the men of Poros, after the Nandas are destroyed."

Chanakya and Chandragupta agreed readily to Poros's terms, but stipulated that the Rulers of Alor, Saindhava-

1. A villainous desperado who can be killed at sight according to the Hindu law-books.

vana, Maha-Urddha and Patala should be given back their capital cities and entire dominions, and made to pay to Poros only the tributes they were paying formerly to the Persian Emperor Darius. Poros agreed at once. Chandragupta and Chanakya raised the blockades of Saindhavavana and Patala, and Peithon and the Greek Captains and garrisons withdrew safely to the west of the *Indus*, giving the forts back to the Rulers of Sind to be held under Poros Senior, in whose kingdom they were now included. Chandragupta and Chanakya withdrew to Simhapura with their troops, now swollen to one-hundred and fifty-thousand by the addition of thousands of Malavas, Kshudrakas, Sauviras and Saindhavas, and with their prestige increased tenfold. The grateful Kings of Alor, Saindhavavana, Patala and Maha-Urddha gave them gold enough to pay the entire army for five years.

Then Chandragupta and Chanakya and Poros began slowly making their preparations for the invasion of Magadha. As it was an enterprise of the first magnitude, which had proved too much even for Alexander and his veterans, they resolved to get everything completely ready before launching on it. They took one year over it, and enlisted every possible person. By September 322 B.C. the preparations were at last complete. Poros had mustered together 300 elephants, 500 chariots, 10,000 horse and 50,000 infantry, besides 70,000 Greek, Saka, Kirata, Kambhoja, Parsika, Bahlika and Asvakani mercenaries, eager for a share in the loot of the Nandas. Chandragupta had mustered together 600 elephants, 1,000 chariots, 25,000 horse and 1,25,000 infantry consisting of

Jats, Kathaians, Kshudrakas, Malavas, Sauviras, Savaras and Khonds. Chandragupta, Chanakya and Poros were proud of these fine armies, and felt confident of meeting and beating the Nanda hosts, especially with the promised help of the Kings of Kalinga, Kamarupa, and Manjupatan, and the expected rising of some of the Nanda troops and citizens in Chandragupta's favour. Poros had also been cheered in the meanwhile by the news that, at the second partition of Alexander's Empire proposed to be made by Antipater he would be recognized as the King in charge of the whole of the country east of the *Hydaspes*, and of Sind, and the Indus delta, and Omphis as the King merely of the territory between the *Indus* and the *Hydaspes*, and that Peithon would be given the Satrapies bordering on the Paropamisadai to the west of the *Indus*. This made Poros's position in Sind legal and secure, and made the Greek mercenaries freely enlist under him as under a person recognized by their Rulers.

In September 322 B.C. the combined armies of the allies were ready for the march. They also heard the welcome news that their numbers had created such an impression of certain victory over the Nandas that the Kalingas had resolved to launch their attack on Pataliputra from the south, and had begun mobilising their troops, that the King of Kamarupa had decided to invade Magadha from the east, and that the King of Manjupatan too had made up his mind to swoop down on Pataliputra from the north, without waiting any further. So, the allies began their march in high spirits and flushed with confidence. Chandragupta and Chanakya were in supreme command of one

army, and Pores, with his brother Vairochaka and son Malayaketu to help him, was in charge of the other army. Chandragupta was in very high spirits.

"At last I am returning home," said he to Chanakya.

"Did I not tell you when we crossed the *Jumna* that we were leaving only to return?" said Chanakya, "and now I tell you once more that we go only to return."

"Return?" said Chandragupta, "Never! We go to conquer or to die."

Chanakya smiled. "Oh, no. You have not understood me. We shall conquer the Nandas, and shall return here to make you King over these Satraps who are without a King from the Hindukush to the mouths of the *Indus*."

CHAPTER XII

THE FALL OF THE NANDAS

The Nandas too made feverish preparations to meet the threatened invasion from all four sides. Their whole army nominally consisted of 2,00,000 infantry, 20,000 cavalry, 2,000 chariots and 4,000 elephants. Badhasala was in supreme command, under the personal direction of Rakshasa and the Nanda King and Princes. He was a favourite of Rakshasa and the Nandas, but was devoid of military ability. In peace times he would impress people well with his fine physique, grand moustache, and brusque and even bullying manners. But he was of absolutely no use in war. He knew neither tactics nor strategy. He was, at bottom, lacking even in personal courage. Worst

of all, he was, unknown to Rakshasa and the King and Princes who trusted him implicitly, corrupt to the core. To please Dhanananda he had been asking for the army much less than the minimum required for keeping it in reasonable efficiency. And, of the amount granted, he was taking one half as commission from the contractors for arms, provisions and supplies. The contractors did not complain, and, in their turn, supplied the most worthless articles, pleasing the minor heads of the army with minor presents. Thus, during the nine years of Badhasala's command the Nanda army had steadily deteriorated as a fighting machine. The natural consequence was that the vassal Princes, like the Kalingas and Andhras, began to delay remitting their tributes.

Badhasala had also alienated almost every officer in the army by his arrogant disposition, corruption, inefficiency, favouritism, and denial of essential supplies. Bhadrabhata, the renowned commander of the elephant corps, Purushadatta, the dashing cavalry chief, Dingarata, the general in charge of chariots, Balagupta and Rajasena, prominent army commanders, had already deserted to Chandragupta before the Battle of Gaya, thoroughly disgusted with Badhasala. Badhasala had appointed to these responsible posts inefficient and junior officers who were favourites of his and could be counted on to keep their mouths shut about his daring acts of dishonesty and malversation of funds. He had not replaced the elephants, horses and chariots lost in the Gaya campaign or by natural causes, and had misappropriated the money drawn for such replacement for his own gambling, debauchery

and extravagant expenses. There were, as a matter of fact, only 1,000 chariots, 2,000 elephants and 10,000 horses as against double that number on the muster rolls. Badhasala was therefore very anxious that there should not be a general mobilization of the troops and a marching them out of Pataliputra lest his colossal and daring fraud should be detected. The infantry alone remained at its original strength, but it had registered a sad decline in equipment and weapons, discipline and drill. Promotion of incompetents over the heads of their betters, not heeding the recommendations of Simhabala, the general in charge of the infantry divisions, had done its ghastly work of demoralisation. Simhabala, the Infantry Chief, and Chandrabhanu, the Transports Chief, who were cousins, had not deserted to Chandragupta formally, but had agreed with Chanakya's spies to desert in the middle of the battle with the bulk of their troops. All the officers were disgusted with Badhasala's devoting his attention to the court and to his drink and nautch parties rather than to the army, and wished that Chandragupta were their Generalissimo instead of this courtier-clout. They had nothing but contempt for Badhasala, and wished that he would meet with defeat and death. The cavalry, elephantry, and chariot troops had no confidence in their new chiefs, and disliked to fight their old commanders, Bhadrabhata, Purushadatta and Dingarata. Nor were their new commanders confident of fighting their old chiefs.

When Badhasala heard of this serious invasion of Magadha, his heart quaked within him. He held

a hurried consultation with Simhabala, Chandrabhanu and the other chiefs of divisions. His opening remarks convinced them that he was terribly afraid of meeting Chandragupta and Poros, aided by the experienced generals and darlings of the Army, Bhadrabhata, Purushadatta, Dingarata, Rajasena, and Balagupta, though he outwardly pretended that it was but child's play to repel the invaders. Most of the officers had met secretly the previous night under the presidentship of Simhabala and had resolved to await all the four invading armies at Pataliputra and then smash the invaders and kill them to a man. Their intention was to demoralise the people of the Empire, and to create a defeatist mentality in the army, by the enemy's capture of all the towns on the way, and to pave the way for Chandragupta's victory.

"We do not want Parvataka to rule any part of our country," said Pushyagupta, one of the junior but brilliant officers in the cavalry.

"Nor do we. Leave it to Chanakya. His spies have assured us that Parvataka will never get an inch of Magadhan territory and that he will be sent back to the Punjab with some money reward for his assistance," said Simhabala.

"Suppose he refuses?" asked Pushyagupta,

"Then more extreme measures will be adopted against him. That is all. Leave all that to Chanakya, young man," said Simhabala. "He has impressed me as the kind of man who will not allow his will to be thwarted by any one on earth."

"He has impressed me too like that. He is a combination of Bhṛigu, Jamadagni and Durvasas¹," said Chandra-bhanu.

All the officers were satisfied.

So, when Badhasala mooted the question as to where they should meet the enemy, Simhabala, on behalf of all the officers, said, "We are so overwhelmingly strong and so sure of victory that it will be bad policy to meet the invaders at Indraprastha or any outlying town, lest the defeated enemy should escape and cause trouble again. It seems to me to be good policy to lure them to the Capital without opposition and then inflict on them crushing defeats, and kill them to a man. For a Generalissimo of your ability this should be child's play." Badhasala was pleased by the compliment, and yet questioned the dummy chiefs of the elephantry, cavalry, and chariots. They echoed Simhabala's suggestion, the cavalry chief adding, "We shall reserve our horses for our own advance after their extermination." So, the vote at the Army General Headquarters was in favour of leaving the outlying towns undefended, and to lure the enemy to Pataliputra and finish him off in a great battle outside the fortifications.

Badhasala considered this decision peculiarly suited for hiding his dishonest and corrupt acts, and went to the urgent meeting of Ministers that day, to expound his policy. All the Ministers, including Rakshasa, the Prime Minister, Nakranasa, Sakatala and Jeevasiddhi, were there. The King and Princes and Sarvarthasiddhi

1 Three famous Hindu Sages typifying great power, calmness and capacity to fulfil vows and curses.

were also there. Badhasala expounded what he called his supremely strategic plan, and said that all the Generals were unanimously for it.

Rakshasa was surprised. "What! Leave Indraprastha, Mathura, Hastinapura, Radhapura, Kanyakubja, Prayag, Sravasti, Saketa, Kausambi, Nandangarh, Vaisali, Vardhamanapura, Rajagriha, Gaya, Rampurwa, Kusinagara, Dinajgarh, and Tamralipti undefended, to fall to the enemy, without a fight! I cannot believe that our generals, and especially Simhabala and Chandrabhanu, would have supported such a policy.

"They not only supported it, but pointed out its advantages," said Badhasala, and gave out the details of the discussions at that day's meeting of the Generals.

"It seems to me," said Jeevasiddhi, "that the plan is not without merit. If we are to take out our entire army to Indraprastha, the transport problem will be no joke, as Chandrabhanu will testify. Besides, there may not be enough men here to defend the city against an invasion from Kamarupa from the east, Kalinga from the south, and Manjupatan from the north, if we take the whole army to the banks of the Jumna to meet Chandragupta, Chanakya and Poros. If, on the other hand, we take out four armies in four directions, they will not be so overpoweringly strong as to defeat the enemy with ease as our combined army will be. Don't forget that all our four enemies are divided by our vast Empire and can unite only here, we being right in the centre of them all. So, if we keep our whole army here, we can meet

each enemy army as it comes and pulverize it. Even if all of them come at the same time, they must attack us separately at the different gates. We can be in this impregnable City, and attack and defeat them separately. By this plan we can also be sure that there will be no revolt of the citizens in Pataliputra, where I am told that there are several concealed adherents of Chandragupta especially among the Brahmins and the upper classes whose caste pride we have wounded beyond remedy by our policy. Besides, our Imperial Treasury, the richest in the world, carefully built up by Dhanananda, is here. That will be the main objective of all the four invading armies. It does not appear to me to be safe to leave this great Treasury unguarded, and go a thousand miles away, to meet the penniless Poros and other adventurers coming hither. Again, if we take out four armies to meet the enemies, it may cost us not less than ten-million *Suvarnas*¹, which can be saved by waiting here."

The argument about the Treasury and the expense had its telling effect on the Nandas in general, and Dhanananda in particular.

"I agree with Badhasala and Jeevasiddhi that it is better to save our money, and await the invaders here and then kill them off to a man," said Dhanananda.

"I too agree," said the King.

The other six Nanda Princes too agreed. Nakranasa and Sakatala agreed, simply to spite Rakshasa whom they

1. Gold coins worth about ten rupees each.

execrated. Sarvarthasiddhi maintained an idiotic silence as usual, flashes of sense being with him only now few and far between. Rakshasa found himself out-voted. All that he could do was to make the Council agree that the forts on the way should be allowed to be defended against the invaders.

"By doing so," said Rakshasa, "our people in the outlying districts and towns will have confidence that we defend them also. The enemy armies too will be weakened by this warfare before they reach here and are smashed by our fresh army. If they leave the forts uncaptured and advance straight here, their retreat can be completely cut off by those garrisons." Jeevasiddhi declared at once that he was for this amendment, as it would uphold the prestige of the Nandas and yet not cause any additional expense or risk. Badhasala too, thereupon, agreed that the amendment was desirable and might be made. It was unanimously agreed to.

The whole army of the Nandas was therefore kept at Pataliputra, whose fortifications were made as strong as possible. Orders went out to the Captains and garrisons of the forts on the invaders' line of march to defend themselves, but not to expect any help from the centre. They were dispirited by the messages, and resolved to put up merely a nominal resistance.

Jeevasiddhi had sent word to Chanakya about the decision of the Nandas. The army of Chandragupta and Parvataka soon reached Indraprastha, and saw the Jumna-crossing left undefended. Chandragupta said to Chanakya, "What a contrast to the former scene when the *Jumna*

bank was full of troops!" As soon as the army had crossed over and begun the siege, the Captain and garrison surrendered. That was repeated at Mathura, Hastinapura, Radhapura, Kanyakubja, Prayag and Benares. Chandragupta issued strict orders that no citizen was to be molested and no private property commandeered. Everything taken as supplies was paid for at current prices. Poros was not willing at first to follow this policy, and said that at least free supplies should be exacted. Chanakya and Chandragupta prevailed on him and the Greek and other mercenaries to keep quiet, promising to pay them liberally out of the eight-hundred million gold coins hoarded by the Nandas. Chanakya began ostentatiously to keep accounts of their expenses, with a view to repayment from the Nanda treasury. "Chandragupta will bear his own expenses," he proclaimed. The people were all grateful to Chandragupta and Chanakya for this freedom from pillage, and, of course, did not include Parvataka or the mercenaries in this gratitude.

Meanwhile, the Kalinga King had invaded Magadha, as the ally of Chandragupta, with 60,000 troops under himself and 10,000 Savaras under their own Chiefs. He advanced on Tamralipti. The feeble garrison surrendered without a blow, and he then marched on Pataliputra, capturing Vardhamanapura, Rajagriha and Gaya also on the way with ease. The King of Kamarupa advanced from the east, as another ally of Chandragupta. With an army of 50,000 he marched through Pandravardhana on Vaisali, captured it, and proceeded to Pataliputra. The King of Manjupatan and Karttipura in Nepal also

swooped down with an army of 40,000 Kiratas, ostensibly to aid Chandragupta, but really to have a share in the Nanda millions. He captured Sravasti, Saketa, Nandangarh and Rampurwa, and advanced on Pataliputra.

All the armies reached Pataliputra by arrangement at midnight on Monday, a full-moon day, and invested the City from all sides. Chanakya, Poros, Vairochaka, the Parsikas and Greeks attacked the city from the north; the King of Kamarupa attacked it from the east; Chandragupta and the Kalingas attacked it from the south; and the King of Manjupatan attacked it from the west.

That same Monday evening, Jeevasiddhi, who had the reputation of being the greatest astrologer in India and a very saintly man fanatically devoted to the Nandas and Rakshasa, met Badhasala and the other Generals and Captains secretly and separately, and told them that there would be a great battle the next morning outside the gates of Pataliputra, that the day, the first day after the full-moon which was also a Tuesday, was most inauspicious for the Nandas and their supporters, and that a terrible defeat was certain. The Generals and Captains asked him in dismay: "What are we to do?" He replied, "What can you do? No one can escape Fate. But I see that you, for one will escape with your life." Each person he talked to thus got not only a settled conviction that the next day's battle was going to end in a decisive defeat for the Nandas, but that he himself was ordained by Fate to run away and save his life.

The next morning, the Nandas and Rakshasa resolved to sortie forth out of the northern and southern main gates,

and fight Chanakya and Chandragupta respectively. Rakshasa had classified the troops at the western and eastern gates as riffraff hardly worth noticing.

At Jeevasiddhi's instance the Nanda King and his brothers chose the northern gate, as it was not auspicious to issue out of the southern gate dedicated to Yama, the God of Death. Sukalpa and his seven brothers, Pandugati, Bhutapala, Rashtrapala, Govishanaka, Dasasiddhaka, Kairvarta and Dhanananda issued forth out of the northern gate in splendid golden chariots drawn by the finest steeds and followed by 500 other chariots, 1,000 elephants, 5,000 cavalry and a hundred-thousand infantry, under the Commander-in-chief, Badhasala, and made a desperate charge. As directed by Chanakya, Poros and the Greeks pretended to run away. The King and the seven Princes thought that the battle was won, and they pursued the retreating army very fast in their fleet chariots. They were soon far in advance of their army, and were in fact in the middle of the enemy army which closed round them under the orders of Chanakya, who closed the ring with 200 Malava chariots. Just at this moment, the astounded Princes saw their own chariots, cavalry, elephants and infantry retreating. Simhabala, Chandrabhanu, and Pushyagupta had declared that the Princes had been trapped, and that it was no use fighting any further and had retreated, and Badhasala had also pusillanimously agreed to the retreat in order to save his own skin.

Seeing themselves surrounded by Chanakya, Poros, Malayaketu and their hosts, the Princes got down from their chariots and fought bravely with their swords, but

were overpowered and killed. At the news of their death Simhabala, Chandrabhanu, Pushyagupta and others changed sides and went over to the invaders with the major portion of their forces. The rest of the army fled in confusion into the city, led by Badhasala. The discontented elements in the city, incited by fifth columnists in the pay of Chanakya, killed Badhasala and many of his troops.

Rakshasa had gone with 1,00,000 infantry, 500 chariots, 5,000 horse and 1,000 elephants through the southern gate to fight Chandragupta and the Kalingas. The fight was fierce. In the middle of it, Rakshasa received news from a fast messenger that the King and all the princes had been slain outside the northern gate and their army routed and Badhasala slain. In great grief, he left the battlefield, and rushed with a body of cavalry into the City, to go to the northern gate and see the dead bodies of his masters. His leaderless army lost heart and broke, and fled into the City losing many thousands in the pursuit by Chandragupta, many hundreds more being killed by the rebellious citizens.

Rakshasa was permitted by Chanakya to see the corpses of the King and the Princes, and to give them a royal funeral. Sarvarthasiddhi and the Nanda Queens and princesses and Princess Durdhara, a descendant of Mahanandin by a daughter who had survived the massacre and was being brought up by Chandragupta's mother's cousin's sister, a Queen of Sarvarthasiddhi, went in solemn procession outside the City Gates, escorted by Rajasena and his company of picked troops and accom-

panied by Rakshasa, They saw the corpses and wept over them bitterly. Chanakya and Chandragupta witnessed the sad scene and were themselves moved. At the instance of Chandragupta, who remembered with gratitude Sarvarthasiddhi's inducing his sons to give back half his estates to him, Chanakya promised Sarvarthasiddhi a safe asylum in a penance grove seven miles from the City and also allowed him to take with him two wagon-load of things. Chanakya wanted to get Durdhara married to Chandragupta in order to secure Chandragupta's claim to the Magadhan throne. His spy, Nipunaka, as well as Chandragupta's female aide-de-camp, Sonottara, had told him that Durdhara was in love with Chandragupta ever since she had seen him let the Ceylonese lion loose, and he had sent her a fine painting of Chandragupta through Sonottara and had ascertained her willingness to marry Chandragupta. Durdhara had little love for the Nandas, as they had killed her relatives, and she had fallen in love with the handsome Chandragupta. Chanakya made Santavati agree to the match after explaining to her how necessary it was to secure her husband's claims to the Magadhan throne, Durdhara saw Chandragupta seated on his elephant Chandralekha near the spot where the bodies of the Nanda King and princes lay. So striking and handsome did he look that she told Sonottara, who interviewed her secretly, that she could not dream of marrying any one but him.

The bodies of the Nanda King and princes were taken into the city by Rakshasa and given a royal funeral. The citizens were too worried about their own fate to attend the funeral in large numbers. Sarvarthasiddhi was

heart-broken and remained like one dazed. Rakshasa tried to make him take up the command of the broken Nanda army and continue the fight. But he found that he was quite spiritless and had lost interest in everything. The blockade of the town by Chandragupta, Chanakya, Poros and their allies was complete. Even the loyal citizens found that they could not have any kind of communication with the outside world and that their commerce was ruined. Their properties outside the City-walls were also looted. They therefore asked Rakshasa and Sarvarthasiddhi either to protect them by defeating the invaders and suppressing the rebels within, or to surrender the City to Chandragupta and Poros. Rakshasa finally agreed to surrender the City and sent word to Chandragupta, Chanakya and Poros that he was ready to surrender and asked for a safe conduct pass for him and Sarvarthasiddhi to leave the city. Chanakya and Chandragupta readily sent the safe conduct pass for Sarvarthasiddhi and Rakshasa. They also asked, Sarvarthasiddhi for the hand of Durdhara for Chandragupta, promising to make her *Agramahishi* or *Pattamahishi*¹ as her being the descendant of Maharandin entitled to her to be. Rakshasa was not for this match. But Sarvarthasiddhi agreed to the proposal, remarking, "The *Sastras* allow Kshatriya girls like her to choose their husband in a *swayamvara* and I hear that she has chosen Chandragupta."

Overjoyed at this, Chanakya fixed up the marriage for that very night, as there was a very auspicious, *muhurtam* at 11 P. M. and he did not want the event to

1. Chief Queen.

be postponed for even a day, and wanted the entry of Chandragupta into the City, a bitter pill for the citizens, to be converted into a happy occasion by making it a restoration of the old regime by the marriage of the legitimate descendant of Mahanandin with Chandragupta in the famous temple of Durga Aparajita in the heart of the City. Sarvarthasiddhi left the City, taking with him two wagon-loads of valuables, as permitted by Chandragupta and Chanakya. With him went Rakshasa, a broken man but with his head brimming with plots to destroy Chandragupta.

All the principle gates of the City, namely. the Indra Brahma, Yama and Sainapatya gates, were then thrown open, and the victorious armies of Chandragupta and Poros entered the Capital in triumph, Poros being allowed the honour of entering through the Indra gate. At the instance of Chanakya, Chandragupta and Parvateswara issued a proclamation:—"The beloved of the gods, Raja Chandragupta and Rajadhiraja Parvateswara say as follows:—

"Citizens of Pataliputra and men of Magadha rejoice! The days of your woe are over. With the grace of God, and the help of Arya Chanakya, we have quickly rescued the scriptures and the science of weapons and the earth which had passed to the Nanda Kings who have been now consigned to the vile dust from which they sprang, unwept, unhonoured and unsung. Henceforward, your persons and property will be safe, and the rule of *Dharma* and the *sastras* will be strictly enforced. The people of this great land, who had been dissociated from the gods by the vile *Nava Nandas*, will be again associated with them

as in the days of Bimbisara and Ajatasatru. The beloved of the Gods, Raja Chandragupta, will marry Devi Durdhara, descendant of Mahanandin, Bimbisara and Ajatasatru, this night, as his *agramahishi*, with due Vedic ceremonies, at 11 o'clock, in the holy temple of the Goddess Mother, Durga Aparajita, where Raja Bimbisara married Devi Chellana, and Raja Ajatasatru married Devi Palmavathi. Muster in your thousands and witness the event. Each Brahmin present will be given a gold coin as *bhuridakshina*,¹ and each poor man will be given a silver coin. A thousand Vedic priests will take part in the ceremony. May all beings be happy! An end to sorrow! Om!" There was wild applause from the assembled multitudes, and great excitement in the town.

Chanakya took charge of the Nanda treasury with its 880 million gold coins and countless gems and other treasures including the *Syamantaka* gem, which became famous later on as the *Kohinoor* and was inset in the imperial crown got made by Mahapadma after he had acquired it from Saurashtra which he had conquered and annexed to his empire. Chanakya made Chandragupta and Parvateswara confirm Sakatala, Nakranasa and all other ministers of the Nandas, and to appoint Brihaspati Misra, the most learned and upright *sastri* of those times Chief Justice of Magadha replacing Vrishabhadatta (nicknamed, Vrishchikadatta, gift of the Scorpion, by the litigants and citizens), the corrupt Chief Justice of the Nandas, notorious for his cruel sentences of death, forfeiture and fine to please his masters, who had fled the City now, fearing vengeance at the hands of the citizens.

1. Gift.

Chanakya gave Poros ten million *Suvarnas* from the Magadhan treasury towards the expenses of his troops, and widely published the fact that Chandragupta was taking not a pie for the expenses of his troops as he was a Magadhan bound to render all his services to Magadha free. The foolish Poros accepted the gift joyously, not suspecting the trap set for him, and roused the contempt and anger of all the Magadhans who regarded him as a mercenary marauder hiring out his services for fabulous sums. The respect of the Magadhans for Chandragupta increased by his act of abstention. Chanakya assigned for Poros and Chandragupta jointly a huge palace as their temporary residence till they could move into the great Suganga palace. Poros was given the best rooms in this palace, and was greatly pleased with Chanakya and Chandragupta for thus recognizing him as the senior partner. The Kings of Kalinga Kamarupa and Nepal were also assigned by Chanakya fine mansions for their residence.

That night, at 11 p. m., Chandragupta was married to Durdhara in Durga Aparajita temple, which was profusely lighted up by the relieved citizens who mustered in their thousands, in the presence of Poros and the Kings of Kalinga Kamarupa and Nepal. Poros was made to give away the bride by Chanakya. He had eight wives himself, and saw nothing strange in Chandragupta's taking a second wife. A thousand Brahmin priests were present. They chanted the Vedic *mantras* in a most impressive way, glad to have such a scholar like Chanakya as their patron. It was long since they had the opportunity

of reciting Vedic *mantras* in the presence of royalty. Many of them had been present on the historic occasion when Chanakya was insulted by the Nandas and driven out with blows, and felt it peculiarly appropriate that he should fulfil his vow made then and extirpate the Nandas in revenge.

Durdhara was wearing a veil as royal ladies were wont to do in those days. Chanakya asked her to take it off saying, "in the *Ramayana* itself it is stated that ladies of the royal family need not veil their faces during their marriage." Durdhara did so, and the audience was astonished at her resplendent beauty and grace and majestic bearing. Chandragupta and Durdhara had both bathed in the sacred water of seven holy rivers kept in golden pitchers, and were dressed in fine Benares silk clothes, and wore priceless jewels. Chandragupta took Durdhara's hand, as directed by Subandhu and Chanakya, and repeated the famous Vedic hymn :—

"I grasp thy hand that I may gain good fortune,
That thou may'st reach old age with me, thy
husband.

Bhaga, Aryamah, Savitri, Puramdhi
Have given thee, my dear, as queen of my home."
To this Durdhara replied by uttering the hymn,
"May all the gods us two unite !
May love divine our hearts entwine !
May *Matrisvan* and *Dhatri* great
Guard us and our children to come ! "

Then Subandhu, who was officiating as High Priest, led them to the holy fire. There at the auspicious moment

amidst the blare of a thousand drums and cymbals and *nagaswarams*, flutes and *veenas*, the sacred *saptapati* the most crucial ceremony at the marriage, was gone through. Chandragupta caught hold of the foot of Durdhara and gently made her walk seven steps. As the seventh step was over, the marriage was complete and irrevocable for ever. Durdhara had become part and parcel of Chandragupta's soul, his help-mate and comrade for all lives to come.

At the conclusion of the ceremony, Subandhu and his thousand assistants recited the Vedic hymn, to the god of Fire :—

“To Thee, O Agni, first they led
Bright Surya with the bridal throng :
So, in Thy turn, to husbands give
A wife who will get progeny !”

Then all of them together addressed the royal couple and uttered the benediction :—

“Here abide ! Be not divided !
Complete Life's whole allotted span,
• Playing with your sons and grandsons,
Rejoicing in your own abode !”

Then Chandragupta and Durdhara prostrated before the great assembly of priests and sought their blessings. The priests blessed them profusely, and said, “May you have a glorious progeny to serve God and the world !” Chanakya was overjoyed. He gave Subandhu, the chief priest, a thousand gold coins and the revenues of a village in perpetuity, and he gave each priest ten gold coins and a

costly shawl. He gave each poor man a rupee and some fruits. The temple of Durga Aparajita was given the revenues of ten villages in perpetuity and a hundred thousand gold coins. The temples of Apratihata (Vishnu), Jayanta (Subrahmanya) Vaijayanta (Indra), Siva and Vaisravana (Kubera) in the city were also given the revenues of a village each in perpetuity, and the city *Brahmana Samooha Matam*¹ was given the revenues of a village in perpetuity. The announcement of each of these endowments was greeted with tremendous applause by the assembled people.

Chanakya told the assembled priests, "Sirs, this land of ours, this *Jambudvipa*, is the land of the Vedas, and you, Vedic scholars, keep it going with your learning, exemplary character and great devotion. We have, with your blessing, averted a great danger to our glorious and ancient land from a foreign conqueror, Alexander. We have also, with the help of these great princes, uprooted the ungodly Nandas. The beloved of the gods, Raja Chandragupta, will always protect Brahmans and cows, and our *Dharma*. Om!" Durdhara and Chandragupta were supremely happy and were whispering to each other in their *Magadhi* dialect. As soon as Chanakya had finished, Chandragupta went and prostrated to him. Chanakya said to Chandragupta in a whisper, "You have my blessings, in abundance, *Vrishala*. I have only destroyed the Nandas so far. I have yet to crown you as King of Magadha and make you Emperor of *Chakravartikshetra*. Go and prostrate to Poros and the other princes

1. An assembly room of learned Brahmins.

also in order to keep them in good humour." The beautiful Durdhara bowed at Chanakya's feet, and sought his blessings. "Rise, mother of Emperors," said Chanakya to her. "Your son and grandson will cover you and our land with glory. A great astrologer, Ramana, has assured me of that. Remember our ancient *Dharma* which Sita and Savitri have followed. For a wife, her husband is both her lord and God. A wife alone partakes of her husband's *harma*, not even his father or mother, brother or sister. Her husband is her only resort both in this world and in the world beyond. A wife devoted to the service of her husband attains heaven even if she does not worship the gods. For a woman there is no jewel more valuable than her husband." She rose up, her face beaming with joy. Then Chandragupta and Durdhara prostrated to Poros and the Kings of Kalinga, Kamarupa and Nepal and got their blessings. Thereafter there was a grand torch-light procession through the main streets of the City with an impressive display of troops, and with Poros, and the Kings of Kalinga, Kamarupa and Nepal following on horseback, with drawn swords, the chariot carrying Chandragupta and Durdhara. After this, the newly-married royal couple were taken to the palace specially arranged for their nuptials. Chanakya sent Poros and the Kings of Kalinga, Kamarupa and Nepal fine marriage sweets, including choice *rasgollas*¹ and ghee-cakes, and also some costly jewels as presents in honour of the marriage.

The following days were spent by Chandragupta and

1: Delicacies of Bengal and Behar.

Chanakya in receiving deputations from the citizens of Pataliputra and from the outlying Districts. Poros was also present at these interviews, but understood little of the proceedings which were all conducted in *Magadhi*¹, with which language his acquaintance was slight, his own *Sauraseni*² being very different. He and Vairochaka were inwardly not at all pleased with the turn of events, and felt themselves left in the cold, though outwardly they professed themselves to be very pleased and satisfied. Chanakya knew their real feelings. He and his numerous spies kept their eyes and ears open for unearthing and countering the plots of Rakshasa, Poros, Vairochaka and Malayaketu, all of whom they suspected, with good reason, of entertaining evil designs against Chandragupta. They were also busy hatching their own schemes against them and Sarvarthasiddhi. At one of his secret meetings with Jeevasiddhi, who had fled with Rakshasa and was his right-hand man in his plots against Chandragupta, Chanakya told Jeevasiddhi: "We have got venomous snakes lurking all round us, ready to bite. We must have our bite in first." Jeevasiddhi nodded a vigorous assent and left for Rakshasa's camp.

CHAPTER XIII

CHANDRAGUPTA CROWNED AT LAST

THE defeat and death of all the Nanda Princes at the battle of Pataliputra, and the extirpation of all the other members of the Nanda family with the exception of

1. The *prakrit* of Magadha.

2. The *prakrit* of Mathura, Delhi and the Punjab.

Sarvarthasiddhi, brought about a most complex situation. Chanakya had to resolve this confused tangle and make Chandragupta King. He set about it with characteristic patience, caution and thoroughness. He did not want to give Poros half the kingdom promised him, or indeed anything at all. Poros was now calling himself not only Parvateswara, but also *Sarvabhauma* and *Chakravartin*,¹ and was given to much drinking and boasting. But it was no joke to get rid of him, Vairochaka and Malayaketu and their mighty army on the one hand, and of Rakshasa and Sarvarthasiddhi on the other. The majority of the citizens of Pataliputra disliked the invading troops, as it wounded their pride. There were also the Kings, of Kalinga, Kamarupa and Manjupatan to be reckoned with. So, Chanakya bided his time and wanted, if possible his different sets of opponents to help him indirectly in the accomplishment of his scheme.

Rakshasa's first idea was to make Sarvarthasiddhi King again. But Sarvarthasiddhi was now quite a different man from the old, energetic and ever-ambitious Mahapadma. Rakshasa found him now to be too unenterprising and other-worldly for the job. He tried to make him at least marry again, as he was still physically fit, and beget a prince whom he could set up as the rightful heir to the throne against Chandragupta. But Sarvarthasiddhi would not agree even to this. He said, "I do not want to marry again at this age, or to fight. Nor do I want the throne. This life of peaceful meditation, I am leading, suits me. I am feeling for the first time in my

1. Ruler of the world; Emperor.

life perfect peace and contentment and a sense of spiritual well-being. Let Chandragupta occupy the throne with Durdhara. He will not find it a bed of roses. But he is at least young and can try. I do not want to try. Leave me in peace, will you?" Rakshasa was depressed at this reply though he was more or less prepared for it. He was anxious to avenge the death of the Nanda King and princes by killing Chandragupta and Chanakya who were mainly responsible for it. He considered Sarvarthasiddhi's reply to be unnatural, and attributed it to senility and the debilitating influence of *ganja* which he was in the habit of smoking after retiring to the penance grove. "*Ganja*¹ and *bhang*² rapidly degenerate a man's brains," he told Jeevasiddhi, who had also heard Sarvarthasiddhi's reply, "and make him have a false sense of peace and well-being. They take away all manliness and ambition. No wonder, hermits and monks smoke them in order to get rid of ambition and attain peace and contentment! We must act on our own hereafter and kill Chandragupta by using Sarvarthasiddhi's name, as the old man is held to be harmless by Chandragupta and even Chanakya, without letting him know about our designs as he may not agree with them and may even warn Chandragupta." Jeevasiddhi agreed fully with this view.

After consulting Jeevasiddhi, who was his main confidant now and after telling Sarvarthasiddhi that he was going to be Chandragupta's Prime Minister, and obtaining his blessings, Rakshasa went secretly to

1. Cannabis Indica.

2. An allied intoxicant.

Chandragupta and told him that Sarvarthasiddhi wanted him to be the sole King of Magadha, with Durdhara as his *Agramahishi*, and that he, Rakshasa, would be glad to continue as his *Agramatya* (Prime Minister), the hereditary post held by his family, especially as Chandragupta came of the ancient Magadhan royal family and had also wedded Durdhara, but that he did not like Parvateswara to have half the Kingdom given to him. Chandragupta consulted Chanakya secretly. Chanakya knew everything from Jeevasiddhi, and advised Chandragupta to take in writing all the sentiments expressed by Rakshasa and to accept his offer. Chandragupta did so, and Rakshasa was made *Agramatya*. Rakshasa made Sarvathasiddhi also send a formal letter of congratulations to Chandragupta.

After some days of constant touch with Chandragupta during the course of which Rakshasa flattered himself that he had obtained his implicit confidence, Rakshasa arranged one day to have some poisoned jujube fruit¹ sent to Chandragupta, falsely stating that Sarvarthasiddhi had sent it as *prasadam*², after *pooja* and with his blessings. Chanakya who had learnt of the murder plot from Jeevasiddhi, took the poisoned jujube fruit from the messenger, exchanged it secretly for exactly similar unpoisoned jujube fruit on a similar plate, and gave the harmless fruit to Chandragupta in Rakshasa's presence sending the poisoned fruit to Sarvathasiddhi as *prasadam* sent by Rakshasa. Sarvarthasiddhi ate the fruit and

1. *Badari* or *Elantai*.

2. Holy offerings made to the Gods.

died at once. Chandragupta ate the fruit and was as healthy as ever, to Rakshasa's great astonishment. Soon, a messenger came and announced the death of Sarvarthasiddhi after eating the jujube fruit *prasadam*. Rakshasa was desolate with grief at this cunning exchange which had made the poison recoil on his own head.

Chandragupta too was genuinely sorry at Sarvarthasiddhi's death. He asked Chanakya, "Why did you bring about the death of that harmless old man, sir, especially when he had agreed to my marriage with Durdhara and to my becoming the King of Magadha?"

"Because your throne will not be secure till he is dead. Rakshasa and others will always use his name to foment trouble and discontent against you. He was like a harmless stone, so far as he himself was concerned, but he could be used by our enemies to hurl against you and kill you, and so had to be removed, though most regretfully," replied Chanakya.

"I liked the old man, and am sorry for his fate," said Chandragupta.

"A King, O *Vrishala*, will have to do many unpleasant and even cruel things for the sake of his Kingdom and subjects," said Chanakya, "Your likes and dislikes should not hereafter count, now that you are going to be King. The holy Ramayana says:—

*Nrisāmsam anrisāmsam va prajarakshanakaranat
Patakam va sadosham va kartavyam rakshata sata
Rajyabharaniyuktanam esha dharma sanatana:*

(Those who are responsible for the protection of a kingdom and its subjects should do all that is necessary for such protection and safety, whether the deeds thus required are cruel or not, sinful or blameworthy. This is the ancient and unalterable law of *Rajadharma*.)

Again, as I have said in my *Arthashastra*,

Praja sukhe sukham rajna :

Prajanam cha hite hitam."

(In the happiness of his subjects lies the happiness of the king : their good is his own good, and not what is pleasing to him. He must find his pleasure in the pleasure of his subjects.)

"What will Rakshasa do now?" asked Chandragupta.

"He will try every possible means to strike at us. If I have judged him aright, he will even intrigue with Poros against us though he has no love for Punjabis. He will want to kill us all the more now in order to avenge the death of Sarvarthasiddhi also, especially as he himself has brought it about unwittingly.

As predicted by Chandragupta, Rakshasa began to intrigue with Poros, promising to make him sole King of Magadha, if he would join in a conspiracy to murder Chandragupta. The ambitious Poros agreed to become sole King of Magadha, but refused to be a party to the murder of Chandragupta. "He is my niece's husband. He was also my guest. We can seize and imprison him. Why kill him?" asked he. Rakshasa pretended to be satisfied, but he resolved to kill Chandragupta without

telling Poros. He made Jeevasiddhi get him a maiden of the most exquisite beauty to be presented to Chandragupta as his handmaid on his accession to the throne, as was the immemorial custom. No man on earth could resist her attraction, and Jeevasiddhi assured Rakshasa that her whole body was so saturated with poison that relations with her would kill her partner forthwith. To make assurance doubly sure, Rakshasa further made Jeevasiddhi give the maiden a deadly powder to be slyly put into the drink, when it was to be given to her lover. Then he took the enchanting maiden to the palace where Chandragupta and Poros were camping. He had not told Poros a word of all this, lest he should reveal the secret to Chandragupta or Chanakya in his aversion to the murder of his relative and friend.

Unfortunately for him, Jeevasiddhi had sent detailed information to Chanakya. When Rakshasa went to the palace that night at nine, he found Chandragupta and Poros sitting on two thrones after their dinner, and Chanakya and Rajasena with them. Poros was dead drunk with the exquisite Greek wines, of which he kept a good stock, and was in a very good mood, having been highly flattered and humoured by Chandragupta and Chanakya. He was loudly proclaiming that he loved Chandragupta like his own son Malayaketu, and would be prepared to give him anything in his power, for the mere asking. So, when Rakshasa presented the captivating maid to Chandragupta, and Poros was gazing at her admiringly and yearningly, Chanakya asked Chandragupta to give her to his brother Poros unasked, just to show

that he was no whit behind in his readiness to part with priceless things.

Chandragupta readily gave her to Poros, who at once took leave of the rest and went with her to his bed-chamber after thanking Chandragupta and Chanakya incoherently, in the height of his gratitude. Rakshasa was a helpless spectator of this strange miscarriage of his murder-plot. He could not tell Poros in the presence of Chanakya and Chandragupta that the man who took the poison-maid was taking death as partner. He took a dismal and cheerless farewell, and went home after having been forced to listen to an hour's vivacious talk by Chanakya, who wanted to make sure that the poison-maid was not interrupted in her deadly work.

The next morning Poros was found dead, and the poison-maid absconding. There was panic among the followers of Poros. Chanakya had it publicly given out that Rakshasa had got Poros murdered through the poison-maiden, as he did not want to give half the Kingdom to him, and instanced his signed letter to Chandragupta, when he took office as his Prime Minister, in proof of it. Rakshasa got afraid, especially as he had really given such a signed letter and had sent the poison-maid, though with the intention of killing Chandragupta and not Poros. He lost his head, and fled from Pataliputra in panic, leaving his wife and son in the house of his trusted friend, the rich diamond-merchant Chandanadasa. Chanakya's spies knew of his flight, but did not do anything to prevent it, because the capture and punishment of Rakshasa would have raised many embarrassing

problems and roused much discontent among the citizens of Pataliputra, while his flight from the City would leave the supporters of the Nandas without a wise and fearless leader, and would allow Chanakya a clear field for his plans and operations.

Chanakya had resolved to kill Poros and Vairochaka for their secret plotting with Rakshasa against Chandragupta. He had also resolved to get rid of Malayaketu. Now Poros was dead. The other two remained. Of those, Vairochaka required more immediate attention than the inexperienced and inefficient boy, Malayaketu. After allowing Rakshasa to escape unmolested, Chanakya went to Rakshasa's house with the infuriated troops of Poros and surrounded it. The house was found deserted. Rakshasa's flight confirmed Chanakya's story that Rakshasa was the person who got the great Parvateswara killed by means of the poison-maid. At the same time Chanakya made his spy Bhagurayana tell the frightened and bewildered Malayaketu, secretly, that it was Chanakya who had got Parvateswara killed and that he would soon devise some internal plan to kill him also, and induced him to flee instantly to his own kingdom and escape, and then consider ways and means of avenging himself on Chandragupta and Chanakya. Malayaketu did not require any further persuasion, but fled to Boukephala with a few faithful followers, without even performing the funeral ceremonies of his father. Chanakya did not try to prevent this escape also. It came in very handy for his plans.

His spies had told him that Daruvarman, the Master-Carpenter of Pataliputra, was in league with Rakshasa and

had prepared a golden arch for the occasion of the State-entry of Chandragupta into 'Suganga' Palace for the Coronation, even before being asked to do so. They had also told Chanakya that Vairavaraka, the Head-Mahout of Magadha and the person entitled to be the Mahout of Chandragupta's elephant *Chandralekha* on the occasion of the State-entry, was also in league with Rakshasa. He resolved at once to utilise the occasion for getting rid of Vairochaka without any blame or trouble to himself. He told Vairochaka secretly, "The silly boy has escaped, thinking that I got Parvateswara killed and would soon get him also killed. But if I had got Parvateswara killed would I have allowed this boy to escape? Was it not the easiest thing for me to have caught the boy and killed him when he was fleeing with his followers? Anyhow, what has happened is for the best. Instead of the inexperienced Malayaketu being made the Joint-King of Magadha, we shall be getting an experienced and wise person in you. You have also no other kingdom to attend to. You can therefore devote your whole attention to this kingdom. The Magadhans may raise two objections, firstly that the kingdom should not be divided and that no foreigner should be given any part of it, and that the promise to give half to Parvateswara lapsed with his death, and, secondly, that even if the promise held good after his death, it is his son Malayaketu who should get his half and not you. Therefore, we must proceed by a stratagem and face them with a *fait accompli*. I shall announce that, Parvateswara having died and Malayaketu having fled, the question of the promise to Parvateswara would be considered later, but that Chandragupta would be crowned

now. Then, I shall dress you up in Chandragupta's robes and deck you with his ornaments, and seat you on Chandragupta's elephant *Chandralekha*. So you shall be crowned as Chandragupta. As soon as that is done, I shall announce your real identity, and get you recognized as King of half the kingdom. Chandragupta will thereafter be crowned as King of the other half."

The plan sounded excellent to Vairochaka. Indeed, in his cunning, he fancied that he would even become sole King of Magadha and shut out Chandragupta altogether. He stipulated with Chanakya that Parvateswara's troops should be sent along with him. Chanakya readily agreed.

Vairochaka was dressed in Chandragupta's robes and decked with his ornaments, and seated on *Chandralekha*. He looked very like Chandragupta in the uncertain light of the torches. Everybody including Vairavaraka and Daruvarman took him to be Chandragupta. The troops of Parvateswara were near him, being given the place of honour, as allies. The Magadhan troops also followed. While Parvateswara's troops were in a festive mood, and not armed for a fight or prepared for it, the Magadhan troops under Bhadrabhata, Purushadatta, Dingarata, Balagupta, Rajasena, Simhabala, Bhagurayana, Chandrabhanu and Pushyagupta were secretly armed to the teeth in order that they might fall upon Parvateswara's unsuspecting troops on a signal from Chanakya.

The glorious procession with Vairochaka on *Chandralekha* passed along the streets that night to 'Suganga' Palace in a most imposing manner, with the blare of

trumpets and the flare of torchlights. Thousands of citizens thronged the streets to watch it. At last the golden arch put up by Daruvarman in front of 'Suganga' Palace was reached. Daruvarman was on the top of it with his friends waving triumphal flags, but ready to drop the heavy collapsible arch on the supposed Chandragupta and kill him with it instantaneously as if by accident. But Vairavaraka saw him, knew what he was up to, and wanted to forestall him and get the credit for the deed and the consequent reward from Rakshasa. Just as the elephant was about to cross the arch, he drew out his dagger to stab the supposed Chandragupta. The elephant *Chandralekha* was frightened at this sudden act, and slackened its pace. Daruvarman had timed that the fall of the arch should be at the moment when Chandragupta would be directly under the arch. Owing to the elephant's slackened pace, the heavy arch fell on Vairavaraka's head and killed him. The dismayed Daruvarman jumped on to *Chandralekha's* back with an axe, and killed the supposed Chandragupta with it.

The soldiers of Parvateswara beat Daruvarman to death, and then fell on the unarmed citizens and began killing them in the frenzy of their rage. The helpless citizens appealed to Chanakya for protection. Chanakya then asked Chandragupta's troops to attack the unprepared soldiers of Parvateswara who were routed with great slaughter. Then he announced that the man killed by Daruvarman was Vairochaka, and not Chandragupta. The citizens received this news with acclamation, and went in their thousands to escort Chandragupta to

'Suganga' Palace for being crowned. Their former apathy was gone. Their only hope of preserving their lives, goods and culture from the barbarians lay in crowning their own Prince Chandragupta.

With the greatest enthusiasm they took him along the streets surrounded by his victorious troops. A thousand flags bearing the Crest newly invented by him and Chanakya, namely, the crescent Moon rising above the Himalaya mountain, and a peacock dancing in the foreground, waved in the light of the blazing torches. Elephants trumpeted, horses neighed, and innumerable ladies uttered the auspicious '*ulu ulu*' cry as Chandragupta entered the 'Suganga' Palace on his elephant *Chandralekha*.

In the coronation chamber everything had been arranged for the *Mahabhisheka* (coronation by anointment and lustration) ceremony under the personal supervision of Chanakya himself. The great lion throne was placed on a magnificent Bengal tiger skin eleven feet long spread over a painted relief map of the seven continents, oceans and mountains to signify the coronation of a *Sarva-bhauma* or *chakravartin*. Golden jars filled with twigs, blossoms and grains were placed all round the throne on three sides. In the forefront stood a golden vessel with yellow consecrated rice prepared by the *adhvaryu*, *hotri udgatri* and the *purohit*¹, after continuous recitation of Vedic hymns in praise of Vishnu, Rudra, Brahma, Indra, Varuna and Agni, and another golden pot with consecrated holy water from all the sacred rivers of India, consecrated likewise by these Vedic priests. These were

1. Priests learned in the *Rig, Yajur, Sama and Atharva Vedas*.

for the high officers and nobles and honoured guests to sprinkle over the King after the *mahabhisheka*, in token of approval and blessing. Vessels of white mustard, parched rice and pulses were also kept there in accordance with ancient custom. Large gold bowls with sandal paste and rare scents and unguents were also there, along with huge quantities of cocoanuts, betel leaves and betelnuts, nutmegs, cloves, cardamom and cinnamon for distribution to guests after the ceremony. Tall shining brass oil lamps were there in plenty, with eight wicks each, shedding their holy light on the scene.

Chandragupta was led to the throne chamber by the Kings of Kalinga, Kamarupa and Nepal and the *Andhra-bhritya*, the prince of the Andhra country and the greatest feudatory of the Empire, and Chanakya and Bhadrabhata, Purushadatta, Dingarata, Rajasena, Balagupta, Pushyagupta and Subandhu. At the great *Homakundam*,¹ Chandragupta did *Pooja*² to the *Navagrahas*,³ and to Ganesa, Subrahmanya and the *Trimurtis* and to Saraswati, Lakshmi and Durga Aparajita. Gallons of ghee were poured into the sacrificial pit with hoary *mantras* from the Vedas. The *Vasus* of the east were worshipped for conferring overlordship, the Rudras of the south for paramount rule, the *adityas* of the west for independent rule, and the guardians of the north for unimpaired sovereignty. Worship was also done to the *sadyas* and *aptyas* of the middle regions and to the *maruts* and *angirases* and to

1. Sacrificial pit.

2. Worship.

3. The nine planets.

Mahaprajapati. Then Chandragupta was seated on a throne of *Khadira* wood spread over with a magnificent tiger skin, and the holy water of the Ganga, Yamuna, Sindhu, Kaveri, Godavari, Krishna, Narmada, Saraswati and Sarayu, and of the four oceans, including water from the *Setu*¹ at Dhanushkoldi, kept ready in a gold pitcher incantated with Vedic *mantras*, was poured over his head which was anointed by the *Purohita* with rare incantated ointments, to the accompaniment of Vedic *mantras* by a thousand priests. Afterwards Chandragupta was given consecrated silk clothes to wear and was seated on the great *simhasana* (Lion Throne) and given a holy thread, with *Krishnachala* skin, to wear, and a *Navaratnamala*² with the wheel of *Dharma* and the *Saddharmapundarika*³ to wear round his neck, as also a garland of one hundred holy fruits, roots and leaves, like *rudraksha*, *tulasi* bead, *tulasi* leaf, *Bilva* leaf, *atalota* root, *Sarasa-parilla* root, *asvatha* root, *vata* root, etc. Subandhu then gave Chandragupta a consecrated bow and arrows for protecting his kingdom and subjects from external invasion and internal trouble, and a consecrated sword, which Chandragupta was made to give to his Prime Minister, Chanakya, to use as his deputy.

Then the proclamation was read by Chanakya. It ran: "By the grace of God and the unanimous consent of the *Janapada* of Magadha, consisting of the four castes and all the holy orders, and nobles, and the hill and

1. Rama's bridge or Adam's bridge.

2. A garland of the nine precious gems, considered very lucky.

3. The Lotus symbolising Dharma.

forest tribes, *Devanampriya priyadarsin*¹ Chandragupta Raja is hereby proclaimed as paramount ruler of Magadha and *sarvabhauma* of all *Jambudvīpa* after this *sarvamedha* and *Mahabhishekam* ceremony. The King has been proclaimed, the lordly power has been born, the guardian of *Dharma* has been installed, the upholder of the laws, without fear or favour, has been consecrated." Then Chandragupta took the solemn oath of office administered by the *Purohita*, Subandu. He said, "I swear by Vishnu, who pervades all the three worlds, and is in my heart and yours, making us do His work, to rule the land according to its ancient laws and customs, never deviating even by a hair's breadth therefrom. I vow to work incessantly for the cause of my people. I shall consider the efficient administration of this land to be my religious duty. I swear to mete out equal treatment to one and all, regardless of caste, creed, race, sex, or class. In the happiness of my subjects shall lie my happiness and in their good my good, and not in what is pleasing to me. The will of my subjects shall be my will, and their pleasure my pleasure. If I deviate from *Dharma*, may all my sacrifice and my office and life be forfeited as also the right of my descendants to the throne!" There was pin-drop silence when he took the oath, and wild applause after he took it. The Kings of Kalinga, Kamarupa and Nepal and the Andhra King, and the nobles and officials and priests then sprinkled on Chandragupta the sacred water and consecrated rice kept in the big golden vessels. A thousand drums and cymbals and *nagaswarams* and

1. The beloved of the gods.

veenas and flutes blared forth their music, and a hundred pretty maidens sang selected songs, and numerous bards recited ballads, and priests chanted benedictory hymns, and the heads of the Buddhists, Jains and Ajivakas went and blessed the King.

Afterwards, Chandragupta administered the oath of office to Chanakya and Chanakya administered the oath of office to Nakranasa, Sakatala and other ministers. Then the Andhra King and other feudatories and the forest and hill chieftains did allegiance to Chandragupta, There were deafening shouts of "Long live the King!", "Victory to the King!" "May Chandragupta, the beloved of the gods, rule for long!" from the assembled multitude. Chanakya then rose and said:—

"We have seated Chandragupta on the lion-emblemed throne of Magadha and placed the Crown of Mandhata on his head. The formal Coronation along with Queen Durdhara will take place next month in the presence of all our feudatory Kings and Princes and peoples. This is simply the election of the people, the famous *Janapada*¹ of Magadha. The coining of *Suvarnas* and *Rupyarupyas*² by the State Goldsmiths and the

1. The assembly of the people.

2. The Mauryan coinage is in India almost unchanged, except that the Sovereign has taken the place of the *Suvarna*. The *Suvarna* was a gold coin (with copper alloy) worth about Rs. 10. The *Rupyarupya* (or rupee) was also called the *Pana* or *Karshapana* and was a silver coin (with copper and lead alloy) worth roughly from twelve annas to one rupee. The *Masha* represented one-sixteenth of a rupee, or the modern anna. The quarter-anna was represented by the *Kakani* or *Kani*, which latter term is still used for it in the Andhra country which was formerly subject to the Mauryas.

Lakshanadhyaksha 1 with Chandragupta's crest, the crescent moon rising over the Himalaya, imprinted on it, has begun from today. Each guest will get a gold coin as memento. "

The function ended with the *mangala sloka*

"*Sarve cha sukhina: santu*

Sarve santu niramaya:

Sarve bhadraṇi paśyantu

Ma kaśchit dukkhaḥ bhavet !"

(May all beings be happy ! May all attain bliss ! May all have happy and auspicious days ! May none be subject to suffering or sorrow !) and the distribution of sandal paste and betel leaves and cocoanuts to the assembled guests, and gold coins and shawls to priests, monks, and nobles.

Chandragupta and Chanakya sent the King of Kalinga back the next day after ratifying the original treaty, and returning to him the statue of the first *Jina* and the crown jewels of Kalinga carried away by Mahapadma, and loading him with presents including a large number of the new coins. The Kings of Kamarupa and Manjupatan were also sent away with gifts of ten-million *Suvarṇas* each, in return for which they readily agreed to evacuate forthwith all Magadhan territories occupied by them and to remain for ever the allies of the King of Magadha.

That evening Chandragupta sent Rajasena to Chanakya's house with a hundred-thousand *Suvarṇas* as a small token of his gratitude, and with a message that a fine palace had been got ready for his immediate

1. The Superintendent of the Mint and the Controller of Currency.

occupation, and that he should move into it at once as the dilapidated house in which he was living was not suitable for the residence of the Prime Minister of a great Empire. Chanakya was away for a bath in the *Ganges*. Rajasena left the money and message behind with Gautami. "You will have to come and take them back," said she smiling. "I shall never take them back," said Rajasena. "Then the '*Aryaputra*'¹ will have to bring them back to the Palace," said she laughing.

Chanakya returned in an hour, and was told by Gautami about the money and message, and her remarks to Rajasena. He smiled, took the money and proceeded to the Palace. He went straight to the Emperor and returned them, saying, "Vrishala, what use have I for gold or riches? Nor do I want a palace to live in. My humble abode is enough for me." "I expected this," said Chandragupta. "Great souls like you never want anything for themselves. But, as a King, I cannot take back what I have given away. Pray suggest some way out."

"Spend the money on feeding poor scholars all over the Empire, and especially at Pataliputra, Benares and Takshasila," said Chanakya.

"All right," said Chandragupta. "Twice the amount will be allotted for it. Now I want to give something to the Venerable Gautami in commemoration of this happy event."

"Yes, but give her only what she asks for," said Chanakya, knowing the extremely simple and non-covetous nature of his wife.

1, "The noble one" here it means her husband, Chanakya.

They went to Chanakya's house. The Emperor asked Gautami to choose some present. She said at once, "I want nothing for the use of myself or my husband. But he is doing daily *Puja*, and it seems to me that such a great man should use in the service of God a silver *Panchapatram*¹ and *Uddharani*², instead of the copper ones he is using now. Your Majesty can give them to me if you like."

"Excellent," said Chandragupta. "The venerable Chanakya cannot object to this at all," and returned to the Palace and sent a fine silver *Panchapatram* and *Uddharani*.

He told Santavati and Durdhara about the episode that night. They admired greatly the unselfish nature of Chanakya and Gautami. "My lord," said Santavati, "I now see that he is the soul of unselfishness, and that he does everything for what he considers to be the public welfare, and never for any private advantage. So, I have forgiven him for what I considered his cruel treatment of my uncles and cousin."

"He did what he did, so that I may be crowned," said Chandragupta.

"Yes, I knew that. Only, till now, I thought that he had you crowned in order to accomplish his vow and satisfy his vanity. Now I see that his vow itself was undertaken in public interests, and not for satisfying his vanity or for wreaking his private vengeance, and I rejoice at it," said Santavati.

1. Tumbler.

2. Libation spoon.

CHAPTER XIV.

TRAITORS PAY

A week after the informal Coronation, Chanakya held a secret conference in the private room of the Prime Minister in 'Suganga' Palace with Vaihinari, the Lord Chamberlain, Rajasena, the head of the Palace guard, Balagupta, the Palace Superintendent, Dingarata, head of the Police, Bhagurayana, the head of the Intelligence Department, and Chandrabhanu, the Chief Transportation Officer. He said to them, "I have called you to inform you of the measures taken to protect the person of the King from all possible enemies. First of all, tell me whether you have carried out the instructions I gave you this morning."

"Yes," said Rajasena. "I have sent away from the bodyguard and the palace guard all foreigners and those who have earned neither rewards nor honours from His Majesty, and also those of our own countrymen who were suspected of being secretly inimical to the King."

"I too have taken every precaution against fire, accidental or intentional, and have also seen to it that no poisonous snakes enter or are introduced into the Palace," said Balagupta.

"The selected cooks are all reliable men, and the head-cook partakes of the dishes in my presence before taking them to the King. I have requested His Majesty also to taste the dishes only after making an oblation first to Fire, and next to the birds. I have kept a number of

fine parrots and *Kchils* ready for that purpose. On rising, His Majesty will be received by troops of loyal women bodyguard armed with bows and arrows. In the second room he will be received by me, and given his coat. In the third room he will be received by dwarfs and hunchbacks. In the fourth room his ministers and kinsmen will receive him in the presence of door-keepers armed with barbed missiles. All the door-keepers and members of the female-guard are trusted persons of approved loyalty personally selected by me and Balagupta," said Vaihinari.

"I have made proper arrangements for watching every man coming in or going out," said Dingarata. "I have kept a complete file of the antecedents of all the persons serving His Majesty," said Bhagurayana.

"The workmen and porters are all trustworthy men," said Chandrabhanu.

"Have the harem-servants been carefully selected?" asked Chanakya.

"Yes," said Vaihinari. "I have personally seen to it."

"All right," said Chanakya. "I only request all of you to keep your eyes open always. Our enemies are resourceful. They will not try open war after this terrible defeat unless they secure the support of some powerful prince like Malayaketu. They will only try assassination, preferably by poisoning. We have not been able to weed out all the supporters of the Nandas. Many of their former servants have taken service under Chandragupta, and sworn fidelity to him. They require to be

carefully watched. It will be difficult to refuse to accept such offers of loyalty, because any change of King involves such wholesale taking over of hundreds of permanent officials. Most of them are not worth worrying about, as they fall in with any regime ; a few will be really sincere in their conversion and actively helpful ; but, a few will also be simply waiting for an opportunity to strike at us secretly and effectively. Watch carefully, and let me know at once anything suspicious, or strange, or calling for inquiry. Never mind if most of the suspicions fizzle out on inquiry. The inquiries made will not be wasted. They will keep us in proper trim. Without such perpetual carefulness, we may be caught off our guard." Every one of them promised to be careful, and then dispersed.

The next day, Chandragupta had a slight attack of diarrhoea. The palace Physician, Abhayadatta, at once prepared his well-known specific for it and took it to the King in a golden bowl. Chandragupta suspected nothing at all, and held out his hand for it. But Chanakya too was there. It seemed to him that there was a slight and suspicious haziness and discoloration on the sides of the golden bowl. He said to Abhayadatta. " Give it to me before giving it to the King. Why are the sides discoloured ?" Abhayadatta's nerves gave away, and his hand trembled as he handed over the medicine to Chanakya. Chanakya poured a little bit into a small dish, and gave it to a parrot which died instantly. " You have mixed a deadly poison in this, Abhayadatta," said Chanakya to him quietly. " Your parched and dry mouth, your hesitation in speech, your heavy perspiration and bodily

tremor, all warned me that you were about to administer poison, and my experiment has proved it to be correct. Drink the contents of the bowl at once, or be prepared to be dragged by *chandalas* to the hanging place and hacked to death limb by limb." Abhayadatta drank the contents without demur, and fell down dead. "Thus perishes one of the greatest doctors of our time," said Chanakya to Rajasena. "I had hoped that he had sincerely resolved to serve us faithfully. Nor would it have been prudent to have dismissed or punished him without proof. He was so popular. Of course, I did not want him, even after this traitorous act, to be done to death like a common criminal. Something is due to knowledge and learning. But, doctors, trying to murder their patients by poisons mixed in medicines must die. Remove his corpse and hand it over to his relatives for a proper funeral. They cannot complain now as he died by drinking his own poison."

Two days thereafter, Rajasena reported to him that Pramodaka, the officer-in-charge of the King's bed-chamber, had suddenly become extravagant, and appeared to be in possession of immense funds from a mysterious source. Bhagurayana and Dingarata too confirmed this. Chanakya asked his spy Udumbara to take to Pramodaka ten-thousand gold *pānas* as if from Rakshasa, but to ask him before handing over the amount to explain why he had not accomplished the object yet, and was simply dissipating the money received in advance on extravagant pleasures. Pramodaka fell into the trap, and told Udumbara that he was only waiting for a favourable opportunity, and would be murdering Chandragupta on the very next night

when the demon Chanakya would be away from the town to perform the annual ceremony of his mother Devaki who had died the previous year. He was then given the ten thousand *panas* by Udumbara, and arrested and taken to Chanakya, who had him put to death by torture, and had his entire property confiscated and distributed between Rajasena, Dingarata, Bhagurayana and Udumbara.

Five days later, Balagupta, Dingarata, Rajasena Bhagurayana and Chanakya saw, on their daily inspection of every room in the Palace, a line of ants with particles of food in their mouths emerging from a crevice between the wall and the flooring in the magnificent ground-floor bed-room of Chandragupta. Nobody took any notice of it except Chanakya. His suspicions were roused, because there were no foodstuffs or provisions in the bed-room, and so the ants must have got them from some hidden store underneath. Yet none of them knew of any basement room there. Chanakya tapped the floor gently, and detected a hollow sound indicative of the existence of a tunnel underneath. He asked Bhagurayana, Dingarata and Balagupta to go and watch the precincts, and prevent the escape of the hidden assassins by any outlets they might have made. Then he and Rajasena had the floor dug up. Sure enough, there was a tunnel underneath. In it were found Bibhatsaka and two others, all Rakshasa's men, armed with assassins' daggers, and provided with plenty of rice, meat and other dainties to while away their time till the night came. Chanakya had them burnt alive in that very tunnel. Thereafter, he ordered that Chandra

gupta should sleep in a different bed-room every night, and had eight different bed-rooms in the Palace always ready for occupation. "I shall tell the King every evening in which bed-room to sleep," said he. Rakshasa's bed-room-assassins ceased to trouble Chanakya after that.

A fortnight later, a great astrologer went to Chandragupta, and gave out many events of the past accurately. Chanakya's suspicions were roused. So, he asked Rajasena to watch him carefully, and be ready for all emergencies. After the usual predictions from the horoscope were over, the man pretended to be a great expert in Palmistry also and requested to be allowed to see the Emperor's hand. When Chandragupta stretched forth his hand, the astrologer approached near as if to scrutinise the markings on the palm, but suddenly pulled out a dagger from his clothes and raised his arm to strike at Chandragupta's chest. Chandragupta with great presence of mind, caught his arm firmly before the blow could descend, and Rajasena ran his sword through the mock-astrologer who fell down dead.

"The fool's astrology didn't tell him this," said Chanakya.

"Nor did his commonsense tell him that if he were to strike suddenly with a dagger, he should have struck at the abdomen by an upward stroke rather than at the abdomen by a down-ward stroke, when his arm could have been easily caught and the act prevented," said Chandragupta. Thereafter, Chanakya hid

every man's person searched before he was allowed near the King.

A month later, a party of twelve horse-dealers went to the Emperor stating that they had a number of very fine Arati, Saindhava, Kambhoja and Vanayu horses, and that the Emperor, a connoisseur of horses, might select some. Chandragupta, accompanied by Chanakya, Balagupta, Rajasena, and Purushadatta went to see them. They were excellent animals. But, no sooner had Chandragupta begun to examine them than all the horse-dealers took up arms concealed in the stables, and attacked Chandragupta and his men suddenly. Chandragupta, an expert horse-man, mounted one of the horses and rode off as directed by Chanakya. Chanakya, Balagupta, Purushadatta and Rajasena fought with the disappointed horse-dealers, who were afraid of the Emperor's bringing aid, and so mounted their horses and bolted. But Chandragupta sent a cavalry division after them under Purushadatta and all of them were caught and executed with torture.

"Hereafter, Purushadatta shall examine all horses and bring them to the Emperor for approval," said Chanakya.

Six weeks later, when Chandragupta was worshipping at the Sankarshana temple in the Palace, the Brahmin priest gave him some sacred water mingled with a deadly poison. But Sonottara had seen the Brahmin look into the gold bowl to see if any sediment remained. So, she snatched the bowl from

Chandragupta and gave it to a cat, which died at once. Chanakya had the Brahmin drowned in the *Ganges* for high treason. The Emperor was also requested not to take even temple-offerings without offering them to some bird or beast, or making the priest partake of them himself.

A week later, one night, a monkey with a large quantity of inflammable material tied to its tail was made to get on to the roof of the Palace after the tail had been ignited. The poor thing jumped from place to place on the roof in its fright, confusion and pain, setting fire to several portions of the building. Fortunately, there was no wind, and the fire did not spread. Chandragupta and Chanakya woke up on an alarm being raised by Bhagurayana, and the fire was put out soon. The owner of the monkey, who was found lurking in the Palace grounds, was burnt to death then and there. Balagupta was asked to keep an eye on monkeys also thereafter.

A few days later, when the Emperor went out to witness a sacrifice, the officiating Brahmin seated him on a cushion near the wall. Soon the Emperor heard something hissing. Turning round he found a full-grown cobra with its hood spread and ready to strike. He sprang forward, and the cobra bit the cushion instead. It was taken and killed. The Brahmin was put into a cage full of poisonous cobras, vipers and scorpions which soon killed him. Rajasena was directed to examine the King's seating arrangements in advance.

Thus, by the supreme vigilance of Chanakya and his able assistants, every one of Rakshasa's plots to kill

Chandragupta failed. The stern punishments meted out to the traitors made it impossible for Rakshasa to secure any more assassins. The precautions adopted rendered further attempts useless. So, Rakshasa was forced to turn from assassination to open war for effecting his object of dethroning Chandragupta and killing him and Chanakya. He devoted all his phenomenal energy to the furtherance of the new mode of attack.

CHAPTER XV.

THE NET IS SPREAD

TWO months after the incidents narrated in the previous Chapter happened, Chanakya sat in the private room of Chandragupta in the 'Suganga' Palace discussing state affairs.

"Rakshasa's persistence and loyalty are indeed wonderful. I thought that he would give up all his efforts as soon as the last of the Nandas was dead. This is why I saw to it that the Nandas were completely wiped out of existence. But, even after that, and after the failure of all his murder-plots, Rakshasa's efforts have not slackened. The latest news is that he has stirred up Malayaketu, who was already wroth against us because of his father Parvataka's death, by promising him our entire kingdom. Assisted by Chitravarman of Kuluta, Simhanada of Malaya, Pushkaraksha of Kashmir, Susena of Sind, and Meghanada the Persian, the *Kshatrapa* of Kutch and Saurashtra, and hosts of Gandharas, Yavanas, Kambhoja

Sakas, Hutas and Kiratas, Malayaketu and Rakshasa will soon march on Pataliputra," said Chanakya.

"This is serious," said Chandragupta. "What do you propose to do?"

"Pooh, all this is not going to worry the man who vowed to destroy the Nanda race, root and branch, and accomplished that vow," said Chanakya. "The fire of my anger burnt down all the branches of the Nandas, numerous like bamboo shoots. Only the subjects, who were like frightened birds, were left untouched. People who cried 'Shame' in their heart of hearts when they saw me dragged away from the seat of honour, have now seen the Nanda King hurled down from his throne like a lord of elephants from the mountain-top by a lion. I have fulfilled my double duty. My anger has burnt itself out by their destruction, and my love has been satisfied by your being crowned and firmly established on the Imperial throne of Pataliputra. But, my anger has burnt out like a forest-fire, not because of weakness but simply because of lack of further materials to burn. Now I see more materials coming my way, and the fire must burn again and do its destined work. Till I win over Rakshasa and make him your minister, and crush these Chieftains and annex their lands to our Empire, my work will remain unfinished. But these things are but child's play for Kautalya. These deluded Chieftains are verily jumping into the mouth of a lion, whose jaws have been dyed with the blood of many elephants far more powerful than the puny ones now facing it. Why do these doomed men

desire my hair to be still sprawling about in the wind, instead of being tied up? These do not know the measure of their own strength as against mine, and are simply rushing to their destruction like moths rushing to a flame."

"I have no doubt of that, sir. But tell me why you want to win over Rakshasa and make him my minister, instead of destroying him like the rest," asked Chandragupta."

"Because he is a gem among men, and, once won over to us and by his own conviction, he will be a tower of strength to us. His loyalty is wonderful. Ordinary men serve their lords so long as they continue to be Kings. Those who follow Kings in exile do so in the hope of a restoration and rewards to be gained in future. Rare are men like Rakshasa who remember their past favours and work against their Kings' foes out of mere disinterested devotion, even after the complete and irrevocable destruction of the lines of their Kings. Besides, he is a very able and efficient Prime Minister and an incorruptible man. Such men, *Vrishala*, should be won over and not killed like the worthless forest and hill Chiefs, who are like the weeds found everywhere and deserve only destruction when found noxious."

"But, sir, I wish you to be my Prime Minister always. Rakshasa will be but a poor substitute," said Chandragupta.

Chanakya's face lighted up just a little with joy as he said. "Chandra, I shall be always available when you want me, like medicine for a sick man. But I cannot be

always your Prime Minister. I have got my book to complete and my soul to look after. Rakshasa will make an excellent Prime Minister. Besides, he is a Magadha among the Magadhans and his ancestors have served the Kings of Magadha, for many generations. Such a man will be an asset as a Prime Minister, when he willingly serves you, and will put out the last embers of discontent among your subjects."

"But, how can I have full confidence in him who has fought against me so often and sought my life in every possible way?" asked Chandraguptya.

"That is inevitable in politics. The foes of yesterday will be the friends of to-day. A king must deal with men according to the existing circumstances," said Chanakya.

"That means that he can never treat one as a real friend lest he should become a foe one day, and can never treat one as a real foe lest he should become a friend one day?" asked Chandraguptya.

"That is so. A King and a Kingdom have no *permanent friends* or *permanent enemies*. They have only *permanent interests*. That is politics. That is why kings must keep themselves fully informed by spies, of whom there must be three different sets, each independent of the other, and acting as checks on one another. But I can assure you that Rakshasa will be all right, once he is really won over. Indeed, there is not one among your other ministers of half his worth. His bravery, honesty, intelligence and devotion are unparalleled. That he has not served you faithfully as Prime Minister so far is due

to the fact that he has accepted the office with mental reservations and for his own ulterior purposes, and not whole-heartedly. That he has served your former foes should be no disqualification by itself. Kings change, but the people and the Government servants do not. But, why do I talk of all this now when he is still our bitter foe, trying his best to crush us? Let us first foil all his plans and root out his allies, and annex all their territory."

"Sir, may I know what steps you have already taken."

"Certainly. My net is almost spread. I have spread a rumour far and near that Parvateswara, our most steadfast ally, was killed by Rakshasa by sending that charming poison-maiden, thinking that he would cause irreparable loss to me by killing one of my main props, Parvateswara. You know that I myself asked Bhagurayana to spirit away Malayaketu to a place of safety by telling him that I was the cause of Parvateswara's death. We had your Coronation to be celebrated then. It would have been inconvenient if Malayaketu was hovering about here at that time after our promise to give his father half his kingdom. I wanted also to give the avaricious and intriguing Vairochaka his deserts. But I used Malayaketu's flight to prove that we had no hand in Paravateswara's death by instructing the spies to ask people whether, if we had purposely got Parvateswara killed, we would have allowed his son to escape. The inexperienced and simple Malayaketu offers no great problem. He is too insignificant to be killed. We can thwart all his plans easily. Our spies have already found

out the two arch conspirators employed by Rakshasa in our city, Sakatadasa and Chandanadasa. I shall round them up soon, and utilise them for our own ends in some cunning way or other. I have already done away with Abhayadatta, Praviraka, Bibhatsaka and others. Bhagurayana, Bhadrabhata, Purushadatta, Dingarata, Balagupta, Rajasena, Lohitaksha and Vijayavarman, all tried and devoted adherents of ours, will desert to the enemy on the plausible pretext of disgust at my tyrannical orders regarding Sakatadasa, Chandanadasa and themselves. They and Jeevasiddhi, who has done so much already for us, will induce Rakshasa to march boldly on Pataliputra. We shall encourage the enemy by frequent bickerings between you and me. Finally, we shall stage, on the *Kaumudi* festival day, an irrevocable quarrel. I shall cancel the observance of the *Kaumudi* festival contrary to your express orders, and you will dismiss me with words of withering contempt and hatred. These quarrels and the dismissal will be used by our agents with Malayaketu, for creating suspicions in the mind of Malayaketu about Rakshasa's sympathy for you and desire to desert Malayaketu and take up again your Prime Ministership. I shall also arrange for his suspecting his five royal allies and killing them. To deal with the rest will be child's play."

"It will not be easy to insult and dismiss you even in joke," said Chandragupta.

"But that is essential, and will have to be done. Act it well. I shall let you know my detailed plans from time to time," said Chanakya.

Chanakya then took leave of Chandragupta. He said, "You will get sealed letters from me about the developments from time to time. Sarangarava will bring them."

"What a simpleton your pupil Sarangarava is!" said Chandragupta.

"He is a simple and loyal soul, but by no means devoid of intelligence. It is cunning he lacks. He never speaks a lie, never! That is a quality you will not find in one man in a million."

Then Chanakya proceeded in the state palanquin to his modest house in the Brahmin street. People on the way looked at him admiringly. An old man stroked his beard and told some by-standers, "There goes the great Chanakya. So long as Chanakya is alive and on good terms with the Emperor, we have nothing to fear from any enemies. All will be caught in his toils, "

Chanakya reached his house, sent away his palanquin, and asked his pupil Sarangarava, who was sitting on the verandah, not to let any stranger go in without his permission. Then he went in alone, and had his bath, prayers and simple noon meal served by Gautami herself. As he took his pepper *rasam*¹, with *pappods*², he told her about his conversation with Chandragupta that day, and his plans to trap Rakshasa and his allies, and asked her what she thought about them. "Your theories are above me. I know only our ancient stories which teach unfaltering

1. Genuine mulagtawny (pepper water) soup, which originated on the Malabar coast of India, the original home of pepper.

2. Thin fried savoury cakes made of rice and blackgram flour.

devotion unto death to one's husband who is to be treated as a God. So, whatever you do is right for me," said Gautami. "That teaching is enough for women to secure this world and the next. They will have better peace of mind that way, than by following the crooked ways of kings and statesmen. Indeed, without such women we shall be undone. We trust none outside our home. Should we not have some one in our home whom we can trust implicitly? In return we feed, protect and love them in prosperity and adversity," said Chanakya. He finished his meal with curds and rice, and fresh lemon pickles which he relished immensely. He then went and sat in a room near the door, perusing the reports already received from the officers and spies from the countryside, while Gautami took her food.

A bard came along the street with the painting of Yama, the God of Death, mounted on a fierce-looking water-buffalo. He stood in front of Chanakya's house and cried out, "Bow down and worship Yama! What is the use of praying to the other deities when they are all powerless to prevent their worshippers from being taken away by Yama? Besides, Yama is not such a terrible deity as people think. I make my living by singing his praises. So he who gives death to others gives me life. I shall enter this house and sing the glories of Yama." He went up to the door.

Sarangarava saw him and said: "Good man, you should not enter."

"Why? Whose house is this?" asked the bard.

"Of my preceptor, the venerable Chanakya," said Sarangarava.

The bard smiled and said, "Oh, then it belongs to a devotee of the God of Death like me. Allow me to go in and tell him something about the God of Death."

Sarangarava said angrily, "Fool, do you presume to teach my preceptor?"

"Sir, don't get angry. Everybody cannot know everything. Even your preceptor may learn certain things he does not know from me," said the other.

"Block head, you don't know the venerable Chanakya' Is there any subject where he can be taught anything by such as you?" asked Sarangarava.

"Yes. He will know that himself if he is as wise as you say he is. Go and ask him by whom the Moon¹ is not liked," said the bard.

"Of what use is this absurd knowledge? What does it matter who likes the Moon and who doesn't?" asked Sarangarava.

"Your preceptor will know of what use it is. Meanwhile, know this much, that lotuses do not like the Moon. Though full-orbed like the Moon, these lovely things hate the Moon," replied the other.

Chanakya, from his place, listened to this conversation, and knew at once that it must be Nipunaka, one of his spies, come to tell him about the malcontents in

1. A pun on the name "Chandragupta".

the kingdom. So, while Sarangarava was telling the man, "Go away, you fool, and retail all this nonsense elsewhere," he went and said to the man, "Come in, my man, and tell me what you know. I know enough not to despise knowledge from whatever source." Then he took him into his private room.

There he asked him, "Are all the subjects contented?"

"Sir, by your wise Government and proper remedies, the hearts of all the subjects have been won over. Only those persistent enemies who cannot be won over by good Government or conciliation are still disaffected towards the King. There are three such people in this city."

"Who are they, those destined to premature death?" asked Chanakya.

"The first is a Buddhist mendicant called Jeevasiddhi, a terrible sorcerer and a man most devoutly attached to Rakshasa and implicitly trusted by him. It is this man who induced Rakshasa to send the poison-maiden and cause Parvateswara's death. He is our implacable enemy," said Nipunaka.

Chanakya was glad to hear of his own spy's ignorance of Jeevasiddhi's real character, but pretended to be angry, and said, "That man will in time get his deserts from me. Who are the other two?"

"The second is a Kayastha petition-writer called Sakatadasa."

Chanakya said to himself, "A petition-writer is of little account. There is a limit to what a clerk can do. But still, he too must be borne in mind." Then he asked Nipunaka, "Who is the third?"

"The third is Chandanadasa, the principal jeweller of this city, and an intimate friend of Rakshasa who has left his wife and child with him."

"What!" exclaimed Chanakya, "How did you discover that?"

Nipunaka was overjoyed at this appreciation of his discovery by his master, and triumphantly took from his loin-cloth a ring and said, "May it please Your Excellency, here is the signet-ring of Rakshasa."

Chanakya took it eagerly and examined it, and saw that it was really Rakshasa's signet-ring with his name clearly inscribed on it. He said to himself, "The war is won before it is begun." Then he asked Nipunaka, "Tell me in detail how you came by this."

Nipunaka said, "According to your orders, I set out to discover who the discontented persons in this great city were. I put on this disguise which enabled me to enter any house without exciting suspicion. I entered the house of Chandanadasa, and began to sing my songs. A boy of five, of noble mien indicating a very high ancestry, rushed out suddenly to see my picture and hear my songs. A woman cried out from inside the house in a frightened voice, 'Oh he has gone out!' Then a beautiful lady rushed out and caught the boy just as he emerged out of the door. In her hurry, this ring, made for a man and

too big for her delicate finger, slipped off unknown to her, and rolled down to where my left foot was. I quietly put my foot over it and, seeing that the people had all gone inside and shut the door, let fall my painting, as if by accident, and, in picking it up, picked up the ring also and secured it. Then I left, and have brought this ring to you."

Chanakya said, "Well-done? Now you may go. You will get a suitable reward before long."

Nipunaka left with his painting, and wandered along the street as before for some time and went home.

Soon after this Sonottara was ushered in by Sarangarava. She saluted Chanakya and said, "The Emperor wants your advice as to performing the funeral obsequies of Parvateswara and presenting his jewels to Brahmins."

Chanakya was pleased at this diplomatic gesture of Chandragupta and said, "Tell him in my name, 'This is a most proper and excellent idea of which I wholly approve. But the priceless jewels of Parvateswara are to be given only to worthy Brahmins in order to get the best results, I shall myself send you Brahmins of proved worth!'"

Sonottara bowed and left. Chanakya sent word to Viswavasud and his two brothers to go to Chandragupta and receive Parvataka's jewels, and see him later with those jewels.

Then he got from Sarangarava an inkstand and paper, and thought out for a minute what he should write in order to foil the plans of Rakshasa and Malayaketu.

Finally he said to himself: "The greatest strength of Malayaketu is from Chitravarman, King of the Kulutas, Simhanada of Malaya, Pushkaraksha of Kashmir, Sindhusena or Susena of Sind, and the Persian Magha or Meghanada, of Saurashtra and Kutch, with his fine cavalry. These are on most intimate terms with Malayaketu. If I make Malayaketu believe that they are secretly plotting against him, and thus cause him to put them to death at once, nothing more need be done to win this war which will win itself. Ah, that is the thing to do. Let me write it down. Nothing can save these five Kings now." He wrote down a draft, and then said to himself: "That won't do. My writing will be familiar to Sakatadasa and will excite suspicion, and ruin the entire plan. Let me adopt some other device. He called Sarangarava and, said, "Child, my writing, that of a *Srotriya* Brahmin¹ though done carefully, is bound to be illegible. So, go and ask Siddharthaka to get a letter written in these terms by Sakatadasa without showing the draft to him, or telling him that Chanakya sent it to him. This is most important. There need be no name of the person sending the letter, or of the recipient."

"I shall see to it," said Sarangarava, and left.

"Malayaketu, you are finished," said Chanakya to himself.

Siddharthaka came in with the letter in an hour.

Chanakya perused it carefully. "How beautiful is the man's handwriting!" he exclaimed. "Well, it is all

1. A Brahmin learned in the Vedas, His writing will be fast and illegible like that of many highly learned men even today.

right. Seal it with this seal," he said, giving Rakshasa's seal.

Siddharthaka did so. "What are your further commands?" he asked.

"I want to send you on a special mission," said Chanakya. "It requires a fearless man whom I can implicitly trust. That is why I have chosen you."

Siddharthaka's face beamed with joy. "Tell me what it is, and I shall discharge the mission faithfully and well," said he.

"I know that," said Chanakya. "I have directed the city Magistrates to have Sakatadasa taken to the hanging place secretly this evening by the *Chandalas* and impaled to death. Go to the place of execution and wait there in hiding till Sakatadasa is brought there. Then frighten the executioners with your drawn sword and a yell, and carry away Sakatadasa to Rakshasa. Rakshasa will reward you for saving his friend. Accept what he gives you and serve him thereafter pretending to be his friend. Deposit this seal with him and present it to him after giving out some plausible story, like finding it near Chandanadasa's door, for your getting possession of it. Pretend to be an enemy of mine, and when the enemies are near Pataliputra, do as follows." He whispered into his ear some important secret instructions.

Siddharthaka said, "I shall do so," and left.

Chanakya then called Sarangarava and asked him to tell Kalapasika and Dandapasika, the City Magistrates,

that they should carry out the Emperor's orders and drive Jeevasiddhi ignominiously out of the city, after proclaiming to the public his nefarious practices against Chandragupta and Parvateswara, and his sending the poison-maiden to kill Parvateswara at the bidding of that villain Rakshasa. "I shall do so at once," said Sarangarava and left. He returned in a few minutes and said that Kalapasika and Dandapasika had already arranged to carry out the orders regarding Sakatadasa and Jeevasiddhi:

A few minutes thereafter, Chandanadasa was taken to Chanakya by Sarangarava as directed. Chandanadasa was apprehensive as to what fate was awaiting him for his high treason in conspiring with Rakshasa and harbouring his wife. He was, however, prepared to face death rather than surrender Rakshasa's wife. So, he instructed his wife to remove Rakshasa's wife and child secretly to a trusted friend's house.

When Chandanadasa arrived, Chanakya requested him to be seated on a cushion near him.

"The ground is good enough for such as me," said Chandanadasa. "An undeserved honour hurts as much as an intentional insult."

"But this honour is not undeserved. Do sit down on this cushion near me," said Chanakya.

Chandanadasa did as he was bidden.

"How is your business? Is it prospering?", asked Chanakya politely.

"Yes, by your favour," was the reply.

"Do not the faults of Chandragupta make you remember the Kings of old and their virtues?" asked Chanakya.

Chandanadasa stopped his ears and said, "God forbid! All of us are delighted by His Majesty Chandragupta's reign, as people are by the Full-Moon on an autumn evening."

"If so, is it too much for the King to expect something in return from a contented subject?" asked Chanakya.

"You may fix any contribution you deem fit," said the merchant.

"Chandanadasa, this is the reign of Chandragupta and not of the Nava Nandas. The greedy Nandas were only pleased with wealth. Chandragupta values much more the contentment and happiness of his subjects," said Chanakya.

"I am very pleased to hear that," said the merchant.

"But it involves abstention from hostile acts on the part of his subjects," said Chanakya.

"Which wretch is hostile to the King?" asked Chandanadasa.

"Well, firstly, yourself," said Chanakya coolly.

"God forbid!" said Chandanadasa stopping his ears once more. "How can grass fight fire? How can a merchant fight the King?"

"Your hostile act does not consist in fighting. You are aiding Rakshasa by keeping his wife in your house. Giving asylum to the wife of the King's deadly enemy is your act of treason," said Chanakya quietly.

"It is untrue," said Chandanadasa alarmed.

"Don't get alarmed. When revolutions take place and servants of the former Kings flee to other countries, it is quite usual for them to leave their wives in the houses of friends even against their will. That is no offence. It is the continuance of the harbouring and concealment of it that constitutes the offence."

"I am relieved to hear that. Rakshasa left his family in my house like that, when he left. His wife was in my house for some time. She has left it now," said Chandanadasa.

"So you uttered a lie in denying it altogether? Chandragupta punishes all liars severely. Still, if you deliver up the family at once, you may escape," said Chanakya.

"Have I not told you that Rakshasa's family was *formerly* in my house?" asked the merchant.

"Where have they gone now?" asked the Minister.

"I don't know," said Chandanadasa.

Chanakya smiled and said, "How can you be possibly ignorant of it? Do as I ask you, and deliver them up. Danger hovers over your head. The remedy is far away. Don't dream that Rakshasa can uproot Chandragupta as I uprooted the Nandas. He can no more

do it than take the prey from the mouth of the angry lion, than deprive the Moon of moonlight. The Nandas were so wicked and perverse that even able Ministers like Nakranasa could not save them."

Just then there was a hubbub in the street. Chanakya asked Sarangarava to find out what it was. He returned and said. "Sir, the traitor Jeevasiddhi, the Buddhist monk is being driven out of the city in disgrace by command of His Majesty Raja Chandragupta, the beloved of the gods."

"What a fate!" said Chanakya. Then turning to Chandanadasa he said, "You see what happens to traitors. So, take my advice, the advice of a friend, and surrender Rakshasa's family."

"They are not in my house," said Chandanadasa.

At this stage there was another hubbub in the street. Chanakya asked Sarangarava to find out what it was about. Sarangarava came back and said, "Sir, the wretch Sakatadasa, another traitor, is being taken by the hangmen for being impaled."

"Let him suffer the just penalty for his treason: You see, merchant, how severe Chandragupta is with traitors. So, surrender the wife and son of another, and save your own wife and children," said Chanakya.

"Sir," said Chandanadasa, "Even if they were in my house, I would not have surrendered them whatever be the punishment. Then, how can I surrender them when they are not in my house?"

"Is that your considered decision?" asked Chanakya flaring up.

"Yes, that is my firm and unalterable resolution," said Chandanadasa. "I am prepared to suffer any punishment awarded to me."

Chanakya was inwardly pleased at this exhibition of rare fidelity and devotion. But, outwardly, he pretended extreme anger and said, "Then, contumacious traitor, experience the King's anger."

"I am prepared," said Chandanadasa. "You may award me any sentence."

"Sarangarava," said Chanakya, "Go to Kalapasika and Dandapasika and tell them, from me, to put this rascal of a merchant at once in fetters. But, wait. Tell Vijayapala, the Jail Superintendent, to keep this merchant and his wife in jail and to confiscate all his property. I shall tell Chandragupta about this. Let the King himself pass sentence of death on this merchant."

Sarangarava took Chandanadasa away.

Chanakya felt immensely satisfied. He felt certain that Rakshasa would be as sure of unhesitatingly sacrificing himself for Chandanadasa, as Chandanadasa was ready to sacrifice himself for Rakshasa's sake.

A few minutes later, Sarangarava returned. Soon there was another uproar in the street. Sarangarava rushed in and told Chanakya that Siddharthaka had turned traitor and had rescued Sakatadasa from the impaling ground, and had escaped with him to join Rakshasa. Chanakya was inwardly delighted, but asked Sarangarava to ask Bhagurayana, the younger brother of General Simhabala,

to pursue Siddharthaka and Sakatadasa at once and capture them. Sarangarava returned with the alarming news that Bhagurayana too had turned traitor, and had fled to join Rakshasa. In a rage, Chanakya asked him to order Bhadrabhata, Purushadatta, Dingarata, Balagupta, Rajasena, Lohitaksha and Vijayavarman to pursue Bhagurayana, Siddharthaka and Sakatadasa and bring them.

Sarangarava returned with the sensational news that all of them had also fled to join Rakshasa. He said, "The whole town is agog with the news of these desertions, Sir. They say that Rakshasa is marching on us shortly with a mighty army headed by Malayaketu and assisted by Sindhusena, Pushkaraksha, Simhanada, Chitravarman and Meghanada and by the chiefs of the Sakas, Yavanas Gandharas, Hutas and Kiratas. Everybody is very anxious on hearing this news."

"Tell them not to be anxious. Let the fellows who have deserted do their worst. Let all others who want to desert to the enemy do so. My intellect has not lost its cunning yet, and can tackle all of them as it tackled the Nandas and their countless hosts. Here, take this letter to Chandragupta."

And he wrote a letter to Chandragupta about all the details of the elaborate hoax, and sealed it and gave it to Sarangarava to be delivered to the Emperor in person. Sarangarava delivered it safely.

The next day Chanakya met Chandragupta and explained everything in person. Chandragupta wanted

to meet Malayaketu's army at the frontier town of Indraprastha, and to put every fort in the empire in such a condition as to be able to withstand a siege for a year. Chanakya agreed regarding the forts, but persuaded Chandragupta finally that the best plan of campaign would be to wait with their army at Pataliputra, assuring him that most of the enemy troops would melt away by then, owing to his battle of intrigue, and that the rest could be smashed and Malayaketu captured with the aid of their own men parading as his allies.

"Will Malayaketu be foolish enough to advance on Pataliputra without capturing the forts on the way?" asked Chandragupta.

"I have given Bhagurayana plausible reasons for advocating such a course," said Chanakya, and he spoke of them to Chandragupta who was perfectly satisfied.

"So, the net is spread. The birds are sure to be caught," said Chanakya.

"I am a bit sorry, though," said Chandragupta, "there will be no real fight, and there can be no joy in such a victory."

"Rejoice that thousands of innocent lives are not destroyed, and that only a few leading men will be wiped out," said Chanakya. He then parted from Chandragupta.

CHAPTER XVI

A MORNING IN RAKSHASA'S CAMP

FAR away from Pataliputra at Boukephala on the banks of the Hydaspes, the capital of Malayaketu, Rakshasa, the former Prime Minister of the Nandas, was exhibiting the greatest energy in collecting together as many enemies of Chanakya and Chandragupta as he could muster. He was trying his best to win over influential Chiefs and army officers to his side with lavish gifts and promises. He was now very busy organising the league against Chandragupta, and awaiting the result of his various designs to assassinate him. He had reconciled himself to crowning Malayaketu as the Emperor of Magadha, as all the Nandas had been extirpated and as Malayaketu was the only person who could be deemed great enough to lead a league against Chandragupta and Chanakya. By daily contact with the simple and trusting Malayaketu he also began to love him. "He has none of the lust for woman or power like his father, none of the intriguing and cunning disposition of his uncle Vairochaka," he wrote in his letter to Chandanadasa, "He is the abode of trust and can be implicitly relied on."

Rakshasa was spending anxious days of grief, self-reproach and despair. Ever since the extirpation of the Nandas he had left off personal decorations. But, this morning, Malayaketu's Chamberlain Jajali gave him some ornaments and told him, "Prince Malayaketu is very much grieved to see your Excellency pining away with grief and refusing to wear any ornaments. He has

removed these ornaments from his own person and sent them to you to be worn by you."

Rakshasa said, "I shall wear them after I have firmly seated the Prince on the lion-embled throne in the 'Suganga' Palace."

"When we have a Prince like Malayaketu, and a Minister like you, what doubt is there that you will succeed? So, it may be taken as already done, and you may wear these ornaments and thus comply with the first request of the Prince," said Jajali.

"All right," said Rakshasa and put them on. The Chamberlain left.

Soon Rakshasa's spy Viradhagupta, in the disguise of a snake-charmer called Jirnavisha, came along and had a private audience with Rakshasa. He had returned from Pataliputra. He told Rakshasa about the fate of Vairochaka, Daruvarman, Vairavaraka, Abhayadatta, Praviraka, Bibhatsaka and his comrades, the astrologer, the horse-dealers, the temple-priest, the monkey-man and the Brahmin sacrificer in great detail. Rakshasa was very much grieved to hear all this and said, "Every thing that I do not only fails but advances the schemes of Chanakya."

Viradhagupta then told Rakshasa about the driving out of Jeevasiddhi, the imprisonment of Chandanadasa and his wife and the confiscation of his property, and of the order to impale Sakatadasa. Rakshasa's distress knew no bounds. He cried out, "Oh, wretch that I am, that I continue to live after these cruel sufferings of my friends! Oh, friend Sakatadasa, you were but a humble

petition-writer, but your heart was of gold, unlike that of mine, the Prime Minister."

Just then, a servant came and announced that Sakatadasa was waiting outside for an audience.

Rakshasa was astounded. "What is this, Viradhagupta?" he asked.

"Perhaps the man's luck was so great that he managed to escape even from the impaling place," said Viradhagupta.

Sakatadasa was called in. He went in with Siddharthaka, and told Rakshasa that Siddharthaka had scared away the hangmen and saved him. "I was taken and placed before the terrible impaling rod, and my bonds were untied. The hangmen tied round my head the garland of death and then, in the sure confidence that nobody would dare to rescue a person in the time of Chandragupta and Chanakya, left me standing by myself near them and beat the drums to announce my execution. At that very moment, Siddharthaka emerged suddenly from somewhere, and rushed upon the astonished hangmen with a drawn sword and a terrific yell. They fled, and I was rescued."

Rakshasa embraced Sakatadasa, made him his Private Secretary and seated him near him. He took off the ornaments given to him that morning by Jajali, and gave them to Siddharthaka as a reward for his heroic act. Siddharthaka fell at Rakshasa's feet in gratitude, and asked him to keep them in a sealed deposit till he asked for them. Rakshasa readily agreed, and asked Sakatadasa

to take and keep the deposit safe. Siddharthaka put the jewels into a packet, sealed the packet with Rakshasa's signet-ring with him, and handed over the sealed packet to Sakatadasa. Sakatadasa examined the seal and said to Rakshasa aside: "This seal of his has your name inscribed on it."

Rakshasa too scrutinised it and said to himself, "Surely, this is the signet-ring which my wife took from me at the time of separation as a keepsake and for ensuring the authenticity of communications from her. How did this man get it?" He asked Siddharthaka, "Friend, where did you get this ring?"

"I found it lying in a street in Pataliputra near the door of one Chandanadasa, a very wealthy merchant," said Siddharthaka.

"That is right," said Rakshasa.

"What is right?" asked Siddharthaka.

"That it should have been found near the house of a rich man," said Rakshasa, unwilling to reveal that his wife had been in that house.

Sakatadasa said to Siddharthaka: "Friend, this ring bears Rakshasa's name on it. Give it to him. He will give you more than its value."

"I shall deem it a favour if the Minister will deign to accept it," said Siddharthaka handing it over to Rakshasa. "I cannot take anything for it as the jewels presented to me by the Minister are worth a thousand times more. Only, I have a request to make."

"Ask freely," said Rakshasa, pleased with the man.

"Your honour knows the demon, Chanakya. He will tear me limb by limb for my rescue of Sakatadasa. I won't be able to escape from his clutches unless I am under your personal protection. I pray that I may be allowed to spend the rest of my days here serving you."

"You are welcome," said Rakshasa. "Indeed, I want such men. But, don't despair. We shall soon march on Pataliputra and get rid of Chandragupta and Chanakya. Both of you must be tired. Go and take some rest."

Siddharthaka and Sakatadasa then went away to take some rest.

Rakshasa continued his conversation with Viradhagupta. Viradhagupta told him that all the subjects of Magadha were talking of a growing estrangement between Chanakya and Chandragupta, due to Chanakya's arrogance and Chandragupta's desire to be free to do as he liked.

"Tell me all about it," said Rakshasa overjoyed.

"Well," said Viradhagupta, "Chandragupta blames Chanakya for having allowed Malayaketu to escape and thus causing all these dangers."

"In a way he is right," said Rakshasa. "But, how could he have caught and killed Malayaketu also when Vaisrochaka was still alive with a powerful army?"

"Instead of explaining the position, as you would have done, Chanakya simply asked Chandragupta to remember that he owed the throne to him. Chandragupta

naturally got wild. Afterwards Chanakya has been daily irritating him with some act of disobedience or other. Chandragupta's proud nature resents this. Both are masterly men, greedy of power. There is no room in the kingdom for both. So, it is only a question of time when Chandragupta dismisses his all-powerful Minister and takes the reins of power in his own hands."

"Great news!" said Rakshasa. "Go at once to Pataliputra in this same disguise and tell the Court-Bard Sthanakalasa, who is in our pay from last month, unknown to Chanakya, to praise and incite Chandragupta with appropriate stanzas whenever he has a quarrel with Chanakya. Let him send word to me from time to time through Karabhaka."

Viradhagupta received a liberal reward, and left for Pataliputra on this mission.

Rakshasa's man then told him that Sakatadasa had sent three precious jewels for his scrutiny and orders as to whether they should be bought from some merchants who were offering them for sale. They were really Parvateswara's jewels sent by Viswavasudhana and his brothers, through these merchant-spies of Chanakya, for sale to Rakshasa. Rakshasa did not know whose they were. On examination he found them to be expensive jewels of exquisite workmanship. He resolved to buy them. So, he asked the man to go and ask Sakatadasa to buy them if they could be got for a reasonable price. Sakatadasa, without the least suspicion, bought them for quite a reasonable price. After asking the man to tell Sakatadasa to

buy them, Rakshasa went to have his bath and meal, feeling himself jubilant at the thought of the fast approaching breach between Chanakya and Chandragupta.

CHAPTER XVII

THE QUARREL

IT was the *Kaumudi* festival¹ day at Pataliputra when every year the great city would be one whirlpool of gaiety, with singing and dancing parties, buffoon-shows and dramatic and juggling entertainments, with all men, women and children streaming along the streets with peals of hearty laughter and merry-making. It was the time when citizens forgot their worries and abandoned themselves whole-heartedly to amusement. This year the Emperor Chandragupta had ordered that the festival should be celebrated with the greatest pomp imaginable, being the first one after his accession to the throne. He had the 'Suganga' Palace magnificently decorated with buntings and festoons, yak-tails and peacock-feathers. Then, when the full-moon had risen and the city was covered with magic light he wanted to get on to the terrace of the Palace, to watch the fun going on in the town.

The Lord Chamberlian, Vaihinari, was embarrassed. How was he to tell the King that Chanakya had prohibited the celebration of the festival in defiance of the King's orders? It was better, he decided, to broach the news gently after the King had seen the thing for himself. So, he led the way to the terrace.

1. Autumn full-moon festival.

The King went to the beautiful and lofty terrace and gazed out into the city. There was not a sign of merriment or gaiety. He was very much put out.

"Vaihinari," he said in a rage. "Has not the *Kaumudi* festival been ordered to be celebrated with special pomp this year? Have not the citizens been told about our desire that this year's festival should be particularly grand?"

"Yes, Sire," said the trembling Vaihinari, "but His Excellency Chanakya has prohibited the citizens from celebrating it."

"What!," roared Chandragupta. "How dare he do that? Bring him at once to me."

The Chamberlain approached Chanakya's humble abode, cursing his mission. He saw the cowdung cakes put up to dry, the sacred grass, and the tottering walls, and said to himself: "No wonder this man can perform miracles, and defy imperious monarchs like Sukalpa and Chandragupta. He has no axe of his own to grind, not even a golden axe. He can afford to do the proper thing and to speak the truth always without fear or favour because he wants nothing for himself. It is the belly which makes our tongue lie in the presence of Kings and pretend that the prohibition of this silly festival, when the city is threatened with a great invasion, is wrong. Control the belly, and the tongue can speak the truth. But, alas that is not for a man like me. It is only given to the great ones of the earth like Chanakya to do so." He saw Chanakya sitting in a fury.

Saluting him humbly, he said to him that the King wanted to see him urgently. "The King wants to see me urgently at this time of night! I hope the news of my prohibition of the festival has not reached him?" asked Chanakya.

"It has, Sir," said Vaihinari.

"Who told him?" asked Chanakya angrily.

"Sir," replied Vaihinari, "His Majesty himself went up the terrace just now and saw that the festival was not being celebrated."

"And you and his other servants secretly exasperated him, eh? I know you, Palace servants. Where is His Majesty?"

"He is still on the terrace of 'Suganga' Palace."

"All right, let us go there."

Then Chanakya and Vaihinari went to 'Suganga' Palace.

Chanakya approached Chandragupta and asked, "Why have you sent for me at this time of night so urgently?"

"I want to know what object you had in prohibiting the *Kaumudi* festival directed to be celebrated by me."

"I have an object. I take the full responsibility for the act," said Chanakya.

"I have a right to be told about the reason," said Chandragupta.

"No," said Chanakya. "There are three kinds of kingdoms, those solely dependent on the King, those

dependent on him and on his ministers, and those solely dependent on his ministers. Our kingdom is of the last variety. So, I, the Prime Minister, am all in all and am not bound to tell you the reason for anything."

Chandragupta turned his face away in anger.

The bard Sthanakalasa, who was in attendance, then sang:—

The glorious moon shines bright,
And ev'rywhere there's light,
Great Chandra rules in might,
And rebels flee from sight.

Lord of Magadha Great,
Man of Destiny and Fate,
Lion of Power and State,
Foe of traitors at the gate!

Kings are tigers among men,
Kings are lions in their den,
Kings kill quickly all their foes,
Kings end quickly all their woes.

Chanakya listened wonderingly, and at once detected the hand of Rakshasa in it and smiled to himself, and made a secret sign. Chandragupta ordered Vaihinari to give a thousand gold coins to the bard.

Chanakya stopped Vaihinari and asked Chandragupta, "Why such an extravagant reward for such a silly thing?"

"I won't be frustrated at every turn. A kingship hedged in like this is but one in bondage," said Chandragupta.

"Well, if you want to be free, run your kingdom yourself. I can't be held responsible for the government of this country, unless every act of yours has my approval," said Chanakya.

"I am going to run the kingdom myself hereafter," said Chandragupta.

"All right. I too shall then attend to my own neglected duties," said Chanakya.

"Do; tell me now why you prohibited the *Kaumudi* festival," said the King

"Tell me why you are so particular in having it celebrated," said Chanakya.

"The first and primary reason is that I want my orders to be obeyed," said Chandragupta.

"My first object in prohibiting it is to disobey your order in this trifling matter, so that you may not get too autocratic by having all your orders obeyed unquestioningly. A King should now and then have his orders disobeyed, in order to have some check on his autocratic tendency. Secondly, this is not a time for festivity. The enemy are about to march against the city with a mighty army. Several of our important Officers who helped us against the Nandas, namely Bhagurayana, the younger brother of General Simhabala, Bhadrabhata, the head of the elephantry, Purushadatta, the head of the cavalry, Dingarata, the nephew of Chandrabhanu the transport Chief, Balagupta, Your Majesty's kinsman, Rajasena, Your majesty's attendant from boyhood, Lohitaksha, the son of the King of

Malwa, and Vijayavarman, the head of the Madraka regiment, have deserted to the enemy with valuable information about our troops and fortifications." replied Chanakya.

"Why did they desert us?" asked the King.

"Bhadrabhata and Purushadatta were addicted to wine and women, and neglected the elephants and cavalry. So I suspended them, and placed them on a subsistence allowance. They therefore deserted to Malayaketu, and became the leaders of his elephantry and cavalry. Dingarata and Balagupta wanted higher salaries. Being refused, they took service under Malayaketu, who has promised to pay them far more. Rajasena was given by you extravagant gifts of gold, jewels, horses and elephants. Fearing that I would cancel the gifts, he too went over to Malayaketu. Bhagurayana has always been a traitor to us, though I knew about it only recently. He informed Malayaketu secretly that I had got Parvataka murdered, and advised him to flee with his life. Seeing Sakatadasa and Chandanadasa dealt with by me recently for treason, he took fright and ran away to Malayaketu who, out of gratitude to him for saving his life, has made him confidential Minister and Private Secretary. Lohitaksha and Vijayavarman were feeling aggrieved that others, who rendered less service than they, received more gifts from you, and so they too deserted," replied Chanakya.

"If you knew about the cause of their discontent, why didn't you remedy them earlier?" asked Chandragupta.

"It was not possible to remedy them," said Chanakya. "There are only two ways of dealing with

discontented subjects, rewards or punishments. It was impossible to think of reinstating such careless fellows like Bhadrabhata and Purushadatta. The fears of Rajasena and Bhagurayana, about losing what they had, did not admit of a remedy. Nor could the envious self-pitying of Vijayavarman and Lohitaksha be cured. Not all our treasury would have satisfied Dingarata and Balagupta. To punish these prominent supporters of ours against the Nandas, would have been both ungrateful and dangerous when Rakshasa and his hosts had yet to be met and defeated, and we could not afford to create any more foes. On hearing that these powerful Generals and Officers had deserted to Rakshasa, I resolved that this was a critical time when we had much rather concentrate on putting the fort in order and preparing our people for war than celebrating a frivolous festival."

"May I ask you some more questions?," asked Chandragupta.

"Do," said Chanakya.

"Why did you allow Malayaketu to escape? If you had not done so, this danger would never have threatened us."

"What else could we do? We had only two courses open to us, to give Malayaketu half the kingdom promised to his father Parvataka, or to punish him. To punish him would have meant a public confession that we were ungrateful wretches, who had partaken in the murder of Parvataka. To give him half the kingdom would have made the killing of Parvataka a senseless crime. So I allowed Malayaketu to escape."

"A fine explanation! Why did you not take proper steps against Rakshasa when he was here? Why was he allowed to leave peacefully?"

"He was a man endowed with intelligence, integrity and valour in a high degree. He was universally respected and loved in the city. His only fault was an unfaltering devotion to his master. To have allowed him to go on living here would have meant the risk of having a serious revolt. To fight him would have meant very heavy loss of men, and also the death of this fine man whom I hoped to win over one day to your service. I wanted to trap him into a false step by allowing him to quit the city in peace. He fell into the trap and quitted the town, and thereby lost his only chance of a successful fight with us. Even people who would have fought for him, had he remained here, gave up supporting him as they considered him a coward."

"Oh, what a great man is Rakshasa!" exclaimed Chandragupta.

"Why do you say so?" asked Chanakya in wrath.

"Because he lived here, in this city, like a king in the midst of our troops, and even obstructed our proclamation of victory. None dared to arrest him. He left just when he pleased," said the King.

"Oh, is that all? I thought he had made Malayaketu Emperor of *Jambudvīpa*¹, as I have made you Emperor," said Chanakya sarcastically.

"You didn't make me Emperor of *Jambudvīpa*!" said Chandragupta scornfully.

1. India.

"Then who did?" asked Chanakya, angrily.

"Fate," replied Chandragupta.

"Only fools believe in fate," said Chanakya.

"Fools boast," said Chandragupta.

Chanakya's eyes flashed fire as he stamped his feet on the ground and exclaimed: "Oh, I feel inclined to take a vow to uproot your line as I did the line of the Nandas. But, I have no right to complain, I ought to have known better. Here is my Sword of State you gave me when I had you crowned. Give it to Rakshasa, or any other person you like, and make him your Prime Minister." He threw down his sword, exclaiming, "Rakshasa, thou hast conquered." He then left the place.

Chandragupta said to Vaibhinari: "Proclaim to all my subjects that henceforward Chandragupta himself will rule the Empire without the aid of Chanakya."

The Chamberlain stood for a moment dazed at the turn events had taken.

"What are you thinking about?" asked Chandragupta.

"Oh, nothing. I am glad that Your Majesty has at last become a King in reality," replied Vaibhinari.

"Sonottara, I have got a headache as a result of this quarrel. Let me go and have some rest now," said Chandragupta. Then Sonottara led him to his bed-chamber.

CHAPTER XVIII

CHANAKYA'S MASTER-STROKE

The preparations in Malayaketu's camp were almost complete for the invasion of Magadha. The troops were only waiting for marching orders, and were getting more and more impatient every day. Rakshasa was waiting for news from Pataliputra about the expected breach between Chandragupta and Chanakya. He was busy, day and night planning out the details of the invasion. The particular morning, he was suffering from a terrific headache.

Malayaketu was as impatient as the most impatient trooper in his army. He thought that his hosts could easily smash up a dozen Chandraguptas and Chanakyas put together, and so could not see any point in waiting for the news of the breach between the Emperor and his Prime Minister before advancing on Pataliputra. In his indignation at his father's murder and the consequent widowhood of his mother and step-mothers, he had vowed to kill Chandragupta and Chanakya, and make their wives widows before performing his father's funeral ceremonies. Nearly ten months had passed since that proud boast. Nothing had happened. His father had not yet got even a libation of water. His mother's reproachful looks were hard to bear or to answer.

Malayaketu's nature was very weak and simple. So the cunning Bhagurayana had no difficulty at all in gently dropping hints against Rakshasa's loyalty to the cause and rousing the Prince's suspicions. He told him one day

casually, "After all is said and done, a hereditary minister will be attached to his hereditary masters. So, one can't blame Rakshasa if he feels a desire to make up with Chandragupta, who is a scion of the Nandas, and to regain his former place of Prime Minister of the Magadhan Empire. But, personally, I believe that this is a baseless imputation against Rakshasa."

"But, how did it come to be made at all, if it is entirely baseless? Besides, now that you say this, I recollect the remarks made by Bhadrabhata, Purushadatta, Dingarata, Rajasena, Lokitaksha, Balagupta and Vijayarman when they entered my service. They emphasised that, having been the victims of Chanakya's injustice, they were not entering my service as Rakshasa's followers, but directly as my admirers. What did they mean by that?" asked Malayaketu.

"They evidently adverted to the possibility of a reconciliation between Chandragupta and Rakshasa, and did not therefore want to be considered as Rakshasa's followers."

"You are right," said Malayaketu. "But I see no reason yet to suspect Rakshasa of any desire to desert me and join Chandragupta,"

"Not the slightest," said Bhagurayana.

"I hear that the poor man is suffering from a thundering headache since this morning. Let us go and visit him, and cheer him up," said Malayaketu.

Malayaketu and Bhagurayana started for Rakshasa's tent. Sindhusena, Meghanada, Pushkaraksha, Simhanada

and Chitravarman joined them, and said that they too were very anxious to see and cheer up Rakshasa. When they reached Rakshasa's tent, Malayaketu dismissed everybody except Bhagurayana, stating that he wanted to see Rakshasa unexpectedly and alone.

Just a few minutes before, Karabhaka had arrived and was closeted with Rakshasa retailing to him the news of the quarrel and the dismissal of Chanakya. Malayaketu suggested to Bhagurayana that they should secretly overhear the conversation in order to know the real state of affairs. So they listened.

Rakshasa asked Karabhaka, "Where is Chanakya after his dismissal?"

"At Pataliputra," was the reply.

"Are you sure that he will not be recalled and reinstated?"

"Absolutely certain."

"Is it only this prohibition of the *Kaumudi* festival that is the cause of the dismissal?"

"Oh, no. That was but the last provocation. Chandrgupta was furious at Chanakya's allowing His Highness Malayaketu to escape. He was praising you to the skies, and was stating that he considered you far abler. Chanakya then threw down his sword, and asked Chandragupta to appoint you, or any other person, as Prime Minister," said Karabhaka.

"Bhagurayana," said Malayaketu, "So, perhaps, Chanakya was not the person who sent the poison-maid to

kill my father, as we heard then, and Chandragupta seems to be very anxious to appoint Rakshasa as his Prime Minister."

"Your Highness had better consider all these things at leisure after the capture of Pataliputra," said Bhagurayana. "This is not the time to break with Rakshasa, unless he does something now against us. Politicians ought to be judged only by their present actions."

Karabhaka took his departure by the back door. Then, Malayaketu knocked at Rakshasa's door and announced himself informally.

He asked him, "When are we to march on Pataliputra?"

"At once," said Rakshasa. "There is nothing more to wait for. Chanakya has been dismissed, and our principal obstacle is removed."

"I don't see why Chanakya's dismissal or retention should loom so large with us. Still, I am glad that we are marching at last," said Malayaketu.

Soon, the immense hosts of Malayaketu were on the move. The elephants, cavalry, chariots and infantry made a very brave show. They started on the day named by Jeevasiddhi as auspicious, namely, the Full Moon day in the month of *Margasirsha*, after the Moon had risen. Rakshasa had doubted the propriety of starting on a Full-Moon day, a day generally forbidden for marches. But, his implicit faith in Jeevasiddhi had finally triumphed over those scruples.

Rakshasa was also feeling some vague misgivings about the loyalty of the former adherents of Chandragupta and Chanakya, who had flocked to his side. He allayed the misgivings by attributing them to his own suspicious nature. He had arranged the divisions of the army thus: The Khasias and Magadhas were in the vanguard under him. The Gandharas and Yavanas were in charge of the centre. The Sakas, Kiratas, Hutas and Kambhojas were behind them. Pushkaraksha, Meghanada, Simhanada, Sindhusena and Chitravarman with their regiments were round Malayaketu.

The army began its march. The place where the *Jumna* was to be crossed was not defended, but the fort at Indraprastha was defended. There was a discussion as to whether they should take the city, or march on.

"Let us march on," said Bhagurayana. "The enemy have not had the courage to meet us. Evidently, Chandragupta dare not leave Pataliputra, leaving Chanakya there. Let us not waste our time over these forts now, but strike at Pataliputra. If the trunk falls, the branches will fall off by themselves. Besides, time is of great importance to us. Chandragupta must be caught at this time, when he has no Prime Minister, and when his quarrel with Chanakya is recent. If we delay, Chandragupta and Chanakya may make up their quarrel at this common danger, and then our task will become more difficult."

Rakshasa too saw the wisdom of this plan. So the army marched on to Pataliputra, leaving Indraprastha, Mathura, Hastinapura, Kanyakubja, Radhapura, Prayag

and Benares un-captured. When they were near Pataliputra, Bhagurayana said to Malayaketu, "Now that Pataliputra is near, and Chandragupta may try to do mischief through his spies, we had better prohibit all egress and ingress from and into our camp except by passports."

"Do," said Malayaketu, "and issue the passes yourself. I can't trust any other, no, not even Rakshasa. I wish my suspicions against him are unfounded. But, they keep on recurring."

A few minutes later Jeevasiddhi went to Bhagurayana to get a passport for leaving the camp. Malayaketu was sitting in the next room.

Bhagurayana asked Jeevasiddhi, "I suppose you are going into Pataliputra on some errand of Rakshasa."

"Oh, no. I have finished with Rakshasa. For a long time I have been tormented by my conscience for still associating with such a man as Rakshasa."

"Why, what did he do?"

"That I cannot tell you."

"Then I won't give you the passport."

"Oh, well, keep what I tell you a secret. He got the great Parvateswara murdered by means of the mysterious poison-maid."

"What!" said Bhagurayana, "All of us heard that it was the wretch Chanakya who did it in order to avoid giving half the kingdom as promised."

"That was false. Chanakya did not know even the name of the woman. Indeed, he drove me out of Pataliputra in disgrace for aiding Rakshasa. Rakshasa it was who engaged the wretch in order to do away with Parvateswara, who was so much more formidable than Chanakya or Chandragupta," said Jeevasiddhi.

"Here is your pass. Tell this to the Prince," said Bhagurayana.

Malayaketu went to the spot and said, "I have heard it all. Oh, the hypocritical wretch! Oh, the murderous villain!"

Jeevasiddhi took his passport and went away.

Malayaketu's first inclination was to call and question Rakshasa, and sentence him to death if Jeevasiddhi's allegation was true. But Bhagurayana told him, "In politics, we are not to act as our heart dictates, but are to bide the proper time even for the most appropriate act. Rakshasa was confident of easily tackling Chandragupta and Chanakya, but the great Parvateswara was far too great to be tackled fairly. So, he took to this mean and underhand method of killing him, and laid the blame on the wretch Chanakya and got off with it. This is however not the time to punish Rakshasa for it. We are in sight of Pataliputra where he has much influence. Let us capture the city, and then deal with him."

Just at that moment Siddharthaka, who had taken his sealed deposit from Sakatadasa and had tried to leave the camp without a pass, was arrested by Captain

Dirgharaksba and was sent up to Bhagurayana. On his person being searched, a letter and a parcel with Rakshasa's private seal were recovered. Malayaketu had the letter opened without breaking the seal. It read, "With best compliments to your Exalted Self. The veracious one has kept his word and dismissed our adversary. Now it remains to give our friends the things stipulated by them for rendering their invaluable help. They have undertaken, in return, to seize and destroy their present master and come over to your Exalted Self. Of these allies, some desire the treasure and elephants of the enemy, and some his territory have received, with immense gratitude, the three priceless ornaments sent by your Exalted Self. I am also sending something in return along with this letter and pray that it should be accepted. The trustworthy person who brings this letter will deliver a most important oral message, which should be heard and carried out by the Exalted One."

"Ah," said Malayaketu, "and what is in that parcel? Open and see, but keep the seal intact."

"The parcel was opened, and was found to contain the three ornaments presented by himself to Rakshasa through Jajali.

"Now it is clear that this traitorous letter is written by Rakshasa to Chandragupta. Beat this fellow till he confesses, and find out from him what the oral message is," said Malayaketu.

Siddharthaka was taken out by a soldier, Bhasuraka, and tortured. He then fell at Malayaketu's feet, and besought his pardon and protection if he confessed the

whole truth. Malayaketu promised a full pardon. Then Siddharthaka said, "It was my master Rakshasa who had the letter written to Chandragupta through Sakatadasa, and gave me the sealed parcel for delivery along with the letter. The oral message which I had to memorise, ran thus: 'Here are my dear friends, five Princes who are very friendly to you, namely, Chitravarman, King of the Kuluta country, Simhanada of Malaya, Pushkaraksha of Kashmir, Sindhusena of Sind, and Meghanada, the Parsika ruler of Kutch and Saurashtra. Out of these, the first three covet the dominion of Malayaketu, and the last two his elephants and treasury. I pray that the Exalted One should grant them these boons, just as I have been granted the boon of the dismissal of Chanakya.'"

"Ah!" cried Malayaketu, "Now it is clear why these five Princes were so anxious to come with us to see Rakshasa and inquire about his headache, and why they have been posted near my person. Call the traitor Rakshasa."

Vijaya, the female aide-de-camp, went to Rakshasa and told him that Malayaketu wanted to see him urgently. Rakshasa, in order to please Malayaketu by having some adornment on his person, took from Sakatadasa one of the costly jewels bought from the concealed agents of Viswvasu, wore it and went to see Malayaketu.

Malayaketu told him of the contents of the letter seized from Siddharthaka and the oral message, and asked him to explain his treason if he could.

"The letter is a forgery," said Rakshasa. "I never wrote it to Chandragupta. Siddharthaka, what is this?" he asked.

"Minister, unable to bear the beating, I said so," said Siddharthaka.

"What will not man say under torture?" asked Rakshasa.

"Why should Sakatadasa write such a letter?" asked Malayaketu.

"Sakatadasa is the soul of honesty so far as I am concerned. If he wrote it, it is as good as written by me," said Rakshasa.

"Call Sakatadasa," said Malayaketu, "and ask him to bring the seal also."

"It is no use calling Sakatadasa, the bosom friend of Rakshasa," said Bhagurayana. "Let some other admitted writing of Sakatadasa's be brought."

This was in order to prevent Sakatadasa's revealing the circumstances under which he wrote the letter. Malayaketu agreed. The admitted writing of Sakatadasa was brought, and compared. It tallied exactly with the writing in the disputed letter. Malayaketu then showed both of them to Rakshasa, who had to admit their identity. Suddenly something gave way in Rakshasa. He saw Chanakya's hand in it all, but could not explain it. Sakatadasa too had evidently succumbed to Chanakya's temptation, he concluded. "Perhaps he wanted to join his wife and child at Pataliputra and live peacefully there."

and so has bought his peace with Chanakya at this price," he thought, "It is better to bow to Fate and acknowledge defeat, and face death. Death will be welcome after the extirpation of the Nandas and the complete triumph of Chanakya." So he stood silent, hanging his head down.

"Why did you send the jewels I gave you to Chandragupta?" asked Malayaketu.

"I gave them as a present to Siddharthaka for saving Sakatadasa. I did not send them to Chandragupta," said Rakshasa.

"Is it believable that such costly presents made by a Prince from his own person will be given away to a fellow who saves a petition-writer from being impaled?" asked Bhagurayana.

"And is this jewel you are wearing now, one of the three sent to you by Chandragupta?" asked Malayaketu. Then he looked at it closely and exclaimed, "My god! It is one of the jewels of my father, the great Parvateswara. Vijaya, come and see this."

Vijaya also examined it and said, "It is certainly one of the jewels worn by our King Parvateswara of blessed memory on the evil night when the poison-maid went in to him."

Rakshasa stood petrified with wonder and dismay. He realised then that the bogus merchants who sold the three jewels to him must have been Chanakya's agents. He felt himself utterly foiled, and resigned himself to his fate.

"Tell me," said Malayaketu, "If Chandragupta did not send this jewel to you, how did you get it?"

"Sakatadasa bought three jewels from some merchants at my instance. We never realised that they were Parvateswara's," said Rakshasa.

"Three jewels! Merchants! Sakatadasa buying! Oh, Rakshasa, Rakshasa, you are already a demon in your acts. Don't utter lies also to add to your infamy. Chandragupta, the Emperor of *Jambudvīpa*, the master of a thousand millions, to offer these jewels for sale!" Rakshasa too saw the absurdity of such a story, and so kept quiet.

Malayaketu at once directed Sekharasena to seize Pushkaraksha, Simhanada and Chitravarman and bury them alive for coveting his territories, and to seize Meghanada and Sindhusena and have them trampled to death by elephants for coveting his elephants and treasure. Sekharasena seized the five unsuspecting Kings suddenly, and carried out the cruel orders to the very letter, and reported the fact to Malayaketu.

Then Malayaketu sent Rakshasa away contemptuously from his camp, saying: "Go and join your Chandragupta, and get the ministership for which you sold your honour and tried to sell me. I can tackle a dozen Chandraguptas and Rakshasas and Chanakyas combined."

Rakshasa entered Pataliputra dispirited, humiliated and broken, and, as he supposed, unnoticed, but really followed by Chanakya's spy, Udumbara, who got the fact reported to Chanakya. Chanakya at once staged

Chandanadasa's execution, and deputed Visalaksha to entrap Rakshasa.

The allied Yavanas, Khasias and others deserted Malayaketu on learning about the sudden executions of the five Kings and the dismissal of Rakshasa who had been the soul of the army till then. Before Malayaketu had recovered from this second sensation, Bhadrabhata, Purushadatta, Dingarata, Rejaisena, Balagupta, Bhagurayana, Lohitaksha and Vijayavarman seized him, and bound him hand and foot for being produced before Chandragupta. Then Chandragupta and Chanakya advanced at the head of the Mauryan army, and routed the leaderless army of Malayaketu.

Meanwhile Rakshasa learnt from Visalaksha, who was disguised as a sight-seer, that Chandanadasa had been taken to the hanging place for being impaled for refusing to surrender Rakshasa's wife. Resolved to save him he rushed to the spot. At first he intended to go armed with a sword, and to rescue Chandanadasa by force. But he heard the shouts of victory following Malayaketu's capture and the rout of his army. He was also told by Visalaksha that after Sakatadasa's forcible rescue, the hangmen had been tortured to death for their negligence and cowardice, and that thereafter all hangmen had, on the mere approach of any armed person, made it a rule to kill the condemned man forthwith and thus escape death by torture for themselves. So, Rakshasa went unarmed to the place of execution.

He saw Chandanadasa bid a tearful farewell to his wife and son, and the hangmen Bilwapatra and

Vajraloman exultingly lay hands on him for impaling him on the pole which had been newly burnished up and sharpened, and glistened in the twilight.

Rakshasa at once declared his identity, and offered himself as a victim instead of his unfortunate friend. The hangmen, who were really Siddharthaka and Samiddharthaka in disguise, sent word to Chanakya, who rushed to the spot along with Chandragupta attended by his Generals. Rakshasa was told that the only condition on which Chandanadasa could live was by his accepting the Prime Ministership of Chandragupta and discharging the duties of that office loyally and faithfully thereafter. Seeing himself thoroughly beaten, anxious to save Chandanadasa, and inwardly feeling the magnanimity and greatness of Chanakya and Chandragupta, he agreed to the condition and accepted the Sword of Office, and swore allegiance to Chandragupta without any mental reservation.

Chandragupta asked him to deal with Malayaketu as he chose.

"Grant him his life," said Rakshasa.

"He is given his kingdom also to be ruled under us," said Chandragupta. "So too, the descendants of the five executed Kings will be given their kingdoms to be ruled under us. Chandanadasa is made the Chief Seth among the SETHS of the Empire, and the Lord Mayor of Pataliputra. Sakatadasa too is set free, and is appointed Superintendent of Writs.

"Oh, this is divine generosity," said Rakshasa.

"But it will not be wasted generosity," said Malayaketu, who had by now been told the whole story of his being duped by Chanakya and spies. "Never more will I dream of opposing Chandragupta. His enemies are mine hereafter."

"What will the venerable Chanakya do now? I hope he will bless us still with his unselfish and unparalleled advice," said Rakshasa.

"That he will, as long as he lives, and as long as *Vrishala* and his descendants live," said Chandragupta.

Chanakya exclaimed, "Long live the Raja Chandragupta, the beloved of the gods!"

The entire assemblage, including Malayaketu, Rakshasa and the prisoners of war, took up the cry which shook the earth.

"All the prisoners of war are set free," said Chandragupta, "as they are now my subjects."

"The next Full-Moon day the *Kaumudi* festival will be celebrated with three-fold pomp," said Chanakya amidst cheers.

CHAPTER XIX

CONQUESTS EVERYWHERE

"WITH Rakshasa firmly won over to our side, and all the old supporters of the Nandas either dead or converted, now is the time to launch the great scheme of conquest of all India, which has been my dream ever since you were crowned as Emperor," said Chanakya to Chandragupta. "The entire army has been reorganised and strengthened and manned by young, efficient and

loyal Officers. Vaisyas and Sudras too have been freely enrolled as Officers and men, thus vastly increasing our strength. The army now comprises 6,00,000 infantry, 30,000 cavalry, 6,000 chariots and 9,000 elephants, and is the most efficient war machine in India. The training given to it is the best ever given to an army. It has been taught to fight in staff formation, in snake formation, in hollow circles and in separate detachments of guerillas. Their discipline too is perfect, being natural, and not artificial. There are large bodies of hereditary troops among them, and few *Atavikas*¹ eager for plunder and apt to become easily discontented and panic-stricken and to behave like lurking snakes. We can easily over-run the whole of *Jambudvīpa*² with this splendid army. Of course, we shall be righteous conquerors with a mission and a vision, our only object being to establish *Dharma* all over the land from the Himalayas to the sea, and not loot or massacre. It will be a case of *Dharma Vijaya*³ and not of *Asura Vijaya*⁴ or *Lobha Vijaya*.⁵ We shall never be moved by greed or lust for killing. You shall conquer the whole country like another Bharata,⁶ and not like another Alexander."

-
1. Jungle tribes : Hill tribes.
 2. India.
 3. Righteous conquest for *Dharma*.
 4. Cruel conquest after wholesale massacre.
 5. Conquest for exploitation of the country for the benefit of the conquerors.
 6. He conquered the whole of India, which was called *Bharata-varsha*, or Bharat, after him, and he established the *Bharata Dharma* over the whole land from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin.

"I like this task better than the tortuous diplomacy and intrigue we have used so far," replied Chandragupta.

The matter was fully discussed at a plenary meeting of all the Ministers and Generals. It was unanimously resolved that a huge army should immediately set out under Chahdragupta and Chanakya for effecting the conquest and subjuagation of all India with the exception of the Chola, Pandya, Keralaputra, Satyaputra and Simhala kingdoms in the far south which were considered to be friendly frontier powers which should not be attacked. Chanakya had a special affection for these ancient and well-governed southern kingdoms. He said, "They are all well-governed, and I shall make their Kings do whatever the Emperor wants, without the need for a war and consequent devastation of those territories. After all, they were never subject to Magadha. Nor are they likely to dispute our hegemony in India." Kalinga too was excepted, as its King had rendered yeoman service to Chandragupta at the time of his exile and during the fight with the Nandas, and had been promised virtual independence in his home-territories and exemption from tribute till 261 B.C.

The mighty army first advanced in triumph westwards up to the limits of the Empire. They were welcomed with joy everywhere. At Prayag, Benares, Radhapura and Kausambi, the crowds were enormous and cheered the King and Chanakya vociferously. At Kausambi the marriage of Chandragupta with Nirmala, a descendant of Udayana and the most beautiful and aristocratic Kshatriya princess of India, was celebrated with great pomp. Chanakya was

keen on this marriage as it would consolidate Chandragupta's hold on *Madhyadesa* ¹ and also enhance his standing among the Kshatriyas by this alliance with the bluest-blooded kshatriyas of the day. Nirmala's father, the Raja of Vatsa, had agreed that it was in the fitness of things that a princess descended from Udayana of Vatsa and Padmavati of Magadha should marry a descendant of Bimbisara, Ajatasatru and Darsaka.

After the marriage, Chandragupta and Nirmala went to Ayodhya. After bathing in the *Sarayu*, the newly wedded pair marched in procession through the streets, accompanied by Chanakya, and followed by an enormous crowd, singing :—

“ The Lord of Lords reigned here,
With Sita sweet and pure,
To ensure Truth on Earth,
And our release from birth !
Jai Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram !
Jai Ram Jai Ram Sita Ram ! ”

The masses were won over by this act of devotion to Sri Rama. Chandragupta then went into Nepal. At Kapilavastu, the birth-place of the Buddha, Chanakya told him :—

“ Here the Blessed one was born
Who proclaimed *Dharma's* might:
Here the noble eight-fold path was preached
And Wisdom's farthestmost shore was reached.”

1. The Middle country : the Ganges-Jumna Doab

The King of Nepal went and did homage to Chandragupta and was allowed to reign in his kingdom with full internal sovereignty. Accompanied by him, Chandragupta and Chanakya then visited the famous Pasupatinath temple in Nepal, near the city of Bhatgaon. There, Chanakya told Chandragupta:—

“Siva is here as the Lord of Beasts,
He pulls us by invisible strings;
Take no heed of useless Fasts and Feasts,
For Salvation comes here on His Wings.”

Chandragupta bathed at the junction of the Vishnumati and Bhagmati rivers and worshipped in the famous shrine.

Hastinapura was the next place visited. Chanakya told Chandragupta the story of the Pandavas and Kauravas. He then took him to Kurukshetra, the famous battle-field of the Mahabharata war. There Chandragupta bathed in Karna's lake, the *Suryakund*, and gave away much gold in charity. The sacred city of Mathura, the birth-place of Sri Krishna was next visited. Chanakya told Chandragupta:—

“Here was born the wond'rous babe
Who put all demons to flight:
Here was born the teacher great
Who gave us the Song of Light.”

Chandragupta bathed in the sacred *Jumna* and worshipped in Sri Krishna's temple.

At Indraprastha¹, the grand army crossed the *Jumna* and went on to the Hyphasis.² All the Kings between the *Jumna* and the *Hydaspes* met Chandragupta at Alexandergiri on the Hyphasis, headed by Malayaketu, Bhagela and Saubhuti, and tendered their submission. Saubhuti presented Chandragupta with two suits of gold armour inset with gems, and also with twenty-four of his famous hunting dogs. Chanakya re-named Alexandergiri Jalandhara adding, "The evil days of the Yavana conquest are gone. Let nothing in our country remind us of Alexander or his cruel massacres and devastations. We shall bury this bronze column with its inscription 'Here Alexander halted.' But the altars shall remain with the gods changed to Siva, Sakti, Brahma, Saraswati, Surya, Ganga, and Narayana. All towns named 'Alexandria' shall be re-named. It is further my wish that no writer in any language in our country should mention anything about Alexander or his invasion. I am issuing orders throughout the Empire to see that people contravening this are suitably dealt with."

The army then moved on to Saubhuti's Capital, and were entertained for two days with great magnificence. Then they went on to Sangala³ which had been re-built. A hundred-thousand Kathaiahs had assembled to welcome the Emperor, who was already their King. Chandragupta had gifted a million *Panas* towards this reconstruction. Women and children crowded round to see him at close quarters. Chanakya ordered a free feeding of all the poor

1. Modern Delhi

2. Vipasa or the Beas.

3. Jullundar; literally, city on flowing water.

4. Modern Sialkot.

and a treat for the children in honour of the Emperor's visit. He told the Kathaians, "Your city has once more risen from its ruins. See that you do not lose it again."

Bhaghela begged of Chandragupta and Chanakya to permit him and his clansmen to colonise a sparsely-populated tract of land in Central India and to call it Baghelkhand, just as the Kathis were being allowed to settle down in Kathiawar, and the Malavas in Malwa. His cousin Bundela too asked for permission for his clan to settle down in another sparsely-populated tract of land to the west, and to call it Bundelkhand. They were granted these requests subject to not interfering with the vested rights of the existing inhabitants.

Malayaketu entertained Chandragupta at his new Capital which was named "Vitastanagari." Swarnamayi had died two months before. So, Chandragupta and Chanakya were saved from the embarrassment of meeting her, who had done so much for them and whose husband and brother-in-law had met with their death indirectly through them. Chandragupta showed Chanakya the dungeon where he had been imprisoned. On seeing it, Chanakya exclaimed, "Thank God, you had the Empress Santavati to save you. I could never have rescued you from here within a day's time, and he should have killed you that day if you had been where they had imprisoned you."

Now the army got ready to cross the Hydaspes and invade Takshasila. Omphis sent messengers promising to submit to Chandragupta, and begged of Chanakya to

intercede for him. Chanakya was for accepting the offer, provided Omphis would surrender the key-town of Takshasila and be content to hold the rest of the country under Chandragupta. Omphis was unwilling to agree to this and resolved to fight the Mauryan army, relying on the aid of Eudemos and the Greek garrisons. The Greeks of Nikaia and Boukephala too, on being expelled by Malayaketu, had joined him. The Greeks and Omphis put Takshasila into a fit condition to withstand a prolonged siege. "They are, like all Indians, weak at taking towns," said Eudemos to Omphis. "So we shall be perfectly safe here for years to come, and can take the offensive whenever we like."

Chandragupta found that it would take at least two years to capture Takshasila which had a garrison of 60,000 first rate troops, impregnable walls, and provisions enough to last for six years. He said to Chanakya, "Our siege-trains are poor. This city is too strong to be stormed. It has only to be starved into surrender. We should concentrate our attention in future on improving our siege-equipment. Meanwhile, we shall leave a big army here to blockade the town, and proceed with the remaining troops to finish our work."

Chanakya agreed. One-hundred-thousand men and a thousand elephants were left behind under Balagupta to blockade Takshasila. Chandragupta and Chanakya marched with the rest of the army to Kashmir. The King of Kashmir, Pushkaradatta, and Abhisara and Arsakes tendered their submission, and were made feudatories of the Empire.

The Emperor, and the Prime Minister were greatly

impressed with the beauty of the Kashmir valley and its inhabitants. They had entered Kashmir through the *Baramula*¹ Pass. They went to Pahalgam, the village in the hills, and thence they went with a few select men to Amarnath on horseback. The path lay by steep snow-capped hills, and the horses had to go by narrow footpaths overlooking abysses 600 to 800 feet deep. On the way there was the delightful *Seshnag* river and lake which would be ice-bound during winter. Chanakya named this spot "Chandravada,"² after the Emperor. Then they pushed on to Amarnath, where Chandragupta and Chanakya worshipped Siva in the famous cave with the ice *linga* formed and dissolved every year by Mother Nature herself.

The Emperor was moved deeply by the holy atmosphere of the place, the snow-capped hills and the perfect peace broken only by the songs and hymns of the Sannyasis, whose living faith had made them brave the dangers and hardships of a journey thither.

"Why go on fighting? Why climb up the climbing wave?" Why not live on here, not caring for wealth or kingdom?" asked he of Chanakya.

"That cannot be," replied Chanakya. "A king must do his duty. Rest and prayer are not for him. Readiness for action is his *Dharma*, and never-ceasing activity his *Karma*. What peace can there be for him when his subjects are being conquered and massacred by foreigners,

1. Pass with twelve corners : called also Punjab Gate.

2. Now Chandanwadi, Chandra's halting-place.

or plundered by wild tribes and robbers, or plunged into a state of anarchy like that in the depths of the sea where fish eats fish, the strong ever preying on the weak? This very snow will then burn him like fire, this peace will be for him the peace of the prison or the graveyard."

Chandragupta was convinced of the soundness of this argument.

Jeevasiddhi was appointed Adviser to the King of Kashmir with a strong army to aid him. Then, Chandragupta and Chanakya returned to the Punjab through the Banihal Pass, which Chanakya named "The Kashmir Gate." The army marched on to Simhapura where it had a glorious reception, the whole town going out with Vijayasimha to receive their own Prince. After a week's stay at Simhapura the army went down the *Indus* valley to Patala. The Sibis, Malavas, Kshudrakas and the Princes and peoples of the *Indus* valley and delta submitted at once, and were added on to the newly-constituted *Uttarapatha* province. The forts at Multan, Malavkot, Brahmasthala and Patala were strengthened, and trustworthy Captains placed in charge of them, with adequate garrisons and provisions.

Then the army went along the banks of the eastern branch of the *Indus*, and marched into Kutch and Saurashtra. Meghanada's son, Arasaka, submitted. He was confirmed in his kingdom of Kutch, on condition that he paid a small tribute and supplied a regiment to Chandragupta's army. At the request of the leaders of the Kshatriya clans of Saurashtra, which had been forcibly subdued by Meghanada, Saurashtra was taken away from Arasaka and given to Raja Vaisya Pushyagupta, the young and

brilliant cavalry captain who was also a wealthy, powerful and universally respected Chieftain of Saurashtra. His life's ambition was to remove famine from Saurashtra by constructing a big irrigation lake near Girnar called *Sudarsana* lake,¹ for ensuring a perennial supply of water, for cultivation. Pushyagupta took the gigantic work on hand as soon as he was appointed Governor. "My private fortune of ten million *Panas* shall be utilized for this," said he. "You shall receive ten million *Panas* from the imperial treasury also," said Chandragupta amidst cheers. Ten thousand Kathis settled down in the peninsula at once as workers and the peninsula soon came to be known as Kathiawar.

Then, Chandragupta marched on Ujjaini, which also surrendered without a blow. He established a new province and viceroyalty at Ujjaini, making Saurashtra, and all the countries between Kutch, the *Sutlej*, *Jumna* and *Narmada* subject to it. Fifty thousand Malavas settled round about Ujjaini, and the Sub-Province was named Malava, or Malwa after them. The Malavas found the new country more fertile than their original home-land, and sent for their kinsmen and friends. Soon, the new country was full of Malavas, and became the only Malwa known to the world, the old home of the Malavas becoming devoid of Malavas and consequently losing its name of Malava. Lohitaksha was formally recognized by Chandragupta as King of Malwa on condition of paying a small tribute and supplying a regiment to the Imperial Army. Vedisagari² was made a secondary Capital for the Viceroy.

1. Lake Beautiful. 'Girinagari' means 'city on the Hill.'

2. The famous Besnagar with the Heliodoros pillar.

Pushyagupta and Lohitaksha requested that Ujjaini be made the second city of the Empire, that the Viceroyalty be filled up as far as possible by the Crown Prince, and that the Emperor should reside for some months now and then at Ujjain. Chandragupta promised to consider the requests favourably. He made Bhagurayana the first Viceroy of Ujjain.

Envoys poured into Ujjaini from the many kingdoms of South India, with tributes and offers of submission. The Kings of Kuntala and of the Kosas, Kadambas, Gangas, Vadukas and Konkanasthas of the far south, and the Princes of Maharashtra and Errandapalla¹ were among these. Chandragupta accepted their submissions and tributes, and sent Commanders and garrisons to Kundinapura, Nasika, Kuntala and Viziadrug.

The Andhra King, Satyasri Satkarni, went in person to Ujjain, did his homage once more to Chandragupta, placed his kingdom and troops at his disposal, and was embraced by the Emperor and made the first feudatory of the Empire. "Our motto is 'Uphold *Dharma*,'" said Satyasri. "It is our proud boast that in our kingdom no man lacks food, and no Brahmin lacks learning."

"Very good," said Chandragupta. "So long as you stick to that ideal, the Mauryas will have no quarrel with you. We can work together for that great ideal. Let nobody in *Jambudvīpa* be starved in body, mind or soul! Let us follow the venerable Chanakya's advice, and be happy in the happiness of our subjects."

1. Khandesh.

Satyasri went back to his kingdom delighted.

Chandragupta and Chanakya visited the *Mahakala*¹ temple in Ujjain. There the Emperor marvelled at the "Wheel of Time," sculptured prominently on the wall. "Why is it so prominently exhibited?" asked Chandragupta. "Is it not better to have the 'Wheel of *Dharma* instead?"

"Oh, no," said Chanakya. "Time includes times of *Dharma* and *Adharma*, and so the 'Wheel of Time' is a more comprehensive object than the 'Wheel of *Dharma*,' as ordinarily conceived. The Lord of Time is beyond Time and Space whereas human *Dharma* is subject to Time and Space."

They went next to Bharukachchha or Bhrigukacha, and bathed in the sacred *Suklateertha* in the *Narmada*. Chanakya learnt with sorrow that both Syama Sastri and Meenakshi had passed away a year back, within three days of each other. Chandragupta was highly pleased with the quiet and holy atmosphere of *Suklateertha* and had a palace constructed in the place, so that he might spend some time there with Durdhara.

'A child conceived here will have peace and prosperity all his life,' was the popular belief which Chandragupta also shared. Surat, at the mouth of the *Tapti*, was occupied without a fight. Then Chandragupta and Chanakya returned to Pataliputra with a portion of the troops, sending a powerful army of all arms under Simhabala, Purushadatta, Chandrabhanu and Dingarata to conquer the lands of the south till the Palar river, the

1. *Siva*, as Lord of Time,

northern frontier of the Chola Kingdom. They then went to Vaisali and Pawa. At Pawa, Chanakya told Chandragupta about the great Mahavira who had been born at Vaisali and had died at Pawa. Said he:—

“Here died the Great Hero
Who defied Time and Fate:
No weapons had he but Love,
And Non-Violence was his Vow.”

He was astonished to see that Chandragupta was attracted by the story of Mahavira more than by the stories of Sri Rama, Sri Krishna, Siva and the Buddha. To his query, Chandragupta replied, “I am not astonished by the achievements of violence. They are things seen by us every day in the world. But that Mahavira could have lived a life of strict non-violence in a world of violence and achieved so much, and even tamed the tiger and the dacoit, thrills me.” Chanakya remained silent, absorbed in thoughts of the future.

The next spot visited was Kamakhya temple in Kamarupa. They bathed in Brahamakund. As Chandragupta watched the waters of the Brahmaputra and the Lohitya, its tributary, fascinated, Chanakya told him, “This is the eastern boundary of *Jambudvīpa*, its western boundary being the mouths of the Indus and its southern boundary the Indian ocean or *Rama Sethu*.¹”

Chandragupta and Chanakya returned to Pataliputra after recognising the King of Kamarupa as a feudatory of the Empire with full internal sovereignty. “This land

1. Rama's Bridge or Adam's Birdge.

of Kamarupa has immense undeveloped natural resources. But it can only be absorbed in the directly-administered territories of the Empire after a couple of thousand years when communications have improved," said Chanakya to Chandragupta. A month later, Chandragupta and Durdhara, with Chanakya and Gautami, went to *Sukla-teertha*, and lived there quietly for six months till Durdhara felt her heart beat wildly with joy at the prospect of becoming a mother. Chanakya was apprised of the joyous tidings by Gautami. He gave elaborate instructions as to how the expectant mother was to conduct herself. "Let her eat only sweet and agreeable food, let her see only auspicious sights, let her have plenty of music and song, and let her have daily recitations of the *Ramayana* and *Bhagavata*," said he, among other things.

Chandragupta and Chanakya returned to Pataliputra, with Durdhara and Gautami, to perform in the 'Suganga' Palace itself the necessary religious ceremonies associated with an expectant mother. The entire city went out to meet the King and Queen Durdhara. There was wild rejoicing among all the citizens and subjects at the prospect of an heir. The *Seemanta*¹ ceremony was performed with great solemnity and splendour. In due course Durdhara gave birth to a very healthy and handsome boy, whom Chanakya ordered to be named as Bhadrasara or Bindusara,² The whole Empire was delirious with joy. Pataliputra was full of gaiety and rejoicing. Three days' holidays

1. A ceremony performed usually in the sixth month of pregnancy.

2. Essence of security : Essence of Nectar.

were proclaimed in honour of the birth of the Prince and thousands of prisoners released and several death sentences commuted. Kings and princes from all over India sent messengers with letters of congratulations and presents.

The army had meanwhile established garrisons in Maharashtra, Devarashtra, Errandapalla, Konkan, Kuntala and Mahishamandala, and had established suitable forts at Devagiri, Rajagiri, Samapa, Suvarnagiri, Chandravali, Brahmagiri, and Chandrarayapatna. Chandragupta constituted a Viceroyalty at Suvarnagiri for the southern provinces, with Purushadatta as Viceroy.

When delimiting the frontiers of the southern provinces of Suvarnagiri Viceroyalty near Chandrarayapatna, Simhabala, who had only a small infantry division with him at the time, came across the troops of the King of Mohur¹. This King and his troops were pursuing some Kosa and Vaduka allies of the Mauryas, after defeating them. Simhabala asked the king peremptorily to desist from the pursuit, and to withdraw to his own territories in the south. The King contemptuously refused, and even referred to the Mauryas as "upstart Mauryas," or "braggart Mauryas" (*Vamban Moriyar*). This made Simhabala furious. He sent urgent messages to the main army to come up. Soon Purushadatta, Dingarata and Chandrabhanu joined him with 50,000 infantry, 10,000 cavalry, 2,000 elephants and 1,000 chariots.

The King of Mohur had retreated with his troops as soon as he heard that the main army had been sent for.

1. Mayuram, in Tanjore District.

He had taken refuge behind the Podiyil hills¹ relying on the impossibility of getting the army and especially the chariots, across that high mountain over which there was no path. But he was mistaken. Chandrabhanu assembled his engineers who soon cut a chariot road across the mountain. The golden-wheeled chariots of the Mauryas advanced rapidly along that road with the mighty Mauryan umbrella on an elephant and Mauryan flags flying and drums beating, and with the Kosas and Vadukas advancing in front. The King of Mohur and his troops fled precipitately still farther southwards. Simhabala halted his troops, and made the Podiyil hills the Mauryan frontier as he had instructions from Chandragupta and Chanakya not to invade the Tamil kingdoms of the South.

He wrote to the Emperor: "Our frontier is now the Podiyil hills. Shall we march to the southern sea? Presents are pouring in from the King of Mohur and the Tamil Kings, who now acknowledge our supremacy and praise the Mauryas and Arya Chanakya to the skies." In six months he got a reply from the Emperor, who, on the advice of Chanakya, wrote: "Stop at the *Payoshni*². No need to advance farther south as messengers from the Tamil Kings and Ceylon have come here by ship, and prayed that our armies should be directed not to advance further." Simhabala perused the letter and said, "That is reasonable. Still I had dreamt of planting the lofty Mauryan flag at *Kanya Kumari* at the meeting of the three oceans." The Mauryan forces were withdrawn to the north of the *Palar* as ordered.

1. Agastyakutam Hills, between Madura and Travancore.

2. The *Palar* : literally, the river of milk.

It was now the beginning of 317 B. C. Takshasila was being hard pressed by Balagupta and his army. The siege of two years had told upon the morale of the defenders. The trade of this prosperous city had been ruined. The citizens became restive. Eudemos and his Greeks were more concerned with the war between Alexander's Generals in Asia Minor, than in defending Omphis's capital against the Mauryas. Eudemos's Chief, Eumenes, who had killed Krateros in 321 B. C., was imploring him to get somehow some war-elephants and join him in his desperate struggle against Antigonos who was aided by Ptolemy, Peithon, son of Krateros, Seleukos and Nearchos. Omphis had only 30 elephants in all, and was not willing to let him go away with them. Nor would 30 elephants be of much use for Eumenes. The Mauryas had 9,000 war-elephants, and even Balagupta had 1,000 of them for the siege of Takshasila. Eudemos could not capture alive even a single elephant of theirs. Nor could he buy any, as elephants and horses were a royal monopoly all over India. The younger Poros had been assiduously collecting war-elephants and had 120 of them with him. He had been very friendly with Eudemos, largely because of his envy of his uncle Poros Senior and, later on, of his cousin Malayaketu.

Eudemos had at first hoped that he could repeat Alexander's tactics, and defeat Balagupta and capture his 1,000 elephants. But a desperate sortie on Hindu New Year's Day 317 B. C. had ended in a debacle of his and Omphis's troops. Only the strong walls of Takshasila saved them from utter annihilation. This battle decided

Eudemos. He concluded that Alexander was wise in not fighting these *Prachyas*. "Even if they lose these 1,000 elephants they have 8,000 more!" thought he, and the thought made him shudder.

The next day, when he was in deep despair, one of Omphis's ministers was narrating the story of Chanakya's bringing about the death of Parvataka and Vairochaka. An idea occurred to him. He sent a letter to the younger Poros to meet him on the banks of the *Indus* near Udabhanaapura with all his war-elephants, suggesting to him a sudden attack on Malayaketu from the rear, and promising him the whole of the territories of Malayaketu. The avarice of Poros Junior was roused. He went to the appointed place with his 120 war-elephants and 2,000 cavalry and 3,000 infantry. Eudemos left Takshasila with 20,000 Greek troops telling Omphis that he would join Poros Junior and attack Malayaketu from behind, and force Balagupta's army to raise the siege and go to Malayaketu's help. He received from Omphis and the merchants of Takshasila ten-million *Suvarnas* for the expenses of this bold campaign, and was also thanked for so generously risking his Greek troops for the sake of an ally.

He went with his troops to the appointed meeting place in splendid military array. Poros Junior was delighted to see his ally arrive with such magnificent troops. Eudemos invited Poros to his tent to discuss some plans in secret. When the unsuspecting Poros went in, Eudemos suddenly picked up a spear and thrust it deep into his chest, and killed him instantly. His Greeks fell upon the unprepared troops of Poros, routed them with great

slaughter, and captured all the 120 war-elephants. Eudemos and his Greeks then went away from India west-wards with the elephants and the ten-million *Suvarnas*, and joined Eumenes in Pontos.

The troops, elephants and money were of very great use to Eumenes in his fight with Antigonos. Seleukos, Peithon and Nearchos. But, even with their help, his opponents proved too much for him. He own troops, despairing of victory, handed him over to Antigonos in 316 B. C. Despite the protests of Nearchos, Antigonos put Eumenes to death at once. No one protested when Antigonos put to death Eumenes's lieutenant Eudemos, who thus met with a swift retribution for his treacherous murder of Poros Junior.

When the murder of Poros Junior and the defection of Eudemos with the elephants of Poros and with his troops and the ten-million *Suvarnas* became known in Takshasila, there was a great outcry against the Greeks and against Omphis who had been their great champion. The citizens opened the gates of the city to the Mauryan army. And, as Balagupta entered the city with his troops, Omphis committed suicide by jumping down from the top floor of his palace. Balagupta gave his corpse a royal funeral. Omphis left no son, or other near heir behind. Balagupta proclaimed the annexation of Takshasila and its entire territories to the Mauryan empire making them part of *Uttarapatha*. Then his victorious troops advanced up to the *Indus*, and even crossed it and occupied Pushkalavati on the other side, the feeble Greek garrison here surrendering at the mere sight of Balagupta's hosts.

Balagupta was appointed the Viceroy of Takshasila by Chandragupta. His jurisdiction extended to the whole of the empire west of the *Sutlej* and north of Kutch, and included Kashmir, Punjab, Peshawar, Takshasila, Pushkalavati, Multan and the entire Indus valley up to the sea. Balagupta being an *Aryaputra*, that is, being related to the Emperor, his appointment was popular with Malayaketu, Saubhuti, Abhisara, Arsakes and the Kings of Kashmir and Sind, and the son of Poros Junior. Within a year Balagupta and his Ministers made Takshasila a Mauryan stronghold in the north, and firmly secured and fortified the Khyber Pass.

Chandragupta, at the instance of Chanakya, issued a mandate to all the Mauryan Viceroys and Governors and Officers as to how to treat the conquered territories. It ran:—"Never treat the conquered people contemptuously. Treat them just as you would treat the people of Magadha. Punish all who offend against them. Never covet their lands, things or women. Preserve their laws, customs, holidays and religious ceremonies."

The conquered peoples were delighted. They became firmly attached to their new ruler Chandragupta, and came to regard him as their own hereditary king. Even the conquered Rulers were treated with respect and consideration and came to take pride in the fact that they were the feudatories of a great Emperor. Within ten years of the conquests, the Mauryan Empire had become an established institution from Pushkalavati to Tamralipti, from Kashmir to the Palar.

CHAPTER XX.

THE GRAND COUNCIL MEETS.

In the great Council Hall of Suganga palace, on *Mahalaya Amavasya Day*¹, the beginning of *Dasra*, the great council of ministers, called *Mantriparishad* till then and called newly *Chandragupta Sabha*, was scheduled to meet at 3. P. M. for deciding the policies of the Empire on certain very important matters and for conducting three State Trials. Chandragupta himself was to preside, and five hundred ministers and councillors from all over the Empire, including Chanakya, Rakshasa, Nakranasa and Sakatala, were expected to attend. More than two hundred thousand men and women had assembled outside the gates of the Hall, even by 12 noon, to watch the King and Chanakya and the ministers and notables pass in and to watch the array of troops and the decorations and paraphernalia. A hundred fine war elephants, fully accoutred, and each with its gold plate on its forehead, five hundred chariots drawn by fine horses and manned by expert charioteers, one thousand lancers of Dingarata's Horse, mounted on magnificent steeds and with levelled lances, and five thousand infantry from the Magadhan, Malwa, Punjab, Mahratta and Andhra regiments, with the renowned Bundela band in attendance, were to be reviewed by the King, the Generalissimo of the Armed Forces. To reach the Council Hall, one had to pass through the four enclosures where the armed

1. New Moon Day in October.

forces were stationed for review. Over the outermost gate, called the Elephant Gate, there was the inscription, "The King is the First Servant of the people". The elephants stood in the enclosure past that gate. Over the next gate, called the Maharatha gate (Great Charioteer gate), the inscription was, "The ministers are the King's Eyes. They are the servants of the Servant of the People." In the enclosure next to that gate were the chariots. Over the next gate, called the *Asvadvāra* (Cavalry gate), was the inscription, "The whole world revolves on the Belly." In the enclosure next to that gate were the cavalry. Over the fourth gate called the *svargadvāra* (gate of Heaven) was the inscription, "Heaven is not a distant world: it is here, in this world, for us to make good by work for *lokasangraha*. Hell is not a distant world: it is here in this world, if we do not make good by work for *lokasangraha*." In the enclosure next to it were the infantrymen. All the four inscriptions had been put up under the instructions and personal supervision of Chanakya. Men, women and children went up and down gazing at the inscriptions and at the Armed Forces till the drums sounded for them to go behind the ropes put up for marking out the road for the King. Stentorian voices speaking through country megaphones warned the assembled people that the punishment for crossing the rope barrier was death.

At 3 P. M. sharp, the royal procession came. Chandragupta mounted on his famous elephant Chandralekha and with regal robes and crown on, came surrounded by twenty-four women body-guard on horses armed with

bows and arrows, and by twenty-four picked cavalrymen with levelled lances headed by Rajasena. Behind them came Chanakya and Rakshasa and *purohita* Subandhu in a magnificent chariot of gold. Behind them came the other ministers and notables in fine chariots. There were thunderous cheers from the assembled crowd as the King and ministers passed in.

Chandragupta reviewed the elephants first. He received their salute, a series of synchronized trumpeting which shook the earth. Then he got into a chariot and reviewed the chariots. He found in the case of seven chariots that the horses were of uneven strength, and in the case of two that the colours of the horses did not match. Then he mounted a horse and reviewed the cavalry. He ordered more Bactrian and Arab steeds to be imported soon to replace the inferior Sindhi horses. Then he got down and reviewed the infantry, as they marched past, and smiled at their proud bearing and faultless turn-up. He then marched in state into the Council Hall, preceded by his male and female guard on foot, and followed by Chanakya, Rakshasa, Subandhu and the other ministers and notables. He told Chanakya, "The inscriptions you have put up over the gates are grand. The difficulty will be to act up to them."

"They are meant to be acted on," said Chanakya. "It will be difficult at first to change over from the old ideals of indiscipline and autocracy to the ideals of *Ramrajya* which these inscriptions embody, but it will have to be done if the dynasty is to endure and the country is to be held."

Chandragupta took his seat on a magnificent throne. He had his crown on with the *syamantaka*¹ gem in it. All the ministers and councillors took their seats. The proceedings began with a prayer by Subandhu. The whole assembly stood up, with folded hands of supplication, as Subandhu prayed :—

“O God, may the King rule his subjects justly and well,
May he ensure them external and internal peace,
May man and beast get enough food and rest,
May happiness reign everywhere by your Grace!

After prayer, and before the council began transacting business, Chanakya rose and told the members:—“Aryas, all kinds of administrative measures and policies are preceded by deliberations in a well-informed council. The discussions here will be free and frank, but, of necessity, must be kept secret even from birds and beasts, any one revealing the deliberations and the individual opinions expressed here being liable under our law to be trodden to death by the royal elephants. Carelessness, intoxication, talking in sleep, blabbering to women one is in love with, are the usual causes of such revelations. But the particular cause will be no excuse, for public safety requires such condign punishment. A king should hear the opinions of all the councillors, great and small, known and unknown; he shall despise none. A wise man will make use of even a child's sensible utterances.”

Then the council proceeded to business.

1. The Kohinoor.

"What shall be the official title of the king? That is the first question before us," said Chanakya.

"I suggest *Rajadhiraja*, as he is a king of kings, the Andhra king, Malayaketu and others being under him," said Rakshasa.

"I suggest *Sarvabhauma*," said Subandhu, "as the *Apastamba Srauta Sutra* indicates, as he rules over all *Jumbudvipa*."

"I suggest *Ekarat*," said Nakranasa. "The *Aitareya Brahmana* holds it to be the proper title for the sole ruler of our land."

"I am for *Samrat*, as the *Gopatha Brahmana* indicates," said Sakatala.

"I am for the simple title *Raja* (he who pleases his subjects) prefixed by the beautiful clause "*Devanampriya-priya darsin* (Beloved of the gods, the gracious)" said Chanakya. "In the *Bhagavad gita*, the simple term *Raja* is used for Dhritarashtra and Duryodhana. In the *Ramayana*, Sri Rama is only called *Raja*. So too, Yudhishtira in the *Mahabharata*. Our king is great enough, like them, not to require bombastic titles. The sweet mango is called only *Am*: our great king need be only *Raja*."

The assembly unanimously voted that the title of the King should be "*Devanampriya Priyadarsin Chandragupta Raja*".

The Council was, on Chanakya's suggestion, named "*Chandragupta Sabha*". The strength of the council was finally settled at 500. "Indra had a thousand councillors,

called his thousand eyes. Manu is for a council of 12 ministers, Brihaspati for a council of 16, and Usanas for a council of 20. I am for such a number as the situation requires. We can have 500 for the *Mantriparishad* of Narendra,¹” said Chanakya, and all the councillors agreed to his proposal. The prime minister was called “*Agramatya*” and Rakshasa made the first *Agramatya*. Chanakya himself, on the suggestion of Rakshasa, was given the title, “*Acharya Chanakya*,” and was constituted Permanent Adviser to the King. Bindusara was recognised as the Crown Prince, and Durdhara as the *Agramahishi* or *Pattamahishi*.

Rakshasa moved a resolution that twenty-four copies of *Acharya* Chanakya's book, the *Arthashastra*, be prepared, and six kept in the treasuries in the Centre and in the Provinces, six distributed to the feudatory kings, six distributed to the principal cabinet ministers, and six given to Chanakya. It was passed amidst acclamation.

The Council then approved of the following principal officers of State:—Prime Minister ; Commander-in-Chief; Ministers; *Purohita* ; Chamberlain ; Collector-General ; Superintendent of Gold and Coinage; Superintendent of Stores and Granaries; Superintendent of Commerce; Superintendent of Industries; Superintendent of Forests and Forest Produce; Superintendent of Weights and Measures; Superintendent of the Armoury; Superintendent of Tolls; Superintendent of Sales Tax; Superintendent of Passports; Superintendent of Spinning and Weaving; Superintendent of Agriculture; Superintendent of Cows

1, Indra among men ; Chandragupta,

and Bulls ; Superintendent of Horses ; Superintendent of Elephants ; Superintendent of Chariots ; Superintendent of Ships ; Superintendent of Toddy and Liquor shops ; Superintendent of Slaughter-houses ; Superintendent of Dancing-Girls and Brothels ; Superintendent of Mines ; Superintendent of Customs ; Superintendent of Writs ; Superintendent of Transport : Superintendent of Town Police ; Superintendent of Country Police ; superintendent of Roads and Light-Houses ; Superintendent of the Embassies ; and Superintendent of the Harem. Power was given to the Prime Minister to increase the number of officers and Heads of Departments in anticipation of the Council's sanction in case of emergency, subject to the sanctioned scales of pay. Orthodox Hindu, Buddhist and Jain Councillors objected to the posts of Superintendent of Toddy and Liquor shops. Superintendent of Dancing-Girl and Brothels, and Superintendent of Slaughter-Houses, as unworthy of an Aryan State which should never encourage drinking or dancing-girls or eating of animal flesh. Chanakya supported the creation of these posts, stating, "There are Non-Aryans also in this State. Even some Aryas eat meat, drink liquor, and go to brothels. We cannot abolish these vices ; we can only pretend not to see them. The better way is to control them, and mitigate the evil, by regulating moderate drinking in well ventilated buildings run by licensees, by regulating slaughter of selected animals on certain days in the year, and by regulating brothels so as to control debauchery and disease." The Council agreed with his views by an overwhelming majority.

There was a section of Councillors who wanted the State itself to mint the coins and take the profits, instead of leaving the minting to licensed goldsmiths and guilds. Chanakya opposed this. He said, "The State will be tempted to make minting a source of revenue and to debase the coins by reducing the gold and silver contents and increasing the alloy, if it gets a monopoly of coinage. That cannot happen if the present system continues. Besides, the goldsmiths and guilds have enjoyed this privilege for centuries, and have not abused it. Why should they be deprived of it without compensation?". The Council agreed with his views. The *suvarna* was recognized as the gold coin of the Empire, and the *rupya-rupa*, half rupee, quarter rupee and one-eighth rupee as the silver coins and the *kakani* or *kani* as the copper or bronze coin, and their weights and constituents fixed. So too, the general weights and measures, and divisions of time were agreed to.

Chanakya's time-table for the King was next adopted, with liberty to the King to change the details as circumstances required. It was as follows;—

"3 A. M. *Brahmarandhra* hour. Getting up to the sound of music.

3 to 4-30 A. M. Reflection on the rules of the *sastras*, and on his duties, and despatch of secret emissaries.

4-30 to 6 A. M. Interviewing the *purohita*, and the priests and receiving their benedictions, and seeing the Royal Physician, kitchen officials and astrologers.

6 to 7-30 A. M. Sitting in the Hall of Audience, receiving military and financial advisers.

7-30 to 9 A. M. Sitting in the Hall of Audience listening to the petitioners.

9 to 10-30 A. M. Bath and prayers and meals.

10-30 to 12. Receiving the Heads of Departments and looking into the Daily Cash Balance.

12 to 3 P. M. Rest and private correspondence and indoor games.

3 to 6 P. M. Review of troops and consultations with the Prime Minister and Commander-in-chief.

6 to 7-30 P. M. Meeting spies.

7-30 to 9 P. M. Second bath and prayers and meal.

9 P. M. to 10-30 P. M. Music in the bed-chamber and sleep."

"None but a superman can follow this time-table without change," said Rakshasa. "A King must be a superman," said Chanakya.

The feudatory kings were recognized by the council and their internal sovereignty was guaranteed. The rest of the Empire was divided into six provinces, namely, *Udichya* or *Uttarapatha* comprising North-West India beyond the Jumna, with Takshasila as its capital; *Madhyadesa*, or Central India, with Ujjaini as its capital; *Prachya*, or Eastern India, with Pataliputra as its

capital ; *Aparanta* or Western India, with Pratisbthana as its capital ; *Anarta* and *Saurashtra* with Girinagara as its capital ; and *Dakshinapatha* or Deccan and the South, with Suvarnagiri as its capital. It was resolved to have royal Viceroys at Takshasila and Ujjain and Civil Servant Viceroys at the remaining places except Pataliputra where the King himself would rule. Governors were allotted to various provinces in each Viceroyalty, and these were all from the Civil Service.

The Salaries of the Prime Minister, *Purohita*, *Senapati*¹ and Crown Prince were fixed at 48,000 *panas* per year, followed by grades of 12,000, 8,000, 4,000, 2,000, 500, 250, 120 and 60 *panas*. Soldiers, on enlistment, were to receive 500 *panas* and peons and messengers 60 *panas*. The army was to comprise of trained troops of all castes, Kshatriyas predominating. The affairs of the Army and Navy were to be attended to by the War Office consisting of thirty councillors divided into six boards of five members each, dealing with the Admiralty; Transport, Commissariat and Supplies; Infantry; Cavalry; Chariots; and Elephants. All the members collectively were responsible for the efficiency of the Army and the Navy. The grand council sanctioned a million *panas* for Admiral Samudranatha to explore the coasts and isles of India systematically and to submit a report to the King.

The Accountant-General, with his extensive staff, was made responsible for receipts and disbursements, and for preventing the 40 forms of embezzlement enumerated

1. Commander-in-chief

by Chanakya who had ended up his speech on the subject by saying that it was as impossible to prevent government servants from eating up a portion of the public monies as to prevent fishes from drinking the waters or birds from sucking air, or persons from licking the honey on the tip of their tongues, and that it was only possible to mitigate it! Transfer of officers from one branch to another and making officers go on tour in their Districts were also agreed on. Irrigation schemes, like those of the *Sudarsana* lake, with water rates for wet crops raised with canal water, were approved. Colonisation of waste lands, afforestation of some hill tracts, increase of pasture lands, erection of forts at strategic points, and construction of light-houses on the coast and in the desert regions of the Yaudhey and Simhapura country were also decided on. Hospitals for man and beast and plantations of herbs, and construction of rest-houses and wells on the roads, at distances of eight miles, were sanctioned.

A police system with graded officials, as in the military, was sanctioned, and its expenses were met by imposing a new police tax or *chowkidari* cess, in addition to the old land cess, sales tax, and other dues. The villagers were held liable to make good the loss by thefts in their limits in the first instance. The Penal Code was made very stringent in order to check the growth in crime which had followed in the wake of the wars.

As regards civil law, the *Dharma sastras*, as modified by caste, regional and family customs, were adopted. At the suggestion of Chanakya, an extraordinary resolution that any kind of marriage was approvable, provided it

pleased all those concerned with it, was adopted. Deliberately attributing immorality to a wife falsely was also held to be sufficient legal cruelty entitling a wife to live separately from her husband and yet to claim maintenance from him.

All lands left uncultivated by their owners were held to be liable to resumption by the State which was ruled to be the owner of all the land. Mines were to be systematically developed wherever they existed, prisoners being made to aid the regular miners and being rewarded with partial remission of sentences, extra rations and small money payments. The gold mines in Suvarnagiri in the south and in the Darada country in Kashmir were specially made protected areas.

The usual land revenue was fixed at one-fourth of the produce, the difference between the one-sixth, allowed by the *Dharma sastras*, and the one-fourth being stored in rat-proof granaries in central villages for use in famine times. The central treasury was to be the one under the Ganges constructed by Dhanananda. Similar three-storied underground treasuries were directed to be constructed in the viceregal cities with the labour of the condemned prisoners so that the secret of their plans and construction would be buried with their subsequent execution.

It was made an offence to cut any green tree without the permission of a magistrate. The teak and the deodar, the horse and the elephant were made State property requiring a licence for a private person to own them. The banyan and *peepul* trees were recognized as community trees to be used for village assemblies. The sale of

toddy, arrack, *bhang*, *ganja* and opium was regulated, and their addicts directed to be registered.

Pataliputra, Ujjaini, Takshasila, Suvarnagiri and Tosali were recognized as major municipal corporations, and Kausambi, Ayodhya, Kasi, Indraprastha, Mathura, and Girinagara were recognized as minor Municipalities. Each Municipality was to be governed by its own elected Council of thirty, presided over by the Mayor, and divided into six boards in charge of industries, arts and fixation of wages; foreigners; vital statistics; trade and commerce, weights and measures, and license fees; supervision of manufactures; and sales tax collection; all the councillors were made collectively responsible for the general administration, sanitation, water-supply, beauty and amusements, city magistrates being headed by the Mayor.

Four trunk roads were sanctioned, with avenue trees and rest houses and wells at convenient distances, besides mile stones to show the distances. The first trunk road ran from Pushkalavati on the northwest frontier to Takshasila, then to the Jhelum, then to the Beas, then to the Sutlej, then to Indraprastha on the Jumna, then *via* Mathura and Hastinapura to the Ganges, then to Radhapura and Kanyakubja, then to Prayag and then to Pataliputra, and then to the sea at Tamralipti. There were signposts at cross-roads indicating the distances to near-by villages and towns. The next trunk road was from Sravasti to Rajagriha past Vaisali, crossing the Ganges near Pataliputra. The third was from Sravasti to Pratishthana *via* Kausambi. The fourth went westwards to Sind and Sauvira across the Rajasthan and Sind deserts.

Boats were permitted to sail along the coast from Tamralipti, Bharukaccha and Surat' and ships to sail from Tamralipti and Bharukaccha to Babylon and Alexandria.

After the business on hand was over, the three State trials were taken up. The first was that of Vrishabhaddatta, the Lord Chief Justice of the Nandas. He was charged with corruption, oppression and perjury. Chanakya explained that perjury was of three kinds, of the judge who wrote a judgment he did not believe to be true, punishable with transportation for life; of a lawyer who adduced arguments he did not believe to be true, punishable with imprisonment for seven years; and of a witness who gave a deposition he did not believe to be true, punishable with imprisonment for three years. The council found Vrishabhaddatta guilty, and sentenced him to work in the gold mines at Suvarnagiri for fifteen years. "His passion for gold will thus be wiped out," said Chanakya.

The next case was that of Karala who had been Superintendent of Customs and had been found in possession of a million *suvarnas*, a hundred times his entire salary for the period of his service, he having no other source of income. The Council held the money to be the proceeds of bribes, and confiscated the entire sum to the State, as he had earned it as the servant of the State, and dismissed him from service.

The third case was a *hartal* by the Jain merchants of Ujjaini as a protest against the destruction of the rats in the City by the Municipal Council, under the orders of



Chandragupta & Seleukos Become Friends

Chanakya, and the imposition of a rat cess on those householders in whose houses and shops rats were found. The Council held the action of the merchants to be unlawful, and against public interests and fined them a thousand *panas* each, with threats of long-term imprisonment if they persisted in such foolish conduct.

Chanakya congratulated the Council on having finished its work in record time. "May you be as business-like as this always!" said he. "You have dealt with men and mice, horses and elephants, coins and weights, collection and corruption. Some of your decisions will affect only the present, but some will affect this land and its people for centuries to come. *Jai Bharat*¹!". Then the Council dispersed, the King, Ministers and notables going out in procession to the thunderous clappings of the populace.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE CONQUEROR CONQUERED.

ALEXANDER, when asked by the Companions as to whom he was leaving his kingdom, had replied with his dying breath, "To the strongest. I foresee a great funeral contest over my body." While his Generals were fighting with one another in order to see who was the strongest, after the wives, sons, half-brother and mother of the great conqueror had been murdered, Chandragupta had made himself master of the whole of India east of the *Indus* with the exception of a small bit in the

1. Victory to India !

extreme south. By 306 B.C., however, Seleukos Nikator was feeling himself secure on his throne at Babylon. He had come out very well from the general scramble. He had married Apama, daughter of the gallant Spitamenes of Sogdiana, and by this enduring union, which contrasted strongly with the ephemeral unions of the other Macedonian generals with their Asiatic wives, had endeared himself to the Asiatics and ensured an Asiatic empire for his descendants. He had at first aided Perdikkas and his cavalry against Meleager and his infantry, and had been made Chilliarch of the Companions, one of the highest offices. In that capacity he had followed Perdikkas to Egypt, and had there put himself at the head of the mutineers by whom Perdikkas was assassinated. He had been given the Babylonian Satrapy at the second partition of the provinces made at Triparadeisos in 321 B.C. He had assisted Antigonos against Eumenes, and had then joined Ptolemy against Antigonos. By 306 B.C. he had become the master of all the provinces of the old empire of Alexander from the borders of Syria eastwards up to the *Indus* including Bactria, Sogdiana, Aria, Arachosia, Parapamasadai, Gedrosia and the whole of Persia and Babylonia, and had crowned himself King, after the example of Antigonos and Ptolemy. He was also just then at peace with Antigonos and other rivals, and so resolved to take this opportunity of recovering the Punjab west of the Hyphasis and the Indus valley from Chandragupta who had annexed them.

He had heard vague accounts of the size of Chandragupta's empire and army. He had also heard much about

the splendour of the capital city Pataliputra, and of the Provincial capitals at Takshasila and Ujjain, which were said to surpass Susa and Babylon in magnificence.

Seleukos regarded what he had heard of the greatness and wealth of Chandragupta's empire with satisfaction, as he felt sure that he could easily defeat the young man whom he had seen at Boukephala as a suppliant for Alexander's help. He considered Poros Senior to be a far more formidable opponent, and yet he and Alexander had defeated Poros and made him a vassal. And now, Poros had been murdered in mysterious circumstances by that black Brahmin, who was said to have effected the equally mysterious escape of Chandragupta from the dungeon. Omphis had warned Seleukos against the incantations of that black Brahmin, but Seleukos, proud of his great personal strength and courage, had laughed in his face, and challenged him to make all the black Brahmins in the world do their worst to him. Alexander too had laughed on that occasion. Now Omphis also had gone, had committed suicide. A man who loved life so well to quit it like that! Well, one never knew what happened in that depressing Indian climate with its eerie nights and queer sights. Seleukos resolved that he would never live in India for good. He thought that the people were strange, almost lunatic, in their outlook. The best thing would be to get the Satrapies of Alexander in the Punjab and Sind back to the empire, and to allow Chandragupta to rule the rest of India as his vassal. This last idea made Seleukos feel proud, for even Alexander had not been able to levy tribute from the King of the Prachyas.

So, early in B. C. 305, Seleukos sent an ultimatum to Chandragupta from Bactria asking him, on threat of an armed invasion and conquest, to surrender the Indus valley and the territories to the west of the Hyphasis, and to recognise him as his Suzerain for his remaining territories, and to pay a tribute of ten-million gold *Suvarnas* per year. Chandragupta sent the following reply, after consulting Chanakya :—

“His Majesty King Chandragupta, the Beloved of the Gods, sends his greetings to king Seleukos of Babylon, and categorically refuses every one of his ridiculous demands. There is no more justification for his demanding cession of territory or tribute from King Chandragupta than for king Chandragupta to demand cession of territory or tribute from him. King Chandragupta requests him to use his sense and commonsense and not to be rash enough to press these absurd demands and invade India once more, and imitate, on a larger and more disastrous scale, the exploits of his master Alexander, who left the bodies of three-fourths of his troops in this country for the jackals and vultures to feed on. If, however, he persists in this foolish course and invades India, the Indian troops will be ready to deal with the living invaders, and the Indian jackals and vultures with the dead.”

Seleukos was furious when he received this reply. He who had crossed the Hydaspes with Alexander and defeated the great Poros was being insulted like this by this boy suppliant of yesterday. He resolved to teach Chandragupta a lesson that he should never forget. He decided to advance on Pataliputra itself, and capture it and the great

treasure of the Nandas before it was dissipated by Chandragupta and Chanakya on irrigation projects, reconstruction of destroyed cities, colonisation of jungles and other schemes. He got together an army of 60,000 Greeks and 90,000 Sogdians, Bactrians, Persians, Scythians and others anxious for the spoils of Ind. Then he marched from Bactria into Parapamisadai at the head of this enormous and well-equipped force.

Chandragupta discussed the plan of campaign with Chanakya. "We are so strong that we had better induce the enemy to cross the *Indus*, and then smash his forces. This time it will be a real battle, and not a battle of intrigue," said he.

"I agree with you in abandoning Pushkalavati, and in leaving the *Indus* crossing undefended, and in concentrating 200,000 infantry, 20,000 cavalry, 4,000 chariots and 6,000 elephants at Takshasila as you suggested yesterday. But, there will also be a battle of intrigue, beside the battle in the field. These Generals of Alexander have adopted the methods of our kings, and are relying on intrigue to a large extent. Seleukos considers himself to be a master of intrigue. Here is Siddharthaka's final despatch from Takshasila received with Balagupta's note. Seleukos approached Abhisara, Arsakes, Pushkaradatta, the son of Pushkaraksha, and Malayaketu for aid against us. They, being men of honour, at once communicated this to Balagupta who has, under my instructions, allowed those Princes to pretend to fall in with Seleuko's offer. So, we shall trap some of the Greeks like cattle. Indeed, I doubt whether there will be a battle at all," replied Chanakya.

"I hope there will be something for me to do," said Chandragupta. These campaigns seem to fizzle out by themselves."

Seleukos advanced on Pushkalavati with his mighty army. His daughter, Diophantes, was also with him. He was fond of her. She too was a spirited girl who loved excitement and adventure, and rode a horse as well as any man. Seleukos expected an easy victory and wanted to show his daughter his triumph. He was slightly disappointed at seeing Pushkalavati undefended. "The enemy is afraid of us," said he. The town was occupied and garrisoned. Then, Seleukos marched to Udabhandapura. The *Indus* crossing too was undefended.

"There is going to be no war at all, it seems," said he to Diophantes. "Have these Indians given up fighting after the death of Poros?"

"But, you have not got a welcome yet from Taxila, as Alexander had," said Diophantes.

"That it easily explained," said Seleukos. "These eastern Indians are a more gloomy lot than Omphis and his men. Even if they know that they will be defeated, they will not accept that fact gladly, but will be sullen over it. They mourn over life as much as they mourn over death. You can't expect such people to welcome us."

News came that Chandragupta with an army of 200,000 infantry, 20,000 horses, 4,000 chariots and 6,000 elephants was awaiting the invaders at Takshasila.

"What a gigantic army!" exclaimed Diophantes.

"Numbers mean nothing," said Seleukos. "The rabble will melt away the moment the battle begins. If they were really courageous and confident of victory, they would not have left Pushkalavati and the *Indus* crossing undefended."

"Still, it will be a job getting through that mass of elephants and troops," said Diophantes.

"We have got a fine plan of campaign," whispered Seleukos to her. "This huge army of theirs will be caught between two armies of ours, and made to surrender. Chandragupta's communications with Pataliputra will be cut off by our army and by the troops of Malayaketu. The drama will begin soon after we have crossed this undefended ford."

The Greek army crossed over to the other side in comfort. Seleukos encamped his host in the very plain where Alexander had encamped his. He offered sacrifices to the gods for his safe crossing, and held gymnastic and equestrian contests.

After taking rest there for a fortnight, thirty thousand Greeks and twenty thousand mercenaries under Antiochos, the son of Seleukos, went, in accordance with the secret understanding with Abhisara, Arsakes, Pushkaradatta and Malayaketu, through the Baramula Pass into the Kashmir valley, in order to rapidly march through the Kashmir-Gate (Banihal Pass) and take the Mauryan army in the rear. Diophantes, who had heard of the beauty of Kashmir was anxious to see it, and accompanied her brother, Antiochos. As they passed through the long Baramula

Pass with its exquisit scenery, she felt as if she were on Olympus. When they saw the vale of Kashmir surrounded by snow-capped mountains on all sides, her joy knew no bounds. "This is a veritable paradise," said she, "and those lakes, oh, how ravishingly beautiful!" She fell in love with the country at once. Arsakes was with the Greek army, and explained to Diophantes how Kashmir meant 'the country of the sage Kasyapa,' and how it was a very sacred land. "Every land is sacred to its inhabitants," said Diophantes. "Just as every life is sacred to its owner. But, that this land is more beautiful than other lands is undoubted." They found people of the valley very handsome, but not very warlike. "Kashmir," Arsakes explained, "is always ruled by the more warlike races, but its wise men migrate to the Gangetic plains, and become ministers and poets."

Antiochos and his troops spent two weeks in the Kashmir valley, enjoying the excellent climate and revelling in the fruits and flowers. Arsakes had gone on the pretext of getting the Banihal Pass route ready for the march. He had promised to return in two weeks, but failed to do so. Antiochos sent Jeevasiddhi, left behind by Arsakes, along with a Greek Captain, to find out what the delay was due to. The Greek Captain returned stating that the Kashmir Gate, the Banihal Pass, was closed by 1,00,000 troops belonging to Arsakes, Abhisara and the Mauryas. Panic-stricken by this news, Antiochos wanted to return through the Baramula Pass to Udabhandapura, but learnt to his consternation that it was also closed by another hundred-thousand Mauryan and allied troops

detached from Takshasila as soon as the Greek army had entered the Kashmir valley.

"We are trapped," exclaimed Antiochos to Diophantes. "It is hopeless to escape through either of the long passes with such a powerful enemy army guarding them."

"Then, let us go on camping here," said Diophantes. "It is simply glorious. But, seriously, brother, is it hopeless to get through?"

"Quite. Of course, we can try, but it will mean the loss of several thousands without any real chance of success. Pushkaradatta and Arsakes have sent word that we will be made very comfortable here till we are released after the war is over, provided we do not commit any act of violence against the inhabitants. 'Touch one of them,' say they, 'and we shall destroy you like rats.'"

"So, what do you propose to do?" asked Diophantes.

"Wait here till father wins the war and comes to our rescue," said Antiochos. "He got us into this mess, in his pathetic faith in these barbarian princes, and must get us out of it. I have sent an urgent messenger to him with the news."

"How did he get through?"

"Every messenger of ours is allowed to pass through after his message is scrutinised."

"Hm! The Black Brahmin again, I suppose."

"No, it is the handsome King who is responsible for this," said Antiochos. "Arsakes and Jeevasiddhi have given him a glowing description of you, and he seems to have been attracted by it. He has sent many an object of luxury to-day for you, a nice cot with the most splendid wood and ivory work I have seen, a fine mattress stuffed with the costliest silk cotton, and some amazingly fine cotton and silk *Sarees* and wollen shawls.

Diophantes examined them and exclaimed. "Oh, how fine! But, why did he send them?"

"Why do men send things to pretty girls?" asked Antiochos.

Seleukos had waited with his other army of 1,00,000 men on the banks of the *Indus*, awaiting news of Antiochos's army taking the Mauryan army in the rear, before advancing to attack it from the front. After long waiting he received a message from Chandragupta which ran, "His Majesty King Chandragupta, Beloved of the gods, sends his greetings to King Seleukos, and is happy to inform him that Prince Antiochos and Princess Devabhanta (Diophantes) are safe in Kashmir with the entire army, and will remain there till the war is over. No anxiety need be felt for their personal safety, unless they do some unbelievably rash thing like attacking the inhabitants, or trying to break through the passes." Seleukos bit his lips in rage. A day later, a messenger came from Antiochos confirming the news. "The fool! the fool!" exclaimed Seleukos. "Not to post his men at convenient places on the pass as he went in, and to leave it all to

Arsakes and Abhisara and that arch-villain Jeevasiddhi ! Well, I too am partly to blame for believing those vipers ! ”

He resolved forthwith to launch an attack on Takshasila and defeat Chandragupta, and thus rescue his son and daughter since it was hopeless to try to storm the long Baramula Pass. But, there was no enthusiasm among his Greek or mercenary troops at the suggestion of marching against the vastly superior enemy, especially after they had learnt about the fate of Antiochos and his army. Seleukos, however, led these unwilling men to Takshasila. A great battle was fought outside the walls of Takshasila, between the Mauryan army of 150,000 men and 6,000 elephants, led by Chandragupta, Chanakya, Bindusara and Balagupta, and the 1,00,000 men of Seleukos. The result was a foregone conclusion. The Mauryan elephants, led by Chandragupta's own elephant *Chandralekha*, made a fierce charge, and crashed through the terrified ranks of the Greeks and mercenaries of Seleukos, trampling several thousands of them to death and routing the rest. The Mauryan cavalry chased the fleeing men, and speared to death several hundreds of them. The Mauryan infantry, and especially the Malava, Kshudraka, Kathaia and Saindhava troops, attacked the Greeks and mercenaries with determination, and wiped out whole regiments.

The mercenaries, finding that they were getting the worst of it, broke their ranks and fled. The Greeks fought on desperately, but lost heart on hearing that Chandragupta and Chanakya had given a million *Suvarnas* and

stirred up the tribesmen of Aria, Arachosia, Gedrosia and Parapamisadai, who had massacred their Greek Governors and garrisons, and taken Varuna, Alexandria¹ and Pushkala-vati and closed the Passes, and burnt the bridge of boats across the *Indus*, and thus effectually cut off their communications with Persia and Babylon.

"There is no use fighting any further," said Seleukos to his general, Demetrios. "We had better make peace, clear out of this mess, and rescue our troops in Kashmir. Men are no match for these beasts. Poros's elephants were not properly trained, and had no mahouts like these. That is why Poros failed at the battle of the Hydaspes. Chandragupta's elephants and mahouts are superb. If I can only get 500 of his elephants and mahouts, I can smash Antigonos. After all, we are more interested in fighting him and gaining Syria and Asia Minor, than in fighting Chandragupta and gaining India. We may very well give up to Chandragupta these troublesome provinces of Aria, Arachosia, Parapamisadai and Eastern Gedrosia, which we have practically lost, for 500 such elephants.

Demetrios too agreed. Seleukos sent messengers to Chandragupta with his terms, which were at once accepted by Chandragupta on the advice of Chanakya. Chandragupta had seen an exquisite painting of Diophantes and had heard fascinating accounts of her from Arsakes and Jeevasiddhi and had fallen in love with her. He requested Seleukos to give her hand in marriage to him.

"Most willingly," said Seleukos. "That will cement our treaty of perpetual alliance and friendship."

1, Kandahar

So, the treaty of Takshasila was signed in 303 B. C., and Antiochos and his troops were released from the Kashmir valley, which they left with great regret as they had come to love it and its inhabitants. The Mauryan troops advanced and occupied the four provinces newly ceded to the Empire by Seleukos and added to the Viceroyalty of Takshasila. In grateful recognition of their invaluable services, Chandragupta remitted one-half of the tributes of Abhisara, Arsakes, Malayaketu and Pushkaradatta for fifty years.

Chanakya had the Khyber pass fortified and garrisoned, the principal fort being named appropriately Yamarudra¹ (the Gate of Death) and garrisoned by three thousand picked men from Jammu. He also directed strong forts to be erected at Bhatinda, Nagarkot and Pathankot to protect the plains from raids by the *Asvakani* and *Pakhtoons*². He told Chandragupta, "These tribes will not become peaceful and law-abiding for another two thousand years at least. Their love of freedom will make them do what they like. They will loot the plainsmen and carry away their women. Strong forts will be required to hold them, and frequent punitive expeditions will also be necessary to crush their revolts."

When Devabhanta was told about her forthcoming marriage, she was highly pleased. When she saw Chandragupta, this pleasure greatly increased. Chandragupta, for his part, was also deeply in love with her. The marriage was celebrated with great pomp at Takshasila itself. When Devabhanta went into the nuptial chamber that

1. Jmrud

2. Afghans and Pathans.

night, Chandragupta said to her, "People outside are shouting out, 'The Conqueror conquered!' Do they mean my victory over your father, or your victory over me?"

"Perhaps both," said she, embracing him with warmth.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE CONVOCAION OF THE UNIVERSITY

OF TAKSHASILA

THE vast grounds in front of the great hall of the University of Takshasila were gaily decorated with leaves and flowers and festoons and buntings. At the entrance to the grounds were emblazoned in letters of gold the words "*Vidyaya Amritamasnute*" (By Knowledge one attains immortality) from the *Vedas*. At the entrance to the Hall were inscribed the words *Nahi Jnanena Sadrisam Pavitramiha Vidyate* (Nothing purifies here below like knowledge) from the *Gita*. Inside the Hall, over the preceptor's seat, were the words "*Nahi Jnana Vikrayam karomi*" (I will not sell knowledge), the oath each professor had to take. A hundred savants and scholars and on-lookers had gathered from all over India and the neighbouring countries. For it was Convocation Day, and the Emperor Chandragupta, fresh from his brilliant victories and conquests, was going to preside and give away the prizes, grants and certificates with his own hands, and the great Chanakya was going to deliver the Convocation Address to the out-going scholars. For over

a month there had been continuous feasting on a most lavish scale at the Emperor's expense, and the most exciting contests between the giants of learning and the arts. Never had there been such bustle and joy in the city's whole history.

Punctually at 8 a.m., the great drums and bugles sounded, and the Emperor marched to the place attended by Chanakya, Balagupta, and Rajasena, and accompanied by the young Prince Bindusara. Loud and spontaneous shouts of "Long live our gracious King Chandragupta!" rent the air. Dharmaratna, the head of the University, went and received them, and seated the Emperor on the throne set in the centre of the dais. Balagupta was seated behind him, Bindusara to the Emperor's right, and Chanakya to the Emperor's left. Dharmaratna then sat down to the left of Chanakya.

After the audience had resumed silence, Dharmaratna rose and said, "The first item is prayer. I shall begin it as usual." Then the whole audience rose and repeated, after Dharmaratna, the familiar and famous prayer:—

"Thousands of heads has He,
Thousands of eyes to see,
Thousands of feet has He,
The Great Primeval One.
The universe He folds
In His loving embrace
And stretches far beyond,
The Great Primeval One."

After that, Dharmaratna said :—

"Brother scholars from the four corners of Bharatavarsha and the lands beyond! This is a unique occasion in the annals of this ancient University. To-day we have an Emperor himself presiding over our Convocation, and he is an Emperor not merely in name, but an Emperor among men. He is an ideal Kshatriya, and has proved it during all these years, and especially during the last war with the powerful and heroic Yavanas. He is reckless not only in war, but also in gifts. Our physicians have been kept busy these thirty days admistering to those who ate over much of the good things given in such abundance by our sovereign. The value of the prizes and the grants to be distributed to-day is well known to you. I need only say that they are worthy of such a King. All of us welcome the Emperor and the Crown Prince Bindusara to our midst, and wish them every prosperity and blessing. The Emperor and the Prince have graciously consented to accept the titles of "Raja Narendra," and "Amitraghata" conferred by the Council of Elders of the University. This is the first occasion when such political titles have been granted by our University, and the first recipients are unique among men. Our King is really an Indra among men, and our Prince fought and killed the enemy in the late war like a veritable Abhimanyu¹, though he is only in his fifteenth year now.

"Another thing which gratifies me very much to-day is that my friend, His Excellency the venerable Chanakya, an 'old boy' of our University, has kindly consented to

1. A great hero of the *Mahabharata*.

come and deliver the Address. I need not introduce Chanakya to you. His learning is such that, in this great assemblage of savants and scholars, not one dared to contest with him for the prize for *Arthasastra*, and so he magnanimously stood aside and became the Judge and held one of the keenest competitions known here. His mastery of the *Vedas* is well known. His practical skill is seen in his quickly rescuing the Scriptures and the world which had passed to the Nanda King, and in meeting successfully both internal revolt and external invasion. His self-denial is such that he, the Prime Minister of the greatest empire of the world, lives in a house which is much worse than many a humble man's abode. The firm establishment of our ancient *Dharma* is his life's goal and mission. Advice from such a man is pure gold.

"Then, the contests we have had! Of the hundred-and-twenty-eight first prizes we are awarding to-day, sixty-four for the Sciences and sixty-four for the Arts. I have no time to talk in detail. Nor need any one in this vast audience be reminded of the exciting contests. I shall repeat, as usual, the eight best *Sutra* sayings¹ in the books of this year. The first is 'Health is harmony,' expounded by the health expert who explained the principle of a harmonious combination of physical, mental and moral health. The next is 'A man becomes a god by doing that which no man can do.' A Brahmin of Sind said this to Alexander. The third is Chanakya's own *sutra*, 'The whole world revolves on the belly,' (laughter). The fourth is, 'Live with honour or die with honour,'

1. Short pithy expressions of great truths.

the advice given by the Brahmins to Sambos. The fifth is again Chanakya's; 'A king' must completely identify himself with his subjects. In their joy lies his joy, in their sorrow his sorrow.' The sixth is that of Vishnusiuri and runs, "Do not sell knowledge." The seventh is that of Dandiswami, 'The paths to God are as many as the paths of the birds in the air, or of fish under the waters, or of rivers to the sea,' The eighth is that of Kalyanaswami, and runs, 'Foreigners are foreigners only till they become natives, and conquerors are conquerors only till they become kings.'

"So much for the Sciences. Turning to the Arts, the juggler who took the Emperor's ring in his very presence without his knowing it, but failed to take the same ring from Chanakya, must have given you as much excitement as he gave me. It is easier to get wealth from a Kshatriya than from a Brahmin! (laughter). That juggler has also publicly, and in broad daylight, exhibited to the people the arts of levitation, and the rope-trick, and burial for three days, and swallowing of mercury and snake-poison. His reading of questions in sealed covers, his producing any scents required of him, and his bringing a dead bird to life for a short time are also worth mentioning. These things will be familiar to the savants, and do not perhaps interest them as much as the discussions. But they have their own value. Then again, the painter who could draw accurate paintings of people shown just once, and the doctor who used to get himself bitten by scorpions and snakes, and get immediately cured with his own medicines must have interested most of you. The

Sculptor who has prepared the granite statues of our great Emperor and of Seleukos seated on lions and holding a lotus flower and grapes respectively, must also have excited the admiration of all. How such polish can be imparted to such refractory material, he alone can explain. The man who fought a lion, a tiger, a boar and a mad elephant in succession single handed in the ring and triumphed over them all, none of us would grudge his prize. Nor does any one here grudge the prize of the musician who played with equal facility on a hundred different instruments, and made air, fire, earth, water and ether all give out immortal notes of unforgettable melody, or of his lady-partner who sang adjusting her melodious voice to one and all of the many-shaped multi-sounding instruments. We have also nothing but admiration for the hero who, blindfolded, shot with precision at the mud pot which was sounded ninth among eighteen similar pots ranged in a row, shot at a wooden ball in a pond and made it shoot up sixty feet in the air, cut off the head of a big buffalo with a single stroke, with the same sword and severed a lime placed on a man's wrist without hurting the wrist. Lastly, the Master-Spy Jeevasiddhi, with his uncanny finding out of our secrets within a given time, must have made us all wish that he could with equal facility wring from Nature her hidden secrets, for example, find out how to cause rain to fall, and how to eradicate disease and suffering. Aryas ! our most gracious Emperor, Raja Narendra, will now distribute the prizes.'

Chandragupta then rose and said, "Aryas ! it gives me the purest pleasure to be in the midst of this great and

learned assembly. I have, as you know, never shirked a war. But I have always felt a keener and purer pleasure in witnessing contests among learned men. For the last one month, I have been able to witness now and then some of the most exciting of your contests, which have already been described to you in such felicitous terms by your head. You may rest assured that the welfare of your University will be carefully looked after by me and my descendants. There shall be instituted at once here a college for *Arthasastra*. The revenues from fifty villages have been assigned for this purpose (loud shouts of "Long live Raja Narendra!" "Long live Prince Bindusara Amitraghata!") I thank you all for your kindly conferring titles on me and your Prince. Believe me, we cherish them deeply. To show how much I love you I shall make Amitraghata Viceroy of Takshasila as soon as he attains his sixteenth year (loud applause).

"Now, proceeding to distribute the prizes, I confer the title of *Kulapati* on the venerable Dharmaratna, with the revenues of ten villages to keep it up. (Dharmaratna rises up astonished and pleased. Then are heard shouts of "Long live Raja Narendra," "Long live Amitraghata," "Long live Kulapati Dharmaratna.") Dharmaratna simply said, "I bow to Raja Narendra. I bow to Amitraghata. I bow to the venerable Chanakya. I bow to the assembly. I pray to the gods that I may be found worthy of the great title conferred on me to-day."

Thereafter the Emperor distributed the other prizes and titles amidst many shouts and rejoicings. "See the light in his eyes when he gives," said the members of the

audience to one another. "He likes to give. He is a real Kshatriya. What a contrast to the mean and grasping Nanda king !"

Then rose Chanakya amidst deafening cheers. "Raja Narendra, Prince Bindusara Amitraghata, and Kulapati Dharmaratna, brother savants and scholars, and noble Aryas ! I am delighted beyond words at being invited to deliver the Address at the Convocation of this old University, of which I am a humble alumnus. When I remember all the great men who have delivered the Addresses here before me, my heart rejoices at having been selected to join their company. I prize this more than being the Prime Minister of this great empire. A Prime Minister has many unpleasant things to do. He has mercilessly to root out the enemies of the Empire, a necessary but often cruel work. Fools and knaves, who stand in the way of the general well-being, have to be plucked out and burnt like the weeds in a field. The cares of the Empire make the hairs grey more quickly than even nightly gazing at the stars to find out the secrets of the skies, or the daily reading of grammar. This is one of the few occasions when I can talk freely and at ease with friends, and with no hidden meaning or intention. I wanted to deliver a speech of my own, which would be worthy of the occasion. Seven times I wrote out a speech, as I write out new writs, but each time there was some defect or other. Sometimes it was dignity that was wanting, sometimes it was sweetness, sometimes it was lucidity, sometimes it was sequence or flow, and sometimes it was completeness. Finally, I came to the conclusion that there was nothing

which I could write which could equal the famous speech of the great master on a like occasion¹, and that the best thing I could do would be to deliver the same speech to you with additions, illustrations and explanations wherever necessary. I proceed forthwith to do so.

“ Speak the truth. This is the key-stone of all learning and religion. All your learning is only an attempt to find out Truth which is God. Never lose sight of this great injunction of old. If at all you are to come to any good, you must speak the truth, to yourself and to others. Of course, the thing is not as simple as it looks. As stated in the *Mahabharata*, ‘ He is a wise man who knows the distinction between truth and falsehood in all its aspects.’ The great sage Kausika Satyavadin was inordinately fond of his fame as the speaker of truth, and so failed to realise the truth that his fame was less important than the lives of innocent fellow-beings. One day, when doing penance in the forest, he saw a helpless wayfarer being pursued by a dozen murderous dacoits. The wayfarer hid himself in some bushes near the sage. The dacoits approached the sage and asked him where the poor refugee was. Proud of his reputation for truth, he disdained to utter a lie, and pointed out the hiding place. The dacoits dragged out the poor man and killed him at once. For this, Kausika Satyavadin got ten-thousand years in Hell, despite all his passionate clinging to truth. He asked Sri Krishna indignantly, ‘ God is Truth. So, should I not have uttered the truth at all costs? Why punish me for this?’ Krishna replied, ‘ But God can protect the innocent against all

1. It is given in the Upanishads.

villains. You evidently could not. So, you should have kept silent and taken the risk, or even uttered a white lie and saved the man, incurring a small sin for avoiding a graver one. In your egotism you forgot that elementary truth, and are now prating about your equality with God.' Kausika kept silent. So, brother Aryas, in war, in love, in innocent social functions, in gambling, and in joke, and of course, in works of imagination, the rigidity of Truth can be relaxed a little. A little sin will no doubt be incurred, but graver sins will be avoided. That is also why our sages have said, 'Speak the truth, but not the unpleasant truth. Speak what is pleasant, but not what is untrue.' Truly it is difficult even for the saint to distinguish between truth and falsehood. Still, we must try and speak the truth on all but the exceptional occasions mentioned above. Once, God took 'Truth out of Himself and put it in one scale of the balance, and put the remaining part of Himself in the other. Truth weighed heavily, and the other scale went up sky-high because of its lightness. Thereafter, sages called God '*Satya*' or Truth.

"Practise the *Dharma* of your respective castes. Let each one among you realise himself by knowing himself, and doing the things prescribed for his caste. One's own *Dharma* leads to salvation, another's *Dharma* is full of danger at every turn. A teacher must teach, a barber must shave, a soldier must fight. If a barber turn teacher, or teacher turn barber, the results may not be happy.

"Neglect not the daily recitation of your *Vedas*. In the *Vedaes*, lie your distinction, power and hope. Recite

them daily, and you can become gods. Neglect them, and you become feeble and commonplace.

"Give your preceptor on parting, something or other which he loves. Love and gratitude can often be expressed only by such material gifts. Thus you can show your gratitude for the immense service he has rendered you. Give according to your ability. But give something. Don't be barren cows eating up grass greedily, and giving nothing in return.

"Go home, and get married, and see that the line of your progeny is not broken. You are not isolated units in the scheme of life. You are the descendants of your ancestors, and the ancestors of your descendants. Don't break the chain of life. Don't put out the torch of descent. You owe your debts to the gods, to the *Rishis*, and to your ancestors. Perform sacrifices regularly, and discharge the debts to the gods. Read the *Vedas* and *Sastras*, and discharge your debts to the *Rishis*. Leave at least a child behind, and discharge the debt to your ancestors.

"You must not neglect the rites to the gods. You must not neglect the reading of the *Vedas*. You must not neglect the rites to the ancestors.

"You must not neglect your own welfare. Worship your mother as a god, worship your father as a god, worship your teacher as a god, worship your guest as a god.

"Those acts that are above reproach, those alone shall you do, and none others. Study and imitate only

those acts of ours which are good, and none others. To Brahmins or holy men who are superior to you, offer your seats, and remove their fatigue, and listen to their wisdom with bated breath.

"You must give your gifts with faith. You must not give without faith. But give even without faith, rather than not give at all. Give according to your means. Give from the fear of the Great Giver, who may withhold His gifts if you withhold yours. Give from friendship. Give from fellow-feeling. Give from very shame at not giving when so many others like you give."

"Should doubts arise in your mind regarding the propriety of any act or conduct, follow those that are devoted to wise deliberations and sober judgments, those that are assiduous and intent, those that are gentle and not swayed by violent passions, and those that are desirous of performing their duties. Act as these act in such matters."

"As regards those who have been accused of some sin or crime, follow the practice of those that are given to wise deliberations and sober judgments, those that are assiduous and intent, those that are gentle and are not swayed by violent passions. As these act towards them so should you act."

"This is the commandment, this is the advice, this is the hidden import of the *Vedas*, this is the instruction and message. Thus should it be acted upon with faith and reverence. *Om Santi Santi Santi*!"

Chanakya sat down. Then Dharmaratna said, "Aryas ! we have heard the familiar old words of wisdom explained anew by the venerable Chanakya with his characteristic sweetness and lucidity. I cannot thank him sufficiently for the trouble he has taken in coming here and delivering the Address. Nor can we express adequately our deep debt of gratitude to our beloved sovereign and prince. Now we shall adjourn after the concluding prayer. I shall lead." He repeated the famous prayer.

*"Asato ma sat gamaya
Tamaso ma jyotir gamaya
Mrityor ma amritam gamaya"*

(Lead us, oh Lord, from Untruth to Truth,
Lead us, oh Lord, from Darkness to Light,
Lead us, oh Lord, from Death to Life !),

and the vast audience repeated it after him.

Then the Emperor declared the Convocation closed, amidst a *Mangalam*¹ song which ran:

"May this holy land of Bharata
Guarded by the mountains and the sea,
Keep to *Brahma*, *Dharma* and *Karma*,
Whatever her future Fate may be !"

1. Auspicious concluding verse.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE ADMIRAL RETURNS

ADMIRAL Samudranatha arrived at Pataliputra from Tamralipti after completing his expedition of exploration of the isles and coasts of Ind and of Indian colonies. This expedition, though sanctioned years before by the Grand Council, was taken in hand only some sixteen months back due to the delay in getting the ships and men and equipment ready. Chandragupta, who had returned from Takshasila one month earlier, after the Convocation there, received Samudranatha at a special levee attended by Prince Bindusara and by Chanakya, Raksha and other ministers, nobles and citizens; and asked him to give an account of his voyage. The queens Santavati, Durdhara, Nirmala and Devabhanta were also there, seated behind a curtain. Samudranatha began his story :

"Sire, as per Your Majesty's command, I proceeded with the hundred ships newly built for the purpose, and carrying a thousand sailors and a thousand merchants, and provisions sufficient for two years, after offering worship at the temple of Durga Aparajita in her aspect as *Bhadrarya*¹. The first place we touched was Kalingapatnam, the sea-port of the Kalingas. There we found the very finest ivory from the *Dasarna*² country. Some ships go from there to the far eastern islands of Sumatra, Java, Madura, Bali etc., across the sea, as also to

1. Lady of Security.

2. Orissa.

Suvarnabhumi¹ and Malaya, and to Simhala or Nagadvipa² wherefrom wonderful pearls were being imported. The Captains of some of the Kalinga ships told us strange stories of monsters of the deep, sea-serpents, whales, sea-dogs, sea-hares, sea-wolves, sea pigs, sea-cows, etc. They told us also of islands in the middle of the Kalinga sea³, the northern group of islands being called the Andamans and the southern group the Nagnadvipa⁴. The men and women of these islands were said to be pygmies and to be black and naked and to be indistinguishable from a distance, both the sexes having clean-shaven heads. They were also said to be addicted to cannibalism.

"Our curiosity was roused. We had the accounts corroborated at the Kalinga capital, Parthivapura.⁵ We resolved to visit the islands. We sailed to the northern group of these islands, taking some Kalinga guides with us. We found those islands just as they had been described to us. We proclaimed to the inhabitants, through our guides, the might of Your Majesty, and planted Your Majesty's glorious flag, showing the Moon rising behind the Himalayas and a Peacock dancing in the foreground, in a port situated on a fine Bay.⁶ The islanders were highly pleased with the coloured flags, and asked for a few spare ones for their chiefs. We gave them these. We

1. Burma.

2. Ceylon.

3. The Bay of Bengal

4. The Nicobars.

5. Parthalis of Megasthenes.

6. Port Blair.

gave also some clothes to the naked women. But, instead of wearing them round their loins they tied them round their heads, and danced about in high glee !”

“ Savages and monkeys are alike,” said Rakshasa. “ They appreciate dress as an ornament, and not as an article of decency.”

“ Even civilised women are not very different,” said Chanakya.

Samudranatha proceeded : “ We left the northern group of islands, and sailed to the southern group. The people of Nagnadvipa were more ferocious than the lazy islanders of the northern group. Here we found also some cannibals. When one of our men went to pluck some cocoanuts from the hinterland, some islanders surrounded him and killed him, and ate parts of him raw before we could gather sufficient force and go to his rescue. But we attacked them and killed a hundred of them. Then we left the island in disgust. But, there was another island adjoining it, and a narrow strait in between. Our ships were dragged into that strait in a sudden storm, and eighteen of them were dashed against the rocks, killing a hundred-and-fifty of our men. ‘ This is the penalty for our killing the ignorant cannibals, for following their ancestral custom,’ said a Brahmin priest in one of our remaining ships. The sailors were furious. The captain of that ship, in a rage, put that Brahmin ashore saying, ‘ Live with your cannibals and follow your ancestral customs.’ The Brahmin wept and wailed, but the ships sailed on.”

"What became of him finally?" asked Rakshasa.

"We must go back to the island to ascertain that," said Samudranatha amidst laughter.

"Then we sailed on eastwards to Sumatra, Java, Madura, Bali, Matan¹, Champa² and Kamboja³ and found there small colonies of Indians from various parts settled amicably among the native inhabitants. These vast new lands were being slowly brought under cultivation by these settlers from Vanga, Kalinga, Dravida, Simhala, Kerala and Saurashtra with the aid of the enthusiastic natives. There were no cannibals in these islands, except in the interior of Sumatra and Matan. Great quantities of tin and zinc were being mined in Malaya. Cinnamon and cassia, cardamoms, cloves and nutmegs grow in all these islands in plenty. There is also a peculiar tree there which exudes a thick viscous liquid which, when dried up and rolled into balls, jumps up and down like a thing alive. I have brought three such balls."

With this he handed over three small balls of rubber of the size of tennis-balls. The Emperor threw one down on the floor with force, and it jumped up to the ceiling to the wonder and joy of the assembled multitude. Devabhrinta, who had seen this from behind the curtains, sent for a ball at once for exhibiting it to the ladies, and for sending it afterwards to her father Seleukos as a wonder of the East. Chanakya gravely took a ball in his hand, pressed it, smelt it, threw it gently on the floor,

1. Borneo.

2. Annam.

3. Cambodia.

kept on rebounding it a number of times, and then handed it over to Rakshasa.

"It is a wonderful thing," said Rakshasa, after feeling it. "But, still, I doubt whether it is such a wonder as to be sent to Seleukos." "Its wonder will be everlasting," said Chanakya. "It is one of the important goods of the future."

Samudranatha continued :—

"We saw a mountain belching fire. It was called by the Indian settlers there Krakatoa from its constant crackling sound. These Indians said that a great demon called *Kolihattai* was living in the mountain and that he was emitting fire from his mouth. Our men got afraid and insisted on my not going farther eastwards and on my turning back towards India.

"From the eastern islands we sailed westwards to Simhala, which is also known as Nagadvipa or Tamraparni," continued Samudranatha. "Its capital is Anuradhapura. It has got two fine ports one to the west and one to the east. The King feasted us sumptuously, and made many enquiries about Your Majesty and praised Your Majesty's wisdom, referring to the way in which the lion was let out of the cage. He gave a dozen priceless pearl-necklaces, and a pair of tusks 7 feet 6 inches long, and capable of holding a gallon of water each, to Your Majesty as a token of his esteem. He was so much taken up with Your Majesty's title '*Devanam priya*¹,' that he has craved Your Majesty's indulgence to

1. The beloved of the gods.

assume it for the kings of his line also. Samudranatha then handed over the necklaces and the tusks, which were greatly admired. Chanakya gave his opinion that the pearls were finer than any from the Pandya country, and the tusks finer than the best Kerala and Kalinga ones.

"Is the island of Simhala very fertile?" asked Rakshasa.

"So fertile that there is a saying that even an iron rod planted there will put forth leaves and flowers the next morning," replied Samudranatha.

"It must be a rich country, seeing that such pearls and tusks are found there," said Chanakya.

"And there are also thousands and thousands of cocoanut and arecanut trees," said Samudranatha. "From Lanka¹, the western port, down to the southernmost end of the island there is a profusion of cocoanut trees on the coast.

He continued; "From Lanka we sailed up the west coast of India. First came *Kumari* the southern extremity of our country, where there is the celebrated temple of the Goddess Kumari. There, at the junction of three oceans, the Goddess Kumari, with a view to marry Siva, collected enormous quantities of rice, dhal, blackgram, vegetables and other provisions for giving a wedding-feast to all created beings, besides gold-dust for presenting to Brahmins. Then she prayed to Siva, and did the severest penance for accomplishing her wish. Siva having already married Meenakshi of the adjoining Pandya

1. Colombo-

2. Cape Comorin

country, was unable to marry her. So, he sent Vishnu with a message '*Kanya Kumari*!' (Remain a maiden, oh daughter) to the Goddess Kumari. She was so stricken with sorrow that she and all her provisions at once turned to stone. The place was named *Kanya Kumari* after this incident. The beautiful idol in the temple there, and the sands resembling rice, blackgram, gold-dust and vegetables are a proof of the truth of the story. *Kumari* is in the Keralaputra country which is in *Tamilakam*, or the Tamil land, from which the venerable Chanakya comes. The Pandyas, Cholas and Cheras form part of a distinct division of the *Dakshinapatha* called *Tamilakam*, below the river Pennar and the sacred Venkata Hills where Lord Venkateswara lives as the unquestioned Lord of all *Tamilakam*, and has the allegiance of also the Andhras, Satyaputras and Kannadigas. The greatest rivers in *Tamilakam* are the Northern *Pennar*, the *Palar*, the Southern *Pennar*, the *Kaveri*, the *Vaigai* and the *Tamraparni*. The *Tamraparni* is the southernmost river in *Jambudvīpa*. Things are very different in *Tamilakam* from here. A great mountain, the Western Ghats, divides the Kerala country from the lands of the Cholas and Pandyas to the east. The customs on both sides of the mountain are diametrically opposite. The men to the west of the mountain wear their tufts in front while the men to the east of it wear their tufts in the back. Women to the west of the mountain wear spotlessly white clothes while only widows wear white clothes to the east of the mountain, married women wearing coloured clothes. To the west of the mountain, woman is over man while

east of the mountain man is over woman. Many strange and curious customs flourish in those lands. We feel as if we are in a different world."

"Describe the religion and customs in some detail," said Chandragupta. "We would like to hear a description of Acharya Chanakya's land." "As Your Majesty orders," said Samudranatha. "*Kumari*, or, *Bhagawati*, or *Kali* is the favourite deity of the Keralaputra country, as *Kumara*, or *Andi* is the favourite deity of the Pandya country, and *Siva*, or, *Pasupati* is the favourite deity of the Chola country. *Kumari* is of course, unmarried unlike *Kali*. *Kumara* is married to a goddess called *Valli*, unlike our Kartikeya. *Pasupati* is the creator, preserver and destroyer, all in one, unlike our *Siva*, who is only the destroyer. In the South things, called by much the same names as here, are somewhat different. This is not only regarding gods, but also regarding men.

"While here full dress is a sign of high rank, over there full dress is the sign of a servant. Servants are asked to be dressed from head to foot, so that their ignoble limbs may not hurt noble eyes! Brahmins and nobles wear only a loin cloth. The Brahmins there are generally darker than our Sudras here, but do not touch flesh, or fish, or eggs. They are all called *Parpars* ('readers of the Vedas') or *Ayyars* ('honoured Aryas') and even the common people are addressed as 'Ayya' or Arya. The language of *Tamilakam* is called *Tamil*. It is said to have been invented by the Aryan sage Agastya. But it is more different from Sanskrit in speech or writing than Kharoshti, or even the language of the Parsikas or Yavanas.

"There are three Kings in the Tamil country, ruling over the three Kingdoms of Chola, Pandya, and Keralaputra. They rule their countries well, but are always at war with one another. They have five great assemblies to aid them; one is composed of the representatives of the people; another of the Physicians; another of the Astrologers; another of the Priests; and the fifth of Government Officials and Judges. The Queen always sits with the King in the Hall of Justice and at Public functions. Land revenue, customs and tolls form the chief sources of revenue. In the Pandya kingdom, slaves and condemned men are made to dive in the sea and bring out pearls, which form a valuable source of revenue like the sale of elephants in the Keralaputra Kingdom, and the rice crops in the Chola Kingdom.

"Our Caste System does not exist there. There are three main divisions, Brahmins, Tamils and Pariahs. The Brahmins are respected, but are a class apart. The Tamils are divided into five classes, namely, the sages, the farmers, the shepherds, the soldiers, and fishermen and scavengers. Women move freely among men, and marriages are often settled by the young people themselves.

"Music, dancing, feasts, cock-fighting and quail-fighting are the amusements. Dramas are popular: and are frequently enacted with much singing and dancing. There are festivals to Indra, Kumara, Siva and Kumari. The armies consist of elephants, cavalry, chariots and infantry, as with us, but all three Tamil Kingdoms have very strong navies, and especially the Pandya Kings, who have the 'fish' as their fitting emblem to symbolise the mastery of the seas. They do not think much of defeats

on land, but take to heart defeats at sea. The Kings call themselves '*Kaliyuga Ramas*,' as they have also successfully invaded Ceylon now and then. The Cholas are strong in infantry, and have the 'tiger' as their appropriate emblem. The Keralaputras are strong in elephantry.

"All the three Tamil Kingdoms are weak in cavalry. Their saying, 'God in his mercy did not give horns to horses and hills,' shows their dread of high-mettled horses. They import a number of very fine Arab steeds, but usually engage Arab horsemen to ride them. This may become dangerous to them in future as mercenaries are always a source of danger.

"But their soldiers are brave. Once a mother heard that her son had fled from a battle, and so went with a sword to the battle-field in order to cut off the breasts that had suckled him, if the news was true. She rejoiced to see him among the slain with wounds on his chest and none on his back.

"The Kings move freely among the men, and cheer up the wounded. There is a close personal touch between the rulers and the ruled. That is why the people are quite ready to fight for their independence even against us. As one man told me at Kaveripumpatnam, 'Sir, we prefer to have a King from among ourselves instead of being governed by a Viceroy sent by a distant Emperor whose language and customs are different from ours.'

"After our victories at Podiyil hill, our prestige has increased with all the Tamil Kings. They talk of the Mauryas with respect, now, but add also: 'Our Chanakya too is partly responsible for this.'"

"Certainly," said Chandragupta. "The account you have given of the south country is very interesting."

"It is also accurate and impartial," said Chanakya.

"Is the Keralaputra country very rich?" asked Rakshasa.

"I should say so," replied Samudranatha. "It has wonderful timber trees like ebony, rosewood, teakwood and sandalwood; it has many fruit trees like the cocoanut, arecanut, plantain and jack; it has valuable spices like pepper, long-pepper, nutmegs, cardamoms, cinnamon and cloves. It has semi-precious stones, like beryl. It has many ports, like Kozhikode, Tiruvanchi, Tribhuvanam, Kochi, and Kottayam. There are all kinds of ships and craft there, and a brisk trade is carried on with Arabia and other distant places. The rivers of Keralaputra are not very large, though they are flooded during the monsoon. The *Periyar* and the *Bharata* river are the biggest rivers. One river, the Nilambur river, brings down to Kozhikode giant teak trees felled in the mountain forests by men and carried to this river by the elephants. Each man puts his mark on his timber, and no other man will dare to interfere with it. The Cholas and Pandyas build their temples like palaces whereas the Keralas build them like ordinary houses of big men (*Perumal*-bigman-they call God). One other curious feature in Kerala is that the temple priests on duty have to live in the temples themselves all the time during their turn. This is to ensure that they have no relations with women while serving God.

" From Keralaputra we went to the Satyaputra country, with its capital at Mangaloura. The same kinds of things, but lesser in quantity than in Keralaputra, are found in Satyaputra. The language is not Tamil but an allied one, Tulu. There is only one main port, and the country itself is small.

" Then we went to the Kannada country. We saw Karwar, Honavara, Gokarna with its famous temple of Siva, the Kannadi islands, the Anjidvipa¹ and Sasigriva islands², and the port of Marmagram³. Pirates abounded on this coast, but kept clear of us on seeing our strength. The Keralaputra coast was being kept free of pirates by the King's fleet, like the Pandyan and Chola coasts.

" From the pirate-infested Kannada coast we proceeded northwards to Aranyavaha or *Mahalavana*⁴, Ratnagiri, Paripatana, Mandaragiri, Vijayadurga, Devgarh and Champavati. Then we went to Kalyani, the great western port of the Andhra country. There are two great inland cities of Dhanyakheta and Pratishtana, sending corn and clothes to Kalyani. The Kingdom of the Andhras stretches from sea to sea. The Andhras keep their ports on the western and eastern seas free from pirates by hanging all relatives of suspected pirates together with their harbourers and supporters.

" From Kalyani we went to our own port of Surat and Bharukachcha at the mouths of the *Tapti* and the

1 Oyster islands

2. Vengurla rocks,

3. Vital village, Modern Marmagoa,

4. Modern Malwan.

Narmada respectively. From there we went inland to Ujjaini for a few days for rest and recuperation. There are none to equal the dancing girls of Ujjaini in grace and charm, music and dancing, and desire to please. After our return from Ujjaini we went from Bharukachcha to Somnathpatan, Dwaraka, Mandvi and Patala in our own realm. Then we returned along the whole west coast, and touched at the ports of the east coast not touched by us before.

"We passed the famous Pamban and Palk straits, and worshipped at Rameswaram, after bathing at *Dhanushkodi* and Talaimannar. Oh, it was such a wonderful experience! The mass of foam there did justify the name "Sea of Milk." Then we went to Korkai, the great port of the Pandyas, full of ships from all the countries of the world, and having marvellous buildings built with brick and wood, but inlaid with pearls and corals. We went from there to Madura, and saw the famous temple of Meenakshi there.

"Then we went to Kaveripattinam, and saw the equally splendid and busy port of the Cholas. Some merchants from Rome and Alexandria in Egypt have built houses and shops there. The finest pearls from Persia, and rubies of pomegranate colour, and lapis lazul are there in plenty. We then went inland to Uraiyur and Arkot, the capitals of the Cholas, fine cities with stately buildings. We then touched at Nagapattinam and Puducheri, two other ports of the Cholas. Though the Cholas have more ports than the Pandyas, they are better as soldiers than as sailors. We also visited Kanchi, recently conquered by our troops, and worshipped at the famous *Kamakshi* temple there.

The King of Mohur, who owned the city formerly and opposed us stoutly, is now very quiet and friendly.

"We went next to Machlipatnam in the Andhra country with its fine cotton clothes. Here the language spoken is allied to Tamil in its roots but has many more *Prakrit* and Sanskrit words than Tamil and is nearer to our Magadhi in vocabulary. We went and saw the famous cities of Amaravati, Rajapura and Dantapura from there. People there were more like us than the Tamils in manners and habits. From Machlipatnam we set sail for Tamralipti, and reached there sixteen months and three days after we set sail, and with 345 sailors and with 840 merchants, left out of the original 1,000 sailors and 1,000 merchants. And now, gracious sovereign who rules from Patala to Patali¹ I await your further commands."

"The dependants of each of the sailors who perished in this voyage will be given a thousand *Panas* as gratuity. Every sailor who survives is given five-hundred *Panas* as reward. The royal navy will be strengthened, and will consist of 1,000 ships hereafter. You are made a *Sreshti*² and our Admiral of the fleet for ten years more, with an allowance of 24,000 *Panas* per year," said Chandragupta.

Samudranatha Sreshti then saluted the King, and withdrew from the Royal presence.

1. That is from Patala in Sind to Pataliputra.

2. Noble. Modern Chetty or Setti

CHAPTER XXIV

MEGASTHENES AT PATALIPUTRA

In 301 B. C., two years after the Treaty of Taksasila, Seleukos, in conjunction with Ptolemy, Lysimachos, and Kassender, fought the famous battle of Ipsos against Antigonos and his son Demetrios. The elephants given by Chandragupta turned the scales against Antigonos, who was defeated and killed, and his former territories divided among his rivals. Seleukos got the whole of Syria and the larger part of Asia Minor as his share. Soon afterwards, in 300 B. C., he sent his friend and companion Megasthenes, who had been employed under Sibyrtios, the Satrap of Arachosia till its cession to Chandragupta, as envoy to the Mauryan court at Pataliputra with presents, of figs, raisins, wine, olive oil, dates, and some rare Greek vases. Megasthenes was received by Aryamitra, the Mauryan Governor of Ariana¹ at the frontier town of Herat², on behalf of Bindusara who was now the Viceroy of Takshasila. Thereafter he was a State-guest of Chandragupta; Siddharthaka, the President of the Committee in charge of foreigners, looked after his arrangements. He pointed out to him with pride the snow-clad mountains till then called the Indian Caucasus and said, "We have called them the *Hindu Koh*³, or Hindu Mountains now, after we got these territories."

1. Harivana.

2. Haristhala

3. Later on, after the Muslims had conquered this part of the country, these mountains were called the Hindu Kush or the Hindu-

Siddharthaka took Megasthenes to Takshasila *via* Udabhandapura. The crossing of the *Indus* was in a fine royal barge, and was to the accompaniment of music. "This is our way of receiving guests," said Siddharthaka. At Takshasila Megasthenes was received by Bindusara, who gave a banquet in his honour, and, in his turn, ate the figs and dates given to him by Megasthenes, and drank the wine, and liked them immensely, and especially the figs which he declared to be the sweetest fruits he had ever eaten.

From Takshasila Megasthenes went by the great royal road to Pataliputra. He was immensely pleased to see that the road was 48 feet broad, and had shady trees on both sides with mile-stones every $1\frac{1}{4}$ miles, and with wells and choultries every eight miles.

"A fine road," said Megasthenes, "but rather easy for the enemy to advance in war time." "It is intended to pursue the enemy effectively, and not for his advance," said Siddharthaka. When Megasthenes crossed the *Hydaspes* and his chariot passed Boukephala, Siddarthaka pointed out to him the place where Alexander's Durbar was held. The Greek envoy watched with interest those scenes of Alexander's exploits, but was grieved to hear that all the Greek colonists had left Nikaia and Boukephala. At Rajagiri on the *Hyphasis* he had a look at Alexander's altars, which were still kept intact, though converted into Hindu places of worship, where even the Mauryan royal

Killer in memory of a battle fought there in 990 A. D. which ended in the defeat of the Hindus under Jayapala with great slaughter. It has recently been re-named the *Hindu Koh* by the Afghan Government.

family used to worship when passing that way. "A good idea, this combination of Greek and Indian symbols of worship," said Megasthenes. "After all, the gods are the same, it is the worshippers who differ. I hope they too will soon like each other better."

They proceeded to Indraprastha on the *Jumna*. Siddharthaka showed the ruins of the palace of the Pandavas and mentioned the *Mahabharata* war. "It is so like our Trojan war. Only, there, the parties were not related to one another, and the whole affair started with the abduction of Helen to Troy," said Megasthenes.

"We have an epic called the *Ramayana* about the abduction of Sita to Lanka and a war on that account," said Siddharthaka.

"The fort is not so very strong," said Megasthenes.

"We Indians rely more on the men who man the fort than on the materials," said Siddharthaka.

The next important place they passed was Mathura.

"This is the birth-place of Krishna, son of Devaki, who is worshipped by millions as *Bhagavan Vasudeva*," said Siddharthaka to Megasthenes pointing to the twin City of Mathura and Krishnapura. Megasthenes was deeply interested in the story of Krishna's exploits and his moonlight dances with the *gopis* in Brinda forest, and exclaimed, "Why, he is Dionysius and Heracles combined". They passed on to Hastinapura on the *Ganges*. Siddharthaka tried to explain the historical importance of that place. As Megasthenes saw no monuments on the ground either very remarkable or ancient, he was not very much interested in

the account. The next big town passed was Radhapura¹. Then they went to Kanyakubja, and thence to Prayag at the confluence of the *Jumna* and the *Ganges*, and thence to Benares. Siddharthaka told Megasthenes about the sacredness of Prayag and showed him the famous banyan tree in the fort there and said that defeated Kings used to hurl themselves from the branches of that tree into the *Jumna* below to put an end to their dishonoured existence. At Benares he told Megasthenes, "This is the most sacred city in India. The waters of the *Ganges* are holy. Indeed, Indians consider *Ganges* water to be nectar, and not mere water. Every Indian hopes to die at Benares on the banks of the *Ganges*. The belief is that death here ensures heaven."

They reached Pataliputra on the 66th day after starting from Takshasila. During the whole journey Megasthenes had been very much interested in the rice and millet and sugarcane crops in the adjoining fields, and in the variety of fruits and bulbous roots, and the flexibility of the branches of trees, and generally in the great fertility of the Gangetic regions. The many tributaries of the *Ganges*, like the *Jumna*, the *Gomti*, the *Sarayu* and the *Gandaki*, each a mighty river by itself, and the lakes formed in many places, pleased him greatly. At one place near Pataliputra the river was in floods, and was three miles broad. The people west of the *Ganges* were being referred to as *Gangaputras*² by Siddharthaka. Megasthenes found the Indians tall, thin and agile, and distinguished by their

1. The Rhodopha of the Greeks.

2. 'Gangaridae' of Megasthenes.

proud bearing. They were fond of living in their villages instead of in great undisciplined multitudes in towns. Most of them were illiterate, but had a great attachment to truth and virtue. They respected their word, and made deposits of gold and valuables orally, without any writing to witness them. They were generally frugal in their habits, but were fond of finery and ornament. The robes of the well-to-do and especially of the ladies, were worked in gold and ornamented with precious stones. They also wore flowered garments with precious stones. Attendants walking behind were holding umbrellas over the nobles. They had a high regard for beauty, and were availing themselves of every device to improve their looks. Houses and property were generally left unguarded, but were safe from thieves. The laws were those handed down through the ages, and were attested to by Brahmins who recited them from memory.¹ He did not find slaves, and was told that Indians did not like the institution of slavery, because they were convinced that the best life was that of a man who never cringed to a master, or domineered over a slave. The tombs were very plain, and many tribes burnt the dead bodies and raised no monuments to the dead at all, considering the memory of their virtuous acts done when alive, to be sufficient. The staple food of the people was rice and curry. The lower classes drank rice arrack, but the higher classes did not drink it. Siddharthaka told Megasthenes that they drank wine only when performing sacrifices. Megasthenes was pleased at all this. But he

1. The *Smritis*, or law-books, like those of Manu.

found that people were taking meals in private, each by himself, and that the hours of meals were all irregular, each one taking it when he liked. He considered this curious, and told Siddharthaka that common meals at fixed times would make for better social and civic life. Siddharthaka told him that it would be considered a great infringement of the liberties of the people and the laws of the Indians, who would rise in revolt against any such imposition.

When they reached Pataliputra, Megasthenes was conducted by Siddharthaka to the palatial State Guest-House, and he was given all comforts.

The next morning was the great festival of *Deepavali*, when the Emperor would bathe and wash his hair at a public levee of the nobles and high officers and foreign Ambassadors, and would receive costly presents from the feudatory Princes. Megasthenes was purposely taken by Siddharthaka to Pataliputra on the eve of this great annual ceremony, so that he might be presented to the Emperor on that auspicious occasion. The next morning, at six o'clock, Megasthenes was woke up and taken to the levee. He found the Emperor seated in the middle of the feudatory princes, nobles, ministers and officials and a vast concourse of people all bathed and wearing new robes. He was being bathed, and his hair washed with *Ganges* water. After this was over, the princes and nobles gave their presents, and received return presents from the Emperor. Megasthenes too went and gave the gifts sent by Seleukos ; Chandragupta received them graciously, gave in return two gold bowls inlaid with emeralds, and containing some aphrodisiacs of rare power asked for by Seleukos, and

made many polite inquiries about Seleukos and the other Greek monarchs of Macedon, Epirus, Egypt, and Cyrene. He then asked Rajasena and the *Dubash*¹ Katyayana to accompany Siddharthaka, and show Megasthenes round the palace and town. The King then went to the 'Hall of Justice,' as it was 7-30 A. M. to hear the petitioners and the reserved cases.

Megasthenes was taken round the Palace, and was greatly impressed with its beauty and splendour. He saw a great sacrifice being performed in one corner by a Brahmin priest, and was surprised to see that the goat was not stabbed, as in Greece, but suffocated to death. He asked Katyayana, why this was so. "So that nothing mutilated may reach the deity," replied Katyayana.

Megasthenes had a peep into the 'Hall of Justice', and saw Chandragupta still patiently hearing the cases. Four men were rubbing him with cylinders of wood.

"Why doesn't the King retire to his private room for this massage?" he asked Katyayana.

"That will simply be a waste of time when this could be done even when hearing cases," was the reply.

"Does he not have a nap at this time, the hottest part of the day?" asked Megasthenes.

"Never does the King sleep during the day," said Katyayana. "But he rests between 12 noon and 3 P. M."

Megasthenes was shown eight rooms in different parts of the palace as Chandragupta's bedrooms.

1. *Dwibhashi*.—A man who knows two or more languages, and so acts as an interpreter.

"Why so many bedrooms?" he asked.

"He changes his bedroom every day in order to defeat plots against his life," replied Katyayana.

"Why has he female door-keepers and a female guard and female servants?" asked he.

"Because the queens may be with him, and it is therefore considered better to have female servants and guards," said Katyayana.

Megasthenes was shown a room in which there were some flasks of wine and some cups.

"Does the King take wine?" he asked.

"He just drinks a little now and then, especially when some joyous event happens, or when an honoured guest is invited to a banquet. He never drinks much. To get drunk is considered disgraceful. Indeed, the female aide-de-camp is expected to see that the King does not get drunk. Once a drunken King was killed by his Kshatriya female aide-de-camp for getting drunk and making improper proposals to her, thereby disgracing his throne and country. The next King not only did not punish her but married her, seeing the sound principles she had," said Katyayana.

Then, Megasthenes was taken for an interview with Queen Devabhanta, whom he knew from childhood and had been treating like his daughter. He had an interesting conversation with her in Greek. Rajasena, Siddharthaka and Katyayana stood out of hearing distance, out of politeness.

"How does Your Majesty get on here?" asked Megasthenes, after being seated on a cushion opposite the Queen who was attended by three ladies-in-waiting. "Splendidly," said the Queen.

"Are the other Queens very friendly?"

"Oh, yes," she replied. "They are such dears, terribly afraid of hurting me, or giving me offence. Santavati is the model of what a high-born princess should be. Oh, such a self-sacrificing woman! She is the senior Queen, but never takes food unless Durdhara, Nirmala and I are served first. She has no child, though she loves children. She has spoilt Bindusara by her caressing. Ever since he was born, he has been more with her than with his own mother Durdhara."

"He is a fine young Prince. I met him at Takshasila," said Megasthenes. "What is more, he seems to like our figs and wine very much, and knows more Greek than Chandragupta."

"Give the credit to me," said Devabhranta. "He is a darling. I have taken to him as if he were my own son."

"What kind of lady is his mother?" asked Megasthenes. "High-born, gentle and kind, but easily upset, and living in mortal fear that something may happen to Bindusara at any time. She is a very interesting woman. Hers is undoubtedly a loving nature," said she.

"And Queen Nirmala?" asked Megasthenes.

"She is a sweet little thing, still blushing deep when Chandragupta calls her. She comes from the noblest family in India, and you can see it from her face."

"What about the king?"

"Oh, he is really a very great man. I consider him far greater than my own father."

"Naturally."

"Oh, no, not because he is my husband. He is a combination of skill, judgment and consideration, action and contemplation. He appears to all people to be a man of action, but I believe that his real inclination is for contemplation. He has all possible luxuries here, but feels happier on a mud floor talking to the Brahmin, Buddhist and Jain ascetics. He loves us, his queens, and loves his son and subjects dearly, but I am afraid he loves several naked Jain idols far more. I found him shedding tears of joy over one of them one day. He has never done it over any of us. He was so absorbed in it that he didn't even see me. Durdhara came in, and prostrated to him and to the little stone. Santavati has never forgiven me for not having called her in to witness what she calls 'a sublime scene.' I told her in fun, 'He may one day desert us all and become a naked *Sannyasi* like Dandiswami and Kalanos.' Instead of getting apprehensive, she said with evident respect and approbation, 'His is really a religious nature. He is born like that. I believe she admired him all the more for it.'"

"Don't you want to visit Greece again?" asked Megasthenes.

"Yes, just to see old faces and places. But I have turned native in India. This land of eternal mystery has caught and tamed me. I love a carved lotus now more

than a Greek vase, a mango more than a fig, cocoanut-oil more than olive-oil, Chandragupta more than Seleukos, heat more than cold, the cow more than the horse, the peacock more than the hen, the *kokil* more than the nightingale, the Himalayas more than Olympus, Pataliputra more than my native town," said she, and shed tears.

"Diophantes!" said Megasthenes, a tear glistening in his eye, "Are you lost to Hellas?"

"Yes. I am no longer Diophantes! I am *Devabhrinta*," said she, wiping off her tears.

"The moment you see the isles of Greece, their fascination will grip you again," said Megasthenes.

"Just for a moment, perhaps. Then I should again pine for the plains of Ind," said Devabhrinta.

"Tell me more about this country," said Megasthenes. "I am writing a book about it."

"Katyayana will be a far better person for that. He knows Greek and the languages of India very well, and his fund of information on all kinds of topics, however uncommon, is amazing. I shall ask him to come to the guest-house and answer all your questions," said she.

Calling Katyayana to her side, she asked him to go to Megasthenes and give him whatever information he wanted.

"Your Majesty, I shall be delighted to do so," said Katyayana. "I shall tell him whatever I know. I shall find out and tell him about things I do not know."

"Excellent," said Devabhrinta.

Then Siddharthaka, Rajasena and Katyayana took Megasthenes to the great prison. Here Megasthenes saw a man's head being shaved with a hard brick for brutally assaulting a girl, and a man's hand being chopped off for having put out another's eye. He saw a man awaiting his death sentence for having cut off the hands of a famous sculptor. He found also two men being whipped for not having assisted in quelling a fire in their street, though they were able-bodied and were bound to help under the Municipal laws.

"Who has sentenced all these men?" he asked Vijayapala, the Superintendent of the Jail.

"The City Magistrates in the case of the men who did not help in putting out the fire, and the man who was being tortured with the brick; the High Court, subject to confirmation by the King, in the cases of the chopping off of the hands and the death sentence," said Vijayapala.

"Is there much theft here?" asked Megasthenes.

"Oh no, about two-hundred *Panas* per day in this town of 4,00,000 people," said Vijayapala.

"That is about two-hundred drachmas," said Katyayana.

Then Megasthenes was taken to the Town Hall and Municipal Office. He was greatly interested in the six committees of five members each, looking after the industrial arts, foreigners, births and deaths, trade and commerce, old and new manufactured articles, and collection of a tax amounting to a tenth of the sale-proceeds of all articles

sold in the town. In their collective capacity they had charge of public buildings and roads, the regulation of prices and the care of markets, harbours and temples.

He was next taken to the War Office, where too he saw six committees of five each to assist the Lord High Admiral, the Superintendent of the commissariat, the infantry, the cavalry, the chariots and the elephants. He was greatly interested in the elephants, and was told about the method of their capture. He was shown how the mahout and the three elephant-warriors would sit on each war-elephant during a battle. He was also shown expert charioteers taking chariots with four high-mettled steeds round and round at a great pace. He learnt that all ranks in the army were paid cash wages, and that the horses, elephants, chariots and arms belonged to the State, and had to be returned when any soldier was discharged. He was also told that no private person was allowed to keep a war-elephant, or a war-horse.

Then, he was taken to the other offices in the city. There he saw the working of the markets, canals, tolls, passports, census, and weights and measures. The method of distribution of water from the canals, the measurement of the land, and the system of taxation, all greatly interested him. Late in the evening he returned to the guest-house after a strenuous and interesting day of sight-seeing.

The next day Megasthenes went to the office of the Superintendent of Accounts. He was impressed with the army of accountants and auditors there. They were

examining the imperial accounts of the last year submitted by the Collector-General.

"How many days has your year?" asked Megasthenes.

"Three-hundred-and-fifty-four," said the Superintendent.

"When are your accounts closed?"

"On the last day of *Ashadha*¹. We begin our examination of accounts on *Vyushtha* or New-Year's Day, the first day of *Shravana*²."

"How do you check the accounts of the provinces?"

"We have travelling accountants and auditors."

"How do you prevent delays?"

"The account and audit officer responsible is fined 200 *Panas* for every month of delay."

"What salary do you pay to your officers?"

"It ranges enormously. The *Ritvik*, *Rajaguru*, *Purohita*, Prime Minister, Commander-in-chief, Crown Prince, King's mother, and Queen are paid 48,000 *Panas* per year; the Chamberlain, Controller of the household, *Pradestri*, *Rajuka*, and *Sannidhatri* get 24,000 *Panas*; the Superintendents of the city, the heads of departments and Wardens of the Marches get 12,000 *Panas*; the elephant and chariot Captains 8,000; Captains of cavalry and infantry 4,000; Mahouts, chariot-drivers and others 2,000; Court-Astrologer and Bard 1,000; ordinary soldiers,

1. About 15th August.

2. About 16th August.

accountants and clerks 500 ; Musicians and Actors 250 ; Artisans 120 ; and Peons and Messengers 60."

"A very liberal scale, especially in the upper grades," said Megasthenes.

"The King's servants must be kept above want and temptation," said the Superintendent.

For a fortnight more Megasthenes went round the various offices of Pataliputra, studying the system of administration and government. He also mixed freely with the Brahmanas and *Sramanas*. He was interested in watching the Brahmin care of the pregnant mother and growing child, and liked the life of the Brahmins who lived in a separate quarter of the city in a simple style, assembling together every evening in a grove to discuss about serious things, or to listen to the discourses of wise men. He noted with approval that they did not speak, cough or spit, or interrupt the discourse in any way. Most of them, he was told, would study till they were 36, and then marry and settle down. Till then they would not eat flesh as food, or have sexual relations, and would use rushes and deer skins to lie on. After marriage they would wear fine muslin clothes and gold rings and ear-rings, and would not abstain from flesh food, though they would not eat the meat of cows or oxen, and would also avoid highly seasoned food. Death was with them a very favourite subject of discourse.

He also spent some time with the *Sramanas* or ascetics in the woods. Their knowledge of pharmacy pleased him. Their cures were more often effected by regulating the diet, than by the use of medicines, though

they used ointments and plasters. They were some of them diviners and sorcerers, and adepts in the rites and customs relating to the dead. They purposely inculcated such superstitions regarding the tortures in hell as they considered favourable to piety and holiness of life. Thus, they taught the people that those who fouled rivers and tanks would have in the next world to bail out the whole water with one-eighth of a gooseberry leaf!

Megasthenes had three more interviews with Chandragupta. At his request, the Emperor directed Bhadrabhatta to take him to an elephant-hunt in the Kalinga forests. It was an exciting journey through the country parts. But the actual hunt was still more exciting. A very deep trench, some half-mile long, was dug round a patch of ground full of juicy sugarcane. A very narrow bridge led into this enclosure, wherein three well-trained female elephants were kept. Men hid in concealed huts outside the enclosure. At night ten wild elephants entered the enclosure one after the other along the bridge. When the last one had crossed into the enclosure, the bridge was removed. The ten elephants thus trapped were starved for three days, and denied even water. Then trained mahouts on fine war-elephants went and fought the wild ones. Expert mahouts got under the bellies of the tired wild elephants, and tied their legs together. Then the wild ones and tame ones were tied together neck to neck with thongs of raw ox-hide. Cuts were made all round the necks of the wild ones, and thongs of leather put into the incisions in order to make them submit to the fetters and to remain quiet when mounted. One of the ten elephants

caught was too old, and another too young. Both were let off into the forest, and the rest were taken to the State elephant-stables twenty miles away, and were there gradually tamed by being tied up to fixed pillars, by regulated starvation, and by their being taught how to obey orders. When they were tamed they were given green reeds and canes in abundance, and quickly recovered their old strength and vigour.

Megasthenes saw also diseased elephants being treated. An elephant with a wound had hot water fomentation applied to it. Then the wounds were rubbed over with butter. Pieces of pork, hot but still retaining the blood, were applied to the wound. He found cow's milk being poured into their eyes for curing sore eyes, and black wine of wood-apples being given with chicken broth to invalid elephants.

He returned to Pataliputra highly pleased with what he had seen. It was two months since he came to Pataliputra. He wanted to go back to Seleukos with the presents Chandragupta had given. He told Katyayana that he would take leave of Chandragupta in three days, and leave for Syria. He asked him to see him the next morning at the guest-house at seven o'clock, and give him some general information about India.

"I shall be delighted to do so," said Katyayana.

CHAPTER XXV

FACTS AND FABLES

KATYAYANA was at the State Guest-House that cool December morning with all kinds of assorted information. He wandered round the garden for an hour till Megasthenes sent for him. At seven, Megasthenes came into the hall. "Oh, thank you very much for coming," said he. "Now we shall go straight to our business." Then he put a number of questions, and noted them and the answers in his notebook for ready reference when writing his book "*Indika*."

"How big is India?" asked Megasthenes.

"32,000 *stadia* from north to south, 28,000 from east to west," said Katyayana.

"So big?" asked Megasthenes.

"Yes. In the extreme south, at Cape Kumari the gnomon of the sun-dial often casts no shadow, the *Great Bear* is invisible at night, and shadows fall to the south,"

"Are there many other mountains besides the Hemodos¹ and the Indian Kaukosos?"²

"Oh, yes. There are many like the Vindhya, the Satpuras and the Western Ghats with an enormous number of timber and fruit trees of different kinds."

"Do you have famine now and then?"

1. The Himalayas.

2. The Hindukush or the Hindu Koh.

"Never has famine visited this country. There has never been a general scarcity in the supply of nourishing food," said Katyayana.

"That is wonderful," said Megasthenes. "How are you able to escape famine altogether? How many crops are grown, and what are they?"

"Two crops a year, the winter crop and the summer crop. Rice, millet, wheat, pulse, sugarcane, plantains, sesamum and many kinds of roots, besides cotton, hemp, and jute are the main crops."

"What is sugarcane?"

"It is a tall reed from which we extract sugar," said Katyayana.

"How is it possible to grow two crops every year?"

"We get two monsoons, and there are also facilities for irrigation."

"Has there ever been failure of rains, or devastation of crops, in this land?"

"Never."

"What happens when wars are waged?"

"Kings and their soldiers fight. The farmers and traders carry on their business as usual, as neither party will molest them. Both parties realise that everything depends on cultivation, and so leave it alone."

"Has your land been ever conquered?"

"Never. Even Alexander gave up all idea of conquering it, when he heard that we had 4,000 trained war-elephants."

"Have you invaded and conquered any other country?"

"Never."

"What are the boundaries of India?"

"The *Indus*, the *Ganges* and the ocean."

"Who are your neighbours?"

"The Persians, the Scythians and the Bactrians."

"Are all the Indians of one race?"

"Oh, no. We have innumerable races. But all these are indigenous to our country. Nobody has colonised any part of India, Nor have Indians colonised any other part of the world." "Who are your gods?" "We have our Dionysius¹, who ruled in a city in the far west², and captured the whole of India with his songs and dances. He taught our people the laws³. His descendants are still rulers of many kingdoms, our Emperor being one. We have also our Herakles⁴, who wears a lion's skin and carries a club. He cleared the sea and land of demons and evil beasts. He married one wife in the Himalayas, another at Benares, a third at Kanchi, and a fourth at Madura in the far south⁵. He was also the original founder of Pataliputra. He had two sons. He had a daughter by Meenakshi, and he made her the Queen of the Pandya country, and gave her an inexhaustible supply of the most lustrous pearls, the envy of the world."

1. Krishna.

2. Dwaraka

3. The *Gita*.

4. Siva.

5. Parvati, Visalakshi, Kamakshi and Meenakshi.

"Have you seven castes as in Egypt ? "

"What are the seven castes in Egypt?" asked Katyayana.

"Philosophers who offer sacrifices, perform the obsequies of the dead and foretell rains, winds, diseases etc; husbandmen: shepherds and cowherds; artisans; soldiers; spies and overseers; and councillors and assessors," said Megasthenes.

"Yes, we too have them," replied Katyayana.

"Can people marry outside their caste?"

"No."

"Which are your largest rivers?"

"The *Indus* and the *Ganges*. But there is a wonderful river in the Hemados by name *Sila*¹, where nothing floats but everything goes straight to the bottom."

"Wonderful! Is it possible to see it easily?"

"No. It takes a year to reach it, and only sages go there."

"How long does an elephant live?"

"As long as the longest lived man, and even longer. I have heard that an elephant lived up to two hundred years."

"Which is the centre of India?"

"The land of the Mundas and Savaras² where on Mount Malaya³, the shadows fall towards the north in

1. Means 'stone'

2. In Ganjam and Vizagapatam.

3. Mahendragiri i the Eastern ghats.

winter, and towards the south in summer for six months alternately."

"Tell me what cotton is."

"It is a kind of wool which grows on trees every year as ordinary wool does on sheep."

"What are the interesting animals in this country besides the elephant?"

"The monkey, the lion, the tiger, the rhinoceros, the peacock, the crocodile, the python, and the king-cobra. Crocodiles guard the trenches in a Chera fort."

"Where are the biggest tigers to be found?"

"Here, among the Prachyas¹. Have you not seen them?" asked Katyayana.

"Yes, yesterday I saw at the park a tame tiger, nearly twice the size of a lion, led by four men, seizing a mule by the hind leg and dragging it to itself. Are the monkeys malicious?" asked Megasthenes.

"No. They do not attack man, or steal things."

"What about the scorpions?"

"They are very troublesome. Some are very long and some are winged."

"Winged!"

"Yes. Even some serpents are winged. They are only two cubits long, and fly about at nights. If their secretions fall on people, blisters and itches are caused."

"Are there very big serpents?"

1. The people of Magadha and Bengal.

"There are serpents bigger than trees. They live in forests, and swallow even cattle."

"What other interesting animals are there?"

"There are the electric eel, the gold-digging ant, and the monkey which rolls down stones."

"How big are these gold-digging ants?"

"About four and a half feet tall."

"Are they of gentle disposition?"

"No; on the contrary, they are very fierce. This is natural, seeing that people want to steal their gold."

"Are there any more strange animals?"

"There are white elephants."

"White elephants!" exclaimed Megasthenes.

"Yes, but very rare. A man caught one recently on the borders of Kalinga. Our King wanted it and sent his men to him, offering him a great reward. The man would not part with it. Then the King sent a Captain with some troops to fetch it. The owner was wounded, and rolled down from the elephant's back. But the elephant picked him up, put him on its back, and bolted into the dense forest and escaped."

"Oh, how faithful are elephants, and how faithless is man!" exclaimed Megasthenes.

"The island of Taprobane, or Simhala has many fine elephants, with pearls inside their tusks," said Katyayana.

"Pearls inside tusks! Elephants producing pearls!" exclaimed Megasthenes.

"When slimy oysters can produce pearls, why not lordly elephants, sir?" asked Katyayana.

"Tell me something about your wonderful birds," said Megasthenes.

"We have parrots of three varieties," replied Katyayana. "They cannot talk when wild, but can be taught to speak like us. You must have noticed them at the palace. Then we have the *kokil*, which pines away in captivity, but sings wonderfully when with its mate. Our hoopoe is very beautiful, and is admired even by Kings. There is a myth about it. It was once born as the youngest prince in an Indian royal house. The elder brothers disdained the youngster, and treated their old parents with contempt. The young man, unable to bear such open slighting of his parents, set out with them for a new home. The old parents died on the way, in a desert, after a long journey. Most unwilling to bury them in that unholy spot, the prince took a sword, cut off his own head and buried his parents in his own body! The sun-god, in great admiration for this act of filial piety, changed him into this wonderful bird with the beautiful crest."

"Is there a myth about the river *Sila* also?" asked Megasthenes.

"Yes. It was once a hard-hearted usurer charging 300 percent interest per year. All people who had dealings with him were ruined, and died heart-broken. He ruined so many people that the moon-god made him the river *Sila*, in which anything put will at once turn into stone and sink."

"Your land is a great one for fables and myths. But how to separate the true facts from these encrusting legends?" asked Megasthenes.

"We never worry about it. Where is the time in this fleeting life? Where is the need too? The myths are known to thousands, the facts but to few, and so the myths are in a sense more real than the facts," said Katyayana.

"Well, conclude your account of the other wonderful animals," said Megasthenes.

"We have the ant-eater which has got such rough scales on the skin, that the animal is flayed and the scales used as files for cutting through brass and iron. There are herds of wild mares in the *Aranya* country¹, which consort with asses and give birth to mules, which are caught young and brought to our King for drawing carts during war time. They are caught with foot-traps. There are yaks which give fine yak-tails, peacocks which give the peacock fans, whales sixty feet long, sea-wolves, sea-hares, sea-snakes, and tortoises, the shells of some of which can contain twenty gallons of water. There is in the Malava country a cavern 3,000 feet deep, where people throw an animal as a sacrifice to save themselves from death, illness or other calamity predicted for them. Thirty thousand horses, oxen, goats, pigs, and other animals are being hurled into the abyss every year. You cannot see the animals at the bottom, but you can hear their plaintive cries, the bellowing of the oxen, the neighing of the horses, the bleating of the goats, and the grunting of the pigs."

1. The Runn of Kutch.

"Do the men thereby free themselves from the predicted evils?"

"They think so, but who can be certain about it?"

"Are there any peculiar races in your country differing from other men?"

"Oh yes, there are the Kiratas, who are only 45 inches tall and who are noseless. Then, there are some whose ears are made to hang so loose that they sleep on them, as on a mat, and even cover themselves with them. There are beings with their heels in front and toes inwards. The King wanted two of these to be caught and brought to him. They were caught all right, but refused to take food and died, and so could not be brought to the King. There are men who live merely by smelling food. There are some who cover their mouths always, lest they should inhale and destroy any living being. They revolt at the smell of meat being cooked. They are called 'mouthless.' There are, in this country, men with only a single eye in the middle of their foreheads."

"We have also such men in our legends, the cyclopes," said Megasthenes.

"We call them '*Lalataksha*.' Then we have men whose hair stands out on their head like spikes. We have men too who live for a thousand years."

"We too have such people. We call them Hyperboreans," said Megasthenes.

"We call them '*Uttarakurus*,'" said Katyayana. "With *Kayakalpa* treatment, others live up to a

thousand years. We have wonderful aphrodisiacs, which will make a man of hundred as young as a man of thirty."

"Your King has given some of them to me to be given to Seleukos," said Megasthenes. "Has your country always had a King?"

"No. We have had Republics thrice, once for 300 years, once for 120 years, and once for 100 years. But, generally we have had Kings. The present King is descended from Sri Rama and Sri Krishna and is 153rd in descent, and a period of 6,042 years has passed since this dynasty began."

"An enormous time, and what a long line of kings!"

"That is nothing wonderful. In the Pandya country women give birth to children at the age of nine."

"Nine!" exclaimed Megasthenes.

"Yes, nine. Fruits ripen there earlier. Men and women too mature earlier. Men in the Pandya country get grey-haired when they are mere boys, and die generally at forty."

"And among you?"

"Say, sixty."

"Are there slaves among you?"

"Oh, no; no Arya can be a slave."

"Do you lend or borrow money?"

"No. Our principle is, don't lend or borrow!"

"Do you go to court to recover deposits?"

"No. We blame ourselves for trusting rogues."

"Are women allowed to be philosophers?"

"Yes, but they must then observe a vow of continence like the men."

"Are the men or the women more numerous among you?"

"They are about equal. Our philosophers, the *Sramanas*, can not only make marriage fruitful, but can also determine the sex of the offspring. They effect the cures of diseases, sometimes by ointments, plasters, lotions, potions and powders, but more often by regulating the diet."

"Yes, I was also among them for some time, and saw it," said Megasthenes. "Now, to some other points. What are the principal countries and races in India? Give me a brief description with the salient details."

"There are 118 of them. Almost all of them are under our Emperor's overlordship. The Asvakas with Massaka as their capital; the Takshas of Takshasila; the Kashmiris; the Aratti; the Yaudheyas; the Abhiras; the Sauraseni with the great cities of Muttra and Kalindipura, or Kalikapura¹, sacred to our Dionysius; the Sakas; the Kiratas; the Prachyas and the Gangaputras with 6,00,000 infantry, 30,000 cavalry, 6,000 chariots and 9,000 elephants and with Pataliputra as capital and dozens of other big cities; the Uttara Kalingas with Parthalis as their Capital and with 60 000 infantry, 1,000 cavalry and 700 elephants ever

1. Brindaban.

ready for war ; the King of Tamralipti with 50,000 infantry, 4,000 cavalry and 400 elephants ; the Madhyakalingas with a powerful army and with their Capital at Dantapura ; the Andhras with 1,00,000 infantry, 2,000 cavalry and 1,000 elephants and thirty towns with walls and towers, including Rajapura, Amaravati, Machlipatnam, Kalyan, Pratishtana and Dhanyaketa ; the tribes of Patala and other places in Sind known to you already ; the Nishadhas in Paropamisadaï ; the Dhars and Suars of Central India ; the Nari with Mount Capitalis¹, loftiest of mountains, in their midst ; the Oraturas, or Rathors, with a powerful infantry but only ten elephants ; the Saurashtri who are a corporation of Kshatriya warriors and keep 1,600 elephants, 1,50,000 infantry and 5,000 cavalry, and have their capital in Ashtamula², a great emporium for trade at the junction of five rivers, and have Pushyagupta as Governor ; the Charmamandalas, the Suriyanis, Jhadejas, Kokaris, Umranis, Kokondas, etc., between the Sutlej and Kachch ; the Chryse and Arakanese with gold, silver and other metals ; the Pandyas, formerly ruled by a woman, and having 300 cities and an army of 1,50,000 foot and 500 elephants, rule with their Capital at Madura ; the Cholas at Arkot ; the Keralaputras, or Cheras, rule at Tiruvanchi³ ; and the island of Taprobane⁴ has 750 villages, and is 9,000 stadia long and 5,000 broad ; there are innumerable others, too tedious and unimportant to mention," said Katyayana.

1. Mount Arbuda or Abu.

2. Vallabhi.

3. Muziris or Karur or Cranganore.

4. Ceylon.

"Any other things of interest?" asked Megasthenes.

"If you like, I can tell you some remarkable things about our philosophers."

"Oh, I know all about them," said Megasthenes. "The Greeks who came along with Alexander have left full accounts of Dandiswami, Kalanos and numerous others. Indeed, I wonder whether many of you here have heard of the end of Kalanos at Sousa. I have read the account given by Nearchos, an eye-witness."

"I have not heard about it. Do tell me," said Katyayana.

"Well," said Megasthenes, "Kalanos had been keeping perfect health till he reached Sousa. He ate and drank to his heart's desire without the least injury to his digestion, despite all his previous ascetic habits. But, at Sousa he was afflicted with colic. He had no desire to live the life of an invalid, and to be pointed out by the Indians and others as a victim to his having taken to forbidden foods and drinks. So, he informed Alexander that he was going to put an end to himself before the malady got worse. Alexander tried very hard to dissuade him from this course, but failed. He saw that Kalanos would put an end to his life in one way or the other, and that he was inflexible in his resolution. So, he ordered Ptolemy to have a funeral pyre arranged as desired. A horse from Alexander's own stud was provided for Kalanos. But, he was unable to mount it. He was garlanded after the Indian fashion, and carried in a litter according to

the Indian custom. He sang hymns in praise of the Indian gods and goddesses, as they carried him. A solemn procession of horses and armed men advanced before him, some of the men carrying incense in gold and silver bowls. The steed of the royal stud provided for him by Alexander was presented by him to Lysimachios, who was his student in philosophy. The bowls and rugs ordered by Alexander to be cast into the pyre in his honour were presented by Kalanos to those who attended him. He approached the pyre, uttered a prayer, and ascended the pile after taking leave of all present. Alexander did not deem it fit that he should witness the self-immolation of his friend, and was absent. As soon as Kalanos ascended the pile, he lay down on it, covered himself with his robes, and ordered the pyre to be set fire to. He asked all the Macedonians to devote that day to pleasure and hard drinking with the King. He added, 'I shall meet the King at Babylon,' which people remembered afterwards when Alexander died at Babylon. As soon as the pyre was set fire to, Nearchos had the trumpets sounded, as ordered by Alexander, and the whole army raised the war-shout, as if advancing to battle. The elephants too swelled the noise with their shrill warlike cries to honour him. When the flames approached him, he did not move, but remained in the same posture till he was completely burnt to ashes. Alexander, on being told about Kalanos's advice, invited his friends and generals to a supper where he proposed a drinking bout with a crown as a prize. Promachos drank 14 quarts, and won the crown, but died in three days. Forty-one of the guests

died of the effects of this drinking bout following the self-immolation of Kalanos."

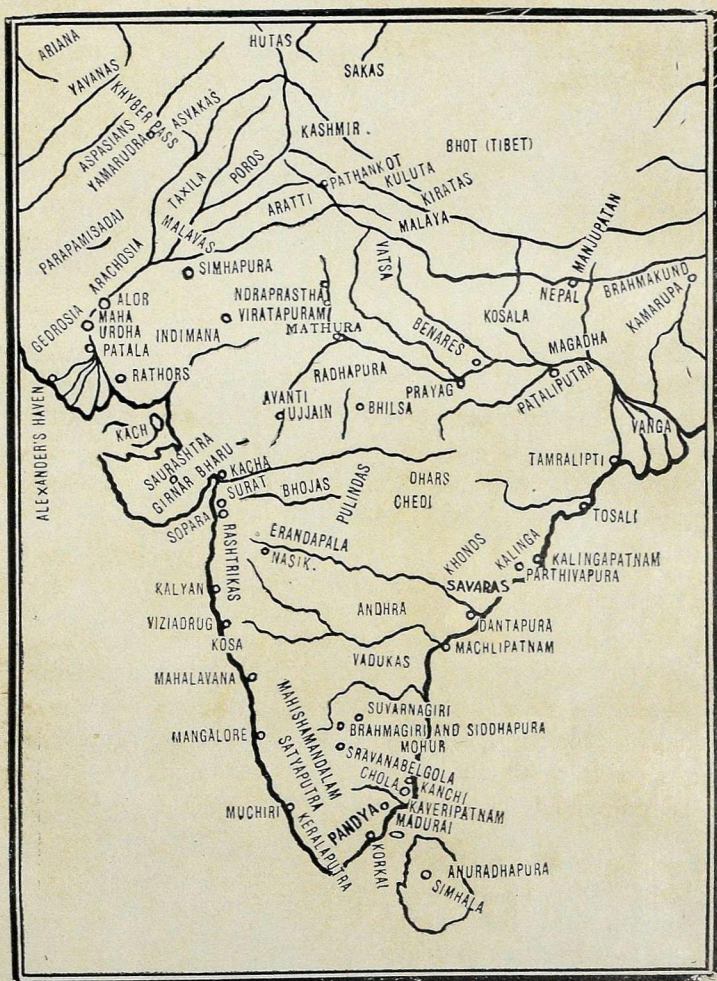
"Wonderful," said Katyayana. "I must tell all Indians about Kalanos's end. Now, about other interesting things. Do you know about *Sati*, the self-immolation of a widow on her husband's pyre, prevalent among some Kshatriyas?"

"I know about it too," said Megasthenes. "When Keteus, the Indian general, died in a great battle between Eumenes and Antigonos, his two widows contended for the honour of being burned on his funeral pile. The younger one was selected, as the elder, being at the time with child, was precluded by law from immolating herself."

"What did the Greeks say about it?" asked Katyayana.

"Some admired the courage and loyalty involved in it. Others condemned it as suicide, and as a worse form of suicide than that of Kalanos, because *Sati* was a suicide sanctioned by custom, while that of Kalanos was the result of his individual choice. Do all of you have the custom?"

"Oh, no. Brahmins are forbidden to observe it. Even others do not observe it much in these parts. We hold that each person reaps in the other world the rewards of his or her acts in this world. As suicide is sinful and leads to Hell, the widow, by immolating herself, goes to Hell and cannot help her husband. By living on and



performing pious ceremonies to the manes of her departed husband she may help him on to salvation."

"Now, I have finished. Thank you very much for your information," said Megasthenes, closing his notebook and giving Katyayana ten gold coins.

"Sir," said Katyayana, returning the coins, "I cannot accept them. Our King pays us well, and will not allow us to take anything from our guests."

"Well, then, thank you very much," said Megasthenes.

"I wish you a safe journey back, sir," said Katyayana, and left the presence of Megasthenes.

CHAPTER XXVI

A PROSPEROUS EMPIRE

The whole empire was enjoying peace and prosperity. There were bumper crops everywhere. The Emperor resolved to go on a pious tour of pilgrimage and sight-seeing. He was accompanied by all his four queens and by Chanakya and the *Purohita*. They started in July 300 B. C. They first went to Benares, bathed in the *Manikarnika* and *Dasasvamedha* ghats of the *Ganges*, and worshipped in the Viswanath temple. At *Harischandra Ghat* several corpses were burning. The ashes and bones were being thrown into the *Ganges*. "We must stop this throwing of the ashes and the bones into the sacred *Ganges*," said Chandragupta. "No," said Chanakya. "It

is this throwing of the bones and ashes which makes the *Ganges* so sacred to the Hindus, by connecting their past with the present and the future. Stop throwing cholera corpses unburnt into the river, if you will, but don't stop the throwing of the ashes and bones." "Why is this great sacred city on the *Ganges* called Varanasi by the names of the *Varana* and the *Asi*, two obscure streams, instead of being called after the *Ganges*?" asked Chandragupta. "It is just like a great man honouring his small guests. The *Ganges* is honouring the *Varana* and the *Asi*, its small guests," said Chanakya.

Then, the party went to Prayag, and bathed at the Triveni, the junction of the visible *Ganges* and *Yamuna* and the invisible *Saraswati*. "Why is this invisible river still added on?" asked Chandragupta. "Because the visible will not be complete without the invisible," said Chanakya.

When they went to Haridwar and bathed at the Daksha-Prajapati Ghat, Chandragupta asked Chanakya, "Why was Prajapati destroyed like that?" "Because he presumed to be a rival to god and considered rituals more important than faith, and cultivated the worst of sins, spiritual arrogance. He opposed material welfare to spiritual values, and wanted to be the Creator himself, and got smashed. Even his own daughter deserted him. Let all materialists take a lesson from his fate. God does not need our wealth or invitation, but we may ourselves lose our peace of mind, and life itself, in the pursuit of such soul-less materialism. There comes a stage when life rots

like a rotten tree, and peters out with nobody regretting our loss," said Chanakya. "Why is the place where the *Ganges*, sacred to Siva, debouches into the plains from the eternal snows, called *Haridwar*, after Vishnu?" "Just to show that Siva and Vishnu are one. You find the same thing in Amarnath, which is reached by the *Seshnag* glacier and river named after Vishnu. Take again the famous temple of Rameswaram in the far south." "Oh, how I wish we could go there!" said Chandragupta. "I long to go and worship there, after the description of the place by Samudranatha." "Well, one day, we may go there, and I may myself show you round," said Chanakya.

Devabhranta said to Chandragupta, "Let us push on to Lakshmanjholā, where the rope-bridge across the sacred stream is said to be a test of faith. Anyhow, it is a test of courage." After some days of travelling in the midst of exquisite mountain scenery, they reached the head waters of the *Alaknanda*, across which the rope-bridge at Lakshmanjholā was thrown. The river at this point ran through a deep gorge, and the rope-bridge was more than 360 feet above the level of the swirling water below. The popular belief was that only he who had the unquestioning faith of a Lakshmana in Rama (God) could cross it safely. Chandragupta and Devabhranta wanted to cross it; Santavati, Durdhara, Nirmala and Chanakya tried to dissuade them, but in vain. "Won't you try it?" asked Chandragupta of Chanakya. "Alas," said Chanakya "I am too full of doubts and fears, schemes and plans, to cross it. My wife, I think, will be able to cross it, owing to her simple and unquestioning faith. I would certainly

dissuade you two also." "We won't be dissuaded," said Chandragupta and Devabhranta. "Then I too shall come," said Santavati. "I too will join you," said Durdhara. "No, no, you should not try it," said Santavati. "You are a mother, and you should not risk it." Nirmala said: "Why pretend? I am too afraid to volunteer."

Chandragupta, Devabhranta and Santavati went one by one along that perilous rope-bridge. None of them showed the slightest trace of fear, though Nirmala almost swooned with fright at the bending and swinging of the rope-bridge. They finally managed to go to the other bank and return safely. "How did you feel like?" asked Chanakya. "Oh, it was a wonderful experience," said Chandragupta. "A bit of an exciting adventure," said Devabhranta. "You could have gone with us. There was nothing much of a risk."

"I know my limitations only too well," said Chanakya. "A child can do what many an adult can never do." "How did you find it?" Nirmala asked Santavati.

"I could not look at the heavens above or the river below, but had to devote my whole attention on the *Aryaputra* for whose safe crossing I was praying all the time," replied Santavati.

They returned to Gaya, and Chandragupta performed *sraddha*¹ to all his ancestors. He asked Chanakya. "What is the secret of this place's sanctity?"

Chanakya replied, "This place is so holy because of

1. A rite in honour of deceased relatives.

Gayasura who, though terribly powerful, volunteered himself to be offered as a sacrifice to Vishnu to be given all the punishments deserved by the sinners who performed *sraddhas* here with due devotion. He is still receiving such vicarious punishment cheerfully."

"What! A giant is doing such a virtuous act!" exclaimed Chandragupta.

"Why are you surprised?" asked Chanakya. "In virtue and vice, there is no distinction between man and demon. The greatest devotee was the demon Prahlada, and the demon Kamsa was also the most wicked one who ever lived. It all depends on the nature we inherit from our deeds in previous births."

They then proceeded to Vaisali where bitter feuds had started between the Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas, Sudras and Panchamas among the Hindus, between the different sects of Buddhists, between the Digambara¹ and Svetambara² Jains, and also between the Hindus, Buddhists and Jains. This ancient Republican city had literally become torn with faction. Chandragupta took firm action. Calling the representatives of all the sects, he said, "There is room in this garden of *Jambudvīpa* for all the trees of knowledge. But, when one tree tries to interfere with the light, air and nourishment of another it will have to be pruned, cut or removed, just as in a garden. The carpet of *Jambudvīpa* has need for all the colours in it, and can do with several more colours. So

1. Naked ones.

2. White-clothed ones.

let every sect behave itself. The Kings of Magadha cannot tolerate fanaticism or caste persecution."

Chanakya said to them: "The Brahmins came from the mouth of God, the Kshatriyas from the arm, the Vaisyas from the thigh, the Sudras from the feet, and there are really no Panchamas¹ as Manu himself has said. The hand which feeds the mouth, shall it hurt the mouth? Shall the mouth bite the hand which feeds it? Shall the thigh, the pillar which supports the arm and mouth, hurt or be hurt by them? Shall the feet, the foundations of the body, give way or be cut off? Shall the followers of Buddha, who wanted all to be treated as brothers, fight others? Shall the adherents of Mahavira, who gave away his only cloth to the Brahmin Somadatta, quarrel with the Brahmins or with one another, seeing that their great Master was both Digambara and Swetambara?" The speeches impressed all the assembled representatives, who promised not to quarrel again.

Chandragupta and Chanakya then proceeded to Ram-purwa, where Chandragupta had set up a fine uninscribed pillar with a Bull capital. All around were railings. One side of the railings had the Buddhist *Dharmachakra* and scenes from the *Jatakas*; another had scenes from the lives of the Jain *Tirthankaras* and *Arhats*²; the third had scenes from the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*; the fourth side was left blank. "The Bull is a symbol of Siva, the village is named after Rama, the pictures include Buddhist and Jain ones, and people may read

1. The Hindu depressed classes.

2. The perfected ones among the Jains.

whatever they like into the uninscribed pillar," said Chandragupta to Chanakya. "It is a fitting monument for an Emperor of *Jambudvīpa*," said Chanakya. "Tolerance of all sects and creeds should be your policy, so that none of your subjects may complain. But you have made the policy your principle itself. Now, we shall go to *Sitakund*, and bathe in the sacred pool there."

They went to *Sitakund*, and bathed in the pool. Though it was midday, the water was cool and refreshing. "It is like Sita's love itself," said Chandragupta to Chanakya, "cool, refreshing and perennial. Can you tell me why Rama abandoned such a wife and left her, when in a delicate state of health, in a forest exposed to the attacks of wild beasts and wilder men?" "God's ways are mysterious," said Chanakya. "Some actions are ordained by Destiny and *Karma*. God himself, born as man, is subject to them; Sita's unjust imputation of dishonourable intentions to Lakshmana, the soul of honour and loyalty, brought its retribution in the drunken washerman's rascally innuendo against herself. Rama obeyed the dictates of destiny and *Karma* and abandoned Sita in a forest, true to his Coronation Oath to make any sacrifice to please even the meanest of his subjects. But, no wild beast could harm Sita. No man could harm her, whom even the demon Ravana found it impossible to harm. Her sons, Lava and Kusa, had to grow up hearing the message of the forest, as they and their descendants had to rule this great country." "Did the earth really swallow Sita, and did the waters of the *Sarayu* swallow Rama?" "Yes," said Chanakya, "Sita

was the incarnation of Mother Earth and returned to the earth. Rama was the incarnation of Narayana of the moving waters, and disappeared in the moving waters of the *Sarayu*."

"I am said to be the descendant of both Sri Rama and Sri Krishna. How can that be, sir?" asked Chandragupta.

"Why not? You are descended from one by the father's side, and from the other by the mother's side," replied Chanakya.

"Was Sri Krishna really killed by a hunter?" asked Chandragupta. "Yes. The earth had its hour of bliss of the Lord. He had delivered his Message, and had to depart. The hunter shot at him from a hiding place, as the Lord had shot Vali from a hiding place in his incarnation as Rama. It was all the result of the *Karma* of previous births." "Are incarnations of God too subject to *Karma*?" asked Chandragupta.

"No. But they voluntarily submit to *Karma* just as kings subject themselves to the law. *Brahma*¹ *Dharma*² and *Karma*³ are common to all living beings."

Chandragupta wanted to imitate the Kings of old, and visit *incognito* one of his villages and ascertain at first-hand what his subjects thought of him. So, he disguised himself as an ordinary citizen of Pataliputra and proceeded to Kundagrama. There he went to the village

1. God.

2. Righteous conduct.

3. Pre-determination by actions in previous births.

assembly-hall, and talked with the elders. Gradually he turned the talk on to Chandragupta and Chanakya. "Which of them is happier, do you think?" asked Chandragupta. "Certainly Chanakya," replied the oldest and wisest villager. "Why?" "He has only a dilapidated house and desires nothing more, and fears no assassins. Chandragupta has a big Empire which he is afraid of losing and lives in daily fear of assassination. Besides, Chanakya depends only on himself, whereas Chandragupta depends on Chanakya, and they say that everything that depends on oneself makes for happiness and everything that depends on another makes for sorrow." Chandragupta's face became sad. "What is your greatest ambition?" he asked, recovering himself, and intending to grant the wish if reasonable. "To see God face to face," was the reply. "I cannot grant it," said Chandragupta. "Who said you can?" asked the other. "If you were Chandragupta what would you do?" asked Chandragupta. "I should make the humblest of my subjects feel that I feel one with him in his joys and sorrows," replied the man. "Our Kings have sadly neglected the masses. The common man is fleeced, oppressed and then neglected by every King. That is why he is indifferent as to who rules him, and the proverb, 'What does it matter whether Rama rules us, or Ravana rules us, has come into vogue. Let the common man only feel that he is the State, that day real *Ram-Rajya* will come, and he will live and die for it." "What position would you give to a King in such a commonwealth?" "He will be the key-stone of the arch, and will keep the arch of the State intact, while

not caring to enjoy more than the meanest of his subjects." "Perhaps too great an ideal to expect Kings to follow," said Chandragupta. "Well, either Kings have to follow that ideal and make it a success, or they must give way to Republics like those of the Sakyas and Malavas, where we are told that every one was rich and happy." Then Chandragupta took leave of the elders, and returned to *Sitakund*, a sadder and wiser man.

The pilgrimage being over, the party returned to Pataliputra, and had three days' feasting and entertainment. A hundred-thousand people were sumptuously fed every morning with food from the King's own kitchen. Then, at noon, there were elephant-fights, wrestling, archery-contests, jugglery-shows and bullock-cart races. In the afternoon there were dances by Virasena, the palace dancing-girl, and her troupe, and also puppet-shows and exhibitions of images of gods. There were recitations from the *Vedas* in the evenings. At night three famous Plays of Bhasa were staged under his own direction. The first night it was *Pratima-Nataka*. The next night it was *Svapnavasavadatta*. The third night it was *Charudatta*. All the plays were highly admired. Chandragupta gave Bhasa a pair of gold-bangles, and a village in perpetuity; he also made him Court-Poet with an allowance of two-thousand *Panas* per year, with permission to have his Plays acted in any part of the Empire, without taking out a licence every time as was required of others.

So popular were these plays that the Ambassador of the King of Keralaputra asked for and obtained permission to

prepare copies of the plays and transmit them to his master. "Will they understand these plays there?" asked Chandragupta. "They will not only understand them, Your Majesty, but a day may come when they may teach even the people of Magadha the beauty of these plays when they have forgotten them," replied the Ambassador. "Why don't you ask for permission to take a copy of the *Arthashastra* also?" asked Chandragupta. "I have already sent it," said the Ambassador. "The venerable Chanakya obliged me with a copy for the King of his own Kerala-putra." Chandragupta smiled and said: "So the venerable Chanakya has still a partiality for Kerala-putra?" "So long as it does not oppose Narendra's interests," said Chanakya. "Then there is nothing to fear. The Empire will continue to be prosperous under our preceptor's guidance," said Chandragupta. "What have we to fear so long as Chandragupta and Chanakya rule our destinies?" asked Rakshsa. Then he called out lustily, "Long live the Emperor Chandragupta! Long live *Acharya* Chanakya!" The huge concourse took up the words, repeated them lustily over and over again, and dispersed.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE KING IN HIS COURT

IT was 7-30 in the morning one fine day in December 300 B. C. Chandragupta sat on his throne in the Hall of Justice in the 'Suganga' Palace.

Over his seat, in golden letters were emblazoned the imperial crest, the crescent moon rising over the Himalayas

with a peacock dancing in the foreground, and the words, "*Satyameva Jayate, nanritam*" (Truth alone triumphs ultimately, never Falsehood) in beautiful *Brahmi* letters. Below it was the famous verse from the *Dharmasastras*:—

*"Kevalam sastramāsritya na Kartavyo hi nirnaya:
Yukti hinavicharetu Dharmahani: prajayate"*

(The decision should not be based only on *sastras*. By an inequitable judgment there will be loss of *Dharma*.)

It was the day fixed for confirming or revising the sentences for grave crimes, reserved for the King's orders by the High Court of Judicature consisting of three Judges and three Judicial Commissioners and presided over by the Lord Chief Justice. The Lord Chief Justice, Brihaspati Misra, and the puisne Judges and Commissioners, the Mayor, the *Nagarika*¹, the four *Sthanikas*², and several nobles and citizens were also present. On the dais next to Chandragupta on the right sat the Heir-Apparent, Bindusara, and next to him sat Chanakya and next to him the *Dharmadhikarin* or Lord Chief Justice. To the left of Chandragupta sat Rakshasa and his son Khallataka who was now minister-in-waiting and Privy Seal. Next to them sat the puisne Judges and the Judicial Commissioners. The two celebrated City Magistrates nicknamed by the public Kalapaksika and Dandapasika³, because of their tendency to convict and impose severe sentences, were also on the dais. A Body-Guard of eight expert horsemen was

1. A City-Superintendent and Commissioner combined.

2. Superintendents of the Wards of a City.

3. Sure as time, and Punishment-Net.

standing behind the King who had in front of him the case files with the notes of the Prime Minister and Chanakya.

Two attendants were fanning the King with yak-tails. Two others were rolling him with ebony-rollers. A very large crowd had assembled to see the King administer justice in person.

The Lord Chamberlain, the Venerable Vaihinari, rose and said, "His Majesty King Chandragupta, Beloved of the gods, will now pass orders on the sentences for grave crimes passed by the High Court during the last six months and the cases reserved for the King's decision as there are no precedents in courts or direct discussion in the *Dharmasastras*. This sitting has been unavoidably delayed owing to His Majesty's pious tour of pilgrimage. Silence, now, on pain of His Majesty's displeasure!" There was pin-drop silence.

The Usher of the Court directed the Jail-officer to take the prisoners one after the other into the roped enclosure which served as the Dock, and to take them away as soon as the orders were passed,

The first to be brought was a man of thirty, with furtive eyes. Khallataka read from his Summary of Cases, "The man before Your Majesty has been unanimously found by your Majesty's Judges guilty of setting fire to his enemy's house at Vaisali at night, and causing thereby the death of two sleeping children who could not be

removed in time. He has been sentenced to death. The cause of enmity was the persistent demand for the fifty *Panas* he owed. He was caught redhanded, and has confessed." "He could have been thrown into that very fire and killed under our law, as he was caught red-handed. As that was not done, let him be taken away and speared to death. Murder by incendiarism to a dwelling house at night deserves a death sentence," said Chandragupta. The man was removed.

The next was a man of 40. "This man," read Khallataka, "was sent out of the village of Kundagrama for persistently fighting with elders. So, one night, he maliciously breached the bund of the village irrigation-tank in order to cause a failure of crops. A villager who was going that night for getting medicine for his child, saw the act and raised an alarm, and the man was caught, and the breach closed and the tank saved. He has been sentenced to death." "He richly deserved to be thrown into the reservoir and drowned. As that was not done and as the tank was saved, I do not consider a death-sentence necessary now. Let him atone for his sin against irrigation-sources by being put on the *Sudarsana* lake works for fourteen years," said Chandragupta.

Next came a man of 50. Khallataka read, "This man is from Gridhrakuta. He enticed a boy of three and offered his severed head to the Goddess *Kali* in a vain attempt to make her show some hidden treasure to him. He has been sentenced to the Suvrnagiri mines for life." "Let him be beheaded just as he decapitated the boy,"

said Chandragupta. "A life sentence will not do in this case where there is no mitigating circumstance at all,"

Then was brought a woman of 45. "This woman," read Khallataka, "posed as a pilgrim in the village of Sitakund, and was hospitably entertained in a farmer's house. That night she gave some sweets to the members of the farmer's family as *Prasadam*¹. These contained powdered *Dhatura* seeds. All who ate the sweets fell down unconscious. The woman decamped with the valuables in the house, but was caught when running away. Previously, another hostess who had entertained her had died from the administration of such poison. She has been sentenced to death." "She is an enemy of society, and has committed a murder by poisoning. It does not matter that she is a woman. Let her be drowned to death as enjoined in our *Sastras*," said Chandragupta.

The next was a man of 25 who had been found guilty of raping a young married woman, and then killing her to hide his crime. He had been sentenced to death. "Confirmed," said Chandragupta.

Then came thirty dacoits who had waylaid travellers on the royal road between Tamralipti and Pataliputra, and robbed them all of their money and wounded many. They had been sentenced to work in the mines at Suvarnagiri for life. "Confirmed," said the King. "For gold they sinned, to gold they shall dedicate their lives."

The next case was that of a witness who had, for a bribe, given false evidence in a murder case and

1. Consecrated food offered to the gods.

caused an innocent man to be speared to death. He had been sentenced to death. "Confirmed," said Chandragupta. "This is as much murder as killing with his own hand."

The next case related to twenty villagers of Pandugati. "These men refused alms to seven ascetics, who thereupon performed some rites of black-magic. That night ten houses in the village caught fire. The ascetics boasted that it was the result of their black-magic. Thereupon these men threw them into the fire, and burnt them to death. They have all been sentenced to a fine of two-hundred *Panas* each," said Khallataka. "Confirmed," said Chandragupta. "With these fines a small temple to *Hariti*, the goddess who removes all sins, shall be constructed in the village."

Then came a man of Pataliputra who had forced himself on a dancing-girl. He had been fined five hundred *Panas*. "Confirmed," said the King. "The money will be given to the woman."

Then came a mahout who had negligently allowed his elephant to gore to death a man of Pataliputra. He had been sentenced to pay a fine of five-hundred *Panas*. "Confirmed," said Chandragupta. "Men should control their beasts."

Then came the cases involving new points not covered by the decided cases or by direct discussions in the *Dharma-sastras* and reserved for the King's decision. The first was that of sixty villagers who had broken open the rice godown of a *Vaisya* trader in Gaya, who had denied all stock of rice, and had removed sixty bags of rice from it after

depositing their market value. The Lord Chief Justice had recommended a nominal fine of ten *panas* each, as the offence was a technical one committed by villagers badly in need of rice for food and had been in a way brought on by the merchant's own dishonest conduct. The King let off the accused with a mere warning, and forfeited the money deposited by them in the godown to the State as the merchant had abandoned his ownership of the rice by his telling the villagers that he had no stock in his godown. He also directed the merchant to be prosecuted for concealment of essential foodstuffs.

The next was that of moneylender who had lent a thousand *panas* to a landholder sixty years before at 48% compound interest per annum with monthly rests, and had prayed for a decree for 100,000 *panas*, giving up the balance out of grace! The Lord Chief Justice had recommended a decree for 8,200 *panas*, giving only simple interest at 12% per annum, but had felt a doubt whether a decree for more than 2,000 *panas* could be legally given in view of the law of *damdupat* which prohibited the grant of a decree for more than double the amount advanced, and so had reserved the case for the King's orders.

Chandragupta ruled that a decree could only be given for 2,000 *panas* as the rule of *damdupat* was a very salutary one calculated to protect the interests of helpless debtors.

The last was a case where a father and manager of a Hindu joint family had sold his undivided share in the joint family lands to a stranger for a proper consideration

and discharged binding family debts, but would not get his share partitioned and delivered to the purchaser. The Lord Chief Justice had recommended that the father be committed to jail for cheating till he effected the partition and delivered the share to the vendee, as Manu had declared that a seller of immovable property who did not give possession to the purchaser, after receiving the consideration from him, was liable for punishment like a thief or cheat. Chandragupta accepted the recommendation.

"The cases are finished. Since the last public Court, three bribe-takers and eighteen false witnesses have been banished from the realm. Now, let those Brahmins, ascetics, orphans, widows and others who complain that they are denied justice by His Majesty's Judges come forward!" announced the Lord Chamberlain.

A number of Brahmins stepped forward, and prayed for the exemption of Brahmin criminals from branding.

"Now a Brahmin criminal is branded with the figure of a rat for theft, the flag of a vintner for drinking, a blue triangle for rape, and a headless body for murder. This is cruel and painful. By abolishing it, your Majesty will earn the blessings of the Brahmins and escape their curses," said their leader. Chandragupta replied, "I am very sorry that I am unable to accede to your request. The other castes are awarded even more terrible punishments. A weaver refusing to work after receiving his wages has his thumb cut off: a Sudra committing rape on a Brahmin woman is burnt alive in mats: there are eighteen kinds of tortures for people convicted of grave crimes, like hanging

them head downwards by their legs and lashing them and burning their finger-joints. All these punishments have been prescribed by great Sages, and we kings have to carry them out. If one part is changed, the others too will have to be changed in order that justice may still remain in accordance with our social scheme, and not be progressively lightened for some castes and weighted against others." "There is banishment also provided for Brahmin criminals. So there can be no serious objection to the abolition of the branding which is only an additional punishment," said the Brahmin leader. "I am sorry. The branding must remain, so that the people of the countries to which these Brahmins go may know them to be criminals and not mistake them for worthy Brahmins of our country, and thereby have a low estimate of the Brahmins of our country," said the Emperor. "The same reason which makes us mark our damaged goods differently from the sound ones applies here also." The Brahmins withdrew.

Then a deputation of the citizens of Sravasti went before the King, and complained that the governor and the high officers of that place had increased the revenues of that Province two-fold within the last one year, though there had been no increase in the income of the people, or accidental receipts like treasure-trove property confiscated to the State, fines levied from Government servants, compensation for damage to Government property, escheats, presentations to the King or phenomenal sales of timber from the forests. "The receipts were verified last *Vyushta* (New Year's Day)." they added. Chandragupta asked Chanakya what he had to say. Chanakya said, "In Book I,

Chapter IX, of my *Arthasastra*, issued as a State Manual under Your Majesty's authority, I have clearly said, "Whoever doubles the King's revenue eats into the vitals of the country. He shall, if the offence be small, be warned not to repeat his action, but if the offence be grave he shall be punished severely." "Sirs," asked Chandragupta of the deputationists, "Is this their first offence? What is their general repute?"

"It is their first offence," said they. "We have no other complaint against them." "They will be warned not to repeat the offence," said Chandragupta. The deputation withdrew, satisfied.

Some pilgrims went up next, and complained that when they and ten others were visiting *Kamakhya* temple in Kamrup, a body of Nagas had carried away their ten comrades for being made slaves, and that complaints to the King of Kamrup were of no avail. Rakshasa rose and said that he had just then received information that eight of them had been released after General Bhadrabhata had sent a punitive expedition, that the ninth preferred to remain with the Nagas as their Chief's *Guru*, and that the tenth had died in captivity. "It is good that one of our pilgrims has gone as *Guru* to these head-hunters, human sacrificers and slave-holders. For, the best way to stop these evils is by converting them through good *Gurus*," said Chandragupta.

One of the cooks in the royal kitchen then went and complained that Chanakya had ordered him to be dismissed, because he had used far more fire-wood for

cooking than the calculated quantity. "Surely," said he, "a Great Emperor like Your Majesty is not to be rationed out fire-wood, oil, rice and other things of trifling value, which even rich merchants and officers do not worry about." Chanakya rose and said, "Your Majesty is a trustee for the poor cultivators, whose hard-earned money we collect in taxes. Nothing necessary is denied to the cooks. I only prevent waste. This man was leaving the fire-wood blazing outside the hearth carelessly, while wandering about the kitchen-compound gossiping with the servants. I warned him thrice, and then dismissed him as an example to the rest. It is these little things which ultimately swell up the expenses and unbalance the budget, like millions of locusts eating up crops which an elephant cannot eat up!" "What loss did he actually cause?" asked Chandragupta. "Fortythree *Panas*," said Chanakya. "This sum will be made good to the public revenues from our Privy Purse, and the man reinstated. If he does not improve, he will be liable to dismissal again," said Chandragupta amidst applause.

The next was a deputation from the women of Manipur for permission to have a Woman's Bazaar, where only women and royalty could buy or sell. "What is the special object?" asked Chandragupta. "Just to make Manipur unique in India." "The license is granted," said the King amidst laughter.

A representative of the merchant-guilds of Bharu-kachcha complained that counterfeit coins were becoming dangerously common in their town, that the *Lakshana-dhyakshah*, the Superintendent of the Mint, had not taken

care to see that his subordinates cut all such coins to pieces, as ordered by the venerable Chanakya, and that several merchants were selling the coins for less than their value as the gold and silver in them were less than the standard fixed. The Emperor directed the Superintendent of the Mint, the Viceroy of Ujjaini, and the Governor of Saurashtra, to enforce the orders strictly, and to trace and prosecute the counterfeiters.

Thereafter some citizens of Pataliputra complained that the Superintendent of liquor-shops had allowed liquor shops to be near each other in their locality, that liquor was sold even to criminals, contrary to rules, that the shops were being located in good buildings and provided with fine beds and seats and flowers and fruits, that the Superintendent of Prostitutes was sending attractive dancing-girls there, and that young men of respectable families were thereby being led into drinking and vice. They also prayed for the strict enforcement of the curfew between 9 p.m. and 3 a.m., and of the routes by which corpses were to be taken to the burning-grounds. The Emperor asked the City Magistrates to enquire into the complaint regarding the liquor-shops and submit a report. He directed the trumpets to be sounded punctually at 9 p.m. and 3 a.m. for enforcing the curfew orders. He ordered also fines to be imposed on all people who carried corpses by other than the prescribed routes.

A deputation of Jains complained against the mass killing of locusts, which had invaded from Persia, under the orders of the Government for protecting the crops. Such wholesale destruction of life is against our *Dharma*

and orders should at once issue stopping it," said they. "Rats, bugs, lice, locusts and other pests have to be destroyed so that men may live," said Chandragupta rejecting their prayer.

Then the King distributed some special rewards. Ram Simha, who had trapped and fired and smoked to death a pack of five man-eating wolves at Gosainganj, seven miles from Saketa, was awarded a thousand *panas*. Ganapati Naga, who had killed a brood of seven serpents lurking in the travellers' bungalow in Sravasti, was awarded a reward of five hundred *panas*. Bhil Bhupal, who had detected the breach of a dam in time and warned the watchmen and villagers, was given a reward of five hundred *panas*. Lakshmi Devi, from Andhra, who had made a *khaddar saree* of such fine yarn that it could be passed through a ring, was awarded five hundred *panas*. Lakshman Sinha, who had raised the best rice in Kosala province, was awarded a gold medal. Yadav Singh, who had been giving free milk to a thousand babes of Pataliputra, was given the title "*Sisubandhu*," The title of *Rajavaidya* was conferred on Prayag Singh who was running a free dispensary in Ujjaini.

The King was about to rise when Chanakya's son-in-law, Agnisarma, stepped forward and said:—

"Your Majesty was pleased on your last birthday to grant, orally, a pension of five-hundred *Panas* per month to maintain myself, my wife Rajarajeswari and our son Radhagupta. The venerable Chanakya has cancelled this grant. How can he cancel Your Majesty's order?"

"I did not cancel the order," said Chanakya, intervening, "I merely waived the grant." "How can a man waive a thing which was not given to *him* but to his son-in-law?" asked Agnisarma. "A son-in-law belongs to a different family altogether." Chandragupta asked the Lord Chief Justice Brihaspatimisra to give his opinion, and it was, "Agnisarma's objection is valid in law. No man can waive what belongs to another." "But my son-in-law lives and eats in my house with his wife and child," said Chanakya. "That will not make them members of the venerable Chanakya's family," said Brihaspatimisra. "And the pension was given to him for being my son-in-law, and so was indirectly a gift to me, and I can relinquish it," said Chanakya. "Oh, no," said Brihaspatimisra, "The motive or occasion for a gift cannot be gone into when considering its validity, except to see if it was illegal or immoral." "The gift is renewed now as a *Srotriya Brahmadaya Sarvaswadanam* gift¹. From the revenues of Kundagrama, six-thousand *Panas* will be paid annually to Agnisarma and his descendants for ever," said Chandragupta amidst loud applause from the assembled people. Then the Court rose at 1 p. m. amidst cries of "Jaya Jaya Maharaja²! Jai Sitaram³!"

Agnisarma rushed home and spread the news of his grant for life to Gautami and Rajarajeswari, and then went away as he did not like to meet Chanakya. When Chanakya returned home, Gautami sent, as usual, the

1. A gift to Brahmins learned in the Vedas.

2. Victory to the King!

3. Praise be to God!

child Radhagupta, aged 18 months, to meet his grandfather. The little boy toddled up to Chanakya, and held fast to his knees. Chanakya picked him up, and kissed and fondled him. Gautami then went and asked, "What news at the Palace to-day? Rajarajeswari's husband came and told her an interesting story." "Did he?" asked Chanakya. "Perhaps the fool does not know that I myself knew everything about the legal position, and opposed the grant only on sentimental grounds because this might be construed as a gift made to me as he was living with us." "That is exactly what he himself told Rajarajeswari, adding that Brihaspatimasra too told him so," said Gautami. "Then he is not such a fool as I thought." "How could he be when he prevailed in an argument over you, a thing which no man has accomplished yet?" asked Gautami. "Now I will have my bath and food," said Chanakya. "The water is ready for your bath," said Gautami. "By the way, the Emperor has sent three choice packets of *Poppods*¹ and seven mango juice-rolls, all from Kerala." "He shouldn't have bothered to get all these things for me from such a distance. Still, they are too petty to be returned, and I shall also miss them if I do. So let us keep them. Only, when thanking him, I shall say that he should not think of sending such presents to me for at least another year," said Chanakya after inspecting them in detail. Then he went to take his bath.

1. Thin savoury cakes, fried and eaten by Hindus.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE ROMANCE OF SUBHADRANGI

Anybody privileged to have a look into the Suganga palace gardens any fine evening in December 300 B. C. would have found two expert nurses, under the direction of Queen Devabhrinta, looking after two young princes, Susima *alias* Sumana aged three, and Asokavardhana aged two. He would have also seen their mother Subhadrangī sitting near them, and watching them play with each other and with Radhagupta, the 18 months old grandson of Chanakya. If it had not been a very busy day, Chandragupta and Chanakya also would have been watching them with proud and loving eyes. It was a great consolation to Chandragupta, with diabetes sapping his system and with death awaiting him not very far round the corner, to see two such sturdy grandsons. The story of their mother Subhadrangī's marriage with Bindusara had been a most romantic one even in those days, when romance was more common than now.

It was early in 302 B. C. Bindusara had been crowned *Yuvaraj*¹ already, at the very commencement of his sixteenth year, the year of majority for the Hindus of *Gauda*², and had married two Princesses, Lajjavatī of Kalinga and Suryakantā of Ujjainī. He was already noted throughout the Empire for his courage, manliness, eloquence and commonsense. He had not yet been sent to Takshasila as Viceroy, and was living in a separate

1. Young King or Assistant King.

2. Bengal and Behar.

Palace near the 'Suganga' Palace, with Khallataka as his Minister and Agnisarma as his Private Secretary. Lajjavati and Suryakanta each tried her best to monopolise his affections. But, within a few months of their marriage, Subhadrangi had become the third Queen and had, from the very outset, overshadowed them both completely.

Devasarma, her father, was a poor Brahmin of Champa, who had become a Buddhist and had been thrown out of their community by the orthodox Brahmins on that account. Even at birth Subhadrangi was amazingly beautiful. All the astrologers had, on examining her horoscope, declared with one voice that she would certainly become an Empress, and would become the mother of the greatest Emperor the world would see. Fired with this prophecy, and believing implicitly in its truth, the proud father tried to make it an accomplished fact, by taking his girl who was now 15, to Bindusara's palace so that she might attract the Prince's attention and be married by him. Devasarma had no doubt whatever that, once Bindusara saw her, he would fall in love with her at once and marry her.

Devasarma was told by the harem servants that both the Queens, while differing about all other things, were agreed in excluding from the harem and the notice of the Prince any beautiful high-born maiden. So he found it to be hopeless to introduce Subhadrangi into the palace openly. But, he was a man with a fertile brain capable of devising means of getting over obstacles. His daughter was not only beautiful, but was also an

expert in music, dancing and several other arts. Devasarma now taught her manicuring and hair-dressing also, and disguising her as a lady-barber, introduced her into Bindusara's harem in that humble capacity. He asked Subhadrangī to wait patiently, and choose a favourable opportunity for attracting the attention of the Prince.

Subhadrangī was as clever as her father. She assumed her role very well, and soon made herself equally popular with Suryakanta and Lajjavatī. Both of them marvelled at her great beauty and accomplishments, but did not suspect anything.

Subhadrangī did not all at once try to attract Bindusara's attention. She waited patiently till she had secured a permanent footing in the harem and had quieted even latent suspicions.

About three months after her entry into the harem, when Lajjavatī and Suryakanta had gone to the 'Suganga' palace to attend a party there given by Santavatī, and Bindusara was alone, she sat in her room singing entrancingly. Bindusara was attracted by her beautiful voice and flawless diction, and listened enraptured. Then he tip-toed to her room and looked in, marvelling at her beauty of form which excelled even her beautiful voice in perfection. She went on singing as if she had not seen him. Mad with love and desire, Bindusara went inside and told her, "Subhadrangī, what a voice you have got! And what a face!" She stopped her song, blushed, and held down her head. He patted her cheek. Her face suffused with pleasure, and she looked straight at him.

with those wonderful eyes of hers full of love and tenderness. Unable to control himself any longer, he caught her wildly in his arms and pressed her to his bosom, and imprinted a burning kiss on her lips. Her body became like a heap of flowers in his embrace, and her breasts heaved and fell against his manly bosom. Tears of joy came from her eyes.

Bindusara said to her, "Oh, beloved one, what a pity that you are a barber and that I, a high-born Kshatriya, cannot therefore make you my Queen!"

"I am not a barber, my Lord. I am a high-born Brahmin maiden, daughter of Devasarma of Champa. I loved Your Highness as soon as I saw you go out for hunt in Champa one day, and swore to love you and none else. Hence this disguise. Now my heart's desire has been accomplished."

"I too thought that you must be a Brahmin or Kshatriya," said Bindusara. "That face so full of grace, that flawless diction, and that dignity cannot belong to a barber maiden. I marry you here and now in the *Gandharva* way allowed to Kings and Princesses."

When Lajjavati and Suryakanta returned after the party, Bindusara told them of his marriage with Subhadrangī. After the first shock was over, they both reconciled themselves to this marriage, the more so as they loved Subhadrangī more than they loved each other.

Chandragupta, Chanakya, Rakshasa and Khallataka also approved of the marriage when they were told about it. "A Queen from Champa, within the home province of

Magadha, will endear the royal house to the Magadhas," said Chanakya. The formal marriage was celebrated with great pomp in May 302 B. C. And Bindusara took her with him to Takshasila, when he went there as Viceroy in October.

The next year, a Prince was born to Subhadra. He was named Susima *alias* Sumana. He was very handsome in appearance. A year after Sumana's birth, the Princess gave birth to another Prince, Asokavardhana, who was rather ugly to look at. But Asoka was the darling of one and all. When Sumana was three and Asoka two, Bindusara called the great Ajivaka Saint Pingala Vatsajiva who was said to be gifted with a true insight into the past, present and future and asked him about the future of the two Princes and as to who would become King after him. "Asoka will become King after you, and will be the greatest King who has ever ruled this country or is ever likely to rule it," said Pingala. "How can that be?" asked Bindusara, "Sumana is the elder one." "Fate does not consider age in its choice," said Pingala Vatsajiva. "It leaves an old man of ninety severely alone, and chooses a child of five to accomplish its end."

CHAPTER XXIX

CHANAKYA INSTRUCTS THE PRINCE

Prince Bindusara returned from Takshasila in April 299 B. C. after handing over the Viceroyalty to Balagupta, as instructed by Chandragupta. He had discharged the

arduous duties of Viceroy for nearly three years and had just crushed a revolt of the *Asvakani* and the Pakhtoons and other border tribes who had risen in force and attacked the forts of Yamarudra, Varuna, Pushkalavati, Udabhandapura, Purushapura, and Mulasthana on the ground that Bindusara's ministers had dishonoured them by disarming them and directing the leaders to report to the Commandants of the above forts every night at midnight. They had protested their loyalty to King Chandragupta and to Prince Bindusara and alleged that their grievance was only against the wicked *amatyas* (ministers) who were putting them to dishonour. But their actions left Bindusara in no doubt about their intention to drive the Mauryan troops of occupation out and regain their primitive freedom. He and Balagupta therefore met the revolt promptly with overwhelming force and crushed it in blood. A thousand of the leading rebels were killed in action and a hundred of the ring-leaders were hanged at Fort Yamarudra for murder, waging war against the King, and kindred offences. They had written piteously to Seleukos that Chandragupta was oppressing with servitude the very people whom he had emancipated from foreign thralldom and had begged for help from Bactria and Sogdiana. Seleukos ignored their appeal for help against his own son-in-law and his son of both of whom he had received glowing accounts from Megasthenes. He simply left the pathetic letter for help from these tribesmen on record in his archives for future historians to peruse and use. The tribal leaders who managed to escape went into inhospitable caves in inacces-

sible mountains and led miserable lives of discomfort there waiting for another chance to revolt. Bindusara wrote to his father:—"One may as well hope to keep wolves in stables amicably along with the sheep, as expect these tribesmen to live peacefully with the plainsmen. The venerable Chanakya was right in foreseeing their revolt and providing for them by constructing strong forts like Yamarudra etc., with the fort of Pathankot too far away for the Pakhtoons to capture by surprise and serving as an excellent base for us to mobilise our troops and resources."

One day after his return, he fixed up an interview with Chanakya to discuss with him certain problems of politics, economics and general principles of administration. Chanakya went and saw Bindusara at his palace at 7-30 A.M., as arranged. He began:- "There is nothing new I can tell you. All possible problems of politics, economics and general administration have been discussed by me fully in the *Arthashastra* published as a State Manual under the auspices of the king, your father. It is divided into fifteen books, which deal with Discipline, Duties of Government Superintendents, Rules of everyday Law, Removal of Thorns, Conduct of Courtiers, Source of Sovereignty, Six-fold Policy, Vices and Calamities, Work of an invader, War, Corporations, How to deal with powerful enemies, strategic means to capture a fortress, secret means and devices, and the plan of the treatise itself. If you read that book, all your doubts will be cleared. Or at least you will know my views on the points in question."

"Thanks. I have seen that book with Balagupta

who was always consulting it for dealing with our problems. I shall certainly read the book now that I have some leisure," said Bindusara.

Chanakya asked Sarangarava to bring a copy of the book and then autographed it and gave it with his blessings to Bindusara who saluted him and received it with great pleasure. "How did you acquire all this knowledge, sir?" asked Bindusara. "By careful study, observation, discussion and reflection," said Chanakya. "My boy, it is my life's work, and I hope I have contributed something for future generations to reflect on."

"I have long wanted to ask you two questions. Shall I ask them now?" queried Bindusara.

"Do," said Chanakya. "Ask as many questions as you like. I have kept the whole morning free for you."

"Why did such a great general like Alexander fail to persuade his troops to march to Magadha, though they had willingly fought the turbulent tribes of the Northwest frontier and the Punjab who were better soldiers than the troops of the Nandas under Baddhasala?" asked Bindusara.

"A gang of thieves once laboriously broke into a kitchen of a Palace in order to feast on the delicacies there. The men unwittingly began by drinking the contents of a bottle of castor-oil mistaking it for honey in the darkness. Of course, their anxiety after that was to beat as hasty a retreat as possible in order to get over the effect of this initial mistake. So too, Alexander and his men began with the Northwest frontier and the Punjab,

which contain the most turbulent and unassimilable tribes of India, and had therefore to beat a hasty retreat when they learnt that the Nanda army was massed on the banks of the Jumna just as the army of Poros had massed on the banks of the *Hydaspes*. Had they begun with South India or Saurashtra, they might have had a far better time, just as the thieves would have had if they had begun with sugar or milk." Bindusara laughed.

"What is your second question?" asked Chanakya.

"Why did Seleukos yield the four great Provinces of Aria, Arachosia, Gedrosia and Parapamisadai in return for our paltry gift of five-hundred elephants?"

"Because he could not rule these provinces, and they were only a source of weakness to him, whereas our elephants were really of the greatest service to him in winning the battle of Ipsos over his formidable rival Antigonos. He only adopted the well-known principles of sound politics. Sovereignty has to be kept unimpaired by following the appropriate policy from among the six-fold policy of peace, war, neutrality, sudden invasion without declaration of war, new alliances and treaties of friendship, and concluding peace with one and declaring war on another. It is the sixth of these policies that Seleukos followed," said Chanakya.

"But I think he wanted also to hide his defeat by pretending that the five-hundred elephants we gave represented a fair exchange," said Bindusara.

"Yes, That kind of window-dressing is essential for a King. A King who proclaims openly his defeat and

beheads his commanders, as the Skythian King does, will soon find his subjects and soldiers discouraged, and his enemies encouraged. Defeats should be dressed up as strategic retreats to one's subjects, though the truth should ever be kept before one's own mind and effective steps taken to remedy the defects and get over the reverses," said Chanakya.

"What is the kind of study you would recommend for a Prince?" asked Bindusara.

"The study of the *Vedas* and *Sastras* is essential for righteous conduct. That of *Varta* is essential for keeping the kingdom in a prosperous condition by having the grain, food-stuffs, cattle, gold, and other materials necessary for the sustenance of life. The whole world revolves on the belly. *Dandaniti*, or the Science of Government, with rewards for the virtuous and punishments for the criminals, is essential to safeguard *Anvikshaki*, the three *Vedas* and *Vartā*. You will find all that you need in my *Arthasasthra*. The progress of the world depends on good Government. Punishment is necessary so long as man is man. When it is kept in abeyance, the law of the fish (*Matsyanyaya*) will prevail, and the strong will swallow the weak. So, Magistrates with the King's punishment-rod to act as a sanction for their judgment are essential for the progress of any country. Fines, imprisonment, mutilation and death are the usual punishments awarded. Our *Sastras* say that a king should fast for one day if a guilty person is not punished, and that he should fast for three days if an innocent man is punished."

"Why this distinction?" asked Bindusara.

"Because the punishing of an innocent man does three times as much injury to society, as allowing a guilty man to escape unpunished," said Chanakya.

"How should prisoners be treated in jail?" asked Bindusara.

"They should be given specific work and treated well. Good food must be given to them, but no luxuries. They must be visited by Jail-visitors daily, or at least once in five days, and asked about their work and treatment. Small sums of money may be granted to their families in deserving cases. The adolescent, old, diseased and destitute prisoners of good behaviour should be set free on the Kings' Birthdays and on Full-Moon days. They should also be released on the acquisition of a new territory, the Anointment of the Crown Prince, and on the birth of a son to the king."

"How should the prisoners be treated after their release?" asked Bindusara.

"*Manu* says that a person who has undergone his punishment and has been released must be deemed to have become pure again, having been purged of his sin by punishment. So, he may be treated like any other citizen for purpose of employment, protection etc.," replied Chanakya.

"Is capital punishment good?" asked the Prince.

"It is necessary in murder, treason and other cases till people become more disciplined. There are several

people who will be deterred from committing those crimes only by the extreme penalty of death. Like war against marauders from outside, it is an unavoidable necessity against marauders from inside. Discipline is of two kinds, artificial and natural. One is like the lion tamed by the person exhibiting it, the other is the natural tameness of the cow. A Prince should discipline himself. He should restrain his organs of sense, and shake off lust, anger, greed, vanity, arrogance and foolish revelry. One important aim of education is the restraint of the organs of sense. Karala, the Vaideha, perished because of his lascivious attempt on a Brahmin maiden. Talajangha perished because of his anger directed against the family of Bhrigu. Ajabindu, the Sauvira, fell because of his greedy exactions. Ravana perished because of his unwillingness to restore Sita, prompted by his vanity that he was equal to Rama in prowess; so too, Duryodhana because of his vanity that he could fight Arjuna and Krishna. Kartaveeryarjuna of the Haihaya dynasty perished because of his arrogance. The *Vrishnis* perished because of their foolish revelry and senseless joking with sages; and Vatapi came to grief in an equally foolish joke with Agastya. So restrain your organs of sense, and cast off the evil passions, and you will be the master of the earth," said Chanakya. "Tell me something about public finance," said Bindusara. "All undertakings depend on finance. Hence foremost attention should be paid to the Treasury. The main sources of revenue are towns, the country parts, mines, forests, plantations, cattle, rivers and the sea and land customs. Tolls, fines,

fees on weights and measures, coinage tax, passport dues, liquor-licenses, slaughterhouse-licenses, yarn-tax, taxes on oil, sugar, ghee, gold jewels, and sales, prostitute-license fees, gambling-license fees, building license fees, pilgrim-taxes and taxes levied on entering buildings of public interest are the revenues from Towns. The produce from Crown lands, the one-fourth share of the produce on private lands, pilgrim-taxes, dues from tolls, ferries, ships, pasture-grounds, roads, and coir, and fines on villages come under receipts from the Country.

"Gold, silver, diamonds, gems, corals, conch-shells, metals, salt and other minerals form receipts from Mines. Receipts from sale of flowers and fruits and sugar-cane from State-gardens constitute income from Plantations. Game-forests, timber-forests and elephant-forests yield the revenue under Forests. The proceeds of cows, buffaloes, goats, sheep, asses, camels, horses and mules from the State-herds come under receipts from Herds. The one-sixth share of the fish caught in the rivers and the sea, treasure-trove, fares from passengers on Government ships and the sale-proceeds of confiscated private ships which are not destroyed, form income from the Rivers and the Sea. Customs receipts are taken on foreign goods landed in ports.

"So far regarding Income. Now we come to Expenditure. Expenditure is of three kinds, Routine, Productive Investments and Extraordinary Expenditure. The Civil Lists and the expenditure for carrying on the King's government come under Routine Expenditure; the thirty-million *Panas* spent on constructing the *Sudarsana*

lake come under Productive Investments ; the money spent on famine-relief comes under Extraordinary Expenditure.

"Both income and expenditure must be scrutinised carefully. There are forty methods of embezzlement known to Government servants. Men are naturally fickle-minded. Like horses at work, they exhibit constant changes in their temper. Just as it is impossible not to taste the honey, or the poison, that finds itself at the tip of the tongue, so it is impossible for a Government servant not to eat up at least a portion of the King's revenues. As fish under the water cannot be detected for drinking the water, as the movements of birds high up in the air cannot be known exactly, so too the embezzlements of Government servants when engaged in dealing with Government monies and the complicated accounts cannot be wholly detected. So, the Government servants should be transferred from place to place and from one work to another, and the evil mitigated, but it can never be wholly eradicated. True informants of embezzlements shall be given $1/6$ of the amounts recovered if they are not Government servants, and one-twelfth of the amounts recovered if they are also Government servants. If the information is false, the informants shall be whipped," said Chanakya.

"Tell me something about Sovereignty and the way to preserve it," said Bindusara.

"The elements of Sovereignty are eight, namely, the King, the Ministers, the Country, the Fort, the Treasury, the Army, the Allies and the Curbing of the Enemy," said Chanakya. "Sovereignty has to be kept unimpaired.

by following the suitable policy from among the six policies enumerated already. He who clings to peace, when his enemy is bent upon war and sudden invasion, will be ruined. He who launches on war with insufficient resources, or with inadequate preparation, rushes to certain destruction. A king's policy and intentions should be carefully concealed from prospective enemies. It will not do to discuss everything in public. The following story will illustrate the point :

"There were two prominent householders in Usagrama. They were both lavish entertainers of strangers visiting the village. But whenever any strangers went to their houses, they had to decide whether they would be treated as honoured guests and fed inside the house, or fed on the verandahs like common people. One householder always used to discuss and settle this point after consulting his wife openly in the presence of the guests with the result that many of the guests were offended and some even actually assaulted him and all went away with a low opinion of him. The other householder, however, was very popular with all guests, and never had the slightest unpleasantness with any. The first householder one day approached the second, and asked him the reason for this difference. "Oh", was the reply, "I and my wife never discuss the thing in public. If the guest is to be seated inside the house, she adjusts her hair with the right hand ; if he is to be seated on the verandah, she adjusts her hair with the left hand. Having settled the question thus secretly, we welcome the guest with all joy and take him to the allotted place and feed

him, and he leaves with the impression that we never discussed his status at all."

"The moral of that story is of the widest application. You must have seen the Emperor fondle the hoopoes constantly as if he were a bird-fancier. That is the impression deliberately sought to be created. Indeed, even the astute Megasthenes went away with that impression. The secret is, of course, that the birds go out constantly and bring in cypher messages which the Emperor peruses, when fondling them, and thus gets timely warnings, intimations and intelligence.

"Sovereignty is possible only with assistance. A single wheel can never move. Hence a King shall employ Ministers and hear their opinions. A wise King should profit even from the sensible utterance of a child. How much more so by consultations with ministers! Experienced Ministers must be natives, born of high family, well trained in arts, possessed of foresight, wise, of retentive memory, bold, eloquent, skilful, intelligent, enthusiastic, dignified, possessed of endurance, pure in character, affable, loyal, of good conduct, strength, health and bravery, not dilatory or feeble-minded, affectionate and free from cantankerousness. They shall be tested by the King, Prime Minister and *Purohit* with religious allurements, monetary allurements, love allurements and threat allurements, but in such a way as not to pollute what is pure but only to find out the good from the bad."

"What is your view on spies, sir?" asked Bindusara.

"The king shall have an efficient System of Spies of all kinds,—fraudulent disciples, recluses, house-holders, merchants, ascetics, schoolboys, poisoners, incendiaries, mendicants and prostitutes. There shall be Stationary Spies and Touring Spies. There shall be Superintending Spies spying on spies. The report of a Spy shall not be believed in unless it is corroborated by two other independent spies. Spies shall not only find out the secrets about officers and citizens, but also the whereabouts and movements of Foreign Spies," said Chanakya.

"Do you approve of rewards by the State, Sir?", asked Bindusara.

"Yes. A King should combine in himself the duties of *Indra* and *Yama*, and dole out rewards and punishments. He shall use conciliation, gifts, dissension and punishment, as the four means of quelling disaffection," said Chanakya.

"What is your advice regarding petitioners?" asked the prince.

"A King shall never cause his petitioners to wait at the door, or make himself inaccessible. He shall personally attend to matters relating to gods, heretics, Brahmins, cattle, sacred places, minors, the aged, the afflicted, the helpless and women. He should also attend personally to the national calamities which are eight in number, namely, Famine, Floods, Pestilential Diseases, Demons, Fire, Rats, Serpents and Tigers."

"I have heard of the first three of them and can also understand the fifth. But the other four appear to be new,

and rather too trivial to be termed national calamities," said Bindusara.

"They appear so on first thoughts, but deeper reflection will show the truth of my observation. There are not less than one-thousand-million rats in India on a modest computation. They eat up and waste foodstuffs enough to feed a hundred million men. They also destroy clothes, timber and construction worth millions of *Suvarnas* every year. The tigers and serpents not only kill thousands of human beings every year, but also render vast tracts of land uncultivable by the fear they generate. The six-hundred-and-sixty-million known demons of our land cause a greater waste of time, money and energy, and a more serious fear and debility than any foreign enemy. The worst passions of man are roused by these demons of various types."

"How can we tackle this problem?"

"Conquer evil by good, untruth by truth, demons by gods! Instal more temples to the gods, and starve out the demons by diverting their offerings to the gods," said Chanakya. "Should a King tolerate all the various practices, or make his subjects conform to one excellent type?" asked Bindusara."

"Life cannot be made to conform to one type, however excellent. An attempt to do so is sure to fail. Even if it succeeds, it will only lead to a state resembling death in life, like all people having their noses cut or pulled out in order that all may be of the same length. Let each caste enjoy its customs and liberties, so long as it

does not endanger the liberties of the rest. Besides, an attempt to compel castes to give up their customs may lead to fierce and prolonged revolts, which will ultimately destroy the State. No foreign invasion will be half so dangerous as such a revolt. So, never try to bring about such uniformity," said Chanakya. "Now I shall conclude this interview with a few general observations. A Brahmin's salvation lies in leading a life of prayer and meditation, and in taking religious vows, performing sacrifices, and taking the final ablution after giving suitable fees to the priest who assists him. A King's salvation is obtained in a different way. Readiness for action is his religious vow, satisfactory discharge of duties is his performance of sacrifice, equal attention to all is his offer of fees and ceremonial ablution. He shall be ever active and discharge his duties, for the root of wealth is activity, and the root of poverty is indolence which destroys present and future acquisitions."

CHAPTER XXX

CHANDRAGUPTA ABDICATES

HARDLY had a year passed since Megasthenes left India with the fable that the country had never known famine, than the fact of famine became a terrible reality almost all over the country. The monsoons failed completely in the whole empire with the exception of Kuntala, Isila, Brahmagiri and other southern provinces of the Viceroyalty of Suvarnagiri, and famine began in a most aggravated

form. Crops had failed throughout Magadha and Bengal and North and Central India and the Maharashtra country. Private charity ceased owing to the great scarcity, and the beggars and the destitute began wandering from place to place all over the countryside. There was a feverish activity in the grain markets. Prices rose steeply, and merchants made tons of money at the expense of the hungry and the dying. Credit contracted, and the middle classes could not even borrow money to buy the essential grain to keep their body and soul together. Looting of grain shops and granaries, an unknown thing before, became daily occurrences. Almost all the wells dried up, and there was not even enough drinking - water for men and cattle. The pasture - grounds were all burnt up by the terrible heat of the sun. At first cattle began to die in thousands for lack of fodder and water. Then, men began to die, first in ones and twos, then in scores and hundreds, and finally in thousands. Reports began to pour in from the officers all over the country about the famine and the heavy toll of human life it was taking. Spies too arrived at Pataliputra from various famine-stricken areas with tales of death and suffering. Chandragupta consulted Chanakya and Rakshasa and issued the following general edict:-

" The gracious King, the beloved of the gods, Chandragupta, has learnt with remorse and regret that more than a hundred thousand men, women and children have died of starvation in this famine and that many times that number are suffering from hunger and thirst. What is worse, Brahmanas and Sramanas, and house-holders of all castes and creeds, who have to treat their mother and

father, teacher and guest properly under the immemorial *Dharma* of this land of *Jambudvīpa*, and to show courtesy to friends, comrades, companions and relatives, as also to slaves and servants, and to perform ceremonies with due offerings of rice and ghee, are unable to do so owing to this terrible famine. The gracious King is greatly pained by the calamity which has befallen his subjects. Even the loss of a hundredth or a thousandth part of the lives that were killed or of the people suffering from the pangs of hunger and thirst now is considered most deplorable by the gracious King. He is resolved to uphold the *Dharma* of this land of *Jambudvīpa* that neither man nor beast shall die of starvation so long as there is a morsel of rice or a cowrie in the country. The treasury will be depleted if necessary in order to save the lives of his beloved subjects. The *Kumara* and *Aryabutra* Viceroy¹, the *Predestris*, *Mahamatras*, and *Rajukas*², the *Mantriparishads*³, the *Janapadas*⁴, the *Antamahamatras*⁵, the *Yuktas*, *Upayuktas*, the *Rajapurushas*⁶, the *Nagarakas*, the *Sthanikas*⁷, the *Gopas*⁸, and other officials of the empire are all directed to remit the land revenue wherever justified, to

1. The Kumaras were sons, Aryaputras other relatives of the King.
2. These were Governors, Commissioners, and District Officials.
3. Councils of ministers[at Imperial and Provincial headquarters.
4. Assemblies of the people at Imperial and Provincial headquarters.
5. The Wardens of the Marches.
6. The Subordinate Civil Service.
7. Commissioners and Assistant Commissioners of Towns.
8. Village and regional officials and accountants.

throw open the royal forests free for grazing, to dig wells wherever water can be found, to start works like tank bunds, bridges, village roads to provide work for the farm labourers thrown out of employment for want of water for cultivation, to buy grains wherever available and at whatever price has to be paid and start free kitchens for feeding the poor and the crippled and the destitute and those not used to work, to supply rice to men and women of status who will be ashamed to come to the public kitchens. They can draw whatever amounts are required from the respective account officers and spend freely whatever is necessary to save lives. The only test which will be applied by the gracious King is the reduction in the Bill of Mortality. The aboriginal and forest tribes require special attention and care. Looting is to be severely punished. Hoarding and profiteering must be put down with an iron hand. Every officer should tour round in his jurisdiction frequently and keep his eyes and ears open. *Varuna* japas, and *Virata parvam* readings must be done for getting rains. Those officers who do not do as directed above will neither please their master, the King, here below nor his Master, the King of Kings, in the world beyond. *Om Tat Sat!*"

The officers did their best, but all to no purpose. There seemed to be a limit to what mere men could do against the terrific destructive forces of Nature. All the meagre grain resources were soon exhausted, and men ravening with hunger fought and killed one another like wild beasts for a handful of grain. Dark stories of cannibalism, of men pouncing on helpless men and killing

them and eating them in secret, began to circulate, and some of them were confirmed as true by reliable spies and officials. The year 299 B. C. and the succeeding five years were the blackest of years. The whole area was filled with the dead and the dying. To add to the horrors of the famine, a terrible epidemic of cholera broke out all over North India and Orissa owing to the people having eaten all kinds of unhealthy food and drunk all kinds of dirty and infected water. The cholera started at first in Rajagriha, Gaya and Pataliputra and spread on to Prayag, Sravasti, Ayodhya, Kausambi, Madhura and Indraprastha. Thousands died daily, and the corpses were thrown into the rivers, unburnt, by the helpless and ignorant people. All the riverside towns down to Tamralipti at the mouth of the Ganges were soon infected with cholera. Owing to the vast migrations of the people from place to place in search of food and water, the cholera spread far and wide, and all the villages were also infected. The water in the Sona and the Ganges at Pataliputra could not be seen owing to the thick coat of corpses covering it.

The efforts of the people to get rid of the disease by following the time-honoured methods, namely by oblations to the great demon Tantukachchha and to the Cholera Goddess, by milking cows on cremation-grounds, by burning the trunks of all corpses even in cases where they would be normally buried, and by spending nights in continuous prayer, were of no avail. Fifty-millions were suffering from acute famine and pestilence, and were being decimated by these fell disasters. Children were being abandoned in thousands by their destitute parents.

Thousands were also sold away as slaves by the poorer classes. Many men and women entered into an indentured labour system, which was nothing short of serfdom, in order to get at least something to eat and drink. In the middle of this Dance of Death and suffering, Bhadrabāhusvamin, the great Jain teacher and Srutakevalin, began preaching his soul-stirring sermons in the great cities of the north. He began at Vaisali, and went on preaching at Pataliputra, with ever-increasing numbers following him. His main theme was that the famine was the result of the bad *Karma* of the people in the past and of their indulgence in violence and cruelty and killing of their fellow-creatures. He attributed their sufferings to their ignoring the teachings of the *Arhats* and *Kevalins* in general, and of Mahavira and Parsvanatha in particular. He advised a great migration from Ujjain to Mahishamandala province in the far south, where there was no famine. A powerful argument used by him was that the famine was making it very difficult for people to practise the normal virtues. "Charity is sapped by having nothing to give. Avarice has increased tenfold with the desire to eat and drink something, somehow. Liberality towards one's relatives and friends has disappeared. Callousness towards sufferings has set in and even, cannibalism has begun. The ancient *Arya Dharma* is perishing. Let us go to the south, where the material conditions are better, and preserve and spread our *Arya Dharma*," said he, "Our sacred books say: 'When overtaken by famine, portentous calamity, old age, or incurable disease, the Aryas take to *sallekhana* for the sake of merit and obtain

liberation of the body. Having purified his mind by the renunciation of all property and of love and hate, taking leave of all relatives and friends, begging their forgiveness for all wrongs done to them, shaking off all worldly shackles, an old man like me or a man stricken by an incurable disease, like our King Chandragupta, should take this vow of *sallekhana* and gradually and cheerfully fast unto death, leaving the world to younger or healthier men. A man undertaking the vow of *sallekhana* should take only rice and milk even to begin with and then gradually reduce the quantity taken by one half every day, and finally leave off rice and milk and take only water and then half the quantity of water every succeeding day till finally the soul cheerfully leaves this abode of dust, this sinful world, and enters the high heaven as if it is its own home and sends out blissful waves of thought and help to the suffering beings here below." This famine will last for twelve years in all, though there will be breaks in the drought when devastating floods will occur in the valleys of the *Ganges*, *Sona*, *Damodar*, *Brahmaputra* and *Lohitya*, and hundreds of thousands of men and cattle will die. The only way to save the rest from destruction is for a sage and a king, leaders in the spiritual and lay realms, to perform *Sallekhana*, one at the beginning and one at the end of this twelve-year period, and start spiritual forces working for the salvation of suffering humanity. So, I am going to invite the king Chandragupta to follow me and the group of *Digambara* Jains in our migration to *Mahishamandala* from Ujjaini."

He sent an appeal to Chandragupta to abdicate and

follow him. Chandragupta was attracted by the proposal. He had been getting greatly dejected by the growing grip of diabetes on him and by the terrible famine and death all around him. He sent for Chanakya and told him:—

"I am in the grip of this fell and incurable disease, diabetes. I am sick of the diet, of bottle-gourd and bitter-gourd, butter-milk and Bengal-gram, prescribed for me by the palace physician. I get up five times in the night to pass water, even though I am on such diet. I cannot go, as before, on long rides, whether for hunting or for mere exercise. There are pains in my joints, debility in my system, and a perpetual and never-satisfied thirst. I have no peace of body, mind or soul. What happiness can there be without peace? Life has lost its fascination for me. I sleep every night in a different room from fear of assassins. Death within has begun its deadly attack, and there is no meaning in evading death from without. I have become like a precious stone, like my own *syamantaka* gem, which has either always to be worn on the body or to be carefully hidden in secure places to be safe, and cannot like the common pebble or quartz, to which class it belongs, enjoy God's sunshine without fear or favour. And the terrible suffering of the people in this famine and the soul's anguish at seeing these thousands die every day has sickened me further. I yearn for freedom from all these cares and worries. I would love to roam about the mountains of the south as I did as a boy in the Himalayan foot-hills when your reverence picked me up. I shall hand over the reins of Government to Bindusara, who is now old and experienced enough to rule, especially with you

here to aid him. Sir, everything I did was only what you dictated. Bindusara also could have done it. Give me leave to abdicate and follow the *Srutakevalin*¹ to the south. I am more attracted by the free life than by the tenets of Jainism. Born in our *sanatana*² doctrines, and a descendant of Sri Rama and Sri Krishna, and a disciple of your reverence, I can never follow the doctrine of the *Jina*³ that there is no Creator, that all men can become gods by mere *Karma*; so, don't oppose my plan on the ground that I have no right to become a Jain."

"Vrishala," said Chanakya, "I know that full well. How can the Beloved of the gods turn against God or adopt the Jain belief that there is no Creator? But, I cannot give you leave now to abdicate, when this terrible famine is on, and nearly a million people have died, and more are dying, and an old and experienced ruler like you is sorely needed to save the rest. Chandra, you under-estimate yourself. Without you, I could not have achieved anything. You are the wall on which I painted my poor pictures, you are the pillar on which my humble building rested, you were the executive arm, the Arjuna, on whom I relied. Without you, what could I, a poor Brahman with no right to rule, have achieved? This Brahman-Kshatriya combination is essential for our country, the Brahman's brains and the Kshatriya's

1. A man who has attained pure knowledge or *Kevala Jnana*; here it means Bhadrabahu.

2. Literally, "eternally true" here it means the Hindu beliefs.

3. Mahavira.

muscles. We have worked together as comrades in this work for *lokasangraha*, for over a quarter of a century. Now, when the Ship of State is approaching the rocks in a terrible storm, are you, the Captain, going to desert me, the Pilot, and leave the ship to its fate? No, Chandra, no. This is not the time for you or me to abdicate our task which is not yet completed, or for the boy Bindusara, albeit as good a substitute as we can ever hope for, to be crowned. Wait till we have overcome this terrible famine and the monsters in the shape of men who are exploiting it. Then you can abdicate, and crown Bindusara King, and I too can go and attend to my own salvation. I stopped at the helm of affairs at your request even after Rakshasa was made Prime Minister. You too must remain as King at my request for at least three years more by which time I hope to conquer the famine and the monsters who are exploiting it. Besides, death by *sallekhana* is *suicide*, and our sacred books say that those who commit suicide go to the worlds of eternal darkness. I cannot therefore allow you to commit *sallekhana* even after twelve years, as Bhadrabahu wants. Write a letter as I dictate, to Bhadrabahu."

Chandragupta was impressed, and wrote to Bhadrabahu a letter as follows:—

"After careful and deep searching of heart, I have decided that I should not abdicate and follow your Holiness. My son is not yet fit to be entrusted with the government of the country, and this is not the time to hand the Empire over to him. My preceptor, the

venerable Chanakya, and I have resolved to pray to God and to fight the famine and pestilence instead of running away from them, and seeking peace and safety for ourselves. We feel that to run away now from our subjects will be like deserting our armies in the middle of a great battle. A king's *Dharma* is, I am convinced, to stand by his subjects in weal and woe. While a petty monarch might arrange a migration to another kingdom with all his subjects in the event of a great famine, a king with a vast empire and millions of subjects like me cannot dream of it. Hence, I must, with sorrow, decline to follow your Holiness's advice. I am, however, sending five-hundred bullock-waggons from the army for aiding this migration, and am also writing to the Viceroy of Suvarnagiri to render your Holiness all possible help."

Bhadrabahu received the letter and was at once aware of its real authorship. He knew that Chanakya was the real obstacle, and not Chandragupta. He had resolved to lead the *Digambara* Jains to the south and establish them in an unassailable position there in virgin soil. It was hopeless to fight the *Svetambara* Jains in North India and hope for a victory. The very climate of North India, with its cold winters, would be against the *Digambara* doctrine of wearing no clothes, whereas the climate of South India was such that not wearing clothes would be more comfortable than wearing clothes. If Chandragupta, the great Emperor of *Jambudvīpa*, joined him and followed him to the south, it meant certain victory for his plans. If he refused, it meant equally certain defeat. So he resolved to meet the Emperor in person and persuade

him. He fixed up an appointment for the very next day, and also desired that Chanakya should be present. He was confident of getting a resounding victory over Chanakya in the expected discussion.

The great Hall of Justice was filled to overflowing the next evening, at 7 P.M. when the *Srutakevalin* went there and was received with all honours due to such a religious head by Chandragupta, Chanakya, Rakshasa and others. Bhadrabahu said to Chandragupta :—"The stars foretell that this terrible famine will be here with us for twelve years, and that you cannot hope for any prosperity if you remain here. So, come South with me. Chanakya's opinion that this famine can be conquered in a year or two, and that wealth and prosperity will return at least in three years, ignores what the stars foretell."

Chanakya replied, :—

*Nakshatramati prichhantam
Balamarthoti vartate
Arthopyarthasya nakshatram
Kim Karishyati taraka :*"

(Wealth and prosperity will fly away from that childish man who constantly enquires as to what the stars foretell, for wealth and prosperity are the stars for wealth and prosperity. What can these material stars, going helplessly in their courses, as directed by God, do to secure them or take them away ?)

Every one laughed. Bhadrabahu said to Chanakya; "So, you believe that God created the sun and the moon

and the stars and everything here below? We Jains don't believe that. How could God, who, according to you, has no attachment, create some men and women as beautiful and some as ugly, some as rich and some as poor, some as healthy and some as sick and deformed? If you say that he has attachment, is he worthy of being worshipped as God?"

"It is useless, sir, to discuss with you on this point. We can only see God, with our human frailty as the elephant is seen in a wooden doll. The child sees the elephant alone in it, as devotees see God alone in the universe, whereas the adults see only wood and not the elephant. Your wisdom makes you ignore God in the universe. Without *Brahma*, how can you explain *Dharma* and *Karma*?" said Chanakya.

"*Karma* is enough to explain everything, and neither *Brahma* nor *Dharma* is required to explain it," said Bhadrabahu. "Alone a man comes into the world, alone he goes out of it, alone he enjoys the merits of his good *karma*, alone he suffers the consequences of his bad *karma*. Leaving his corpse behind, like a log of wood or a clod of earth, his wife, sons, relatives and friends turn their backs on him. His *karma* alone follows him to the world beyond. We should therefore gather good *karma* day after day. Doing *sallekhana* and dying deliberately in our old age or in incurable disease, with malice towards none and with no fear of death, will lead us to heaven, as of right."

"Life or death a man should not court: but like a servant awaiting his master's command, he should bide his

time awaiting His command," said Chanakya. "But what is the use of telling this to you, as you do not believe in God the Creator? So, I shall tell you this. The selfish inaction you propose is far more terrible and wicked than the selfish action we condemn in men of the world. Man has three enemies whom he has to fight: Nature, when it is destructive and murderous, as now in this drought, famine and disease; fellow-men, like the monsters exploiting this famine for their own selfish ends; and his own lower nature which always wants to prevail over his higher nature. But each battle has to be fought only after he has won the previous one, just as in the rounds of a match or regarding the milestones of a road in a journey. So, Chandra must remain here till the famine is conquered and Nature subdued, and till the rapacious exploiters are punished and subdued."

Chandragupta said, "How can I disagree with what the venerable Chanakya has said just now?". Bhadrabahu said:— "Well, think it over. Don't be led by these specious arguments of a fanatical *sanatanist*. After all, even if there is some force in them, you can safely crown Bindusara King and follow me. I shall be in this town for another fortnight. Who can think of spiritual things, or look after his soul, when he is inhaling the dust of towns and doing the work of Kings and courts?"

"Do you suggest that a King should not fight his enemies or famine?" asked Chanakya,

"Oh, no. Even a Jain King must do it. So long as he is a King, he must discharge such duties. But when he

has a grown-up son and a clever minister, like you, there is no need for him to neglect the duty he owes to his soul. I must tell your Excellency that a man can have a clever brain but that his soul may not be whole."

Then Bhadrabahu left the palace, leaving Chanakya wincing at the last remark, which had robbed him of his victory over the Jain saint. Still Chanakya was glad that he had averted the threatened abdication of Chandragupta.

But the very next day, cholera invaded the imperial harem, and struck quickly and ruthlessly. The first victim was the gentle Nirmala whom Chandragupta loved best among his queens. Within twenty-four hours thereafter Durdhara and Santavati followed. The next day Devabhanta, who had taken charge of the panic-stricken harem like a masterly head matron and infused renewed confidence, caught the fell disease herself and died. Chandragupta was prostrate with grief and attributed the calamity to his refusal to follow Bhadrabahu. He sent for Chanakya. But the great Chanakya himself was busy attending on Gautami who too had caught the disease, and could not come. Gautami was a great friend of Durdhara and had gone to visit and console her in her last moments and had caught the disease.

Chanakya was desolate with grief as he bent over his dying partner and watched her death pangs. He said to her tenderly, "Gautami, I cannot live without you." She replied, "You must. Who will look after Rajarajeswari, Agnisarma and Radhagupta?"

He asked her weepingly whether she had any last wishes. She said, "Yes. I wished we had a son. We were not blessed with a son by God." Something gave way in Chanakya, and he sobbed like a child.

"Don't weep," said she. "What cannot be cured must be endured. It is all God's wish. At least he gave us Radhagupta. You must do something for poor Agnisarma and Radhagupta for my sake. Do make an exception to your rule that you will not ask for anything for yourself or your dependants. After all, they are not worse than others."

Chanakya promised to do something for them, and Gautami died with a pleasing smile on her lips, crying out "Govinda! Govinda!". Chanakya cried out, "My God! My God!" and wept as if his heart would break. His life's partner was gone, and he felt as if he was living in another world, a world of pitiless strife and hate with the only soul who loved him disinterestedly gone. The man of iron wept like a child. Agnisarma and Rajarajeswari tried their best to console him, but met with only very limited success. Chanakya did the ceremonies mechanically like a somnambulist, and one and all were surprised.

On the sixteenth day after the death of his beloved wife, Chanakya was sufficiently recovered to go and meet Chandragupta. Chandragupta fell at his feet and drenched them with his tears and tales of woe. Chanakya raised him and wept and drenched him with his tears. "Who is to console whom?" asked Chanakya at last. "Both of us have lost our beloved ones."

Chandragupta begged of Chanakya to allow him to abdicate and follow Bhadrabahu to the south. "I cannot remain in this palace any more, with the memories of my beloved queens. It will be like living in a graveyard or cremation ground. Give leave me to abdicate. Crown Bindusara, and guide him for thirteen years, I beg of you. Follow the example of our Sri Rama and the Pandavas and sacrifice your pleasure for my sake, for the sake of *Dharma*" said he, and again fell at Chanakya's feet and refused to rise up till his prayers were granted. Chanakya said finally, "Yes, rise up Chandra. What is fated must happen. We shall crown Bindusara this very midnight in silence, in the presence of the ministers and the secret councillors, and spread the news abroad that you died at midnight suddenly of diabetic carbuncle, after crowning Bindusara king at midnight with tears, and were quietly burned in the palace grounds. It will never do for the people to know that you, their King, are still alive. Some Jain or other faction may like to revolt in your name. Hence my suggestion."

"Whatever your reverence suggests will be for the good of myself and the kingdom and the world," said Chandragupta. "Such great souls like you will never suggest anything which is not for my good and the good of the world. I agree."

Rakshasa and the ministers and the secret Privy Councillors were sent for and told about the plan and sworn to keep the thing as a top secret. Then at midnight, Chandragupta abdicated, and Bindusara was

crowned King and a proclamation was issued that Chandragupta, the Beloved of the gods, had died at midnight, of diabetic carbuncles, after crowning the Crown Prince, Bindusara, King with tears. The City, prepared by the famine and pestilence for any calamitous news, received this also without any surprise. While the quite few citizens in the streets were discussing the sensational news, Chandragupta joined Bhadrabahu, who had been told everything by Rakshasa in strict confidence, and left with him and his party for Ujjain in a specially fast chariot supplied by Chanakya. "A terrible fellow, this Chanakya, a man of the world to the core," said a disciple of Bhadrabahu to Bhadrabahu while travelling. "You are mistaken," said Chandragupta. "He is a noble disinterested soul. He is like the father wandering in the storm in search of his children. May God be with him!" And Bhadrabahu, the *Srutakevalin*, nodded his vigorous assent.

CHAPTER XXXI

AN EMPEROR FASTS TO DEATH

As soon as Chandragupta had abdicated and Bindusara had taken charge as Emperor, very drastic measures were taken for combating the famine and pestilence and the hoarding and profiteering of merchants. Bindusara issued a proclamation as follows:—

"The beloved of the gods, the gracious Bindusara *Amitraghata*, greets his dear subjects in sorrow and in

hope. You are all aware of the terrible famine and pestilence that are raging. I have assumed charge at midnight and am waiting for the dawn. There are only two ways of solving any problem, Co-operation and Conflict. I beg of all well-disposed ones to co-operate with me and my government, in this task of world welfare. Come forward, you who can thrill in answer to a great ideal, you who can feel the utter meanness of a life wholly consecrated, or rather desecrated, to selfish greed, however respectable or even virtuous in the eyes of men, come and do something on the lines of what you love to read and hear about what God did in His *avataras* for the sake of world welfare. Do not take refuge in *selfish inaction* which is a million times worse than *selfish action*. Co-operate in catching hold of hoarders and profiteers who are going to be shut up in prison by me without food till they point out their concealed hoards of grain. Co-operate in village works. Co-operate in distributing the grain. Co-operate in eating only what is required to sustain life so that others may also get that minimum quantity. Co-operate in allaying panic and aimless wandering. Co-operate by taking part in mass prayers for rain. Affliction destroys a man's courage, it destroys his learning, it destroys his good impulses; indeed, there is no enemy like Affliction. They say it is all Fate that has brought about this calamity. Be it so! But it is only the cowardly and the mean who submit to Fate. The brave and the magnanimous fight against Fate and eventually conquer. Death follows you everywhere, whether you are walking or running, resting or travelling. Accumulated treasures

perish. Only your good deeds will avail you in this world or the next. They are courageous, when they resolve to do a work, see it through despite all obstacles. Nothing is impossible by co-operation and perseverance. There are some who by their nature are demoniacal and anti-social. These *rakshasas* and *asuras* cannot be won over by good words or gifts or honours or threats, and can be only subdued by merciless punishment. The gracious King has held his rod on high to punish these demons as they deserve. He will stop at no cruel punishment of these monsters. Why are you all afraid of these men? Denounce them to the government without fear. But punishment will be effective only over such demons. Co-operation and kindness alone will succeed with the rest. A wise man follows different methods with different people to achieve his ends. The gracious king is resolved to follow every method likely to be of use at this crisis. *Om Tat Sat !* "

There was immediate response from the people. Hundreds of hoarders and profiteers were denounced to the Government, and they were all detained and starved till they disclosed their hoards of grain. One merchant, Dhanakirti, disclosed fifty thousand bags of rice on the fifth day of his detention and starvation. Several others disclosed smaller hoards. One, Ratan Chand, died on the fortieth day of detention and starvation, stoutly maintaining that he had not a grain. Bindusara was a bit sad, and thought that Chanakya had committed a mistake in his case. But Chanakya had acted on reliable secret service information. He sent Jeevasiddhi, the Head of the Intelligence Department, with fifty select spies to

thoroughly search Ratan Chand's premises, and they found a hundred thousand bags of the finest rice kept in a vast underground granary. "He must have been a bandicoot or a squirrel King in his last birth," said Bindusara on hearing the news. "I am rather depressed from another point of view," said Chanakya. "I thought that men would rarely tell lies with their last breath. That illusion too has gone." This incident had the effect of making all merchants sell their hidden stores to Government.

The grain so gathered from the hoarders was found sufficient for feeding the citizens of Pataliputra for six months on an austerity scale. The rich were given rice at twice the price at which the State had bought it from the honest merchants or farmers, and the poor were given free rations of coarse rice. A law was passed that merchants should not sell goods of Indian origin at more than five percent above the cost price, and goods of foreign origin at more than ten percent above the cost price. All merchants who were proved to be guilty of breaking this rule were ordered to be fined a thousand *panas* and given twelve stripes by the City Magistrates at the public *chowk* or square. The whipping of a few big merchants had an electric effect in stopping profiteering and black-marketing.

Bindusara was very much worried about the famine. He called Chanakya and asked him, "What do you think about our efforts to fight this terrible famine? Will they succeed?"

"Certainly," said Chanakya. Bhasa has said beautifully:—

"Fire is got even from wood by constant churning,"

Water is got from earth by constant digging,

Nothing is impossible for men of daring.

Who go the proper way, ever succeeding!"

"But we have not sighted any real improvement yet," said the King. "That is so," said Chanakya. "We have to wait and hope.

"The day slips past, and we look forward to the night;

The bright dawn comes, and we look forward to the day:

As time passes thus, we have, in our troubles, to sight Advantages yet to come, as best as we may!"

Chanakya took the most drastic steps to put down the increasing robbery and looting cases. He appointed as City Police Superintendent of Pataliputra, Chandagirika a weaver who was found burning down portions of his house in order to burn the bugs which had built nests there. This cruel man took a fiendish delight in sending out police agents to prominent robber chiefs to come with their gangs to some rich houses, promising to make some servants therein open the doors for them from inside. Then, when the robbers were inside, the houses were burnt down with them, or the robbers were massacred. This device stopped the robberies, and lootings in a few months. But Brihaspati Misra, the Chief Justice, protested to Chanakya and Rakshasa that while the law allowed the killing of

robbers entering the house at night it did not countenance uring robbers into the house and killing them there on set plan. They ignored the protest telling Binduasra that there was no case before the Chief Justice and that his powers were limited to cases before him.

Some Maharashtra and Andhra princes and nobles took the occasion of the great famine and the paralysis of Magadha for revolting against Bindusara. They argued that they had only sworn fidelity to Chandragupta by name, and not to the Magadhan King, and that they owed no allegiance to Bindusara, and refused to pay any tribute or to acknowledge the suzerainty of Bindusara. Chanakya took prompt and firm action. The sixteen cities which had revolted, headed by Partishthana, Vaijayanti, Amara-vati and Machilipatnam of the Andhras, and Nasika, Vatapi, Devagiri, and Kalyani of the Maharashtras and Abhiras, were besieged and cut off from the rest of the country by Mauryan armies despatched with great speed and made to surrender. A dozen princes and nobles who had revolted were taken in chains to Pataliputra and kept in the big new Central Jail, five miles from the City, where Chandagirika and his lieutenants, Atikrura and Mahakaya, had kept their strange death traps and devilish contrivances. On a dark night, they tried to escape by scaling over the high walls of their enclosure and leaping to the other side. They fell straight into a vast sheet of burning tar and pitch kept there and perished miserably. The fortifications of the sixteen towns were razed to the ground, and Bindusara *Amitraghata's* suzerainty established from the shores of the western sea to the shores

of the eastern sea. The common soldiers were all forgiven, as Chanakya thought that the princes and nobles had misguided them and that it would be enough to punish them, especially as he did not want to leave any bitterness behind. Bindusara asked him, "Will not these people revolt again for the descendants or relatives of these princes?" "Oh, no," said Chanakya, "most of these princes and nobles are mushroom ones who attained to prominence only recently by violence, and few men will care to die for them. It is different with the ancient kingdoms of the south where the dynasties have lasted long and ruled the country well and there is real attachment to the rulers. That applies also to Satyasri Satkarni who has remained loyal to us."

Soon after the crushing of the revolt, news came from Purushadatta, the Viceroy of the South, that the *Surtakevalin*, Bhadrabahu, had died by *Sallekhana* in *Vindhyagiri* or *Indragiri* cave, at Sravanabelgola (*Sramana Valia Kolam*--the big tank of the Ascetic) attended by Chandragupta to the very last, and that after his death, Chandragupta, attended by Agnisarma and others, had gone on a visit to Sivasamudram, Jog Falls, Mudubidri, Janaradanam, Anantasayanam, Kanyakumari, Rameswaram and Madura, and that at the temples at Mudubidri, Kanyakumari, Rameswaram and Madura, he had given away one-fourth of his diamonds and other precious gems. He had also sent a letter to Bindusara asking him to give away the *Syamantaka* gem to the idol of *Dwarakadhish* at Dwaraka to whom it belonged. Without a second thought, Bindusara had the *Syamantaka*

gem taken out of the Imperial Crown and sent through Dingarata, with a strong escort, to Dwaraka to decorate the crown of Sri Krishna in his temple there. That night he dreamt that Sri Krishna told him that in return for the great gem he had sent, He was going to make his son Asoka a peerless gem among men. He was delighted at this and asked Chanakya what the best way of training his sons was. Chanakya replied:—

*"Rajavat Panchavarshani dasavarshani dasavat
Prapte shodasavarshetu putram mitravat acharet"*

(Treat the son as a King, according right royal treatment to him, till he is five; from five to sixteen treat him like a servant, making him do all kinds of work; after sixteen treat him as a friend and equal.)

Bindusara smiled and said, "A good formula I shall follow it."

The Emperor and Chanakya sent Samudranatha with 400 State ships and 600 commandeered private ships and ten-million gold *Panas*, taken from the Nanda hoard, to the Chola, Pandya, Keralaputra and Simhala countries to buy and bring all the paddy he could get. In six months he returned with 4,00,000 bags of paddy in his ships and some 600 ships of the Southern countries. He also brought the cheering news that the Kings of Pandya, Chola, Keralaputra, and Simhala had refused to take money for the 1,00,000 bags given from the State granaries as that would be opposed to their motto of "Charity is our household Divinity." The Emperor and Chanakya

were so pleased with it that they at once directed Purushadatta, the Viceroy of Suvarnagiri, to withdraw his regiments from Kanchipuram and Palar bank to Brahmagiri Siddhapura, Samapa and Isila in the Kuntala and Mahishamandala country, and to present each one of the Southern independent kingdoms with a dozen golden-wheeled chariots, so much coveted by them, and to assure them, that there would be in future no war with them unless they themselves started it.

Chandrabhanu was directed to use his 60,000 bullock waggons belonging to the army for transporting grain from the Southern provinces to the famine areas. Rakshasa asked Chanakya whether it would be wise to use the entire army transport for fighting the famine, lest some enemy should attack them, taking advantage of the opportunity. "Which enemy is there capable of attacking us now? Seleukos and the Rulers of the Southern States are our friends. The Kiratas and Kambhojas of the north are too weak to dream of attacking us by themselves. If anybody is foolish enough to attack us now, every citizen will become a soldier and hack the invaders to pieces, if they do not die of the famine and cholera," replied Chanakya.

Chanakya directed the river-canals to be repaired and deepened, and bunds to be put up across small streams for feeding the canals. Farmers were ordered to cultivate river-side lands only with food-crops, and not with cotton and other crops. A hundred thousand men were made to cross-bund the Ganges near Pataliputra and to replenish with water the dry ditches round the Capital. This had a

magic effect in restoring confidence in the City. "Even if rains fail the melting of the snows will help," said Chanakya.

The Emperor and Chanakya also ordered the opening of rescue-homes for abandoned children, and free kitchens and relief-works like repairing old forts, buildings and tanks and constructing new forts, roads, tanks and buildings. All the above measures slowly infused confidence into the people.

Chanakya organised, in addition, a great Prayer for rain by ten-thousand Brahmins to Indra, Varuna, Agni, the Asvins, Jayanta, the Rivers and the Mountains, and also made them recite the *Virataparvam*. 'Sir,' asked Siddharthaka: "Will these ceremonies be of much use?" "Surely," said Chanakya. "God must be amenable to prayers for the benefit of the people in general. Rain is the gift of the gods in return for prayers and sacrifices. I am sure God will hear us and grant us rain, if we pray long enough." For three years more the famine raged, but the deaths were much less owing to the measures adopted by Chanakya, and the grain brought by Samudra-natha and Chandrabhanu.

The Brahmins went on praying till one day in September 296 B. C. the welcome clouds gathered, and the sky opened out, and the earth was deluged with rain after a complete drought of 48 months. There were floods in the Ganges, Sona and Damodar and in several parts of the country, but Chandragupta and Chanakya had foreseen this, and got ready boats and other necessary equipment for fighting the floods. So, the floods did no more

havoc than wash off a few thousand trees and submerge a few hundred-thousand acres. After they had subsided, there were rice-crops on the fields, and the country looked as if it had never seen famine, flood or pestilence, though fully one-fourth of the population of the Empire had perished.

Now that the crisis was over, Bindusara relaxed a bit. He sent a messenger to Antiochos of Syria, the son of Seleukos, to send him some figs, raisins and wine and "to buy" for him a good Greek philosopher, to teach him the wisdom of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. Antiochos sent the figs, raisins and wine but regretted his inability to send the philosopher as it was not permissible to *buy* philosophers in Greece. "Nor here," wrote Bindusara to him, "but scholars of repute are eager to flock to a great King's Court, like Yagnavalkya, for discussion and reward, and we jocularly term this "*buying*" them."

Rakshasa asked Chanakya why he was allowing Bindusara to drink wine. Chanakya replied, "A little vice keeps bigger vices and evils away. I do not want this King also to abdicate and perform *Sallekhana*. He is a Kshatriya and a King, and he need not be an ascetic like us. 'Do not make your life a continual sadness and sorrow,' say the Vedas."

Many were the discussions Bindusara had with Chanakya. One day, he found Chanakya very sad and asked him, "Why are you so sad to-day, sir?". Chanakya replied, "It is Gautami's death anniversary tomorrow. My

heart is sad thinking of her. In the silence of the night I feel her coming softly to my room to see if I am being attended to as when she was alive, whether I am as comfortable as before."

"Are you?" asked Bindusara.

"How can I be, though Rajarajeswari does her best?" asked Chanakya. "The day with its noise and work drowns the sad memories. But, at nights, we are like the roads listening to the foot-falls of memories in silence. These memories touch us tremblingly like the fingers of a babe. Sometimes I too wish to die and join her who is waiting for me. But to wish to die before God wills it is a weakness, is a sign of failure and cowardice. Life is the concern of man, Death is the concern of God. So, I wait patiently, and look only to the present. The present is in our hands. We can make it or mar it. The past is on the shelf of eternity, beyond recall. The future is unborn, the child of the past and the present. The world has kissed my soul with its pain and I want to leave this work and devote my whole time to Him. I am counting the thirteen years I have promised to serve you." And his eyes were shining with incipient tears.

"You are constantly thinking of her," said Bindusara.

"Yes," said Chanakya. "As Bhasa has said,

'Can one forget a love which shook the heart?

Fond memory brings it back with a start:

Our sad and mortgaged minds get free, one fears,

But by paying in full the debt of tears.'!"

"That is very true," said Bindusara.

"Blessed is a woman loved with affection so sincere,
She lives in her lord's love for ever, though burnt
and departed."

"God gave me such a wife. It is only proper that I should show my gratitude at least by remembering her," said Chanakya. "Sir, do you see any real evidence of God in the world?" asked Bindusara.

"Yes, I find marks of His foot-steps everywhere. The noise of the moment tries to drown the voice of eternity but is powerless to do it for reflective souls. I hear His voice in the rustling of the leaves of the *asvattha* tree opposite my house, I hear it in the shouts of little children, and in the cries of birds," said Chanakya.

"Your learning must be of immense help to you and must have created many desires in you not found in common men," said the King.

"Oh, no. Learning is a load on the mind, desire is a load on the heart; both hamper you in your journey to God," said Chanakya.

"Do you agree with the sages who say that mere love alone will enable man to reach God?" asked Bindusara. "If so, don't you think it will be very easy to reach Him?"

"I agree that love will enable man to reach God. But, I don't think it is easy. Man tears other men to pieces like a tiger; hoards like a squirrel; retires into his shell like a crab; steals like a rat; spies about like a snake; crawls and cringes like a worm; is greedy like a

shark; and strangles like an octopus; the only animal he has not imitated is the *chataka* bird with its unselfish love! If knowledge will do, many will be saved; if works will do, many more will be saved; if love is required, only a very few will be saved. There is no doubt that the road to Heaven runs through the heart. Man's innate propensities are food and sex, fear and disgust, conceit and vanity, assertion and submission, association and dissociation, impression and expression, elation and depression, curiosity and comfort, acquisitiveness and gifts, construction and destruction, weeping and laughing, yawning and sleeping, wandering and resting. Loving another like oneself is not one of his characteristics," said Chanakya.

Years rolled on. It was September in the year 285 B. C.

The Empire was in the height of its glory and prosperity. In every Province and State there had been plenty of rains. In consequence, the crops were in fine condition. There was no war or rebellion. A network of highly paid officials and wealthy non-official honorary dignitaries administered the Empire ably. Perfect peace reigned and there were the most cordial relations with the Chola, Pandya, Keralaputra, Satyaputra and Simhala kingdoms in the south, and with the Greek States to the west. Patrokles, the Admiral of Seleukos, had just visited Patala, and left it with valuable merchandise. Ocean-voyages were becoming popular even with the non-seafaring peoples of Magadha and Kosala. Inland trade too had increased a hundred-fold owing to the absolute security and the enormous improvement in communications effected

by the construction of military roads, royal roads, district roads, village-roads, garden-roads, and chariot-roads. Wealth had also increased correspondingly. There were many merchants who were worth millions at Pataliputra, Ujjain, Takshasila, Bharukachha, Machlipatna and Suvar-nagiri. Luxuries were increasing. Mansions of all kinds had sprung up. For the first time in India, stone and brick houses and temples and *Viharas* and *bastis* and *chaityas* and *stupas* began to be constructed, replacing wood which had been exclusively used before. Hindus, Jains and Buddhists raised metal or stone pillars of peace after the *Rampurwa* Pillar. A Dhvajasthambham, 36 feet high made of copper, and with gold plating outside, was set up by Bindusara in Durga Aparajita temple. Many people, especially nobles, officials, landlords and merchants were building fine comfortable houses outside the forts, as there was perfect security, and as there was no need to live only in the congested fortified areas.

India was becoming unified from Purushapura and Pushkalavati to Kamarupa and Arakan, from Kashmir and Nepal to Cape Comorin and Ceylon. Many things of North India began to be commonly used in South India and *vice versa*. People from the various Provinces also began to freely migrate to other Provinces. A great colony of *Digambara* Jains under Bhadrabahuśvamin had gone to the far south and settled down at Sravana Belgola, Brahmagiri, Jatinga Rameswara and Siddhapura and in the Satyaputra country, and had converted thousands of South Indians to their faith and left their impress for ever. A band of Buddhists too had gone to the South, imitating

the Jains, and had settled down in the Suvarnagiri Province and at Amaravati, Kanchipura and Nagāpatna, and even in the Keralaputra country and had spread the teachings of the Buddha to thousands of South Indians. Brahmins and other Sanatanist Hindus too had not been behindhand. A number of Brahmins had, at the request of the Chola king, settled down at Kaveripumpattinam and instituted there an annual *Indra* festival lasting for several days and having songs and dances throughout, to please the southern taste. Some Brahmins had also settled down at Srichandrur or Tiruchendur in the Pandya country, and had begun the process of identifying the southern *Murugan* with the northern *Kartikeya*. A few Brahmins even went to *Subrahmanya* in the Satyaputra country, settled there and began identifying the age-old *Snake-God* there with *Kartikeya*. The goddesses Kamakshi, Meenakshi, and Neelayadakshi worshipped at Kanchi, Madura and Nagapattinam were identified with Parvati and Visalakshi. *Chamundi* and *Mahishasuramardini*, of Mahishamandala, and *Bhagavati* of Kerala, were identified with Mahakali of Ujjaini, and *Pillayar*, of South India with Ganesa or Vighneswara. Slowly but surely, in the sphere of religion, as in the sphere of politics, an All-India system was growing up, albeit with some semi-independent minor entities.

Several thousand families of sturdy landless labourers had been settled in Vidarbha, Mahakosala, Gondwana, Kosa, Kuntala, Konkana and Vanavasi or Vaijayanta by Mauryan officials. Some families also settled down at Karkala, Venur, Padubidri, Vanchi, Kayamkolam

Karumadi, Tenkasi and other places. The vast hills and forests of the Vindhyas and Satpuras, which had cut off North India from South India for ages, were now being traversed by four trunk-roads. One went along the east coast from Pataliputra to Tamralipti, Tosali, Kalingapatnam, Machlipatnam, Vengipura, Siddhapura, Isila and Samapa. Another went along the west coast from Bharukachchha to Surat, Sopara, Kalyan, Pratishthana and Suvarnagiri. The third went from Ujjain to Nasik, Pratishthana and Suvarnagiri. The fourth went from Ujjain to Kundanipura, Nandadera, Dhanyaketa, Suvarnagiri and Siddhapura. Besides these roads, there were the growingly popular sea-routes from Tamralipti and Bharukachchha to Muchiri, Machlipatnam, Kaveripumpattinam, Korkai and Simhala.

In North India, there was the grand-trunk-road from Pataliputra to Udashbandapura on the *Indus*, with an extension westwards to the frontier-town of Haristhala (Herat), and another southeastwards to Champa, Vardhamanapura and Tamralipti. Then, there was the great northern road from Pataliputra to Vaisali, Nandangarh, Rampurwa, Rummindei, and Manjupatan. There was also the road from Muttra to Viratapura, Vanakausambi, and Ujjain. There were in addition the water-ways of the *Indus* and *Ganges*, and their innumerable tributaries. Besides these, there were the roads in the Pandya, Chola, Keralaputra, and Satyaputra kingdoms connected with the Mauryan roads. There was in particular a fine road to Venkata or Tirupati Hills. Bullock carts and pedestrians were to be found on trunk-roads at all times, especially after Bindusara had, on Chanakya's advice, made the *Gopas* and the

Chorarajjukas and the people of each village collectively responsible for making good the loss by thefts and robberies, and appointed hunters and *Ghat talayuris* to clear the roads not only of thieves and robbers but also of tigers, wild beasts and snakes, and to run water-pandals for thirsty travellers. There was a commercial and agricultural boom, and thousands of people had plenty of money to spend.

So, when the great *Dasara* or *Navaratri* festival was celebrated in October, the celebrations were on a lavish and magnificent scale. As usual, *Sarasvati*, the Goddess of Learning, *Lakshmi*, the Goddess of Wealth, and *Parvati*, the Goddess of Victory, were worshipped by high and low throughout the Empire. There was universal hilarity. Thousands of poor people were fed in every town, and innumerable puppet-shows, magic-performances, dramatic entertainments, rope-dancing, and dancing and singing parties were held.

On the New-Moon day beginning the *Dasara* holidays, 10,000 Brahmins and 100,000 poor people were fed at Pataliputra in the Emperors's presence. On the fourth day of the *Dasara*, there was a grand tiger-hunt in a royal game-forest fifty miles from Pataliputra, reputed to contain a man-eater. The Emperor, Bindusara, rode on horseback to the forest to reach it quickly.

On reaching forest, he alighted from the horse, and got upon his elephant *Chandralekha*. A female Body-Guard of twelve, headed by Bahudanti, surrounded him on horse-back in their picturesque uniform. Outside this circle was another circle of expert spearmen under Rajasena. The road was marked off with ropes, which no unauthorised man or woman

could cross without being killed forthwith by the male or female Body-Guard. Men with drums and gongs headed the hunting party.

The beaters began their work, and by 4 p. m. they succeeded in cornering the man-eating tiger and two panthers. The Emperor discharged three arrows in quick succession, and the tiger fell down dead within three feet of *Chandralekha*. Bindusara bagged also a panther, and Rajasena bagged the other. The hunt was over, and the King and Generals spent the night in tents in the forest, and returned the next day on horse-back to Pataliputra. The dead tiger and panthers were taken to the City in bullock carts, and were paraded through the streets with music, as an additional item of amusement.

On *Vijayadasami* Day, Chanakya returned from Sravanabelgola after being present at the *sallekhana* of Chandragupta. Asoka and Radhagupta, who had gone with him, also returned with him, full of excitement at what they had seen. Bindusara asked Chanakya: "Tell me briefly about this sad episode. How did my father die?"

"There was nothing sad about it. It was a sublime departure from this world of a man who had realized the real nature of life and death; it was like the withdrawing of a lamp without its being extinguished or blown out by a storm. His death was a silent withdrawal of life to another world, nothing else. It had nothing terrible or gruesome at all about it.

"We watched it with admiration as we watch the setting sun. I tell you, a man is a man of God by what he is, not by what he knows or believes. Most

men's deaths are of momentous significance only to them, not to the world. But deaths like these are of world significance. It teaches man to die willingly and consciously when his work is over, and not to be dragged by Yama unwillingly," said Chanakya.

"Give me some more details about the event," said Bindusara.

"We reached Sravanabelgola just an hour before the end. Chandragupta sat at the mouth of Bhadrabhu cave, on Chandragiri hill, with the most serene and happy face I have seen. He had been eating nothing for the last six days, having strictly observed the *sallekhana* vow. A big admiring crowd was there watching his end with rapt silence. Two feet carved on the rugged slopes of the hill indicated the departure of Bhadrabahu, and men were standing by to carve another pair of steps. Chandragupta was very glad to see us. He said to me, "Come here, Vishnugupta. Pingala Vatsajiva was right. Asoka will be the next King, with Radhagupta as his minister, and his reign will be a landmark in history for its great ideals and achievements. Calling Asoka to his side, he said, 'Avoid cruel deeds of all kinds even though a King's duties may tempt you to commit them. Blessings, my boy!' Then saying, 'The Light is only One, not two', '*Ekam Advitiyam*'¹ '*Ekam Sat: Vipra bahudha vadanti*'² he went into *samadhi* and into *Mahasamadhi*³. The men standing by carved another pair of steps up the slope of the hill."

1. There is only one, no second : a Vedic saying.

2. The Truth is only one : the wise men call it by different names : a saying from the Rig Veda.

3. Death of a saint,

CHAPTER XXXII

FROM NEVER-CEASING WORK TO EVERLASTING PEACE

It was the great *Gayatri Puja* Day in the month of *Shravan*¹, 284 B. C. Chanakya walked out of the great *Suganga* palace, dressed in the ochre robes of a *sannyasi* and with a *tridanda*² crutch and a begging bowl in hand. His thirteen years were over, and he had declined Bindusara's earnest entreaty to remain as Adviser for some more years. He looked happy and care-free, and was glad to hear the drums beating in honour of Khal-lataka's becoming Prime Minister, as his father, Rakshasa had died two years before. Agnisarma and Radhagupta had offered to follow Chanakya to the Himalayas, as also Sarangarava and Jeevasiddhi, in order to see him settled in a hermitage, but he had firmly refused their offers, as also the offer of Bindusara to send two or three officers with him. "I am my own servant hereafter, just as I am my own master," he told them all. "Do not bother about me. My life as a politician and man of the world is over. I am going to spend the rest of my life in the Himalayas in *tapas*³ for my soul's salvation. I am going straight to *Naradamuni*, the greatest sage now living, the author of the *Bhaktisutras*, in order to get initiated by him. Regard me hereafter as dead. I shall not live for long. And the little time left to me has to be utilised to the full for my spiritual uplift. He has gained nothing who

1. 15th August to 15th September.

2. Three sticks bundled into one : to conquer Lust, Anger and Greed.

3. Penance.

has not gained his soul. Time is pressing. Time is more precious than the most precious thing in the world. It can neither be bought nor borrowed, nor delayed nor brought back. It must be utilised to the utmost. Farewell !”

He took the long, long road to the Himalayas. He felt a new joy in his system, the joy of being free from all worldly bonds and shackles. He, the great Chanakya, the Pillar of the Empire, the man whose very name made Kings and peasants alike shudder, was now a homeless wanderer begging for his very food ! He feared no one, and no one feared him now as he passed by unrecognized along the long white dusty road printed all over with bare feet, and with its slow-moving traffic of bullock-carts and wayside choultries where travellers cooked their simple fare. His dream of peace and quiet had been realized, and he felt supremely happy. Walking leisurely for several days, resting in choultries and under *banyan* and *peepal* trees, he finally saw the great snow-line of the Himalayas. His heart beat fast as he approached the hermitage of Naradamuni at the foot of *Kanchanasringam*¹.

“ Ab, this must be his hermitage,” said he. “ For, Unperturbed and serene the fawns graze here,
Sure of their ground and with no trace of fear:
The trees are all nurtured with love and care,
Their branches groan with fruits and flowers rare;
Here are those famous herds of tawny kine,

1, Kinchinjunga.

And no trace of the plough till the sky-line ;
From here and there are rising high smokes
mauve,

I am sure this must be the hermit's grove."

He saw a pupil about and asked him, " May I enter ?"
Naradamuni, who was coming out just then, said, " Come
in freely, sir, A hermitage is common to one and all."

Chanakya went and prostrated to Naradamuni, and,
with tears in his eyes, begged to be accepted as his
disciple and initiated into the path of salvation, suited to
his temperament, telling him who he was. Naradamuni
was not a bit surprised. " You have done the right
thing," said he. " Birth as a human being is very
difficult to obtain. Having obtained it, a man must
desire for liberation and seek out a great soul to find out
the way to liberation. Without the grace of the Lord,
salvation can never be obtained, or the wheel of births
and deaths stopped."

" Sir," said Chanakya, " why do the Buddhists say,

' No God of Heaven or Brahma world
Doth cause the endless round of birth ;
Constituent parts alone roll on
From cause and material sprung ?' "

Naradamuni replied,

" Bound in the bonds of heresy,
By passion's flood they're borne along ;
And borne along by passion's flood
From misery find they no release.

" Truth alone triumphs, not falsehood. Brahman alone

is true, and every *jiva*¹ is Brahman and nothing else. He is our *Atman*², and is seated in our heart. This Atman has to be seen, heard, reflected and meditated upon, by concentrating on the heart where alone all real knowledge is. Not by actions, nor by progeny, nor by wealth, but by devotion and renunciation alone can He be attained. He is woman, He is man, He is youth, He is maiden, He is an old man tottering along on His stick. His face is turned everywhere. He is Infinite, Immutable, without birth or death, and from Him all the worlds are born, and into Him all the worlds dissolve. Seek refuge in Him!" "What is the kind of *sadhana* you prescribe for me, O sage?" Chanakya asked Narada. "With which *Upanishad* shall I begin?"

"No," said Narada. "With men of super intelligence like you, such studies will only lead to barren discussions and useless cogitations which will be artificial, absurd, and even positively dangerous for you. Have you not seen some of these Vedic scholars marching along full of conceit, and even calling themselves God, pompous asses who see their shadows under their feet when the sun is overhead and try to bring their shadows under their feet so as to bring the sun overhead? Knowledge can, like any science, only know the outside of God and Nature and can never reach the inner core of God. What a man of your vast learning and self-confidence wants is *japa*³, the silent repetition of *Ram Nam*, prescribed by the *Gita* and by *Manu*."

1. Being.

2. Soul.

3. Silent repetition.

"What will be the result of *Ram Nam japa*, sir?" asked Chanakya.

"You will kill Ravana. and win the Kurukshetra War," said the sage.

"Sir, I thought Ravana was already killed by Rama, and the Kurushetra war already won by the Pandavas," said Chanakya.

"Yes, but every man has also to kill the ten-headed Ravana inside himself, his five *karmendriyas*, his feet, hands and mouth, and his excretory and procreatory organs, which lead him astray, as well as his *jnanendriyas* his eyes, ears, tongue, nose and skin, which also lead him astray by seeing forbidden things, hearing forbidden things, eating and speaking forbidden things, smelling forbidden things and touching forbidden things. He has also to ensure victory for the Pandavas, the righteous *karmendriyas* and *jnanendriyas* over the Kauravas, the hundred and one wicked impulses and desires. *Ram Nam japa* will do all this. It made Valmiki a saint from a robber. It will bring you peace, by bringing you *bhakti*."

"How do you define *bhakti*, sir?"

"It is *bhagavad asakti* or attachment to God, the highest love for God. It is of the nature of immortal bliss. On attaining *bhakti*, a man becomes perfect, immortal, satisfied for ever. Thereafter he wants nothing, exults over nothing, laments over nothing, hates nothing, and is never

rooted in worldly things. He becomes self-controlled and attains peace. He relies only on God, and feels separation from Him even for a second intolerable. He does not care for the ways of the world for attaining wealth or women or pleasures, nor does he even care for Vedic and other rites prescribed for attaining heaven. He offers all his acts to Him and feels the highest pangs of separation from Him whenever he loses remembrance of Him. It is greater than *karma* or *jnana* or *dhyana* or *yoga*. Mere knowledge is no good. just as knowledge of how to prepare a good dinner is not the same as eating a good dinner. Once *bhakti* becomes the goal, you will come to grips with Maya."

"How to cross *Maya*?" asked Chanakya.

"He who gives up all attachments, he who waits on a *Mahanubhava* or magnanimous soul, he who gets rid of material possessions. He has true *bhakti*. He crosses *Maya*" said Narada. "He goes to a lonely place, cuts away all worldly attachments, gets rid of all his worldly possessions, and the desire to acquire more, casts off lust, anger, greed, intoxication, illusion and competition, climbs over the three *gunas*, renounces all fruits of his actions and the hankering after fruits in doing actions, gets over the pairs of opposites, and dedicates every act of his to God. The exact way differs with different people. Parikshit crossed over *Maya* and attained peace by listening to the Lord's story; Suka by singing His praises; Prahlada by ever remembering Him; Lakshmi by serving at His feet; Prithu by ritual worship; Akrura by adoring Him;

Hanuman by doing His work; Arjuna by being His friend; and Bali by dedicating his all to Him. For you, adoration by *Ram Nam Japa* is the best. Choose a clean spot below this great peak, *Kanchanasringam*, and repeat *Ram Nam* till you throw off this mortal coil. You have got an iron will. Use it for this holy purpose."

He then imparted to him the Sri Rama *Taraka Mantras* :

"*Sri Rama Rameti Rame Rame Manorame
Sahasranama tattulyam Ramanama Varanane.
Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare
Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna
Hare Hare.*

*Rama eva Param Brahma Rama eva Param
tapa :*

*Rama eva Param tatvam Sri Ramo Brahma
tarakam."*¹

Chanakya chose a clean spot near a deep pond, called *Gosainsthan*, and began his penance. He used to wake up at 3 A. M., the *Brahmarandhra* hour, perform his ablutions, and begin repeating *Ram Nam* till the sun rose. Then he would repeat the *Gayatri* a thousand and eight times. His food consisted of fruits and milk just sufficient to keep body and soul together. After two years of this life, his whole nature changed completely. The man of blood and iron became a kindly old soul full of the milk of human kindness. One day, he found a scorpion

1. Rama, O Rama, Thou art the Lord Supreme. Your pleasing name is the only thing I rely on for salvation. You are the only Truth. only penance, my only raft to cross the ocean of *samsara*.

struggling for life in a small channel of water. He was going to take it out when a passer-by warned him not to do so as the nature of a scorpion was wicked and it would bite the hand which saved it. He took the animal out, despite the warning, and it stung him. The passer-by said, "I told you so." "Yes," said Chanakya, "It behaved according to its nature. But should I not behave according to my nature? Or do you want me to descend to its nature?" Then he deliberately set the scorpion free!

In April 282 B.C. Chanakya began to sink. Jeevasiddhi heard about this and at once intimated the fact to Bindusara who had ordered him to let him know so that he might be present with Asoka and Radhagupta at the end of the great man. Bindusara, Asoka and Radhagupta reached Chanakya's penance grove late in the evening of *Chaitra Pournimi* and saw Chanakya in a *samadhi*, and waited for him to come out of it. "Father," said Asoka to Bindusara, "this Himalaya seems to me to be a living, throbbing thing, like you or me, and not mere dead matter. There is great fun here among her peaks. Look at this giant of a *Kanchanasringam* beaming at us like some *deva*¹ incarnate! Look at that waterfall, rising from that perennial fountain of a glacier, roaring down its slopes, like my younger brother Tishya rushing down the steps of *Suganga* palace, the other day, on seeing me return from *Sravanabelgola*! See those delightful clouds racing in the sky like mad, and yet revealing the blue patches of Indra's sapphire out of which the sky is made. These Himalayan valleys ring with mirth and joy, and the echoes

1. A god.

play a never-ending song as old as these hills, the song of life from its very beginning."

"Hush ! " said Bindusara, " he is walking up from his *Samadhi*." " You are right, my boy," said Chanakya to Asoka. " Life is really a never-ending song which can be heard most clearly in the mountains, or on the sea-shore, or even on the banks of great and holy rivers like the *Ganga*. What we call the new is only the ever-old woven into a different pattern, a necessary adjustment to be in conformity with the new flow of Life's Stream, like the melting of an old gold jewel to make a new one in keeping with the latest fashion, adding a little new gold to replace the worn-out and lost quantity. So, every new age is an echo of the old with something new drawn out of the never-exhausted stock of God and Nature. You are also right about the Himalaya being living and throbbing. Inanimate things are also animated by God who is both *sat* and *asat*¹. Why, when a man dies, his breath goes out of him into the air, his eyesight goes out of him into the sun, his hearing goes out of him into the ether, his ego goes out of him into empty thunder, his hair goes out of him into the plants and trees, his body becomes earth or ashes, and his mind goes out of him into the moon. So out of the non-living Life emerged, and into the non-living Life merges."

Then he said to Radhagupta, " Come here, Radhagupta." Radhagupta went up to him. Chanakya put his hands in those of Asoka and said, " You will be the

1. The living and the non-living.

Prime Minister of Asoka, Radhagupta, as I was of Chandragupta and Bindusara. Asoka's reign will be unique in the annals of our country. It will be an experiment in *Rama Rajya*¹, a glorious experiment. He will want every man, Arya or Sudra, to live a joyous life in this world and to attain heaven in the next, putting merit over birth, treating all men like his own children, even as Sri Rama treated Hanuman and Sugriva more affectionately than he did his own brothers. He will carry out the Vedic injunction, "*Priyam sarvasya pasyata uta Sudra uta Arya*"² He will associate men of *Jambudvipa* again with the gods in the grand work of co-operation, following the Vedic cry, "*Tvasmakam tava smasi*"³. He will try to make every man an Arya, acting on the Vedic maxim, '*Krinavanto viswam aryam*'⁴. He will follow the path of peace following the Vedic maxim, '*Svasti pantham anucharama*'⁵. He will make every one honour his father and mother, teacher and guest, agreeably to the Vedic injunction, '*Matri devo bhava, pitri devobhava, acharya devo bhava, Atithi devo bhava*'⁶. He will proclaim the whole world as Man's Motherland and call on every one to serve it, agreeably to the Vedic maxims, '*Mata bhumi : putro aham prithivyah*:'⁷ and '*upasarpa mataram*

1. Rama's Rule, ideal rule.

2. Look on Arya and Sudra with like eyes.

3. You are ours, O Lord, and we are Your own.

4. Make every one an Arya.

5. May we follow the path of peace and prosperity for all !

6. Treat your mother as a god, treat your father as a god, treat your teacher as a god, treat your guest as a god !

7. The whole world is my Motherland : I am a son of Mother Earth.

bhumim ' 1. He will try to make every one educated following the Vedic saying, '*Vidyaya amritam asnute*' 2. He will try to wipe out want and fear and be a friend of man and animal like Sri Rama who was '*Bhuvanasya raja patireka asit*' 3. Serve him faithfully and well, Radhagupta."

"I will," said Radhagupta. "Nothing will give me greater pleasure than serving Asoka."

"I am glad to hear that at the time of my departure on my long long journey," said Chanakya,

"You will live for many years longer, sir," said Bindusara.

"I shall die this night, an hour after the moon rises," said Chanakya. "We who meditate on God know something about the hour of our departure."

"I cannot believe it at all, you are so calm and natural," said Bindusara.

"Have you forgotten what I told you about the death of Chandragupta?" asked Chanakya. "Death is only a long journey, Bindusara, and there ought to be nothing terrible or gruesome about it. A wise man withdraws from life as calmly as he starts on a journey."

"When I am gone, cremate my body here——"

"But, reverend sir, should we not bury you and erect a *samadhi* over your tomb, as for *sannyasis*?" asked Bindusara.

-
1. Serve the Earth, your Motherland.
 2. By knowledge one attains immortality.
 3. He is the King of the Universe, its one and only Lord.

"No I am really only a layman who has tried to cast off a part of his sins by *Ram Nam Japa*," replied Chanakya. "So, cremate my body here and immerse my bones and ashes at the eight spots I indicate."

"Yes, sir, what are the places?" asked the King.

"Prayag, where the Ganges, Yamuna and Saraswathi mingle their waters; Haridwar, where the Bhagirathi, Jahnvi and Alaknanda flow in one stream as the Ganges; Moolasthan, where the Sindhu and the Five Rivers join; Brahmakunda where the Brahmaputra, the Lohitya and the Dihang merge; Nasika on the Godavari sacred to Sri Rama; Sivasamudram, where the Kaveri falls down at the feet of the Lord; at the spot on the Chandragiri Hill where your father sacrificed his life; and at Dhanushkodi where Sri Rama camped with his army to invade and kill the ten-headed Demon."

"It shall be done, sir," said Bindusara.

The brilliant full moon of *Chaitra* rose, and the stars shone bright.

"See how bright the stars are today!" said Asoka.

"The stars in their courses and man in his life are parts of one. infinite happening where all is linked each to each by and through God," said Chanakya. Then with the words. "*Ram! Ram!*" he subsided into silence. Bindusara bowed his head in reverent salutation and said, "He has gone to Rama's feet. See how full of *ananda* his face is, as if he is seeing his Rama!" Then he quietly

closed his eyes. Khallataka and Agnisarma shed tears of love and sorrow for the great departed.

"He was a miracle of a man," said Khallataka "He never cared whether his ideas were popular or unpopular but went on executing them once he was convinced that they were for the common good. He lived dangerously and spoke the truth as he saw it. Fear was a word as unknown to him as selfish gain."

"The world has come to regard Chanakya as a Force of Nature, unaffected by sentiment, something like an earthquake or avalanche," said Bindusara, "He was not a man but a phenomenon. From never-ceasing activity he has gone to everlasting peace. *Om Santi ! Santi ! Santi !*"¹

1. Peace ! Peace ! Peace !