

16

SHESH ACHARYA ;
THE
YOUNG BRAHMAN.

First Edition, 3,000 Copies.



MADRAS :
M. R. T. & B. SOCIETY.
S. P. C. K. PRESS, VEPERY.
No. 19. 1879. One Pie.

STORIES AT ONE PIE EACH.

- 1 The Mango Story.
- 2 Story of the King's Son.
- 3 Story of the Spoiled Child.
- 4 The Leper Cured.
- 5 The Debt Cancelled.
- 6 Story of the Fiery Furnace.
- 7 Story of a Brahmin.
- 8 Story of a King.
- 9 The Quarrelsome Women.
- 10 Story of the Liars.
- 11 Story of the First Man.
- 12 Story of a Queen.
- 13 The Child's Horoscope.
- 14 Story of the Red Berries.
- 15 The Hen and her Chickens.
- 16 Story of the First Brothers.
- 17 Story of the Great Flood.
- 18 The Wolf Story.
- 19 The Pearl Merchant.
- 20 Youthful Martyrs.
- 21 Little Tukaram.
- 22 The Boy Who Wished to See
the Queen.

16
2-79

SHESH ACHARYA;
THE YOUNG BRAHMAN WHO
WANTED TO SEE GOD.

I shall tell you about a Brahman boy, who wanted to see God, and to have his sins forgiven, and how, for many years, he tried this in vain.

Little Shesh Acharya was born at Nagpore, near the centre of India. When he was seven years old his father sent him to a guru, who taught him to read and write, and to study the Shastras.

When this boy was fourteen years old, he wished very much

to see God. The god he wanted to see was Vishnu. Was this a good wish? Yes, I think it was, if Vishnu had been the true God, as the young Brahman thought he was.

The guru taught this boy a sort of prayer; and he told him that if he repeated this prayer eight lakhs of times, Vishnu would appear to him. He repeated his prayer over and over every day, with all his might, and in three months he had said it more than eight lakhs of times. But Vishnu did not come. Then he began to say it all over again. He allowed himself only three hours'

sleep in the night, and slept on the bare ground. He took a little food only once a day, and by the time he had gone through his task he had made himself ill; but after all, Vishnu did not appear to him.

The poor boy was very much disappointed, but he was not willing to give up. He was going to begin his wearisome task over again, when he was taken very ill, and obliged for some time to leave off. When he was seventeen, his father went to live at Benares. Here he met with another guru, who promised, if he would give him a large sum of money, to

teach him the highest form of prayer which men could learn. He repeated the prayer in the guru's house with many ceremonies. Sometimes, he sat up to his neck in water while he said it. He repeated it a hundred and sixty-five times every day, and he scarcely ate enough food to keep him alive. His father heard about it, and took him away, and punished him severely for wasting so much money. The poor youth was so bent upon obtaining his heart's desire, that he left his father's house, and went to a distant part of the country to repeat his prayer in peace ; but

his father found out where he was, and brought him home again.

When he was twenty-one years of age, his father persuaded him to marry. In a few months his wife died. He married again, and soon after his second wife was accidentally drowned. Perhaps he might think this was a punishment for giving up his prayers. He would not marry again. He resolved to become a devotee, and to go on pilgrimage to various temples.

On foot, without attendant, he travelled many a weary step, and over many a scorching plain. He journeyed through almost the

whole length of India, from the Himalaya Mountains in the north, to Cape Comorin, in the south, visiting all the temples of Vishnu, and leaving offerings at each. He went to the source of the Ganges, obtained some of the sacred water to present to his idol, and at last returned to Benares.

He set out on pilgrimage a second time, and travelled down the western coast. Next he went to the Panjab, where he stayed at Lahore two years, and spent his time in performing puja for the Maharajah Ranjit Singh. This puja was making up a thousand

lumps of clay every day, in the shape of a Salagrama, and worshipping them. After visiting more places than I can tell you, he came round the southern point of India, and up the eastern coast, till he came to Madras. At Kanchipuram not far from Madras, he went to a guru who taught him the Siva prayer, *Na-ma-si-va-ya*. He repeated this many times for eighteen long months, fasting by day, and watching by night. Then he went to bathe in the sacred tank at Combaconum, for the Hindu Shastras said that this would wash away the sins of twelve years. Then

he went to Tiruputi, hoping to wash away the sins of two years. He performed puja at many other idol temples, and returned to his friends at Benares.

Poor Shesh Acharya was now twenty-eight years of age, and half his life had been spent in wearisome and useless pilgrimages, in fastings and prayers to a god who could not hear, who could not save. He was still unhappy and dissatisfied. His sins pressed heavily upon him, and he could find no peace. He set out on pilgrimage a third time; and it was a happy thing for him that he did so. As he was on his

way from Jagannath to Calcutta, he fell in with another traveller who was going the same road. They travelled together for few days, and Shesh Acharya told him all that he had been doing, and what it was he wanted.

The man with whom Shesh travelled was a Christian; and he told Shesh, with great earnestness, that all his pilgrimages, pujas, offerings, and prayers, would be of no use. He told him of the Lord Jesus Christ, whom God had sent into the world to be the Saviour of men, and who had offered Himself up as a sacrifice for sinners. He told him much of

what Jesus did and said—His wonderful works, and his pure and holy life. When he told how Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, Shesh thought, “This must indeed be the Son of God.”

I think these two fellow travellers were like the disciples of Jesus going to a village, and that Jesus himself was near them while they talked of Him. The heart of poor Shesh did indeed burn within him as he heard these new and joyful tidings. He found, that there was a Christian Church at Burdwan, near Calcutta, and he sought out the Missionary. A New Testament was given him,

and he took it to his lodgings, and read it much. His Hindu fellow-travellers were very angry with him, and they wanted to hurry him away from Burdwan, lest he should become a Christian. But while they were busy getting ready to go, he slipped off, without being seen, and escaped to the mission-house in safety.

Shesh Acharya went no more on pilgrimages. He had found what he wanted. He renounced his false god. He remained under the teaching of the missionary, and on the 6th of August, 1843, he was baptized at Burdwan by the name of Timotheus.

His great delight afterwards was to tell his fellow countrymen that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin. He prayed to be among "the pure in heart, for they shall see God," and he looked forward to the time when he should be perfectly like his Saviour and see Him as He is.



MORNING PRAYER.

O Lord, I thank thee for taking care of me the past night. Forgive all my sins for the sake of Jesus Christ, and may thy Holy Spirit create in me a clean heart. Watch over me this day, and keep me from all sin. Make all men know thee and love thee. Hear my prayer for the sake of Jesus Christ. Amen.

EVENING PRAYER.

O Lord, look down on me this night. Forgive for Christ's sake, whatever I have done wrong, and may thy Holy Spirit make me holy. Bless my friends, and have mercy upon all men. Take care of me this night; and when I die, let my soul go to be with thee for ever. I ask all in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

