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Tales of India

TALES FROM THE PANCHATANTRA

EDITED BY

V. RAMACHANDRA RAO

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V. RAMACHANDRA RAU, B.A.



MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED
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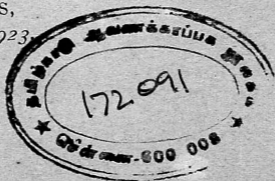
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FOREWORD

THIS is one of the series of continuous readers entitled *Tales of India*. The aim of this new series is to make Indian children acquainted with the treasury of the interesting myths, legends, and stories of their country. The stories are told in a simple manner and in language which is within the reading capacity and understanding of pupils in the lower forms of schools. There is plenty of bright conversation in them which will help to secure good expression in the reading lessons. These books serve as a basis for oral and written composition. The stories are so presented as to form valuable auxiliaries to character-building.

The publishers gratefully acknowledge their indebtedness to Miss E. B. Noble, L.L.A., Principal, National Girls' School, Mylapore, Madras, who was good enough to read through this book in proof and advise various suggestions to make the book serve the purpose it is intended for.

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Tales from the Panchatantra

WHO WROTE THE FABLES AND WHY

THERE was once a city called Mahila-ropya in South India. A king named Amara-shakti ruled there. He was very learned, wise and good. His power was great, and the kings and princes of other countries feared and respected him.

Amara-shakti had three sons. They were very dull. They could neither read nor write. They would not study. This made the king very sad. He sent for his ministers and said to them, 'You know my sons are stupid. They do not study. When I see them, I feel very unhappy.'

'It is better to have no son than have a son who is a fool. It is better to have a girl than a stupid son. Of what use is a cow that gives no milk? Of what use is a son who is not learned and obedient? Now is there any way by which my sons may be taught wisdom? There are, in my kingdom, five hundred pandits, and I protect them all. Can they do anything?'

A minister named Sumati then rose up and spoke. 'Sire,' he said, 'there is, in this city, a Brahman, named Vishnu Sarma. He is learned in all the sciences, and his fame is great among scholars. The princes should be left in his charge. He is sure to make them learned in a short time.'

So the king sent for Vishnu Sarma, and said to him, 'I hear you are very learned; will you, sir, for my sake, teach my sons wisdom? Will you teach them what a prince should know? If you succeed, I will give you large grants of land.'

'I thank Your Majesty,' replied Vishnu Sarma; 'but, learning is not sold. I do not sell it for grants of land, but, I will teach your sons wisdom. I will teach them what kings and princes ought to know. If I do not succeed in six months, I am not worthy of the name of Vishnu Sarma.'

There was joy in Amara-shakti's heart. He at once handed over his sons to the care of the learned Brahman, who took them to his house.

It was for them that Vishnu Sarma wrote the book, which is known as the *Panchatantra*. The princes studied it, and in six months became very wise, even as the Pandit had said.

A few only of the many nice stories contained in the *Panchatantra* are told to you in this book. Children enjoy reading them and gain much knowledge.

ORAL AND WRITTEN EXERCISES

1. What made King Amara-shakti sad? Why?
2. Who wrote the *Panchatantra*? Why?
3. What will you do to be a good son?

TALE I

THE MONKEY AND THE WEDGE

NOT far from a village there was a small wood. In the middle of that wood, there was an open space.

A rich merchant saw the spot, and said to himself, 'I will build a temple there. Man lives and dies; wealth is lost if it is not spent usefully. But, good acts live for ever. So, I will build a temple.'

He employed many workmen, and in a short time, the temple-tower was built.

Now, every day at noon, the workmen went to the village to eat their food.

One day, the carpenters were sawing a heavy beam of timber into two. They had sawn it half-way through, and to prevent the cut in the beam from closing, had stuck in a wedge.

After they and the other workmen had left, a troop of monkeys came there, by chance. They grinned and chattered, and leapt from tree to tree. They jumped on to the tower of the temple, and from there reached the beam.

One monkey suddenly noticed the wedge and tried to move it, but could not, for it was driven in fast. He might have left the wedge alone, but, he did not. Death was written for him that day, and he was to die.

He put forth all his might, to try and pull out the wedge, but it was too firmly fixed. He was resolved, however, to get it out. So, he seated himself between the parts of the beam. Pushing and tugging, he used all his strength. Out came the wedge at last, and the two parts of the beam sprang together. The poor monkey was caught between them and crushed to death.

Mind your own business.

He who meddles with the affairs of other people will come to grief.

ORAL AND WRITTEN EXERCISES

1. The merchant built a temple. Why?
2. Can you name other good acts like this?
3. Tell in your own words why the monkey died.

TALE II

THE JACKAL AND THE DRUM

IT was a very hot day. A hungry jackal went into a forest in search of food. He wandered far and wide, but found nothing.

All at once, he heard a loud, deep sound. He was afraid, and he did not know what to do. He asked himself, 'Is there an enemy here?'

For some time he stood where he was. Then came the sound again: it was louder and deeper. And the jackal's fear became greater.

But he was a clever jackal. He stood still, and gathered up courage. Then, he slowly went towards the place whence the sound came.

Now, a battle had been fought in the forest only a few days before, and a drum had been left there. It lay under the branch of a big tree. The branch was broken, and it moved when the wind blew. As it moved, it beat the drum, and a loud sound was heard.

The jackal reached the place and soon found out how the sound arose. All his fears fled, for, really, there was nothing to be afraid of. He thought he was a fool to have been in such fear, so he ran away laughing at himself.

Do not fear without a right cause. Only fools are afraid of sounds.



THE JACKAL FOUND OUT HOW THE SOUND AROSE

ORAL AND WRITTEN EXERCISES

1. Why was the jackal afraid at first ?
2. Describe what he found.
3. Name four things you see in the picture.

TALE III

THE MONKEYS AND THE CRANE

THE night was very cold. The wind blew chill, and dark clouds moved in the sky. Man, beast and bird had gone to rest in their homes, where all were quite snug and warm.

But it was not so with some monkeys. A herd of them was wandering in a forest. The sharp wind bit them, and they felt the cold very much.

Close by, there were some fireflies dancing in the air. Now, there is light in their tails, as all children know.

The shivering monkeys thought that the light was fire: for they, poor things, did not know any better. So they said, 'Let us go near to the fire and warm ourselves.'

On a tree near by, there was a crane named Sumukha. Sumukha had a kind heart. It pitied the poor monkeys, and was sorry that they mistook the fireflies for a fire.

So it called out to them, and said, 'That is no fire, my friends! They are fireflies and they give no heat!'

'Is that so?' cried one monkey who was ruder than the others. 'Who asked you to advise us? There is a fire there, and you say there is not! Wait, and I will teach you how to behave.'

So saying, the monkey leaped up the tree, and dragged the poor bird out of its nest, dashed it on a rock, and so put it to death.

Never advise a bad man.

The wicked return evil for good.

ORAL AND WRITTEN EXERCISES

1. The crane said, 'That is no fire.' Was this true or false?
2. Why was the monkey angry?
3. What would the bird have thought, when the monkey dragged it out of the nest?

TALE IV

THE FOOLISH CRANES

ONCE, a he-crane and a she-crane lived in a tree. The she-crane laid her eggs in her warm nest. But, as soon as the young ones were hatched, a cruel snake robbed the cranes of their children and ate them.

This went on for a long time. The father and mother were very, very sad. They did not know what to do.

One day, the two birds were standing near a lake. They were thinking about what they should do, to save their young ones.

Just then, a crab peeped out of his hole. He saw the sad pair. He came up to them and asked them what was the matter. So the cranes told the crab their story with much sorrow.

'I have thought of a way,' the crab said after some time, 'by which you are sure to kill the snake, and free your little ones from harm.'

'Pray, tell us what it is,' said the cranes,

The crab replied, 'Get some fish, and place them in a line on the ground, between the hole of the mungoose and the home of the snake.'

'The mungoose is fond of fish. He will leave his hole, and go along eating the fishes. He will, at last, reach the snake's hole. When he sees the

snake, he will at once kill it. Then, you need fear no more.'

The cranes thought that this was a very good plan. They did as the crab told them.

Presently, the mongoose ran out, and followed the line of fishes eating them as he went, till, at last, he came to the hole of the snake. There, he found the cruel thing, and killed it.

And still, the mongoose ran on. The cranes' nest was only a short way off. There he found the young ones and ate them up also.

Now, were not the cranes foolish?

Evil comes out of evil.

ORAL AND WRITTEN EXERCISES

1. Why were the cranes foolish?
2. Did any good come to them at all?
3. Was the crab a good friend of the cranes?

TALE V

THE LION AND THE FOX

IN one of the great forests of Hindustan there lived a lion. One day, he went in search of prey. He wandered all day long, but he found nothing.

It was growing dark, and the lion thought of a plan. There was a big cave before him, and he said, 'I will hide in here until some animal comes in to spend the night; then I will fall upon it and eat it.' So he went in and hid himself.

Now, a fox had made his home in that cave. He had gone out, and returned when it was evening. He saw the footsteps of a lion going into his den and wanted to find out if the lion was still there, or not. He thought he would make sure before entering. Foxes, as you know, are very cunning animals. So he stood at a distance, and shouted, 'Cave! Friend Cave! May I come in?' But no sound came from the cave.

'Cave! Cave!' shouted the fox again. 'Well, friend Cave, you do not answer. Every day you used to speak to me. But, to-day, you do not; therefore, I shall go to another cave, and make it my home.'

The lion heard the fox's words, and said to himself: 'I think this cave must have been speaking

to the fox every day. It is surely afraid of me, and so is silent to-day. But, I will speak instead.'

Thinking thus, the lion spoke. He roared so loud, that all the animals in the forest shook with fear.

'Ah, is it you, Uncle Lion!' said the fox and ran away.

Look before you leap.

ORAL AND WRITTEN EXERCISES

1. What did the lion do? What did the fox do?
2. The lion answered the fox. What would *you* have done?
3. Think you are the fox. Think that the lion gave no answer. What would you do?

TALE VI

THE TORTOISE AND THE SWANS

IN a certain tank, there once lived two swans and a tortoise. The three were very good friends, and spent their time happily.

One day, one of the swans said to the other, 'The rains have not fallen. The tank we live in will soon become dry. So we must go to another.'

To this replied the other, 'Yes. It is fit that we leave this place. But before we go, we ought to inform our good friend the tortoise. Else he will feel sorry, and we shall be doing him wrong.' And the swans told their plan to the tortoise.

The tortoise said, 'Well, you have wings, and can fly away. But what is to become of me? Will you leave me here?'

The swans thought for a while, and then they spoke. 'We have an idea,' they said; 'listen to us and we will take you with us. You should keep your mouth closed on the way. You must not speak even one word. If you do, you will die.' The tortoise agreed to this plan.

They, then, brought a thin, strong stick. 'Hold it fast in your mouth,' the swans said to the tortoise. 'We will carry the stick, one on each side, and fly through the air. Remember, you are not to speak.'



DOWN, DOWN THE TORTOISE FELL

The tortoise held the stick fast in his mouth. The swans stood one on each side. They lifted up the stick in their beaks, and flew across the sky.

The three travelled thus for some time. As they were passing a big city, some people saw this wonder. 'Ho! look there!' they cried, 'look at the swans and the tortoise! The tortoise holds a stick, and the swans carry it!' And all the boys and girls made such a noise in the streets!

Now, you will be sorry to hear that the tortoise did not do as his friends had told him. He wished to know why there was so much noise.

'What is that noise about?' he asked the swans. As he spoke, he left hold of the stick. Down, down, he fell through the air, and was almost dead, when he reached the ground. There were some men near. They killed the tortoise, and took him away.

We should listen to our friends: they tell us only what is good.

ORAL AND WRITTEN EXERCISES

1. What was the plan of the swans?
2. Why did it fail?
3. Tell this story in your own words.

TALE VII

THE COBRA AND THE CROWS

THERE once lived in a tree two crows. They were husband and wife and were very happy.

One day, the female crow laid some eggs. Then, she and her mate flew out to eat their food. When they returned, the eggs were gone. Do you know what had become of them?

A cobra was living in a hole in the tree. It crept up the tree and ate the eggs.

Some days passed. The she-crow laid her eggs again. But, when she and the he-crow had gone out, the cobra came and stole the eggs again.

And thus it went on for a time. The crows were very unhappy. They did not know what to do. They thought that they would ask their friend, the jackal.

So, they went to the jackal, and told him the sad story. The jackal sat thinking for a while. Then he said :

‘ Fly to yonder city. There, in the king’s palace, is a bathroom. Go and sit there. The fair princess comes there every day to bathe. She removes her jewels before bathing.

‘ Now, be quick, and pick up one of those jewels. Then, carry it, so that every one can see it, and drop it down the cobra’s hole. Then all will go well.’

The crows did as the jackal advised them. They went while the princess was bathing, and took away her diamond necklace. Then, they let it fall into the cobra's hole.

Now, the princess raised a cry, when the crows flew off with her necklace. The king's servants heard the cry, went running after the birds, and saw where they dropped the jewel.

So, they brought axes, and broke open the hole. The cobra came out, hissing, and the men cut it into two.

The crows were full of joy, now that the cobra was dead. From that day, their eggs were safe, and the parent birds lived happily with their young ones.

A clever man overcomes his enemy.

ORAL AND WRITTEN EXERCISES

1. What was the jackal's advice?
2. The jackal said, 'Carry the jewel, so that every one can see it' Why?
3. What did the king's servants do?

TALE VIII

THE FOUR FOOLS

THERE was once a bird that lived on the mountains. It was as free as air and flew where it liked. It sang sweet songs and was very happy.

Now, this bird was not like other birds. Every day some gold came out of its mouth.

One day, a fowler went to the mountains. He saw the bird. His joy was great when he found that gold fell out of its mouth. 'I will catch this bird alive, and take it,' he thought.

He spread his net on the ground, and scattered on it, some grains of rice. The bird flew down into the net, and was caught. The fowler took it home, kept it for some days in his house, and all the gold was his.

Soon, he began to think, 'Perhaps I am doing a wrong thing. If the king comes to know I am keeping this bird, which gives gold daily, he will surely take the bird away and I shall be punished. So, I myself will make a present of it to the king, and he will reward me.'

The fowler went to the king. He bowed low, and laid the bird at his feet. 'Sire, this is a rare bird,' he said. 'I caught it on the mountains. Every day, some gold drops out of its mouth. Will you have it?'

The king was full of joy, and said, 'Yes.' He gave a big sum to the fowler, and sent him away. He next ordered a beautiful cage to be made. The cage was made of shining gold, and was set with diamonds. Into this cage, the king's servants put the bird.

The king's Prime Minister came by just then. He looked at the bird and the costly cage. 'Sir,' said he to the king, 'have you listened to a foolish fowler, and bought this bird? May I ask you to set it free?'

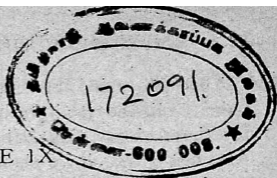
When the king heard his Minister speak thus, he opened the cage, and set the bird free.

And the bird flew on to the roof of the king's palace, and cried from there: 'First, I was a fool, for, I was caught. The second fool was the fowler, for, he did not keep me, but gave me to the king. The king bought me, so he was the third fool; and his Minister the fourth, because, he told his master to set me free.' So saying, the bird flew away to its own home on the mountains.

First think, then act.

ORAL AND WRITTEN EXERCISES

1. Who were the four fools? Why?
2. Do you like this story? Why?
3. What would you have done, if you had been (i) the bird, (ii) the fowler, (iii) the king, and (iv) the Minister?



TALE IX

THE STORK AND THE CRAB

ONCE upon a time, there was an old stork. He loved fish very much. He lived by eating the fishes in a pond.

One day, he came to the pond, and stood there looking very sad. The stork was not really sad: he was only pretending.

One by one, the fishes came above the water. They found the sad stork there. They did not know what was the matter with him.

Now, there was a fish in the pond, bolder than the rest. He thought he would ask the old stork what made him sad. So, he swam up to the stork, and said, 'Good friend, why are you sad to-day? You would catch fish daily and eat them. But, to-day, you are standing still. Tell us what is the matter.'

The stork sighed deeply and replied, 'True, my dear fish, I eat some of you every day. To-day, my heart is heavy, and I am sorry for you all. For, have you not heard the bad news? The fisherman will come here to-morrow. He will cast his net, and catch you all, and not one will be left among you. Oh! oh! I am sorry when I think of your fate.'

The cunning stork said all this in a low, sad

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voice. He cried, and shed some tears, too. The fishes believed it all to be true. They were sorry for themselves. But, they pitied the stork more, who felt so much for them.

The fish then spoke. 'You are our friend,' he said. 'Though you kill and eat fishes, we count you as our friend now. You told us of our danger, and you are the right man to help us to escape from it. A friend in need is a friend indeed. Take pity on us, and set us free from a cruel death.'

The stork replied, 'I will do all I can to help you. You know I am old, and I cannot fight the fisherman. I will carry all the fishes from this pond to another. There you will be safer and happier. Now, tell me, does this please you?'

All the fishes in the pond, then, went together and thought what was best to do. It seemed to them best to leave that pond and go to another.

So, the fish came up, and said to the stork, 'Father Stork, we are ready to do as you tell us. Please carry all of us to another pond where we shall be safe. You will save many lives and we will call you our Father!'

The cunning stork agreed. He was very glad in his heart. He knew he had told a false story to the fishes, and deceived them. He thought he could now eat as many fish as he liked.

One by one, he took the fishes in his long beak, and flew from the pond. He ate some till he could eat no more. Others he put to dry on a big rock.

Now, there was a crab in that pond. He, too, wanted to get away along with the fishes. So he said to the stork, 'If you please, sir, will you take me also from here?'

The stork heard the crab. He felt very happy, and consented to take him also. 'Fortune never comes singly,' he thought.

The crab said, 'I am too big to go into your bill. So, I will just sit on your neck.' The stork agreed, and off they went.

As the stork flew along, the crab looked down. He saw some dead fishes lying on the way. He also found that many more were drying on the rock.

The crab was very angry when he saw that the stork was a cheat. He said to himself, 'This bird has killed and eaten so many of the poor fishes. He wants to kill me also. Now, I must think of a way, and kill him.'

So, he said to the stork, 'Sir, you are very kind to me. There is one thing that makes me sad: my friends and relations are left behind. I want you to help them also. Will you?'

'Yes, I will,' the stork answered.

'Then, carry me back, and I will show them to you.'

The stork turned back, and flew towards the pond. 'This is a lucky day,' he thought.

But that was not so. He came very near the pond. He had not yet reached the ground, when the crab bit him sharp in the neck. Away went



AWAY WENT THE STORK'S HEAD FROM HIS BODY

the stork's head from his body, and down, down, they fell into the pond. The crab, too, fell down, but, he was not hurt.

Thus did the wicked stork die; and the crab saved himself and the other fishes, and to them he told the story. . They were all glad that their foe was dead.

Evil to him who does evil to others.

ORAL AND WRITTEN EXERCISES

1. What story did the stork tell to the fishes?
2. The stork's food is fish. Was it wrong in taking away the fish to eat? Why?
3. Can you tell another story to illustrate, 'Evil to him who does evil to others.'

TALE X.

THE TIGER AND THE BRAHMAN

THERE was once an old tiger who lived in a forest. He was so old that he could not run about and kill and eat his prey. So, he thought of a plan.

He bathed himself in a pool in the forest, and sat by its edge. He had a gold bangle, which he found on a robber, whom he had killed some time before. He held this bangle, in one of his paws, and some *kusha* grass in another.

Just then, a Brahman happened to pass on the other side of the pool.

'Holy Brahman!' called the tiger, 'here is a gold bangle. Come and take it.'

The Brahman heard the words of the tiger.

'Where is your bangle?' he shouted.

The tiger held it up.

The Brahman wished to have the bangle, but fear filled his heart.

'You are a fierce beast,' he said to the tiger. 'How can I trust you? All the world knows that tigers prey upon men and animals.'

'Good God!' exclaimed the tiger. 'I prey upon men and animals! I do not even touch them! It is true I once killed them. But, that was when I was young. Now, I have changed my mode of life. I have wept for my past evil deeds. My

sins have been great, but I have suffered for them. I have fasted many days, and I know God has forgiven me.

‘I have studied the Shastras. I have performed sacrifices. Early every morning, I bathe in this pool, and sit here giving gifts to the poor. I practise penance. I speak Truth. Now, do you not believe me?’

‘Still if you do not trust me, look at me. I am old, and my strength has gone from me. My teeth have fallen, and I have lost the use of my claws. How can I harm you?’

‘Come here, and I will give you the bangle. You seem to be poor. You seem to be good also. If this gift is given to you, my heart will have peace. Wade across the pool. The water is not deep.’

These were really nice words, and the Brahman was deceived by them. Further, he said to himself, ‘Was anything ever gained without some risk? There is danger in approaching the tiger. I must run the risk. Else, how shall I have the bangle?’

He stepped into the pool, and when he reached its middle, his feet sank in the mire. He could neither go on, nor turn back, and he cried, ‘Ah, I am helpless.’

‘Is it so?’ said the wicked beast. ‘Wait, and I will help you out.’

So saying, he sprang upon the poor Brahman, and caught him by the throat.

‘Alas ! alas !’ thought the Brahman, as he was dying, ‘the tiger will kill his prey. It is his nature. I was a fool to be deceived by his words. My avarice is the cause of my death !’

Then, the tiger dragged him to the bank, and ate him up.

Never have faith in a bad man.

Be contented with what you have. Avarice brings trouble.

ORAL AND WRITTEN EXERCISES

1. What did the tiger say to make the Brahman come near him ?
2. Was the Brahman wrong in approaching the tiger ? Why ?
3. What do you learn from this story ?

TALE XI

THE LION AND THE HARE

IN a certain forest, there once lived a lion. The lion, you know, is called the King of Beasts. This King was very, very cruel, and all his subjects feared him.

Now, what the lion did was this. Every day he killed many animals and ate them all. It seemed that, in a short time, there would not be even one animal left. So, all the beasts held a meeting.

It was a large meeting, and every bird and beast attended it. The tiger was the chairman. Every one made a speech. And this was what the tiger said in the end :

‘ Our King kills many animals daily. I am afraid, that, soon, there will not be even one of us left. We want to save ourselves from this great danger. Now, what I say to you is this. We will send word to the king, that one of us will go to him every day at dinner-time, and that he need not hunt us. The lion will kill that *one*, and eat him. If we arrange things in this way, we need not die in numbers. I think you will all agree with me.’

‘ Yes, yes,’ shouted all the animals, ‘ that is right.’

And the tiger sent word to the lion as he had said.

The lion consented. Every day, at noon, one of the beasts went to the lion, to be killed and eaten by him.

Things went on like this for some time.

One day, an old hare's turn came to go. He said to himself, 'I shall think of a way to kill this lion. Then, I shall be saving myself and all the other beasts.'

He stayed long, very long, on his way to the lion's den. The hour of noon was long past, when he walked slowly, and in a short time, was before the lion.

You may imagine that the lion was very hungry. He was very angry, too. So he roared, 'You knave, you wicked fellow, why have you come so late? Do you not know that my dinner-hour is past? Every other beast has come to me in time. And you, you old fool! Wait and you will know how I am!'

'Be not angry, sire,' replied the hare. 'I am late, it is true. But, it is no fault of mine. I started early in the morning. When I had come some distance, I met a very fierce lion. It was a hard thing to escape him. I lay hidden until he went away, and now, I have come.'

The lion was in a rage when he heard that there was another lion in that forest.

'Is there another lion here?' he asked the old hare.

'Yes, my lord,' he replied, 'and he calls himself King of this forest.'

‘Is that so?’ roared the other; ‘show him to me, and I will put him to death.’

The hare, then, led the way, and the lion followed. There was a deep well in the forest, and when they reached it, the hare stopped.

‘Here is the other lion, sir,’ he said. ‘Seeing you come, he got in and is hiding himself. Look in and you will find him.’

The lion looked in, and he saw his own reflection in the water. He mistook it for another lion, and he set up a loud roar. The roar was echoed and he heard it.

‘There is a lion there, to be sure,’ he said to the hare, ‘I will kill him.’

So saying, he leapt down into the well, head first. He did it with such force that he stuck in the mire, and died shortly after.

Wisdom conquers strength.

ORAL AND WRITTEN EXERCISES

1. What did the tiger say?
2. Write in your own words what the hare did.
3. Finish this sentence: The lion met with his death, because—

TALE XII

THE CLEVER CHITTU BIRD.

THERE were once two chittu birds, who were husband and wife. Their nice, warm, little nest was in a bush on the seashore. In it they lived happily.

One day, the she-bird said to her husband, 'My dear, I think the time is come when I should lay eggs.' Our home on the seashore is not very safe. The sea will wash away our eggs. So, we must choose a safer place.'

The husband replied, 'Fear not, my love. The ocean cannot harm us. For my power is great, and it will not make me its enemy. This place is very nice, and you can lay your eggs here.'

The wife laughed at this. 'Do you know what you say?' she asked. 'The ocean is so wide and so deep, and its waves are so huge. Can we measure our strength against it, or can we fight with it? If we fight, shall we not be sure to lose?'

Then answered the other, 'Set aside your fears. I say my power is great, and the ocean dare not make me its enemy. If it wrongs us, I will put it to shame!'

The she-chittu bird put away all her fears. Soon, in her nest, she laid two small white eggs.

One day, soon after, the wind blew rough, and the sea rose high. The waves came on rolling, rolling, and washed away the nest, eggs, and all.

Great was the grief of the mother bird. She said, 'Ah, what can we do now? Our eggs are gone. Did I not say that there was danger here? Can we fight with the ocean now? Alas! alas! our eggs are gone!'

'Be wise, and do not cry like that,' replied her mate. His anger was great. 'See what I can do now. I will get back our lost eggs.' And he flew with his wife to a large tree, hard by.

There he sat all day long, and called every bird that flew past him. To each one, he told the sad, sad story. All the birds pitied the poor fellow, and they said they would help him to get back the eggs.

Then they all went to Garuda, the king of the birds. The chittu bird told him his sad tale, and asked him to get back his lost eggs. And all the birds cried, 'O king, we pray you to get back the eggs from the ocean, and give them to our friends.'

Garuda heard their prayer. He thought, 'I am the king of the birds. A king shares the troubles of his subjects. And to be called a king, I must help those who suffer. A king always does good to his people. I will go to Vishnu, and try what I can do.'

And Garuda went to Vishnu, and bowed to Him. He told Him how the ocean had robbed the chittu

birds of their eggs, how the two birds were full of sorrow, and how all the other birds came to him for help.

‘I am the king of the birds,’ said Garuda; ‘a king helps his people. I shall sin if I do not get back the eggs from the ocean, and give them to the poor chittu birds.’

Garuda was the servant of Vishnu, and so he was dear to Him. Garuda loved God much, and God said He would help him.

Vishnu, then, ordered the king of the ocean to appear before him. The king of the ocean came quickly, and bowed to Vishnu.

‘Give back to the poor birds, the eggs you have stolen,’ said Vishnu, ‘were you not sorry to cause them grief? Fetch the eggs, but be quick.’

The king of the ocean bowed low and retired. He, soon, brought the two eggs, and gave them back to the chittu birds.

‘Is not my power great?’ said the male chittu bird to his wife, as they both sat in their warm nest. ‘Have I not recovered our lost eggs? Have I not put the ocean to shame?’

We should not make foes of those whose power is great.

ORAL AND WRITTEN EXERCISES

1. What did the chittu bird do to get his eggs back?
2. The chittu bird was clever; but was he wise?
3. Tell why Garuda was a good king.

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