

sleep thereon. On its becoming morning, the king sent for him, and asked, 'Didst thou sleep comfortably through the night?' He replied, 'Your majesty! I had no sleep the whole night long.' 'Why?' asked the king. He replied, 'Your majesty! in the seventh fold of the bedding there was a hair, which was pricking my back, and I had no sleep in consequence.' On hearing this, the king looked into the seventh fold of the bedding, and lo! a hair was found. Thereupon he said to him, 'Thou art indeed a nice judge of beds.' "

After relating so much of the story, the sprite asked, "Who was the greatest connoisseur of those three?" King Bir Vikramajit replied, "He who was the connoisseur in the matter of beds." When the sprite heard this, he went again and hung on to that tree; (and) the king also went there on the instant, and bound him, placed him on his shoulder, and carried him away.

TALE XXIV.

THE sprite said, "Your majesty! in the country of Kaling there was a Brahman named Yagya Sharmā, whose wife's name was Somadattā. She was very beautiful. The Brahman began offering sacrifices, whereupon his wife had a beautiful boy. When he attained the age of five years, his father began teaching him the *Shāstras*. At the age of twelve years he had finished the study of all the *Shāstras*, and become a great scholar; and he began to be in constant attendance upon, and to help his father."

"After the lapse of some time the boy died, and in their sorrow for him his parents uttered loud cries of lamentation and wailing. On receiving this news all his kinsfolk hastened thither, and fastening the boy upon a bier, took him away to the burning-ground; and when there, began repeatedly gazing at him, and saying to one another, 'See! even in death he appears beautiful!' They were uttering words like these, and arranging the pyre, while an ascetic was also seated there engaged in religious austerity. He

hearing these words began to think to himself, 'My body has become very old; if I enter this boy's body, I can practise religious meditation with ease and comfort.' "

"Having thought thus, he entered the body of the child, turned round, and pronouncing the names of Rām (Balarām) and Krishn, sat up as one sits up from sleep. When the people witnessed this, they all returned to their homes in astonishment; while his father lost all desire for the world on witnessing this marvel; first he laughed, then he wept."

After relating so much of the story, the sprite said, "Say, your majesty! why he laughed, and why he wept." Thereupon the king said, "Seeing the ascetic enter his body, and so learning the art (of changing one's own body for another) he laughed; and through regret at having to quit his own body he wept, thinking, 'Thus shall I too some day have to abandon my own body.' " Hearing this, the sprite went again and suspended himself on that tree; and the king, too, arriving close at his heels, bound him, put him on his shoulder, and carried him away.

TALE XXV.

THEN the sprite said, "Your majesty! there is a city in the south named Dharmpur, a king of which was named Mahābal. Once upon a time another king of that same region led an army against and invested his capital. He continued fighting for several days. When his army went over (in part) to the enemy, and a portion was cut to pieces, then, having no help for it, he took his wife and daughter with him, and went forth by night into the jungle. After he had penetrated several miles (lit. *kos*) into the jungle, the day broke, and a village came in view. Then, leaving the queen and princess seated beneath a tree, he went himself towards the village to get something to eat, and in the meantime (a body of) Bhils came and surrounded him, and told him to throw down his arms."

"On hearing this, the king commenced discharging arrows, and they did the same from their side. Thus did the fight last for three hours, and several of the