The Oldest Story

Doings of our Ancestors in India 10,000 years ago

Translated from Pre-Vedic Sanskrit

BY

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

I

A FEW years ago, while I was roaming about the delta of the Indus, upon the beach of the Arabian Sea, my attention was attracted by a piece of slab upon which strange characters were engraved. Just at that moment my mind was fixed upon a seemingly different idea, namely, the great antiquity of the soil upon which I trod. I was wrapped in Vedic song, and yet I made an unconscious halt, gazing intently upon the slab which the ebbing and flowing waves for centuries had evidently at last succeeded in dashing upon a peaceful shore. Slowly I awoke from my Vedic dream ; warily, as if the fragment had been cast upon consecrated ground, I raised and examined the stone, and saw that the deeply-indented characters, as well as the smooth surface upon which they had been chiselled, must have been the work of human hands. Presently I thought that the letters and words were Sanskritic, but the effacing work of ages and the smallness of the fragment hindered my arriving at a fixed conclusion as to the nature and value of my find.

I seized the earliest opportunity of taking my booty, thus wrested from the ocean's grasp, to a friend and teacher, a great Indian Sanskritist. At first this famous scholar also seemed perplexed, but he soon concluded that the letters and language were of a very ancient type—a sort of pre-Vedic Sanskrit. His curiosity, as well as my own, became very great, and before many months had elapsed, he gathered around him a band of Sanskrit scholars—some Indians, some Europeans or other foreigners who, like myself, had gone to India to learn its ancient philosophy by living the life of the devout philosophers in this abode of our very remote ancestors.

The more we discussed the nature of my find the more intense grew our curiosity. We entertained a theory that a very ancient island situated near the shore must have been submerged. This idea specially appealed to the scientific side of my curiosity. Our enthusiasm at length spurred us to action. We now set to work to fit out an expedition with the view of unearthing the slab from which the fragment had been broken, a task which would have been pronounced hopeless by all who were endowed with less resolution than ourselves. Diving and sounding appliances of the most scientific precision, as well as a submarine boat, were at our disposal. The crew consisted of eight Indian and four European and Asiatic Sanskrit scholars. In deference to the philosophy of our Indian teachers, we did not engage subordinates, or others skilled in the management of boats, but each of us first learnt all that was needed to be done, and there was then an exchange of duties, depending upon the skill or endurance of the persons engaged in the enterprise.

Rock after rock was sounded and searched in vain, not less vainly were examined the craggy cliffs, the mossy brows, the slimy caverns, and the pebbly plains, and not the faintest trace of the eagerly sought civilisation was yet found by the dauntless divers. As pilgrims to a watery shrine, we did not know how to fail, however, and we felt as if we would rather perish than despair of forcing the greedy depths to yield up their sacred treasure. If by sweeping the heavens a deity could be found, another spiritual find, effected by sweeping the great ocean depths, would also be high consolation to the Hindu.

A comparatively shallow sea was at length sounded, and an effort was made to determine the configuration of its bed. The singularly craggy irregularity of the surface, conjoined with the fairly well-defined borders, awakened the belief that the anticipated ground of consecrated antiquity was on the point of discovery. Partially embedded objects were now seen, which bore evidence of a civilisation more or less remote, but the absence of inscriptions was as conspicuous as the presence of our

resolute determination that the relic, which had cost us so much effort and so many disappointments, must be fished up. Our battle seemed to be lost, and a breathing spell had to be enjoyed to enable us to restore our strength. We resolved upon taking another plunge, however, when the divers discovered a Sphinx-like object, being the peak of a rock chiselled into the form of an immense human head, and all the crew examined it by descending in turns. The facial expression had clearly suffered through the ceaseless battling of ages. A special meeting was held, partly for relaxation and partly for discussion. I dwelt specially upon a rim, which I closely examined, around the head of the Sphinx. I was asked what this had to do with the tablet which we were in search of, and which might turn out to be the real holy writ. I ventured to surmise that the sculptor of the Sphinx had deposited the sacred writings in the space which should have been occupied by the brain, the cap of the skull first being removed and then replaced. It was contended that this theory could not explain the fragment found upon the shore, there being no outlet from the brain. It was said that the crew were in search of sacred records, not necessarily such as those of which the fragment formed a part, that the Sphinx's brain could not contain all the holy writings, that even if the sought tablet were found, it might be so defaced that it could not be deciphered, and that the Sphinx itself, being a sacred find, must not suffer mutilation by examining the brain. "There is no evidence," said one of the crew smilingly, "that the Sphinx belonged to the same nationality as our pre-Vedic ancestors, but if it turned out to be a heathen, the more it were vivisected the better."

Having abandoned all hope of effecting other finds, the crew were discussing the propriety of setting sail for the shore in order to obtain instruments for operating upon the skull of the Sphinx, when a boisterous gale arose, and we had to remain anchored over-night. The storm swept the boat several hundred yards out of its mooring. At break of day we decided to descend by

turns, four at a time, in order to bid a short farewell to the Sphinx and examine the rim more closely, thereby to determine the kind of surgical instruments required to effect an entrance into the brain. Owing to the drift of the boat, we had to descend by a new route. The four who made the first descent, upon reaching solid ground, struck upon another find. It was a fallen and broken Sphinx, with skull collapsed, which was evidently the head of a female, and as I was the discoverer, I was asked to give it a name. I called it the Sphinxess, and as nobody objected, it always went by that name.

The huge brain space contained twelve large tablets, all the same size and thickness, and packed in such a way that each fitted on the top of the one below. They were rectangular in shape, almost square, and were so fitted together that they were supported in the centre of the skull by the corners coming into contact with the inner surface. The surrounding spaces, irregular in size and shape, were filled up with small cylindrical and wedge-shaped stones of various sizes, upon each of which were engravings similar to those on the broken slab. The breakage suffered by the skull was so great that the tablets could be easily removed, and many of the small stones were lying about. All were seemingly reclaimed, and it was found that a corner of one of the tablets was broken off, which corresponded with the fragment I had discovered upon the beach. The victorious pilgrims forthwith set sail for the shore, and deposited their cargo in a safe place. It was found that the twelve tablets contained a connected story or fragment of history, while the small stones were mainly foot-notes to the historical events described, without which it would have been extremely difficult to understand and translate the story. In this book I am giving a translation of these tablets. There is no heading to the story but the date at which the events transpired is given, although none of the translators have as yet been able to understand the reference. Assured that all other fragments of ancient history hitherto discovered belong to a much more recent date, I have

hazarded the title, THE OLDEST STORY, for my find. It is divided into seventeen parts or chapters, not one of which has any heading, but for the convenience of the reader I have given a table of contents in which the leading event of each chapter is named. In this preface I am presenting such facts, including translations of a few of the small stones, as will enable my readers to understand the story itself as clearly as possible.

II

THE next steps to be taken could be decided without discussion. The band of victorious adventurers needed a rest. Their eagerness to translate the tablets and small stones may be left to the imagination. Those who do not know these Indian philosophers called Vedantists will now be thinking about coming to conclusions by means of chairmen, resolutions, majorities, etc. These great scholars and teachers live in the forests of India, and spend most of their time in study and meditation. They receive pupils, although they accept no fees, and do not submit to much disturbance in their ways of living. They feed mainly upon spontaneously produced foods, and what may be lacking in the forests they make good by begging from their neighbours. This cannot be called begging in our sense of the word, however, for they take the food as a right, not as a favour. Their life is very simple, even simpler than that of the poorest of the ordinary poor, and is reduced to the barest necessities. Perhaps if society denies them access to the area of land required to produce their food it appears logical to them that they are only getting back what has already been taken away from them, so that the idea of begging does not enter their minds. What they inculcate above all other virtues is the practice of unselfishness—non-attachment to the world with its possessions and its vanities. If anyone believes that they are in possession of knowledge, this they impart freely, repudiating even the idea of reward. To think or act otherwise would

be selfishness. They cannot fear death, for unselfishness is everything, and is eternal. So-called others, even to the extent of all the universe, can only be a projection of each one's self. What we regard as nothing, they sum up as everything; what we know and feel to be everything, they pronounce to be nothing. They never adopt a creed; they can never tell us what their to-morrow's belief will be. If we ask them what they are going to do to-morrow, they answer by asking us whether it is necessary for them to make up their minds to-day. They tell us, moreover, that their future actions can be logically deduced from their philosophy. To know their philosophy is to foretell what they will do. If they can be accused of attachment to anything, it is to the ideas of their ancestors, and yet for them the past, present, and future are all one. Imbued with such ideas as these, the Vedantists have never formed any organisations—or, at best, only free and temporary ones for carrying out clearly-defined objects—so that for them the question of majorities or minorities can never arise. They never put themselves in a position which enables them to dictate what others shall do.

With a knowledge of these facts, it is now clear how the stupendous task of translating the tablets and stones would be undertaken. The four foreign members of the staff, including myself, were so deeply impressed with the generosity and sincerity of our teachers—although I had only gone amongst them with the object of making a scientific and impartial inquiry into their methods—that we could not oppose their philosophy while making our translations. It was therefore understood, without discussion, that each would set to work when he liked, also leave off when he liked, and when there seemed to be a conflict, the actions of one being limited by those of another, then and then only arose the necessity for organised effort, which was subject to many limitations. No questions could be brought before the members as a body—there were no members, there was no body—and all discussions upon textual and other obscurities were of a private and conversational character. Feeling the dangers of prejudice,

none liked to commit himself to theories which might turn out to be ill-founded, and thus, instead of discussing the direct point, the conversation would turn upon some law or principle which explained the lesser issue.

There arose arguments for and against the theory that the remoter the civilisation the higher was its level, all depending upon the definition of the word "civilisation." It was understood, without questioning, that each would translate the story and notes into his mother tongue—or, at all events, into the language or languages which he had most completely mastered. Here was, indeed, a babel of tongues. Each translated parts into one language and parts into another, finding that some languages were better adapted to the expression of certain laws or sentiments than others. When we had all finished our labours, however, there were complete translations into the following languages: Vedic Sanskrit, Classical Sanskrit, Russian, Greek, Hungarian, German, French, Italian, English, and three languages of modern India. In some instances there were two translations into the same language, the one according to the spirit, and the other according to the letter.

There was a good deal of discussion relating to the antiquity of the relics. I ventured to suggest that the inscriptions might be as ancient as 8,000 years B.C., to which the replies were made that during so long a period the language might have undergone changes so many and great that the story could not now be deciphered, and that the Aryan race did not fight their way to the borders of India until about 2,000 B.C. In reply it was observed that Greek had undergone little change during two or three thousand years, that national collapses were not so common in the most ancient civilisations, so that the primitive languages would be more apt to retain their original purity, and that our Aryan ancestors might have inhabited India at a period anterior to 2,000 B.C., and might have regained possession of their holy land.

III

IT seems necessary to say a few words about pre-Vedic Sanskrit. The story itself was written in what was called the vernacular, being spoken by the inhabitants of the plains, who formed the "Kingdom of Garsch." They understood agriculture and manufacture, passed laws, had ideas about religion, morals, property, etc., so it is a comparatively easy task to translate their vernacular into any known language, ancient or modern. The translation of many of the comments, engraved on the small stones, presents enormous difficulties, however, as they were written in what may be called the "seer tongue," spoken by the inhabitants of the Himalaya mountains, who, although seemingly possessing a rich language, had no ideas about religion, morals, agriculture, manufacture, laws, property, etc., except through what they had seen and heard in their association with the citizens of Garsch. These mountaineers are sometimes referred to as savages, although their ancestors were regarded partly as seers and partly as gods, their abode often being called "Seerland," and a few of the inscriptions seem to indicate that some of these very ancient seers or gods were still alive during the period in which the events related in the story were transpiring. There was another tribe known as forest dwellers, sometimes also referred to as sages, who occupied the forests, mostly along the rivers, and were noted swimmers. At an earlier period they enjoyed possession of property, their lives being something like those of the inhabitants of Garsch, but partly on account of the insecurity of their property, and partly through their eagerness to lead philosophic lives, they renounced their property, save such as they could swim away with on their backs. They spoke a dialect of the vernacular, and their language is engraved on many of the small stones. The scholars amongst the sages, like those amongst the citizens of Garsch, only knew the seer tongue as a dead language, the ordinary sages and Garschians not knowing it at all, although the three

tongues were all Aryan. What most charmed the inhabitants of the forests and plains were the proverbs and fables enshrined in the seer tongue.

IV

THE construction of the seer's language, wherein there are so few ideas in common with those of other languages, is only of special interest to grammarians and philologists, so that, instead of enlarging upon the subject here, I have prepared an appendix, the perusal of which may not be strictly necessary in order to understand the general drift of the story. The language is so highly inflected that the words may be placed in almost any order without changing the meaning of the sentence, save so far as emphasis may be concerned. Hence when the seer says, for instance: God is all, or God is love, the meaning is the same as all is God, or love is God. The verb is usually omitted, so that the expression God (is, am) I, would have the same meaning as I (am, is) God. Hence it cannot be ascertained in any modern language whether the seer believed in a deity or not. Another peculiarity of the seer tongue is that each word, with rare exceptions, is, in the ultimate analysis, composed of one syllable only, although in writing several are welded together, depending upon the euphony, rhythm, style of composition, etc., but only so far as each word could be readily taken in at a glance. The vernacular, spoken by the dwellers of the plains, is much less highly inflected, even less so than the sage tongue, so that these are much more easily translatable into modern languages. One of the peculiarities of the vernacular consists in the large number of its pronouns, each being used to address a different class of society, and one of the stones contains a comment to the effect that, according to the prediction of the writer, the citizens of Garsch could never change their classes, because it was impossible to change the pronouns, to introduce new ones, or to do away with any of those already existing.

The translators of the story were much puzzled over

the seer's ideas with regard to time. In all other languages, ancient as well as modern, the world is conceived as being born old, and is constantly growing younger—that is, more modern—whereas in the seer tongue it is conceived as being born young (although strictly it has been born at all only by a figure of speech) and is continually growing older or more ancient. Yet one of the inscriptions seems to indicate the illusion of time recognised in the seer tongue, for it may be translated as follows: "How long has the present been with you, O dwellers of the plains; how long, O dwellers, is it going to stay with you?" If time was not in the seer's vocabulary, it is difficult to ascertain whether he could have had any idea about eternity, or about a first cause, or about a last effect. It is clear, however, that the conception of property is absent from his language, and some of the translators argued that it was therefore impossible that the seer could have any ideas about morality, or rights, or duties.

V

A TRANSLATION of a few inscriptions from the smaller stones, which indicate the attitudes of the tribes to one another, will help the reader to understand the story more clearly.

Referring to the large number of pronouns in the vernacular, each addressed to a different class, this comment is engraved in one of the cylindrical stones: "A political law in the Kingdom of Garsch can be broken with comparative ease and impunity; to break a grammatical law demands a violent revolution."

"When one gets to know the laws of Garsch, they are found to be the most wise, most just, and most humane of all laws, and they have only this one drawback—that nobody ever gets to know them."

"The citizens of Garsch are so humble that they must have a ruler, and so proud that they refuse to be ruled."

. . . . . .

To his friends a King of Garsch had often expressed a desire to have a chat with a seer. They always

dissuaded him from such unkingly behaviour, however. One day while driving along the foot of a mountain the king commanded his charioteer to ascend, when the latter soon met a seer coming down, whose eyes were intently fixed upon a scroll held before his face.

"Your dignity," said the charioteer, "the king is at the foot of the mountain waiting in his chariot to have a chat with you."

"Tell his Majesty," said the seer, without feeling disturbed in his meditations, "that I would not know how to behave in his august presence."

"The words of your dignity shall be respoken," said the charioteer.

"Also tell his Majesty," continued the seer, without lifting his eyes from the scroll, "that he would not know how to behave in my presence."

. . . . . .

Four sages had an angry dispute, and failed to agree on any point save to refer the matter to a seer.

"Tell us, great master," said one of the sages, "whether the Absolute is composed of everything or of nothing."

"Tell me, O sages," said the seer, "whether the air belongs to everybody or to nobody."

The four sages discussed this subject amongst themselves in the presence of the seer. The first argued that the air belonged to everybody, the second that it belonged to nobody, the third that it belonged both to everybody and to nobody, and the fourth that it belonged neither to everybody nor to nobody. Then said one of the sages to the seer:

"We cannot answer your question, great master."

"Tell me, O sages, why you cannot agree," said the seer.

The sages again wrangled and failed to agree as to why they disagreed.

Then said one of the sages: "Tell us, great master, how is it that we cannot agree."

"Because your idea of possession applies only to limited things which you can store up for your own use," said the seer.

The four sages agreed that this view was reasonable.

"This view is not reasonable," said the seer, "for everybody is possessor of the air which he breathes."

The four sages agreed that this view was reasonable.

"Tell us now, great master," said one of the sages, "whether the Absolute is everything or nothing."

"The Absolute is without limitation or isolation," said the seer, "and so it cannot possess qualities applied to things or no-things."

The four sages agreed that this view was reasonable.

VI

FROM the foregoing preliminary observations it is now hoped that my translation of THE OLDEST STORY will be clearly understood without further note or comment. I have to acknowledge the debt I owe to my able and generous colleagues who have made translations into other languages. These I have enjoyed the supreme pleasure and advantage of reading, and my perusal thereof has induced me to modify, in some particulars, my original rendering into English. I have done my best to bring out the dramatic ease and touching simplicity of the text, yet I am only too deeply conscious of my shortcomings, especially as the original has evidently been the work of different hands, judging both by the literary style and the mechanical art evidenced in the engravings themselves, which give a charming variety quite inimitable when the translation is made by one pen. Especially in making a free rendering, which I have striven to do, the translator cannot help, however unconsciously, infusing some of his own style and spirit into such a story. I leave further comments to my critics. I am no critic. I am not a teacher. I do not feel missioned to teach. Neither am I a moralist, but should I succeed, however humbly, in my duty as a mere translator, my fondest hopes will be fully realised.

My apology for undertaking so great a task is two-fold. Firstly, I have been one of the foremost in the discovery of the tablets after many years' painstaking

study of the languages and philosophies of our great ancestors. Secondly, I feel it to be my most solemn duty to rescue the story from the terrible fate of falling into the unscrupulous hands of our three-volume romancers who are scouring the earth, if not also above and below, for old tales with the view of securing material in the hope of being able to foist their social and religious fads upon an unwary and over-indulgent public. History seems impotent to teach them any new lessons. So they are reduced to rummaging the recesses of our pre-historic fathers, presumably in the hope of finding some faint trace of an idea which can guide them in making new social departures.

I am not an historian, nor am I an antiquarian, much less am I a prophet, so I don't know whether the citizens of Garsch, or any of the other tribes named in the story, were savage or civilised, and therefore I cannot say whether THE OLDEST STORY has any message for the generations of the twentieth century.

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THE OLDEST STORY

CHAPTER I

PRINCESS SATAMARTI, THE PRIDE OF GARSCH

AT this period the Kingdom of Garsch attained the height of its riches and power, and was ruled by the most remarkable monarch that had ever worn the crown. His reign was marked by the most thrilling adventures, and was replete with heroes whose exploits were not much less intrepid than his own. Through his daring, backed up by the brave officers and soldiers under his command, he had succeeded in completely prostrating all his foes, who had for centuries either been making inroads into his kingdom or had been a menace to its integrity.

Shahu, King of Garsch, had three sons, worthy scions of a long and famous line of royal ancestors, who had commanded under him on many a victorious field. One after another, in different climes and on different fields, these sons had shed their blood in defence of their native and beloved soil. The king himself escaped only with many a ghastly wound. Princess Satamarti, his only daughter by Queen Tathdivi, now became heiress to the throne of Garsch. The utter subjection of all his enemies, conjoined with the vast treasures which he had accumulated as the spoils of war, presaged a long era of peace, and he lost no time in making use of the opportunity to reconstruct his kingdom, inaugurating a period of peace, plenty, and contentment amongst his subjects. His was not an aggressive policy; he was satisfied with the limits of his kingdom, and his war budget was framed only with the view of defending his honour and possessions against the surrounding hordes of barbarians and savages.

Not less active and heroic was the queen in her own sphere of life. She had made up her mind to be victorious in the fields of the domestic and philosophic virtues. She brought up and educated her own children. She taught them, above all, that war was not an ideal life, that it was necessitated only by ignorance, selfishness, and other imperfections, and that the model virtues consisted in parents loving their children, children loving their parents, and each and all loving their neighbours and enemies. One's love for another was measured by one's readiness to help and comfort another. Within her palace, and within all the circles in which she shone so brightly, her teachings were a living spirit and not a dead letter. Just as her sons were entering the period of manhood, they were, one after the other, removed from her; they were the crowning achievement of her life's efforts, and yet, by virtue of this very victory which surpassed her most sanguine expectations, she became a victim to her own philosophy. Weighed down in the innermost depths by mortal grief, due to the loss of her true and brave sons, the Royal mother, after enduring more pain than they had all suffered during their dying hours on the fields of battle, yielded up her spirit to sleep with the immortals. The king himself hardly survived the terrible blow. The young princess, in her distraction, halted between two courses: either to sink and depart peacefully to dwell with her beloved mother, or personally to lead her army of brave warriors against the savage hordes who had so ruthlessly butchered her darling brothers. She chose neither, but yielding finally to priestly influence, she elected to live a life free from danger, and to perpetuate the line of her Royal ancestors. The great high priest omened that her death would signal the ruin of a great kingdom. The young and charming Princess Satamarti, filled with the deepest affection for her subjects, braved life and dared to live. The bond of love and duty between herself and the king was daily growing firmer and stronger. Since the death of the Royal mother, so deeply mourned by a grateful nation, Satamarti was

consulted on all the affairs of State, and, indeed, she was often called queen, so many of the queenly virtues of her mother had she already practised in spite of her youthful and impulsive nature. Her qualities, so largely the effects of the mother's training, were looked upon as the reflex of her mother, and in this way the late queen still lived. Her youthful ardour, tempered by the cool and wise judgment of the king, free from the faintest suspicion of jealousy, selfishness, or ambition for power, combined with her refinement and natural charms, drew around her many friends and admirers, and she was already beginning to bewail the class restrictions which Royalty entailed. The king, placing unbounded faith in the excellent effects of the mother's training, imposed no rule of life upon Satamarti. He always found her engaged in occupations free from frivolity, in those pertaining to her duties to her subjects, or in self-culture. Through ardent attachment to outdoor sports, she developed a robust and commanding physique, which was not less admired than her mental and social charms, and yet also in all domestic concerns in and about the Royal palace she took the deepest pride. Her mere presence in any company made all those around her feel the burden of their insignificance, so powerfully magnetic were the charms of her modesty, her simplicity, and her graces. Hers were no studied manners, and with all her learning she could never learn to give offence even to the meanest creature. Every thought, every movement, emanated from a spontaneous soul. She knew how to sigh with those who sigh, to weep with those who weep, to smile with those who smile, to laugh with those who laugh, to sing with those who sing, to dance with those who dance, alike amongst rulers and subjects, but the crowning point in all her learning was to know how to lead the way in turning sobs into smiles. Yet she was always lamenting her imperfections, and in her strife for self-betterment she would aim at the elevation of all whom she could bless with her presence. In her way of thinking, the degradation of others led to her own degradation: what elevated others elevated her. What adorned others was a fresh jewel in her crown.

What enriched others removed her so many steps farther away from poverty. She was queen by virtue of all these qualities, as well as by the unanimous consent of her subjects, not by any ancestral pride or ambition, and if she failed in any degree, to that self-same degree she was the humblest of subjects. If she failed in any queenly virtue, to that same extent were her subjects queenless, or some other queen should enjoy the sovereignty. Her idea of the State was to be stately. She would accept orders from her subordinates, and in this way make them all kings and queens. Whenever she failed to come up to her own ideals of a queen, she would invite her friends to share her grief. All this was indeed also the practical philosophy of the late lamented queen, which that famous sovereign put into effect with the view of making herself worthy of the warlike intrepidity of the great king.

CHAPTER II

THE TEST OF BRAVERY

ACCORDING to an ancient custom, the privilege of choosing a consort was not permitted to a prince or princess. This was the special function of the great high priest, who, indeed, was himself bound to observe certain laws of ecclesiastical etiquette therein. The nature of these laws was such that a future spouse could often be determined from the very birth of a prince or princess, and still oftener some years before the great high priest pronounced his official judgment thereon. This functionary claimed on behalf of his predecessors in office that the high physical and moral standard of the Royal family of Garsch was due to their nicety of discernment in the selection of consorts. In the veins of this great family flowed the pure blood of a long line of Royal ancestors, and from time immemorial there had been no change in the dynasty. To preserve this purity was the loftiest ambition of the priesthood, and the citizens of Garsch shared this ambition.

The king and the great high priest had agreed to pursue a policy which would tend to insure peace for

the longest possible period of time, both within and without the confines of the kingdom.

The time had now arrived when, according to custom, it was necessary for the great high priest to publicly announce his decision as to the consort of Princess Satamarti, for she was now nearing her majority. His long-expected edict at length appeared, announcing the approaching marriage of the princess with Prince Utsikta, a warrior who had been the most powerful and most inveterate foe of the Kingdom of Garsch, and who could boast of having killed in battle the bravest son of King Shahu, and of inflicting the severest wounds upon the king himself. Both king and priest had concluded that this marriage would prove the most effective means of securing permanent peace for the Kingdom of Garsch. The king thought it prudent, however, that the personal feelings of the princess should be consulted in the choice of a husband. The great high priest had already paid a visit to Prince Utsikta, who protested his deep and undying love for the princess. When these facts became noised abroad, there was great disappointment amongst the citizens of Garsch, for Utsikta was not the prince whom they had in mind as the prospective husband of their precious princess, and both lawyers and judges accordingly declared with one voice that the selection made by the great high priest was contrary to law. The priesthood, on the other hand, maintained that the great high priest's choice was the supreme law. The legal point in dispute was whether the heroism of the prince or the purity of his blood was the determining factor. The king was of opinion that a heroic act must be held to be the most positive proof of the purity of the blood. The commoners, who had assembled especially to discuss this question, came to the conclusion that the most pacific solution of the dilemma was to empower the princess to choose her own consort. They had no authority to bestow such a power upon her, however; and, moreover, the step was declared by the priesthood to be unconstitutional.

Intense curiosity prevailed throughout the kingdom,

and even amongst surrounding nations, as to the personal feelings of the princess. She was very reticent, however, and when approached upon the subject would reply that she did not like to meddle with matters which were still unripe for decision. A painful interval elapsed, during which nothing was done, but her majority was drawing nearer and nearer, and, according to custom, her marriage should be celebrated on the eighteenth day thereafter. Alike the authorities and the citizens generally were looking for a personal pronouncement from the princess, for they all knew that her popularity amongst all classes was so great that she would gather a powerful following, no matter what her decision might be. She adopted the policy of feeling her way step by step. Not a day would pass without a report being circulated to the effect that a certain personage of the highest rank had such and such information concerning her intentions. It was reported, for instance, that she was deeply in love with Prince Isra'ali. Presently it transpired that this Prince was not only an ardent admirer of Satamarti, but also loved her tenderly. Wherever groups of citizens gathered together, the rousing exclamation would be heard: "All princes are in love with Satamarti."

Still the interval of painful uncertainty continued. Some citizens were now curious to know why their princess was acting so illegally and so unconstitutionally as to hesitate to marry Prince Utsikta. When their curiosity could no longer be satisfied by reports, they set up theories of their own, and in this case the idea was that Utsikta was much older than the princess. He also stood self-accused of killing her favourite brother in battle. It was reported, however, next day on the highest authority that, although these obstacles might be overcome, more serious reasons had been found as the result of personal investigations made by the princess, which proved that Isra'ali was the prince of purer blood, although not a warrior. He was famous for his learning and refinement, while Utsikta was a cruel sportsman, and the princess could never bear to see animals tortured. She was very fond of them, and

it was her delight to play with them. It was now reported that Utsikta was fitting out an expedition in pursuance of his claim to Satamarti's hand, and that he would reach Sindhi, the metropolis of Garsch, on the date fixed by law for her marriage. This report created intense excitement throughout the kingdom, and active preparations were at once made by the military authorities in case of resistance being required. The great high priest still insisted that the princess should marry Utsikta, while she was reported to have declared to one of her intimates that since she was already a slave, despite all the victories of Garsch, her enforced marriage to Utsikta could not tighten her bonds of slavery. When a princess attained her majority it was customary to have a great national jubilee, but as the marriage should take place eighteen days after, it was decided to hold the two festivities together, namely, on the later date. There was to be a great Royal and official procession, augmented by foreign sovereigns, princes, princesses, warriors, and priests. The whole nation was preparing to turn out in honour of the brilliant spectacle, and as many citizens as possible were to be allowed to present gifts to the princess along the route. So great was the conflict of opinion, however, regarding the probable outcome of the proceedings, that the preparations for the jubilee and the maturing of the military manœuvres necessary to drive back Utsikta's army in case of need came near to exhausting the resources of the nation. The war-centre and soldiers were agreed, however, as to the course they should pursue, and there was no power in the State strong enough to oppose them. They concluded to carry through the festival entirely without reference to Utsikta, and if invasion turned out to be the order of the day, they were prepared to resist it in their private capacity as citizens and guests of the fête, and not in their official guise as officers and soldiers. In this manner they hoped to make a warrior of every man, woman, and child in the Kingdom of Garsch.

The terrible day at length arrived. So many marriage problems had presented themselves for solution that the

princess had not yet even chosen a husband, much less was she prepared to marry, and yet nothing could stop the festival. If the nation were not celebrating her marriage, they must be held to be doing honour to the attainment of her majority. The great high priest, however, had sent the invitations to Prince Utsikta and the other Royal families and priests abroad upon the presumption that Satamarti would meanwhile come to her senses, and marry the consort prescribed by him. The chief augur having presaged that her refusal to marry according to law would bring about the ruin of a great kingdom, the priest feared to attend the festivities. The foreboded calamity might happen on the very day of the fête, and they would not even risk appearing as spectators. The foreign priests would not be disappointed, however. They came to help celebrate the nuptials, it is true, but failing that, they were determined to see the princess about whom they had heard so much.

On the eve of the festival Satamarti appeared amongst her guests at the Royal palace, and her great name and fame were enhanced by her achievements that day. Prior to the reception the king asked her what she had made up her mind to do under such a trying situation, and she replied that there was no need to fear for the result so long as she was governed by the logic of events. She magnetised her guests so much by her cheerfulness and charm that they all resolved to carry out the festive programme fearlessly. For the sake of her subjects who had done so much, and were about to risk so much in her honour and for her enjoyment, Satamarti would not like, she said, to see the day prove a failure, and every one of her guests resolved to be the last to say fail.

Commander Sadko, who had won so many brilliant victories under his king, went forth on the morning of the eventful day at the head of the procession, followed by a long line of chariots and horses. Before the bridge over the Indus had been crossed, it was evident to many observers that the gathering was the greatest that had ever been witnessed on such an occasion. The whole nation, specially and gorgeously costumed for the event,

seemed to have thronged the streets of Sindhi, and lined the banks of the Indus. Shouts upon shouts and peals upon peals of triumph rent the air, and resounded all over the city. Following the long array of foreign guests was the superb and imposing chariot of the king, in which he sat alone owing to the death of his queen; then there was the princess' chariot, in which she was also alone, for her marriage had not yet taken place, and after her were several empty vehicles designed for carrying the presents handed to her along the route. Then came in order, two abreast, a long line of the most dazzling and prancing steeds that could be obtained in all the world, mounted by literary and martial celebrities of all nations in glittering costumes. Those in chariots and those on horses had the privilege of making their presentations at the palace, before the starting of the procession, while those who enjoyed the honour of handing in the presents along the route joined in afoot behind the horsemen. The pomp and pageantry inspired the liveliest enthusiasm amongst all classes of spectators. Throughout all the city the processioners could see little else than the waving of hands and flags, and could hear nothing save bursts of joy and triumph. The king remained seated in his chariot, now bowing on this side and now on that, while the princess stood up, her chariot being thrown open in such a manner that the spectators could obtain the best possible view of her movements. She was plainly and chastely attired, yet her upright and commanding figure, her blushing modesty, her cheerful countenance, her graceful bows and attitudes, her magnetic charms, and all the rest of her attractions enkindled in the breasts of her subjects the most rapturous transports of enthusiasm.

The Royal palace stood upon the brow of a hill which sloped gently down into the river, which was crossed by a wide, long, and high bridge. The processioners, having completed a long and circuitous route throughout the city, were about to re-cross the bridge, their destination being the palace. On the other side of the bridge, near the palace, was seen a large army, heavily weaponed, and the noise of the war

drum resounded far and wide. Commander Sadko's keen eye took in the whole situation at a glance. He recognised Utsikta, who figured at the head of the army. The former rode calmly back to signal the news officially to the princess and her guests, and when he saw them remain so unperturbed he felt it his duty to lead the procession over the bridge just as if there were no obstruction. While this course was being pursued, the spectators, believing the army to be Utsikta's, rushed, unarmed, in headstrong haste to surround it, for they were all ready to lay down their lives to prevent the abduction of fair Satamarti. Utsikta caused the note of war to be drummed and bugled, but his noise did not stem the rushing throng of citizens and other spectators, nor did it perturb the equanimity of the guests. The king and the princess, above all, remained unmoved. A portion of the processioners was already across the bridge, and the open chariot in which Satamarti was standing was half-way across. She was bowing smilingly to people who were rushing to cross the bridge, with the view, no doubt, of encompassing Utsikta and his army. The last bugle-note now sounded, indicating that Garsch was on the point of being attacked, when, in the twinkling of an eye, a stalwart figure rushed up to the princess' chariot, upset it, and spilled out its occupant. Before anyone present could realise what had happened, the stalwart grasped the princess under the armpits and suddenly flung her over the railing of the bridge into the rapidly-flowing river, swollen by weeks of heavy rains. Having made no attempt to escape, the delinquent was easily captured. A breathless moment supervened. Instantly a bystander sprang over the railings on the opposite side of the bridge, and as meanwhile the foaming and rolling tide had not floated the princess a much greater distance than the width of the bridge, the brave rescuer plunged into the water only a few yards behind her. The cries of anguish uplifted by the bystanders who had witnessed the sad and startling catastrophe, deeply contrasting with the acclaims of joy a moment before, arrested the attenti-

of the more distant spectators, and their rush was now in the opposite direction. Utsikta himself was an eye-witness, having been on the river-bank within sight of the scene. In a fleet moment of deep silence a ringing cry was heard, which echoed throughout all the city: "The princess is now yours, O brave Utsitka, spring and save her!" The sudden and unexpected change of events forced Utsitka to change his military tactics, which he could not do without consulting his augur, who was kept in a safe place in the prince's rear. Having only a moment to reflect, the augur had only time to answer, saying: "A good cause in brave hands is bound to succeed." While Utsikta's attention was thus diverted, his chief commander, in the hearing of the soldiers, addressed his officers to the effect that war, as well as peace, had its codes of honour, and that if they obeyed any command to capture a helpless or dying princess they would merit the wrath of the gods. Scarcely had these words been spoken when Utsikta, returning in great haste, ordered his commander, to be followed by his officers and soldiers, to push forward on either bank of the river, steadfastly watching the movements of the princess, and to capture her should she swim to the shore; or, if she seemed to be sinking beneath the waves, to rush into the water and seize his prey. He would take the lead, he said, and he commanded them to follow. Utsikta did take the lead, it is true, but not one officer, not one soldier, followed. Having witnessed the insubordination of his army, a fact unparalleled in the history of all his campaigns, Utsikta hastily betook himself once more to his augur to consult him as to the next step to be taken, for he had sworn a solemn oath not to withdraw from Garsch until he had clasped the fair princess in his arms.

The princess is floating meanwhile down the buoyant stream. Vast multitudes are thronging the banks on either side. Splash! splash! is the only response they can get from the impetuous flood. Now she sinks, now she rises. It is hard for her brave rescuer to swim faster than he can be borne along by the billow's breast. He

is thus still left behind. Thousands of hands are clasped in prayer to Father Indus, beseeching him to buoy up their darling princess and land her safely upon the shore. Splash! splash! splash! is the only answer to this prayer. Now she raises her brave hand, which some interpret as a signal for help, some as a signal of victory over the sturdy flood, and some as an attempt to raise her hands in prayer for her restoration to her beloved subjects. The wails of the frantic spectators are growing more and more pitiable—more and more heart-rending. Bravely is good old Father Indus still bearing up her chin. Presently, by means of a few desperate strokes, her undaunted rescuer splashes his way up to her side. Peals upon peals of joy now issue forth from the tumultuous crowds. Behold! he is seizing her brave chin. See how the braves are struggling inch by inch nearer the shore—onward with the waves, sideward in spite of the waves. Behold! another dash forward. Behold! another dash sideward. Silence! Patience! O triumph! Dry ground is reached.

The joy and impetuosity of the spectators could find no bounds. The over-anxious king was the first to push his way to the front. He had to fight his way on foot through the crowd, and was on the spot when the princess planted herself upon the bank.

"Don't fret, papa dear," said the princess to the king. "I am not hurt."

Scarcely had her brave deliverer found solid ground when he made a bold attempt to run away, but he was instantly seized by an army of bystanders. The princess was the first to observe his attempted flight, and it was even she who laid the first hand upon him to hold him back. Grasping him firmly by the hand, and addressing a few words of cheer to those around her, she made her way through the dense and uproarious crowd back to her chariot, which she entered still leading her brave deliverer by the hand. When her guests saw what she had done, they all took their former places, and the procession wended its way up to the palace as if nothing had happened, where, amidst tears and joy, Princess Satamarti received the congratulations of all her guests.

CHAPTER III

EXIT UTSIKTA

THE second day after the jubilee Prince Utsikta was obliged to return home with his army. His stores were running short, and owing to the insubordination of his officers and soldiers, the hopes of obtaining food in Garsch by plunder were very slender. At first he tried to bring his officers to their wits by insults and threats, but having failed, he then reasoned with them. In this manner he regained their confidence, and they answered all reasonable questions. They admitted that the princess had passed by their side leading her deliverer to her chariot, and when asked why they did not capture her, they replied that through her exploit in overcoming the raging torrent of the Indus, she had made the highest record as a swimmer, that thereby she had brilliantly won her liberty, and that they were disarmed by the overpowering influence of her charms. Utsikta, alternating between sadness and fury, saw that his only course was to return ingloriously to the capital of his kingdom.

Having exhausted the resources of his country in the fitting out of this expedition to obtain the heiress of Garsch as his bride, Utsikta, so accustomed to return to his capital amidst the intensest outbursts of triumph, now felt constrained to disguise himself. Until the collapse of this disastrous enterprise, he was universally regarded as the chief amongst all the princes of the civilised world, and so far as princesses were concerned, none dare be mentioned in the same breath with the name of Satamarti. After his failure to capture the fair heiress, however, the world was at a loss to know what to do or say. For Utsikta it meant the ruin of his illustrious name and of the great ancestral kingdom of which he was the proudest representative. To bear up against these misfortunes, and against the consequences which his love for the fair princess entailed, required sterner morale than that of which Utsikta was made. Not his priest, not his soothsayer, not his

medicine-man, not his dearest friends, could comfort him in his dire distress. His prospects were all blighted. His life's ambition had met with irretrievable disaster. He looked backward and forward, and upward and downward, and even sideward, and yet he saw no solution. Satamarti, having heard of his pitiful condition, was deeply moved, and she made a proposal to pay him a visit in the belief that she could console him, for she looked upon herself as the cause of his troubles. Both Utsikta's augur and the great high priest of Garsch forbade the visit, however, unless she first promised to marry him. Over this turn of affairs she was sorely distressed, but undertook to give the proposal her most unselfish consideration. Utsikta, having heard that the princess wished to see him to cheer up his drooping spirits, swooned away into a sort of trance. During this attack he acquired a new sense. Now he came into possession of a faculty which enabled him to look inward. He looked into himself to find the cause of his shattered life. With wild staring eyes he exclaimed at the highest pitch of his voice: "O why was I born to kill, and not to save!" Often would he censure himself for interpreting his soothsayer in the most selfish spirit. At the first he would soon recover from this entranced state, and would then freely discuss all sorts of schemes for smashing the barbarians of Garsch and other foreign tribes, but the loss of his dearest friends and most faithful allies, coupled with the straitened condition of his exchequer, baulked his plans and played havoc with his health, so that he was now no longer the Prince Utsikta of former days. During these intervals he would sink rapidly, not taking food enough to sustain his great natural activity, while during his trance he would eat heartily and enjoy comparatively good health. His priest and medicine-man vainly sought to restore his normal conditions, but his alternations occurring with ever greater frequency, broke him down, and thus the brave Utsikta, the great calculator in times of war, and the great miscalculator in times of peace, passed away unhonoured, unbugled, and undrummed by an ungrateful

nation. When Satamarti heard of his untimely and unexpected death, her tender heart was sorely grieved, for she looked inward, and felt that the cause of his death might have been in herself.

CHAPTER IV

SINGHYA STEPS IN

FROM jubilee day all Garsch was astir with curiosity to know something about the prisoner who had cast Satamarti into the Indus, also about the brave swimmer who had rescued her. Attempts had been made by groups of citizens to put the prisoner peremptorily and unceremoniously to death, seeing that the crime had been perpetrated in cold blood, amidst a crowd of witnesses, and at a moment when any seeming provocation must have been of the slightest and most trivial character, but better counsels finally prevailed, and he was allowed to await a fair trial. The crime had been witnessed by no fewer than three spies, and the criminal, a man of great physical strength, although he offered no resistance, was thought to need four Royal guards and eight other officers to lead him to the lock-up. The lawyers had little difficulty in deciding the class to which the crime belonged, namely, attempted regicide, but there was no court to try such cases, for a like crime had not been committed within the memory of any man then living. There was much wrangling amongst the priests, judges, and lawyers over the reconstruction of the court. When it became known throughout Garsch that the prisoner was a mountaineer, there was much prejudice excited against him amongst the over and mid classes, for they had always looked with grave suspicion upon the tribe to which he belonged, and had feared them on account of their great strength and their apparently great numbers. The under classes, on the contrary, regarded them as friends, for it was the custom amongst these mountain-dwellers to bring down food for the poor and to help them when their work had become too oppressive. In this manner they had often kept the free workers from drifting into

the slave class, and also kept the slaves out of the common refuges. These mountaineers were known to the commoners and many of the coinmongers chiefly as cheap, strong workmen, but it was very hard to keep them at their work, as they were too independent and preferred to spend most of their time in the mountains, where they lived on the raw and spontaneously-produced foods of their native regions, and where they appeared to need no shelter. The over classes, although they knew little and cared less about their habits and movements, were great admirers of the ancestors of this tribe, whom they regarded as seers, and whose language and literature they studied and cultivated with great avidity. To their ears the seer tongue had long been dead, however. The legal and priestly functionaries were making much ado about the trial of the prisoner, especially owing to wide-spread complaints that their duties were very trivial, especially when measured by the compensations which they were receiving.

Affairs at the palace were meantime being transformed. The king had always been conscious of the great power which he exercised over his subjects so long as he was embroiled in foreign wars and returning from victorious campaigns laden with booty. He had less experience with regard to the extent and nature of his power during long periods of peace, however, but history was full of instances, as he well knew, which pointed out a marked decline in the Royal prerogatives in times of peace, especially when combined with internal hostilities. It devolved upon the priesthood to check this tendency amongst ungrateful subjects by inspiring love for and fear of the gods. The singular and eccentric behaviour of Princess Satamarti, coupled with the fact that the gods had failed to visit her subjects with that degree of presaged wrath with which they had been threatened, strongly tended to undermine the priests. Even during the comparatively short period of peace which the Kingdom of Garsch had now enjoyed, there was palpable evidence of political disintegration. The nation seemed to be crumbling away beneath the feet of the authorities,

and yet the process was sufficiently gradual to prevent violent shocks amongst those classes who were content in following the conventions of the times. During the jubilee the masses spent all their savings in their ambition to make presents to, and be seen by, their fair and popular princess. The result was extreme destitution. The coinmongers were the only gainers, and their donations were only just sufficient to prevent a violent revolution. They protested loudly against the process of political dissolution which seemed to be taking place in all parts of the kingdom, and which went hand in hand with excessive disrespect for the rights of property. They demanded a strong military arm to quell opposition, a power which had hitherto resided in the king, backed up by the judicial and priestly authorities. Long and loud were the cries for deliverance, and each class was expecting a great deliverer—one who would rise in his might to strike a final blow for its cause. The over classes stood out for deliverance through military agencies, and although the king was still regarded as the greatest warrior, he was slow to act on account of certain domestic affairs which were in progress at the palace. The philanthropists and commoners were now very active, and both united to protest, in the interests of Garsch in particular and humanity in general, against deliverance by civil wars. They found that the under classes were expecting a deliverer who would ease their burdens and comfort them in their afflictions. Only on one question were all classes agreed, namely, that some great event must happen before long.

The king and the princess, who had hitherto been working harmoniously together in the affairs of State, now agreed upon a kind of division of labour. He was following more closely the course of events outside the palace, and was consulting his chief advisers as to the most prudent course to pursue. He irritated them exceedingly by his unprecedented policy of delay, and they could not understand why palace concerns should interfere with his immediate assumption of arms.

For several days after the jubilee a large number of princes, seeing that Utsikta was forced to retire disgraced

to the capital of his kingdom, remained at the palace, where they were vying with one another for the hand of fair Satamarti. Her winning manners inspired hope in the breasts of all these princes, but when she saw the impending dangers, she tearfully besought them all, one by one, to return quietly to their homes that she might enjoy a short respite to enable her to solve certain marriage problems. They offered her their services to help her out of her dilemma by means of discussions on the subject, but she still implored them to depart. Overcome by her soft entreaties, they finally retired.

The only guest now in the palace was her deliverer. He persistently begged of the princess to let him go, declaring that he felt ashamed, not only on account of the nature and scantiness of his attire, but on account also of the kindness, wholly undeserved so far as anything he had done was concerned, with which she overwhelmed him. He had, moreover, awakened the envy and jealousy of the princes, who knew that he was in the palace, and he feared that his presence might lead to unpleasantness. She implored him to stay, fearing that if he once went away he would be lost to her forever, fitted out a special chamber for him, and gave the princes no clue as to his whereabouts.

After their departure she was very curious to know all about her guest, and all the citizens of Garsch were affected by the same curiosity. The first news circulated was that his name was Singhya. Now there was not a poor person in all the city who did not know Singhya. He was a sage from the forest, a record swimmer, who often used to come into the city with arm-loads of provisions for the poor, would set to work for them with his own hands when he found them overburdened, and would visit and console those whom he found ill or in grief. When asked by them why he was so good, he would reply that he was aspiring to be a seer, and that when he was not amongst them he was striving to climb up the mountains. The princess did not learn these facts from Singhya himself, but through gossip in the city. When the poor heard that it was their dear Singhya who had saved their beloved

princess, and that he was still her guest at the palace, they could not contain themselves for joy, for they instinctively felt that her interest in them would now grow deeper and deeper, and it was even hinted all round about that he was the deliverer of Garsch whom they had been for long expecting. The king himself was profoundly moved. On several occasions he took Singhya with him for a drive in his chariot, conversed freely with him, showed him the interesting sights and his personal possessions, and even went so far as to take him into his confidence in matters concerning the government of his kingdom. He frankly said to his brave guest that all his private possessions, and all his authority, together with the hand of the princess, were a most trivial reward for saving her life, adding that if a life should be taken for the taking of a life, a life should be given for the saving of a life. Both the king and the princess were surprised to see Singhya's look of indifference when all these inducements were offered to him, and all the reply they could get was that it was his mission to become a seer. His grand physique, his calm demeanour, and his wise judgment deeply impressed the princess, although his manners differed widely from her own, and at length she could not refrain from telling him how much she admired and esteemed him. Indifferent to all the world beside, Singhya confessed that he was overpowered by her gratitude and her charms, and so implored her to let him go, lest her fascinations might interfere with his prospects of becoming a seer. She would do nothing to limit his freedom in any way, but finally a compromise was made by which he promised to return and pay her a visit in the near future.

While these events were taking place at the palace—and the king now became more deeply interested in palace politics than in national affairs—the over classes were being torn by fear, curiosity, jealousy, and indignation. Princess Satamarti had violated one of the most fundamental laws in the Kingdom of Garsch, they said, by taking into her chariot a disclassed person, and by driving with him to the palace on the occasion of her

jubilee her behaviour was all the more unconstitutional. One of the lawyers even went so far as to declare that the act of saving her life by a person of lower rank was illegal. It was a violation of the sacred laws of Garsch. It was moreover maintained that no member of the Royal family should associate with any subject below the priestly, the judicial, and the warrior castes without the special sanction of the great high priest. How much more illegal must it therefore be to receive as guest any person without class. At the same time a bitter contention arose between the great high priest and the chief judges of the high court. The latter argued that the princess, having once taken Singhya into her chariot during the procession on the fête day fixed by law for her marriage, introduced an incident which constituted a portion of the marriage ceremony, and that the priest had therefore no choice other than to complete the marriage between Satamarti and her deliverer. The learned judge did not contend that she was justified in taking Singhya into her chariot, but once having done so, the only solution was the completion of the marriage ceremony. At first this judgment struck terror into all classes, but when the under classes got used to talking about the subject it grew popular amongst them. The commoners maintained a dignified reserve. The over classes violently protested against the judgment.

The great high priest held, on the contrary, that the judge's pronouncement was utterly unconstitutional, and that the judiciary had no authority whatever to interfere in priestly concerns. Since the painful death of Prince Utsikta, the great high priest had simply felt it his duty to enter into negotiations with some other prince with regard to the marriage of Satamarti, and his long delay in doing so was occasioned by the extreme difficulty in choosing a prince who would be popular amongst a majority of the citizens of Garsch. Royalty, and priests, and judges might sometimes feel disposed to wait, but, alas! political events were always on the wing.

CHAPTER V

THE PRISONER AND HIS JUDGES

ACCORDING to the laws of Garsch, the crime of regicide, or attempted regicide, merited the severest punishment. The trial of the criminal was fixed by law to begin on the seventy-second day after the perpetration of the crime, but no steps could be taken without a Royal edict, which had to be issued not later than twelve clear days before the commencement of the trial. A body of criminal judges had assembled, and had constituted themselves into a sort of council with the view of discussing the law relating to regicide, about which little was known, for a case had not been before any court for two centuries. The proceedings of the court, according to the records, were not quite clear. The only process described in detail was the nature of the punishment and the duties of the medicine-man after the prisoner had been found guilty. The great high priest, having heard about the constitution of this council, loudly and strongly protested, for according to the records of his office, the court constituted for the trial of regicide cases was a department of State under his exclusive jurisdiction. He held that no criminal judges had a right either to form a council or a court without his direct sanction. He did not deny that the case was to be tried before three judges, but, he argued, the organisation of the court depended upon him. He pointed out, in support of his contention, that all questions relating to Royalty were under the control of his office. The council of judges did not accept this interpretation, but as there might be some doubt upon the point, and as the last day for the issue of the Royal edict was drawing near, it was considered prudent to wait in order to see to whom the edict would be addressed, as the records in the king's archives might throw light upon the subject. The last day now arrived, and no edict was issued. Both judges and priests grew alarmed, and the supreme judge of the criminal court, as well as the

great high priest, sent each a special messenger to the king asking for the required edict, to whom the latter replied that it was illegal to issue the writ until it had been formally applied for. Straightway the great high priest sent back his messenger with the formal application, to which the king replied that the writ was not applied for by the proper tribunal. His holiness was deeply incensed by this reply, as the last day for the issue of the edict must expire before a solution could be effected. He reminded the king how often he had saved the nation from utter ruin by his holy prayers to the gods, but now, through this flagrant breach of the law, there was no longer any hope for safety. He censured the king for unwarranted delay, and declared that his most fervent prayers would no longer be of any avail. When the supreme judge found that his holiness had failed to obtain the edict, he made a formal application himself, but the king rejected it on the ground that it was illegal to issue the writ after the day fixed by law. When the great high priest found that public indignation against the prisoner was so strong, there being no doubt about his guilt, his holiness officially informed the king and the judges, also issuing a public edict to the same effect, that he would himself try the prisoner, beginning on the day fixed by law, and that he would also in person superintend the ceremonies connected with the execution of the sentence. The council of criminal judges now allowed his holiness to take his own course, and they only inquired of him whether it would be wise to reward Singhya for his heroism, as well as to punish the prisoner for his crime. His holiness indignantly replied that there was no law in Garsch which justified such a course, and that he would merit the wrath of the gods if he even proposed to reward the deliverer of the princess.

The palace was also all astir about the trial and execution of the prisoner. The first thing Satamarti did after the departure of Singhya was to make inquiries as to the kind of punishment inflicted for the crime of attempted regicide. The king went to look up the old records, and meanwhile Satamarti sent for the Royal

medicine-man. Having heard the nature of the punishment, she nearly fainted, and observed that Garsch was now more civilised and would demand a milder sentence of death. The medicine-man agreed, and, although it was his function to kill regicidal criminals, he pointed out that it was impossible for him to undertake the task. In olden times, when such crimes were of more frequent occurrence, the medicine-men of the Royal household were adepts in their profession, and so ran no risk in completing the torture and death of the criminal according to the prescribed ceremony, but now, the art having been lost, the torturer would be taking a very heavy responsibility, for he was personally answerable for any mishaps which might take place during the ceremony of torture. He therefore tendered his resignation, but the king tried to prove that it would be illegal for him to appoint another medicine-man to perform the death torture. His relations with the priesthood and the judiciary were too strained to allow of anything being done by way of compromise, and he was, moreover, deeply impressed with the futility of bringing the prisoner to trial, seeing that there was so much evidence to condemn him, and that he had admitted the act, unless some person could be found who was competent and willing to put him to death.

When these complicated legal problems became known to the citizens of Garsch through their commoners, many favoured the proposal that the decision should be left to Satamarti, since she had now outgrown her girlhood, and acquitted herself with such marvellous courage and judgment during the trying ordeal of jubilee day, while on the other hand there arose a strong party who opposed this course on the ground that she had got into such a muddle about her marriage. She would always act, as this party thought, according to the intuitive simplicity of her nature, and not according to Royal tradition.

Since the jubilee the commoners had often met to discuss affairs of State and gather news, so hungry and thirsty for gossipy material had the citizens of Garsch become. Satamarti's next step was to increase

her weight with them, they being now in session assembled. She appeared before the assembly and declared that she was unwilling to take any serious step without their unanimous consent and that of her subjects. They frankly and sympathetically informed her that the under classes were highly conservative and deeply loved the traditions of their country, that since the jubilee, and even many months before, hers were the only questions discussed, that through so much talking, also through the deep sympathy which her behaviour had evoked, the citizens unconsciously arrived at the conclusion that she was the embodiment of their traditions, and consequently could do no wrong. Time, they informed her, was on her side, but might go against her if her name and virtues, to any appreciable extent, ceased to be noised about.

Upon her return one day from a meeting of the commoners, Satamarti found Singhya in the palace conversing with the king. She was delighted to see him, and told him that she was longing for his calm and independent judgment in matters now agitating her kingdom. She recounted the events relating to the trial and execution of the prisoner for the crime of attempted regicide.

"Who is this prisoner?" asked Singhya in his usually calm tone of voice.

"All we at present know about him," said Satamarti, "is that he is a mountaineer."

"A mountaineer, a seer!" exclaimed Singhya in such a peculiar tone that his curiosity seemed awakened—a most unusual attitude of mind for this sage.

"I know a good deal of what has been said about the crime," said Singhya, "but why do you speak about the infliction of the death penalty before the prisoner has had a fair trial?"

"The evidence against him is so damaging," said the king, "that it is impossible for him to escape punishment, and I have no power to save his life."

"The prisoner is innocent," said Singhya emphatically, "for he has not only saved the princess, but even also the whole Kingdom of Garsch."

"Hush! dear Singhya, hush!" said Satamarti; "you know that it was you, and you alone, who saved the princess."

"No doubt Singhya means that nothing which a mountaineer does can be classed as a crime," said the king, "but the prisoner is a criminal according to the laws of Garsch, and by these he must be tried."

"My meaning is that the prisoner is innocent by the laws of Garsch," said Singhya. "Will you kindly tell me what is the punishment for the crime of attempted regicide?"

At this question Satamarti grew pale, and hastily glided out of the palace. The king himself trembled, and begged to be excused from giving a reply, but Singhya insisting, the king read as follows from a scroll:

"The torture is to continue forty-two days. The condemned is first placed in his coffin, fixed in an upright position, and so constructed that any one side thereof may be removed at a time. These sides are furnished with numerous sharp spikes fitted in such a way that when the inmate moves while being tortured he comes into contact with one or more of these spikes. The skin is torn in strips from different parts of the body, the raw flesh underneath is roasted with red-hot irons, and then the strips of skin are stitched into their original places over the roasted flesh. The hands and feet are pinched tightly with screw-jacks, and plasters of burning hot and poisonous medicines are placed round different parts of the body and limbs. A spike is forced through the tongue outside the teeth in such a way that the tortured cannot draw the tongue into the mouth. The face is stung all over by poisonous snakes. Clamps are tightly screwed around the head, heavy weights dangle from the wrists and shins. The condemned gets nothing to eat or drink during his term of torture. If he expires before or after the forty-second day the medicine-man, who does the torturing, is punished more or less severely according to the extent of his failure, and may even be put to death for gross miscalculation as to the vitality of the condemned, while if the latter survives the ordeal he is set at liberty."

After a pause, Satamarti, who was still outside, was heard to exclaim :

"You are not talking any longer about the punishment, are you, papa dear?"

"Come in, my daughter," exclaimed the king.

Singhya still seemed lost in meditation, but after a long silence he broke out, saying :

"May your gods have mercy on the man who attempts to put a seer to death!"

Another pause.

"The punishment is inadequate," said Singhya, "for a seer has more vitality than six ordinary citizens of Garsch. A man who is indifferent to pain cannot really be punished at all. A substitute must be found, if punishment there must be."

"Our laws make no provision for substitutes," said the king.

"If the condemned survives the ordeal, the torturer is substituted," said Singhya. "Your law proclaims that the supreme aim of punishment is its deterrent effects, and thus the innocent may be punished as well as the guilty."

"In order that the deterrence may be effective, it surely must follow," said the king, "that the public believes the condemned to be guilty, even though he may actually be innocent."

"A general belief that it is the guilty who is always punished might deter the public," said Singhya, "but when a really guilty man escapes, he has all the more encouragement to commit further crimes, because the public, through belief in his innocence, is so much the less on its guard."

"By this mode of reasoning it would not do for a man willingly and openly to suffer death in order to save the life of a friend," said Satamarti.

"A true friend would not suffer any of his friends to die for him," said Singhya. "If it is assumed that one of two friends must die, and that the one cannot, it follows that the other must suffer death. But if a criminal is worthy of a friend who begs to die for him, this act of devotion should shed fresh light on both of their

characters, and many citizens would not favour the death of either of these devoted friends."

Singhya now rose as if he wished to take his departure. His hostess was too polite and too generous to insist upon his staying if he wanted to go, yet she felt constrained to express her wish that he should stay. It was not her words that held him back, however, it was rather the irresistible force of her silence. Yet he feared to stay, the reason he assigned being that there was danger of his suffering from awakened desire, which might blast his prospects of becoming a seer.

"What to do with the prisoner is still taxing my brain," said the king. "To-morrow the trial begins before the court illegally established by the great high priest, and I am at a loss to decide whether to enter my protest or let events take their course. The judges refuse to take any part in the unconstitutional proceedings, and his holiness is obliged not only to try the case himself, but also to inflict the punishment. He has many sympathisers with his holy cause. I fear there will be stirring times. Ah, me! I have resolved, and have even taken a solemn vow, that there should be no decline of the Kingdom of Garsch during my reign. I now tremble lest my vow be broken and my hopes blasted."

"Cheer up, O king!" exclaimed Singhya. "Fear not. Art not thou and the princess one? What has been the history of Garsch since the death of its beloved queen? There have been no events worth recording save the series of brilliant victories won by the world-renowned Satamarti, Princess of Garsch. The power is still in thy hands, O king. Alas! thou art awakening desire in my selfish and ignoble breast."

"Peace! O, papa dear! O, let us have peace!" exclaimed Satamarti.

"I am very sorry," said the king to Singhya. "What desire have I awakened?"

"I pray thee, O great king, put me to death instead of the seer!" exclaimed Singhya with uplifted arms.

"Hush! dear Singhya, hush!" said Satamarti pathetically, as she placed her hand upon his brow.

"Never! never! so long as my body is animated by a breath. You saved my life, and now you are putting me cruelly to death. No, no! Let *me* die to save the seer. I am more easily put to death than you, my brave Singhya. I have less vitality than you. Should we not rather reward the seer for his bravery, my dear Singhya?"

"There must be some other solution," said the king, much affected by the dramatic scene.

"The word is spoken, O king," said Singhya, growing more calm. "Have you not promised me your kingdom, with all your private possessions and the hand of the princess? Now, therefore, I am king, and as monarch of Garsch I command, and this is my first and last proclamation, that I be put to death to save the seer and the princess."

"And I am now queen of Garsch," said Satamarti dramatically "and as your queen I command that you both remain here and take no further steps till my return."

Scarcely had Satamarti uttered these words when she found herself outside of the palace, as hastily as if the fate of her kingdom depended upon her movements. Struck with astonishment at her mysterious departure, the king and Singhya stood like statues awaiting her return.

It had occurred to Satamarti that her commoners were in session, and that they were going to adjourn on the evening of that day. The cause of her great haste was the fear that they might have adjourned before her arrival. She found them winding up their meeting, yet they were delighted to see her, and would be pleased to receive any news she had to impart. She was visibly excited, which portended that she had startling events to relate. She imparted as much as she thought prudent to disclose, and her unusually dramatic manner of address inspired her commoners to carry out her wishes in every detail. They all admitted the difficulties and dangers of the political situation, for the gravity of which there had been no precedent in the Kingdom of Garsch. She came to them, she declared, with her first message. She desired to inform

her dearly beloved and law-abiding subjects in all parts of her kingdom that events had imposed upon her the painful necessity, the grave responsibility, of resolving the palace into a council of judges for the trial and execution of the mountaineer who had perpetrated the terrible crime of attempted regicide. The palace, she argued, was the only unprejudiced judge, and she would see that the prisoner had a calm hearing and a fair trial. After Satamarti had delivered her message, her commoners fled to all quarters of the kingdom, shouting "Long live Princess Satamarti," for never had they had such thrilling events to reveal.

When Satamarti returned to the palace she found the king and Singhya in the same positions as those in which she had left them. They were curious to know what she had been about, but she insisted upon their answering her questions first.

"Don't you know, papa dear," said she, dancing sprightly around the king in her girlish fashion, "that it is one of the Royal prerogatives to keep keys of the prison, and visit prisoners at any time without fear of molestation?"

"You are partly right," replied the king, with an air of curiosity, "but this is rather an ancient custom. Nowadays etiquette requires that we should first obtain the sanction of the great high priest, and enjoy his personal presence as our guide."

"This custom only applies when our subjects are prisoners," said Satamarti, "and the seer is no subject of ours."

"Ah! there's where the dilemma comes in," said the king, smiling.

Satamarti asked her servants to bring some food for the king and Singhya, and then she hastened into the museum to search for the keys. She could not find them for a long while, and then it was getting so near midnight, the time when the seer was expected to be removed from the prison, that she feared her object might fail. When she returned she was fidgety to get away again.

"Come, papa dear, come along, dear Singhya," said she, in her usual style of girlish glee.

Thereupon the new council of judges for the trial and execution of the seer hastened to the prison. This was a bold step at this untimely hour, since the great high priest had stationed a special army of guards at the prison gates for the purpose of preventing violence or the escape of the prisoner. The king here met some of his old warriors, who were so delighted to see him, also the fair princess, that they forgot the instructions issued to them by the great high priest, and so allowed the Royal party to pass through the gate unchecked. Satamarti unlocked the door, and there stood the seer unmoved in his lonely cell. Singhya suddenly seized him by the hand, and attempted to pull him out, but the seer, being much the stronger, remained immovable.

"We are going to investigate the whole truth about your dastardly attempt to take the life of our universally beloved Satamarti," said Singhya to the seer in so boisterous a tone that his voice must have been heard by the whole army of guards. "It is not your terrible lies that we fear, but the damnable plausibility with which they are told."

"Be calm, dear Singhya," said Satamarti in a muffled tone. "We fear nothing. The gentleman is no desperado."

Satamarti then entered the cell, took the seer gently by the hand, and invited him to be her guest at the palace. He walked meekly by her side, but before they had gone many steps the chief guard, mindful of his duty and of his solemn oath to the great high priest, stepped up, and, with courage more apparent than real, politely informed Satamarti that he had strict orders not to allow any person to come near the prisoner save in company with his holiness. She expounded the law to the guards assembled, concluding that the king was within his right to visit the prisoner unaccompanied by the great high priest, because the criminal was a mountaineer, and did not therefore belong to any class in the Kingdom of Garsch. The chief guard accepted this interpretation of the law, but whether he was more convinced by her logic or

fascinated by her charms must be decided by future historians of the Kingdom of Garsch. At all events, Satamarti succeeded in leading the seer to the palace, and the pair was followed by the king and Singhya.

CHAPTER VI

HOW THE COMMONERS EDIT THE NEWS

THE next day all Sindhi was in a state of commotion, and the news spread rapidly throughout all Garsch. The commoners were running on foot or driving in chariots in quest of the latest events, and rushing back again to their constituencies. All sorts of reports were flying about, but the citizens depended upon their representatives for the truth. It was not always possible for commoners to state the facts. They discovered that the business of the politician was to be politic. They did not believe that facts had any essential connection with truth. No class, they thought, should receive more truth than it was able to bear. Their scheme was to set up some ideal to be realised, and then they would regard as truthful all speeches or actions which tended towards its realisation. In the existing state of affairs their aim was to preserve peace, or prevent a violent revolution, for they saw that the palace was bringing about revolutionary changes by peaceful methods. They had to originate reports in order to test the effects upon the multitudes assembled in different quarters, and if these reports created a tendency to foment violence, they would then contradict them. Unfortunately there were many busybodies all over the kingdom, however, who would issue imprudent reports without any hope of reward, and would in this manner interfere with the legitimate function of the commoners.

There was one report that the prisoner had escaped, which had to be contradicted in order to protect the prison guards from violence. Also it was reported that the prisoner had been tried by the great high priest and found guilty, and that his holiness was going to start the torture the next day. Vast crowds were already gathering around the prison in order to see the criminal

and hear his cries of excruciating agony. As there was a strong faction ready to mob the priests for their unconstitutional action in attempting to condemn and execute the prisoner without the sanction of the king or judges, this report had to be contradicted. The philanthropists were very busy trying to prove that the nation had outgrown its former barbarism, and that the prisoner should therefore in some way enjoy instantaneous death. When the report was circulated that the king and Satamarti had removed the prisoner to the palace, where he was going to receive a fair trial, another report followed to the effect that the priests had arrested all the witnesses for the purpose of preventing the king from proceeding with the trial, and as this action was loudly proclaimed to be illegal, there arose a widespread cry of "Down with the priests!"

The great high priest had meantime summoned the chief and subordinate guards to explain their illegal conduct in allowing the king to remove the prisoner to the palace. The chief guard, having stood fearlessly and irreverently before his holiness, provoked him to anger while the former was explaining how Satamarti had expounded the sweet and fascinating reasonableness of the Garschian law, and especially how inconsistent it was for the king to enjoy possession of the keys and yet not be permitted to enter the prisoner's cell. His holiness replied with threats, and said that it was the duty of the guards simply to obey orders and not to listen to expositions about the laws of Garsch. The anger of his holiness having subsided, he reflected upon the dilemma in which he had placed himself, for it was he himself who had appointed as guards all the greatest warriors of the kingdom, friends of the king, and as they were now all united to defend the action of the chief guard, there was no power strong enough to resist them. His holiness remained undaunted, however, and immediately set to work to retrieve his lost ground.

The commoners were now in session, but had not received detailed accounts of what was transpiring at the palace. They had to venture another report, seeing that the people were craving for news. They admitted

in their discussions that certain laws of Garsch had been broken, that an infraction of one law often entailed the breach of another, that the gods had not visited the nation with severe punishments for infringement of the laws, that, when a law must be broken, the prerogative belonged to the king, and that the gods had been merciful because the king had taken into his own hands the responsibility of making certain reforms necessitated by the urgencies of the times. They concluded that this report would not be dangerous, but as no news would meet the urgent demands of the citizens unless it contained some reference to the personal sayings or doings of Satamarti, the commoners believed, on fairly good authority, that it was her intention, should the laws of Garsch prove inadequate, to try the prisoner according to the laws of his own country. This report did not produce a disquieting effect, but it awakened in the citizens such intense curiosity to know all about the mountaineer law regarding attempted regicide that the commoners had to invent some facts, although they admitted their ignorance on points of detail. They faithfully promised full reports later on, however, and meanwhile they suggested that considering the mountaineers to be a very barbarous race, their methods of punishment would be much more savage than those of the Kingdom of Garsch. Yet there was another view, the speakers cautiously added, namely, that many of the most scholarly citizens knew or believed that the mountaineers, or their ancestors, were great sages, and should this turn out to be the case, there would be a possibility, though not a probability, that some method of instantaneous death might be applied. The general response to these reports was, "Long live Princess Satamarti!"

CHAPTER VII

PRINCESS AND PRISONER

"YOU must be starved to death, for our prisoners get nothing to eat but wild raw herbs, and I am afraid that the guards have not been giving you the right quantity

or quality," said Satamarti to the prisoner as she was holding him by the hand leading him to the palace.

The king and Singhya were walking closely behind, eager to catch every word which fell from the seer's lips, and as there seemed to be nobody within hearing range at this late midnight hour, it was considered safe to speak in audible tones.

"As your prisoner I must be content with my treatment," said the seer in a singularly composed tone of voice.

"Tell me frankly whether the food has sustained you," said Satamarti, "for I have been much worried about you, believing that I did not enjoy the prerogative of visiting you or giving orders to the guards."

"The food is nearly the same as that which I always eat," said the seer in confidential accents, "but I will admit that I could have enjoyed a much larger quantity and a much cleaner and fresher quality. Still, I was quite indifferent, for I had much weightier things to think about, and if you had not put the question I should never have thought about my prison diet."

"All I can now do is to ask you to accept my compassion for you," said Satamarti, "and as for the poor guards, they are so ignorant and selfish that they do not know what they do, so they deserve our sympathy. Would I be worrying you by putting just one more little question?"

"No, princess, no indeed," said the seer.

"Do tell me if you have been treated with incivility by the guards, or if there is anything else objectionable in the treatment of prisoners," said Satamarti.

"Incivility is no doubt part of the punishment," said the seer. "It cannot punish those prisoners who themselves are already hardened by an uncivil disposition. It only punishes innocent and tender-hearted prisoners who are shocked by the reflection that rudeness so largely abounds in the hearts of men. As for myself, if their roughness had attracted my attention, I should probably have concluded that it was no punishment to me, because it was a delight to them. One short moment, in a trance of weakness, I

became conscious of inhaling the bad, hot air of the prison, and in the same instant I saw my uncleanly surroundings, but as these features of prison life were no punishment to my fellow-prisoners, the thought passed at once away."

"Have you been listening, papa dear?" said Satamarti, "and you, dear Singhya, I saw you listening. Just think of our barbarous laws," continued she, turning round and taking Singhya by the arm and all the four now walking abreast on the wide passage within the palace walls. "Just think! We punish prisoners before they are proved to be guilty, the most innocent are the most severely punished, and the most guilty receive punishments which cause them no pain."

The party was now nearing the palace. It was after midnight. The chief cook and chamber-maid had been forbidden to go to bed until after the return of Satamarti and her companions. She asked the king and Singhya to go straightway to their beds, as it was necessary for them to get up early in the morning to prepare for the trial of the prisoner. She asked the cook to make a nice warm supper for him, composed of the most dainty dishes ever prepared in the palace, and sent orders to a chamber-maid to get ready the bed reserved for the most Royal of foreign guests. She asked him whether he preferred going into the drawing-room or sitting out in the portico to enjoy the fresh air.

"I am your prisoner, princess," said the seer, "and all I wish to do is to obey your commands."

"For this night I invite you to be my guest," said Satamarti.

"Then as your guest I shall take what you offer me," said the seer. "You have only to command, princess, and I shall obey."

"Well, I command that you do what is most agreeable to yourself," said Satamarti. "I know you need fresh air, and as I myself never get tired of the refreshing breezes, I command that you sit in the portico, and I shall sit by your side till our supper is ready."

The seer having heard Satamarti giving orders to the cook and chamber-maid, said that cooked dainties and soft beds would be severe punishments to him, that he could not enjoy a clean bed after coming out of a polluted prison cell, and that he greatly missed his refreshing sun and rain-baths.

"How disappointing!" said Satamarti. "I had hoped that I could do something to please you, and I fear I have nothing left for you to enjoy save a moon bath. The charm of your mountain enjoyments must be very fascinating, and I have often looked upon such as an ideal life. Indeed, a large portion of my palace grounds has, through my own directions and supervision, been turned into an ideal park, and I had to get it walled off from the vulgar gaze on account of my delight in your kind of baths."

Satamarti hastened to countermand her orders to the cook and chamber-maid, and desired them to have breakfast ready by the dawn of day. Upon her return she continued her conversation with the seer.

"There is a charming little rivulet running through my park," said she. "I have had a large basin excavated therein in such a manner that when the water runs into it for bathing or swimming purposes it can all be drained off again by means of a sluice-work, and then pure, fresh bathing water may be allowed to flow in. After enjoying my swimming bath, often with friends of both sexes, we indulge in foot-races all around the park before costuming ourselves, but of course we cannot allow any vulgar people to be within sight during these enjoyments. The frolicsome sports are, I suppose, what you call sun-baths when enjoyed in the blaze of the sun, and moon-baths when enjoyed in the glistening moon. We also like rain-baths very much, for the showers are so nice and soft and magnetic."

"We do not think of these things as baths or sports," said the seer, "for they form a regular part of our general habits. No labour is expended in excavating basins or making sluice-works, we do not need to think of our grounds as parks, because they are not inclosed

and are equally open to all, and there are no vulgar people in our community, because our only costume is composed of the short hairs which densely cover our bodies and the long hair of our heads which we weave around our loins plaited with strips peeled from the inner bark of certain trees, but we only make use of this plait-work when we come down from the mountains into the plains."

"This is all very interesting," said Satamarti, "but I must hasten to call one of my servants to fetch you some fresh fruits and herbs out of my garden. I am very fond of raw herbs, fruits, and roots myself, all of which grow spontaneously in my own little corner of the Royal demesne. I am very sorry that my wild nuts are not yet ripe. I do love to climb the trees for them when they begin to ripen. Let us enjoy your favourite repast together. If you prefer taking your bath before eating, I shall send the king's most skillful hairdresser with you, who shall lather and wash you all over with the most cleansing jelly obtainable in all Garsch—one which is the most fragrant cosmetic used by myself in my own toilette."

"If you don't mind, princess, I shall take my bath first," said the seer, "but I do not like to see your servants disturbed. I never ask others to do for me what I can do for myself, and as for your lather jelly, princess, we never use anything of the sort in our community, as we have no dirty work, and as we can keep clean by always living in the open, but since the prison fragrance issuing from my body is so pronounced, a little of your lather jelly might be very useful just now."

Pleased that she had at last been able to do something for her guest, Satamarti showed him the portion of her grounds where her wild herbs were growing, where they enjoyed a light repast together, and she also pointed out to him the location of her bathing and swimming basin, and the most charming spots where he would most likely be able to sleep comfortably and soundly, at the same time handing him a box of her cleansing jelly. When she found that she could be of

no further service to him, she bade him good-night and retired to her bed in the palace.

The seer now plunged into the basin, having first removed his prison clothes, and then he lathered himself from tip-toe to hair's end, until he frothed all over. He rubbed and rubbed, and scrubbed and scrubbed, and then he washed away all the lather. He doubted whether the prison odours had vanished, or whether they were drowned in the fragrance of the lather jelly. The idea had even struck him that this jelly might be the beginning of some form of torture which he had to endure on account of his crime of attempted regicide. Having taken some more food, he looked around for a cosy nook where he might retire for rest and sleep. Accidentally he came across a hammock stretched between two boughs of a huge tree, when he remembered that the princess welcomed him to sleep therein, which he tried to do but failed, and then he found a suitable place of rest on the moon-side brow of a hillock. He had only an hour or two for sleep before the commencement of his trial, but never even a seer had slept so soundly.

CHAPTER VIII

THE TRIAL BEGINS

THE same morning at dawn the seer was first at his post, namely, in a light structure of lattice-work situated in the centre of the palace grounds, where, as he had been given to understand, he was going to be tried by the council of palace judges. Singhya was the next to arrive at the court, having come there some time before the appointed hour. The seer recognised by his costume that he was a sage, and suspected him to be one of the judges.

"You took part in the procession at Satamarti's jubilee," suggested Singhya, as he seated himself and left the seer standing by his side.

"I was one of the spectators," said the seer composedly.

"It has always been a puzzle to me to find out why

the processioners continued their march with so much self-possession after Prince Utsikta had bugled and drummed his note of war," said Singhya. "To defy so many Royal personages was to proclaim war against the whole civilised world."

"Distracted between love and war, the prince was not always in the sane possession of all his faculties," said the seer.

"Would there have been bloodshed?" said Singhya.

"To sound the war note on such an occasion was against international codes of honour, it meant a declaration of war against the world," said the seer; "but once having sounded the note, it would have been cowardice to draw back. In either case there would have been much spilling of blood, and there would have been an end to the Kingdom of Garsch."

"By casting the princess into the high, foaming torrent of the Indus, would not the disaster likely have been even greater?" said Singhya.

"I knew Satamarti's record as a swimmer," said the seer, "and I also knew her wonderful presence of mind. Only a few sages have higher records, and she has no peer in point of self-possession. The champion swimmer could have reached the beach only with a gain of an angle of two degrees."

"Do you mean to say," said Singhya, with a look of surprise, "that Satamarti could have saved herself?"

"Certainly," said the seer, "but she would have been a little more tired. I overheard a prison guard say that her life had been saved by a sage. If this report be true, her reputation for prowess would be enormously lessened in the minds of all the world."

"Why did you not save her yourself?" said Singhya in a slightly harsh tone.

"I could not if I would, for I was overpowered and taken in charge," said the seer, "and I would not if I could, for I was not in quest of fame."

Just at this moment Satamarti came dancing up in her wonted gleeful manner, carrying a scroll in her hand. Having told Singhya that she did not expect him to go out before breakfast, she expressed her deep

desire to know how her guest had passed the night. She expressed her delight to find that he had enjoyed his bath and his food, that he had slept so soundly, that he felt so cleanly, and that he had appeared in court without his dirty prison garb, and having his nice long hair neatly plaited around his loins.

Singhya hinted that the scroll which she held in her hand might contain some points of law which might prove useful during the trial of the seer. She replied that she was only doing her regular morning's task, for she had made it her daily practice to read a portion of their beautiful ancient language at the dawn of day, and that she had finished the scroll all but the last sentence when her cook informed her that Singhya had already gone out into the palace grounds. This, she explained, was her reason for coming out, and she informed her cook that she would act as messenger for calling him to breakfast.

"That is a dead language for you and me," said Singhya, "while it is the living and native tongue of the seer, and if you have lost any time, he may make it up by helping you through with your last sentence."

"I should be very sorry to trouble him," said Satamarti smilingly, "for he is still my guest until his trial begins."

"Whether as your prisoner or your guest I shall be delighted to try and help you," said the seer.

"Thank you very much," said Satamarti, as she stepped, holding out the scroll, up to the seer with a smile.

"The only way I can translate the sentence so as to make it have any meaning for you," said the seer, "is as follows: 'If the judge lived the life of the prisoner, his verdict would be modified.'"

"How can it have a different meaning in your language?" said Satamarti.

"Because judge and prisoner are the same person," said the seer, "seeing that when a seer harms anybody, or is accused of doing so, he himself first proposes how he can best rectify the mistake."

"I should never have thought of such a rendering,"

said Satamarti, "and I am sure my professor knows nothing about it. Will you kindly read aloud a few paragraphs for me?"

"I am so sorry I cannot comply with your modest request," said the seer, "for I could not give the proper intonation without being heard all over the town."

Satamarti began to laugh heartily, so noisily, in fact, that she came near being heard all over the town herself. When Singhya got to know what idea was running in her mind, it turned out to be that, should the seer be persuaded to read aloud, the citizens of the town might conclude that his torture had already begun according to law. Satamarti then began to read the scroll aloud herself, having first declared that she could read without bellowing, but the seer did not understand a single word of what she was uttering. She then took Singhya by the arm and led him to breakfast, remarking that the trial must not be longer delayed.

Upon their arrival at the palace the king was curious to know whether they had begun the trial of the prisoner without his aid, and then Satamarti asked Singhya whether he had begun the trial without her knowledge or consent.

"Now, my darling daughter," said the king to the princess, after the council of judges had sat down to breakfast, "thou knowest very well, my sweet child, that the fate of our kingdom depends upon our work this day. Thou knowest full well, my beloved daughter, that my affection for thee has been so deep and enduring that I have let thee have thine own way both in domestic and public concerns. Now, my darling, for my sake I pray thee not to take too active a part in the trial of the prisoner. I am an experienced old warrior; Singhya is ripe in prudence, in philosophy, and in a knowledge of the ways of men, whilst thou, O, my precious daughter, art still only a mere child."

"O, my darling papa," said Satamarti to the king with a look of mingled seriousness and astonishment, "how cans't thou speak thus? Thou knowest, my dearly beloved papa, that the prisoner is still only a mere young man. I know that thou art a very

indulgent papa, and so for thy sake I will do my best to be as silent as thou wilt allow me to be, but O, my cherished papa, I beg that thou wilt let me have charge of the execution of the prisoner, for he is still also only a mere child, and I promise thee, my dear papa, that, should he have as many lives as a score of the citizens of Garsch, the first shock of my torture will produce instantaneous death."

Singhya remained silent and thoughtful. As soon as breakfast was over the council of judges hastened to the court, Satamarti being deeply impressed with the idea that this might be the most interesting and important trial that could be found in all the annals of Garsch. The king was still giving utterance to caution, and closed with these words of warning: "Now, my darling child, thou knowest that thou always beginnest things at the wrong end, that thou hast gotten me into many troubles by thy waywardness, and that if we allow thee to talk immoderately during this solemn trial thou wilt allow the prisoner to judge thee, while thou oughtest to know that it is thy sacred duty to judge him."

Singhya still remained silent. When the council of grave judges entered the court they found the prisoner standing in the centre awaiting his trial and execution. He stood calm, dignified, and unmoved. The judges eyed him a long while, and seemed reluctant to break the silence. Satamarti at length took him by the hand and led him to a seat, herself sitting down by his side, and after a painful pause the king and Singhya took a seat on another bench in front of the prisoner. This delay and loss of valuable time were occasioned by the fact that the solemn ceremonies in which they were engaged had no analogy in all the history of Garsch.

"What's your name?" said the king gruffly, by way of opening the court.

"O, papa dear, don't be rude," said Satamarti, as her adorning red took refuge in her cheek, for the king's manner partly forced her to rise from her bench, and she gazed on the seer in order to find out how he was affected by the harsh words spoken. "Whenever you

begin to be rude, that same moment you cease to be king, and I cease to be Satamarti, Princess of Garsch," continued she, after growing more collected.

"I have no name," said the seer tranquilly. "People have no names in my language."

The king still looked fierce, but the placid countenance of the seer and the fear of offending the princess moved him to silence. After a long pause, each of the judges expecting one of the others to speak, Satamarti said:

"And have your people never had any names?"

"In one of our most ancient tablets," said the seer, "there is an inscription to the effect that a certain sect amongst our ancestors took it into their heads to ornament themselves with names. Before that time our people regarded themselves as one, for they thought alike and acted together, but now they disagreed about the beauty and gentility of their respective names, and they imagined that they were isolated individuals because they had different names. The wrangle turned to violent blows, each seized something, or girded his loins with something by way of protection from the violence of his companions, which accentuated the difference and the isolation, and led to further conflicts. Some wrapped themselves up in the skins of animals as a protection, which estranged them from these creatures, and at last the disorder became so great that our more peaceful ancestors, aided by the animals, had to roll every member of the sect down the mountains. The survivors got the idea into their heads that everything they could grasp was their own, which led to further strife, and finally they settled down at the foot of the mountains or in the plains. We have a tradition that this was the origin of the dwellers of the forests and plains."

The seer related this little tale in such an amusing and charming style that the countenances of his judges were battling between wonder and amusement, and they were all eager for more tales, but when they reflected that the trial was proceeding so slowly, and that the fate of Garsch depended upon that day's work, there was deep anxiety to come more directly to the point at issue. For the sake of truthfulness the seer added,

however, that in his country some had sometimes temporary names depending upon their age or how they were engaged for the moment, so that for the time being his judges might call him Mr. Prisoner.

"What's your address, Mr. Prisoner?" said the king abruptly, but not in such a tone of menace or superiority as formerly.

"I have no address," said the seer.

"Have you any testimony as to your character or breeding, Mr. Prisoner?" said the king.

"All the people of my country have the same character and are descended from the same ancestors," said the seer.

"What's your age, Mr. Prisoner?" said the king.

The seer was silent, and looked as if he were making some mental calculation.

"Make haste," said the king, "the trial must proceed more quickly."

"If you disturb me, I cannot change my age into your style of reckoning," said the seer, "and you cannot understand our system. All I can say on the spur of the moment is that, when a name is given, the age may also be indicated, for our occupations are dependent upon the ages of our people."

"And what is the criminal age, Mr. Prisoner?" asked the king.

"We have no criminals," said the seer.

"Do you mean to say, Mr. Prisoner," said Satamarti, "that there is a change of name every time there is a change of age?"

"I now find," said the seer, after further calculation, "that it is impossible for me to convey to you any idea of my age."

"Are you old or young, Mr. Prisoner?" said the king.

"I am neither," said the seer.

"People of good breeding can always prove that they were born, can they not, Mr. Prisoner?" said Satamarti.

"Did a long time elapse between your birth and the date of your crime, Mr. Prisoner?" said the king.

"We don't measure by time, but by progress," said the seer, "and progress has never had a beginning."

"What's your occupation?" said the king.

"I have no occupation," said the seer. "I may also say that everything is my occupation."

"You are charged with the crime of flinging Satamarti, Princess of Garsch, over the bridge railing into Father Indus, which is attempted regicide," said the king. "Guilty or not guilty?"

"According to your language, I am guilty," said the seer. "According to my language, I am not guilty."

"You are here for trial according to the language and laws of Garsch," said the king. "Then you plead guilty. And you, Singhya, and you, Satamarti, I call you both to witness that the prisoner has committed and admitted his crime."

"I witnessed the act," said Singhya. "The prisoner is guilty."

"Have you any witnesses for your defence?" said the king. "Do you wish us to summon more witnesses to add further proof to your guilt?"

"I accept the penalty," said the seer. "Torture me till I am dead."

"If nobody speaks," said the king, "I shall pronounce judgment against the prisoner according to the evidence."

"I move an adjournment of the trial," said Satamarti. "My ground for doing so is that, according to the laws of Garsch, the name, residence, character, age, and occupation of every criminal must be recorded. The prisoner has no name, no abode, no character, no age, no occupation. He cannot therefore be tried according to the laws of Garsch. If he cannot now be tried according to the laws and language of his own country, he is a free man."

"What is the law for attempted regicide in your country, Mr. Prisoner?" inquired the king.

"In Mr. Prisoner's country there are no kings," said Satamarti. "If a crime can be conceived, criminal and judge are one, and no judge could consider himself competent to try a criminal unless he leads the life of the criminal."

"What, then, do you propose to do?" said the king. "What amends do you propose to make?"

"I shall undertake to resurrect the Kingdom of Garsch," said the seer. "If I have destroyed Garsch, I shall build it up again."

There was now a long and profound silence. The judges desired to continue the trial, but there seemed to be no more questions to be asked in the Garschian language or according to the Garschian laws. At length Singhya broke out, saying:

"You must have been in a fit of religious fanaticism when you committed such a senseless and daring crime, Mr. Prisoner?"

"What do you mean by religion?" said the seer. "Is it the priestly or the anti-priestly religion of Garsch? There is no religion in my language. It is not needed."

"Although religion cannot be defined in words," said Singhya, "yet everybody must feel in his conscience *that* it is, and *what* it is."

"Your people's consciences differ as widely as their ideas," said the seer. "Each class carries its own idea, and each idea carries its own conscience. One mind, one conscience. One conscience, one mind."

"Do you set up mind or conscience as the highest Reality?" said Singhya.

"In our language they are one," said the seer. "We all think alike, feel alike, and act together."

"I can now trace the source of your terrible crime," said Singhya. "You cannot fear death. It does not exist for you, because the one is merged in the All, and the All can never die. Is the Supreme All conscious of itself?"

"In your language consciousness of desires is meant," said the seer. "We have no desires, and therefore we cannot be conscious of them. As the Supreme All is replete, it can leave nothing to be desired."

"Is the Supreme thus resolved into nothing or into everything?" said Singhya.

"In your language it is nothing," said the seer, "in ours it is everything."

"I think I now understand you," said Singhya. "Desire is nothing: what remains after the removal of desire is everything. Is there only one god, or are there many gods?"

"Many desires, many gods," said the seer. "No desires, no gods. One desire, one god."

"I think I can explain it all in a few words," said Satamarti, who was listening very attentively. "Mr. Seer—"

"You mean Mr. Prisoner," said the king abruptly.

"Pray, papa dear, do let us have a little variety," and then she continued:

"Our gods are symbols of the elements, and so the more we grow out of touch with our climatic surroundings, the more we dread our gods. In Seerland the inhabitants never feel cold or warm, wet or dry, and therefore they can have no climate and no gods. With them the elements are always propitious towards them, their animals and their herbs. With us the human body is that which suffers pain and disease. The seers never suffer, and so they have no conscious body. Death is something caused by pain and disease, so also for them there can be no death. What we know about disease we call knowledge. For them it is ignorance."

"There must somewhere be a line between that which has properties cognisable by our senses and that which has no sensible qualities," said Singhya. "Progress in knowledge must consist in making sensible that which has previously been insensible. Otherwise must not the insensible always remain unknown or unknowable? I can see effects, such as the growth of herbs, which cannot be explained by any known cause, and therefore I conclude that there must be some vital and unknown principle behind sensible objects. Can this be developed into the Supreme All."

"You only assume the existence of cause and effect," said the seer. "The Supreme can have no limitations, so that sensible objects are reasoned away. If objects of sense are the Supreme, then you reason away that vital principle which you claim to be behind these objects. There can be no progress of knowledge after you reason away the objects of knowledge."

"I think I now understand it all," said Satamarti, turning her head to the seer. "You are the climate of

Seerland because you are insensible to its heat or cold. That's that. You are not our climate because you see us shivering with cold in our warm costumes and warm houses, and feel disagreeable sensations in the stuffy atmosphere of our dirty prisons. The court is now adjourned. Come along, papa, come along, Singhya," continued she in gleeful tones, taking the king and Singhya by the arm and leading them to dinner. "I am sorry I cannot invite you, Mr. Seer, as you do not relish our food. Go along and pick your berries and herbs. I shall be with you presently."

"You say that Mr. Prisoner has no body," said the king, putting stress on the word *Prisoner*. "I wager he can eat more than any of us."

"O, papa, please don't be so stupid," said Satamarti. "You haven't been listening to our discussion. Of course he eats, but what is meant is that he never feels hungry—except when locked up in our dirty prison. The reason why he is never hungry is that his food, like his climate, always agrees with him, and there is always a plentiful supply. Good-bye for the moment, Mr. Seer. I am thankful to you for helping me to understand myself."

CHAPTER IX

THE PRISONER EXPLAINS THE SEERLAND PHILOSOPHY

DINNER and the usual time for repose being over, the day of the trial was passing on towards its close. No longer could the palace enjoy any repose in the afternoon of that memorable day. All Garsch was at the gates, or was surrounding the walls. Some had even crawled over the heads of others and had succeeded in scanning the park and garden ramparts. In their interpretation of the laws of Garsch many lawyers held that the torture of a prisoner found guilty of attempted regicide could start on the day of the trial, if the evidence against him was clear and conclusive, and at the hour immediately after the great high priest had finished his dinner. Hence the presence

of all Garsch with the view of hearing the agonising shrieks of the prisoner. The immensity of the multitude was also to a large extent accounted for by the fact that his holiness had organised a band of adventurers, amongst whom were found many of the priests in lay costumes, with the object of capturing the prisoner and getting him tried before the special court which had been brought into existence by the priesthood. His holiness did not himself venture to lead his band. "Hush! hush! the torture is beginning," some voice would be heard exclaiming upon the hearing of any unusual sound. Priests, commoners, and others made many attempts to address the multitude, urging them not to foment an insurrection, but the speeches were drowned by voices shouting "Hush! you are keeping us from hearing the wails of the tortured." It was evident that a riot was about to break out. The palace judges did not know what to do or say. The priests were now hoping that the prisoner would be captured. Citizens were jumping over the ramparts by scores. Satamarti took in the situation at a glance. She rushed out of the palace carrying a ladder, ran to the nearest point of the rampart, and instantly scaled the top. The summit was dangerous by reason of its narrowness and irregularity, yet she ran hastily along, exclaiming in deep, pathetic tones: "I pray you, my loyal and faithful subjects, be silent and motionless till I come back to you. You shall hear all." The loyal subjects now fancied that they were enjoying another jubilee, and shouted "Long live Princess Satamarti!" On her return along the top of the rampart, walking slowly, she explained that the trial had to be postponed owing to certain flaws in the laws of Garsch, that death by long and slow torture would be illegal and unconstitutional, that it was probable that the prisoner would have to suffer instantaneous death, that her commoners would go out amongst them and carry all the news from day to day, that as loyal and law-abiding subjects it was their duty to go away peacefully to their homes, that her kingdom was not threatened, and that she was on the most friendly terms both with gods and men. The

crowd dispersed very gradually, amidst shouts of "Long live Princess Satamarti!" She led quietly out through the gate all those who had effected an entrance over the ramparts into the palace grounds.

For some time past the palace had also been besieged by messengers from all the world carrying news to and fro in relation to the engagement and marriage of Princess Satamarti. The great high priest, failing to find a consort who would be popular amongst a majority of the citizens of Garsch, had to change his policy. She was really indeed growing so popular that no prince in all the world was considered worthy to be a match for her. His holiness saw the futility of trying to arrange a marriage under such circumstances. He dispatched messengers to the palace and to all the nations with the proclamation of his intention to select three princes, amongst whom Satamarti might take her choice, and wherein he also announced his promise that she might have liberty to consult him with regard to the fixation of a date for the celebration of the nuptials. To give courteous attention to all these messages, and at the same time to conduct the trial of the prisoner, together with her domestic and political duties, was a great strain upon her; she was overworked, and yet she did not lose any of her hilarity or self-possession. Just after having sent away the crowds from the ramparts, she entered the palace, where she found the king and Singhya in a fussy state of mind, not knowing what to say or do.

"O, this eternal marriage question!" exclaimed Satamarti, having just politely dismissed a batch of messengers. "It seems to me that I was born either to solve this problem or perish in the attempt. The more I study the subject, the more remains to be studied. I shall not sleep another wink, I declare, until I make up my mind to do something—perhaps something desperate. Where can I find any new ideas? Silence! Now I know. I shall first find out something about the marriage laws in Seerland. Come along, papa dear, come along, Singhya," continued she gleefully, taking them by the arm, and leading them into the court

The seer was already present, awaiting the opening of the second session of his trial. The king was the first to enter the court, and bravely did he step up to the prisoner.

"Hallo, Mr. Prisoner!" exclaimed the king, by way of opening the second sitting of the court.

"O, papa dear, how can you be so rude?" said Satamarti, shocked at the excessive arrogance of the king.

"I fancy I am very civil considering the enormity of the crime perpetrated by Mr. Prisoner," said the king in a milder tone of voice.

"He is Mr. Prisoner no longer," said Satamarti, rather indignant. "During this session of the court I am going to be the presiding judge, and his name shall be Mr. Guest.

"If I am not troubling you too much, Mr. Guest," continued Satamarti, after resuming her smiling mood, "I should like to know something about the marriage laws of Seerland."

"I should be delighted to tell you anything I know," said the seer, "but I cannot yet see what marriage laws have to do with the crime for which I am indicted."

"There is a very close alliance between marriage and crime," said Satamarti.

"What is marriage?" said the seer.

Satamarti was thunderstruck at the simplicity of the question, believing that every adult must either know or feel what marriage was; yet after a moment's reflection it occurred to her that the subject needed to be analysed, and so she begged of the seer to help her through with her difficulties.

"The best way to get at the root of the subject is first to think away all that you consider to be the non-essentials," said the seer, "and then you are able to examine the essential principle or principles, if anything remains."

"Can you explain the marriage laws of Seerland in this way?" inquired Satamarti.

"Exactly," said the seer, "for with us there is no system of government, and so you must think away the

idea of State marriages, if that is a non-essential principle."

"I can easily think that away," said Satamarti, "for our marriage ceremonies are conducted by priests only, although under State regulations, and yet I can conceive a system of self-government, each citizen governing himself, or the political power being evenly distributed amongst all the citizens. Is that your system of government, Mr. Guest?"

"Well, it may seem so in your vernacular," said the seer, "but with us the idea of government is completely abandoned. Can you think of marriage ceremonies in which the priests take no part?"

"I don't think we could fancy a non-priestly marriage," said Satamarti, "for we are taught by the priests that marriage is a divine institution. It would not therefore do to have the ceremonies performed even by the king or other member of the Royal family. Our marriage ordinances cannot be altered, for our gods are unchangeable."

"Your permanent and essential principle is therefore the divine sanction," said the seer. "Could you be brought to believe that your gods might reveal themselves direct to every human soul without the intercession of the priests?"

"Our priests could not understand divine government in that light," said Satamarti, "and they are the teachers of the people."

"Our spiritual like our political power is evenly distributed amongst our people," said the seer, "and you can now therefore clearly understand our marriage laws."

"The logic seems to be that your women are all harlots," said Satamarti nervously.

"Well, in a sense that may be so, providing you conceive harlotry to be the opposite of marriage. Yet where every woman is a harlot no woman is such."

"I clearly see that all knowledge is relative," said Satamarti. "If you think away the relativity, nothing remains, and yet I cannot conceive absolute nothingness. If harlotry be removed, marriage cannot remain.

That's logic. If you do away with ignorance, you can acquire no knowledge. If we roll our devils down the mountains, our gods must follow them. Is slavery removed, there can then remain no liberty. Remove poverty, then riches cannot stay with us. This is all as clear as noon. You have drawn blood with your sharp logic, Mr. Guest, but it hasn't gushed out beyond my cheeks. I came near forgetting to say that there is another essential in our marriage laws," continued she, after a pause, "for every husband is compelled by law to provide his wife with food, clothing, and shelter."

"Such a law in Seerland would have the same effect as a law in Garsch which compelled every husband to supply his wife with air," said the seer.

All the three members of the council of judges now remained silent for some time. Satamarti was in a meditative mood. She felt that there were more questions to be put to the seer, but she could not easily make up her mind as to their number and nature. At last she ventured to say:

"If I do away with hate, you will let love remain, will you not, Mr. Guest?"

"I don't see how you can understand this question till you climb the mountains and see how we live," said the seer. "In your vernacular love is an attribute or a condition of the individual. It could not be narrower than that. In our tongue we can only conceive love in the absolute sense. Where love is inspired by qualities, and qualities are attributes limited to individuals, there can only be love in the narrow sense, which is quite different from a state of society in which the qualities are common to all, are equally noble, and are attained through equality of opportunities and aspirations. In your vernacular love is unnatural, abnormal, and true love is smothered by your desires."

"I see you are getting tired, papa dear," said Satamarti to the king, "so you should go back to the palace and take a rest, if it is possible for anybody to rest during these disquieting times. You will find at the palace a host of messengers from all quarters of the world. Do not let them worry you too much. I am

going to take Singhya and Mr. Guest through the gardens for a walk."

"If I leave you," said the king, "you must promise not to continue the trial of Mr. Prisoner during the absence of the most important and most impartial of the judges."

"Your desire shall be respected, papa dear," said Satamarti to the king.

"I am now going to fulfil my promise," said she to the seer, after the king had taken his departure. "You are now my guest. I cannot treat you like other guests, for I can offer you nothing which you desire."

"Can you not come with me and help me to eat your berries and herbs?" said the seer.

"Then you are inviting me to be *your* guest," said Satamarti. "I should be delighted if you entertained a desire for our companionship."

"I cannot invite you to eat your own berries," said the seer.

"They cannot be my berries," said Satamarti, "for they grow wild, and have therefore no value."

"It must be admitted," said Singhya, "that things placed before one's guests must always have value. I am very fond of the berries myself, not because they have no value, but because they contain and impart to me more vital force than the same varieties when they are cultivated for a long period and consequently devitalised."

"With us the value of a diet consists in eating it with one's friends," said the seer.

"We are agreed that we are all fond of wild berries and herbs," said Satamarti, "and I am sure that I need much more vital force to enable me to cope with my heavy responsibilities."

"There is another solution," said Singhya. "If you lessen your responsibilities, you might obtain quite enough vital force from cultivated herbs."

"Are you conscious of what you are doing?" said the seer.

"I see the point," Singhya remarked. "By giving the seer so many names you are trying him according to

the laws of his own country, and now you have become a guest according to the same laws. Customs introduced in this way develop and become laws of Garsch, although the Garschian laws are proclaimed throughout all the world to be sacred, unchangeable, and inviolable."

"A plague on our laws!" exclaimed Satamarti. "I am always introducing the customs of my Royal guests from all quarters of the civilised world. It is bad manners to ask my guests to follow my customs, and if my subjects take delight in learning and adopting these changes, I am the last to complain."

In walking through the palace gardens and grounds Satamarti was surprised to find that the seer could name all the herbs, flowers, shrubs, roots, and trees, and could describe their medicinal, dietetic, and other properties. What surprised her most was that what he partook of as edible herbs her gardeners classed as useless save for ornament. Singhya agreed with the seer that the eye ought to be trained to regard the most useful herbs as the most beautiful, that the sense of smell should be trained to feel that the most edible herbs are the most odoriferous, and that there should be no distinction between edible and medicinal herbs—that food should be medicine, and medicine food. Having partaken of a light repast by the artless example of the seer, the party found their way to a basin which flowed into a large pond near by. After sitting and conversing a while on the edge of the water, Satamarti said in emphatic tones, as if she specially desired the fixed attention of her companions:

"I may not be able to comprehend your philosophy of the Supreme All, but I do understand that this pond is my emblem of supreme purity. I bathe in it only with guests, who, as I have been taught, must be of pure Royal blood, and many have been the swimming sports which I have enjoyed with Royal personages from all quarters of the civilised world. The highest honour which I can bestow upon a guest is to invite him or her to enjoy a swim with me in this pond.

It is now getting late, too late to invite a Royal personage even to take a dip with me in this pond according to our custom, but as you are master of the swimming records, Singhya, I should be delighted to see you take the lead and show us some of your aquatic tricks."

Singhya plunged into the water, no time having been lost in taking off his sage toga, and instructed and amused his audience with his daring feats. He then said he would like to show how he saved people from drowning. Satamarti entered the water and played the drowning subject, but she soon found that she could not by any tricks drown herself. After a short rest, the seer was invited to exhibit some of his feats, which he did, and having sprung into the water, he at once began to splash about with terrific violence. When asked why he engaged in such vigorous exercise, he replied that man was not a water animal—he was an air animal—and that while he was in the water he should therefore splash violently about in order to enable the skin to breathe vigorously in a cooler and denser element than the air. Having performed certain swimming tricks, which his eager audience regarded as quite original, he hinted that he preferred doing useful and practical work, such as saving six people all at once from drowning. Satamarti asked him to save the lives of two helpless bathers first, and accordingly she and Singhya plunged into the water. The seer stood on the edge of the water, asked his subjects to swim into the deepest part of the pond about thirty yards apart, and then they were simply to act just as if they were dead. While they were getting into position the seer ran back about one hundred and twenty yards, ran then swiftly to the water's edge, sprang a distance of nearly forty-eight feet into the pond, and landed a few feet from the spot where Satamarti was drowning. He dived down underneath her, she lying across his back. When the surface of the water was reached he released her, turned himself upon his back, grasped her under the chin with one hand, swam quickly to the spot where Singhya was sinking, left Satamarti floating a few moments until he

in the same way brought him to the surface, then holding up each of his subjects by the chin, he swam on his back to the edge of the water, and flung them on the sand with such force that not an inch of their skin was touching water. He then leaped out of the water himself, stood between his subjects, grasped each by an ankle, raised them up at arm's length in such a manner that their heads were down near the ground; in this attitude he ran about with them a good while as if he were looking for a suitable place to deposit his cargo, and finally he dropped them, faces downward, upon the pinnacle of a hillock.

"Really that beats all records many times over," said Satamarti, as she sprung quickly to her feet and smiled as if nothing could disturb her self-possession. "Never have I learnt half so much in ten times as much time. I shall never rest till I am able to perform all these feats."

Both Satamarti and Singhya were curious to learn the secret of the seer's great strength, nimbleness, and tact. He explained that the first essentials were a serene and self-possessed mind, a strong and deep feeling of responsibility, and a readiness to grasp the nature of the situation with its ever-varying details. The learner should also practice swimming in a great variety of positions, chiefly adopting attitudes in which the dangers can be seen from many sides, and the nether limbs should be strong and active, such a condition as is attained by mountain climbing, so that the hands may be left free to do their work without aiding in the swimming movements.

Now mildness of temper, gentleness of voice, and physical strength and activity, combined with harmonious proportions of body and a texture nicely and finely knit, summed up Satamarti's ideal of a perfect man. Never before had she seen such a model. In presence of such a man she would always feel protected, the faintest trace of suspicion or artfulness would never awaken in her mind, and in him she would place the most unwavering confidence.

"It is now growing dark," said Satamarti, "and it is

not supposed to be becoming for people of high rank to be out at this hour. I am expecting an unusual number of callers this evening, but what I have been learning here is so absorbingly interesting compared with the light gossip at the palace that it pains me to think of leaving this spot. I always like to make the best of every opportunity for learning something useful and true. I am really beginning to hate the palace. There is so much strain and worry, all to no purpose. I can learn nothing there save deceit and cunning. I know I shall not sleep a wink this whole night through, for this everlasting marriage problem must be solved before long, and now that I have new light on the subject I shall pass a restless night, buried in meditation. I have yet to learn the practical application of the marriage laws of Seerland in my special case. Dear me! how often have I slept out all night here in my little hammock in order to escape the tyranny of the palace."

Having hardly completed these words, Satamarti sprightly climbed up a tree near by and sprang into her hammock, which was stretched across between two huge boughs, where the beautifully green leaves were quivering all around her. Singhya sat on a bench at the foot of the tree, and the seer stretched himself on the grass below.

"My life has been a hard struggle between liberty and duty and passionate striving after truth," continued Satamarti sorrowfully, then pausing in the hope of receiving some cheering reply.

From her reclining position Singhya and the seer drew the conclusion that she desired silence in order that she might obtain repose. Silence did reign a while. Then the seer whispered to Singhya, who was quite close to him, saying:

"What is truth?"

Singhya was silent. Satamarti, who had overheard the question, said in a loud and pleading voice:

"Do reply yourself, my kind seer."

"In your vernacular truth is that which comes from words," said the seer. "Truth itself is only a word. A word comes by means of words, and there is no first

word. Each can understand as much truth as he can find in his list of words."

"Do not words spring from ideas?" said Singhya, much surprised.

"Your ideas are words," replied the seer. "Your words are ideas."

"Do you wish us to infer," said Singhya, with increased surprise, "that in the seer tongue truth is not a word?"

"We need no truth in our tongue," said the seer, "for all our actions are perfectly organised, perfectly harmonious, and perfectly progressive."

"Is not the name of the tree under which we are reposing as much of a word in your tongue as in the vernacular?" said Singhya.

"The distinction is very great," said the seer. "In our tongue the name suggests nothing which is out of harmony with the growth of the tree or with the actions of our own lives."

"If I were viewing an incident, and if I described the fact to you in such a manner that my words produced the same effect upon your mind as the incident did upon my mind, would I not then be relating the truth?" said Singhya.

"In the vernacular, yes," said the seer, "but in our tongue the viewer and the incident are not the complete Universe, nor are they isolated from each other."

"Can we not assume the truth of a simple proposition for the sakes of argument and unanimity of thought?" said Singhya.

"If you allow yourselves to be ruled by the results of the argument, your lives will not be harmonious," replied the seer.

"If I remember rightly, this discussion began through a remark made by Satamarti to the effect that her passionate love for truth had been the source of many of her hard struggles," said Singhya. "She has also had her struggles with liberty and duty. Will you now analyse these words for her? It seems to me that the Universe can neither be free nor fated, so that the ideas of liberty and necessity must be sought in the realms of relative knowledge."

"Satamarti is struggling for liberty to choose her own husband," said the seer, "while it is clearly her political and religious duty to marry the prince chosen for her by the great high priest. Liberty is therefore opposed to duty."

"If I now make a confession, and so remove the discussion from the abstract, I am sure the course I ought to pursue will then need less thinking out," said Satamarti, apologising for her interruption. "My girlish passion was for Prince Isra'ali, whom I thought it my duty to love on account of his purity of blood, and then I was also charmed by his philosophy and his refinement. I now feel it my duty to love Singhya, because he saved my life."

"The process of analysis now consists in discriminating between the different qualities which awaken love," said the seer. "You should also keep in mind that kind of love which is voluntary, and not impeded by any sense of duty, liberty, or responsibility. If your love for Prince Isra'ali was inspired by his purity of blood, it would be your duty to marry another prince if a higher purity could be traced. If his philosophy inspired you most, it would be your duty to marry another philosopher should he succeed in winning you over to his philosophy. According to this law of love and marriage, you could not change your ideas more rapidly or more slowly than those of your consort. Otherwise it might be your duty not to love him, or not to love at all. This is not the law of love. It is the law of harlotry. This is not the law of liberty. It is the law of slavery. If you see qualities which you cannot appreciate, then you cannot love. One man may save you from drowning, another may save your life by mending your fractured bones, and yet none of these may possess any of the qualities which inspire your love. Their capacity for saving your life may be mere accidents of their occupation or their opportunity. Their deed may have caused them little effort, and may have been inspired by those very qualities which you cannot appreciate or admire. The man who saves you from drowning may be the last to save you from the violence of the mob, and if your life has been saved

more than once by different men, your love cannot be constant. In all cases your freedom in the choice of those qualities which you ardently admire from time to time is restricted. All these ideas are the debasement of love, and a bar to constancy."

"The Supreme must be devoid of sensible qualities," said Singhya. "If you argue away the qualities of men, why should qualities remain in other sensible objects? According to your way of thinking, qualities are words whose meanings must not interfere with a harmonious life. For you climate has no sensible qualities, because you do not experience heat or cold, and you can only learn the effects through us when you come down into the plains. I like to dwell on this point, because our actions depend more upon it than upon any qualities which we may attach to other things.

Many other subjects were discussed without disturbance, Satamarti forgetting all about her palace duties, and now suddenly, as if she awoke from a dream, she recognised by the position of the moon that it was midnight. She made up her mind to go to the palace. Singhya was anxious to continue the discussions, and the seer remained indifferent. Satamarti was puzzled to know what to do with her guests, and would like to find out their wishes. Singhya saw her dilemma, and offered to lead the seer away from the palace grounds. If she objected to this solution, the inference would be that she wanted to retain the seer as her prisoner. She had not the heart to convey that impression, and yet if she consented to their departure she feared that they might not return. She ardently desired to see them again to help her through her private and political difficulties. The midnight hour, she felt, was the safest for them to take their departure. She feared the assemblage of vast crowds in the early morning, which might develop into a riot through the instigation of the great high priest, who was still determined to capture the prisoner and have him tried and executed under the special court constituted by his holiness. If the seer could once escape from the palace grounds he would not be recognised by any bystanders or bypassers, for all the mountaineers looked

so much alike, but if accompanied by Singhya, who was well known, there would be greater cause for suspicion. Then there were the guards at the gates and round the ramparts, who might well spread perilous gossip.

Her perplexity did not last long. She asked her guests to follow her to the gate, taking good care not to be seen by the gatekeeper. They were to walk a short distance behind her, and to ambush behind a cluster of shrubs before the gate was reached.

"Will you kindly go to the Royal medicine-man and ask him not to leave town within twenty-four hours, as he is desired by Princess Satamarti to await a message as to an interview with her about putting the prisoner to an instantaneous death or handing him over to the great high priest to be tried and executed."

"These be troublesome times, O great princess," said the gate guard, "and I tremble lest your sublime highness be not able to hold the gate till my return."

"Fear not, my brave guard," said Satamarti. "Go thy way."

"It shall be as your highness commands," said the guard as he hastened away with the Royal message.

Satamarti now beckoned to her guests to draw near. This was a terrible moment for her. She wanted them soon to come back again. She did not doubt that Singhya would come back. Having opened the gate, and seeing that nobody was about, she fell down at the seer's feet and exclaimed in pathetic and imploring tones:

"I am the poorest and humblest creature in all Garsch, battling and praying for my dearly beloved subjects. I beg and pray that you will not forsake me in the hour of my deep distress."

"Where there is the poorest and humblest soul crying for help, there am I," said the seer, hastening away after Singhya.

CHAPTER X

SATAMARTI BECOMES QUEEN

ON the following day all Garsch was astir with gossip. The king was curious to know what had become of

Singhya and the prisoner. All the satisfaction he could get was that they were secure, and that the latter was awaiting the third session of his trial. Having made inquiries amongst the guards, the king could not find that anything unusual had transpired during the night. Satamarti informed him that the palace was deluged with more important business than the trial of the prisoner, and that the third session had been adjourned for several weeks.

Satamarti went to the commoners with a new message. She met the great high priest there, who declared before the assembly that her action with regard to the trial and execution of the prisoner was unconstitutional. The commoners replied that it was not their function to discuss the constitutional character of political and ecclesiastical questions, but to carry news to their patrons, and that if his holiness had anything sensational to impart they would be pleased to noise it all over Garsch. He then tried to give his own colour to the news which they should impart, but when he saw that they claimed freedom to do their own colouring, he left the assembly in a huff.

Satamarti now proceeded to state that the prisoner had not only been found guilty, but had also confessed his guilt; that the council of palace judges had found it impossible, without acting unconstitutionally, to torture the criminal according to the laws of Garsch; that Singhya, her deliverer, had offered to suffer death in his stead in accordance with an ancient custom of Garsch; that the reason for his offer was that he himself aspired to become a seer, and had largely attained his object; that by virtue of the superior wisdom he had thus acquired, he had come to the conclusion that the prisoner, a seer, had not only saved the Royal family but also the whole Kingdom of Garsch from utter perdition; that he pleaded for the high honour of dying for a man who had saved Princess Satamarti and her kingdom from the attacks of that low and cruel tyrant, Prince Utsikta; that according to the laws of Seerland the prisoner may suffer instantaneous death; that she was herself an ardent admirer of the language and

wisdom of these seers; that she was so deeply moved by the bravery and wisdom of Singhya that she had made up her mind to suffer torture and death in his stead; that the great high priest himself was obliged to sanction this conclusion of hers, for when a sovereign of Garsch had broken a law and had offered himself up as a sacrifice for his crime, the gods were then never moved to anger, and that she desired the calm opinion of all her loyal and law-abiding subjects before the council of palace judges pronounced final judgment.

The calm, solemn, and dignified manner in which Satamarti delivered her message, coupled with her charming, majestic, and magnetic presence, filled her commoners with the most ardent enthusiasm and sympathy, and they hastened—never before had they had such a strong desire to hasten—away to all quarters of Garsch, firm in the conviction that they had never had such thrilling and startling tales to relate.

The commoners broke the sad news to the people by first dwelling on the seer character, saying that these wise and daring philosophers should not be savagely treated, and then they recited in their most rhetorical and dramatic style the wise sayings uttered by seers, all of which literature was well known and highly appreciated by all the citizens of Garsch. The people were so much flattered by the desire of Satamarti for their opinions, and so deeply touched by her self-sacrificing spirit, that they burst out into floods of tears, and the commoners had to wait a long while before they could gather unanimous views of the citizens and convey them to their princess.

It was at length found that unanimity was attained on the following points:

1. Our noble princess shall not die.
2. Brave Singhya shall not die.
3. In all other affairs Satamarti shall be absolute monarch over all the citizens of Garsch.

Princess Satamarti was not ambitious. This decision of her subjects overwhelmed her with surprise, and she was now busying herself about the meaning of the new revolution.

The king was pleased with the new turn of events, and he and Satamarti both knew very well that there would be no change at the palace, for he had increasingly been looking upon her as queen and as the moving spirit in his home and foreign policies. With her own hands she engrossed on a scroll, in her inimitable style, her deep sense of thankfulness for the high honour they had conferred upon her, and she entreated them to give her ample time to develop her new scheme of government. This scroll was read aloud by her commoners in all quarters of Garsch amidst the wildest enthusiasm. She began to study constitutional questions with great ardour. She was feeling at ease, now no longer being so much harassed by messengers about marriage affairs, and she settled down to write out the seer's ideas about statecraft, which she desired to complete before they escaped her memory. She adopted the plan of first writing down his leading principles in her own words, and then drawing the inevitable conclusions therefrom. Her elevation to the supreme sovereignty would have the effect, she believed, of shelving the marriage question for some time to come, for now being queen, no prince dared offer her his hand in marriage. Her darling hope was not realised, however, for within six weeks from the day on which she was proclaimed queen by her subjects, not less than five kings had been assassinated, and the same number of princes became kings, all of whom were now eligible candidates for her fair hand. The sorrow caused by these sad events was a heavy weight upon her spirits, but she had succeeded in writing out the seer's principles of statecraft before much of the distressing news reached her ears. The following is copied from her scroll:

"What is liberty? It stands opposed to slavery. Take away slavery and the idea of liberty is gone. It is also the opposite of authority, since the exercise of authority implies slavery. In Seerland there is no liberty, no slavery. Our gods give us liberty to break their laws, they give our authorities liberty to catch us for our crimes, our judges have liberty to

judge us, our medicine-men to punish us, and the king enjoys liberty to pardon us. Also our gods give us liberty to obey their laws. Our system of government thus seems to be one of universal liberty, and yet we all feel that we are slaves. Something is always standing in the way of our darling ambition—the attainment of our desires. Liberty is also related to ability, for we can do many things if we know how, and we can obtain proportionate rewards and honours. So long as our king has the wit to convince his subjects that the ability to govern merits the highest reward, his pre-eminence is assured. If our priests are able to convince us that the highest ability consists in finding out the will of the gods, this then becomes the governing principle, and the higher the reward, the greater is the power to govern. If slaves can convince us that the production of the necessaries or luxuries of life is the true measure of ability, the rewards can then be adjusted to this test. Why do rewards govern? Because they have value for men with large desires. Are there any rewards in Seerland? No, because there are no desires. A seer is only rewarded by his own exertions, not by those of others, which in the vernacular is the negation of rewards. Desire is slavery. Has anything any value in Seerland? No. Why? Because the sum of desire is less than the quantity of objects necessary to fulfil the desire. This is what is meant by the absence of desire. When the sum of desire is greater than the quantity of objects available to satisfy it, the result is war. Can war be prevented so long as the desire is greater than what it feeds on? Never! Can war exist where the desire is less than what it feeds on? Never! The tendency of equal opportunities is to equalise ability, which implies equal qualities and equal increments of devotion."

The social thinkers of Garsch were rapidly being reduced to two factions. The one believed that the terrible miseries of the people could be alleviated, and the straining burdens lightened, by creating more riches and distributing them more evenly; while the other believed that the only sure and permanent cure of all

social ills would be the complete and universal renunciation of all riches. Queen Satamarti, still bent upon securing harmony of thought and feeling amongst all her dearly-beloved subjects, was now busying herself with a solution based upon the seer's principles of statecraft. Her experience was that the greater the riches the greater was the danger of riots, not because there was less to eat in her kingdom, but because the coinmongers found it more difficult to circulate their coins, and had to give more of them away in order to prevent rioting. If more riches were no cure, she could not see a solution by a more even distribution of them, for she had always observed that people with few coins fought for them just as bravely as richer men who had many coins, and if the slaves had metal coins enough to keep them from starving, the coinmongers could no longer keep them in the slave class; the latter would then stop working altogether, or would cease to obey the coinmongers. If salvation was to be at all through riches, she could not understand how the production of smaller quantities would be the logical course to pursue. What would now be the difference, she asked herself, between the production of no riches and the renunciation of all riches? If less riches effected a solution, why not lessen them till none were left? Since she was promoted to the chief sovereignty by the unanimous voice of her subjects, and should therefore act impartially towards them all, she could not force any of them either to renounce their riches or to create more riches. To adopt either course would be tyranny on her part. She observed that those who favoured voluntary renunciation were the kindest-hearted amongst her subjects; she foresaw that if they took this course they would be crushed to death by the coinmongers, not being able to compete in the slave class; she could not stand the idea of seeing equal burdens imposed where the capacity to bear them was unequal, and she could not be persuaded or convinced that the kind-hearted had a less right to live than others.

The great bulk of the riches being in the possession of the coinmongers, they had to exercise the utmost

vigilance to suppress disorders. Also this policy cost them many coins. Hand in hand with this tendency to revolution, the coinmongers had to grapple with the growing godlessness of the citizens of Garsch, who would no longer submit to starvation rather than rise in open revolt. There was a point of endurance beyond which they openly refused to go in spite of all the sermons from their priests. The coinmongers, conscious of their danger, and bitterly complaining of the expense which the suppression of revolts entailed, gladly accepted the queen's invitation to present their schemes of reform under the condition that the army could meanwhile be depended upon to protect their metal coins and other possessions.

Having met together and discussed their reforms, the coinmongers proposed to reward the thrifty and industrious slaves with more coins than the quantity strictly necessary for getting in exchange the bare necessaries of life, this surplus not to be handed over to them till the arrival of the weary and dreary days of their decrepitude. The slaves of Garsch, argued the coinmongers, were brave; it was revolting to their nature to rely upon alms, and they were so loyal and law-abiding that they would, even in their very old age, render aid in the suppression of revolts. This scheme created a split amongst the slaves, some approving, some rejecting, some wishing to accept the extra coins and to stick to all their old companions at the same time. Satamarti saw that her subjects were splitting themselves up into a greater number of factions than ever before, and feeling her responsibility all the more keenly since her elevation to the supreme sovereignty through the unanimous consent of her subjects, she felt sorely grieved. Her highest ideal of queenly happiness was the unanimity of her subjects. Accordingly she sent a message to the coinmongers imploring them to wait for her reply till she examined the scheme of reforms presented to her by the renunciationists. These believed that it was impossible to prevail upon many people to renounce their riches, that they themselves could not renounce

till others did so, and that if all renounced, the condition would be one of universal poverty, which would be worse than the existing state of affairs. Satamani herself was immensely rich, more so than any of the coinmongers, but she was not of their order, because she did not believe in riches for the mere sake of riches, or to be spent in swelling her desires, and she admitted the existence of duties and responsibilities. Also, she did not belong to the renunciationists, for she did not limit her alms or her friendly services to what that sect called the deserving. The renunciationists, many of whom were more or less mixed up with the philanthropists, only relieved the humble and the diligent, leaving the poorer and the poorest to be relieved by the poor, while she thought and felt that there was excuse for indolence and even riotousness where the conditions imposed upon the slaves were too painful to be borne, and as for humility, she felt disposed to pardon those who manifested symptoms of rebellion under distressed conditions. She protested against employing her army for suppressing such disorders, for she learnt from these upheavals that the rich were neglecting their duties, and instead of punishing the rebels she was in favour of applying all rational methods for the removal of their distress.

In her ideal community, seen in the light of the seer's theory of statecraft, none of these questions could arise. Her idea was to abolish both poverty and riches, but her subjects were not ripe for so great a revolution. She could not immediately renounce her own riches, because the mere idea of a poor queen would shock her subjects. In their minds riches and queenliness could not be separated. To be poor implied to suffer all the miseries of poverty, and she would no longer be their queen if they allowed her to suffer. To renounce her duties and responsibilities as queen would to them be the basest cowardice, and her only ray of hope lay in sticking to her post, and striving to make them ripe for her system of government. In spite of this conclusion she saw many difficulties, however. A crisis was rapidly ripening; the time was at hand when she seemed to be

forced to pronounce judgment, which she could not see how to do without being accused of partiality. Her subjects were growing impatient for another message from her, and many sects had already declared that they could wait no longer.

The long-expected message was at length engrossed on a scroll and presented to her commoners with her own hands. She was ready to answer any questions put to her by them. She proclaimed her intention to recognise the commoners without any change in the constitution of that body. By elevating her to the supreme sovereignty, her brave and good-hearted subjects had violated the most sacred law of the Kingdom of Garsch, but the gods only smiled upon their action, because they, her good-natured subjects, had accomplished their deed with one voice. If there was now to be any friction, if they continued to split themselves up into factions, and if they forced their queen to pronounce judgments opposed to the spirit of impartiality and unanimity, the gods would be justified in getting angry and bringing ruin upon their queen, upon their vast and glorious kingdom, and upon her loyal, law-abiding, and dearly-beloved subjects. The policy which she was going to pursue was to vest in her faithful subjects those powers which they had so generously bestowed upon her, and this scheme of government would be carried out as promptly as they could prepare themselves for the exercise of these powers. She implored them, therefore, to grant her ample time and opportunity for maturing her plans of organisation and administration.

CHAPTER XI

SINGHYA'S GREAT RENUNCIATION

IN her perplexities Satamarti was often thinking about Singhya and the seer, seeing that the king or her subjects could give her no practical advice, but she did not know when to expect them back. They had now had ample time to roam about in the forests or mountains, and the probability was that they would soon return.

She believed that they were already in the city, and were conversant with all the national events. She had a presentiment that they were coming, one so strong, indeed, that she went to the gate to meet them, and having stood there a few minutes, they arrived, Singhya taking the lead. Evidence of intense delight could be traced in all her looks and movements. She still adored Singhya, and the moment she saw him she danced up gleefully and embraced him, while her behaviour to the seer was that due to a great master. Singhya responded rather coolly, whereby she felt hurt, and his words harmonised with his actions. She did not wish to display in his presence her sense of surprise and disappointment; she did not lose any of her self-possession, and forthwith she glided away into the palace and announced the glad tidings to the king, who came out to bid them welcome. The party betook themselves to the air-house, where the trial of the seer, as former prisoner of the palace, had taken place. She walked beside Singhya, taking him by the arm as was her former custom, while the king and the seer followed up behind. The silence, due to Singhya's cool behaviour, was as persistent as painful; it was felt that the former happy relations between Satamarti and himself had become seriously strained; and it was hoped that he would break the silence by explaining his changed attitude of mind and heart. It turned out that this hope was realised.

"All Garsch knows," Singhya began to relate in solemn accents, "how its queen, then the youthful and ardent Princess Satamarti, loved Prince Isra'ali; how she grew out of her love for him because her ideas were more progressive than his, or because she felt it her duty to love me as her deliverer who is supposed to have saved her from a watery grave; how she failed in her duty to love Prince Utsikta on account of his ambition and his cruelty, which were bringing untold misery upon all the world; how in moments of despair she ceased to love altogether, which was opposed to her ardent nature and was retarding her spiritual growth into true womanhood; how bravely she bore

herself along the swelling bosom of Father Indus; how she braved the dangers of becoming queen of Garsch alone by her personal qualities; how high has been her ideal of virtue, and how assiduously she has striven to attain it; how passionate is her affection for her subjects, and how she sways them to virtue, loyalty, and obedience by her graces and charms; how fearlessly she has stood, unweaponed, amongst her most fearful enemies, and how she has vanquished them by her self-possession and the grandeur of her presence; how she has brought contending factions together to enable them to understand one another; how great has been her magnanimity in offering to die for me and for her would-be murderer; how apt she was to recognise the seer as a great master—but I need not go on to dwell upon her modesty, her sympathy, her humanity, her sense of justice and proportion, and all her great qualities which the gods of Garsch should be proud to envy. Garsch shall never know how I have grown to love the possessor of all these fine qualities. My love for her has been deep and abiding, and now all I can say or do is to bury my unworthy head in shame, and renounce the fair hand and faithful heart of the refined and dignified Queen Satamarti."

Hardly had Singhya finished these words when he was overcome with emotion; he seemed to have something further to say, and then after a strained interval exclaimed:

"O, the pain! O, the death, of this great renunciation!"

The queen, who was visibly much affected since Singhya began his speech, now broke out into tears. The king was manifestly surprised. The seer alone remained calm. The tension of the silence was now growing painful. Then the king broke the awful pause, saying:

"My opinion is that Singhya, by virtue of his great renunciation, should win the heart of my daughter, Queen Satamarti. The qualities cannot be greater than the virtue of renouncing them."

Another painful pause.

"Speak, great master, O speak!" exclaimed the queen, wiping away her tears.

"Speak!" echoed the king.

"O speak!" re-echoed Singhya.

"What seems meritorious from one point of view may be reduced to nothingness when another side is exposed to the sight," said the seer, in a tone of cool deliberation. "An action may be pronounced virtuous because it harmonises with a customary standard of virtue—maybe a very selfish standard. To be a seer is to see the far and the near. To be selfish is to cease to be a seer. The rich think they are charitable because they give to the poor; but if they did not give there would be a revolution, and they would lose their riches. Is that charity? If I ask a poor man why he is so poor, he tells me that it is because he gives so much of his work to the rich, who are not able to work for themselves. This is the charitable duty in which he is engaged. Another poor man tells me that he is poor because his work is taken from him by force, so that, in order that he may feel independent, he takes back with his own hands a good deal of what he works for in order to save others the trouble of doing the same thing for him. This is his idea of charity. If you give away voluntarily that which you obtain by force, the goodness of the one action is set at nought by the badness of the other. If I ask a well-disposed person how he remains rich, he tells me that it is wrong to make poor people work for him, but that he is obliged to do so for fear they may fall into the hands of ill-disposed people. This is what he calls charity. Now if you adopt a standard of unselfishness which will meet the notions of all these rich and poor people, you will find that no idea of charity can remain. The idea of renunciation works out the same way. When the king said he would rather renounce his kingdom than see it decline or be ruined during his reign, he only chose what he believed to be the easiest way out of his dilemma. In renouncing in favour of Singhya he made an offer to a man who, as he well knew, could not be tempted by kingdoms, whether flourishing or tottering. When Singhya rescued the then Princess of Garsch, he ran no risk of his own life, for he is a most

daring swimmer, and there is no fear in his religion. When he offered to die to save my life, he knew that he could not be put to death according to the laws of Garsch, and even if his ambition was to be humble, he chose the surest and straightest way to fame. Now he renounces the fair hand of Queen Satamarti. Why? Maybe because his marriage with her would thwart his ambition to become a seer. It is easy to renounce love and marriage if the fear of the consequences is the stronger force. Is fear a virtue? His avowed reason for renouncing Satamarti is that she is everything and he is nothing. What a happy pair they would make! Why does not Singhya renounce his philosophy? Because his philosophy is Singhya."

"Do you renounce Singhya, O my daughter?" said the king.

Satamarti was dumb.

"Speak, O great master, speak!" exclaimed she, after a mournful and tearful silence.

"Speak!" exclaimed the king.

"Speak, O speak!" reverberated Singhya.

"If you propose to do good to any person, should it be according to your or to his idea of good?" said the seer. "Singhya's supreme good, he declares, is to become a seer. Satamarti's supreme good, suppose, is to marry Singhya. If her good does not clash with his good, or his with hers, there is nothing to be renounced. Judging her by the history of her actions, it has always been painful to her to act with the idea of attaining some end. Her supreme happiness has not consisted in doing things, but in being herself. She was not made queen by her subjects. She was born their queen, and they only endorsed her title. She became their queen by being herself. All her glorious and bloodless victories have been won through her being herself. To be Satamarti is to have no ambition. To be Singhya is to be ambitious. To know who she is is to know what she will do. Singhya does not love Satamarti. Satamarti does not love Singhya. In the Garschian vernacular the highest virtue has been to love one's enemy. Satamarti b

no enemy. She recognises no enemy. If she made an enemy, she would feel it her duty to reward him. She could not hate some that her love for others might be more abounding. Her fount of love is inexhaustibly deep."

"Rewarding an enemy for committing a crime does not belong to practical politics," said the king. "Anybody would commit crimes if he were sufficiently rewarded."

"It is impossible to try the experiment," said the seer. "Crimes are not regulated by rewards or punishments. When the time is ripe, brought about by your desires, its characteristic events must then happen. If you can stop the rupture at one point, it will break out at another. When a majority of your people becomes criminals, their crimes become virtues, which must be enforced by sermons and by arms."

"The question of my daughter's marriage still remains unsolved," said the king. "To suggest whom she shall not marry is not to decide whom she shall marry."

"May your gods forbid that I shall ever decide what any mortal shall do," said the seer. "Being governed by the logic of events, all actions must be right in their time and place, and can only be conceived as wrong when you grow conscious that something is getting out of gear. Satamarti will leave nothing undone to find a consort whose qualities are more or less akin to her own."

"It is now plain that I did not save Satamarti's life," said Singhya. "I only took away the honour due to her. The seer saved her life, and his daring is all the more noble because it was not inspired by the fear of punishment or the hope of reward. He committed the deed because he was himself. The time was ripe, and the event had to happen. He could not have sought the kind of fame which awaited him."

Satamarti was listening very attentively all the while, but the growing darkness prevented the making of observations as to the moods which she was experiencing. Eventually she said:

"...vill be some time before I recover from the shocks ...by this discussion. I understand myself better

now, I think, but I suppose I shall go on acting according to the promptings of my wayward nature, as I have always been doing. Two people having kindred qualities and not loving each other get married. Is that harlotry? Two other people having no qualities in common and yet loving each other get married. Is that marriage? Should love, like the death penalty, be an instantaneous process, or should its inception be accompanied by a long period of torture?"

The seer nudged Singhya, believing him to be most capable of answering these questions, and Singhya then nudged the seer.

"You cannot understand these mysteries till you climb the mountains," said the seer, after being requested by the king to reply to his daughter's questions.

"If there is any truth in the theory that Garsch is going to perdition, I am afraid that my marriage problem will never be solved," said Satamarti. "I hope this theory is only the delusion of a few pessimists, and yet it seems that, for each step forward, we make two steps backward. Can no stop be put to these backward strides?"

"Not till the time is ripe," replied the seer. "You must first be firmly convinced that you are losing ground, and if you can then do away with selfishness, so that you can see all points of view, you will find the solution so simple that a child can understand it."

"Must the first step on your new ground be taken by the rich or by the poor?" inquired Satamarti.

"There are a few persons in all classes who already see a vague solution," said the seer. "A step needed to be taken by the educated is that they stop wrangling over wild theories invented to justify the existence of selfish interests."

"Can you put me in touch with any poor person who is on the right track?" said Satamarti. "I should like to organise with him."

"Yesterday I had a chat with a youth named Nagdhara, the son of a very poor and wretched slave, with whom you might make some very interesting experiments," said the seer.

"There seems to be another problem to be solved first," said Singhya. "A few persons might attempt to work together in free organisation, and to carry out some new ideal of life, but they might very soon become submerged by the fiery opposition of society in general and their neighbours in particular. Would it not be better for such persons to wait until a majority of the citizens of Garsch were converted to their views, so that all obstruction could be easily removed?"

"So long as affairs are regulated by majority rule, there can be no change in the character or structure of your society," said the seer. "One man with strong convictions and a problem burning for solution is mightier than any majority. If you set seriously to work to reconstruct your own life, you will find that all the destructive forces in society are old enough to take care of themselves. No agitators are needed, and educational cramming is done away with. If you govern yourself, you exercise more power than all the majorities who cannot govern themselves, and cannot even be ruled by their own gods."

"Government without majority is no government at all," said the king.

"Government by majorities has always been a failure," said Singhya, "and when there is unanimity no question of governing. When all the wills are the same as one will, the each cannot conflict with the all, nor the all with the each. Hence there can be no government. Each then governs himself or the self's equivalent. This conclusion would, I suppose, lead to free organisation."

"This is all very fine talk," said Satamarti. "Let us now test your theory and work out the details by means of action. I have been curious to know something about boy Nagdhara, his theories, sayings and doings."

"The boy has a religious cast of mind," said the seer, "and is looked upon by his parents and companions as being very eccentric. He once heard priests say that the misery of the poor was due to their greed for metal coins. Thereafter he refused to touch these coins, and when his parents remonstrated, telling him that the priests themselves handled piles of coins, he declared

that the priests were right in what they said and wrong in what they did. On another occasion, having reached the age when boys should begin to wear loin girdles, he refused to put his on, for the priests had taught that it was wicked for people to desire things they did not need and would be better and healthier without. So he refused to wear the girdle his mother made for him, because he could do without it in the future as well as in the past, and because the cloth could not be obtained without giving metal coins in exchange. His parents rebuked him, saying that the priests had also taught children to obey their parents and other superiors. Boy Nagdhara contended, by way of reply, that, as stated in the scrolls of the priesthood, it was the duty of parents to obey their priests. The wicked Nagdhara was then brought for trial before his priest, who commanded him to put on his girdle and to obey his parents. The boy still protested, giving as one reason that his parents could not afford to give him such a nice girdle as his companions wore, which would make him feel ashamed, and so he would rather wear nothing. The boy could not be managed by anybody, and finding that neither the divine wrath nor the earthly punishments threatened by his superiors had fallen upon him, he next refused to sleep in houses, contending that sages and seers did not need them, and that they could not be built without slaves and metal coins. His strange doings got him into many troubles with his mates; he would never trounce any boys smaller than himself; he became such an expert boxer and wrestler that many adults were afraid to attack him, and when not defending himself he would be protecting mates who were being cowardly assaulted by bigger boys. His idea was that he should always be on the defensive side. People wondered why he should bring such great troubles upon himself, but he contended that his big troubles worried him much less than the little troubles which others brought upon themselves worried them. Boy Nagdhara has a curious theory about metal coins. He argues that if slaves could work together in some way so as to be able to do away with the use of coins,

the coinmongers could then find hardly any use for their pieces of metal, and so the slaves would become free. If nobody wanted these nasty coins, the rich could get nothing to eat unless they did their own work. Such is the philosophy of boy Nagdhara."

"Can you give me the names of other poor people who have strange ideas?" said Satamarti.

"I suggested Nagdhara's name in the hope that you were willing to make an experiment in free organisation," said the seer, "and if a start is made with more than two persons the prospects of success cannot be bright. All great movements can be traced to small beginnings. When only two people in all Garsch are ripe for a change, then is the right time to start a group. The idea is to bring rich and poor together in such a way that both classes can work harmoniously at the same task upon terms of equal freedom. Each member must be equally free to go or stay, and in order to secure this extent of freedom, the means of livelihood of each must first be secured."

Satamarti and her guests seemed willing to continue the talk, but points had been raised which needed cool deliberation before further discussion could be made advantageous, and as the darkness was already upon them, she was perplexed as to how her guests should be entertained for the rest of the evening. The seer relieved her mind by saying that he was obliged to depart, and Singhya intimated his intention to follow him wherever he went. She made up her mind to treat both her guests with equal courtesy and respect, as she did not wish to convey the impression that she was abnormally affected by Singhya's great renunciation. She informed the seer that she had thoroughly made up her mind to climb the mountains and visit Seerland. This is the way she invited her guests to return. She inquired how she was to prepare for her journey, and having received the desired instructions, a day was appointed for the return of Singhya and the seer in order that they might accompany her.

CHAPTER XII

THE BOY NAGDHARA EXPRESSES HIS VIEWS OF LIFE

ALL Garsch was clamouring for another message from its queen. The commoners could not carry news fast enough, and, indeed, they had come to play such a small part as makers and carriers of national events that their functions had almost ceased. Every citizen was asking what the queen was going to do, and was equally ready with one or more answers. Not only could everybody answer his own questions, but also all the questions put by everybody else. The only popular commoners were those who could confirm everybody's answer to his own questions.

It was reported that Satamarti was getting tired of her palace, that she was going abroad to get fresh air, and that she was not going to make up her mind how to govern her subjects till she had examined foreign systems of government. One of the most persistent reports was that she had confessed herself to be a criminal. Nobody believed the news, for the subjects were rapidly coming to the conclusion that their queen could do no wrong. This report, however, was repeated so often and so long that the question arose as to what crime she had committed, when the reply came that she was going to punish herself for neglecting her poor subjects, and keeping them from producing food for themselves on vacant lands which she possessed. Her mode of punishment was, as was rumoured, that she was going to produce food for her poor with her own hands, and that she would allow them to help her if they liked.

The old sects were again broken up, and new sects formed. One sect thought it would be very nice to find themselves working beside their queen, and enjoying the pleasure of her company. Another sect argued that if Satamarti stooped to come into such close contact with the slaves, she would cease to be queen; that if she allowed her lands to be worked in this way, they would cease to be her property, and that a queen

without lands was unthinkable. Some members of this sect held that she still had jewels, metal coins, and robes enough to enable her to retain the high honour of being Queen of Garsch. Some held that coins were a title to land, some that they were a title to the things which came from the land, while others held that coins were a title to the work of slaves. Just as the gods of Garsch would cease to be gods if they came down to dwell amongst their worshippers, it was argued by way of analogy, so a queen would cease to be such if she stooped to work with her subjects, and she would no longer be fit to live in a palace. All sorts of compromises were also proposed. Some held that Satamarti might be allowed to enjoy her palace, her lands, and her coins, that she might sometimes come down amongst her subjects while they were at work, and that she might give them orders to do what she wanted to be done. This solution was objected to chiefly on the ground that nobody was qualified to give orders unless he had learnt how to do the work. These questions made a new cleavage amongst the classes of Garsch, and even the priests, otherwise so clannish, were now asunder. Satamarti looked upon this reconstruction of the classes as a hopeful sign of the times. The lawyers were for the most part opposed to the movement in any of its forms, as there had been no precedent therefor in all the history of Garsch.

In spite of the clamours for news, and especially for a fresh message from the queen, it was evident that there would be a dearth of events during the coming season, for the crops about to be gathered promised to be the most abundant that had ever been witnessed by men then living, and the recent cleavage amongst the sects and classes tended to promote better co-operation in the fields during the harvest months. Satamarti had fully made up her mind to climb the mountains; no force could keep her back. The king was unwilling to coerce her in any way, and should there be a dangerous upheaval amongst her subjects during her absence, her greatest security reposed in the hands of

Singhya and the seer. The citizens of Garsch could be depended upon to suffer much and to exercise commendable self-control in seasons of general scarcity, but there was no power strong enough to induce them to suffer want in times of general plenty. The coin-mongers were already building additional granaries, large enough to contain all the surplus crops in the kingdom; they were holding meetings at which arrangements were being made for gathering and storing the abundance, which the slaves were looking upon with grave suspicion, and an uprising was highly probable. All other industries were being almost suspended that the great abundance might be gathered in good condition. A singular impulse began to seize the citizens, for now they regarded the gathering of the crops as being of greater importance than social ranks, the queen acquiescing in this revolution of sentiment, but the harvesters had fully made up their minds that they would receive their fair share of the output of their efforts.

When Singhya and the seer left the palace, Satamarti did not know what direction they had taken or what they intended to do. Her mind was fully occupied with boy Nagdhara, and she was discussing with herself and with the king how he should be introduced to her, or she to him. She was deeply impressed with the seer's idea that they should meet on terms of equality, for otherwise they could not co-operate as independent units to render mutual service. Accordingly, she felt that she could not take the liberty of inviting Nagdhara to come and see her, which might be interpreted as an act of fancied superiority on her part, and so she called on him, stating the object of her visit to be to obtain information about the seer. She was struck with his manly appearance and his straightforward answers to her questions. Having enjoyed a friendly chat with him, she took the liberty of inviting him to see the king at the palace, which invitation flattered the boy's parents and friends so much that a feeling of consternation, mingled with curiosity and jealousy, soon spread throughout all the city. When Nagdhara arrived at

the palace, she called the king to have a chat with him. They asked him to relate some of his adventures and expound some of his theories, which he did with such fluency, terseness, and frankness that he greatly interested and amused his Royal audience. In her dealings with people Satamarti had laid down the rule that a person with a lofty ideal, accompanied by a resolute determination to carry it out, could always be trusted. This supreme virtue she found in boy Nagdhara. The boy having spent several days between his home and the palace, she asked him if he would like to remain with her, to which he replied that he would. She gave him lessons in reading and scrolling, but he found out how to do his reckoning without a teacher. She showed her fondness for him by letting him follow the bent of his own mind, while he expressed his pleasure and gratitude by refraining from troubling her when he saw her performing duties with which he felt himself to be unconcerned. She asked him, the first day he consented to remain with her, if he would put on a girdle if she commanded him to do so. He frankly and fearlessly replied that he would not, and when she asked him why, he replied that he did not obey commands, and that he did not need a girdle. She then asked him if he would wear a girdle if he knew, without her giving him any orders, that she would like him to do so, to which he replied that he would not, because the girdle might prevent his becoming a seer. On another occasion, after completing his lesson, she asked him if he would sacrifice his life for the good of Garsch. He replied that he would allow himself to be tortured to death to save his dearly-beloved Garsch, but if she wanted him to make the sacrifice against his will, he would see all Garsch in ruins first. When she discovered that he was willing and able to help her in many ways just as much as he appreciated her voluntary services to him, and that he always found out for himself what she most desired him to do without giving any orders, she then regarded him as the most important functionary in the palace.

Meanwhile, also, even in spite of her many official duties, Satamarti was busily engaged in making preparations for her pre-arranged journey up the mountains. The seer had given her full information as to the nature of the climate in Seerland, and the difficulties of the climb, and also detailed instructions as to the manner of her preparations. These she inscribed on a scroll after his departure, expressed in her own words. The following directions, taken from her scroll, seem to be the most important:

"The climate is not a thing which surrounds a person, but is within him, for the diseases of laziness and shivering are caused by some of the cells of the body being in a dying or dead condition, and unable to get out into the open air, but if these cells could once get out and be washed away by the rain, there could then be no shivering, and consequently also no sense of climate. The dead heat which clogged the body, and caused laziness, had to be got rid of in the same way as the shivers, as both are the outcome of the same disease. These feelings affect the mind as well as the body, they are especially bad for the spirit, and they put the thoughts and consciences all wrong. The best way to get rid of these cells, which are really not bad things in themselves, but right things in the wrong place, is to eat a lot of sappy foods, the sap also being the only water to be drunk, and to do a great deal of climbing, both with hands and feet, and if much swimming is thrown in, more good than harm is done. This is the only way to keep the busy cells of the body alive and well, and get rid of the cold and heat in Seerland. A person knows that he has not this disease when he needs very little sleep, if any, when the most terrific noises cannot wake him up, and when he breathes so vigorously while asleep that he does not shiver when he wakes up."

With these instructions in her mind Satamarti set to work—she called it setting to play—with the object of preparing to climb the mountains. She made arrangements with her gardener to be given the hardest exercises connected with his duties in the palace

grounds. Having long, dense, brown hair, which reached down below her loins, she costumed herself in the seer fashion, her dishevelled hair being interwoven with narrow strips peeled from the inner bark of certain trees, and her arms protruding through apertures left for this purpose above the web. In this way she exercised her limbs with garden implements in rain and shine, in heat and cold, and slept similarly costumed out of doors in her hammock. The necessary food lacking in her garden was sent to her through the hands of seers and seeresses when they came down the mountains on their regular visits to the plains of Garsch.

The day appointed for the coming of Singhya and the seer now arrived. They reached the palace early in the morning. All were in high spirits save the king, who could hardly brave the idea of seeing his darling daughter leave the palace. She introduced boy Nagdhara to the seer as her private secretary. Her guest, on other occasions so cool and indifferent, could now hardly refrain from smiling at the wisdom of her appointment. He informed her that he had brought down a young seeress with him, who would like to ascend with the party. Nagdhara saw in Satamarti's face that she was delighted, and he forthwith ran out to the gate to invite the seeress to come into the palace. The king and Satamarti both expressed their surprise to find how fluently the seeress spoke their vernacular, to which the latter replied that she and her companions often came down to learn the language and manners of the plains. It was at once observed by all the party how strongly Satamarti felt attached to her new companion, the seeress, who had many winning ways, and uttered many wise sayings. For fear of the wild animals on the mountains, Satamarti had to costume herself like the mountaineers, and the seer brought down with him a supply of wooden shreddings with which the seeress interwove Satamarti's hair.

Secretary Nagdhara took in the whole situation at a glance. He saw that the citizens must know nothing about Satamarti's absence abroad, much less about the day and hour of her departure, for otherwise there

would be dangerous demonstrations all along her route. He would have to drive the party, as he saw, as far as the foot of the mountains, and that, too, in some closed old chariot, drawn by a pair of tottering old nags, and in the darkness of the night, for if he did not do so, the citizens of Garsch would recognise their queen, and would make silly spectacles of themselves. Accordingly, without receiving any orders or making known his intentions, he had the vehicle ready in the dusk of the evening. The king was overcome with grief, and wanted to accompany his affectionate daughter, thinking that thereby he might also escape the political troubles now impending, but he was reminded by the seer that he had not prepared himself for the journey. When Satamarti saw the king shedding tears and weighed down with grief, she burst out into tears also, and tried to console him by saying that she was not going away in order to escape dangers, that she was sure to return shortly and safely, and that friends of the seer and seeress, who were regularly climbing up and down the mountains, would keep him day by day well informed as to the progress of the party, and would check disturbances amongst the citizens. The seer having nodded his head to indicate that what she said was all true, the king became more composed, and as soon as he began to smile upon their adventure the little band merrily took their departure.

CHAPTER XIII

SATAMARTI CLIMBS THE MOUNTAINS AND STUDIES SEERLAND LIFE

IN six days Secretary Nagdhara reached the foot of the mountains with his freight of mountain climbers, and having bade them an affectionate farewell, he returned to the palace. The drive was associated with one noteworthy incident only: the strong attachment which sprang up between Satamarti and the seeress. The latter took a lively interest in all the sayings and doings of her new companion, and, indeed, this interest was

mutual. Satamarti felt as if she had found a long-lost friend, a dearest friend, and her confidence in her was unbounded. What most inspired this confidence was the tender and unselfish tone of the seeress's voice. What the seeress most admired in Satamarti was her ever-varying moods of earnestness and vivacity. On the seventh day of their companionship Satamarti unbosomed to her dear and fair companion, and to her alone, the darling secret of her heart, which she expressed with such deep emotion and sincerity that the seeress was drawn to her in still closer ties of friendship. While satisfying her most ardent desire to see mountain life with her own eyes, she also, she disclosed, felt that her conduct might make her worthy to share her lot or her life in some way with the meanest inhabitant of the mountains. The seeress, though replying in cheerful and encouraging tones, expressed the view that a decision could not be expected until personal experience of mountain life was first acquired. Satamarti felt somewhat depressed, but did not lose her courage, and she was now keen to make the ascent with all the greater speed.

The climbing now began. The little band were in grand condition and in splendid cheer. The seer and Singhya took the lead, walking abreast, followed closely behind by the seeress and Satamarti. The seer and seeress often changed their position, or style of climbing, and when questioned why they did so the reply was that the art of climbing consisted in preserving due relations and proportions between the muscles brought into play and the respective strains which they were able to bear. These styles were accordingly imitated to some extent, the seeress telling her companion that she might sometimes lean lightly on her when very weary, until her movements became easy and graceful, and until the muscles adjusted themselves to the strains imposed upon them. It would not do, continued the seeress to explain, to be helped much, for it needed all the force expended in climbing to keep away the cold, and it would not do to carry baggage, because every climber had all he could do to carry his bare self.

Satamarti and Singhya were also making such close observations of the wonderful scenery, and were commenting so forcibly thereon that, as was feared, their energies might be expended in this manner, instead of being utilised in making the ascent and learning the styles of the different movements of the limbs.

Several small halting-stations were passed, where it was customary to enjoy food, sleep, and recreations of a mental and physical character. At these stations, also between them, many mountaineers were seen, ascending or descending, and when Satamarti and Singhya expressed their surprise that all the inhabitants of Seerland should look so much alike, and that the seer and seeress should seem to be equally acquainted with them all, speaking to all with equal familiarity, the reply was that a seer could see as much difference between one seer and another as a Garschian could see between one Garschian and another, and that the reason why a seer spoke to all other seers in terms of equal familiarity was because all the inhabitants of Seerland belonged to one and the same class, so that no introductions were necessary.

Here there were also many smoothed stones containing inscriptions, scattered all about, which all Seerland learned to read. The most ancient of them, which were said to be the wisest and most inspiring sayings, were committed to memory, and were deposited in caves specially excavated for the purpose. A noted station was at length reached, which few mountaineers passed without making a long halt, and a large number of seers and seeresses were now there. By Satamarti's complexion they all knew that she belonged to the plains below, and in like manner they could locate the abode of Singhya. They all came up in a line and bowed their heads to welcome their new visitors, whose presence was a very striking event, seeing that nobody from below had ever been known to climb so high before. They did not further detain them, for they intuitively realised that they were weary and needed sleep. After their departure Satamarti suggested that these people might feel more decent if they approached

her in some kind of girdle or toga, and then she corrected herself by saying that the indecency might be a mere idea located in her own brain. Singhya stated that in his forest home some wore togas, while others did not; that those who wore them were less healthy than those who did not; that it was doubtful whether the same style of toga should protect a person from the weather and also from the feeling of shame, and that a solution could not be arrived at until it were decided whether health or decency were the higher ideal. The seer thought it a fine subject for study, to discern why the decent should set up a standard which they desired to force upon others, while the indecent were in favour of complete liberty. The existence of the decent might be explained, added the seer, by the presence of insatiable and purely imaginary longings. Satamarti hoped to discover a world in which there was nothing to be ashamed of. A world of shame, in her view, was a disgrace to the creator thereof. Yet she might be wrong, she concluded, for the seers might miss the highest pleasure of life by not experiencing the refined and exquisite sense of shame.

The party now all enjoyed a sound sleep in the shade of a low-branched tree, luxuriant with foliage. The seer and seeress were the first to awake, and they retired a short distance for fear of awakening their companions. When these awoke the seeress suggested that it was time to take food, and set the example by plucking and eating leaves from the tree under which the party had been sleeping. Both Satamarti and Singhya were astonished until they found the leaves to be very soft, juicy, and palatable, and they were informed that the fruit, as well as the foliage, would become still more delicious, nourishing, and luxuriant if the leaves were thinned out considerably. Satamarti and Singhya, who understood pruning, now set to work and plucked the largest and smallest leaves in places where they were very dense, and ate them with great avidity and relish. Satamarti rested her eye upon a beautifully clear spring near by, where she intended to quench her thirst, but when she found the leaves so nice and sappy, her thirst

vanished. Still she wanted to know what the charming spring, with the sparkling stream which issued fórth therefrom, was intended for, to which the seeress replied that, like the variegated flowers which were smíling all around her, the rivulets were intended to feed the eye. Indeed, they fed the ear as well, as Satamarti added. Both she and Singhya expressed their wonder how the seer and seeress could gaze unmoved upon such lovely scenery, to which the reply came that the inhabitants of Seerland were in direct contact with such views all their lives, save when they were visiting the plains of Garsch.

The seer was now leading the way. He was climbing higher up, where a great expanse of country was visible, when suddenly he looked up to the blazing sun and said it was exactly noon. He saw Satamarti lagging an unusual distance behind, gazing upon a time-worn stone which contained a very ancient inscription. She seemed to be much absorbed and affected, and pleaded for a short respite to enable her to drink in what she was reading. Her companions all gathered around her, when they found that she wanted to translate the sentiments roughly into her vernacular, the inscription being smoothly metered in the seer tongue. Her rough and unmeasured version was as follows:

"The noonday sun now gilds the mountain tops with golden gauze, while underneath the bulging rocks he flings his slaty shades. The winding streams anon he silvers o'er, far down beneath whose sparkling face he beds the heavens. Himself is heaven's eye, which gazeth up and gazeth down and bopeeps all around. The summer herbs turn on high their sappy lips, pleading to be kissed, and pouring down their wishes, he tells them to be fair and rich and free. The seers and other beings, skipping all around, up the hills and down the woods and far along the glades, he next turns his glad smiles upon, and says: 'It gives me joy to see you dance and sing.'"

"Come along now, Satamarti," said the seer. "You have made a very good translation considering the short time which you have spent in reading the inscription."

"Ah, don't be in a hurry," said Satamarti imploringly. "Do let me commit the words to memory; they are so charming."

"Should we not first examine the scenes which the inscription depicts?" asked the seeress. "For us the words are much inferior to the odes inscribed in many other stones, and so what you have read and translated cannot have been the work of our very remote and uncivilised ancestors."

"Kindly don't press me," said Satamarti. "I cannot tear myself away. If the streams and flowers feed my ear and eye, this sun-song feeds my whole being. Pray don't drag me away."

"It is evident that our ancestors themselves did not think much of this inscription, else they would have deposited the stone in a cave," said the seer. "The author mixes us up with the wild beasts."

"Wild beasts!" exclaimed Satamarti. "How I do love them! I wish the author had mixed me up with the wild beasts."

"The artless simplicity of the song does not charm me so much as the reserve force between the words," said Singhya.

"What carries me away is the universal joy and love that come streaming out from behind the words," said Satamarti. "I wonder what your glorious sun is saying to a forlorn maiden like me?"

"I wonder what he is saying to a weary doubter like me?" said Singhya.

"Come along, now," said Satamarti. "I have committed the sweet song to memory. I now know what stones are made for."

"Let us go to the other side of the mountain and bathe our ears in the songs of birds," said the seeress, after expressing her surprise that Satamarti had memorised the song so quickly.

The bare mention of birds was enough to put Satamarti into a fit of ecstasy, and she could now hardly contain herself any longer. She could not walk, she danced. She could not run, she skipped. She

could not smile, she laughed. She could not hear, she felt. She could not speak, she sang.

"I have often heard that the mountains were pestered with wild beasts," said Singhya.

"We have no wild beasts in the mountains," said the seer.

"Then all your animals must be tame and domesticated," said Singhya.

"In the mountains we have no tame animals," said the seer.

"No wild beasts! No tame beasts!" exclaimed Singhya, with a look of surprise. "There must be some explanation. Let me see. You are always saying that this or that fact is a truth only in the vernacular sense. What we call a tame beast is one which we can chase into the stall, or which will not always turn round and poke us to death when we draw blood by our switching or goring, or which we can catch in order to bend a twig around its neck, or whose milk or blood of life we drink to quench our thirst, or whose raw or stewed flesh we eat when we prepare a great feast for our guests. Our idea of a wild beast is one which will run away from us when we chase it, or which will turn on us and eat us up, or gore us to death, if it can. I can conceive of a beast from which all these wild and tame qualities are absent, but if I were to go on arguing in this fashion for a good while, there might be no words left in our vernacular, and we pride ourselves on the great number of our words."

Satamarti was now starting to speak, when, in the twinkling of an eye, the seer and seeress pricked up their ears and begged a moment's silence. Satamarti heard nothing. Singhya heard nothing. Presently the seeress, followed by the seer, began to dishevel their hair, and both ran swiftly towards the setting sun. Satamarti and Singhya instinctively felt that they should imitate the example, which they did, and after a while they also heard cries of pain, but insisted that the noises came from a direction quite different from that in which the seer and seeress were hastening with all possible speed. All were now running after the

seer. The seeress lagged behind with the object of calming the fears of her guests, and of explaining to them that the noise was that of a dog whose puppy had met with an accident, and that the mother was crying for help. When the seer reached the spot, the dog sprang upon him, placed his paws upon his shoulders, and licked his chin. The dog then ran aside and looked over a precipice, as much as to say: "There is one of my darling little puppies down below; bring it up, kind sir, for if I go down and risk my life, my other dear puppies might starve." Then the dog turned round and gazed upon Satamarti and Singhya with grave suspicion, and began to snarl. The seeress embraced and kissed her, and then patted Singhya on the back, as much as to say, "These are friends, and not enemies." The dog then leaped up to Satamarti and Singhya and licked their chins. "The darling pet!" exclaimed Satamarti, patting the creature with both hands. "Let me go down and bring up the dear little puppy." She was too late, however, for the seer had already made the descent, and had the puppy in his arms. The seeress stood on the brink of the precipice with outstretched hands, the seer threw up the puppy, which she gracefully caught, and all was safe. Satamarti then took the little creature in her arms, fondled it tenderly, gave it all sorts of pet names, and carried it to its mother, which was lying down to suckle it, at the same time licking Satamarti's hand. The seer again examined the little creature, and found that no wounds had been inflicted or bones fractured.

Satamarti now wanted to sit down beside her darling dog and watch her for fear some other calamity might befall the dear puppies, and her host and hostess could hardly induce her to come away. Singhya was looking on all the while, offering to do anything or everything, but he could not see very well when and where he should join in by way of help. Satamarti asked why it was necessary to dishevel the hair before running to the rescue, to which the seeress replied that the interlaced hair impeded the movements of the body when speed

was so important, and that the dog might turn savage at the sight of such a singular fashion, especially when strangers were also present. Singhya asked whether the best way of getting rid of surplus dogs was not to let them fall over precipices and starve to death. The seer replied that there was not an over-supply of dogs, that the most venturesome puppies turned out to be the best dogs, that dogs often saved the lives of mountaineers, that starvation was the most cruel mode of death, and that seers found the saving of puppies to be a most interesting form of education and recreation.

"May I not adopt the rescued puppy?" said Satamarti pathetically, as she picked it up and kissed it sweetly,

"That might afford great pleasure to you," said the seeress, "but it would be a great misfortune to the dear puppy and its mother. I know you could do nothing so cruel."

"We have adopted all the animals in the mountains," said the seer. "We adopt them by letting them live according to their own nature, no seer enjoying exceptional privileges with regard to their use."

"How can dogs be left to their own nature when you rescue the puppies which fall over the precipices?" said Singhya.

"Dogs also adopt us," said the seer, "and they let us live our lives according to our own nature. They never kill us to make room for more dogs. They are just as clean as we are, for they frisk about under the rain, as we do, and their occupations are less dirty than some of ours."

"But the dog is a flesh eater," said Singhya, "and so he must tear animals to pieces before he can devour them."

"Not till after they are dead," said the seer.

"Do you mean that a corpse is fit food for any animal?" said Singhya, with a look of surprise.

"The citizens of Garsch devour worse food than a fresh corpse," said the seer. "They let most of the life's fluid leak out for worms by chopping off the head, and then they make the sapless body suffer a second death by stewing it in water or roasting it on bricks.

The flesh is then more dead and less nourishing than that of a fresh, warm corpse. Many of our animals can live either on fresh corpses or on herbs, and so they are regulators of our food supplies."

"I am aware that seers do not eat corpses," said Singhya, "but do animals eat the corpses of seers?"

"What would you expect us to do with our dead bodies?" said the seer.

"Bury them, of course," said Singhya.

"None of us would like to do that," said the seer. Seers and animals die of old age only, and without pain, barring the few accidents, and then the still warm bodies make wholesome food," said the seer. "Death before old age implies disease, and a diseased corpse is not fit for food."

'Now I understand, I think," said Satamarti. "Your animals are tame in the sense that they do not fear or injure other creatures, and they are wild in the sense that they gather their own food, just as seers do, and therefore they do not differ from their human companions, who are neither savage nor civilised."

Satamarti having bidden an affectionate farewell to the doggie and her puppies, the party, led by the seer, started away in another direction.

"I should like to see your cultivated fields," said Singhya. "All your foods cannot surely be made up of wild herbs."

"We have no wild herbs," said the seer.

"Then if all your herbs are tame, all your land must be under cultivation," said Singhya.

"We have no tame herbs," said the seer.

"How stupid I am!" exclaimed Singhya. "I am always falling into the same trap. Now I see how your herbs need neither be wild nor tame in the vernacular sense. Yet you must treat them in some fashion, just as you do in the case of animals."

"We treat herbs in such a way as to get the greatest abundance of the best quality," said the seer.

'And with the least labour, of course," added Satamarti.

"We have no labour," said the seer. "In your plains

and in your vernacular herbs are made scarce by tillage and seed-planting till they die out, and their place is taken up by wild herbs which you cannot eat and cannot kill, and when they in this way get so scarce that they can be measured by your metal coins, you then fancy that you are growing rich. In the mountains we go about the business in a different way. We obtain a plentiful supply of herbs by watching their habits of growth, leaving them to flourish according to their own nature, and if we can be said to aid them, we do so as part of the law which favours the persistence of their vital force. They aid us in the same way, as also the animals do. We pluck and eat them where they are thick, and when they are in excess of our needs, we either store up the surplus or transplant it into soils or climates more favourable to the growth of these herbs. In this way they never die out, nor are they killed by other herbs less suitable for ourselves or for animals. If you call this labour, then you must contend that our birds labour also, for they carry more herbs in the form of seeds than we. These herbs also, when they are growing, labour in the same way that we do."

"There must be a struggle for life amongst the mountaineers when your crops fail," suggested Singhya.

"Failure applies to cultivated herbs only," said the seer. "A healthful herb continues to the end as unfailingly as a healthful animal."

"I cannot yet see what you would do if the number of seers multiplied faster than the quantity of herbs," said Singhya.

"We always know the number of seers and the quantity of herbs," said the seer, "and if the number cannot be adjusted to the quantity, we then know that we should have to lead the same lives as the citizens of Garsch, the idea of which makes us shudder."

"Yet the animals do not know this," suggested Singhya.

"If we were not conscious of the effects, our numbers would not increase more rapidly," said the seer, "for we are only one of the powers of the All, and the whole

cannot outdo itself. An overgrowth of numbers always goes with selfish and spasmodic passions, which is evidence of weakness, not of strength. Love attuned to the workings of the All is a constantly-flowing pleasure. The difference between our consciousness and that of our animals is merely a question of language."

On reaching the other side of the mountain, around which the party were travelling, the climate, vegetation, and scenery differed widely from the side which they first approached. Here there was much shrubbery, laden with ripe berries, and intermingled with large trees whose fruits were beginning to ripen. Having refreshed themselves with the delicacies of that region, and having enjoyed a long rest and a calm sleep, they descended into a valley in the bright light of the moon. At dawn a large structure was seen, where children of both sexes were moving in and out as busily as they could. Each was carrying something, some having the load on the head, some on the shoulder, some on the back, some in the arms, while others were pulling or pushing vehicles. On nearing the structure, it was seen to have been built of stones. On each stone, large or small, there was an inscription, surrounded by some work of art, both on the inside of the wall and on the outside. These stones came, as the seer explained, some from near, some from afar, the inscriptions first having been engraved by different artists and at different periods. The lettering, the composition of the sentences, and the ornamentation were all the results of exercises in art and literature, the arrangement of the stones while building the walls being made according to the highest literary and artistic ideas of the time, and the building as a whole was constructed on the profoundest principles of mechanics and architecture. The work was all done by students in connection with study and lectures. There being no division of work, every student was an artist, an author, a mechanic, and an architect, and there were no slaves or masters. Each saw with his own eyes what was needed to be done, and he did it. The science of organisation was as intricate as that of any

other branch of knowledge, and amongst the sciences this was the most needed by all the students.

It was seen that the children were harvesting fruits and other foods, this being the duty incident to that season of the year. The reason why adults did not take part in the gathering of the fruits was that there was hardly exercise enough for the children, all of whom desired to learn all the details, including the methods of organisation. There was a meeting that morning before sunrise, when the best ways of setting to work were discussed, and it was seen that the little workers were hardly speaking a word, the speeches having been made before the duties began. Such meetings were attended by adults, and especially by elderly people, whose main duty was to answer questions put by the boys and girls. Nobody remained long at the same piece of work, changes being frequently made without disturbing the organisation, and when a youth stood still and merely looked on, this was a part of his lesson, as he was induced to learn when he should stop and when he should join in without disturbing the industrial processes. Eating, resting, sleeping, acting, breathing —all these were component parts of his life, and there were no words in the seer tongue by which a line could be drawn between work and play. His life's work consisted in making himself, and if at the same time anything else seemed to be produced, it made no difference in Seerland, as there was plenty for all, whether this secondary product of exertion was said to belong to somebody, anybody, nobody, or everybody.

The seer further explained how groups or organisations originated. A person began to do something which was a necessity of his nature. His liberty or independence was not restricted by another person's observing his movements, and if both could now join together without hindrance to either, the basis of a group was then formed. Before they joined, each was usually understood to be able to systematise his own work in the best possible way, both being equally free and capable of acting alone or in groups, and so the chief effect might only be the acquisition of experience

in the knowledge and practical uses of organisation. The idea was not therefore primarily to do more work in less time, but to extend the area of self-culture and to acquire a group sense. When an organisation became permanent, no matter how large it might be or how many generations it might have existed, it was still necessary to conserve this mode of thought as explaining the origin and development of the movement.

Continuing their travels, the party next visited a structure in which instruments were made for hewing stones, cutting inscriptions therein, cleaving and polishing wood, chiselling statues, and for other purposes. Here the organisation was on the same plan as that connected with the food repository, although the building belonged to a different class of architecture, statues forming the chief feature of the art, but no workers were present at the time of the visit, as much fruit was ripening in the valley, which had to be hastily gathered. Satamarti and Singhya ascertained here that no fire was employed in Seerland save in connection with the working of metals. In and around this structure they found that there were especially two classes of statuary, many specimens being very ancient. The one class represented exact configurations of individual men and animals in the age wherein the statues were chiselled. The other class were statues of idealised beings, representing what men and animals were likely to develop into under given methods of progress, and these statues proved how wonderfully clear was the insight and foresight of the seer artists of old. These works of art were so much superior to those made in Garsch that Satamarti was at first sight startled, fancying them to be alive.

Satamarti and Singhya began to talk to each other about what they had been seeing and examining, the latter suggesting that only a very small proportion of the work in Seerland was productive, and that nothing seemed to have been made by specialists. In reply to questions on these points, the seer said all the work was productive, and produced seers when

the duties were performed under the stimulus of a due sense of proportion, although there were faint traces of specialism amongst old seers. Exclusive devotion to one subject, he added, narrowed one's capacities so much, and was so much at variance with the sense of organisation, that one's work possessed no real human interest or value. The seeress asked Singhya whether he regarded dancing as a productive occupation, to which he replied that in the vernacular it certainly was not. She then led the party to a high elevation where there was an immense platform, and where a large number of seers and seeresses were engaged in a dance. She pointed out that there were about a thousand variations in that dance, that every change of movement made by any one dancer, or any change in the tune introduced by a singer or whistler, involved a corresponding change in the whole body of performers, that the dances were organised just like other occupations, there being no difference between working and dancing, and that the dance going on just at that instant was helpful in saving the lives of puppies. To Satamarti and Singhya the performance now seemed to be over, but by way of change the dancers began to cast wooden balls at one another. Satamarti feared that every performer would be killed, so great was the velocity and precision with which every ball was hurled. Yet every ball was coolly and gracefully caught, two sometimes being caught at once, and was instantly flung at some other performer. The seeress explained how this play was one of the finest tests of one's ability to organise.

In travelling between two of the leading centres of activity several incidents occurred. In none of the groups were any provisions made for the reception or entertainment of strangers, namely, people who could not see how to join in and do something without being asked, when opportunity offered, or when the conditions needed their co-operation, so Satamarti and Singhya had to be satisfied with occasional words of welcome by organisers who could spare a moment without neglecting their work in co-operation. The reason why

there was no group organised for the reception of foreigners was because none had as yet been able to climb up so high into the mountains. Satamarti and Singhya were only too anxious to join in and help all the acting groups, but they were told that it needed years of experience, as well as a born disposition to move into line, to know what to do and when to act, which was the groundwork of education for all little boys and girls. To entertain strangers quite a new organisation would be needed, founded upon the same plan as groups already existing for other undertakings. Several isolated individuals were also met along the route, but as each had already undertaken some work which he was systematising, he or she could not stop long enough to bid welcome even to so important a personage as the Queen of Garsch. Groups were also met, but no reception, for the same reason, came off. Satamarti at first felt slighted, and even hurt, but when she understood the circumstances connected with organisations, she suppressed this feeling of pride.

Satamarti and Singhya often remarked that the seers and seeresses were so much alike, and that they all seemed to be of the same age, and of the same sex, to which the seeress replied that she saw great differences, although there was a good deal in it with regard to the sameness of the sexes, because the occupations were the same save the slight and necessary variations during the period of maternity. She could also, she said, often distinguish individual animals of the same species, although they were more alike than were the seers and seeresses. She showed how she could imitate the voices of all the species of animals, how they would come up to her when she imitated them with certain intonations, and how she could play with them or ride on their backs. Some of them, she said, were very swift, and when she wanted to go a long distance in great haste, she would call a swift animal by imitating its voice, and would ride all the way on its back. In like manner she called down birds from the tops of trees, playing with them and showing how she trained them. Just at this

instant a big bird was flying past with a little boy and girl on its back. These sights and tales caused Satamarti to leap out of herself, and she said that if she related these facts to the boys and girls of Garsch, the mothers would find their darlings all missing the next morning. The big and strong animals, as the seeress went on to relate, were trained to carry heavy loads, and she pointed to a pair walking abreast with huge inscription stones on their backs. Little birds were trained to carry messages, she said. When she heard an animal crying for help, she would call and mount the swiftest of wing, which knew at once by the pitiful cries where to go, and knew the shortest route better than she. The voices of these animals, she said, were a source of the seer tongue, and this was a reason why seers and animals could understand one another so well. Also the seer language had other sources. Sounds were obtained by imitating the voices of nature —rolling thunder, sighing winds, splashing waters, falling trees—and other sounds were created by placing the mouth in all sorts of positions and then emitting such noises as naturally issued forth. The letters of the seer alphabet were derived from conformations of animals and other objects, a portion of some line or bend being characteristic of every letter, so that both the spoken and the written language was progressive. Making letters and words was an art, building sentences was literature, speaking was a science, and all belonged to the regular occupations of seers. No education in the vernacular sense was required; there were no teachers, all were learners, for as all seers belonged to the same class, none could make mistakes in speaking or writing, and nobody set up standards to be followed. The time now having arrived for taking a rest, the seer entered a cave and took out two scrolls, asking Satamarti and Singhya if they saw any difference in the styles of writing. They could see no difference. The seeress then examined the scrolls, drawing attention to wide differences—so wide, indeed, that she was able to identify the writers and to imitate their voices. Satamarti began to think that the seers were

as niggardly with their time as the Garschians were with their metal coins, yet when she found that it was not the time measured by courses of the sun, but the time measured by the progress of Seerland-humanity, she became less harsh in her criticisms.

CHAPTER XIV

THAT MARRIAGE PROBLEM AGAIN

SATAMARTI had not intended to remain so long in the mountains, where she had already spent six weeks. She had not expected to see so many fascinating sights, and everything she saw interested her intensely. When she was told that there were many mountain regions much higher up, which differed from Seerland as much as Seerland differed from Garsch, she bewailed the narrowness of her life, and thought it much too short to be efficiently enjoyed. She was only a prisoner in a narrow cell, as she expressed her existence. She was beginning to get a little home-sick, and yet the mountains had much greater charm for her than the plains. The seer and seeress could read every expression of her features and every movement of her limbs, and so they now, without consulting their guests, started to march back in the direction of the plains. Her interest was not abated in the slightest degree, but she walked with a steadier tread, and so her exertions were less fatiguing. She also obtained mental relief by subduing her curiosity and gazing more calmly upon the objects so dramatically captivating. When she found that the seer and seeress eyed these scenes seemingly without any feelings of emotion, no doubt because they were constantly in the midst of such pleasures, the idea struck her that to be constantly in love was not to be in love at all—that loving everybody and everything was not love, for there then was nobody or nothing to be hated.

The seer now led the way. Before he had gone far he began to whistle, making a most deafening and yet most pleasing noise, which was resounded by all the surrounding mountains. Satamarti was startled,

and wanted to know what awful events were going to happen. The seeress calmed her fears, informing her that the sound was one of those prevalent when a new model was found.

"Great Sol! are we to be sketched?" exclaimed Satamarti in a tone of mingled surprise and satisfaction, at the same time adjusting her hair as if she were going to pose.

"It is difficult for me to explain what is meant," said the seeress, "for this branch of art is so narrow in your vernacular. With us sketching goes hand in hand with the study of character. Measurements are taken, first with the eye, then the accuracy of the artist's observations is tested with delicate instruments, the quality, firmness, and texture of the model's bone and muscle are examined, as well as the shapes, and the artist is expected to be able to determine how much mountain climbing, or other exertion, the model can undergo."

At this juncture the seeress took Satamarti by the arm and held her back, the seer and Singhya walking on ahead. After a little while the former whispered into Satamarti's ear, saying:

"If you are seeking a consort amongst us, now is the time for you to look your best."

"I see no use in doing that," whispered Satamarti, with a sigh, "for all the seers are so much alike that there is no choice, and they all seem to be too busy to attend to trifles. I have given up all hopes."

"Take my advice, dear sister," said the seeress. "If you fail to recognise the seer amongst the crowd of artists, your chance may be lost."

"Have you ever been in love, dear seeress?" said Satamarti, now speaking a little louder, as the seer and Singhya were some distance ahead.

"The qualities of seers really differ a good deal," said the seeress. "Although the seers may seem so much alike to you, the differences are noticed by our students of character, and we train ourselves to love and admire all the qualities. My duty as a lover is to cultivate varied qualities of my own. I have never loved one seer more than another, and I think I am equally loved

by all. Higher up the mountains, where we have not yet been able to climb, the solution may be different."

"In Garsch our style of love is inspired by standards of qualities set up for us by wicked people," said Satamarti in tones of the deepest emotion. "Is that not awful, my dearest sister?"

The party now arrived at a spot where the side of the mountain looked like a huge amphitheatre, over which was constructed the largest and most artistic edifice in all the regions round about. Here students of art were beginning to assemble from all quarters. They were going in and coming out of the cave, each with scrolls and stylus in the hand. The seeress invited Satamarti to stand on a disc-like rock situated near the foot of the amphitheatre, and Singhya was asked to take his stand on an elevation close by, the seer and seeress at the same time vanishing amongst the crowd. The students then passed along beside their models, eyed them closely, chatted freely with them in the vernacular, and, recognising their first model to be the Queen of Garsch, they offered her a hearty welcome, Singhya also being honourably received. The queen inferred that the seer and seeress were going to take part in the students work, and in closely observing them all as she was chatting cheerfully with them, she at first imagined that every male to whom she spoke was the seer, and every female the seeress. After a time she recognised the seer, having first had a short talk with him, but she did not recognise the seeress, so much did the latter look and talk like her sister seeresses. The students now retreated a short distance, and began to make their sketches. One seer stood near her all the while, having no scrolls, and doing no sketching. He was addressing the students, often also pointing to Satamarti and Singhya, or laying his hands on them, but as the lecturer spoke in the seer tongue, the models did not understand what he was saying, for although to their eyes this was a live language, yet it was a corpse to their ears. The students took their departure before long, first bidding an affectionate farewell to their models, and only the seeress remained.

"What does all this performance mean?" said Satamarti to the seeress. "I should like to keep on talking to those students for ever. It pains me to see them go away. What was that seer saying who was addressing the students?"

"He is a very old seer who is devoting much of his attention to the branch of art connected with the study of character," said the seeress. "He makes no mistakes in his eye measurements or in his estimate of qualities. He comes out only on special occasions. He knew by the seer's whistle that there was going to be a grand feast for artists, which also explains why so many students were present, and the day and hour are extremely favourable."

"What did the elderly seer say about me?" said Satamarti, with a look of intense curiosity.

Instead of answering this question just then, the seeress looked more intently upon her scroll, and seemed to continue her sketching with deeper interest.

"May I see your sketch?" said Satamarti, with a curious eye towards the scroll.

"I am afraid our style of art would shock you," said the seeress. "None of the sketches are finished yet. We only take the proportions and fill in samples of the colours while the model is posing. Your artists put black marks on a white surface. We draw the light as well as the shade. When the model stands in the shade we select a previously shaded scroll of the same colour as the shade, and when he stands in the light we use a scroll coloured exactly like the light. The varieties of stylus have all the other colours, and the fine art consists in the harmony produced when the colours of the model are perfectly blended with the lights and shades. I shall show you the picture as soon as I fill in the colours."

The seeress was continuing her artistic work while making these explanations, and Satamarti was dancing with curiosity. "May I see it now?" said she several times, and then immediately apologised for her interruptions.

"You may see it now," said the seeress.

"Great Sol, it's alive!" exclaimed Satamarti, the moment she gazed upon the picture.

She was not startled by the style of art so different from the style in Garsch; it was her living and breathing self upon a scroll that startled her, for she felt as if she had climbed out of herself. She became a sudden revelation to herself. She wanted to know how she could gain possession of the scroll. The seeress replied that she was only a mere novice, that the seer was a real wizard in art, and that she might get possession of his sketch. One of the easiest works of art, continued the seeress, was to make a straight stroke; everybody in the mountains could do that quite well, and yet nobody could imitate the seer's stroke. Nobody could even imitate his dot. When he completed his picture the background would also all be filled in, and so exquisitely would the colours, lights, and shades be all blended together that, while examining the picture, one could determine the hour of the day in which it had been drawn. While the seeress was making these observations, she was closely observing Satamarti's countenance, and found that her model was in a state of suppressed emotion.

"I would give all the world for the seer's sketch," said Satamarti, deeply moved.

"I don't know whether you will be able to get it or not," said the seeress, "but I do know that you can never get it as a gift. Seers never have anything to give; they never have more than they need for themselves, and they could not give without first getting by foul means that which they propose to give. The seer drew the picture because he loves art. You posed, I suppose, because you love art."

"Do tell me what the elderly seer said about my character," said Satamarti imploringly.

"You know I must be true to the seer race," said the seeress, "and also, my dear sister, I must be true to you. You will let me reflect a moment, if you wish to be true to us. The elderly seer told the artists," continued the seeress after a pause, "that they should let their eyes first dwell upon the tapering portions of your limbs, which would leave the impression that you were a tall person. They were then asked to let

their eyes linger a while on your stout muscles, which would convey the idea that you were stoutly built. The elderly seer concluded from this deception that you were a marvellous combination of fleetness and strength. He said that your muscles were not so firm as those of the seers, and that you could not therefore do as much mountain climbing as they, while, on the other hand, the movements of your dark sparkling eyes were extremely rapid, denoting that your ideas flowed more rapidly than those of the seers. Your life must have been spent, he said, amidst much mental agitation, as proved by the expressions of your eyes and all the lineaments of your face. In any moderate climate, he ventured to say, you would be fascinatingly beautiful, your charms would be increased if you underwent more physical exertion and less mental strain, and you were still young enough to beautify yourself in an amazing degree."

The seeress observed that Satamarti was trembling all over while this description of her character was being related. After a pause the latter tried to speak, but her voice trembled, and she seemed to be in doubt whether she should laugh or weep. Having recovered her composure, she said:

"What were those last words which the elderly seer, the dear old gentleman, said when the artists cheered so much?"

The seeress was silent a while, being in doubt whether she should answer this question faithfully, and then she replied:

"His last words were that he congratulated the seer upon his find."

Satamarti was now more restless than ever, as the seeress observed. Her expression indicated that her mind was in a state of wild confusion as to the real meaning of the words, modified at intervals by a feeling of intense yearning.

"Never let the seer's indifference give you pain," said the seeress by way of consolation. "That's his way."

The seeress seeing Satamarti's continued confusion of mind, mingled with curiosity, expected a host of

questions from her passionate companion, and being unwilling to be so rude or so unfaithful as to give evasive replies, she said:

"When a young lady sees her failings, and can put forth strength enough to overcome her weakness, we prize this quality as one of the highest virtues."

Presently Satamarti regained her self-possession, but she was still curious to know what the elderly seer meant by the expression: "I congratulate the seer upon his find." "Great Sol, am I a find?" she asked herself in a loud tone of voice. Having felt that she was estopped by the seeress from putting questions, she now adopted the practice of questioning herself. Then she artfully changed the subject, hoping thereby to gather other ideas which might throw light upon the riddle.

"I find seers going, singing, and whistling everywhere, which suggests to my mind that you must have many concert halls in the mountains," said Satamarti. "I have not yet seen any of your musical instruments."

"We have edifices for holding music scrolls," said the seeress. "Some of our ancient concert halls contain old wind and string instruments which we keep for the sake of curiosity. We have cultivated our voices to such a high and broad pitch that every instrument makes us shudder, forcing us to put our fingers into our ears, and when we sing in these halls the walls do not resound nearly so sweetly as the mountains do while re-echoing our tunes. The blows of dead instruments strain our live nerves and make us feel weary, while the live songs of seers and birds are very soothing and enlivening. It is the same way with our pictures. In Garsch your drawings are splashed with dead colours which weary and weaken the eyes of observers, while our colours are alive and affect the eyes the same as when one gazes upon growing herbs. For this reason we do not look at dead sand and stones very much, nor do we eat much food with the life squashed out. I cannot invite you to a concert in any of our halls; indoor concerts are rarely held now, and never at this

season of the year, and, besides, they are conducted just on the same plan as all our other organisations. Every singer and whistler knows where to join in and when to be silent, in order that the sweetest harmony of sounds may be produced."

Satamarti half expressed a desire to remain in the mountains till the next indoor concert took place, having been charmed so much with the numerous outdoor concerts which she had attended, but when she reflected on the explanations made by the seeress, when she recollected that Secretary Nagdhara was soon to meet her with his nags at the foot of the mountains, when she considered how much she was neglecting her loyal and beloved subjects in Garsch, and when she bore in mind how much of a burden and worry she might have been to her exceedingly kind and inspiring host and hostess during her stay in the mountains, she changed her plans, and resolved to wind up her visit with a few concluding observations upon topics dear to her which had not yet been discussed.

"From what I have seen and heard, I may not be able to draw right conclusions relating to your marriage customs," said Satamarti, "and I could never rest content until I understood something very definite about your methods of rearing children."

"Knowing your tender susceptibilities on these points, I have said as little as possible on the subject," said the seeress, "and for the same reason I have striven to keep you from too close contact with our children. You will be wiser with regard to this question when you visit us again, or when we visit you again. I know what questions you are preparing to put, and I shall answer them as briefly and sincerely as I can. When a seer and seeress desire a child, and if they entertain any doubts as to mutual fitness, they go to the art gallery, where their characters are described, nothing more, and then, if satisfied, they guide their actions in such a way that their conduct will be least liable to any censure. When a child is born, we all know, therefore, that the parents must have understood each other. This may be called the marriage test. It might now be

said that the artists perform the marriage ceremony, yet the fact remains that they rarely ever get to know beforehand what the intentions of their models are, and when it is further considered that nearly everybody goes to get sketched or have his character described, that everybody is an artist who works merely for the love of his art, your conclusion can only be that our artists are not priestlike so far as our marriage institutions are concerned. The test of parentage is that the parents recognise their own offspring, and as all seer and seeress parents stand this test, no questions can be put. The rights and duties of parentage are not the same as those suggested in your vernacular. The children are reared largely under the eye of their parents, aided mostly by prospective parents, also the smaller children are trained by children who are older or have more experience, but the boys and girls are brought together in large groups, who are treated more like families than like pupils, the school hours embracing the whole lives of the children, and the parents would cease to be seers if they saw their child any bigger, or smaller, or brighter for the sole reason that it was their child. This would be a description of our methods from your point of view; you might soon also get to see that everybody is always teacher and taught, but in the seer tongue it would be just as true to say that all our children, like our animals, bring themselves up, adults being regarded more as spectators than as teachers. Not being a mother myself, I cannot yet explain the deeper mysteries of parentage."

Satamarti was so deeply meditative that her thoughts could not find expression, and when the seeress saw the unlikelihood of receiving any comments upon her speech, she suggested that Singhya and the seer might be in the art amphitheatre awaiting their return.

"When we get back to the spot where you posed when the seer was sketching you," continued the seeress, "you might first take a good view of the background, for should you happen to see the picture some day it will be all the more impressive if you think of the surrounding scenery as part of yourself. Watch closely

the direction in which the sun casts the shadows of the objects which it strikes; examine the lengths of these shadows, and behold how the light dances and glitters when it kisses some objects more than others. By attention to these details you will, when examining the picture, be able not only to name the hour of the day in which the sketch has been made, but by the condition of the flowers and herbs you will be able to determine the season of the year even also."

"Will the sweet fragrance of the flowers also be in the picture?" said Satamarti in a peculiar tone of voice, at the same time closely observing the effect of the question upon the countenance of the seeress.

"This art has not yet been brought to perfection," said the seeress. "There is a great variety of odours in our colouring materials, but some of them are rather deadening in their effects, and do not for long affect our sense of smell as pleasantly and healthfully as the delicate and delicious odours which emanate from the flowers and herbs themselves during the most favourable periods of their growth."

The seeress and Satamarti having returned arm in arm to the amphitheatre, the latter, standing where she had posed, examined the surroundings very eagerly and minutely, and after long observations seemed to be transfixed to the spot. Fearing that the seer and Singhya might be gone, the seeress had to force her companion away, leading her into the gallery, where she found them examining and discussing some of the most ancient pictures with a group of seers and seeresses. The judgment of the elderly seer upon her character was still working in Satamarti's mind, and she made a firm resolution to take all things quietly and smoothly, not allowing herself to be overcome by any surprises, whether inspired by scenes, words, or deeds. Scarcely had she formed this resolution when her curiosity to see the portrait of herself, which the seer had drawn, grew so intense that she could hardly subdue herself, yet she retained courage enough to remain silent, knowing that the portrait would not be visible till completed. Feeling that even in Garsch the excitement would be

less trying to her nerves, she now expressed her willingness to escape to the plains. The seer now stepped up to her, knowing that she had to depart at once in order to meet Secretary Nagdhara with his chariot and nags at the foot of the mountains. He unceremoniously bade her farewell, expressing his regret that he could not escort her down. Just for a moment this was a cruelly sore cut to her; she could hardly refrain from looking round to take a last glance at him, but when she reminded herself of her resolution to keep cool, and the words of the seeress that she should not feel pained at his indifference, and when she began to feel that the seeress was going to accompany her and Singhya to the foot of the mountains, she recovered her calmness of mind and feeling.

Shortly after the return party had left the summit of the mountain, the seeress expressed her regret to Satamarti and Singhya that she could not in this trip take food down for the poor children of Garsch, as she might have to turn back before she reached the plains.

"Your remark reminds me of a very significant question which has for ages been agitating the lawyers of Garsch," said Satamarti. "The problem is whether there has ever been a contract between the seers and any former king of Garsch to the effect that they were permitted to descend into the plains only when they brought down food with them for our poor inhabitants."

"I have never heard of such a contract," said the seeress. "No record of such could ever have been handed down to us, for we have never made contracts with anybody to do anything which should bind posterity. If any person, or body of persons, amongst us had ever entered into such a contract, he or they would have ceased to be one of us. No seer ever makes such a contract even with another seer, or ever binds himself in such a way, never even deciding to-day what he shall do to-morrow, save when there are special reasons for doing so, for he always hopes to be wiser on the morrow. He never adopts a creed, nor does he ever decide that he or his descendants will never adopt a creed. I have not promised to return with you from

the mountains. Have I been less true to you on that account? We carry down food for your starving poor because we have more than we can eat, while you have less, and there can be nothing more painful than to see dear children starving. If we have anything to give it belongs to all of us, not to any individual seer."

CHAPTER XV

THE MARRIAGE PROBLEM SOLVED

THE foot of the mountains having been reached, Secretary Nagdhara was found there already waiting with his chariot and nags, and the seeress, having put things in order and having had a pleasant chat with Nagdhara, retreated hastily up the mountains. Singhya entered the chariot with Satamarti, and the party drove away in the direction of the palace. He could not go all the way with her, having important duties in the forest, so she arrived at the palace alone with Nagdhara as her charioteer. So long as Singhya remained in the chariot he was so busily engaged with Satamarti, discussing the scenery and customs in the mountains, that Nagdhara felt it his duty to be silent, although he had much to say and many questions to ask. Also Satamarti was anxious to get news from him. Scarcely had Singhya left the chariot when Nagdhara said:

"You look very blooming, your majesty. It must be much more healthy up in the mountains than in the plains. I wish I could get a chance to go up."

"Your turn will come," said Satamarti. "We shall discuss that question later on. Now tell me, my good boy, what has been going on in the palace and in my kingdom during my absence. Have you had any squabbles with the king or with my servants? How is the king? This is my first question."

"The king has always been talking about you," said Nagdhara, "and has been wishing you were back again. In other respects he has been quite well, and I have been getting along charmingly with him. I have had no difficulties with your majesty's servants. I have been working very smoothly with them. I have been

managing them the same way as seers manage us when they come down from the mountains and visit us poor people. They know what we have to do even better than we ourselves know, and they join in and help us, often without any questions or discussions. They never do the wrong thing, never create friction, and when there is any squabbling in the family they always succeed in making peace, so keen is their sense of justice and harmony. I have been behaving in the same way towards your majesty's servants. You told them that they must not expect me to do any of their work. I observed very closely what they had to do and how they did it, so they were always pleased to get me to help them, and when I found out better and easier ways of doing their work, as the seers used to do with us, they were all the more highly pleased. This is the only sure way to avoid squabbles."

"Good boy, Nagdhara!" exclaimed Satamarti. "There is still hope for Garsch. You are fit to be a governor. It is a great misfortune that the rich and learned people of my kingdom have not discovered the organising ability of the seers, and have not allowed them access to their houses. Now tell me, my brave boy, what has been going on in my kingdom during my absence. Have you seen many of my commoners? Have you issued any messages in my name?"

"Many seers have been calling at the palace," said Nagdhara, "who have been asking for news to carry to you. Surely they have not befooled me."

"Not at all," said Satamarti. "I have been hearing a good deal about affairs in Garsch, but I am desirous of hearing your version. I have been so much charmed with my visit in the mountains that I came near forgetting all about my kingdom. Having received no reports about disturbances, I issued no manifesto."

"One was delivered to your commoners," said Nagdhara. "Many of them called at the palace, but only for news."

"Delivered!" exclaimed Satamarti, with a look of surprise. "How did that come about?"

"There were six days of heavy rains," said

Nagdhara, "so heavy that it was too wet to work in the fields, and nearly all the harvesters assembled together to manifest, and they demanded a manifesto. At the same time two seers called at the palace to say that you were well, and enjoying yourself, but could not return for several weeks. I discussed the state of affairs with them, but they refused to give me any advice, saying that my own judgment was ample security against disturbances. Accordingly I handed a message to your commoners in your name and with the king's consent in order to prevent a violent attack upon the coinmongers for their rashness in building so many granaries and attempting to fill them with the abundant crops which were being reaped all over Garsch. The drift of the message was that, until your return, the crops must be stored on the estates where they were grown, only temporary granaries being built where there was a lack of storage-room, and that no permanent distribution was to take place until you were present to give directions. This message had the effect of putting a stop to the revolution which was evidently breaking out."

"Brave boy!" exclaimed Satamarti. "I could not have done better myself."

After an uneventful drive the palace was reached. Satamarti was keeping in mind her resolution that she would struggle against allowing her nerves to be unsteadied or unstrung by public or private worries. She expected visits from many dear friends of both sexes, but she made up her mind to receive them all with an air of calm dignity. She desired to make an exception of the king, however, who would be sure to interpret any quiet demeanour on her part as evidence of estrangement, pride, or ingratitude. With him alone would she manifest a judicious outburst of fussiness. She conspired with Nagdhara to keep her return dark as long as possible, and as the harvest was not yet over, no sensations of great magnitude were anticipated.

The only baggage which she brought down with her from the mountains was a roll of wood fibre, used by seers and seeresses in interweaving with their hair for

covering their loins when visiting the plains. The seeress had foreseen how uncomfortable Satamarti would feel in her ordinary costume after enjoying such a long and bracing air-bath in the mountains, and now the latter experienced the wisdom of this foresight. Accordingly Nagdhara informed the servants, both those in the palace and those in the gardens, that their queen, although she would be most delighted to greet them immediately upon her return, could not present herself to them until she was able to attire herself suitably, but they all declared with one voice that they would rather see her in her seeress garb than delay the pleasure of welcoming her return. Nagdhara displayed the same artful diplomacy with regard to friends who were streaming into the palace to welcome her back. She was soon able to go freely about the palace and gardens, costumed as a seeress, without shocking anybody, and shortly afterwards a few of her servants formed themselves into a deputation for the purpose of getting her permission to adopt the same fashion for certain purposes, which request was cheerfully granted.

The harvest having been gathered, and the return of Satamarti being well known throughout all Garsch, there was great commotion, and the demand for a Royal message was universal and imperative. She clearly saw that the fresh cleavage in the parties could by no means be splintered together. In her message she laid special stress on this point, but, as she afterwards found, her most ardent effort to bring about a reconciliation produced little impression. She well knew how few of her subjects were ripe for the form of government which she desired to introduce. This was an advantage, she maintained, for all true progress was not only slow but also started from very small beginnings, and it was impossible to control an unwieldy mass of people suddenly converted to a new faith, especially when the change entailed a revolution in their actions and ideas of government. Her subjects were still dear to her, and while she would on this account rejoice exceedingly to see unanimity prevail amongst them, yet she saw, above all, that a system must be practicable.

The existing form of government in Garsch, she knew too well, was not practicable, and never could be made so. A fundamental change was imperative. The history of Garsch for centuries, also the histories and traditions of the surrounding nations, amongst which all other forms of government had been amply tested, proved conclusively that a new departure would have to be taken, if society was to be held together. She had been up in the mountains, the message stated, had minutely examined the seer system of government, and had come to the conclusion that no other system was worth striving for. *How* the seers governed themselves, *how* each ruled himself, could not be now explained, because the vernacular was impotent to convey a coherent idea of the method. All she could do was to live the seer life amongst her beloved subjects, her conduct being modified by the special conditions in the plains and by the stage of thought of those who came into her immediate circle, and she would be delighted to associate with herself those who understood her actions and regarded them as being coherent. Such was the substance of the Royal message.

After the contents of this message had been made known throughout Garsch, and before she had entered upon her new duties, seeing that there were so many inquiries about the mountaineer form of self-rule, she announced her intention to explain the seer systems of industry and organisation at meetings assembled for the purpose of hearing her, yet she feared that her efforts would be all in vain. She attended a few meetings garbed as a seeress, but soon saw the folly of continuing the work. Many people thought she was mad, and the very few who claimed to understand her only had vague ideas of what she was talking about. She did not want followers, but only fellow-workers, who judged her by her conduct, so she made up her mind to act rather than to speak. She soon found that it was not the learned, nor even the rich, who understood her best. This seemed fortunate for her cause, for she needed more workers than theorists. She had attended

meetings enough to prove that a new cleavage amongst her subjects was inevitable.

All the while the great high priest was watching her career with mixed amazement and interest. Several times he proposed to himself to pay her a visit and get the facts at first hand, instead of depending upon rumours, but the same number of times his courage failed. He had heard of her intimate relations with the seer, whom she had abducted from his jurisdiction, and whom she had tried at the palace for the crime of attempted regicide, and every time he proposed to pay her a visit he feared he might fall into the awful presence of the seer, his former prisoner. His holiness summoned courage at last. He entered the palace without pre-arranging his visit, and fervently hoped that the seer would not be there. He had fully expected that Satamarti and the king, if they allowed him to enter at all, would receive him very coolly. To his great surprise, they welcomed him with extreme cordiality, extending to him all the privileges and honours of their most favoured guests. The seer, who happened to be in the palace at the time, also renewed the acquaintance of his holiness, and welcomed him with equal sincerity. They were now all so busily engaged in discussing their principles and future plans that the bygones connected with the crime of attempted regicide completely escaped the memory of the great high priest, and he found his mind and sympathies gradually yielding to the logic of the new system of organisation. He was soon able to think out the whole of the new world for himself in his own way. Just before he took his departure, the bygones having recurred to his mind, he said half apologetically that he had for long felt that he had the right ideas and sympathies in the wrong category, whereby his actions had been misdirected, and that when the struggles and dangers of the times were reckoned with he should be entitled to a fair amount of consideration from those whose prejudices against priestcraft were so strong. While declaring his deepest sympathy with the new movement towards self-rule, he did not think it prudent

that he should work openly with the little band of enthusiasts who were taking up the cause with so much ability, for there were many good citizens who would have nothing to do with organisations in which priests had anything to do or say. Satamarti, backed up by the seer, could not exactly see in this light the objection raised by his holiness. She did not want many adherents to go on with, and claimed that the ideal should stand or fall for its own sake, and not for the sake of the individuals who attempted to carry it out. The priests had as much right to live as other citizens, she contended, and if they could not live up to their ideals, they were no worse than her other subjects, all of whom were equally responsible for the circumstances under which all classes were obliged to fight bravely for their own lives. There was the same degree of inconsistency in all ranks of society, and each had to support equally illogical theories with the same selfish aim of defending its own interests. If this reasoning was not sound, then she was, she contended, the greatest criminal in all Garsch, for the palace, where the highest virtues were supposed to repose, was the nest in which the deepest intrigues had been hatched, and she thanked the gods of Garsch that she would not much longer be able to call that historic spot her own. The riches and glitter of the palace had been the source of more poverty and bloodshed than the weapons of all the kings and other warriors of Garsch. She was now going to put a stop to all these crimes or perish in the attempt. Although all her beloved subjects may have shared equally the guilt of selfishness, they could not all suffer alike for their godless deeds, and she rejoiced to know and feel that the gods of Garsch had given her the strength and courage to take upon her own unworthy self the iniquities of all the generations of her beloved kingdom.

The first bond of fellowship comprised Satamarti, the great high priest, Singhya, and Nagdhara. His holiness opened his home, with the gardens, for them, placing them on the same footing as his own family, and in like manner Satamarti opened her palace and grounds.

The spirit of inspiration had not taken hold of the king or any member of the priest's family. Every seer and seeress that came down from the mountains was a welcome insider. The band were united in bonds of the most brotherly and sisterly affection, without the faintest trace of vanity, jealousy, selfishness, or suspicion. It was the first duty of each to find out, either for himself or after discussion with one or more of the others, what was most necessary to be done, and then to do it, either singly or in organisation, without giving or receiving any orders, and the most pressing necessities were always understood to be the winning of his or her independence by living a simple and healthful life, and by producing his or her own necessaries from the land. This restriction left each member equally independent and equally free to make the best use of his surplus time, the long hours over and above those needed to produce these simple necessities, whether alone or organised with one or more of the other members of the band—or even with outsiders. From this simple beginning the members learnt to solve the greatest problems that the world had ever seen. Above all they were growing more and more conscious of their actions, and of the causes and effects of their actions, in all matters pertaining to the mental, physical, and spiritual unfoldment of each, and to the parts they were playing in relation to the conduct of their fellow-men.

Very early one bright morning the palace was visited by two seers. Each was carrying a heavy load, and the visitors were received by Satamarti. At first she thought that one of them was the seer whose guest she had been in the mountains, and she could hardly refrain from giving him an exceptionally warm greeting, but when she recalled her resolution not to be disquieted by any startling events, and when, upon closer inspection, she concluded that she had never seen these seers before, she said little, and all she did was to leave the door open, allowing the visitors to enter if they chose, and to do what they saw fit to be done, for she now acted towards the seers as if the palace were in Seerland, being as much theirs as hers. The visitors

called her back, saying that a certain seer had wished to obtain her permission to have a picture hung upon the palace wall. She replied that her consent was quite unnecessary, and then, leaving them at the door with the burdens still on their backs, she went about her ordinary duties as if the visit were a mere trifle. The visitors hung up the picture and immediately took their departure. She was vain enough to fancy that she knew something about the picture, about the artist, and about the sender; she feared that the sight of the portrait might make her dance or tremble, and yet the temptation to take a peep at it completely overmastered her. She saw that it was a beautifully-coloured, life-sized portrait of herself, with a lively background which she clearly recognised, and then she felt sure that it had been sent by the seer. She was overcome partly by the inspiring and masterly character of the art, and partly by the kindness of the artist, who was also the sender or giver, and for some time she could not summon courage enough to look at the picture again. She tried to let other duties distract her attention, but she failed. The farther she got away from the picture, the more it pulled her back. To admire one's self, said she to herself, was the highest vanity and deepest folly, and this idea gave her strength to run away a long distance from her portrait. She grew curious to know whether it was exactly life-sized; she thought there would not be much vanity in taking the measurements herself, not wishing to put her servants to the trouble of doing this work for her, and she found that the artist had not made a single mistake, although no measuring instruments had been employed. The spot in which she had been sketched, with its lights, shades, and other colours, was literally brought down from the mountains, and she was now striving to soothe the effects of the picture by reading the inscriptions and examining the other ornamental work engraved on the wooden frame. She now began to feel more deeply moved again, darted away from the scene, and remained in the air-house, where the seer had been tried for the crime of attempted regicide, until she recovered her calm. She

was not guilty of vanity, she now concluded, for the picture depicted the seer, the artist who drew it, and could not therefore be a portrait of herself. This idea fixed in her mind, she flattered herself that kissing the picture would not be vanity. She danced up smilingly and kissed it. The background, was that also the seer? she asked herself. That was the seer also. The whole range of mountains was the seer, the plains were the seer—all the world, excluding herself, was the seer. To include herself would be vanity. Once she heard the seer say: "To know thyself is to know all." All things were now in the picture. To learn all things could not be vanity. If the picture really represented herself, it might be a very ugly one, and only seemed beautiful to her own selfish self on account of the manifold associations which it so vividly awakened.

Amongst the mysteries which the picture revealed, one of the greatest was how it came to be left hanging on a wall of the palace. Not being able to reason out this mystery as quickly as she would like, she kept putting questions to herself in the hope that she could find solutions while she was preparing her answers.

"Is the picture a gift?" she asked herself.

"The seer would reply," said she, "'No, not in the vernacular sense, for no seer has ever anything to give.' It seems to me that everything unreal is a fact in our vernacular. Nothing that is real has any meaning in our tongue. I should learn to enjoy the beauties of the picture just as much as if it were a gift. Maybe seers have nothing to give because they have everything to give. They have so much of everything that nothing is worth giving. The seer drew the picture because he loves art. Fie! it is not a picture, because the artist does not love his model. I posed because I love art. I wonder if I could have posed if I did not love the artist. He would not let me adopt a mountain puppy because this would be painful to the puppy. Does he know how acutely he is torturing me? If he does not, he cannot be a seer. If he does, he cannot be a seer. To be in the plains is death. To be in Seerland is a thousand

deaths. Ah me! Never mind. Cheer up, poor Satamarti! Something may reveal itself some day."

All these outbursts of emotion only strengthened Satamarti's resolution to struggle against them, and to keep them from interfering with those duties which were now fully ripe to be performed. The curiosity which her actions had evoked amongst her subjects was beginning to die away; to see her walk about with seers and sages, helping and comforting the poor, engaging in their menial activities, became an affair of frequent occurrence; very few could understand her performances, and many believed that she had lost her wits. There was no longer the same demand for her Royal messages. She really ceased to be Queen of Garsch, although she had not tendered her resignation, and had received no formal dismissal. The coinmongers were bringing the people to the brink of revolution by insisting upon their rights, namely, the gathering of the abundant crops into their newly-built granaries, but they were still disputing amongst themselves whether they could best attain their object by the aid of the king and his warriors. Those who worked so hard to secure the crops in good condition refused to let them be moved until their just shares had been allotted to them, and as an unusually large number of citizens had been working in the fields, the resistance to the demands of the coinmongers was strong. The workers declared that up to this time they had received nothing beyond their food, or its equivalent in coins, and they expressed their fear that if the crops were once removed into the new granaries, no shares would be allotted to them. Delay was on the side of the workers, and the coinmongers could hardly make any move, because there was now no longer any strong arm in Garsch by which their demands could be enforced with weapons of war. The question now was, who was the supreme ruler of Garsch, and many were already putting the question, who the supreme sovereign was going to be. A strong body of citizens petitioned the king with the view of inducing him to resume the supreme sovereignty, stating that they had been forced to take this course owing to the strange and aberrant

conduct of Satamarti, his only daughter, whom, they admitted, they promoted to be queen in violation of the laws of Garsch. They greatly feared that the gods were now going to punish them for this crime; they regretted that Satamarti, their former princess, had accepted the title and responsibility of queen, and they hoped that, by the death of their king, whose life they prayed the gods to spare for many long years, Satamarti would regain her wits, and would reign in his stead, according to the laws of Garsch.

The king pleaded for delay in answering their petition until he ascertained the amount of unanimity which prevailed amongst the citizens of Garsch as to his resumption of the sovereignty. The petitioners replied that the question raised was very difficult to answer, that some of the commoners had faith in Satamarti's system of government, and that the lawyers were disputing whether the commoners were a legally constituted body. The king pointed out by way of reply that further delay was now inevitable, for the amount of unanimity amongst the citizens could not be determined without the commoners, adding that Satamarti's affection for her subjects was growing stronger and stronger in proportion as the hate of her enemies, which her waywardness had evoked, was growing more bitter; that he was himself not one of Satamarti's disciples, her strange ways not being understood by him, but she was his child, his only child, whom he had not the heart to forsake; she had been his counsellor, his companion, his nurse, his truest friend, and he would see all Garsch go to perdition rather than indulge in conduct towards her which could be construed as being unfatherly acts. He pleaded for delay in order that he might have ample time to consider whether her seemingly strange conduct was the fruit of her deep and abiding love for her father and her late subjects. It was a law of Garsch, he continued, that when any member of the Royal family had a deranged mind, the dynasty of that line of sovereigns must come to an end, so delay was necessary until the condition of his daughter's faculties had been examined and

determined by a commission of medicine-men appointed by the great high priest. It now rested with his loyal and law-abiding subjects to say whether at that moment Garsch had or had not a king. If he were still their king, he had only one message to deliver to them until the condition of Satamarti's mind had been duly determined. That message was that his dearly-beloved subjects should meanwhile try the experiment of self-rule. Not only the petitioners, but the coin-mongers and a few other classes also, blamed their king for exercising over-indulgence towards his daughter, declaring that he might have saved their kingdom had he much more largely restricted her liberty; that they had no use for a king who was so tender-hearted towards his daughter; that, in order to be like the nations around them, they needed a king, and that they were bound to have a king who would make the kingdoms of the earth tremble at his awful nod.

The coinmongers, above all, declared that delay could no longer be entertained. If the crops, they said, were not at once removed into their new granaries, the foods would spoil, and there would then be a great famine throughout all the land. Their class was already being ruined, they contended, through the unwarrantable delay of the king, for from their stores they were obliged to be doling out supplies to the workers in order to prevent a revolution. The latter proved that they kept records of the time they had worked, also of the quantities of work they had performed, and they were demanding supplies from the local granaries in quantities proportionate to the work completed. The coinmongers insisted upon appointing a new king, a brave warrior who would help them to defend their rights, and a number of candidates for the post was already in the arena. Some classes wanted to elevate a warrior citizen of Garsch to the supreme sovereignty, but every great soldier whose name had been mentioned was so severely gossiped about in matters relating to his private character and public career, and the uncon-stitutional nature of the proposal was so obstinately

denounced by lawyers and judges, that a majority of the citizens seemed to grow in favour of selecting a foreign king. Yet this alternative was equally unconstitutional. A king of Garsch had to grow. He could not be made. The demand for a new king now became imperative on account of the many rumours of danger both through enemies without and enemies within.

One morning, very early, the members of Satamarti's band were in the palace discussing the duties to be performed that day, when two seers and two seeresses entered the gate. The gatekeeper, although he had received instructions to let seers pass through with the same freedom as the most privileged members of her household, entered the palace and announced their arrival. Satamarti hastened out, and after a short time spent in doubting recognised the seer and seeress whose guest she had been in the mountains. She began to dance with delight, so pleased was she to see her late host and hostess, but recalling her resolution to remain calm under all circumstances, she strove to control her feelings. In a moment of forgetfulness she was on the point of rushing into the arms of the seer, but timely succeeded in changing her course, and embraced and kissed the seeress instead. It struck her that she should first thank him for the beautiful picture which he had sent to the palace, but she refrained, not on account of her quivering voice, not on account of the fear of uttering some endearing word to him which might overleap the bounds of modesty—she refrained because it occurred to her that the picture was not a gift. He asked her if she would allow him and his companions to enter the palace. She replied that all seers and seeresses were members of her band, and that his question could not therefore be put. She suspected that there might be some mystery underlying his question, still felt that she should make some remark about his charming picture, and then, continuing her reply, she said:

"Every seer and seeress has an equal right to examine the fascinating picture—I mean the fascinating work of the artist."

She then went back into the palace. The visitors all

followed, having ascertained through her replies how thoroughly she understood the customs of Seerland, and how pleased she would be to introduce them into the palace.

After entering the palace, and being assured that they were not intruding, the visitors sat down upon the floor, which implied that they were going to stay a while, yet the seer and seeress had a presentiment that they ought to be up and doing something.

"Do you hear that rumbling noise?" said the seeress.

Nobody else heard it save the seer.

"If there is any danger in the wind or sky, we should be up and doing," said the great high priest.

"Let us fear nothing," said Nagdhara.

"How is it, Satamarti, that you allow us to examine the picture," said Singhya, "while you seem to deny the same privilege to the citizens of Garsch?"

"Our citizens cannot appreciate its perfections," said Satamarti. "They do not desire to see it, so I am depriving them of no privilege. I could not teach them half its charms. If I could convince any of my friends that the art is so enrapturing and bewitching as it really is, and if they repeated to others my high appreciation of its merits, the palace would be stormed by visitors who would want to view it, not on account of the inspiring charms of the art, but because so-and-so had seen and loved the picture, and they desired to be up to date. Life is too valuable to be thus frittered away in allowing people to flatter their vanity, and they should wait till they are moved by an inspiration to study Seerland art. The picture can only be truly admired by people who have climbed the mountains. If I opened the palace to all the world, the visitors would not know how to organise in such a way as to give each an equal chance to view the picture; each would want to stand in the way of others, and would try to prevent others from obtaining as good a view as himself. All this rioting can be traced to people's desire to flatter their vanity, and I would rather see the picture go to smash than encourage such unbridled anarchy."

Fearing that her words might not be a true exposition of seer philosophy, Satamarti was now silently eyeing the seer, trying to find out by the expression of his face whether her remarks had met with his approval. She only saw an expression of indifference, and yet she well knew that, whenever she could only see the ripple of a smile in a seer's face, another seer might be able to see and hear explosions of laughter.

"The deepest realities contained in the picture do not yet appear to have been noticed," suggested Singhya.

"I can also see that the artist has brought the mountains down into the plains," said Satamarti. "One cannot level down the mountains without levelling up the plains. A mountain is that which is hard to climb. When one has thoroughly trained oneself to climb up, the mountain then vanishes."

"If there were no mountains, there would be nothing to strive for," said Singhya.

"Mountains and plains are dreams," said Satamarti. "When the seemingly highest mountain is once scanned, then still higher mountains expand before the view."

The rumbling noise which the seeress first heard was now growing so distinct that it thrilled in the ears of all who were in the palace. It seemed to be getting nearer and nearer, but none of Satamarti's band feared, no matter what was going to happen.

"The citizens of Garsch cannot be expected to give up their old habits and customs all at once," said the great high priest.

A deep and prolonged silence now prevailed, each looking at the others as if desirous to know what new subject his holiness was going to introduce.

"For a while our band must live with one foot on the mountains and the other on the plains," continued the priest. "I myself am in deep sympathy with the spirit of compromise, but we cannot deviate from our first principle, personal reform attained through free organisation, although endless compromises may be made with respect to details and to methods of proceeding with our stupendous task. Consistent with our

strife for reform, we should shock the citizens as little as possible. It would be better to shock them a little bit than to neglect our reforms too much."

"All these things are relative," said Singhya. "I once knew a number of citizens who protested against a neighbour who introduced the custom of entering the holy place without sandals on his feet, explaining as his reason that the holy place should be occupied only by people of humble mind and simple life, but they continued their protests, declaring that their neighbour had no right to shock people who desired to worship at the holy shrine, and before the affair could be settled, which lasted a good while, they got so much accustomed to their neighbour's bare feet that they felt shocked no longer. In the meantime he also began to leave off his toga, and they did not feel more shocked at this disgrace than they felt when he began to do without his sandals."

As it was the great high priest who had introduced this subject, every member of the band was now silent as if waiting for him to continue the discussion, and as if curious to know what the subject had to do with any matter connected with the order of the day. The rumbling noise now began at times to deafen the members of the band, but none wished to speak or act as if he were afraid. His holiness was putting questions as if he were anxious to know whether the seer and Satamarti understood each other, and in a tone of voice as if he were in a hurry to get something done, but it is probable that his haste had little or nothing to do with the rumbling noise which was dinning in his ears, as he did not look as if he were more afraid than other members of the band, who seemed to think that he was introducing a far-fetched question for discussion, just at a moment when other duties appeared to be much more pressing. Satamarti assured his holiness that, in her opinion, she understood the seer pretty well after her long course of training. The seeress then broke the silence by saying:

"Satamarti understands the philosophy of the picture, which is one of the deepest and most practical questions which the seer could put to her, and if she understands

a marriage gift, she has the key to the solution of her marriage problems."

The mention of the word marriage was enough to make Satamarti jump in every direction at one bound, but she admirably well succeeded in subduing her emotions. Yet she wondered what marriage had to do with any duties which the band had in hand for that day. She was impatiently awaiting some explanation from the priest, who had to do with such matters, and yet a word from the seer would also be a great revelation to her.

"Satamarti understands the seer, and the seer understands Satamarti," repeated the great high priest, "and this mutual understanding is the essential of a marriage tie in Seerland and in the seer tongue, and—"

At this juncture Satamarti covered her face with her hands in order to hide her expression, but having failed to stop trembling all over her body, she rushed out into the portico, and, sitting down on the floor, was striving to make up her mind whether she should weep or laugh. The seeress went out to console her by sharing her feelings, and then she began to whisper something in Satamarti's ear. Fearing that the seer might hear what was being said, Satamarti darted off into the garden, and dodged behind a cluster of shrubs. When the seeress came up the whispering was resumed in more audible tones.

"We know how passionately you love the seer," said the seeress confidentially. "All your movements and expressions, even also the tone of your voice, prove the depth of your love for him, and you should not try to hide your passion from us any longer. Now, bear up, my dear sister, and you will be the happiest girl in all the world."

"Oh, weak creature that I am!" exclaimed Satamarti. "How bravely I have struggled to hide my soul-stirring passion from him and you, knowing my unworthiness of his love! How pained I now feel at my lack of success! Oh, the painful thought of his indifference towards me!"

"Cheer up, my dear sister!" said the seeress, taking

Satamarti by the hand, lifting her to her feet, and wiping away her tears with her hair. "The seer loves you tenderly. Your noble actions have been the only force that has ever moved him. Your youthful strength backs up your will to conquer. The world is yours, O my dear and fair sister! You have saved him from torture. Let him now save you. Come along and let us now hear what your priest has to say."

As soon as Satamarti heard that the seer loved her she turned all colours, and did not know what posture to assume. She was weeping with her eyes and laughing with her lips. Her composure having been restored, the seeress asked her to lean on her and follow her back into the palace. They glided slowly and silently along. Before they had reached the portico, the members of the band, excepting the seer and the priest, came out to meet them. Singhya and Nagdhara joined in to help the seeress, but before they had gone many steps Satamarti felt a pressure as if they wanted to force her faster than she felt inspired to go, when, all in a moment, she caught each and dashed both Singhya and Nagdhara violently upon the ground. No sooner had they fallen than she picked them up as quickly as they fell, embraced and kissed them, humbly apologised, and inquired with deep concern whether they had been hurt. On being assured that no harm had been done, Satamarti continued to glide along with her head reclining on the shoulder of the seeress. While entering the palace Satamarti was walking alone, and was bracing up her courage to meet the seer again. She saw him standing and gazing upon her, and she again began to falter in his calm yet majestic presence.

"My function as great high priest of Garsch ceases this day," said his holiness, "and the noises which all this morning have been dinning in our ears are very ominous. Some enemy must be nearing the palace, and must be on the point of taking possession. Let us not be afraid, for the enemy has yet to reckon with our gods. In Garsch the ceremonies connected with all Royal marriages have to be conducted by the great

high priest, and while you were out in the garden I discovered that the priest's robes and other costumes used at these marriages have not yet been removed from the palace. In the Garschian code relating to marriages the essentials are the wedding garments and the benediction. Also there are many other ceremonies connected with Royal marriages, but these will have to be omitted unless we wait and run the risk of being drummed out of the palace."

His holiness then hastily put on his robes, and having found suitable wedding garments for the seer, Satamarti, the seeress, Singhya, and Nagdhara, he pronounced the benediction, asking, in conclusion, whether anything remained to be done to complete the marriage according to the customs of Seerland.

"By being yourself you have conquered all," said the seer to Satamarti, after all the wedding garments had been taken off and removed from the palace. "To conquer all is to be all."

Save for these words and the strikingly impressive tone in which they had been uttered, Satamarti could have borne the strain, but now she reeled, and her companions were in doubt whether she was going to rush out again into the garden or fall at the feet of the seer. After a pause, dramatic to behold, she fell at his feet. He took her by the hands. She felt a stream of his life, as she also gazed into his eyes, passing through her arms into her heart. After rushing through all her body, gathering parts of her life as it flowed along, a new living stream passed out of her into the arms of the seer, whence it spread throughout all his body. She felt as if she had been changed into a man. He felt as if he had been changed into a woman. Then he let her arms go free. She raised herself up. There she stood, a statue of Victory—erect, bold, strong.

The enemy now came up in great haste and surrounded the palace, apparently knowing that the late Queen of Garsch was inside, and the exits were closely watched as if she were to be captured while attempting to make her escape.

CHAPTER XVI

GARSCH IN THE STATE OF FLUX

PRINCE VISHTA, a younger brother of Utsikta and a son of the King of Parsi, had now acquired the princedom vacated through the sad death of his brother. This prince powerfully helped his father to revive the Kingdom of Parsi, which had been reduced to poverty and disgrace by the untimely and degrading death of Utsikta; he was doing great havoc amongst the surrounding barbarians and tribes, was often returning home with the immense booty wrung from his enemies through his glorious victories, and it was rumoured that he was undertaking these daring exploits as a training in order to prepare him for an invasion of Garsch in revenge for the death of his brother, Utsikta. Parsi was probably now the foremost nation in the world, the supremacy of Garsch was doubtful on account of the failure of King Shahu to govern with his usual vigour and enthusiasm, while the citizens were too proud to accept the sovereignty of the king of any second-rate State. Shahú was still the nominal king, and when asked whether he intended to continue his rule he would reply that he would submit to the will of his subjects, but as the general will was constantly changing its force and centre, the reply amounted to a plea for delay, which by no means satisfied the coinmongers, so they petitioned the King of Parsi, who agreed to act as their ruler, and to defend their interests. When the workers heard of this compact they were amazed and irritated, and it was not till then that the King of Parsi discovered their power. They sent a petition to Prince Vishta, who consented to rule Garsch in their interests, and when this clashing of sovereignty became known there was much agitation, which led to a good deal of bloodshed amongst the Garschians. A compromise was finally effected, by which the King of Parsi was to enjoy the title of King of Garsch, while Prince Vishta was to occupy the palace and to exercise

the sovereignty with regard to the internal affairs of Garsch.

The old veteran warriors of Garsch, having heard of this compact, came together to discuss the situation, Shahu being present by special invitation, as he was still their leader, and they unanimously resolved to remain faithful to him, and to recognise no other king. He implored them to suppress their ardour, and to allow events to take their normal and logical course. The commoners, owing to the many sensational rumours, now gained in strength and popularity, but as they had also been doing a flourishing business in placing reports from Satamartian centres of influence, they saw rich prospects in store for them. The disquieting situation in Garsch, bordering on a civil war, and provoked by the proposed change of sovereignty, forced the King of Parsi to lead an army to suppress the Garschians and to enforce his claims as their legally constituted sovereign. A second army, under the command of Prince Vishta, was despatched to seize and occupy the palace. The King of Parsi met with no opposition, but felt enraged because the citizens did not welcome him with open arms. The armies of Garsch had no leaders to oppose his march, and when he recovered his self-possession he issued a Royal edict to the effect that he was going to return to Parsi and remain there until the necessary formalities incident to a change of sovereignty had been executed, and until the gods of Parsi had obtained a solid footing in Garsch. Not knowing what to say or do under the sudden change, the Garschians kept the peace for a short time.

Under the tuition of his father, the King of Parsi, Prince Vishta had been a close student of the history of his kingdom. Before starting on his expedition to take possession of the palace, he discussed with the ablest commentators the nature of Utsikta's enterprise, when this unfortunate prince disastrously failed to enforce his claim to the hand and heart of Satamarti, the then Princess of Garsch. In the light of this lesson, these authorities, backed up by Vishta's soothsayer,

urged extreme caution, and warned this young prince to beware of international complications. It was their unanimous conviction that Utsikta's failure was caused by his own rashness on the one hand and Satamarti's extraordinary self-possession on the other. Prince Vishta therefore thought it prudent to despatch a special messenger to the palace, who should state the day and hour at which he was going to arrive in the palace for the purpose of taking possession. Satamarti had organised her work in such a way that the palace would be found empty several hours before the arrival of Vishta's army, but a good deal of delay had been caused by the festivities connected with the marriage of the seer and Satamarti, so that a band of soldiers, with Vishta at their head, had succeeded in surrounding the palace before the wedding party had made their escape. The appointed hour had not yet quite arrived, and this was the reason why the soldiers did not at once effect an entrance but guarded the exits instead. Prince Vishta did not consult Satamarti's convenience with regard to the time when she should vacate the palace, he only stated through his messenger the day and hour of his arrival to take possession, yet he expected a reply from her, which she did not think prudent or necessary to send. The inmates of the palace, having completed the marriage ceremonies, immediately took their departure, and Vishta was the first who saw the party walking towards the gate. He saw the seer looking up to the sun and saying that haste was not necessary, as the hour fixed by Vishta for Satamarti's departure had not yet quite arrived. The wedding party did not seem to have noticed the soldiers; they went on talking and laughing as if they had not been seen or heard by anybody, which gave so much offence to Vishta that he ordered his army to surround the marriage feast-makers, and to make as much alarm as possible with their voices, drums, and bugles, as if he wanted to inspire them with the fear of being captured, but being so deeply impressed by their coolness and self-possession, and having recalled the dangers of international complications, he allowed them to pass

out unharmed. This was a sore day for Vishta, for he had long been inventing excuses for capturing Satamarti, as he had always been a great admirer of her charms, her dignity, and her courage, although he had never been willing to defend her waywardness.

Having occupied the palace, Vishta's first act was to introduce the gods of Parsi into Garsch. He allowed King Shahu and Satamarti to retain their personal effects, their metal coins, and their precious stones, but he deprived them of all titles to the Royal domains.

All Garsch was ablaze to know whom Vishta was going to marry, now that he had become the foremost prince in the world. The commoners foresaw the abundant harvest of reports which was rapidly ripening for them. They had literally to besiege the palace in order to obtain authentic reports as to the princesses with whom Vishta was associating. The prince was spending so much of his time abroad, or was so busy receiving visitors and messengers at the palace, all about the solution of his marriage problem, that he had little time left personally to supervise the government of Garsch. The commoners worried him so much for reports about his intentions and prospects that at last he issued an edict abolishing them altogether, stating that the citizens could safely rely upon his experience and ability, that it was not necessary for them to know what was taking place at the palace, and that any new law which had to be obeyed would be written on a scroll and hung up in the public hall. When the citizens found out about this new law they angrily declared that Vishta did not know how to govern them, and that they would teach him a few simple lessons in the science of government. Yet many felt disposed to give him a chance to find out a few things for himself. He could not see how impossible it was to suppress the commoners, for nobody could prevent people, whether or not they were elected, whether or not they were political specialists, from inventing, carrying, and spreading reports, and even if they could be suppressed, still nobody could prevent citizens from inventing rumours for their own consumption.

The commoners themselves clearly saw the effect of this new edict issued by Vishta, who had not had the good manners to consult them in the matter. Nearly all of them had been intimately acquainted with Satamarti, many also having been her dearest friends, and very few of them believed that she had gone out of her mind. Their business was to carry reports, authentic, if possible, but in any case attuned to the end they had in view, and it was clear to them that, failing to get reports from the palace, some other centre had to be chosen, and such centre would naturally be under Satamarti's sphere of operation or influence. Accordingly they visited her in groups or singly, and discussed her new system of government with her. She informed them that she still loved her late subjects, and that as many thought her mad because they did not understand her, therefore she did not herself intend to spread her ideas amongst them, but that if her friends chose to do so, she would be as open-minded to them as she had been while she occupied the palace. The palace had been regarded as the centre—it had often been called *the* centre—from which reports had emanated. Now she had, she said, a number of centres, all focussing into one, and reports might be arranged to issue therefrom which could not be distinguished from palace rumours. All the members of her various groups, she said, were quite capable of producing reports which would be welcomed by the citizens of Garsch, and this work could be organised amongst them just in the same way as all their other work. The commoners thanked her sincerely for her encouragement, gathered a number of reports and rumours from her and from the late great high priest of Garsch, also from other members of her centre, and expressed their conviction that Vishta would some day be sorry for having abolished their office, and for his refusal to allow any reports to issue from the palace.

Vishta's princely gifts and brilliant and costly entertainments, both in the palace and abroad, were a severe strain upon his own resources and upon those of Garsch. He had been rich in lands, coins, jewels, and

booty, the Royal domains of Garsch vastly increased his riches, the King of Parsi encouraged the world to believe that all Parsi and Garsch belonged to him, the young prince's prospects in his matrimonial adventures thereby being immensely improved, yet the king was amongst the first who foresaw that great caution was needed. The prince felt sure that all the princesses eligible for marriage were ready to fall at his feet as soon as he gave the nod; he took a keen and cruel delight in keeping them in painful suspense as to his intentions, and his long and unaccountable delays became a source of alarm to the Parsians, as well as a source of suspicion to the Garschians. For the latter all reports and rumours from the palace were getting provokingly monotonous, and new sources of information had to be tapped. The palace itself was beginning to show signs of neglect, and the occupant had to get loans of coins from coinmongers to keep it in repair. The King of Parsi foresaw that, unless his son had made a choice of a consort before their substance was squandered, their kingdoms would soon count for little amongst the nations of the world. Through his policy of matrimonial delays, the prince, the great lover of riotous living, was forced to allow the palace to fall into the hands of a rich coinmonger, who occupied it with his family, leaving only a small area of the Royal domain, on which was built a residence for Prince Vishta, so that when the latter became reduced to this low state of poverty he could not secure the hand and heart of any of the princesses whom he had been wooing, and his influence as ruler of Garsch came to be purely nominal.

Over and over again the Garschian coinmongers petitioned the King of Parsi, reminding him of his sacred promise to protect their interests, but the same reply was always forthcoming, that he never agreed to interfere with the internal affairs of Garsch, this being the prerogative of his son, Vishta, and that he could only use his personal influence with him in their behalf. The policy of Prince Vishta having tended to favour the workers, he claimed as much honour and praise

therefor as if he had been actively engaged in fighting their battles, and he laid much stress on the fulfilment of his promise to defend their interests, adding that his health had broken down in defence of their cause, and that all his riches had been sacrificed for their good.

Through the intimate relations between the commoners and the Satamartian band, the former began to develop a sense of foresight into future events, and their forecasts turned out to be so full of insight that it made little difference whether the predictions or the events were related.

Asserting and enforcing their claim to the fruits of their work, the under-classes continued their employments with revived energy. The over-classes were not strong enough to check this tendency, and their strength was further curtailed by the ever-diminishing quantity of metal coins put into circulation by the workers, exchanges having been largely effected in proportion to the amount of work stored up in the things produced. When a job could not be standardised, when equal lengths of time gave title to equal fruits of the work done, there was then much simplicity in the way of keeping the records, although there were some complaints. These were for some workers removed by adopting *common* time, a plan by which the time spent upon the jobs by ordinary workers having ordinary experience was carefully noted, and then the clever workers, who did the jobs in less than the ordinary time, received an advantage proportionate to the time they saved by their extra cleverness. Amongst the slow and inexperienced workers there was much grumbling over this arrangement, but as they were in the minority, they thought it prudent to submit. Foremost amongst the grumblers were the coinmongers, whose coins were losing their value as fast as they were going out of circulation, for they had learnt to do nothing but higgling, which trade was now rapidly falling into disuse. They had either to become changed into workers or to run the risk of getting nothing to eat or otherwise enjoy.

At first the commoners thought that Garsch was

undergoing a complete transformation, that a comparatively silent revolution was taking place, but having thoroughly discussed the situation with Satamarti and other members of the Satamartian band, they concluded that no substantial change had yet taken place. As formerly, the Garschians were governed by reports and rumours. Their system of government could, in the minds of experts, be reduced to a simple formula. So-and-so says such-and-so, which has had a so-and-such effect upon So-and-so. When So-and-so and company became such important personages that their whereabouts, the centre of their activities, was clamoured for, then some other So-and-so and company had, if possible, to come to the forefront. There had to be variety to satisfy the Garschian mind. The clever and diligent workers were storing up riches, and they bitterly complained that a part of the fruits of their industry had to be taken from them to keep their poorer, more indolent, and less intelligent brethren. Some there were, however, who did not want to do more work than was necessary to enable them to live a plain life, and when these found out that they needed less land to work upon than their more ostentatious brethren, they complained, wanting to know where the latter had obtained the titles to their extra pieces of land. The clever and diligent workers, although they were much more numerous and had their riches more evenly divided amongst themselves, were really by degrees displacing the former coinmongers, but they were still discontented, and were looking around for some other form of government. No class in Garsch was satisfied with the national situation; all were on the point of revolt, but not knowing what to do, or which way to turn, or whom they should revolt against, they remained meanwhile in a state of agitated suspense.

These facts explain the reason why Satamarti did not wish to spread her ideas about government too hastily amongst the Garschians. She still loved her late subjects most tenderly; her chief aim for the moment was to prevent bloodshed amongst them, and she felt convinced that the best thing she could do for them

was to leave them to continue their existing régime till experience should ripen them to find out for themselves a higher and a nobler form of government.

Many of the commoners were now joining her centres. A few of them in explaining the situation to their former patrons pointed out the effects produced on the clever and industrious workers by the habit of heaping up riches. The extra wares, they said, made by the workers, which they could not use up themselves, would have no value unless there were poor people, or others with strong and ungoverned desires, who wanted these wares, so that such riches could not exist without people who needed or desired more than they could make for themselves. The diligent workers, the speakers admitted, had as much right to work hard and long as the idlers had to do little or nothing, but if the latter refused to starve, the former had to bear the burden either of making them work or of keeping them in disease and idleness. Sometimes it was easier to find them something to do and make them do it, while in other cases it was easier to let them do little or nothing. The sturdy workers had so wide a choice in these matters that they had no longer cause to complain, and so, as the speakers hoped, there need be no riots or toleration of rioters.

In the days of the palace the Garschians were governed. Now they were led. There was in their system of government a change of name, it was true, but the essence remained.

CHAPTER XVII

SATAMARTI LOSES GARSCH AND GAINS THE UNIVERSE

A DYING process from one point of view may be the beginnings of life from another. During this epoch in the history of Garsch some commentators saw the nation in a state of decay only, while others, who were onlookers of the so-called ruin, saw also therein the throbbings of a new life. Where the one saw disease the other saw cast-off scales. From these two points of vision, and there are many stages between them, the

decline and revival of the commoners will be differently recorded and understood.

There was no general custom regulating the choice of commoners. Any citizen could appoint himself, and there was nothing to hinder his advance save the adverse attitude of his patrons, namely, those who listened to his reports and rumours. In some cases a number of citizens would assemble and would suggest that a certain person well known to them, usually one of those assembled together, would make an excellent news-carrier. In a few instances the position became hereditary and remained so for several generations. Sometimes a commoner would act for all the citizens in a village or district, while another would have a few patrons in several quarters. Some patrons had one commoner for special and another for general news. The commoners were rarely engaged to carry news, reports, or rumours for a fixed period of time. The coins they received for their work were given voluntarily by their patrons, no pre-arranged bargains having been entered into, but for special or very sensational events they often received tips. In busy seasons they usually helped their patrons in fields, shops, or kitchens, and were treated as members of the families. By this custom they became very expert and useful in many branches of industry, and often became teachers of their patrons and their families. For their meetings they enjoyed free access to the public hall in Sindhi, the capital of Garsch. They met at irregular intervals mainly for the purpose of discussing codes of honour relating to their profession, but concerning the getting and spreading of news there was a good deal of jealousy and rivalry amongst them, each striving to win fame and patronage by the startling and alarming character of his reports.

The Satamartian band was steadily gaining in influence, and there were centres in all the leading quarters of Garsch. The members were all workers, but they could not fairly be called such in the usual sense. The ordinary worker, if he was honest and diligent, always felt in his conscience that his time

should be fully occupied in making wares to supply his present and future necessities, or making exchanges with the view of bringing about the same results. He looked upon work as being something painful imposed upon him by nature, by man, by the gods, or by himself. The Satamartian worker stopped working, he made it a question of conscience to do so, when he made enough to keep him over till the next crops were ripe, which, due to the efficient system of organisation adopted amongst the members of the various centres, occupied an exceedingly small proportion of his time. He was then free to devote his attention to many pursuits which were not directly necessary for his bodily subsistence. As he was always able to do much more work, each member being a worker, than was necessary to maintain his bodily efficiency, he began to lose the idea of working altogether, or to regard work as a pleasurable and health-giving occupation. Work was also a privilege, and a reason why he did not do more of it was that he could not do so without other members being robbed of equal privileges.

Proportionate to their members, the commoners exercised greater influence than any other class in all Garsch. They possessed more all-round intelligence. They were great commentators and historians. The number of them which joined the Satamartian band was not great, but proportionately they were much more largely represented therein than any other class. The reasons for this are not hard to explain. They had led a very precarious life, and most of them had always been at the mercy of the coinmongers. By joining the Satamartian band their subsistence was always secure, and they enjoyed much more leisure to indulge in the pleasures which their favourite pursuits afforded them. In the service of the coinmongers they largely held a relationship somewhat akin to that held by the seers in their visits to the poorest citizens of Garsch, chiefly with the difference that the services of the seers were purely voluntary, while the commoners worked for metal coins. The latter had rarely ever come into direct contact with the seers, as they only served the

over and mid-classes, but they knew much more about the seers than these knew, and understood their ideas much better. Now when Satamarti went over to the seers, the commoners did not think her actions were strange, much less did they follow the other citizens in the belief that she had gone mad, but so long as they remained the commoners of the people they were not at liberty to express their private views freely. They did not formally resign their position as commoners. They kept their movements more in the dark, professed to take a more kindly interest in the affairs of their patrons, became more friendly with them, and expressed their intention to visit them less frequently, and without the hope of receiving coins from them, yet they promised to bring news with them as formerly. By this seeming change they promoted themselves, for now they were rather news-makers than news-carriers; they thus strengthened their capacity to manage the Garschians; they proved their services to be of immense value to the Satamartian band, and they exercised greater power than formerly in checking riotous tendencies amongst the citizens.

Having associated themselves with the Satamartian band, one of the first problems which the commoners, aided by Satamarti and the seers, set to work to solve was how to deal with the now dominant force, the diligent workers. These were much more numerous than the idlers and incapables combined. The total quantity of wares which they could not use up was very great, but what was owned by each was very small. Yet a large number of workers did not want to make more wares than they could either use or circulate by means of free exchange, for they liked to have a good deal of time left to be devoted to amusing themselves and visiting one another. They therefore could never have any wares to give away to people poorer than themselves. The commoners had seen how hard it was to dislodge the coinmongers from their position, and they now foresaw that it would be much harder to dislodge the diligent workers, for they were more numerous than the coinmongers had ever been, and were ready to

fight for their little as bravely as the latter had ever fought for their much. This seemed to be a really new situation, and so the commoners were striving to increase their strength and influence as much as possible in order to check the much rioting that was expected. Satamarti strove to aid them by making it easier for the diligent workers to join her band than to run the risk of their lives in defence of the wares that they could not use up.

When Satamarti left the palace, although she was deprived of the Royal domains, she still was rich in coins and personal effects. A short period later, Prince Vishta having had to dispose of these lands to satisfy the claims of the coinmongers, she regained possession of a portion of her former domains. These she parcelled out in small plots, building a cottage on each plot, and gave the free use thereof to members of her band. She retained the ownership in her own name, fearing that squabbling might arise, and then she would be in a position to decide which occupants were making the best use of her cottages, and she would only retain those who were the most useful and diligent in forwarding the cause. In the midst of these cottages she had a large building constructed, which was intended to be free for the common use of all the cottagers who could organise harmoniously together. There were also factories, some for private and some for common use, and here so many wares were made and freely exchanged that coins soon fell almost entirely into disuse among the groups. On account of the great care she had taken in the selection of cottagers, there was so little friction that the question of ownership never arose; indeed, the idea of owning anything was rapidly vanishing, and the organisations of the members were also harmonious. This degree of concord was attained at the expense of numbers, so that her original band of workers grew very slowly. This institution became known as the centre of the Satamartian band. Other institutions, differing more in degree and in detail than in principle, gradually arose, amongst which the most conspicuous was the one organised by the late high priest, and known as the priest's centre. The organisers of these centres had the

same duties as the other members, and all enjoyed the same and equal authority. The members were really a set of wandering pilgrims, walking from one centre to another, never remaining long anywhere. In their wanderings they were always studying and discussing, or gathering news for the special use of the commoners. Many of them succeeded in climbing the mountains, and a few remained there, or, like other seers, only paid occasional visits to the plains. Every seer in the mountains was regarded as a member. The Satamartian band was a name more or less loosely given to all adherents of Satamarti's cause or her system of organisation, even to those very temporarily attached, and who could only find occasional work at one of her centres. An important body of organised workers were unconsciously carrying out some phases of her system, notably the disuse of coins in the making of exchanges, without knowing anything about the Satamartian band. Yet they still adhered to their plan of keeping time records, while many Satamartians ignored all kinds of standards.

As a seer Satamarti had a strong sense of kinship with all that lived, even with all that was. Her affection for her late subjects could not therefore grow less, but it did not follow from this that she could organise with them all, or even with a very few of them, upon the same terms. She rather expressed her affection by trying to organise with them upon their terms. To do otherwise would, she thought, be selfishness. In order to understand the terms of the coinmongers she had to cultivate a deep sense of clear and cool calculation, and when she had to face the intuitionalists she had to grasp and organise difficult situations before she could find time to pass through the slow processes of cold calculation. Then the bent of her thoughts had to be linked with the feeling of kinship. When the mind was out of tune with this feeling, then ignorance and consequent selfishness ruled.

Many citizens implored Satamarti for leave to join her band, but they could not join. They could not feel; they could not understand. One of her late servants at the palace, a servant in whom she had

placed the deepest confidence, and for whom she had the highest respect and closest affection, called upon her on several occasions, and prayed to be admitted into her band, declaring that she would and must follow her wherever she went.

"I have no band," replied Satamarti. "You are using a meaningless word, which is leading you astray in your thoughts. If you conceive our movement as a band, then let us know what you want, and we shall strive to join you. We have no leader, we have nobody who could invite you to join, and if you come here you can only awaken our attention by seeing something to be done, and then doing it. You may work alone if you like, but you cannot expect any of us to join you unless we see that you are bettering yourself in some way, and that we are at the same time bettering ourselves. You must think that we are very poor and helpless creatures if we need your work or guidance. Yet you are always praying that I should let you help me, and that I give you leave to obey my orders, and mine alone. Do not be deceived by words, I warn you, for the deplorable condition of Garsch is the penalty of language. Let me try to make you understand how to get rid of the idea of authority. Assume that I am your absolute ruler, having power enough to cause you to be put to death, and then conceive that I hand over to you all the powers which you get to understand how to exercise over yourself. After a while you will find that all my authority is gone, all of it being absorbed in yourself."

This servant was more or less typical of a large class with which Satamarti had constantly to deal. They had minds and feelings enough, but these qualities were lacking in the grace of proportion. The rush of this class to join her ranks became so great that she founded a separate institution for them, and although she succeeded in finding people who were able and willing to exercise a mild and benevolent despotism over them for a time, the experiment fell far short of causing her hopes to be realised.

During the period in which the power of the coin-

mongers was beginning to decline on account of the custom of making exchanges without coins, which had been introduced by a large body of workers, and in which the over and mid-classes petitioned the King of Parsi to act as their sovereign, he persistently refused to interfere with the internal affairs of Garsch, this power having been placed in the hands of his son, Prince Vishta. This prince having failed to rule himself, could not for long rule the citizens of Garsch. Rumours about his sayings and doings were no longer in demand, and his rule therefore ceased to have any effect. The citizens now wanted to know who was their ruler. The coinmongers, representing the over and mid-classes, constantly and forcibly demanded of the King of Parsi that he should compel all the workers of Garsch to make use of metal coins in the making of their exchanges. They explained to him that large numbers of their class were being lowered into the ranks of the workers, and that this process would continue more rapidly as time went on unless he took up arms in their defence. The king replied that he could do nothing until he had caused the gods of Parsi to obtain a firmer footing all over the Kingdom of Garsch, that if they wished their demands to prove effective they would have to aid him in this holy cause, that many citizens of Garsch could not be induced to undertake any great enterprise until it was decided which were the more to be feared, the gods of Parsi or the gods of Garsch, and which of these gods were to reward or punish them for their deeds, and that many of the citizens were determined to get rid of the Parsi dynasty altogether.

It was now reported that gods were not the most terrible foes of Garsch; that Satamarti had married a devil, the most furious devil in all the mountains; that all the mountaineer savages were devils, the most dangerous being the most hairy and naked; that King Shahu still loved his daughter, Satamarti; that he did not believe she was mad; that he had never given up the crown of Garsch, and was never formally invited to give it up; that he was therefore still their king; that

all his old warriors were still praying for the honour of fighting for him; and that if even a single devil were attacked he would bring down all the devils from the mountains and get all the citizens of Parsi and Garsch eaten up. The coinmongers sent messengers to the King of Parsi with this intelligence, inviting an answer whether the rumours made him tremble. He replied that the gods of Parsi would only protect the Garschians so long as they submitted to Parsian rule, but if they struggled for their independence they would have to rely solely upon the gods of Garsch. The king consulted the nations as to what he should do. The substance of all the replies was that foreigners would not interfere in any expeditions he dared undertake; that in view of the terrible havoc he had been making amongst barbarians and savages, they foresaw he would not be afraid to storm the mountains and exterminate the devils, and that they would watch his continued courage and bravery with deep interest. These messages from the nations the king regarded as a challenge to his daring, and he made up his mind that, whatever else his actions might prove, nobody would ever have the courage to accuse him of being a coward.

The King of Parsi now made up his mind to send two armies up the mountains, the one from Parsi and the other from Garsch, but when he heard the persistent rumours that Shahu and his warriors were training themselves to defend the devils, he only sent up the Parsian army, not necessarily just yet to make battle, but, first of all, approximately to determine their numbers and to make a treaty with the enemy if possible. His plan was to make a covenant with the devils that they should never come down from the mountains, or, at most, in very small groups at a time. In consideration for such a promise he would protect them from invasion by any civilised army.

This expedition set on foot by the King of Parsi soon became known throughout all Seerland. The seers, who well knew the Parsians and their language, knew also that, above all other tribes, they would have to meet them with tactics as their chief weapon. When

they found out the route up the mountains which the Parsian army proposed to take, they planned that isolated seers should be walking down the mountains by the same route. The Parsian commander tried to get information from them respecting their numbers, their chief haunts, and their centre of government, but they pretended not to understand the Parsian tongue, excepting a few words, and they kept pointing as if they wished him to mount higher up to obtain the desired information. Although he could not speak the seer tongue, the commander found out, when it was too late, that nobody could climb far up the mountains with baggage on his back. There was plenty of food along the route, which would have been delicious and nourishing for the seers, but the commander did not know that it was fit to be eaten. He made a hasty retreat down the mountains, but alas! before they marched to the bottom he and all his brave warriors perished from cold and hunger. No veterans in all the world would have been more able to march high up the mountains had they left their baggage in the plains, and had they first made an effort to find out something about Seerland and its inhabitants. The seers, whom they had often met in the villages of Parsi, and with whom they were too proud to speak, would have given them the desired information about the seer system of government. Through the loss of its great army the Kingdom of Parsi continued to exist only in name, but upon its ruins there remained room enough for the spread of the Satamartian band.

While Satamarti was one day working in a garden with the late high priest and other members of her first band, a body of citizens called on her, desiring to know whether the gods of Garsch were stronger or more numerous than the gods of Parsi. She asked them why they had come to her, for they had now more priests than ever, those of Garsch and those of Parsi, whose duty it was to answer such questions. They replied that they had sought answers everywhere, and could obtain no peace of mind. If they earnestly wished her to help them, she said, and if they fully

believed that she could do so, she would do her best, but as she was busily engaged in bettering herself, and had little hope of being able to better them, she asked their permission to remain at her work while she was talking to them. She then asked the priest to reply to them, as this was his special subject, and they gathered round him, while he was going on with his work, to hear what he had to say.

"The gods of Parsi are more numerous than the gods of Garsch," said the priest, "but their strengths are equal. One god high up in the ages past and up high above the mountain tops is as mighty as an army of gods seated below the clouds."

"Do you mean those hairy and naked devils who come down to us from the mountains?" said one of the visitors.

"They are devils when they are beneath your feet and beneath your notice," said the priest. "They are devils because they do not act like you. They are devils because you do not understand their ways."

"Tell us, O priest, whether the gods who reward us for our good deeds are the same as the gods who punish us for our wicked deeds," said one of the visitors.

"Your gods are beings whom you make no effort to understand," said the priest. "Your devils are beings whom you make no effort to understand. Your gods and your devils are one. They are your own ignorance. The same beings reward you for your good deeds, and punish you for your wicked deeds."

"Tell us how to be wise, O priest," said another visitor.

"Your ignorance is your only teacher," said the priest. "To know your own ignorance is to be all-wise."

The late great high priest saw most clearly that the Satamartian band could not spread rapidly, or do its work efficiently, until the seer tongue was introduced and fluently spoken by its members. He made a specialty of this duty, first learning to converse with the seer boys and girls while playing with them and undergoing a course of training in preparation for a visit to the mountains, and then he climbed up in order to

acquire a mastery of the language and institutions of Seerland. Singhya made remarkable progress after mastering the seer tongue, married the seeress, and took delight in bringing down herbs from the mountains which grew spontaneously in the plains, and when planted in their gardens greatly lightened the work of the members. Nagdhara, who also married a seeress, took a deep interest in all movements, whether or not connected with the Satamartian band, in which exchanges of wares were facilitated without the use of metal coins.

Satamarti presented the seer, her husband, with a large family of boys and girls, some being born in the plains, some in the forests, and some in the mountains. All the vigorous Garschians and sages who married seers or seeresses were remarkable for their large and robust families. When the members of the Satamartian band thoroughly understood one another, even in the vernacular, each could more or less clearly foresee and foretell what the other would do in many avocations, as their ideas were coherently related, but it was not till they had thoroughly mastered the seer tongue that they succeeded in reading each other's thoughts, and in doing so, it mattered not how far they were apart. They could not foretell the actions, or read the thoughts, of Garschians who were completely outside of their band, for they never could determine whether outsiders would act according to their selfish or their unselfish selves.

Satamarti's system of self-rule, namely, the seer system modified to suit the customs and natures of different peoples, was spreading at home and abroad as rapidly as the rule of the unself was dying out. She lost her sovereignty, it is true—she lost even also all the world — but she gained the Universe. Her desire for gain did not go beyond that, so great became the simplicity of her life.

THE END

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