

SATEE
By the courtesy of the artist, Mr. Nandalal Bose.

# 1785 ant, 8.07 $F$ V. 28 <br> THE MODERN REVIEW 

VOL. XXVIII

JULY, 1920

WHOLE
No. 163

Act I
Whirl the mam servant
Khiri
OME people have the means to be good in gorgeous comfort, and others like us groan under the burden of their goodness. Their charity grows fat in their easy chairs, while we carry out their mission with the sweat of our brows. They reap undoing fame and we early 'death.

> A voice from without
> Khiri! Khiri!
> Khiri

There she calls! No time for poor me even to nurse my grievance!

## Enters Rani Kalyan <br> Kalyan

Sulky as usual !
Khiri
That proves I am made of flesh and blood.

## Kalyani

What is your latest grievance ?

> Khiri

That I made a wrong choice when I chose you for my mistress. Why should I come to a Rani's house, if I must serve a whole world of ragged riffraff, cook for a needy neighbourhood bred in dirt, and wear out my fingers washing their dishes? and all this with nobody to help me!

Kalyan
Help you could have enough .if your tongue did not sting out all the servants I brought to my house.

## 'Khiri

You are right. I have a sensitive mind,
and cannot bear the least wrong around me. This fastidious delicacy of mine dooms me to solitude. The servants you had were pure-blooded robbers, blessed with a dangerously innocent look.

Kalyan
And what about yourself ?

## - Khiri

Holy Mother! I never claim tu exception. I freely take all that I can lay my hands on. YetI have but a single pair of them. The Creator made these to grab and to hold; therefore if you multiply hands about you, you divide your possessins.

Kalyan
But your solitude seems to be bursting with ea crowd of nephews and nieces and a miscellaneous brood of cousins. Hasn't each of them a pair of hands for their share ? You anger me and yet make me laugh.

## Khiri

If only you laughed less and got angered more, possibly you could have changed my nature.

Kalyan
Your nature change! Not even when you are đead.

## Khiri

This is encouragingly true. It makes me hope that death will be cautious about claiming me. There ! look at that lazy crowd waiting at your gate. Some of them have the story of a sick husband, who obligingly never dies, and some of an uncle, whose death remains for ever fresh with its endless claim to funeral rites. They bring their bags full of lies, to ex:
range th in solid silver. I never cease to wonder fowt certain people can have a special relisil for being cheated.

Kalyani
The poor cheat because wealth is often meaner than poverty. However, tell me why, last evening, when I fed the poor, sweets were scarce and also milk.

Khiri
Very likely the pastryman and the milk-vendor like to give you a fair chance to be cheated.-

Enter Netghbouring Wómen
They shout
Long live Rani Kalyani !
Khiri
Lrown to that ! If their stomachs had missed their fill of good fare yesterday, their lungs would shof it this morning.

Kalyan.
Who is that girl with youn, fiavi? never sawy her before.
.Second woman
It is the new bride come to our house. I have brought her for your blessing Khiri
It in easy to guess what you mean by blessing.

Kalyani
She has a sweet face.

## Second woman

But not a particle of jewelry has she brought from her father's house.

> Khiri
"They are all safely stored in your own chest," whisper those who are in the secret. Kalyáni ${ }^{-}$
Come with me into my room.
(Kalyani goes with the woman and the briae)
Fist woman
The uncommon cheeliz of that woman. Khirì
It is tiresomely common.

Third woman
But this surpasses anytking that we know.

## Khiri

Because it benefits somebody else but you.

## Third woman

Your wit makes our sides burst with laughter.

First woman
Whatever we may say, our Rani has! the biggest heart in the world.

## Khiri

In other words, she is the biggest for under the Sun.

## Fourth woman

That is true. You remember how blind Andi was loaded with money, merely for fun, it seemed to me,

## Tfird woman

And that old witch of a potter woman took away from her a real woolen rug as a reward for her facility in weeping.

Fourth woman
There is no harm in charity, but must it be foolish ?

First woman
But she has such a sweet nature.
. Khiri
A great deal of one's sweetness belongs to one's pocket.

## Fourth woman

What I object to in her is her familiarity] with vulgar people.

Third woman
She could easily have a better companion, to say the least, than Kedar's mother.

## Fourth woman

It is simply courting the applause of the vulgar.

> -Khiri

Such is the way of the world. It is all give and take. She supplies food to our mouths, ta gather back praise from them.

She gets the best of the bargain. For food is vulgar, but praise is for the great.

Fourth woman
There they come' back from the Rani's room, that woman with the bride.

First woman
Show us what you have got.
Second woman
Nothing but a pair of bracelets.
Third woman
It sounds like a practical joke.

## Fourth woman

You remember Piari got for her newly harried daughter a gold chain besides a Wair of earrings.

Second woman
Pity is not for the poor, but fortunate are they who

Fourth wowan
The generosity of the rich is ermerhobby, it is only to please themselves.

> Khiri

If only Lakshmi, the Goddess of Luck, were kind to me, I would show how to be kind in proper style.

Second woman
We pray that your wish may be fulfilled.

First woman
Stop your chatter ! I hear the Rani's footsteps!

Fouth woman
(Loudly) Our Rani is an angel of mercy.

Third woman
Wealth has been blessed by the touch of her hands.

## Enters Kalyani <br> Kalyani

What are you all so busy talking about?

## Khiri

They have been furiously ploughing the ground of your good fame, harrowing,
hoeing and raking, weedir! ever, green thing that bore flowers

Kalyani
Before you go home remember that if gifts had to flow parallel with expectations they would have run dry and disappeared from the world within a few days of creation. (She leaves the ròm).

Fourth woman
Isn't that spiteful? She must have been eavesdropping.

Khiri
No need for that. She is old enough to know by this time that the praise that grows to excess before her face is generally pruned thin behind her back.

## Fourth woman

Really, you people cuight to control your tongues.

## Third woman

If only you cáa do it, it won't matter mitetif therast of ras fail.

## Khiri

Enough for the day's work of detraction. Now you can go home with eased hearts and try to forget the smart of receiving favours. (The women ga.-Shè calls-) Kini, Bini, Kashi!
(THE gIRLS COME)
Kashi
Yes, Granny.
Kini and Bini
Yes, aunt.
Khiri
Come and take your meal.
Girls

- We are not hungry. .Khiri
For eating hunger is not essential, but opportunity is. You will find some milk in the cupboard and some sweets.

Kashi
You are doing nothing but eat all day. Appetite has its limits.

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Khiri
Buc ga things are immensely more limited. Byai, why don't I see the silver comb you nad in your hair ?

## Bini

## Poor Khetu's girl-

Khiri'
I understand. Benevolence! The plague is in the air in this house ! It is fatal for a girl of your circumstances. Our Rani indulges in wasting her means only to prove that they can never be exhausted. But for you to give is to lose for ever, do you not see the difference? Now then, off to bed.
(They go).


- Life has become a Eurden to me, Rani. Kalyanh
You seem to bear it with worderful ease


## Khiri

I'swhat by your feet, I am serious. I Tave news from home, that my aunt, my father's youngest sister, is on her deathbed.

> Kalyani

A yeat is hardly past since I paid you the funeral expenses of this very same aunt, the youngest one.

Khiri
What a pity! But you seem to, have a keen memory only about my poor aunts.

> Kalyani

Does it choke yout to hask from me ? Must you lie?

Khiti
Lies are necessary to give dignity to begging. Truth would be monotonous and mean.

Kalyani
But, have I ever denied you, when you asked?

## Khiri

To neglect our weapous, when not. needed, is the sure way to miss them in the time of need. But-I must tell you that you encourage lies by believing them.

> - Kalayani

They will fail this time,
Khiri

I shall not despair about my next chance. Till then, my father's youngest $n$ y sister shall never be mentioned again.
(Kalyani goes out laughing)
Mother Goddess of Luck, your favourit, bird, the owl, must have daily carried yo to this house. Could it by mistake aligl on my shoulder, I would feed it with choic morsels of mice flesh till it became languid and lay at my door.
(Enters Goddesc-IAkshmi)
Wisitors again!
Khiri
Lakshmi
I am willing to leave, if I am not wanted.

## Khiri

I must not be rash. That seems to be ' a regular crown on your head. And- yet you don't look ridiculous with it as a real queen would do. Tell me who you are.

## Lakshmi

I am Lakshmi.
Khiri
Not from the stage?
Lakshmi
No,-from my heaven. -
Khiri
You must be tired. Do take your seat, " and do not be in a hurry to leave. I know fall well you have no mercy for those who have brains. It is, I suppose, because, the clever ones need never die of starvation and only fools need your special favour.

## Laksbmi

Are you not ashamed to make you living by cheating your mistress?

## Khiri

It is because you are perverse in your choice that those who have minds live upon those who hare money.

## Lakshmi

Intellect I never despise, only the crooked minds I aroid.
Khini

The intellect, which is too straight, is only another name for stupidity! But if you promise me your favour, I give you my solemn word that henceforth my dullness will delight your heart. I shall be content to remain a perfect bore shunned by all intelligent people.

Lakshmi
Do you think you will ever be able to spend a farthing in charity ?

Khiri
"itli pleasure. For when charity grazes ply at the fringe of one's surplus, it adds -o the beanty of the view-and it can also be made paying by good management. - Only change our mutual position, and you will find the Rani developing a marvellous talent for devising means to get what is not her own. On the other hand, I shall. become perfectly silly in swallowing lies and parting with my possessions, and my temper will grow as insipid as that of an egregious saint.

## Lakshmi

Your prayer is granted. I make you a Rani. The world will forget that you iver were a servant unless you yourself selp it to remember.
$\qquad$ .

Khiri:
Should the elephant eveni. the weight of its tusks? Min.

> Malati ds

Yes, Your Highness!
Khiri Malati
Teach this girl why she ed by attendants.

Malati
Remember that you are a $k a^{-1} s^{1}{\underset{o}{n}}^{a}$ randdaughter. In the Nawab's house, where I used to serve, the Begum had a litter of pet mongooses ; each of them had four maids for their attendants, and sepors. besides.
, Khiri
Kashi, do you hear? Attendant
Moti of our neighbourhood craves audience.

Khiri
Malati ${ }^{-}$
Malati

Yes, Your Highness !
Khiri
What is the form of salutation expected : from visitors in your Begum's hogse?

Malati
They have to walk forward, salaaming by touching the earth at each step, and then retire walking backward, salaam ing again.

Khiri
Let Mati

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Moti
gatic.
Malati
Moti
'sni Mother. Today, being
the ing 2y. of the moon, is for fastsgiving. Khiti
Your nani Mother can ascertain the phases of the moon even without your help, if she finds it profitable.

$$
\dot{M o t i}
$$

whet me receive alns from our Rani and \%ake leave singing her praises.

Khiri
The first part of your prayer I prefer to ignore; the rest I graciously grant. You may leave immediately singing my praises. Malảti!

Malati
Yes, Your Highness !
Khiri

- Let this woman take her leave in proper style.

Moti
Then I go.
Malati
Not so easily. Bend your head down. Take up the dust of the floor on the tip of tyour nose. Once again. Once more.
(Moti goes.)
Khiri $\cdots$ tem the ring you

Khiri
You must admit that a thing either remains, or is stolen, or lost, or

Bini
I have given it away.
Khiri
Which plainly means that someone has cheated you of it. Tell me, who has it?

Bini
Mallika. She is the poorest of all your servants, with her children starving. I have such a heap of rings, I thought . . . Khiri
Listen to her !. Only those of moderate means earn fame by spending in charity, , while the rich in doing it earn ingratitude. Charity has no merit for those who possess too much. Malati
Malatit

## Yes, Your Highness. <br> Khiri

Mallika must be dismissed at once.

## Malati

She shall be driven away.

> Khiri

But not with the ring on her. What music is that outside my palace?

## An attendant

A marriage procession.
Khiri
A marriage procession in front of th. Rani's house ! Suppose I happen to object what is there to prevent me? Malati!
Malati
chness 1

Khiri
Ask my guards to give everyone of the party ten strokes with a shoe.

First attendant
Only ten strokes! It almost sounds like a caress.

Second attendant
They ought to rejoice at this happy ending.

Third attendant
Our Rani has the gift of humour, for which God be praised.

## Enters a Maid Servant

Maid
My pay has been in arrears for the last nine months. To slave and yet to borrow poney to feed oneself is not to my taste. - her pay up my wages or allow me leave and go home.

Khiri
Tu pay up your wages is tolerably good, but i, saves a lot of trouble to allow you to leave. Malati !

Malati
Yes, Your Highness.
Khiri
What is your advice?
Malati
Let her be fịed at least a hundred rupees.

Khiri
As she is poor I remit fifty rupees out of her fine.

First attendant
Rani, you are kind.
Second attendant
How lucky for her to get fifty rupees for nothing.

Third attendant
You can as well count it nine hundred and fifty rupees out of a thousand.

Fourth attendant
How few are there whose charity can bear such a drain,

Khiri
You do make me blush. (To the maid servant) Now you may go away with proper ceremony and finish the rest of your weeping at leisure outside my palace.
(Malati takes away the maid making her walk backwards with salaams)

Re-enters Malati
Malati
Rani Kalyani is at your door.
Khiri
Has she come riding on her elephant?
Malati
No, walking. She is dusty all over.
Khiri
Must I admit her in ?
First attendant
She should sit at a proper distance.
Second attendant
Let her stand behind your back.
Third attendant
She can be dismissed by saying that Your Highness is tired.

Khiri
Malati!

## Malati

Yes, Your Highness!
Khiri
Advise me what to do.
Malati
Let all other seats be removed but jour own.

Khiri
You are clever. Let my hundred and twenty slave girls stand in a row outside that door. Sashi, hold the state umbrella over my head. Malati!

Malati
Yes, Your Highness!
Khiri
Is it all right?
Malati
Perfect! like a picture!

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Khiri
Mring her into my presence.
(Malati goes out and returns with
Kalyani)
Kalyani
Arejyou well?
Khiri
My desire is to keep well, but the rest 'the world tries its best to wreck me.

Kalyani
I must have a talk with you in private. Khiri
Nothing can be more private than this. Only yourself and I. These are mere. servants.: Malati!

Malati
Yes, Your Highness!
Khiri
Is it possible to send them away?
Malati
I shudder to think of it.
‘Kalyani

Then let me tell you briefly, Our Pathan King has forcibly robbed me of my lands.

## Khiri

You are not joking? Then those tillages Gopalnagar, Kanaiganj and ....

Kalyani
Ther no longer belong to me,

> 'Khiri

That's interesting: Haven't you some , cash left?

Kalyani
Nothing whatever.

## Khiri

How funny! That sapphire necklace and those wonderful diamonds and that.
 Kaľani
They are all taken away.

## Khiri

Doesn't our scripture say that wealth is unstable like a water drop on a lotus
leaf? And your jewelled umbrella, and that throne with its canopy-I suppose they also have followed the rest.

Kalyani
Yes.
Khiri
This is instructive. Our sages truly say that prosperity is like a beautiful dream that makes the awakening all the more dismal. But have they left you your palace?

## Kalyani

. The soldiers are in possession،
Khiri
It does sound like a story-a Rani yesterday and today a beggar in the street. Malati!

> Malati
'Yes, Your Highness !
Khiri
What do you say?
Malati

- Those who grow too high must have their fall.

Kalyáni
If I may have shelter here for a short time I can try to recover my lost fortune. .
'Khiri
How unfortunatel My palace is crowded with my seryants-no space left where a needle can be dropped. Of course, I could leave you my room and try to rough it in my country-house.

## First attendant

Absurd!

> It wecond

I cannot dream of putting you to such inconvenience. I take my leave.

Khirt
Must you go so soon? By the by, if you still have some jewelry left, you may leave it with me for permanent safe keeping.

Kalyani
Nothing has been saved.
Khiri

How late it is. It gives me a headache if I am made to talk too much. I feel it already coming on. (Kalyani goes) See that my State chair and footstool are carefully put back in the store-room. Malati!

Malati
Yes, Your Highness !
Khiri
What do you think of this?

## Malati

It makes one laugh to see the frog turning into a tadpole again.

## An attendant

A woman craves your audience. Shall I send her away?

Khiri
No, no, call her in. I am in a delightful mood today.

Enters the woman.
The woman
I am in trouble.

## Khiri

You want to pass it on to others?

## The woman

Robbers came to my room last night.
Khiri
And you must take your revenge on

The woman
I ask for your pity.
Khiri
Pity for what you have lost yourself and nothing for what you ask me to lose?

The woman
If you must reject my prayer, tell me where I may get it granted.

Khiri
Kalyani is the proper person to suit you. My men will go and show you her place.

The woman
Her place is well known to me,-I go back to her! (Revealing herself) I am the Goddess Lakshmi!

Khiri
If you must leave me, do it in proper style-Malati, Malati, Tarini! Where are my maids ?
(Eñters Kalyani)
Kalyani
Have you gone mad? It is still dark, and your'shouts bid fair to wake the whole neighbourhood.

Khiri
What ugly dreams I have had all night! It is a new life to wake up from them. Stay a while, let me take the dust of your feet. You are my Rani, and I am your servant for ever.

Rabindranath Tagore.

## INDIAN SETTLERS IN AFRICA

## II

IHAVE in my possession a pencil-written manuscript, which was given to me by an Indian friend, who travelled many long journeys with me in East Africa. We had talks together which sometimes continued far
into the night ; and I always found his nature the same,-simple, religious, free from the least touch of racial bias, perfectly frank and open, and essentially truthful. He had a great wish to accompany me'on all my journeys, and it would have been a delight to me

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