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KRISHNA KANTA'S WILL



(37)

ANNA KANTA'S WILL

BY

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APPENDIX.



NOTE I.

Fractional quantities are frequently expressed in India by the fractional parts of a rupee, which consists of 16 annas. Thus, an 8-anna estate is half the estate; 3 annas is $\frac{3}{16}$, and so on. Similarly, a farmer may say he expects to get only a 12-anna crop—that is, a quarter less than a full crop. If he has paid his rent in full, he will call it a 16-anna rent; if he only cultivates a fourth of his land, it is a 4-anna cultivation.

NOTE II.

To stretch out the hand to seize the moon is a common proverbial saying, denoting the vain attempt to do an impossibility, or to hope for something unattainable or hard to get.

NOTE III.

The hardships imposed on Hindu widows are most deplorable, and can be but faintly realised out of India. Intense misery and loneliness, domestic drudgery and reproach, and a total renunciation of all earthly enjoyments, and of the simplest luxuries in food and clothing, are all summed up in the word widowhood.

NOTE IV.

Draupadī, in Hindu mythology, was the wife of the five Pândava princes, the description of whose contests with their cousins, the Kauravas, is given in the Mahâ-bhârata. She is there said to be specially noted for her skill in cooking.

NOTE V.

The names here quoted are those of some of the leading warriors on each side in the war between the Kauravas and Pândavas, which forms the subject of the Mahâbhârata.

NOTE VI.

This refers to a practice occasionally resorted to by women of Bengal, who, when about to commit suicide by drowning, attach a *Kalsi*, or earthen water-jug, by a rope to their necks, that it may, when full of water, act as a weight to prevent the body from rising to the surface.

NOTE VII.

The *Srâddha*, or funeral ceremony performed on the death of a Brahman, is generally a most costly undertaking. Large sums are spent on gifts to priests and Brahmans, who flock thither from miles around. Besides this, a general feast of milk, rice, *ghee*, sweetmeats, &c., is provided, not only for all the relatives of the deceased, but for the poor and for beggars of every description. The respect shown to a departed relative is often measured by the sum spent on his *srâddha*.

NOTE VIII.

Tarakeswar is a village in the district of Hugli, not far from Calcutta, which contains a shrine of great sanctity, to which sick people and pilgrims flock in great numbers for recovery from disease, or the performance of vows to the god Siva. A great religious festival is held here in the month of April, at which severe penances and most cruel self-inflicted tortures are practised. The well-known barbarous *Charak-puja*, or swinging festival, used to be held at this fair, until put a stop to by the British Government in 1863.

NOTE IX.

Phulsajja is the name given to a prevails amongst Hindus of adorning the bridal bed with flowers.

NOTE X.

This mythological allusion will best be explained by quoting from Dowson's "Hindu Mythology," under the heading *Avatara*, p. 36 :

"Vishnu appeared in the form of a tortoise in the Satya Yug, or first age, to recover some things of value which had been lost in the Deluge. In the form of a tortoise he placed himself at the bottom of the sea of milk, and made his back the base or pivot of the mountain Mandara. The gods and demons twisted the great serpent Vāsuki round the mountain, and, dividing into two parties, each took an end of the snake as a rope, and thus churned the sea until they recovered the desired objects. These were (1) Amrita, the water of life; (2) Dhanwantari, the physician of the gods, and bearer of the cup of Amrita; . . . and (14) Visha, poison."

It would appear from this that all the objects were obtained, but finally a deadly poison was produced. This threatened to destroy the universe; whereupon the god Siva swallowed it up to avert that calamity, but the poison remained lodged in his throat, causing it to become of a dark-blue colour. Hence it is that Siva has received the epithet of the "blue-throated god."

GLOSSARY OF INDIAN TERMS.



- Amin.* A native land surveyor and assessor of rents.
- Amla.* The native officials of a court, or office.
- Asoka.* The *Jonesia asoka*; a tree bearing beautiful flowers, held sacred to the god Siva. It is considered especially meritorious to bathe in a stream with asoka blossoms floating on the water.
- Avatâr.* The incarnation of a deity on earth.
- Bâblâ.* The *Acacia Arabica*, of hard wood and thorny used in making agricultural implements.
- Bairâgi.* A religious mendicant.
- Champak.* The *Michelia champaca*; a tree bearing large brilliant yellow flowers, very strongly fragrant. It is personified as one of the five flowery darts of Kama, the god of love.
- Châtak.* The *Cuculus melanoleucus*; a small bird which, according to a popular legend, exists entirely on rain-drops.
- Chokidâr.* A village watchman.
- Dârogâ.* A manager or overseer of any public department or office.
- Darwân.* A gate or door-keeper.

- Dayal.* The Indian robin.
- Dikpâl.* In Hindu mythology, the guardian of one of the eight points of the universe.
- Diwân.* Manager of a zemindar's estate.
- Durgâ.* A form of the goddess Pârvati, consort of Siva, represented as terrible in form, and irascible in temper.
- Gânja.* The leaves and flower-head of the hemp plant, used for smoking as a narcotic.
- Ghât.* A bathing place on the bank of a river, or tank.
- Ghee.* Clarified butter; used for cooking purposes; also for an offering to the gods, and in the preparation of sweetmeats.
- Gomashtâ.* An agent, steward, or factor.
- Gri hastha.* A Brahman who performs the duties of the head of a family.
- Grihini.* The mistress of a Hindu household.
- Guru.* A Brahman who gives religious instruction, a schoolmaster.
- Hari.* A name or incarnation of Krishna—a name of invocation.
- Huka.* The Indian tobacco pipe.
- Indra.* The god of the firmament.
- Kabiraj.* A native physician.
- Kachari.* A court whether of a judicial officer or of a zemindar.
- Kalsi.* A water-jar, either of earthenware or brass, usually carried by women on the hip, and sometimes also on the head, causing that erect and graceful carriage characteristic of Hindu women.
- Kârkun.* A clerk, a vernacular copyist.
- Karta.* The head of a Hindu family.

- Khânsamâ.* The house steward or butler.
- Khayer.* The resinous gum of the *Mimosa Catechu*.
- Kokil.* The Indian cuckoo. Its notes are associated with all the joys and sorrows of a Bengali villager.
- Kothi.* A factory, warehouse, or large brick building.
- Kuber, or Kuvera.* The god of riches—the Hindu Plutus.
- Lakh.* One hundred thousand.
- Lâthiyâl.* A man armed with a lâthi or stick, employed by zemindars, planters, and others to enforce their orders.
- Mahâdeva.* A name of the god Siva, usually represented as riding on a bull.
- Mahâshay.* A gentleman; a form of respectful address.
- Muharrir.* A writer; a clerk who writes English.
- Naib.* A deputy or assistant.
- Naik.* An overseer.
- Nâmâbali.* A garment worn by Brahmans, bearing the names of Hindu deities.
- Pâpiyâ.* A bird of the cuckoo species, with shrill crescendo notes.
- Pandit.* One learned in the Sanscrit language and literature, or in Hindu law.
- Peon, or, Piyâda.* An office servant or messenger.
- Pirân.* A long coat usually worn by educated natives.
- Rangan.* The *Ixora bandhuca*, an ornamental flowering shrub, used for dyeing.
- Rattika.* A creeping shrub, the pods containing beautiful scarlet seeds, with a black spot, which are strung together for necklaces.
- Râyat, or, Ryot.* A peasant or cultivator.
- Sannyâsi.* A Brahman who has renounced all worldly ties—an ascetic.

Sári. The cloth worn by Hindu women, wrapped round the body, the loose end thrown over the head.

Shástra. The sacred books of the Hindus.

Sitár. The Indian guitar.

Tahsildár. A rent collector.

Thákur. An idol or deity, used as an honorific mode of address.

Tulsi. A plant held sacred to Vishnu, found in every temple, shrine, or holy spot. Every devout Hindu also has a plant growing in the courtyard, to which he daily offers worship. The plant has also valuable medicinal properties.

Vakil. A native pleader or attorney.

Zemindár. A landowner who pays revenue direct to the Government.