

RHYMES OF RAJPUTANA



# RHYMES OF RAJPUTANA

BY

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## PREFACE

IN 1829 Colonel James Tod, after an intimate personal acquaintance with the Rajput States dating from 1806 to 1822, published in two big volumes his famous work entitled *The Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, which is still the chief authority recognised by natives of the country as well as Europeans in all that pertains to the Rajasthan of former days. In that book he laid open from almost every known source, including the classics of Hindustan, local bards and tradition, a mine of information and romance regarding his beloved Rajputs, whom he identified as connected with "the Getic nations

described by Herodotus" and the Scandinavian Asi and German tribes. "The heroes of Odin," he writes, "never relished a cup of mead more than the Rajpoot his *madhva*, and the bards of Scandinavia and Rajwarra are alike eloquent in the praise of the bowl." Again: "Even in the heaven of Indra, the Hindoo warrior's paradise, akin to Valhalla, the Rajpoot has his cup which is served by the Apsara, the twin sister of the celestial Hebe of Scania." "Rajasthan," he explains, "is the collective and classical denomination of that portion of India which is the abode of (Rajpoot) princes. In the familiar dialect of these countries it is termed *Rajwarra*, but by the more refined Raet'hana, corrupted to Rajpootana, the common designation among the British to denote the Rajpoot principalities."

The Jat States of Bhurtpore and Dholpore and the Mahomedan State of Tonk have also been included for many years in Rajputana.

Most of the Rhymes in these pages refer to history more or less ancient, and the ground-work of these may be found in Tod's book. For the story of two I am indebted to Powlett's *Gazetteer of Bikanir*. A few of modern cast are added by way of contrast under the head *Miscellaneous*. Should they collectively lead any English reader to take an interest in Rajasthan past and present, my object in publishing them, as a farewell tribute of friendship to the Chiefs and people of that delightful country from whom I have received much kindness, will have been accomplished.

I trust the Notes at the end will not seem too long: they are mainly extracts from Tod, and the uninitiated would do well to glance at them before reading the Rhymes they explain or illustrate. It will be seen that in some Rhymes I have imagined a local guide or bard speaking to an English traveller, in a way which to those who know the country and how difficult it is to extract

any information or sentiment from such persons, generally conspicuous by their absence, will seem indeed an effort of imagination. It is an old device, however, and may plead the sanction of usage and Sir Walter Scott.

Lastly, must I ask scientific orthography to pardon colloquialisms like Oodeypore, Jeypore, Jodhpore, instead of Udaipur, Jaipur, Jodhpur, for the sake of rhyme, if for nothing else? I have followed the modern method only in spelling words which I thought would not be familiar to the English reader. Thus, though I cannot dethrone *Suttee* and *nuzzer* in favour of *Sati* and *nazar*, I write Amra and Jagat where Tod wrote Umra and Juggut; herein following, with a halting step, a rule now generally accepted in English newspapers and railway time-tables published in this country as well as by the Government of India for official correspondence.

The Rhymes entitled "Stepping the Boundary," "A



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Petition," "Snake-Bite," "A Thakur at Home" have appeared before in a little volume called *Whiffs* published by Messrs. Wheeler and Co., Calcutta and Allahabad (Indian Railway Library Series), the copyright of which belongs to me.

MOUNT ABU, *September* 1894.

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