burmese folk-tales

MAUNG HTIN AUNG

Oxford University Press, Amen House, London E.C.4

GLASGOW NEW YORK TORONTO MELBOURNE WELLINGTON
BOMBAY CALCUTTA MADRAS KARACHI CAPE TOWN IBADAN
NAIROBI ACCRA KUALA LUMPUR

First published 1948
Third impression 1959

Printed in India by V. N. Bhattacharya, M. A. at the Inland Printing Works
60/3 Dharamtala Street, Calcutta - 13 and published by
John Brown, Oxford University Press, Calcutta - 1

CONTENTS

II. ROMANTIC TALES

III. WONDER TALES

IV. HUMOROUS TALES

INTRODUCTION

THE folk-tales included in this collection were current in Upper Burma and, to a less extent in Lower Burma also, until two or three decades ago. Most of them had their origin in Upper Burma, for until the destruction of the Mon Empire of Pegu by Alaungpaya in 1752, the home of the Burmese people was Upper Burma. In the last decade or two with the advent of the fiction magazine, the novel, and the cinema, these village folk-tales have come to be half-forgotten.

Tales told in a Burmese village could be divided into three categories, (*i*) folk-tales, (*ii*) folk-legends, and (*iii*) *Jatakas* or Buddhist Birth stories. But the village story-teller considered a tale as a tale and no more, and he would not distinguish or classify the stories that he told. For the folk-tale collector then, there are many pitfalls: a tale which appears at first to be a perfect folk-tale may prove to be a *Jataka* on careful scrutiny as, for example, the account of the enmity between the Owl and the Crow (given below as Appendix I); and a tale which appears to be a folk-legend may prove to be a folk-tale after all as, for example, the account of the prediction of the astrologer of Pagan.

Folk-legends are of two classes, (*i*) those relating to persons who are either heroes or magicians mentioned in the chronicles, and (*ii*) those relating to places. In this second class are (*a*) place-name stories as, for example, the legend of the Wild Boar of Tagaung, dealing with places on the eastern bank of the Irrawaddy, the names of which begin with *Wet*, the

Burmese word for 'boar' (given below as Appendix II); (*b*) stories about places as, for example, the Legend of the Indaw Lake (given below as Appendix III); and (*c*) stories relating to buried treasure. Most folk-legends are historical, and they attempt to amplify certain episodes mentioned in the chronicles. However, some of the folk-legends relating to persons and events before A.D. 1044 may originally have been folk-tales which were later incorporated in the chronicles. Although some writing was known at least in palace circles in the Kingdom of Prome that flourished before Pagan, and the Mons had their writing before Pagan, it was only after 1044 that the Burmese alphabet came into being as a result of the conquest of the Mon Kingdom of Thaton by Anawrahta (King of Pagan 1044-1077). In consequence the history of Burma before 1044 is legendary in the sense that it is not based on contemporary records. As the chronicles came to be written only after 1044, for the events before 1044 the chroniclers had to rely on the tradition of the palace and legends of the people. In these circumstances, doubtless a few folk-tales crept into the chronicles as legends. The account of King Outsider (given below as Appendix IV), for example, seems to be in reality a folk-tale although it is to be found in the chronicles. That a monarch by the name of King Outsider once ruled over the Kingdom of Prome there is no reason to doubt, for the list of kings of Prome as given in the chronicles is on the whole authentic, for the chroniclers relied on palace tradition for that, and as the names of the previous kings of

Burma were always carefully handed down from generation to generation of palace officials, palace tradition was unlikely to err in its list of kings. But what does the name 'King Outsider' signify? It merely signifies that a person who did not belong to the royal line became king. Therefore, it is not impossible that the folk-tale relating to a person who became a king just because he ate the head of a cock, was accepted as a traditional account of the real King Outsider of Prome. The theme of the story of King Outsider is not how a poor lad became king, but that the flesh of the cock had certain magical qualities which would accrue to its eater. Viewed in this light, the story of King Outsider is of the same category as the folk-tale of the Gold Cock. Perhaps a belief that the flesh of a cock had certain magical qualities was prevalent in Burma and the neighbouring regions in primitive times. The less civilized peoples of Burma, especially the Karens and the Chins, use the legs of a cock for purposes of divination. In the folk-tale of the Astrologer of Pagan there is an attempt to explain why the legs of a cock should be able to divine. There is also a *Jataka*[1] in which the magical qualities of the flesh of a cock serve as the main theme. As a peasant was sleeping under a tree, he heard two cocks quarrelling; the first cock boasted that anyone eating his flesh would become the possessor of much gold and jewellery, and the second cock boasted that anyone eating his flesh would become king; the villager killed the second cock, and cooked it; but as he was not fated

[1] E. B. Cowell: *The Jataka*, Vol. II, No. 284, and Vol. IV, No. 445.

to be king an accident intervened and, in the end, the king's prime minister ate the flesh of the cock and became king afterwards. It is perhaps interesting to remember that Burma with its numerous streamlets and wooded valleys was one of the earliest homes, if not the original home, of the fowl.

In 1056 Buddhism became the state religion of the Kingdom of Pagan, which now included the whole of Burma in its dominions. Pagan became a great centre of Buddhism, and there was a widespread study of the Buddhist scriptures by monks and scholars. The scriptures were in Pali, and had yet to be translated, but the villagers gradually became familiar with the *Jatakas* through the village monk, who would include one or two *Jatakas* in his sermon on the sabbath day. Many of the *Jatakas* are animal fables, and every *Jataka* contains some moral. The coming of the *Jatakas* to the village perhaps resulted in the disappearance of the folk-fable or moral tale. Among the folk-tales in this collection only one could be termed a fable, namely 'The Rabbit has a Cold', but even there, the stress is laid on the wisdom of the Rabbit, the hero of the Burmese animal tales, rather than on any moral. The acceptance of Buddhism also meant the acceptance of Buddhist and semi-Buddhist mythology and as a result the native myths disappeared, except for a few which became degraded into folk-tales. In this collection, 'The Eclipse of the Moon', 'The Old Man in the Moon' and 'The Three Dragon Eggs' are obviously myths degraded into folk-tales, and perhaps 'Master Thumb' is also a degraded myth.

In Burmese literature there are many tales, but they can be reduced into four groups, (*i*) *Jataka* tales, (*ii*) tales with some moral or religious background, adapted from Sanskrit and Pali sources, (*iii*) Proverbial tales, and (*iv*) Juristic tales. But the classification is far from water-tight; a Proverbial tale may often be also a *Jataka* tale or an adapted Sanskrit tale, and many Juristic tales are adaptations from Sanskrit and Pali sources. Pali and Sanskrit were widely studied after 1056. A Burmese Proverbial tale is not a fable. A fable points to some moral lesson, which can be expressed in the form of a proverb or saying, but a Proverbial tale narrates the particular set of circumstances which gave rise to a proverb or a saying. To make the difference clear let us suppose that 'If you give him an inch, he will take an ell' was a Burmese saying. Now Aesop's tale of the camel who first asked to be allowed to put his head in his master's tent and who in the end took possession of the whole tent, is a fable which will illustrate the above saying. But, a Proverbial tale to illustrate the saying would narrate how one inch was actually given and how one ell was actually taken. There are approximately about one thousand Proverbial tales in Burmese literature; some of them are *Jatakas*, as for example the tale of the saying, 'If one tries to rival one's teacher, one is hit with brickbats,' which narrates how the wicked pupil of a great harpist was hit with stones and brickbats by an irate mob as he insolently challenged his teacher to a musical contest and was duly defeated;[1]

[1] E. B. Cowell: *The Jataka*, Vol. II, No. 243.

some of them are adaptations from Pali or Sanskrit sources; but most of them, I think, were originally folk-tales, for surely most of the sayings originated from native tales. In this collection there are some folk-tales which are also to be found among Proverbial tales, although in different style and tone.

A Juristic tale illustrates a point of law or describes a clever decision of a judge, and it has some official authority, for it could be cited by a disputant or his advocate before a court of law. A Juristic tale may be an adaptation from Sanskrit or Pali, or a modified folk-tale, or a tale invented by the writer, or a record of an actual decision made by a judge in a court of law. There exist many collections of Juristic tales, and they were written or collected by judges or lawyers. Burmese Law, like English Common Law, was customary, and the Juristic tales served as commentaries on the law. They were meant to guide, not so much the trained and experienced lawyers and judges of the King's capital and the big towns, but the honorary justices of the villages and the small towns, whom the people themselves elected to decide civil disputes which were too petty to be taken to the King's courts. These honorary justices were formally appointed by the King when the people had chosen them, and there was a right of appeal from the decision of an honorary justice to the King's courts; but that right was seldom exercised by the people, for a decision of their own judge was usually accepted as the correct interpretation of the law. In this collection there are

a few tales, adaptations of which are also to be found among Juristic tales.

In this collection the folk-tales are grouped in four classes, (*i*) Animal tales, (*ii*) Romantic tales, (*iii*) Wonder tales, and (*iv*) Humorous tales. The classification is made for the sake of convenience in commenting on the tales, and is therefore more arbitrary than scientific. Among Animal tales, I have included those tales where animals figure, and in which the animals, although speaking and behaving as rational beings, retain their own characteristics. Among Romantic tales, I have included those tales which contain some marvellous adventure that could happen only in a world of dream and fancy. The atmosphere of these tales is of the same kind as that of such European tales as 'Tom Thumb' and 'Snow White'. These Romantic tales however do not tell of witches and fairies. 'The Big Tortoise' does mention a witch, but she is a witch only in name, for she does not seem to be able to use any witchcraft to ruin her hated step-daughter Mistress Youngest. The Burmese believed and still believe in witches and fairies and it seems rather curious that they should be absent from these tales. Among the Romantic tales I have included some stories in which animals figure, either because the animals are subsidiary characters, or because the animals behave as human beings and no longer retain their own characteristics. Among Wonder tales I have included those tales which tell of some marvellous adventures of this workaday world, but their occurrence is connected with magic or

alchemy or *Nat*-spirits. The marvellous adventure of the Romantic tales and the marvellous adventure of the Wonder tales must be clearly differentiated. To the Burmese, magic and alchemy and astrology and *Nat*-spirits are real things, and they belong, not to a fairy world, but to this world. Among Humorous tales I have included those tales in which the primary object is to raise a smile. Of course most of the tales in this collection have some humour in them, for humour is one of the characteristics of a Burmese folk-tale, but in these Humorous tales the stress is on the humour, and the tone is mock-heroic. Among these Humorous tales there are included some tales in which spirits and ogres and ghosts figure prominently but, unlike the Wonder tales, the atmosphere is not one of awe and wonder, and these supernatural beings are mocked and laughed at.

In the Animal tales the Rabbit is the hero, and he is the Burmese counterpart of the Malayan Mouse-deer, the Negro Brer Rabbit, and the European Reynard the Fox. The Rabbit is usually wise and just, and is referred to as 'Wise Rabbit'. However, in 'The Coming of Daywaw', he is not too wise; in 'Golden Rabbit and Golden Tiger' he ill-treats his trusting friend, Golden Tiger, for no reason; and in 'The Over-Cunning Rabbit' he is cunning and conceited. The Rabbit figures in eleven tales. The Tiger appears in six tales, and he is more a likeable old fool than villain. In 'Why the Tiger and the Monkey are Sworn Enemies' and 'Master Po and the Tiger' he is the villain, but a villain without

much cunning; in 'The Coming of Daywaw' he is stupid enough to be easily frightened; in 'Golden Rabbit and Golden Tiger' and 'Why the Tiger is so Bitter Against the Cat' our sympathies are entirely with the Tiger. The Crow figures in five tales. He is on the whole a villain, for in 'How the Crow became Small in Size' he leads a rebellion against his rightful king; in 'The Crow and the Wren' he wants to eat up the innocent little Wren; and in 'Crow's Leg Plant' he breaks up the happy home of Master and Mistress Pheasant. However, in 'Why the Crow looks after the Cuckoo's Eggs' he gets into trouble through his false friend the Owl, and in 'How Friendship began among Birds' he behaves in an admirable manner.

In the Animal tales references to the *Naga*-dragon and the *Galôn*-bird occur, and it will be convenient to give here an account of Burmese mythical animals. In Burmese folk-lore there are in all five mythical animals, the *Toe-Naya*, the Water-Elephant, the *Keinnara*, the *Galôn* and the *Naga*. The *Toe-Naya* is the Burmese unicorn. It is very much like a horse, but with one horn jutting from the forehead. It has long fleecy hair, and its eyes are as shining as rubies. Some *Toe-Nayas* are able to fly, and then they are known as *Naya-pyan* or 'Flying-*Naya*'. The *Toe-Naya* does not figure in any folk-tale, nor in Burmese literature, but it takes a leading part in the folk-feasts in which villagers dress themselves to look like the *Toe-Naya* and dance. The Water-Elephant is as small as a mouse, otherwise it is exactly like an ordinary elephant. But it is so

powerful that ordinary elephants live in terror of it. It loves to eat the brains of an ordinary elephant. It is the least important of the mythical animals as it does not figure either in literature or in folk-tales or in folk-feasts. The *Keinnara* is half-human and half-bird, but it is more akin to the Swan Maiden, rather than to the Harpy of European myth. The *Keinnara*, unlike the harpy, is pretty and has a sweet nature. There exist two or three village tales in which the theme is how the wings of *Keinnara* were hidden by a prince and how she became his consort, but as the tales are obviously adaptations of Sanskrit and *Jataka* tales I do not consider them to be real folk-tales. The *Galôn* is the *Garunda* of Hindu and Buddhist mythology and is a great bird like an eagle. The *Naga* is a serpent-dragon. The *Keinnara*, the *Galôn*, and the *Naga* are figures from Hindu mythology, but they were introduced to the Burmese by the *Jatakas*. When Buddhism was re-introduced into Burma by Anawrahta, although the villager could not yet learn to read he was at once introduced to the *Jatakas*, as the monks used those first steps in Buddhism in their sermons to the people. These three mythical animals figure in Burmese literature—especially the drama. With regard to the *Keinnara* and the *Galôn*, they seem to be mere borrowings from the *Jatakas*, but the *Naga* needs further consideration.

The *Naga* is so familiar to the Burmese that they consider it almost as a real animal. It seems significant that in 'Why the Wren is Small' the *Galôn* is mentioned as a spirit-animal that never came to the forest;

but the *Naga* figures as a real animal. The *Naga* has always been a favourite motif for the Burmese *curvar* and artist and goldsmith. Above all, it figures prominently, not only in folk-legends, but in the chronicles. The Kingdom of Tagaung, the oldest Burmese Kingdom, was deeply connected with *Nagas* according to the chronicles. In the folk-tale of 'Maung Pauk Kyaing' the hero had to kill a *Naga* before he became established on the throne of Tagaung. Although the theme of 'Maung Pauk Kyaing' is common in folk-tales of various nations (it can be identified as Type No. 507B 'The Monster in the Bridal Chamber' in Aarne and Thompson: *Types of the Folk-Tale*), the emphasis is on the *Naga*. In the chronicles relating to the Kingdom of Prome it is narrated that Prome's most famous king, Duttabaung, had a *Naga* queen, and that he was taken away in the end to the *Naga* Kingdom underneath the sea, as he insulted the *Nagas* by spitting into the sea; according to a place-name legend, this happened off the coast near Bassein, in the whirlpool of *Naga-Yit* or 'Where the *Nagas* twist and turn'. The chronicles also mention that many *Naga* lads served among the royal guards of Pyusawhti, a hero king of early Pagan. All these references to the *Naga* belong to the periods before 1044. However, there is an interesting reference to the *Naga* in the chronicles after 1044. The chronicles relate how King Kyansittha, who followed Anawrahta's son, Sawlu, on the throne of Pagan, when a child, was saved repeatedly by a *Naga* lad who hid him from his enemies, and the folk-legend of Kyansittha

narrates that, when Kyansittha was still a baby, a *Naga* came and protected him from the heat of the sun by sheltering him with its hood. It has been the fashion among scholars of Burmese history to explain that the *Naga* of the Burmese chronicles was not a serpent-dragon but a man, namely a person from the Naga Hills of the Assam-Burma border. But the Nagas of the border have up to now been primitive, and it will be difficult to explain how they could have played a leading part in the Kingdom of their civilized neighbours. Moreover, the pre-Buddhist religion of the Burmese included a worship of the *Naga*, and surely the Burmese did not worship the wild Nagas from the hills.

The religion of the Burmese before 1044 was a mixture of three difficult elements; (*i*) the worship of the Ari Monks, who preached a form of Buddhism deteriorated almost beyond recognition, and who were great exponents of magic and alchemy; (*ii*) worship of *Nat*-spirits, and (*iii*) worship of the *Naga*; and definitely, the *Naga* that was worshipped was a dragon and not a man. Anawrahta suppressed the existing religion in two different ways. He unfrocked the Ari Monks and forced them to join his army as ordinary soldiers, thereby impressing upon the people that the monks they worshipped were inferior to him, and he put images of the *Nat*-spirits and figures of the *Naga* in the attitude of worship before the images of the Buddha in his pagodas, thus impressing upon the people that their old gods themselves worshipped the Buddha. Anawrahta made the

worship of the Aris illegal, but did not make the worship of the *Naga* and the *Nats* illegal, provided the worship became subsidiary to the worship of the Buddha, and *Nat* and *Naga* temples were allowed to remain. From this it would seem possible that the *Naga*-lad who was said to have hidden Kyansittha was an attendant in a *Naga* temple, and that Kyansittha was hidden in a *Naga* temple.

There exists much folk-lore regarding the *Naga*. The Burmese Naga is definitely of the serpent brood. A *Naga* can burn anything into ashes by merely looking askance at it in anger. But this power does not affect the *Galôn*, who is the arch-enemy of the *Naga*, for the *Galôn* loves to eat *Naga*-flesh. A *Naga* is able to assume human form at will. When a *Naga* who has assumed human form falls asleep, he automatically becomes a *Naga* again. A *Naga* gives jewels, especially rubies to those whom he likes or to those who worship him. There have been instances of a male *Naga* in the form of a human being mating with a human woman and a female *Naga* in the form of a human being mating with a human man. *Nagas* live underground or on the floor of the sea. Whirlpools and earthquakes are often caused by the *Naga*. Under each mud volcano in Minbu district, there lies a *Naga* who guards it.. But unlike the *Nat*-spirit, the *Naga* does not interfere much in human affairs, and usually remains aloof from human beings. There are also many place-name stories which are about *Nagas*, for many villages in Upper Burma are known by names which have some reference to the *Naga* as, for example, 'Naga-bo',

which means '*Naga* Male', 'Naga-Dwin', which means '*Naga* Pit'. The very word '*Naga*' shows that the Burmese *Naga* has much to do with the Indian *Naga*, and doubtless the Burmese *Naga* is also intimately connected with the Chinese Dragon; nevertheless the Burmese *Naga* has certain characteristics of its own which clearly distinguish it from the Indian and Chinese dragons.

'The Snake Prince' belongs to a type of folk-tale to be found in many other countries, and both its happy ending and unhappy ending have their parallels in other countries. But the Burmese tale contains many humorous touches and, even in the unhappy ending, the account of how the eldest sister is gradually swallowed by the python is light-hearted in tone. In the happy ending the joke is not only on the two ugly sisters, but also on the stork. The stork in question is the bigger Burmese stork, that is, the Adjutant bird. It seems not impossible that the happy ending was originally a separate tale dealing with the origin of the Burmese name for the bird. The Adjutant is called *Nget-kyee-wun-bo* or 'The big bird with the extra burden', and in the tale the bird takes up an extra burden in the form of another's wife and child. This tale does not seem to have any connexion with the legends of the *Naga*, for the following reasons; (*i*) although the Burmese *Naga* has a serpent form, it is clearly differentiated from a snake, unlike the Indian *Naga*, where the cobra is sometimes associated with the *Naga*. It is true that the cobra is considered in Burma to be a *Nat* animal in the sense that it is

ridden by *Nat*-spirits, but the tiger and the crocodile are also considered to be such animals, and the *Naga*, himself as powerful as the *Nats*, cannot be put in the same category as those 'servant' animals of the *Nats*; (*ii*) in the tale, the Snake casts its skin to become a human being, whereas in the legends a *Naga* transforms itself into a human being without casting its skin.

'Rain Cloud the Crocodile' seems at first glance to have the same theme as 'The Snake Prince' in that its hero is an animal who assumes human form and lives happily as a human being until it is re-transformed into an animal. Although its plot can be reduced to this form, it is clearly different from the 'Snake Prince' type. 'Rain Cloud the Crocodile' has no heroine; it does not mention even the name of Rain Cloud's wife, and Rain Cloud's romance is kept very much in the background; and the real theme of the tale is the revenge of the fisherman on the crocodile. Moreover, the tale is one of a series of tales dealing with the adventures of the crocodile. My grandmother and my great-aunt told me when I was still at school that in their childhood they knew many other tales of Rain Cloud, which they had forgotten. The tale which is entitled 'The Rainbow' is a 'Rain Cloud' tale, and perhaps in the lost tales 'Brownish the Female Crocodile' played the part of the villain as she plays it in 'The Rainbow'. 'Rain Cloud the Crocodile' and 'The Rainbow' are definitely Lower Burma tales, and I think they are two of the very few Mon folk-tales that remained in the country after

the Mons themselves had left, and became absorbed in Burmese folk-lore. It is definite that 'The Rainbow' was originally a Mon tale as the heroine's name, Myenun, is a Mon name. The hero's name, Nanda, is of Pali origin, but that proves nothing, as both Burmese and Mon royalty used Pali names just as many of their cities had names of Pali origin. However, it is not definite whether 'Rain Cloud the Crocodile' was originally a Mon tale. *Nga-Mo-Yeit* or 'Master Rain Cloud' is a Burmese name and therefore two explanations are possible; either 'Rain Cloud the Crocodile' was originally a Mon tale but the Burmese, on adapting it, changed the name of the Crocodile; or it was originally a Burmese tale, but in adapting the Mon original of 'The Rainbow' the Burmese turned the latter tale into an adventure of their own Rain Cloud. It is a pity that the other Rain Cloud tales are lost, and a definite conclusion cannot be drawn as to the region of 'Rain Cloud the Crocodile', but as stated above, I am of the opinion that it is also Mon in origin as 'The Rainbow'. The atmosphere of wistfulness present in the two tales is absent from the other Burmese folk-tales; and the humour which is found in other Burmese folk-tales is not found in them. However, the belief that a crocodile when it attains the age of a hundred years has the power to transform itself into a human being is common, not only in the folk-lore of Lower Burma, but also in that of Upper Burma. In its power to transform itself into a human being, the crocodile is like the *Naga*, but it is inferior to the *Naga* in that it

has to wait a hundred years to possess that power. But it is not impossible that the Rain Cloud tales were originally connected with the *Naga* legends. Professor Elliot Smith in *The Evolution of the Dragon* clearly shows that the earlier Chinese dragons were often depicted, not with a serpent body, but with a crocodile body; and therefore it may be that the *Naga* and the Crocodile in the folk-mind are related. On the other hand, it should be remembered that the Crocodile was never worshipped in Burma as the *Naga* was. The theme of 'The Rainbow' reminds one of the medieval tale of Hero and Leander. It is to be noted that 'The Rainbow' does not say that the rainbow originated from the smoke of the funeral pyres, it merely narrates that the smoke from the pyres formed a rainbow; therefore, the tale is not a Rainbow myth.

'The Three Golden Eggs' attempts to explain the origin of the Ruby Mines, and perhaps to explain the deadly nature of the tiger and the crocodile. Of the animals in the Burmese forest, the snake, the tiger, and the crocodile are the most dangerous. At the present day, of course, the number of persons killed by these animals is not large, but the background of the folk-tales is Burma of many centuries ago, when the country was covered with thick forests and to go on a journey was a dangerous adventure. It is not surprising that these three animals have always been considered *Nat*-animals, or servants of the *Nats*. Of the three, however, the snake is considered the least dangerous, for not all snakes are poisonous: antidotes

to snake-bite were known even in primitive times, and the snake (except the python) does not eat human flesh. The tiger and the crocodile seem to be alike in their cunning, in their ferocity, in their fondness for human flesh, and in their swiftness and strength It is no wonder then that the tale makes the two animals brothers and the offspring of a *Naga* princess and the sun-god. In Middle Burma, where there are not many streams, the journey was usually by land through the forests in which the tigers lurked, and so the tale makes Middle Burma the home of the tiger. In Lower Burma, the journey was usually by water along the many streams of the Irrawaddy Delta, where crocodiles lurked, and so the tale makes Lower Burma the home of the crocodile.

The monk who figures as the hero in 'Why there are so many Pagodas at Pagan' is an Ari monk practising magic and alchemy, but the pagodas of Pagan in actual fact were built only after 1056 when the Aris had been suppressed. So it seems possible that an earlier tale dealing with a wonderful Ari monk was later used to explain the existence of the countless pagodas. The tale of course has no historical basis. Mount Popa mentioned in the tale is an extinct volcano, which must have been the Burmese Olympus before 1056, but which figures as the home of the Thirty-seven *Nats*[1] after 1056. It is the scene of many legends dealing with the *Nats*, magic, and alchemy. The tale is perhaps also a wistful memory in the folk-mind of the better type of Ari monks, for surely the

[1] See R. C. Temple : *The Thirty-seven Nats.*

Aris could not have been so bad as the chronicles make them out to be, and in the beginning they must have served a definite purpose for the existing society, as otherwise the people would not have tolerated them for so many centuries. Admittedly the Aris were a danger to the king and to the new religion in 1056, and they must by that time have become a burden to society for the people to join the king against the monks, but all the same it is likely that Anawrahta resorted to propaganda, some of which became embodied in the chronicles. The monk in the account of King Outsider (given below as Appendix IV) is also an Ari monk, and although he kills the cock which a pure Buddhist monk should not do, he is a good master and a good teacher to the novice. The ghost of the monk in the humorous tale of 'The Drunkard and the Wrestling Monk', however, gives the other side of the picture, and the ghost is that of an Ari monk, for the Aris were, at least towards 1044, great boxers and wrestlers.

'Mister Luck and Mister Industry' mentions a pond whose water can turn a human being into a monkey. Burmese folk-lore knows, besides this magic pond, (*i*) the pond whose water turns a child into a young man or a young girl of sixteen years of age, (*ii*) the pond whose water makes an old man or an old woman young again, (*iii*) the pond whose water restores the dead to life, (*iv*) the pond whose water turns a person into stone, and (*v*) the pond whose water can cure all witchcraft and all diseases; to this class belongs the second magic pond mentioned in the folk-tale, for it

cannot transform a real monkey into a human being, but can only re-transform a human being who has already been transformed into a monkey. These ponds are considered to be *Nat*-spirit ponds. The idea of a human being being turned into a monkey by witchcraft because he commits the sin of incest is common in Burmese folk-lore, and the chronicles mention that a king (some centuries before 1044) was turned into a monkey as he was attempting to commit the sin of incest.

'The Big Tortoise' is the longest of the folk-tales in this collection. The idea that a grievous injury may turn a person into another being instead of killing him is stressed in the tale; the mother is turned into a tortoise when she is hit with an oar, Mistress Youngest is transformed into a white paddy-bird when the cauldron of boiling water is emptied over her, and even when the paddy-bird has been actually killed, a quince tree grows out of it, and Mistress Youngest becomes a fruit-maiden. Perhaps this has something to do with the pre-Buddhist or at least non-Buddhist folk-belief that a violent death merely cuts off the allotted span of life, whereas a fatal disease clearly indicates that the span has been exhausted. This belief perhaps has some connexion with the other belief that a person who dies a violent death becomes a ghost, instead of being re-born as another king, until his original span of life is exhausted. In Burmese folk-lore regarding birds, the idea of a violent death transforming a person is common; for example, the bird called *Shwe-pyi-so* is believed to have been a

crown prince who was transformed into a bird when the executioner's sword fell on him, and it is believed also that the reason why he keeps calling out in plaintive tones *Shwe-pyi-so* or 'Oh, Ruler of the Golden Kingdom', is because his heart has been broken because his beloved king wrongfully accused him of treason. The idea of course is also found in the folk-tales of other nations. Burmese children when their nails have been pared are warned that if any bit of nail should be dropped in the house, poverty will come to the house, and they are told to throw away the bits right outside the house, with these words: 'May a tree of gold and silver grow from these.' I wonder whether this has some connexion with the idea in the tale that a tree can grow out of a body or part of a body. This idea is present twice in 'The Big Tortoise'; a tree of gold and silver grows out of the bones of the tortoise, and a quince tree grows out of the body of the paddy-bird. In 'How the Crocodile Lost his Tongue' a plant grows out of the tongue; in 'Crow's Leg Plant' a plant grows out of the leg; and in the humorous tale of 'The Origin of the Coconut' the coconut tree grows out of the mischief-maker's head. A similar idea is of course found in the folk-tales of other nations. The words of Mistress Youngest when the bones of the tortoise were being buried, and the words said by her on taking part in the trial by ordeal are not prayers nor an oath, but a solemn asseveration. The Buddhists believe that unwavering virtue practised through a lifetime entitles a person to make a solemn asseveration or 'Act of Truth' declaring his

will and calling on the powers of the universe to aid him in a crisis. Thus Mistress Youngest makes such a solemn asseveration: 'If I have in life-long duty truly loved my mother, may a tree of gold and silver grow,' 'If I am the true Mistress Youngest, may my sister's sword be harmless to me.' But the oath mentioned in the wonder tale of 'The Pincers of Pagan' is an oath of punishment in that a certain punishment is asked for by the person making the oath, should the evidence he gives be false. In the courts of law, of course, the oaths made were oaths of punishment, and the usual punishments mentioned were death from snake-bite, death from lightning, to be swallowed by the earth, to be stricken with leprosy, and 'May I and my family to the seventh generation become slaves.' The trial by ordeal mentioned in the 'Big Tortoise' has no counterpart in the customary law prevailing under the Burmese kings, but no doubt such trials did exist when society in Burma was still primitive. There exists even at the present day a folk-method of detecting a culprit; when some trifling article is lost in the house, and the head of the household suspects that one of the inmates has stolen it, he resorts to this method; every member of the household has to bring some rice wrapped in a piece of cloth with an identification mark, then all the bundles of rice are thrown into a pot of boiling water, and after some time the bundles are taken out; if the rice in a bundle should remain uncooked, then the owner of that bundle is the culprit.

'The Drunkard and the Opium-Eater', 'The

Opium-Eater and the Four Ogres', 'The Drunkard and the Wrestling Ghost', 'The Tree-spirit who Liked to Tickle' and 'The Thieves and the Pot of Gold' mention pots of gold that were buried, but these tales are not folk-legends about buried treasure. Legends about buried treasure deal with 'untold wealth' buried at certain definite localities, and they also narrate in detail the circumstances under which the treasure came to be buried. Moreover, in such legends the treasure is guarded by a treasure-spirit who is not a *Nat*-spirit, but as inferior a spirit as a ghost.[1] A treasure-spirit protects its treasure by one of the following ways: (*i*) it inflicts bodily harm on the intruder who attempts to take away the treasure, (*ii*) it allows the treasure to be taken away and then causes the intruder's body to itch unbearably until the treasure is returned to its original place, (*iii*) it makes the treasure invisible, and (*iv*) it transforms the treasure into a big snake, so that the intruder is frightened to touch it. In 'The Thieves and the Pots of Gold' the *Nat*-spirit is *not* the guardian of the treasure, but he knows where the treasure is buried. There is no treasure-spirit guarding this pot of gold, but the *Nat*-spirit turns the gold into a snake to frighten away the thieves.

The tales given in the following pages were collected by me during the period 1933 to 1937. All the tales except 'Master Thumb: Lower Burma Version' were told to me by villagers at four different places, Pauk, in Pakokku District; Nyaung-U, near the

[1] Cf. the author's 'Alchemy and Alchemists in Burma' in *Folk-Lore*, December 1933, and 'Some Burmese Inferior Spirits' in *Man*, August 1932.

ruined city of Pagan; Mindôn, in Thayetmyo District and at Sinbaungwè, in Thayetmyo District. There were only very few variations at the different places. The tales dealing with 'Rain Cloud the Crocodile', 'The Coming of Daywaw', 'Golden Rabbit and Golden Tiger', 'Why the Snail's Muscles Never Ache' and the tale about the Puffer Fish were told to me also at Kyaiklat and Pyapon, both on the Irrawaddy delta, and also at a village in Moulmein District. 'Master Thumb: Lower Burma Version' was told to me only at Kyaiklat, Pyapon, and the village in Moulmein District. Told to me and noted down originally in Burmese, I have translated them into English. Of course many of the tales were known to me in my childhood. I may mention that no collection of Burmese Folk-Tales, either in Burmese or in English, has ever been published before this work.

M.H.A.

1. ANIMAL TALES

WHY THE SNAIL'S MUSCLES NEVER ACHE

THE Horse passed the Snail on the road, and in a contemptuous tone shouted, 'The slow must always give way to the swift.'

The Snail replied with dignity, 'We Snails run swiftly only in a race.' The Horse laughed loudly at this, and the Snail challenged him to a race to be run the next morning. The Horse accepted the challenge.

The Snail summoned all his cousin-snails to him. 'Look here, you fellows,' said he, 'horseflesh is medicinal; it cures paining limbs and aching muscles. Do you want to have some?' All the cousin-snails replied that they wouldn't mind a little bit of horseflesh. 'All right,' said the Snail, 'now listen carefully to my instructions.' He then told them to line the road for many miles, and instructed that between each cousin-snail the distance was to be exactly one furlong. The Snail went to sleep after that, and the cousin-snails walked to their respective stations along the road. As they walked so slowly, it took them the whole day and night to be ready for the race.

The next morning the Horse came to the Snail and asked with due sarcasm, 'Are you ready, Master Runner?'

The Snail replied that he was ready, and laid down the conditions of the race; the runners should run on and on along the road until one was left behind, and at every furlong the runners should call out to each other to signify that neither had fallen behind. The Horse agreed, and the race started. The Horse ran swiftly, but the Snail walked at a leisurely pace.

At the first furlong the Horse shouted, 'Are you still in the race, Master Runner?'

'Of course I am,' said a cousin-snail, and the Horse was really surprised. He stopped and looked round carefully, and saw the cousin-snail walking sedately by his side.

The Horse thought that the cousin-snail was the Snail, and said, 'I will outstrip you all right at the next furlong.' But at the next furlong, there was a cousin-snail ready to pretend that he was the Snail. The Horse lost his temper and ran and ran, but always at the end of a furlong, there was a cousin-snail. At last the Horse fell down dead as the result of too much running.

The Snail and the cousin-snails later ate up the dead body of the Horse. And up to this day, painful limbs and aching muscles are unknown to the snails.

WHY THE WREN IS SMALL

THE Lion who was the king of land-animals including birds, strayed to the sea-shore and waded into the water to bathe himself. The *Naga* Dragon, who was the king of water-animals, appeared and accused the Lion of insulting him by trespassing on his domain. The two quarrelled violently. At last they agreed that each should show his strength and the one who showed the greater strength should eat the other. The Lion showed his might by roaring loudly, and some animals fell down dead. The Dragon then

showed his might by looking askance at some animals, and they were at once burnt to ashes.

'Which is the mightier of us two?' asked the Dragon in triumph. 'You have to roar to kill, whereas I merely have to look askance.'

The Lion had to admit that the Dragon was the mightier, but he pleaded, 'Please grant me some days' respite, for I want to say farewell to my family before I am eaten up.' The Dragon was agreeable and, asking the Lion to come to the sea-shore seven days later he disappeared beneath the water.

The Lion went back to his home, looking crest-fallen. The little Rabbit, who lived nearby, noticed the unusual demeanour of the Lion, and inquired why His Majesty was looking so sad. The Lion told him about his encounter with the Dragon.

'Do not lose hope, my lord,' said the Rabbit, 'for I will devise a way to save you from the Dragon.' The Rabbit then went and called the 'Bird-Herald'.

'Herald,' said the Rabbit, 'you go far and wide on the King's business. Have you ever come across the *Galôn*-bird who eats up dragons?'

'I have heard about him, Wise Rabbit,' replied the Bird-Herald, 'but I have never seen him. He is a spirit-bird and does not come to our forest; and as the King has no authority over him, I have had no occasion to go in search of him.'

'Is it not possible to go and find him?' queried the Rabbit.

'It will be difficult,' replied the Herald, 'and even

if I do find him, he will not care to come as he owes no allegiance to King Lion.'

'Then I must find a substitute,' said the Rabbit. 'Herald, please assemble all the birds and beasts at the sea-shore on the seventh day from now.'

On the appointed day, the Rabbit inspected the hundreds of birds and beasts who stood assembled at the call of the Bird-Herald. 'I am looking for a big bird,' exclaimed the Rabbit, 'a very big bird.' The Eagle came forward, the Stork came forward, the Vulture came forward, and the Adjutant-Bird came forward, but 'Bigger, bigger,' cried the Rabbit. Then a curious-looking bird stepped forward. He was thick and square and mighty, and as big as the Elephant.

'Who is this stranger?' asked the Rabbit in surprise, 'I thought I knew all the birds and beasts.'

'He is Bird-Big-Blunt-Multicoloured,' replied the Bird-Herald proudly, 'and even I, the Herald of the Forest, have seen him only twice before. He is very shy, and hates company. He has come here out of sheer loyalty to his King.'

'How clever of you, Bird-Herald,' praised the Rabbit, 'to bring him to this assembly.' All the birds and beasts gave a cheer, and said they would change the clever bird's name from Bird-Herald to Bird-Clever. And by the latter name is he known at the present day.

The Rabbit instructed the Bird-Big-Blunt-Multicoloured to hide himself behind some trees, and to flap his wings and peck with his beak at the trees, when the Dragon came. Then the Rabbit went to the Lion and

conducted him to the sea-shore. The Lion gave a roar to intimate to the Dragon that he was there, and at once the Dragon appeared from underneath the sea.

'Ho, ho,' laughed the Dragon, 'so the mighty king of land-animals is ready to be eaten up, ha?' At that moment, he heard the flap of mighty wings and the peck of mighty beak. 'What is that?' he asked in alarm.

'It is the *Galôn*-bird,' whispered the Rabbit. 'He heard that you were coming here to eat up the Lion, and he has been waiting behind those trees since dawn. But where is friend Dragon?' the Rabbit asked in feigned surprise, for the Dragon in one great dive had returned to his home beneath the waters.

'Thank you, Bird-Big-Blunt-Multicoloured,' said the Lion, 'you saved my life.' All the birds and beasts embraced the big bird and kissed him with their beaks or with their lips. As there were so many beasts and so many birds, and as they kissed with so much zeal, by the time all the kissing was over, the mighty bird had shrunken to a size even smaller than that of the Sparrow; the Bird-Big-Blunt-Multicoloured now stood as the little Wren! And from that day onwards, he was never again called Bird-Big-Blunt-Multicoloured, and came to be known instead as the Bird-Kissed-with-the-Lips. And by the latter name is he known today.

THE COMING OF DAYWAW

A NIGHT-WATCHMAN, whose duty was to guard some cattle, sat in his little hut. As the roof of the hut was full of holes and the sky was dark with rain clouds he feared he would get soaked to the skin, and grumbled to himself, 'If the Thief comes I can deal with him. If the Tiger comes, I can deal with him also. But if Daywaw comes, I shall be ruined, I shall be destroyed.'

Now, unknown to the Watchman, there was a Thief hiding on the roof of the hut, and a Tiger hiding underneath the floor. They were hoping that the Watchman would become drowsy and fall asleep so that they could steal the cattle. And the Thief did not know that the Tiger was there, nor did the Tiger suspect the presence of the Thief. The Thief did not know that 'Daywaw' was Pali for 'rain', and wondered to himself, 'Who is this mighty Daywaw that the watchman is afraid of?' The Tiger also did not know and wondered to himself, 'Who is this mighty Daywaw, that the watchman is afraid of?'

Rain fell down in torrents with peals of thunder. The Thief jumped down from the roof in fear, and the Tiger rushed out from underneath the floor. And it happened that the Thief fell astride the Tiger's back. The Thief thought that the Tiger was Daywaw, who was now carrying him to his den to be eaten, and the Tiger thought that it was Daywaw who was astride his back. In fear the Thief gripped the neck of the Tiger, and the Tiger ran on and on, thinking that Daywaw was trying to break his neck. The whole night the Tiger ran round and round the forest with the Thief on his back. When the first streak of light appeared, the Thief realized that he was on the back of a Tiger. Seeing a tree with a hollow trunk the Thief jumped off from the Tiger's back, and after climbing the tree he slid into the hollow trunk.

The Tiger ran on, shouting at the top of his voice 'Roughrider Daywaw is here! Roughrider Daywaw is here!' He ran on, until he was stopped by the Monkey.

'What ails you, friend?' asked the Monkey, and the Tiger narrated his adventure. The Monkey, however, did not believe that there was any Roughrider Daywaw, and requested the Tiger to take him to the tree where Daywaw was supposed to be hiding. So the Monkey went with the Tiger to the tree, and sniffed round it. He admitted that there was someone in the tree-trunk, and proposed to wait, for, he pointed out, that someone would have to come out sooner or later for food. The Tiger became a little bolder, and agreed to keep the Monkey company. So the two friends sat down with their backs against the tree. Now there were two small holes in the tree-trunk, and through them the Thief put out his hands. With one hand he gave a pull at the Monkey's tail, and with the other he gave a poke at the Tiger's back. The two animals jumped up in fright, and ran away shouting at the top of their voices, 'Roughrider-Daywaw-Pull-a-Tail-and-Poke-a-Back is here! Roughrider-Daywaw-Pull-a-Tail-and-Poke-a-Back is here!'

They ran on, until they were stopped by the Rabbit, who, after listening to their story, asked to be taken to

the tree, as he did not believe that there was any Roughrider-Daywaw-Pull-a-Tail-and-Poke-a-Back. So the three animals went back to the tree. In the meantime, the Thief had come out of the trunk, and was standing right at the top of the tree, for he wanted to have a good view of the surrounding country to find out his bearings. When he saw the Tiger and the Monkey and the Rabbit underneath him, he thought that the wise Rabbit had explained away the Tiger's fears and the Tiger had come back to eat him up. So he trembled and shook with fear and, losing his balance, he fell down right on top of the animals. The Thief ran away in one direction, and the three animals in another shouting at the top of their voices, 'Roughrider-Daywaw-Pull-a-Tail-and-Poke-a-Back-Jumper-on-our-Heads is here! Roughrider-Daywaw-Pull-a-Tail-and-Poke-a-Back-Jumper-on-our-Heads is here!'

THE RABBIT HAS A COLD

KING Lion appointed the Bear, the Monkey, and the Rabbit to be his ministers of state, and together they roamed the forest. But one day the Lion became tired of their company, and wanted to kill and eat them. However, as he himself had chosen them to be his ministers, he had to think of an excuse which would give a semblance of legality to his unjust act.

So King Lion called his three ministers of state, and said to them, 'My lords, you have been my ministers for some time, and I must now find out whether high

office has spoilt you.' The Lion opened his mouth wide, and asked the Bear to state what sort of smell issued from the royal mouth. As the Lion was great meat-eater, naturally a foul smell came out from his mouth.

The Bear, ever truthful, said, 'Your Majesty, it is a foul smell.'

'Rank treason,' roared the Lion in anger. 'You insult the king to his face. The punishment for treason is death.' So saying he pounced upon the Bear and killed him.

The Lion now asked the monkey to say what sort of smell issued from the royal mouth. The Monkey, after witnessing the fate of the Bear, thought that the only way to escape with his life was to resort to flattery, and said, 'Your Majesty, it is a delicious smell, as sweet as the choicest perfume.'

'You are a liar and a flatterer,' roared the Lion in anger. 'Everyone knows that only a foul smell can come out of my mouth as I am a great meat-eater. Untruthful and flattering counsellors to the king are a danger to the state.' So saying, he pounced upon the Monkey and killed him.

The Lion now said to the Rabbit, 'Wise Rabbit, what sort of smell issues from my mouth?'

'I am sorry, Your Majesty,' replied the Rabbit, 'I have a cold and my nose is blocked. May I go home and rest until my cold is cured, for only then shall I be able to use my nose and say what sort of smell issues from the royal mouth?' The Lion had no choice but to let the Rabbit go home and, needless to say, the Rabbit never went near him again.

HOW THE RABBIT RID THE FOREST OF ITS TYRANT

KING Lion called all the animals together and said, 'When I go out to hunt, I spread terror and panic among you all, yet I kill but one animal a day for food. If we can come to a mutual arrangement by which I get one animal every day, it will be of benefit to you because you will be released from an atmosphere of fear and uncertainty that prevails now in the forest, and it will be of benefit to me also, because I shall not have to hunt any more.' The animals approved of the Lion's proposal, and agreed to send one animal every morning at sunrise. Among themselves, the animals arranged that lots should be drawn every evening, and the one on whom the lot fell should go to the Lion the next day at sunrise.

For many days the arrangement stood. The Lion stayed in his den, and the other animals roamed the forest without fear or anxiety; and every day at sunrise one animal went to the Lion's den and was promptly eaten. But one evening the lot fell to the Rabbit, and he said to himself, 'Why should I be eaten by the lion? I will think of a way to rid to forest of its tyrant.' So the whole night the Rabbit did not sleep, but sat thinking.

At sunrise, the Lion woke up and waited for his victim, but no one turned up. He was just starting out for the forest in anger to accuse the animals of treachery and treason, when the Rabbit turned up breathless.

'I presume you are my breakfast,' said the Lion. 'Why are you so late?'

'My lord,' replied the Rabbit, 'have patience, for I have a tale to relate. As I was coming to you, I met another Lion, who proposed to eat me up, until I told him that I was on my way to you, the King of the Forest. At this he became very angry, and told me that you were the usurper, and he the rightful King. He let me go on condition that I should go round and tell all the animals that the rightful King of the Forest had returned to kill the usurper.'

'Take me to the villain, that liar,' ordered the Lion, and the Rabbit led him to a deep well.

'Look down, my lord,' said the Rabbit, 'for this is his den.' The Lion looked down, and saw his own reflection in the water. Thinking it to be the other lion, he jumped into the well with a roar of anger and was drowned. When the animals learnt of the Rabbit's exploit, they marvelled at his wisdom. And from that day onwards the Rabbit has been called 'Wise Rabbit'.

WHY THE TIGER AND THE MONKEY ARE SWORN ENEMIES

THE Tiger met the Elephant in a narrow lane in the forest, and said, 'Make way, make way. I am the king of the forest.'

'I recognize only the Lion as my superior,' replied the Elephant with anger, 'and I will now trample you to death for insulting me.'

'Let us have a trial of might,' suggested the Tiger, 'and the one who proves to be the mightier shall eat up the other.' The Elephant agreed. The Tiger gave a mighty roar, and some jackals near by fell dead through sheer fright. The Elephant trumpeted, but nobody died.

'Ho, ho,' laughed the Tiger, 'now I will eat you up, for you are the vanquished.' The Elephant admitted that the Tiger was entitled to eat him, but asked for a few days' respite, so that he could go and say farewell to his family. 'All right,' consented the Tiger, 'but be sure to come to this place on the seventh day from now.'

The Elephant stayed with his wife and family for five whole days, tenderly instructing them how to find their food when he was no longer with them to look after them. On the sixth day, he wanted to have a last wandering in the forest, and he roamed about, looking miserable and forlorn. The Rabbit noticed his behaviour, and inquired what was troubling the mighty Elephant. The Elephant told of his unfortunate encounter with the Tiger, and the Rabbit remained silent for some time, busy with his thoughts.

'And so tomorrow I die,' sighed the Elephant.

'No, you don't,' said the Rabbit cheerfully. 'Meet me here tomorrow morning at sunrise, and I will save your life without much trouble.'

The Rabbit got up from bed very early the next day, and called all the animals to him, except the Monkey, with whom the Rabbit was not on speaking

terms, and except, of course, the Tiger. He said to the assembled animals, 'Will you do me a favour? Will you please run all over the forest, looking terror-stricken and shouting "The Mighty Rabbit has conquered the Elephant, and is now searching for the Tiger"?'

'Of course we will do that,' replied the animals enthusiastically, 'You are our counsellor in our troubles, Wise Rabbit, and we are always ready to obey you.' Then the Rabbit jumped on to the Elephant's back, holding a bunch of bananas in his hands. He then instructed the Elephant to go at a leisurely pace towards the place where he was to meet the Tiger. The forest now rang loud with the terror-stricken cries of animals—'The mighty Rabbit has conquered the Elephant and is now searching for the Tiger.'

The Tiger heard the cries, and became a little anxious. He did not quite believe that the Rabbit could do any harm either to the Elephant or to him, but at the same time, he felt he ought to have a companion to stand by his side and fight, should the Rabbit really be searching for him after conquering the Elephant. So he explained to the animals that it was he, not the Rabbit, who was going to eat the Elephant. 'And today,' the Tiger continued, 'the Elephant comes to the appointed place to be eaten up by this mighty me. But I am by no means a glutton, and if one of you fellows will come along with me, I will share the Elephant's carcass with him.'

'We dare not, we dare not,' replied the animals in

unison, 'the mighty Rabbit will eat us after he has eaten you.' So saying, they ran away, still pretending to be terror-stricken. The Monkey, who all the time had been sitting astride a tree-branch and listening to the Tiger's words, now came down and offered to go along with the tiger.

So the Tiger and the Monkey went along to the appointed place. When they arrived there, they hid themselves behind a bush and waited for the coming of the Elephant. As they waited, they again heard the terror-stricken cries of the animals and they became rather worried. The Monkey thought to himself, 'The Tiger is a treacherous animal, and should the Rabbit prove to be really mighty, he might run away, leaving me to my fate.' Therefore, he suggested to the Tiger that they should tie their tails together in a knot, so that they should not become separated at the approach of any enemy. 'Unity is strength, Friend Tiger,' the Monkey explained, 'and we must not get separated but must stand together.' The Tiger readily consented, for he also had been thinking that the Monkey, being a treacherous animal, might run away and leave him to the Rabbit, if the latter proved to be really mighty. So they tied their tails together in a knot and waited.

Some time after, the Tiger and the Monkey saw the Elephant coming towards them with the Rabbit on his back. The Rabbit was eating the bananas one by one, and he kept shouting, 'I am eating the brains of the Elephant, and I shall soon be eating the brains of the Tiger.'

The Tiger really believed the bananas to be the brains of the Elephant, and trembling from head to foot, he suggested to his companion that they should run away. But the Monkey said, 'You old duffer, they are bananas; I know, because I eat some every day.' However, the Tiger was not so sure.

Then the Rabbit gave a hard look at the Monkey and said, 'You useless Monkey! You boasted that you would bring me a big, fat Tiger, and you have brought me only a small, thin Tiger!'

At this the Tiger ran away, shouting to the Monkey, 'You treacherous thing! I understand now why you offered to come along with me, why you wanted to tie up my tail with yours, and why you said that the brains were only bananas.' The Monkey asked him not to run, but the Tiger ran on, pulling the Monkey along with him as their tails were tied together in a knot. At last they bumped against a tree-stump and fell down. The Tiger got up and ran on one side of the tree-stump, whereas the Monkey got up and ran on the other side, with the result that their tails stuck against the tree-stump. They struggled and pulled, until the knot was cut against the tree-stump. Then they ran away in different directions with bleeding tails. Since that time, the tiger and the Monkey have been sworn enemies.

MASTER PO AND THE TIGER

A young boy, by name of Master Po, used to leave his village every day and wander in the forest. He became friends with all the animals, especially the Tiger. Master Po and the Tiger used to take long walks in the forest together. Master Po had a genuine affection for his friend, but the Tiger had an ulterior motive; he looked forward to the day when he could ask young Master Po to take him to the village, so that he could run away with a fat calf or two belonging to the villagers. One day, the Tiger said to Master Po, 'Friend Po, will you take me to your village?'

'I cannot do that, good Tiger,' replied Master Po, 'for the villagers all dislike you. You must remember that you have often pounced upon their cattle while at pasture outside the village.'

'If you won't take me, I will go there by myself,' said the Tiger petulantly.

That same evening, the Tiger loitered about the village gate. Master Po saw him, and said to him, 'Friend Tiger, do not loiter about here, for the villagers are full of cunning, and they will trap you.' But the Tiger merely laughed at this warning. Master Po stood at the gate, trying to persuade his friend to go back to the forest, but without success. It now became dark, and as his parents were calling him, Master Po went back to his house with a final warning to the Tiger. The Tiger waited until the villagers were all asleep. He then went into the village, and came out dragging a fat calf. Early the next day, Master Po went into the forest and found the Tiger. 'Tiger,' said Master Po, 'we have been friends for a long time, so please heed my words. Tonight they are laying a trap for you, so do not come again to our village.' But the Tiger laughed at the warning as before.

That night the Tiger entered the village, and was duly caught in the trap laid by the villagers. In the morning, the villagers found him. 'We will let him rage and roar in the trap until he exhausts himself,' agreed the villagers, 'and we will let him die slowly of starvation and thirst.' So they left the Tiger in the trap.

For six days the Tiger raged and roared, and Master Po felt sorry for his friend, but as he was afraid of a beating from his parents, he did not dare to set the Tiger free. On the seventh day, however, Master Po felt that it was worth a beating to save his friend, so he went and opened the trap. 'Run away now, good Tiger,' said Master Po, 'for the sake of our friendship, I will face the anger of my parents and other villagers.'

'Thank you,' replied the Tiger, 'but I must eat you, for I am exhausted and cannot hunt for prey.' Master Po pleaded that as the animal owed him a debt of gratitude for freeing him, the Tiger should not eat him. The Tiger, in reply, contended that there was no such thing as a debt of gratitude. In the end, Master Po succeeded in persuading the Tiger that they should find a judge and let him decide their dispute.

Master Po and the Tiger went into the forest in

search of a judge, and they met the Skull of a dead ox. They begged the Skull to decide their dispute. After listening to the arguments put forward by the disputants, the Skull gave his decision: 'There is no such thing as a debt of gratitude. For example, my master made me plough his land for many years, but when I became old in his service, he killed me and ate me. So the Tiger should eat Master Po.'

'I will eat you now,' roared the Tiger. But Master Po claimed the right of appeal to another judge. So Master Po and the tiger went on until they met the Banyan Tree, whom they asked to decide their case. The Banyan Tree, after listening to the arguments put forward by the disputants, gave his decision: 'There is no such thing as a debt of gratitude. For example, human beings rest in my shade from the heat and glare of the sun, yet they break my branches and take away my flowers. So the Tiger should eat Master Po.'

'I will eat you now,' roared the Tiger. But Master Po claimed the right of appeal to another judge. 'Remember this is your last chance,' warned the Tiger, 'for one is entitled to go before three courts only for the same dispute.' So the two went until they met the Rabbit.

'Wise Rabbit,' said they, 'please decide our dispute.' After listening to the arguments of the disputants the Rabbit said that he would have to visit the scene of the dispute before he could give his decision.

So the Rabbit went with Master Po and the Tiger to the trap at the village. 'Now,' said the Rabbit,

'where were you, Tiger, when Master Po came to free you?'

'I was in the trap,' replied the Tiger.

'Show me exactly how you stood in the trap,' asked the Rabbit, and the Tiger went and stood in the trap. 'Now, Master Po,' said the Rabbit, 'close the trap first and then show me how you came and freed the Tiger.' When Master Po had locked the trap, the Rabbit shouted, 'Stop! Do not free the Tiger.' The Rabbit then explained to the astonished Tiger and Master Po, 'I have now restored the *status quo* of the disputants. The Tiger is back at his place, and Master Po is back at his place also. The dispute is now over.' The Rabbit then went back to the forest, and Master Po ran back to his home. The Tiger died of hunger and thirst a few days later.

JUDGE RABBIT

Mister Clever and Mister Stupid were neighbours and the former had a cow, whereas the latter had a mare. One night Clever's cow gave birth to a calf, and Stupid's mare gave birth to a colt. Clever, being a light sleeper, heard the bleating of the calf and the neighing of the colt. Taking a light, he went down to the cowshed to have a look. He noticed that there was no light in Stupid's stable. Guessing that Stupid had not been awakened by the neighing of the colt, Clever took the calf to the stable, and brought the colt to the cowshed. Then he went back to bed.

Early the next day he went round the village,

telling everybody that a strange and wonderful thing had happened; his cow had given birth to a colt. The villagers flocked to the cowshed, and gazed in wonder at the colt. By this time, Stupid had found the calf in his stable and, suspecting the truth, he came to Clever and accused him of stealing his colt. Clever denied, maintaining that by a strange freak of nature, his cow had given birth to a colt. 'But what about the calf in my stable?' asked Stupid indignantly.

'By a strange freak of nature also,' suggested Clever sweetly, 'your mare must have given birth to a calf.' Stupid appealed to the neighbours, who however admitted their inability to decide the dispute. So Stupid asked Clever to go with him to another village to find a judge. On the way they met the Rabbit and asked him to act as judge in their dispute.

'With pleasure,' replied the Rabbit. Stupid and Clever explained what the dispute was, and the Rabbit said, 'I am busy now, but will fix a date for your case. I will meet you in your village at sunrise on the morning of the seventh day from now. Be ready with your witnesses.' Stupid and Clever thanked the Rabbit, and came back to their village.

On the appointed day at sunrise Stupid and Clever and the whole village assembled to await the coming of Judge Rabbit. The sun rose higher and higher until it was noon, but there was no Judge Rabbit. Noon passed and still there was no Judge Rabbit. It was only at sunset that the Rabbit appeared. As it was so unusual for the Rabbit to break his word, the villagers could not help asking why he did not come

at the appointed time, although in ordinary circumstances they should, out of courtesy, have asked no questions of a judge.

'I am so sorry,' replied Judge Rabbit, 'but I was delayed by an accident. As I was coming to you this morning, I saw a sandbank in the river on fire, and the whole day I have been carrying water in a wicker crate and pouring it on the fire to put it out.'

Clever, who took pride in his cleverness, thought that Judge Rabbit was trying to test the intelligence of the villagers. 'Sire Judge,' said he brightly, 'how can a sandbank in the middle of the river be on fire, and how can water be carried in a wicker crate? It is against nature. I do not believe you.'

'Quite right, Clever,' replied Judge Rabbit calmly, 'how can a cow give birth to a colt, and how can a mare give birth to a calf? It is against nature. So take back your calf and give back the colt to your neighbour Stupid.' The villagers applauded the decision of Judge Rabbit, and from that day onwards they always chose the Rabbit as their Judge in all their disputes.

HOW THE CROCODILE LOST HIS TONGUE

THE Crow looked at the fat Crocodile, and his mouth watered. Meaning to kill the Crocodile by a trick, the Crow said, 'Friend Crocodile, you are indeed an old stick-at-home, for you stay in this shallow river, although only a short distance away there is a far bigger river.'

'I have never heard of it,' replied the Crocodile.

'I never tell lies,' said the Crow. 'I have a kind heart and I try to help people.'

'Will you please take me to the big river,' asked the stupid Crocodile, 'so that I may stay there?'

'I will take you there,' agreed the Crow. 'It is only about half a mile away, and surely a big, strong fellow like you can walk that distance.' The conceited Crocodile replied that he could walk that distance all right. So the Crow hopped in front, and the Crocodile followed, walking slowly.

They had gone at least a mile, when the Crocodile said, 'Friend Crow, surely we have come at least a mile, and yet where is your river?'

'Go on,' replied the Crow, 'we have walked only a few yards. Surely a big, strong fellow like you cannot be feeling tired yet.' The Crocodile felt ashamed to admit that he was tired and walked on. At last he was so tired that he collapsed, and lay helpless on the roadway. By that time he was at least three miles from his river. The Crow laughed loudly and said, 'Well, my fat and stupid friend, you will soon die of starvation and thirst. Don't worry, I will come and eat you when you are dead.' Then he flew away.

A kind-hearted cartman came along in a cart, and found the Crocodile on the roadway. The Crocodile, with tears in his eyes, begged the cartman to save his life by taking him back to his river. The cartman felt sorry for the unfortunate animal, but knowing him to be a crafty fellow, he first bound him with a stout rope, before lifting him on to his cart. The

cartman drove his cart to the river's edge, and made ready to drop the Crocodile there.

'Master,' pleaded the Crocodile with a quiver in his voice, 'I am so weak, and my limbs are stiff because of your stout rope. If you drop me here at the river's edge, I shall not be able to swim away for some time, and then unkind human beings will come and kill me. So please drive your cart into the river, until the water comes up to the thighs of your bullocks, and drop me there.' The cartman drove into the river until the water came up to the thighs of his bullocks, and untying the rope, pushed the Crocodile off his cart. At once the wicked animal caught hold of a bullock's leg with his jaws.

'Let go, let go, you ungrateful animal,' shouted the cartman. But the Crocodile would not let go.

The Rabbit, who had come down to the river for a drink, saw from the shore what was happening, and shouted, 'Hit him with your driving stick. Hit him with your driving stick.' The cartman followed the Rabbit's advice, and hit the Crocodile so hard with the driving stick that the latter had to let go of the bullock's leg. The cartman then swiftly drove his cart to the river bank. After thanking the Rabbit for his valuable advice, he drove away.

The Crocodile was very angry with the Rabbit, and swore that he would catch the interfering Rabbit when the latter came again to the river for a drink. Early the next day, the Crocodile swam to the river's edge to wait for the Rabbit. But as the water at the edge was so shallow, he could not get his whole body

submerged, and his back remained exposed to view above the water. When he saw the Rabbit coming, he remained perfectly still, so that he should be mistaken for a log. But the Rabbit, being wise, looked carefully at the seeming log, and sang loudly:

'True Crocodiles swim upstream,
True logs float downstream.'

The Crocodile, to assure the Rabbit that it was really a log, floated downstream for a few yards. The Rabbit, seizing his opportunity, drank quickly and ran away.

The next day, the Crocodile again waited, pretending to be a log. The Rabbit as before sang:

'True Crocodiles swim upstream,
True logs float downstream.

But the Crocodile remained perfectly still, and when the Rabbit lowered its little head to drink, thinking it was really a log this time, he caught hold of the Rabbit in his jaws. The Crocodile, however, did not eat the Rabbit at once but kept him in his big mouth, for he wanted all the animals to know that he had caught the cunning Rabbit at last. He swam up and down the river, swishing his tail about, and shouting 'Hee, Hee, Hee'.

The Rabbit put himself astride the Crocodile's tongue, and gripping it firmly with his paws said, 'You big fool, I know you can shout "Hee, Hee", but can you shout "Ha, Ha"?'

The Crocodile laughed in reply 'Ha, Ha'. Now when the Crocodile said 'Ha, Ha', he had to open his mouth wide, and that gave the Rabbit the chance to jump out of the captor's mouth, taking with him the

torn-out tongue. That explains why at the present day, the Crocodile has no tongue.

The Rabbit gained the river bank without much difficulty as the mighty jump he made landed him near the river's edge, where, as it will be remembered, the water was shallow. But he did have to swim a few yards with the heavy tongue in his paws, and he felt a little tired when he reached the bank; so he decided not to burden himself with the tongue any further, and left it hidden under a bush. He walked back towards his home, and met the Cat on the way. 'Hello, friend Cat,' greeted the Rabbit cheerfully, 'if you should be feeling hungry, I could give you a tongue.' He then proceeded to tell the Cat of his adventure with the Crocodile and directed his friend to the place where the tongue was hidden. The Cat gleefully went to the place, but although he searched and searched, he could not find the Crocodile's tongue. He found, however, a strange new plant, whose fruit was long and narrow and flat, and after careful thinking, he realized at last that the tongue had become transformed into the strange new plant. The plant, of course, is none other than the familiar '*Kyaungshar*', which means 'the tongue of the Cat', for, you see, although the tongue originally belonged to the Crocodile, it was later given by the clever Rabbit to the Cat.

THE THREE FOOLISH ANIMALS

THE Wise Rabbit sat under a tree and pondered on life in general. He said to himself, 'The world is full of difficulties and dangers. First, there are natural catastrophes such as earthquakes and landslides and storms. Second, there is always the dangers of famine, of shortage of food and water. Third, there is the danger of thieves and robbers.' He then remembered an important appointment and went away.

Unknown to him, three animals had been listening to him, namely, the Lapwing, the Earthworm, and the Monkey. They were very foolish animals, and they became panic-stricken at the words of the Rabbit. The lapwing thought in particular of natural catastrophes and with tears he said, 'What if the sky should fall on me when I am asleep? If it should fall when I am awake at least I can fly away, but if it should fall when I am asleep I shall be crushed to death.'

The Earthworm thought specially of the danger of famine, and with tears he said, 'What if there should be a shortage of soil which is my food? I shall die. I shall die.'

The Monkey thought in particular of thieves, and with tears he said, 'The earth is my most valuable property, but at night I leave it to sleep aloft in a tree. What if thieves and robbers should come and steal the earth while I am asleep?'

From that time onwards, the Lapwing sleeps on his back with his two little legs in the air, so that if the sky should fall the legs would support the fallen sky; the Earthworm vomits out the soil after eating it, in

case there should be shortage of soil; and the Monkey comes down from his tree three times every night, and feels the ground to assure himself that the earth has not been stolen from him.

GOLDEN RABBIT AND GOLDEN TIGER

GOLDEN Rabbit went to Golden Tiger and said, 'Let us go thatch-reaping early tomorrow morning.' Golden Tiger, being a good-natured old thing, was pleased that Golden Rabbit should come and make friends with him. So when morning dawned Golden Tiger, taking a bundle containing some rice and cooked meat, went to Golden Rabbit, and together they proceeded to the thatch fields. Golden Rabbit also brought a bundle with him, but it contained only some cow-dung and sand.

Golden Tiger started to reap, but Golden Rabbit felt lazy. 'Let us go and have our breakfast first,' he suggested. But Golden Tiger, being an industrious old thing, replied that he wished to go on with his reaping and would eat later. 'As you will,' said Golden Rabbit, 'but do not forget the saying of the wise:

"He who comes first gets meat and rice,
But he who comes late, gets dung and sand."'

He then ran quickly to where the bundles were, and ate up Golden Tiger's meat and rice. Afterwards he went to sleep beneath a shady bush. Only at full noon did Golden Tiger come for his breakfast. As he found only Golden Rabbit's bundle, he shouted to Golden Rabbit, 'Did you eat up my meat and rice?'

'Of course not,' replied Golden Rabbit indignantly, 'but I can guess what has happened; the saying of the wise has proved to be true, and your breakfast has been turned into dung and sand.' The simple old Golden Tiger accepted Golden Rabbit's explanation.

The whole afternoon Golden Tiger reaped, while Golden Rabbit slept. By the time the sun was setting Golden Tiger had reaped a lot of thatch, whereas Golden Rabbit had reaped nothing at all. When Golden Tiger had put the bundle of thatch on his back, and was starting for home, Golden Rabbit said, 'Golden Tiger, I am feeling feverish and I cannot walk. What a fool I was to sleep in the hot sun!' Golden Tiger, being a good-natured old thing, asked Golden Rabbit to jump on to his back and sit on the bundle of thatch.

When Golden Tiger had walked some distance Golden Rabbit took out his tinder-box and struck a light. 'What is that noise?' asked the Golden Tiger, suspicious at last of Golden Rabbit.

'It is only my poor teeth chattering, because my whole body shivers with the ague,' explained Golden Rabbit. He then set fire to the bundle of thatch, and jumped off Golden Tiger's back.

Golden Tiger's back was badly burnt and became covered with blisters. He went on, and found Golden Rabbit sitting innocently by the wayside. 'You treacherous villain,' roared Golden Tiger. 'You ran forward after setting fire to the thatch. I will kill you now for your treachery.'

'I have never seen you before,' protested Golden Rabbit. Golden Tiger, being a trusting old thing, thought that it was another Rabbit, and apologized for his mistake. 'I don't blame you either,' said Golden Rabbit generously, 'for I have many brothers and sisters and cousins who all look like me. But, friend Tiger, how did you manage to get so many blisters on your back?' When Golden Tiger explained how his back came to be covered with blisters, Golden Rabbit said that the best cure for blisters was to rub them against a tree-stump. Golden Tiger, being a trusting old fool, went to a tree-stump and rubbed his back against it with the result that the blisters became torn and bleeding.

Golden Tiger in great pain went on, and soon found Golden Rabbit sitting innocently by the wayside. 'You treacherous villain,' cried Golden Tiger in anger.

'I have never seen you before,' lied Golden Rabbit. 'I presume it is a case of mistaken identity, for I have so many brothers and sisters and cousins who look like me.' Golden Tiger believed him and apologized. 'By the way,' said Golden Rabbit, 'your back seems all torn and bleeding. How did it happen?' Golden Tiger related how his back had become covered with blisters, and how he had rubbed them against a tree-stump. Golden Rabbit, looking very sympathetic said that the best cure for torn and bleeding blisters was to roll on one's back on sandy ground. Golden Tiger, being a trusting old fool, went to the sandy shore of a river, and rolled on his back, with the result

that the sand got into his wounds, paining him greatly.

Golden Tiger went on his way, and after some time he found Golden Rabbit sitting innocently by the wayside. 'You shall not escape me this time,' roared Golden Tiger.

'I don't know you,' replied Golden Rabbit. 'You must be mistaking me for one of my many relations.' Golden Tiger, being a trusting and good-natured old thing, apologized for his mistakes. 'Oh, my poor friend Tiger,' exclaimed the Rabbit, feigning sympathy, 'your back seems to be full of wounds. It is fortunate that I can take you to a wishing well, where you can wish away all your wounds.'

'Do take me to that well,' pleaded Golden Tiger.

'Follow me,' said Golden Rabbit.

So Golden Rabbit took Golden Tiger to a nearby well. 'Look down, and wish aloud,' he instructed. As Golden Tiger leaned forward and looked down, Golden Rabbit gave him a push. Golden Tiger fell into the well and was drowned. That was how Golden Rabbit first tormented and then killed the trusting Golden Tiger.

WHY THE RABBIT'S NOSE TWITCHES

The Frog was jealous of the Rabbit's reputation for wisdom, and planned to make the Rabbit the laughing-stock of the jungle. So he hid himself underneath a stone and when he saw the Rabbit coming along leisurely, the Frog hallowed in a loud voice 'Ong-Ing'.

The Rabbit jumped one cubit into the air and then ran away in fright. As he ran, he knocked down a Pumpkin. The Pumpkin rolled down the slope to a Sessamin field and bumped against a Sessamin Plant, scattering the Sessamin seeds. The Wild Fowl happened to be flying over the spot, and some of the seeds got into his eyes, temporarily blinding him. The Wild Fowl alighted on a Bamboo Plant. The Bamboo broke and fell on a Snake who was sleeping underneath. The Snake ran away in fright and bumped against the Wild Pig who was quietly eating a Cucumber. The Wild Pig dropped it in fright, and the Cucumber fell into the nearby pool. There was a *Naga*-dragon sleeping at the bottom of the pool, and he felt very annoyed at being disturbed by the Cucumber.

'You shall die,' said the *Naga* to the Cucumber.

'Oh, Sir, Oh, Sir,' replied the Cucumber, 'I am not to blame. The Wild Pig pushed me in.'

The *Naga* left the pool and soon caught the Pig. 'You shall die,' said the *Naga*.

'Oh, Sir, Oh, Sir,' replied the Pig, 'I am not to blame. The Snake bumped against me.'

The *Naga* chased the Snake and soon caught him. 'You shall die,' said the *Naga*.

'Oh, Sir, Oh, Sir,' replied the Snake, 'I am not to blame. The Bamboo fell on me.'

The *Naga* went to the Bamboo and said, 'You shall die.'

'Oh, Sir, Oh, Sir,' replied the Bamboo, 'I am not to blame. The Wild Fowl alighted on me.'

The *Naga* soon caught the Wild Fowl and said, 'You shall die.'

'Oh, Sir, Oh, Sir,' replied the Wild Fowl, 'the Sessamin Plant threw his seeds into my eyes and blinded me.'

The *Naga* went to the Sessamin Plant and said, 'You shall die.'

'Oh, Sir, Oh, Sir,' replied the Sessamin Plant, 'I am not to blame. The Pumpkin bumped into me.'

The *Naga* soon found the Pumpkin and said, 'You shall die.'

'Oh, Sir, Oh, Sir,' replied the Pumpkin, 'the Rabbit knocked me down.'

The *Naga* found the Rabbit and said, 'You shall die.'

'Oh, Sir, Oh, Sir,' replied the Rabbit, 'I am not to blame. A Monster from under a stone frightened me.'

The *Naga* went and looked under the stone, but as the Frog had fled, he could not find anything under the stone. The *Naga* went back to the Rabbit, and said, 'You little liar, there was no monster, and you shall die.' The poor Rabbit stood there trembling from head to foot, and his nose twitched and twitched in fright. The *Naga* roared with laughter to see the Rabbit's nose twitching and, recovering his temper,

he went back to his pool. And even at the present day, the Rabbit's nose is forever twitching.

THE OVER-CUNNING RABBIT

THE Rabbit had cheated all the animals one after another, and now he decided to cheat the human beings. So he went near a village and sat looking here and there. When he saw an old woman coming with a tray of bananas on her head, he lay down on the roadway, pretending to be dead. The woman picked up the Rabbit, and meaning to cook and eat him later, she put the Rabbit among the bananas. The Rabbit in addition to having a free ride on the woman's head, ate up the bananas one by one. When he had eaten them all, he jumped down and ran away.

The Rabbit went to another village, and had a look round. He noticed that there was a *Nat*-dance in progress, and all the villagers had come with bananas as offerings to the spirits. The Rabbit went to a nearby well, and shouted, 'There is a tiger in the well! There is a tiger in the well.' When the villagers heard him and rushed to the well, the Rabbit ran and ate up all the bananas. Then he went away.

The Rabbit felt very bold, and became full of contempt for the credulous human beings. So, when he came to another village, he entered boldly and going into the kitchens he ate up all the bananas that he could find. When the villagers chased him with stones and sticks, he ran in front until he came to a disused well. It was pitch-dark in the well, but with his sharp

eyes he saw that there was no water in it. So he jumped into the well, and when the villagers approached, he cried out, 'Save me! Save me! I am drowning! I am drowning!' The villagers peered into the well, but could not see anything as it was so dark inside. Some went home, thinking that the Rabbit had been drowned, but others were more suspicious. 'Let us make sure that he is drowned,' said they. 'Let us make sure that there is enough water in the well to drown him.' So they sent back one young lad to the village to bring a long rope, and when he came back with it, they let down the rope into the well. The Rabbit, crouching at the bottom of the well, coiled up the rope.

'The well is deep all right,' said the villagers, 'for even with this long rope, we cannot touch bottom. But let us see whether there is any water, so pull up the rope.' The Rabbit quickly licked and spat on the coils of rope. When the rope was pulled up, the villagers found it wet all over, and saying that the water was deep enough for the Rabbit to drown, went away. The Rabbit then came out of the well.

The Rabbit was now very conceited and looked forward to many more victories over the stupid human beings. As he went along, he saw an old man coming along with a basket of bananas on his shoulders. 'An old trick is worth ten new tricks,' said the Rabbit, and he lay down on the roadway as if he was dead. The man, however, was a shrewd old fellow, and he saw at a glance that the Rabbit was merely pretending.

'Here is a dead Rabbit,' said he, 'but I must make

it deader.' So saying, he beat the Rabbit to death. Later he cooked and ate the Rabbit.

WHY THE TIGER IS SO BITTER AGAINST THE CAT

ALTHOUGH the Tiger was big and strong and fierce, he was so clumsy in his movements that he became the laughing-stock of the jungle. 'Look at the clumsy Tiger,' the animals jeered: 'he will soon starve to death as he is so clumsy that he cannot catch any prey.'

The Tiger felt very unhappy until he remembered his cousin, the Cat. So he went to his cousin and said, 'Cousin, please teach me all your methods of hunting and catching prey, and I will serve you faithfully for three full years.' The Cat agreed.

So the Tiger became the pupil of the Cat, and although they were cousins and he the elder, he showed the Cat every respect due from a pupil to his teacher. He swept the house; he prepared the meals; he ran errands; he accompanied the Cat wherever he went; and he learnt his lessons. In short, the Tiger was the perfect pupil. The Cat at first was a good teacher but later he became jealous of his own pupil. 'The Tiger masters all the tricks I teach him,' he reflected, 'and if I teach all I know, he will rival me, nay, he will surpass me, for he is stronger and bigger than me.' So he decided that he would not teach the Tiger one special trick.

The three years of apprenticeship drew to an end,

and the Tiger respectfully asked, 'Sire Teacher, have I learnt everything?'

'Everything,' replied the Cat untruthfully. The Tiger thanked the Cat and went away joyfully.

The Tiger now started hunting on his own, but he was soon disappointed with himself, for as he crouched to spring on a doe, the latter seemed to know that she was in danger, and ran away. He again crouched to spring on a bullock, and again the Tiger failed to get his prey. 'Hide yourself well and surprise your prey,' was one of the maxims of his teacher, the Cat, and he had hidden himself well behind a bamboo thicket, but both the doe and the bullock knew that he was there. He was puzzled and, crouching as if to spring, he considered his position carefully. At last he realized that the 'thud, thud' of his tail, as he swished it up and down, served as a warning to his would-be victims. 'It is that treacherous Cat,' he cried out in anger, 'he never taught me to swish the tail about without making a noise.' His anger increased when he remembered how silent was the Cat's tail when on a hunt, and he swore that he would eat up the Cat, nay even the Cat's dung, if the Cat could not be found.

And from that day onwards, the Tiger has been looking for the Cat, who, however, is so cunning that he is still alive. In fact, the Cat will not give to his old pupil even the doubtful satisfaction of finding his dung, and so he always covers up his dung with earth or ash.

WHY THE CORMORANT HAS NO TAIL

Once there was a King who ruled over human beings and animals. He had as his retainers not only human beings but animals also. The Cormorant was one of the animal retainers, and he was very proud of his appearance. He strutted about in the King's palace flourishing his long tail. Now the Cormorant had a beautiful tail : it was shaped like a *V* at the end and was covered with black spots as was the rest of the Cormorant's body.

One day the King ordered all his subjects to come and appear before him. The Gudgeon came in answer to the King's summons, and as he entered the throne room, he saw the Cormorant standing near the door. The Gudgeon's heart missed a beat, for the Cormorant was a fisher-bird with a special liking for gudgeons, but he remembered that all human beings and animals had to preserve the strictest truce while in the King's city, and felt reassured. The Cormorant's mouth watered when he saw the Gudgeon, but he knew he sho' d not even touch the Gudgeon, for otherwise he would be executed for treason. But he was tempted by the Gudgeon's timid behaviour to frighten him, and so he stared rudely at the Gudgeon, and when the latter stared back in fright the Cormorant gave a sudden wink with his left eye. The Gudgeon gave a wild shriek of fear, and ran out of the palace back to his home. The poor fish was later arrested, and was tried for treason.

'Why did you create a disturbance in my palace, and why did you go away without my permission?'

asked the King, who was acting as the judge in the trial.

'Your Majesty,' replied the Gudgeon, 'my ancient enemy the Cormorant, who was standing near the door in the throne room, frightened me by making eyes at me.' As after due inquiry the Gudgeon's statement was found to be true he was pardoned. As for the Cormorant, he was ordered to give a banquet to the Gudgeon that very evening as compensation for frightening the poor fish.

That evening the Cormorant gave a banquet to the Gudgeon and plied him with drinks, until the fish fell into a drunken sleep. Then the sly Cormorant took off the Gudgeon's tail, and hid it in the fork of a tree, meaning to eat it later when the hue and cry for it was over. When the fish woke up in the morning and missed his tail and broke into tears, the Cormorant suggested that as the city was full of thieves, they surely had stolen the missing tail. The Gudgeon, however, refused to accept the Cormorant's explanation, knowing him to be such a sly fellow, and took the matter to a Court of Law. The Court, after hearing evidence, decided that as a host was responsible for the safety of the life and property of his guest, the Cormorant should surrender his tail to the Gudgeon as compensation. So the Cormorant's tail was duly cut off, and joined to the tail stump of the Gudgeon. That is why the Gudgeon now has a tail shaped like a *V* at its end and covered with black spots so different from the rest of the Gudgeon's body. As to the Cormorant, he did not dare to take down the

stolen tail from the fork of the tree and join it to his own tail stump, lest it should become obvious to the world that he was a common thief. That is why the Cormorant has no tail at the present day.

THE PUFFER FISH AND THE GRASSHOPPER

THE fishes and the insects met together and held a conference. 'We will unite,' they decided after due deliberation, 'and conquer the land animals. Thus the whole world, both land and sea, will be ours.' So they chose a fish who was slim and swift to be their king, and an insect who was a mighty swordsman to be the commander-in-chief of their armies. Then in order and array, the fishes and the insects marched to meet the land animals. There was a bloody battle, and at last the land animals were put to flight.

The fishes and the insects held a great feast in celebration of their victory. The flesh of the land animals who fell in the battle was cooked in big pots. The food was served in golden dishes for the King Fish and Generalissimo Insect to eat. The two were gluttons, and they ate and ate. After so many helpings, the stomach of the King became bloated, and the Generalissimo choked because he had had too much food. As the Generalissimo gasped for air, the fishes and the insects thumped his head and body. As a result of this rough treatment the Generalissimo did recover his breath, but unfortunately his head and his body became absolutely flat.

The feast was broken up by the trumpets of the

guards calling the fishes and the insects to battle, for the land animals had reformed their broken armies, and were gathering to attack. The fishes and the insects hastily took up their arms, but to their dismay they saw that the King Fish was unable to get up and fight, because of his bloated stomach. They turned to the Generalissimo, who, however, was suffering from loss of memory as his head had been thumped flat, and was striking down his friends around him with his sword held firmly in his hands. In despair the fishes and the insects fled, and the land animals regained their supremacy. The land animals captured the King Fish and the Generalissimo Insect, but they were so amused by the bloated stomach of the Fish and the madness of the Insect that they let them go free.

From that day onwards the King Fish came to be known as 'The Fish with the Bloated Belly', and Generalissimo Insect came to be known as 'The Swordsman'.

THE CROW AND THE WREN

THE Crow once caught the Wren, and said to her, 'I will eat you now.' The Wren wailed to herself, 'Oh, my little daughter, my little daughter, who will look after you when I am dead?' The Crow thought to himself, 'This Wren is old and tough, but her daughter will be young and soft,' and so he suggested to the Wren, 'I will let you go if you will promise to give me your daughter to eat on the seventh day from now.' The Wren promised and the Crow let her go.

On the seventh day, the Crow came to the Wren and asked for her daughter.

'You eat all sorts of rubbish,' said the Wren, 'and your beak is dirty. My daughter is clean and sweet, and unless you wash your mouth in front of me, I cannot put my daughter in your beak.'

'All right,' replied the Crow, 'I will come back soon with some water.' Then he flew away.

The Crow went to the Water, and said:

'Water, Water, come with me,
To wash the Beak,
To eat the little Wren.'

The Water replied, 'How can you take me away without a pot? So go and get a pot first.'

'All right,' said the Crow, and flew away. The Crow then went to the Pot and said:

'Pot, Pot, come with me,
To fetch the Water,
To wash the Beak,
To eat the little Wren.'

'I am willing to come,' replied the Pot, 'but I have a hole in my side. So please go and fetch some mud to fill up the hole.'

'All right,' said the Crow, and flew away. The Crow then went to the Mud and said:

'Mud, Mud, come with me,
To mend the Pot,
To fetch the Water,
To wash the Beak,
To eat the little Wren.'

'I am willing to come,' replied the Mud, 'but I am

too hard to mend the Pot. So please ask some buffalo to come and wallow here.'

'All right,' said the Crow, and flew away. The Crow then went to the Buffalo and said:

'Buffalo, Buffalo, come with me,
To wallow the Mud,
To mend the Pot,
To fetch the Water,
To wash the Beak,
To eat the little Wren.'

'I am willing to come,' replied the Buffalo, 'but I am too weak with hunger to wallow. Please get me some grass to eat.'

'All right,' said the Crow, and flew away. The Crow then went to the Grass and said:

'Grass, Grass, come with me,
To feed the Buffalo,
To wallow the Mud,
To mend the Pot,
To fetch the Water,
To wash the Beak,
To eat the little Wren.'

'I am willing to come,' replied the Grass, 'but the Buffalo is such a big eater, and he needs more of me. If you can give me some fresh land, I will grow more until there is enough of me for the Buffalo.'

'All right,' said the Crow, and flew away. The Crow then went to the Land and said:

'Land, Land, come with me,
To grow the Grass,
To feed the Buffalo,
To wallow the Mud,
To mend the Pot,
To fetch the Water,
To wash the Beak,
To eat the little Wren.'

'I am willing to come,' replied the Land, 'but, as you see, I am covered with forest. How can the Grass grow on me, unless the forest is cleared?'

'All right,' said the Crow, and flew away. The Crow then went to the Forest and said:

'Forest, Forest, go away,
To clear the Land,
To grow the Grass,
To feed the Buffalo,
To wallow the Mud,
To mend the Pot,
To fetch the Water,
To wash the Beak,
To eat the little Wren.'

'I am willing to go away,' replied the Forest, 'but I cannot move, as the roots of my trees are stuck in the ground. If you will please fetch a fire, and burn me up, the Land will be cleared.'

'All right,' said the Crow and flew away. The Crow then went to the Fire and said:

'Fire, Fire, come with me,
To burn the Forest,
To clear the Land,
To grow the Grass,
To feed the Buffalo,
To wallow the Mud,

To mend the Pot,
To fetch the Water,
To wash the Beak,
To eat the little Wren.'

'I will come,' replied the Fire. The Crow in great joy flew back towards the Forest with the Fire in his beak, but before he could reach it, his beak had become so badly burned that he had to drop the Fire. Giving up all hope of eating the little Wren, the Crow flew home in disgust.

WHY THE CROW LOOKS AFTER THE CUCKOO'S EGGS

ONCE a mischievous boy shot with his catapult a mud pellet at the Owl, and the mud pellet entered the rump. The Owl was in great pain, and went to his friend the Crow for help.

'I am no physician, friend,' said the Crow, 'but I could take you to the Cuckoo, who is a master of the art of healing. Let us go now.' So the Crow took the Owl to the Cuckoo who, however, refused his professional services, on the ground that the Owl was a treacherous bird and was not likely to pay his fees once his trouble had been cured. The Crow offered to stand surety, and the Cuckoo examined the Owl's body. The Cuckoo said that the water-treatment would meet the case, and asked the Owl to go and sit in a pool of water until the pain disappeared.

The Owl went and sat in a pool of water for some hours. The water melted the mud pellet, and the pain

disappeared. He went home and moped the whole day, blaming himself for going to the Cuckoo for treatment. 'What a fool I was,' he grumbled. 'If I had only sat down and thought it out, this simple idea of sitting in a pool of water would have crossed my mind.'

In the evening, the Cuckoo gave a professional visit to the Owl, and asked, 'How is my little patient?' The Owl replied, 'He is all right, thank you.' 'So my prescription was the right one, eh?' said the Cuckoo very pleased, and put out a leg for his fee. The Owl pretended to be very dense, and said, 'What a beautiful leg!' The Cuckoo, being a great physician, considered it infra dig to ask openly for his fee, and he gave all sorts of hints. But the Owl pretended to be very stupid. In the end the Cuckoo said to himself, 'Infra dig or no infra dig, I will have my fee.' So he asked the Owl, 'What about my fee?'

'Regret, I cannot pay,' replied the Owl. 'Water cured me, not you.' Then he drove the Cuckoo out of his house.

The Cuckoo, in great anger, went to the Crow. 'Didn't I tell you?' he exclaimed. 'Your good friend now refuses to pay my fee, maintaining that water, and not me, cured his trouble.'

'Oh, my friend loves to play jokes on people,' replied the Crow, 'and I am sure he was merely trying to tease you. Come along, let us go to him.' So the Crow took the Cuckoo to the Owl's house, but it was all shut up. The Crow knocked and banged on the door, but nobody seemed to be within. They broke open the door, but the bird had flown.

'Oh, where is my friend?' said the Crow with concern.

'I don't care where he is,' said the Cuckoo with feeling, 'I only want my fee. As you stood surety for him I must ask you for the fee.' The Crow maintained that he was under no obligation to pay. Moreover, he said, he was a pauper and had no money at all.

The Cuckoo sued the Crow for his fee in a Court of Law. The Judge declared that the Crow was under an obligation to pay the fee; but as the Crow was a pauper, the Judge awarded damages to the Cuckoo in the form of service; the Crow was to look after the eggs of the Cuckoo. The Crow, after accepting judgement, went in search of the Owl to kill him. The Owl was so frightened of the Crow's revenge that he went and hid himself in a hollow of a tree-trunk. And he dared to come out for food only at night when the Crow was asleep. These repercussions in the bird world caused by the mud pellet of that mischievous boy of long ago, remain even at the present day. The Crow still searches for the Owl to have his revenge; the Owl still lives in a hollow of a tree-trunk in fear of the Crow, coming out only at night; and the poor Crow still has to look after the Cuckoo's eggs.

HOW THE CROW'S LEG BECAME A PLANT

Once there was a King who ruled over all men and animals. The Crow was his special courier. One day the Crow was sent on important state business. After accomplishing his mission, he came back with hopes of praise and reward, but on the way he met Mistress Pheasant. Mistress Pheasant, although she had a husband, fell in love with the dashing King's courier. So she made love to him and gave him a feast. They became intoxicated with love and wine, and fell asleep in each other's arms. Unfortunately, the husband Pheasant arrived on the scene, and killed the Crow with one mighty peck of his beak.

As the Crow did not arrive at the appointed time, the King sent out search parties, and at last the dead body of the Crow was discovered. The Pheasant was arrested, and brought to trial for treason. The Pheasant, however, was a clever lawyer, and he argued his own case. He pleaded that he killed the Crow, not as the King's courier, but as an adulterer, caught in the very act of adultery. And as he was the wronged husband, he had the right to kill the adulterer Crow. The King had to accept this plea, and the Pheasant had to be acquitted.

The King however, felt sorry for his faithful servant. 'Poor Crow,' he said, 'if he had lived, he would have been given a huge reward for the success of his mission.' He considered it grossly unfair that people should remember the Crow only as a drunkard and an adulterer. 'For,' explained the King, 'of all my subjects, the Crow had the most wonderul eye-

sight.' So the King gave the Crow a state funeral, and before the body was buried, he caused one of the legs to be cut off. Then he buried the Crow's leg in front of the palace, and prayed, 'May a plant grow from this leg, and may it cure all the diseases of the human eye.' The following morning, the passers-by saw a strange new plant growing in front of the palace, and realized that the King's prayer had been answered. That plant, of course, is no other than the 'Crow's Leg' plant, which all Burmese physicians use in their eye-medicines.

HOW FRIENDSHIP BEGAN AMONG BIRDS

At first friendship was unknown among birds, for there was intense rivalry among them all. If a bird saw another bird, he at once said, 'I am a better bird than you,' and the other replied, 'Certainly not, for I am better than you,' then they would start to fight.

One day the Pheasant met the Crow and, being in no mood to quarrel, he said, 'Crow, you are a better bird than me.'

The Crow was not only surprised but very pleased at these words of the Pheasant, and out of politeness, he replied, 'No, no, Pheasant, you are a better bird than me.' The two birds sat down and had a chat.

Then the Pheasant said to the Crow, 'Crow, I like you. Let us stay together.'

'All right, Pheasant,' replied the Crow. So the two lived together in a big tree. With the passing of time,

their regard for each other grew, but in their case familiarity did not breed contempt, and they continued to show courtesy and respect to each other.

Other birds watched the association of the Pheasant and the Crow with interest, and they were surprised that the two birds should stay together for such a long time without fighting or quarrelling. At last some of the birds decided to test their friendship. So they went to the Pheasant while the Crow was away, and said, 'Pheasant, why do you live with that good-for-nothing Crow?'

'You must not say that,' replied the Pheasant, 'the Crow is a better bird than me, and he honours me by living with me in this tree.'

The next day they went to the Crow while the Pheasant was away and said, 'Crow, why do you live with that good-for-nothing Pheasant?'

'You must not say that,' replied the Crow, 'the Pheasant is a better bird than me, and he honours me by living with me in this tree.'

The birds were deeply impressed with the attitude of the Pheasant and the Crow towards each other, and they said to themselves, 'Why couldn't we be like the Pheasant and the Crow, instead of fighting and quarrelling?' And from that day onwards, friendship and respect for one another developed among birds.

HOW THE CROW BECAME SMALL IN SIZE

ONCE there was a great king who ruled over all men and all animals. He was a just and kindly ruler, and his subjects, except for a wicked few, loved and obeyed him. He was also mighty in body and a show of his fist was enough to frighten a rebellious subject into submission. However, one day the Crow decided to rebel. The Crow at that time was a big and mighty bird, and as at present, he was the most cunning of all birds. He wanted to become the king of the birds. So the Crow cajoled some of the birds to recognize him as their king, and fought the others into submission, until at last all the birds were under him. But he was not satisfied, and he now wanted to rule over human beings also. With this end in view, the Crow led his army of birds to the great king's city.

The great king, realizing that the birds had been won over by cunning or by force to join the Crow's rebellion, did not wish to kill them. So he did not call out his soldiers, but went alone to meet the Crow and his army of birds. 'Crow,' said the great king, 'I have no desire to kill you or your followers. I will pardon you if you will ask for forgiveness and disband your army.'

'Be honest,' replied the Crow insolently, 'and say that you are frightened of this mighty Crow.' The king showed his mighty fist to frighten the Crow into submission. 'Ha, Ha,' jeered the Crow, 'do you call that a fist? Compared to my big and mighty body, it is indeed a tiny thing.'

At this insult the great king became angry, and said, 'Crow, I do not wish to kill you, but for your insolence I will punish you now. You are very proud of your size, and you are contemptuous of my fist. So I lay this curse upon you: May you become as small as my fist.'

The Crow opened his mouth to give an insolent reply, but before he could say a word, his body started to shrink, and it continued to shrink until the Crow was no bigger than the great king's fist. All the other birds begged for pardon from the king, but the Crow flew away in fear and shame.

WHY THE QUAIL STANDS ON ONE LEG

HUMAN beings at first did no harm to the birds, who therefore did not fear them and did not run away from them. But later the human beings came to like the taste of birds' flesh and, starting with the fowl, they ate up many birds. The clever little Quail kept his eyes open, and realized that human beings are not to be trusted any longer. Although he did not run away, he took precautions. 'The essential thing,' he said to himself, 'is for me to look different from other birds.' So he stood only on one leg, hiding the other under his wings, whenever there were human beings near him.

Because the Quail looked so queer with only one leg, the human beings were not very sure whether the Quail was a bird at all, and left him alone for some time. But in the end, they decided he was a bird

after all, and therefore his flesh would taste as nice as the flesh of other birds. So they caught him, but when they started to pluck off his feathers, the Quail sang:

'Quail, Quail, one legged bird,
Poisonous to eat, Poisonous to eat.'

The human beings were alarmed. 'Yes,' they said, 'this bird is a cripple, his limbs are not sound. His flesh must be poisonous.' So they set him free.

The little Quail flew to a safe distance, deciding never to go too near the human beings again. He, however, wanted to jeer at them for their foolishness in believing his story, and so, dangling both his legs that all might see, he sang:

'Quail is fleshy, Quail is tasty,
But human beings do not know.'

And even at the present day, the Quail will often alight on the ground, and stand and hop about on one leg, just to remind the human beings of his exploit of long ago.

WHY THE VULTURE IS BALD

THE Vulture was originally a humble old bird, and rather stupid. His plumage was not exceptionally beautiful, but quite passable. One day, however, he noticed that his feathers were falling off. He consulted other birds, who told him that he was merely moulting, and new feathers would grow later. But the Vulture was pessimistic, and soon became thin and

sickly with worry about his plumage. At last the other birds took pity on him, and each gave him a feather to stick on his body. When all the birds had given him their feathers, the Vulture looked a wonderful bird with a plumage of all colours.

The Vulture now became conceited. He strutted about in his borrowed feathers, and declared that he was the most beautiful of all the birds. He became more and more proud until he asked the birds to recognize him as their king. At this insolence, the birds pecked off, not only the feathers that they had given the Vulture, but also the Vulture's own feathers. So when the birds had finished with him, the Vulture looked old and ugly and bald. That is why even at the present day the Vulture is a sour and ugly old bird.

A BRIDEGROOM FOR MISS MOUSE

MISS Mouse was so beautiful that her parents decided to marry her to the most powerful being on earth. So they set out in search of a bridegroom.

They went first to the Sun. 'Oh, Sun,' they pleaded, 'please marry our beautiful daughter.' When the Sun agreed readily, they were assailed by a doubt, and asked, 'But are you really the most powerful being on earth?'

'Why, no,' replied the Sun, 'the Rain is more powerful than me because when it rains, I am driven out from the sky.'

'Sorry,' said the parents of Miss Mouse, turning

to go, 'but we want only the most powerful being to marry our daughter.'

They went to the Rain, who however said that the Wind was stronger than he, for rain clouds were always being driven about by the Wind. So they went to the Wind, who, although willing to marry Miss Mouse, admitted that he was not the most powerful being, for he had never been able, however hard he tried, to blow away the Mound, who always stood in the Wind's way. So they went to the Mound, who told them that the Bull was more powerful, for the Bull came every evening to sharpen his horns against the Mound, breaking chunks off it in the process. So they went to the Bull, who regretted he was not the most powerful being, for he had to turn right and left according to the orders of the Rope, which acted as the reins in the bullock-cart driver's hands. So they went to the Rope, who was overjoyed at the prospect of marrying the beautiful Miss Mouse, but he also had to admit that there was one more powerful, namely the Mouse who lived in the cow-shed, for he came every night to gnaw at the Rope.

So the Mouse who lived in the cow-shed was chosen as the bridegroom. He was found to be a strong and handsome fellow, a worthy mate for Miss Mouse.

THE LITTLE CHICKEN AND THE OLD CAT

THE little Chicken said to her mother, 'Mother, please bake me a cake.' The old Hen consented, and asked her daughter to bring some firewood splinters, which human beings threw away. So the little Chicken went into the kitchen of a nearby house, but as she was picking up some firewood splinters, an old Cat found her and threatened to eat her.

'If you will be so kind as to let me go,' pleaded the little Chicken, 'I will give you a piece of my cake.'

'All right,' said the old Cat.

The little Chicken went home with the firewood splinters, and told her mother about her adventure. 'Don't worry, little daughter,' said the old Hen, 'I will bake you a big, big cake, so that there will be more than enough for you and your old Cat.' When the big, big cake had been baked, the old Hen gave it to the little Chicken, reminding her at the same time that she should not forget to leave a bit for the old Cat. But the cake tasted so nice that the greedy little Chicken ate it all up. Then she said to her mother, 'What shall I do now? I have eaten all the cake.'

'You greedy little thing,' scolded the old Hen.

'Perhaps he has forgotten,' said the little Chicken hopefully. 'Perhaps he won't come, perhaps he doesn't know where we live.' But just at that moment, he saw the Cat coming towards her. 'Oh dear, what shall I do now, for the old Cat is here?' she cried out in fear.

'Follow me,' said the old Hen, and rushed into the kitchen of the nearby house. The little Chicken

followed. The old Hen and the little Chicken looked round for a hiding place in the kitchen and, discovering a big earthen jar, they slipped inside it.

The old Cat saw the Hen and the little Chicken running away and felt very angry. 'Where is my share of the cake?' he shouted. 'I will eat you up, you greedy Chicken, and your mother too.' He followed the fugitives into the kitchen, but although he cast his eyes round, he could not spy them. 'But they must be here,' he argued to himself, 'for I saw them running in here and, moreover, there is only one door. Sooner or later they must come out of their hiding place.' So he sat down in the doorway, and waited patiently.

Inside the earthen jar the old Hen and the little Chicken were trembling with fear. After some time, however, the little Chicken felt bolder and became fidgety. So she whispered in her mother's ear, 'Mother, I want to *sneeze*.'

'You will do nothing of the sort,' replied her mother angrily, 'for the old Cat will hear you and will look inside the earthen jar.'

Some moments passed, and the little Chicken again whispered, 'Please let me *sneeze just a bit*.'

'No,' replied her mother, 'decidedly not.'

Some moments passed, and the little Chicken again whispered, 'Please let me *sneeze just a tiny bit*.'

'No,' replied her mother.

Some moments passed, and the little Chicken again whispered, 'Let me *sneeze just a half of a tiny bit*.'

The mother lost patience and said 'yes'; and the little Chicken gave a loud, loud sneeze. The sneeze was so loud that the earthen jar broke in two exposing the old Hen and the little Chicken to view. Luckily for them, however, the old cat ran away in fright, thinking it was a peal of thunder. So the old Hen was able to leave the kitchen safe and sound, with the little Chicken strutting proudly behind her.

HOW THE BATS ESCAPED PAYING TAXES

Once there lived a king who ruled over all men and all animals. One day he decided that all his subjects should pay him taxes, and he sent hundreds of tax-gatherers all over his domains. He ordered that the taxes be collected from his subjects species by species. So the royal tax-gatherers collected taxes from all human beings the first day, from all elephants on the second day, from all tigers on the third day, and so on, until the turn of the bats came. But the bats were very cunning; they folded their wings and sat in the dark. The tax-gatherers came to them, and said, 'Bats, pay up your taxes.'

'We are not bats,' replied the bats. 'Do look at us carefully, and you will find that we are rats.'

The tax-gatherers peered at the bats in the dark, and saying, 'Have it your own way, but you will have to pay when the rats' turn comes,' they went away.

It was now the turn of the rats to pay the taxes. The tax-gatherers collected the taxes from the rats, then they went to the bats, and said, 'Look here, you

fellows, last time you said you were rats, and refused to pay your taxes as bats. Now it is the turn of the rats to pay, and so pay your taxes now.'

'We are bats,' replied the bats, spreading their wings, 'and so it is not our duty to pay.'

'If you do not pay, we will report you to the king,' threatened the tax-gatherers.

'You ought to have reported it when we refused to pay the first time, for it was then our turn,' the bats pointed out. 'Now if you go and report that the bats are refusing to pay taxes on the day when the rats have to pay, the king will think you silly, and if you explain to him about our first refusal to pay, he will hold that you have been negligent in not reporting the matter earlier.' The tax-gatherers realized that what the bats said was too true, and went away. So the bats did not have to pay any taxes after all.

HOW THE GALON-BIRD BECAME A SALT-MAKER

As a *Naga*-Dragon was having a stroll in the forest, a *Galôn*-Bird saw him from the sky, and swooped down to catch him. The Dragon looked round swiftly for a hiding place, but found none. However, a king was near by on a hunt and, assuming human form, the Dragon lost himself in the king's retinue. The *Galôn* was puzzled at the sudden disappearance of the Dragon, but soon guessed what the latter had done. So he assumed human form also and, joining the king's retinue, he scanned the face of every retainer

carefully. The Dragon quaked in fear, for he knew that the Bird would recognize him. The king and his company met a group of merchants, who respectfully stood aside for the king and his men to pass. The Dragon slipped into the group of merchants and went along with them.

The *Galôn*-Bird had scanned the face of every retainer, but he did not find the Dragon. After consideration, he realized what the Dragon had done, and followed the group of merchants. But by that time the merchants were approaching the sandy shore of the sea, and when the Dragon saw his enemy coming towards them, he decided to make a dash to the sea. So, assuming Dragon form, he ran across the sand towards the sea. The Bird saw him and, assuming *Galôn* form, he chased his prey. However, he was just too late, and the Dragon dived into the water and returned to his home beneath the sea.

The *Galôn* wept in disappointment, for he had set his heart on eating that particular Dragon. He felt he could not leave the place where the Dragon entered the water, for he expected that the latter would one day come out of the sea again, and he decided to wait. However, he realized that it was out of the question to wait in his own form, for the Dragon would see him from underneath the water and, moreover, human beings would come and harm him. There was a village of salt-makers, who made salt from the sea-water, nearby and, assuming human form, the *Galôn* joined them. He worked and watched at the edge of the sea every day, but the Dragon did not reappear.

The *Galôn* grew old and died as a morose salt-maker, for he never caught the Dragon after all.

WHY THE BUFFALO HAS NO UPPER TEETH

The Buffalo and the Ox were cousins and they were very fond of each other. The Buffalo had two rows of fine teeth, but the Ox had only one row, which was on his lower jaw. But the buffalo was a kindly old thing, and when he had eaten his meal he would lend his upper teeth to the Ox.

The Horse was a wonderful dancer, and he was also a wonderful clown. He could sing very well too. He toured the countryside dancing and singing and clowning. Everywhere the animals flocked to see the Horse putting up a fine show.

One evening the Horse was giving a performance near the place where the Ox and the Buffalo were living. The Buffalo did not care for such frivolities, and for him to stay submerged in water up to the neck was better than any dancing or clowning. But the Ox was only a young animal, and he wanted to see the show. As other animals went to such shows in all their finery, the Ox wanted to go with both rows of teeth, so that when he laughed at the jokes of the clown, all the world would see that he had two rows of lovely teeth. So after he had finished eating his evening meal, he did not return the upper teeth to his cousin, but slipped away to the place where the Horse was performing.

The Ox strutted up to the front and took his seat.

On the stage the Horse danced, and the animals clapped their hands. The Horse now performed acrobatic tricks, and recited humorous verses, until the animals were prostrate with uncontrollable laughter. The Ox laughed with his mouth wide open, and the Horse saw the two rows of ivory teeth. The Horse also had no upper teeth, and felt very jealous that the stupid-looking Ox should have them. So he thought of a trick.

The Horse finished his act and he sat down amidst applause. 'Oh, Horse,' said the animals, 'you are wonderful.'

'My friends and patrons,' replied the Horse, 'I could entertain you more if some one would lend me his upper teeth, for then I could talk better and sing better.' Up jumped the foolish Ox and, taking out his upper teeth, handed them to the Horse. The Horse expressed his thanks to the Ox, and after resting for some minutes continued his performance. He sang a merry song, and the animals roared with laughter. Then he turned a back somersault, and the animals clapped their hoofs in joy. He turned another back somersault, and he was off the stage. The animals clapped the more. Then the Horse gave another back somersault, and now he was quite a distance from the stage. As the animals cheered his acrobatic trick, he suddenly turned his back to the audience, and ran with all his might. The Ox crying, 'Stop thief, return me my upper teeth,' chased the Horse, but as the Horse was such a fine runner, very soon he was over the hills and far away.

That is why, at the present day the Buffalo has no upper teeth. Even now, the Buffalo wails, 'It's mine, it's mine.' The Ox, to support his cousin's claim, cries, 'That's true, that's true.' And the Horse laughs in reply, 'Hee, hee, hee,' for he still possesses the upper teeth gained from the Ox at that performance of long ago.

WHY THE BARKING DEER BARKS

THE Stag in all his glory marched up and down the forest, crying, 'Hello, hello, I am like a soldier.' He did look like a soldier with his strong body and beautiful antlers.

The Small Deer with his short horn imitated the Stag, and he also marched up and down, crying, 'Hello, hello, I am like a soldier.'

The Monkey, sitting aloft in a tree, was playing with a creeper, and shouting, 'Coil up the rope! Coil up the rope!' He looked down and saw the Small Deer swaggering up and down, and laughed aloud.

The Small Deer was annoyed. 'What are you laughing at, Oh you Fool of the Tree Top?' he asked.

'At you, my deer,' replied the Monkey, and he went on shouting, 'Coil up the rope! Coil up the rope!'

'Are you thinking of catching me with a rope?' asked the Small Deer indignantly. The Monkey did not deign to answer and went on playing with the creeper. 'You wicked animal,' said the Small Deer, 'I will make the tree fall down, so that you also will fall down.' So saying he went and gored the tree with

his horn. The tree did not fall, but the horn stuck in the trunk. The poor Deer pulled and pushed but the horn remained stuck. The Deer struggled the whole day but he remained stuck to the tree. The sun set and darkness came, and the Deer became frightened. But the Monkey still sat on the tree, playing with the creeper, and mocking the Deer with his cries of 'Coil up the rope! Coil up the rope!'

The Leopard now prowled the forest, and the Deer pleaded, 'Sire Monkey, please save me. The Leopard with his piercing eyes will soon see me and kill me.' The Monkey pitied the Deer at last and said, 'Bark like a dog, and I will shout like a human being. The Leopard will think a hunter and his dogs are waiting for him, and will run away.' So the Deer barked like a dog, and the Monkey shouted. The Leopard, as expected, ran away in fear.

When dawn broke, the Monkey came down from the tree and freed the Deer. 'I shall not be boastful again,' promised the Small Deer, 'and I shall never again cry that I am like a soldier. Instead I shall always bark.' He then said farewell to the Monkey, and ran back to his home, barking all the way.

II. ROMANTIC TALES

LITTLE MISS FROG

Little Miss Frog was clever and industrious, but her neighbour Big Miss Frog was stupid and lazy. Everybody loved Little Miss Frog, and so Big Miss Frog was very jealous of her.

Little Miss Frog's mother said to her, 'Child, take this bamboo tube and fetch me some water from the river.' Little Miss Frog went down to the river, but as she stooped to fill the bamboo tube the current carried it away from her hand. Little Miss Frog jumped into the river to recover her bamboo tube, and she also was carried away by the current. Luckily for her, however, she was able to reach the bamboo tube. She clung to it, and thus saved herself from drowning.

An old Ogress, some miles down the river, was in the habit of capturing human beings and animals, for she loved to eat flesh. When she saw Little Miss Frog come floating down the river, clinging to the bamboo tube, the Ogress swam out to her and brought her ashore. But as Little Miss Frog was so small, the Ogress thought that it was not worth eating her up, and so she decided to employ her as her servant.

The Ogress took Little Miss Frog to her house, and said, 'Little Miss Frog, rid my hair of lice.' Little Miss Frog looked in the Ogress's hair, but it was as clean as it could be. However, she guessed that the Ogress would think her lazy if she said she could find no lice in her hair. So she said to the Ogress, 'Please, may I go into the kitchen to wash my hands before I handle your beautiful hair?'

'What a clean little girl!' exclaimed the Ogress.

Little Miss Frog slipped out of the back door, and climbed up the fig tree which was growing nearby, and brought back the kernel of a fig. After washing her hands in the kitchen, she went back to the Ogress. After pretending to search among the hair, she said, 'Oh Mistress, what a lot of louse eggs there are in your hair,' and showed the kernel of the fig, which looked like a cluster of louse eggs. The Ogress was very pleased, and said that Little Miss Frog was an industrious little girl.

The next day the Ogress had to go out on some business, and she asked Little Miss Frog to mind the house in her absence. 'But don't you be inquisitive and peep into my bedroom,' the Ogress warned with a frown. Little Miss Frog waited until the Ogress was lost from view, and then she peeped into the bedroom. She saw bones and skulls and half-eaten bodies of human beings and animals. But she kept her nerve, and after carefully shutting the bedroom door again, she sat down quietly as if she had seen nothing. The Ogress came back, and she said to Little Miss Frog, 'You are a good little girl. Will you stay with me in this house for many months?'

'I would love to, Mistress,' replied Little Miss Frog, 'but I am always wondering who is looking after my old mother, now that her only child is away from her.'

'Are you afraid of me?' asked the Ogress, wanting to find out whether Little Miss Frog had disobeyed her and discovered the secret of her bedroom.

'I respect you, Mistress,' said Little Miss Frog sweetly, 'and I love you. But I am not afraid of you.'

The Ogress was so pleased with Little Miss Frog's answer that she gave her seven bars of gold, and allowed her to walk back along the river bank to her own village.

All the frogs in the village praised Little Miss Frog when they heard her story, and Big Miss Frog became very jealous. She went down to the river in a huff, taking a bamboo tube, and floated down the stream astride the bamboo tube. The Ogress, as expected, swam out to Big Miss Frog and brought her ashore. Although Big Miss Frog was big for a frog, she was too small for the Ogress to eat her, and so the Ogress decided to employ her as her servant. The Ogress took the frog to her house and said, 'Big Miss Frog, rid my hair of lice.' Big Miss Frog gave the hair a glance, and told her mistress that there were no lice in her hair. 'What a lazy girl,' thought the Ogress. 'She is telling me a lie just because she is too lazy to look for the lice.' The next day the Ogress had to go out on some business and she asked Big Miss Frog to mind the house. 'But don't you be inquisitive and peep into my bedroom,' she warned with a frown. The moment the Ogress left the house, Big Miss Frog opened the bedroom door, and seeing the bones and skulls and the half-eaten bodies, she cried out in fear, 'I want to go home!' The Ogress, who had gone only a short distance, heard her cries and came rushing back. Finding Big Miss Frog crying, with the bedroom door wide open, she at once knew that Big Miss Frog had disobeyed her. So she ate up Big Miss Frog.

THE FROG MAIDEN

An old couple was childless, and the husband and the wife longed for a child. So when the wife found that she was with child, they were overjoyed; but to their great disappointment, the wife gave birth not to a human child, but to a little she-frog. However, as the little frog spoke and behaved as a human child, not only the parents but also the neighbours came to love her and called her affectionately 'Little Miss Frog'.

Some years later the woman died, and the man decided to marry again. The woman he chose was a widow with two ugly daughters and they were very jealous of Little Miss Frog's popularity with the neighbours. All three took a delight in illtreating Little Miss Frog.

One day the youngest of the king's four sons announced that he would perform the hair-washing ceremony on a certain date and he invited all young ladies to join in the ceremony, as he would choose at the end of the ceremony one of them to be his princess.

On the morning of the appointed day the two ugly sisters dressed themselves in fine raiment, and with great hopes of being chosen by the Prince they started for the palace. Little Miss Frog ran after them, and pleaded, 'Sisters, please let me come with you.'

The sisters laughed and said mockingly, 'What, the little frog wants to come? The invitation is to young ladies and not to young frogs.' Little Miss Frog walked along with them towards the palace,

pleading for permission to come. But the sisters were adamant, and so at the palace gates she was left behind. However, she spoke so sweetly to the guards that they allowed her to go in. Little Miss Frog found hundreds of young ladies gathered round the pool full of lilies in the palace grounds; and she took her place among them and waited for the Prince.

The Prince now appeared, and washed his hair in the pool. The ladies also let down their hair and joined in the ceremony. At the end of the ceremony, the Prince declared that as the ladies were all beautiful, he did not know whom to choose and so he would throw a posy of jasmines into the air; and the lady on whose head the posy fell would be his princess. The Prince then threw the posy into the air, and all the ladies present looked up expectantly. The posy, however, fell on Little Miss Frog's head, to the great annoyance of the ladies, especially the two step-sisters. The Prince also was disappointed, but he felt that he should keep his word. So little Miss Frog was married to the Prince, and she became Little Princess Frog.

Some time later, the old king called his four sons to him and said, 'My sons, I am now too old to rule the country, and I want to retire to the forest and become a hermit. So I must appoint one of you as my successor. As I love you all alike, I will give you a task to perform, and he who performs it successfully shall be king in my place. The task is, bring me a golden deer at sunrise on the seventh day from now.'

The Youngest Prince went home to Little Princess

Frog and told her about the task. 'What, only a golden deer!' exclaimed Princess Frog. 'Eat as usual, my Prince, and on the appointed day I will give you the golden deer.' So the Youngest Prince stayed at home, while the three elder princes went into the forest in search of the deer. On the seventh day before sunrise, Little Princess Frog woke up her husband and said, 'Go to the palace, Prince, and here is your golden deer.' The young Prince looked, then rubbed his eyes, and looked again. There was no mistake about it; the deer which Little Princess Frog was holding by a lead was really of pure gold. So he went to the palace, and to the great annoyance of the elder princes who brought ordinary deer, he was declared to be the heir by the king. The elder princes, however, pleaded for a second chance, and the king reluctantly agreed. 'Then perform this second task,' said the king. 'On the seventh day from now at sunrise, you must bring me the rice that never becomes stale, and the meat that is ever fresh.'

The Youngest Prince went home and told Princess Frog about the new task. 'Don't you worry, sweet Prince,' said Princess Frog. 'Eat as usual, sleep as usual, and on the appointed day I will give you the rice and meat.' So the Youngest Prince stayed at home, while the three elder princes went in search of the rice and meat. On the seventh day at sunrise, Little Princess Frog woke up her husband and said, 'My Lord, go to the palace now, and here is your rice and meat.' The Youngest Prince took the rice and meat, and went to the palace, and to the great

annoyance of the elder princes who brought only well-cooked rice and meat, he was again declared to be the heir. But the three elder princes again pleaded for one more chance, and the king said, 'This is positively the last task. On the seventh day from now at sunrise, bring me the most beautiful woman on this earth.'

'Ho, ho!' said the three elder princes to themselves in great joy. 'Our wives are very beautiful, and we will bring them. One of us is sure to be declared heir, and our good-for-nothing brother will be nowhere this time.' The Youngest Prince overheard their remark, and felt sad, for his wife was a frog and ugly. When he reached home, he said to his wife, 'Dear Princess, I must go and look for the most beautiful woman on this earth. My brothers will bring their wives, for they are really beautiful, but I will find someone who is more beautiful.'

'Don't you fret, my Prince,' replied Princess Frog. 'Eat as usual, sleep as usual, and you can take me to the palace on the appointed day; surely I shall be declared to be the most beautiful woman.'

The Youngest Prince looked at the Princess in surprise; but he did not want to hurt her feelings, and he said gently, 'All right, Princess, I will take you with me on the appointed day.'

On the seventh day at dawn, Little Princess Frog woke up the Prince and said, 'My Lord, I must make myself beautiful. So please wait outside and call me when it is nearly time to go.' The Prince left the room as requested. After some moments, the Prince

shouted from outside, 'Princess, it is time for us to go.'

'Please wait, my Lord,' replied the Princess, 'I am just powdering my face.'

After some moments the Prince shouted, 'Princess, we must go now.'

'All right, my Lord,' replied the Princess, 'please open the door for me.'

The Prince thought to himself, 'Perhaps, just as she was able to obtain the golden deer and the wonderful rice and meat, she is able to make herself beautiful,' and he expectantly opened the door, but he was disappointed to see Little Princess Frog still a frog and as ugly as ever. However, so as not to hurt her feelings, the Prince said nothing and took her along to the palace. When the Prince entered the audience chamber with his Frog Princess the three elder princes with their wives were already there. The king looked at the Prince in surprise and said, 'Where is your beautiful maiden?'

'I will answer for the prince, my king,' said the Frog Princess. 'I am his beautiful maiden.' She then took off her frog skin and stood a beautiful maiden dressed in silk and satin. The king declared her to be the most beautiful maiden in the world, and selected the Prince as his successor on the throne. The Prince asked his Princess never to put on the ugly frog skin again, and the Frog Princess, to accede to his request, threw the skin into the fire.

ONCE there were two brothers. One brother, who was poor, lived in the forest, while the other brother, who was rich, lived in the town. One day the poor brother found a golden feather underneath a tree and, on looking up, saw a cock sitting on a branch. He picked up the feather and took it to his rich brother. 'It is a pretty thing,' said the rich brother, 'but of little value. I will give you a silver coin for it.' The poor brother had never handled gold, and did not know that the feather was of the purest gold. So he thought that a silver coin was a good price for a feather. The next day the poor brother again went to the tree, and again found a golden feather, which was also sold to the rich brother for a silver coin. This went on for many days.

One day, as the poor brother stooped down to pick up the golden feather, the cock crowed out repeatedly: 'If any one eats my heart, he will find two golden eggs every morning under his pillow.' The poor brother told the rich brother about this and the rich brother said: 'If you can bring me the dead body of the cock, I will give you one thousand silver coins.'

'I do not want your silver coins,' replied the poor brother, 'but I want you to adopt my two boys as your sons, for I want them to grow rich like you.' When the rich brother promised to adopt them, the poor brother in his turn promised to send him the cock the next day.

Early next morning, he went to the tree and shot the cock with his bow and arrow. Then he sent his two sons with the cock to the rich brother. The rich

brother, being a miserly old fellow, had no intention of giving his nephews board and lodging for nothing, and decided to use them as his servants. So he ordered the boys to cook the cock for his dinner. The boys, who wanted to please their uncle very much, cooked it with skill and care, but the heart of the cock jumped out of the pot. 'Oh, dear,' said the elder brother, 'we will have to throw it away: we cannot serve it to our uncle, because it has fallen on the dirty kitchen floor.'

'Do not throw it away,' said the younger brother. 'I am feeling so hungry. Let us halve it and eat it.' So the two boys together ate up the heart. When the uncle sat down to dinner, he looked in the dish for the cock's heart, but could not find it. When he learnt on inquiry that the two boys had eaten it, he felt so disappointed and angry that he drove them out of his house with blows. The two boys went back to their home in tears. The next day each found a golden egg under his pillow, because each had eaten one half of the cock's heart. The boys took the eggs to their father who was so angry against the rich brother that he would not take the eggs to him, but sold them to a stranger. The stranger, being an honest merchant, gave a good price for the eggs, and only then did the poor brother realize that the rich brother had been cheating him all along over the golden feathers. The poor brother and his two sons daily sold two golden eggs, and became far richer than the rich brother.[1]

[1] For a detailed discussion of this tale, see the Introduction.

Long ago there lived an old widow, who was very poor. She had a daughter, who was pretty and good-natured.

One day the mother asked the daughter to scare away the birds from the tray of rice which was being dried in the sun. So the daughter sat down near the tray, and scared away the birds. When the rice was nearly dried, however, a strange bird came flying towards the tray. It was a crow, but with gold feathers. The Golden Crow laughed at the little girl's efforts to scare him away and calmly ate up the rice. The girl started to cry, saying 'Oh, my mother is so poor! My mother is so poor! The rice is so valuable to her.'

The Golden Crow gave her a kindly look, and said, 'Little girl, I will pay for the rice. Come to the big tamarind tree outside the village at sunset, and I will give you something.' Then the Crow flew away.

At sunset, the little girl went to the big tamarind tree and looked up at the branches. To her surprise, she saw that there was a little house of gold at the top of the tree. The Crow looked out of a window of the little house, and said, 'Oh, there you are! Do come up. But, of course, I must drop the ladder first. Do you want the golden ladder, the silver ladder, or the brass ladder?'

'I am only a poor little girl,' replied the girl, 'and I can only ask for the brass ladder.' To her surprise, the Crow put down the golden ladder, and the little girl climbed up to the little gold house.

'You must have dinner with me,' invited the Crow;

and he went on, 'but let me see, do you want the gold dish, the silver dish, or the brass dish to eat your food from?'

'I am only a poor little girl,' replied the girl, 'and I can only ask for the brass dish.' To her surprise, the Crow brought out the gold dish and the food in it was delicious.

'You are a good little girl,' said the Crow, when the little girl had finished eating, 'and I would like you to stay here with me for ever. But your mother needs you more, so I must send you back home before it gets too dark.' Then he went into the bedroom, and brought out a big box, a medium-sized box, and a small box. 'Choose one of these boxes,' said the Crow, 'and give it to your mother.'

'The rice was not much,' replied the little girl, 'and the little box would be more than enough.' She then chose the little box and, after thanking the Golden Crow, climbed down the golden ladder and went towards her home. When she reached there, she gave the little box to her mother. Together they opened the box, and they were surprised and delighted to find in the box a hundred priceless rubies. The mother and daughter became very rich, and lived in luxury.

There was another old widow in the village, but she was not poor. She also had a little daughter, who, however, was greedy and bad tempered. This widow and her daughter became very jealous of the other widow and her good little daughter. When they heard about the gift of the Golden Crow, they decided

to get a similar gift. So they put out a tray of rice in the sun, and the greedy little girl kept watch. But as she was so lazy, she did not try to scare away the birds which came to eat up the rice, with the result that when the Golden Crow at last turned up, there was very little rice left. However, the Golden Crow ate what remained, and the greedy girl shouted rudely, 'Hey, Crow, give me and my mother wealth for the rice you have eaten.'

The Crow looked at her with a frown, but he replied politely enough, 'Little girl, I will pay for the rice. Come to the big tamarind tree outside the village at sunset, and I will give you something.' Then the Crow flew away.

At sunset, the greedy little girl went to the big tamarind tree, and without waiting for the Crow to come out, she shouted, 'Hey, Crow, keep your promise.'

The Crow put his head out of the window and asked, 'What sort of a ladder do you want to climb up here? The golden ladder, the silver ladder or the brass ladder?'

'The gold ladder, of course,' replied the greedy little girl; but, to her disappointment, the Crow put down the brass ladder.

When the girl had entered the little gold house, the Crow said, 'I must give you your dinner. But what sort of dish do you want to eat your food from? The gold dish, the silver dish or the brass dish?'

'The gold dish, of course,' replied the greedy little girl. But, to her disappointment, her food was served in the brass dish.

The food was delicious but it was a tiny morsel, and the greedy girl was very annoyed. Then the Crow brought out one big box, one medium-sized box, and one small box, and said, 'Choose one of these boxes, and give it to your mother.' The greedy girl, of course, chose the big box, and without remembering to thank the Crow, she struggled down the ladder with her burden. When she reached home, she and her mother joyfully opened the big box; but to their disappointment and terror, a big snake came out. The snake hissed at them angrily, and then glided out of the house.

THE FIVE COMPANIONS

TODAY, my dear, I shall tell you of the Five Good Companions.

Once there were four brothers and an attendant. The attendant was not really a servant. More experienced and stronger than the others, he was rather the guide and leader of the group.

The attendant's name was Stumpy, for he was short and thick-set and strong. The first brother's name was Quarrelsome, for he was always challenging people to fight him. The second brother's name was More-than-others, for he was the tallest among them all. The third brother's name was Treasurer, for he was thrifty and careful. The fourth brother's name was Little Brother, for he was the youngest and the smallest.

The five companions wandered about the country

doing great deeds until they came to a great city, ruled by a powerful king. 'What is the good of winning glory and honour in small bits?' said Stumpy. 'Let us win a kingdom for ourselves, and make our names live in history for ever.' The others agreed, and they went near the gates of the golden city. Quarrelsome challenged the king, and as a result there was a great fight between the king and his men-at-arms on one side, and the five companions on the other. In the battle, More-than-others distinguished himself by his mighty deeds of valour. Finally the King was killed and the city surrendered.

The question now arose as to which of the five should be king. The four brothers said that Stumpy should rule because he was their captain, but the latter refused, suggesting instead that Quarrelsome should rule as he started the great battle with his bold challenge. Quarrelsome disagreed, and suggested that More-than-others should be king, for he was indeed more than others in the recent battle. However, More-than-others argued that as there was so much wealth in the city, Treasurer, with his economical ways, should rule. Treasurer in his turn said that Little Brother should become king, for he was the smallest and the gentlest and the most helpless, and he could not win a kingdom by himself without the help of his brothers. But Little Brother said that he was too tiny to be king. They argued for hours, and finally they decided to rule as joint-kings over the city.

Now look at your hands, my dearest. You also

have five good companions ready to serve you. Your Thumb of course is none other than Stumpy, for he is thick and strong. Your Fore-Finger is of course Quarrelsome, for when you quarrel with any one you point that finger at him. Your Middle Finger is More-than-others, for he is the longest finger. The next Finger is Treasurer, for when you grow up and wear a ring, you will wear it on this finger. Last of all, you have the Little Finger, who is so gentle and weak and humble, and he is Little Brother. So you have five faithful companions to serve you, my love, and they will doubtless win you a golden city and a golden throne when you grow up.

THE TWO FAITHFUL SERVANTS

THERE lived a sweetmeat seller in a village. She was a widow, and had only one son, who was known as Lazybones, for he did no work at all. One day as Lazybones sat at home, doing nothing while his mother was at the market, he saw a man leading a dog and a cat by a string. 'What are you going to do with the two animals?' asked Lazybones from the window.

'Going to drown them in the river,' replied the stranger.

'Why would you be so cruel?' asked Lazybones.

'I am the king's cook,' explained the stranger, 'and these two rascals came into the kitchen and ate up the king's breakfast.'

'Please sell them to me,' begged Lazybones. 'I will promise to see that they do not come to your kitchen again.'

'What will you give me?' asked the stranger.

Now the old widow was so poor that the only thing of value in her house was a basket of rice. 'A basket of rice,' said Lazybones. The man took away the rice, leaving the dog and the cat. When the old widow came back and learnt that the basket of rice had been given away in exchange for the animals, she said with tears, 'Oh, Lazybones, Lazybones, you will not work, yet you have given away the little spare rice that we had.' Lazybones felt so sorry for his mother that he promised to look for work the next day.

That night the cat said to the dog, 'Friend, Lazybones saved us from death, and we must save him from work in return.'

'Agreed,' replied the dog, 'but how shall we do it?'

The cat explained that in the middle of the sea there lived a prince in a golden palace, and he had a wishing-ruby. 'If only we could get that ruby and give it to our master Lazybones,' said the cat.

'Jump on my back,' said the dog, 'and we will go and get the ruby.'

So with the cat on his back, the dog swam to the palace in the middle of the sea. The dog and the cat stole up the palace stairs. 'Keep guard on these stairs,' instructed the cat, 'while I search the prince's bed-chamber for the ruby.'

The cat entered the chamber of the sleeping prince, and searched high and low, but could not find the ruby. However, he found a mouse. 'Sire, Cat,' pleaded

the mouse, 'do not kill me, but let me go. I will help you to find anything you want in this room.'

'I want the wishing-ruby,' replied the cat.

'I will get it for you,' promised the mouse, 'for I know that the prince keeps it in his mouth.' When the cat set him free, the mouse climbed on to the sleeping prince, and tickled the prince's nose with his tail. The prince gave a loud sneeze, and the ruby was thrown out of the mouth. The cat seized it, and ran to the waiting dog, who swam back to the shore with the cat on his back. They then went to their master, Lazybones, and after waking him, gave the ring to him saying, 'Master, there is no need for you to find work in the morning.'

When morning came, Lazybones said to his mother, 'Mother, do not worry any more, for I am going to marry the king's daughter.'

The mother said, 'Lazybones, don't be silly.'

'Mother,' said Lazybones, 'please go to the palace, and ask for the hand of the princess in marriage for me.' The mother refused at first, but Lazybones told her about the ruby and assured her that all would be well. The mother went to the king, and asked for the hand of the princess for her son.

'What can your son do?' asked the king.

'He can do everything,' replied the proud mother.

'All right,' said the king. 'Ask your son to build a bridge of gold and a bridge of silver from your house to my palace. If he can do that, he gets my daughter, but if he cannot do that, I will burn him and you alive. Mind you, woman, the bridges must be finished

tomorrow at sunrise.' Of course that was an easy thing for Lazybones, and the next morning at sunrise, he gave a rub to his ruby and wished for the bridges to be ready.

The king at that moment looked out of his window, and saw the gleaming bridges. 'My daughter is a lucky woman,' said the king to himself. So Lazybones married the princess, and became the crown prince. He and his Princess lived in a gold house, his mother in another gold house, and the dog and the cat were given a little gold house of their own.

MAUNG PAUK KYAING

MAUNG Pauk Kyaing had been a student at the University for three whole years, but he had learnt absolutely nothing, because he was very lazy. At the end of the course of three years, other students bade farewell to their teacher, and returned to their respective homes, full of learning. Maung Pauk Kyaing also bade farewell and the teacher felt sorry for him. 'My son,' said the teacher, 'you have learnt nothing so far, but try to remember the following maxims of wisdom, which are my parting gift to you:—

"If you walk on and on, you get to your destination.
If you question much, you get your information.
If you do not sleep and idle, you preserve your life!" '

So Maung Pauk Kyaing left the University for his home, but when he had gone some distance, he decided to go and see the wonderful city of Tagaung before returning to his village. Tagaung was many

miles away, and as he had no money he could not hope to travel on horse or cart. So he travelled on foot, and although many days passed and Tagaung remained still far away, he never lost heart. At last he reached Tagaung, and he realized how true and valuable was the maxim—'If you walk on and on, you get to your destination.'

At Tagaung, he obtained some employment, although ill-paid. He spent his leisure hours in asking people many things about the city. He soon obtained the interesting information that the kingdom was ruled by a Queen, and not by a King. He wanted to find out why that was so, and after repeated questioning he discovered that the Queen had been married to several Kings in turn, but each King had mysteriously died in bed on the wedding night. Nobody now dared to marry the Queen, although the ministers, maintaining that it was more satisfactory for a kingdom to be ruled by a King, had declared that the man who would marry the Queen would be King. Maung Pauk Kyaing was glad to get this information, and he realized with gratitude how true was the second maxim of his teacher—'If you question much, you get your information.'

Maung Pauk Kyaing now marched boldly into the palace, and informed the ministers that he was willing to marry the Queen. He was duly wedded to her, and declared to be King. When he went to the royal bedchamber that night, he took with him the stem of a banana plant, and hid it under the bed. He then got into bed and, pretending to be asleep, waited for the

Queen, who came in soon after and fell asleep by his side. Maung Pauk Kyaing stealthily got up from bed. He put the banana stem in his place in the bed and, covering it with the blankets, he made it look as if it were a man sleeping. Then he hid himself from view behind a pillar, and awaited events. Some hours later, he saw a *Naga*-Dragon appear from behind the rafters, and slide down the pillar nearest the royal bed. The Dragon became very furious when he saw the form of a sleeping man by the side of the Queen, and he struck his fangs with all his might at the banana stem, but his fangs became stuck in it. Maung Pauk Kyaing rushed to the now helpless Dragon and killed him with one stroke of his sword. The Queen woke up and was stricken with grief, for the Dragon had been her secret lover for many years ; it was the Dragon who killed her unwanted husbands, before Maung Pauk Kyaing. Maung Pauk Kyaing, in contrast to the doleful Queen, was in great joy, and he realized how true was the maxim—'If you do not sleep and idle, you preserve your life.'

The next morning there was joy all over the city at finding the King still living, but the Queen was furious with her husband. She bribed the servants not to bury the dead body of the Dragon, but to bring it to her room. She then sent for a huntsman and, swearing him to secrecy, asked him to tear off the skin of the dead Dragon ; to him, she gave one thousand silver coins as reward. She then sent for a seamstress and, swearing her to secrecy, asked her to sew a pillow out of the skin ; to her, the Queen gave

one hundred silver coins as reward. The Queen herself took one of the Dragon's many bones, and made it into a hairpin. Then she went to Maung Pauk Kyaing who was sitting in council with his ministers, and begged for a boon. Maung Pauk Kyaing, wanting to be friends with the Queen, replied, 'I grant you the boon, my Queen, even before I know what it is.'

'My Lord,' said the Queen, 'the boon is that you make a wager with me.' Maung Pauk Kyaing agreed. 'My Lord,' went on the Queen, 'I will set you a riddle, and I will give you forty days to find the answer. If, on the evening of the fortieth day from now, you can solve it correctly, you are to kill me; but, if you cannot, I am to kill you. And here is the riddle:

"For a thousand, he was torn,
For a hundred, he was sewn,
The loved one's bone was made into a hairpin."'

Poor Maung Pauk Kyaing! He was never a scholar, and he remembered with regret the years he wasted at the University. He asked his ministers, he consulted his wise men, he questioned all and sundry, but no one could tell him the solution of the riddle. Days passed, and Maung Pauk Kyaing lost all hope.

In his misery, Maung Pauk Kyaing forgot to send for his parents who lived in a remote village, or acquaint them of the fact that he had become King. But the parents heard rumours that their son had become King, and they set out for the capital. They arrived at the outskirts of the city on the fortieth day

of the riddle. They rested under a tree and ate their meal which they had brought with them. But they were so excited at the prospect of seeing their son that they were unable to eat much, and so they threw away their food. They saw a male and a female crow come and eat up the food, and then to their surprise they found that they could understand what the crows were saying to each other. 'We have had a royal meal,' said the female crow, when she had eaten, 'but I am afraid we cannot have such full meals every day. Dear husband, how are we to solve the food problem tomorrow?'

'Do not worry, dear wife,' replied the male crow, 'for tomorrow Maung Pauk Kyaing will die; his body, cut in pieces, will be on the scaffold, and you and I can pick out his eyes. In fact, we shall feast on a King's body.'

'Why should he die?' queried the female crow.

'Because he cannot solve the riddle and this evening the time limit expires.'

'You are very wise,' the female crow said with affection and pride, 'you know all the news. Perhaps you even know the answer to the riddle.'

'Of course, I do,' boasted the male crow. 'The riddle refers to the Dragon's body. His skin was torn off for one thousand silver coins, the skin was then sewn into a pillow for one hundred silver coins, and one of his bones was made into a hairpin by the Queen herself.'

'How do you know that it is the correct solution?' asked the female crow.

'I watched the Queen's chamber that day,' explained the male crow, 'for I thought I would have an opportunity to peck out the Dragon's eyes.'

'What did you intend to do with his eyes?' asked the female crow.

'To give them to you to eat, of course,' explained the male crow.

'What a loving husband you are!' said the female crow. Then the two crows flew away.

The old couple, after listening with bated breath to the crows, rushed to the palace, shouting, 'The Solution, the Solution,' which caused the guards to throw open the gates to them. They greeted their son with cries of 'The Solution, we know the Solution!' Maung Pauk Kyaing was very happy to see them, but he did not believe that they had hit on the right solution, until they told him their story.

That evening, Maung Pauk Kyaing sat in council with his ministers, waiting for the Queen. The Queen came in, looking radiant with joy, for she thought that Maung Pauk Kyaing would not be able to give the correct answer to the riddle. 'Are you ready to die, my lord?' she mocked. 'Or have your wise ministers told you the answer to my riddle?'

'I will solve your riddle,' replied Maung Pauk Kyaing, and gave the answer.

The Queen shook with fear for her life, but Maung Pauk Kyaing was magnanimous; he did not kill her but merely exiled her. Maung Pauk Kyaing proved to be an able ruler, and his people came to love him greatly.

For a detailed discussion of this tale, see the Introduction.

MASTER THUMB

ONCE a poor woman who was with child was trying to dry some paddy. But the moment she put out her basket of paddy the Sun disappeared, and the moment she took in her basket thinking it was going to rain, the Sun shone bright and clear again. This was repeated so many times that the woman lost her temper and abused the Sun roundly. The Sun in return laid upon her a curse, with the result that when her son was born later he was no bigger than a man's thumb. The child was given the name of Master Thumb.

Master Thumb felt very unhappy because other children made fun of his small stature, and when he attained the ripe age of sixteen years he demanded of his mother the true reason for his being no bigger than a thumb. When he learnt that the Sun's curse was the cause, he said, 'Mother, make me a big cake tomorrow, as I am going in search of the Sun to fight him.'

Early next morning Master Thumb set out northwards in his quest for the Sun, taking with him the cake which was many times bigger than himself. It was midsummer, and the fields were bare of vegetation, and the whole countryside groaned under the intense heat. As he travelled on Master Thumb met an old boat, left high and dry as the stream on which it was floating had been dried up by the Sun. 'Master Thumb,' greeted the Boat, 'where are you going?'

'I go to fight my enemy the Sun,' was the reply.

Now the boat also was very bitter against the Sun for the Sun had dried up his stream, so he pleaded, 'Please let me follow you.'

'All right,' replied Master Thumb. 'Eat a piece of my cake and get inside my stomach.' The Boat did as he was told.

Master Thumb travelled on, and he met a bamboo-thorn. 'Where are you going, Master Thumb?' greeted the Bamboo-thorn.

'I go to fight my enemy the Sun,' was the reply.

Now the Bamboo-thorn also hated the Sun, for the Sun had caused all the bamboo plants to wither and fade; so he pleaded, 'May I follow you?'

'All right,' replied Master Thumb. 'Eat a bit of my cake, and get inside my stomach.' The Bamboo-thorn did as he was told.

Master Thumb travelled on, and he met a strip of moss. 'Where are you going, Master Thumb?' greeted the Moss.

'I go to fight my enemy the Sun,' was the reply.

Now the Moss also hated the Sun, for the Sun had dried up all the other moss near by, and this Moss had survived only because he had hidden himself among the roots of a big tree; so he pleaded, 'May I come with you?'

'All right,' replied Master Thumb. 'Eat a bit of my cake, and get inside my stomach.' The Moss did as he was told.

Master Thumb travelled on, and he met a rotten egg. 'Where are you going, Master Thumb?' greeted the Rotten Egg.

'I go to fight my enemy the Sun,' was the reply.

Now the Rotten Egg also hated the Sun, for his parents and relations, the fowls, had died of thirst as their streams were dried up by the Sun: so he pleaded, 'May I come with you?'

'All right,' replied Master Thumb. 'Eat a bit of my cake, and get inside my stomach.' The Rotten Egg did as he was told.

So our Master Thumb, with his four faithful followers inside his stomach, travelled on, until at nightfall he reached the northern mountains, where he expected the Sun to appear the next morning. He decided to rest for the night, and looked round for some shelter for the place was wild and bleak. To his surprise he saw a house some distance away. Master Thumb was not only courageous but wise, and he realized that the house could belong not to any human being, but to an ogre, for only ogres lived on bleak mountains and in wild forests. He walked round the house, and discovered that it was empty. 'But the owner will come to sleep here for the night,' said Master Thumb to himself, 'and so I will wait and fight him for the house, as I must have a good night's rest before the battle.'

At this the Bamboo-thorn, the Moss, and the Rotten Egg jumped out of his stomach. 'Master,' they pleaded, 'allow us to fight the ogre, for you must reserve your strength for the morrow.' Master Thumb reluctantly agreed and, hiding himself behind a bush, awaited events.

The three faithful followers entered the house and

the first thing they did was to hide the tinder-box. Then the Bamboo-thorn placed himself underneath the bed, the Rotten Egg in the fireplace in the kitchen, and the Moss near the water jar. Soon afterwards a big Ogre came in, and threw himself on the bed. The Bamboo-thorn gave him a series of sharp pricks. 'Too many bugs in this bed,' the Ogre grumbled, 'I must light my lamp and look for them.' He got up and felt for the tinder-box and, not finding it, he went to the kitchen to get a light. But as he bent over the fire the Rotten Egg burst itself with a loud bang, throwing the ashes into the Ogre's big eyes. The Ogre groped his way to the water jar with the intention of washing out the dirt from his eyes, but he slipped on the Moss and fell, breaking his neck. The three faithful servants reported the death of the Ogre to Master Thumb and placed the house at his disposal.

At dawn Master Thumb, with his three faithful followers arrayed beside him, challenged the Sun to come out and fight him. The Sun appeared, red with anger, and he made himself hotter and hotter until poor Master Thumb was nearly shrivelled up and, no doubt he would have been ignominiously defeated had not an unexpected ally appeared. Now the Rain had been fighting the Sun since the beginning of time, and the Rain considered anyone fighting the Sun worthy of his support. So the Rain came out and quenched the Sun. Master Thumb and his three faithful followers laughed loudly at the Sun's discomfiture, but soon they became silent with dismay,

for the Rain, in quenching out the Sun, had caused great floods to appear and Master Thumb was now in danger of drowning. At this juncture, however, out jumped the Boat from inside Master Thumb's stomach and placed himself at his master's service. Master Thumb and his other three followers jumped into the Boat, and they floated southwards together, back to Master Thumb's village, where all the villagers came out with laughter and with shouts to greet the return of their hero, and to celebrate the defeat of the Sun.

THE DIMINUTIVE FLUTE PLAYER

Once a poor woman gave birth to a son, who was no bigger than her thumb, and he fell through a hole in the flooring. 'Where is my child? Where is my child?' the mother cried and looked everywhere. 'Here I am,' replied the child, climbing up a post and reappearing through the hole in the flooring. He had a flute in his hands and he played a melodious tune on it, which delighted the mother. 'Mother, I have played you a tune,' he said, 'so please cook me a basket of rice.' And when it was cooked, he gulped it down in no time.

Every day the diminutive flute player did nothing but play upon his flute and eat a basket of rice. The father, who was a poor cultivator, felt that he would soon be ruined by this glutton of a son. So he decided to kill the diminutive flute player, and asked the consent of his wife. But the woman loved her son

dearly, and would not agree for a long time. In the end, as the man was so persistent in asking for her consent, she agreed. However, she stipulated that the killing should be done indirectly and as if accidentally and that, if the child should remain alive after four attempts, no further attempt should be made on the child's life.

The next day, the father asked his diminutive son to accompany him to the forest. When they arrived at the forest the father started to cut down a big tree and, just as the tree was about to fall, he asked his son to stand where the tree would fall. The child took his place, and the tree fell. The father thought that the boy had been killed and went home quickly. Soon after, the diminutive flute player arrived carrying the tree on his shoulder and shouting 'Where shall I put the tree, father? I caught it on my shoulder and brought it here myself for firewood.' So the first attempt to kill the flute player failed.

The next day the father took the son for a walk on the high road, and when a herd of elephants approached the father said to the flute player, 'Stand in the middle of the road, and do not go away until I come back.' The child obeyed and stood in the middle of the road, playing on his flute. The elephant-drivers could not see the flute player as he was small, but heard the flute. 'Make way, make way,' they shouted, looking up and down the road, but as they could not see anybody they drove the elephants forward. When the elephants were nearly on top of him the diminutive flute player jumped inside the hoof-mark-

of a cow, and the heavy feet of the elephants passed above his head harmlessly. The father came back, and was sorely disappointed to find his son alive and playing on his flute as usual.

The next morning the father asked the flute player to come fishing with him, and father and son went off in a boat. When the boat was some distance from the shore the father gave a push and the flute player fell into the water. The father rowed swiftly back to the shore thinking that his son was drowned, but he found the flute player waiting for him on a sandbank near the shore, astride a crocodile. 'Father,' greeted the son cheerfully, 'I have caught a big water lizard for you.' He stepped on to the boat, and the crocodile swam away. Thus, the father's third attempt to kill his son also ended in failure.

The next morning the father took the diminutive flute player to the thickest part of the forest, and slipped behind some trees. The flute player thought that his father had lost him, and wandered about the jungle crying 'Father, I am here!' The father went home swiftly. At last the flute player decided to go home by himself. As he passed by a tiger's den the animal, smelling human flesh, rushed out but it stood stock still when it heard the flute player's music. The tiger was frightened of the little man who could make such a lot of loud noises. The flute player jumped on to the tiger's back and drove it towards his house, still playing on his flute. When he reached his home the child shouted cheerfully, 'Father, I have brought a big cat for you.' He jumped down and the tiger ran

back to the forest. The mother took the diminutive flute player in her arms in great joy, and the father had to admit that he was a wonderful little fellow after all.

GOLDEN TORTOISE

ONCE there were two sisters. The elder married and later gave birth to a beautiful boy. The younger also married but later gave birth to a tortoise. The elder sister was ashamed of the tortoise and wanted to throw the animal into the sea, but the younger sister said that he was her son after all and, naming him 'Golden Tortoise', brought him up with loving care.

The two cousins, the boy and the tortoise, grew up together and became very fond of each other. When the boy reached the age of sixteen, he asked his mother, the elder sister, to buy him a ship so that he could become a merchant. The elder sister agreed to buy him the ship provided the boy would promise not to take the ugly tortoise with him, for she disapproved of the boy's friendship with the animal. The boy refused to promise but the tortoise announced that he was afraid of the sea, and would not like to travel on a ship. The ship was bought and the boy set sail on it. After he had sailed a few miles he discovered, to his great joy, the tortoise sleeping in the hold, where he had hidden himself before the ship left the shore.

When the ship had sailed for some days a storm arose and drove the ship towards an island inhabited by ogresses. The storm then abated and the boy and

the sailors landed on the island to get fresh water. The ogresses assumed human form and came out to welcome them. The boy and the sailors, not knowing that they were ogresses, fell in love with them, and the boy married the queen-ogress and the sailors married the ogresses.

The ogresses in the evening gave a big feast for the boy and the sailors. After the feast, tired with feasting and revelry, the boy and the sailors fell asleep. But Golden Tortoise kept himself awake. Then an ogress said to her queen, 'Madam, let us take two or three of the drunken sailors to the forest and eat them.' The queen-ogress agreed. Another ogress suggested that, as they would have to be staying with human beings for some time, they should hide in the forest their three treasures, first the box in which all their 'lives' were kept, second the ruby that was worth a kingdom, and third the rattle-drum that answered all commands. The queen-ogress agreed. Then the ogresses seized hold of three sleeping sailors, and went into the forest. Golden Tortoise followed them stealthily. When they reached the forest they ate up the sailors and buried the bones, and then they put the three treasures in the top branches of a tree. Afterwards they came back and went to sleep by the side of the boy and sailors.

Golden Tortoise waited until the ogresses were all asleep and snoring, and then woke up the boy and the sailors. He told them his story without, however, mentioning the three treasures. As they did not believe him, he took them to the forest and showed

them the bones of the dead sailors. He advised the boy to go back to his ship and to sail away at once. On the boy agreeing, the sailors ran towards their ship. But the Tortoise remained behind and took down the treasures from the tree. Then he followed the boy and the sailors to the ship.

The ship had sailed but a few miles when the sailors saw the queen-ogress and her followers approaching the ship. With long strides they came running on the water, and it seemed as if nothing would save the sailors. However, the Tortoise calmly took out the little box containing the 'lives' of the ogresses and broke it to pieces with an iron bar. At once the ogresses died and their bodies sank in the sea.

Some days later they arrived at a city, whose king had no son but only a daughter. The boy fell in love with her and sought the advice of the tortoise. The tortoise went to the king and bought the kingdom with the ruby. Then he made the boy king of the city and married him to the princess. And the tortoise became the crown prince.

After some time the tortoise longed to see his mother, and asked permission from the boy to go back to their own city. The boy tried to persuade him to stay a little longer, but it was of no avail and the boy gave him permission to go. The tortoise bade good-bye to the boy, and then took out the rattle-drum. He shook the rattle-drum and said, 'Take me home to my mother,' and lo! he was back in his own city at the house of his mother. He told his mother about his adventures and stayed happily with her.

Now the king of the city had a very beautiful daughter, but no son. The kings of the seven neighbouring kingdoms had sent ambassadors asking for the hand of the princess in marriage, but the king refused them all. Golden Tortoise one day saw the princess and fell in love with her. So he asked his mother to go to the king and ask for the hand of the princess for him. The mother refused at first; but, as the tortoise would not sleep or eat for pining for the princess, she went at last to the king. On hearing her request the king laughed and said, 'If your son the ugly tortoise wants my daughter, he must build a bridge of gold and a bridge of silver connecting his house with my place. He must do it by the seventh day from now and, should he fail, he will be put to death.' The mother ran home in fear and said, 'Golden Tortoise, your foolish desire to marry the princess will cost you your life.' Then she told him about the king's command. 'Is that all he wants me to do?' said the Tortoise. 'Do not worry, dear mother, only wake me up early on the seventh day from now,' and he calmly went to sleep.

Early on the seventh day, when Golden Tortoise was woken up by his mother, he took out his rattle-drum and, shaking it, said, 'I want a bridge of gold and another of silver to connect my house with the king's palace,' and at once the bridges appeared. Then he went boldly to the king and demanded the princess. The king was ashamed to have the tortoise as his son-in-law, but he had to keep his word. So preparations were made for the wedding. But before

the day appointed for the wedding arrived, the kings of seven neighbouring kingdoms came with their armies to fight the king, as they considered that the king had insulted them by refusing to give the princess to one of them. The king called the tortoise to him and said, 'Golden Tortoise, you will be my heir when you have married my daughter. So it is your duty to defend the city.'

'Very well, Your Majesty,' replied the tortoise. He went back to his house, and shook the rattle-drum. 'I want an army powerful enough to defeat the enemy,' he commanded, and at once a mighty army appeared. The tortoise marched at the head of his army, and routed the seven kings. The tortoise thus earned the gratitude and approval of the king, and the wedding was at once celebrated. But the princess was unhappy, for she was ashamed of her ugly husband.

One morning the princess woke up much earlier than usual and, to her surprise, found a beautiful young man sleeping beside her. She jumped up in fright and then she saw a tortoise skin and shell near the bed. Now realizing that the young man was none other than Golden Tortoise, she picked up the tortoise skin and shell and, taking them to the kitchen, threw them into the fire. The young man followed her moaning, 'I am burning, I am scorching,' but when the princess threw a bucket of cold water on him, he felt all right. So Golden Tortoise remained a young man, and lived happily ever after with the princess.

MASTER HEAD

ONCE a poor woman gave birth to a son, but he had only a head and no body. The husband was ashamed of the mis-shapen child and wanted to kill him, but the wife said that, whether mis-shapen or well-shapen a child was a child. The child then said, 'Mother, I am grateful to you, and I will prove a worthy son who will look after you in your old age.' The mother told her neighbours of her wonderful child, and they came to look at him in wonder. And they all called him 'Master Head'.

Some weeks later Master Head said to his mother, 'Mother, please take me to the chief merchant in the king's city.' The mother took him there. 'Sire Merchant,' said Master Head, 'give my mother one thousand silver coins, and take me as your slave. Then you can exhibit me to the public. You can charge them a fee for looking at me.' The merchant was pleased, and did as Master Head suggested. In a few days' time, the merchant received one thousand silver coins from the people who flocked to see the wonderful Master Head.

A convoy of seven merchant ships arrived from overseas. Master Head said to the merchant, 'Sire Merchant, I have served you faithfully and well. May I now travel overseas and seek adventure? Sell me to those foreign merchants as a slave for one thousand silver coins.' The merchant had become very fond of Master Head, and he was reluctant to part with the wonderful child. But just to please Master Head the merchant sold him to the sailors of

one of the seven ships for one thousand silver coins. When their cargo had been sold the seven ships sailed away. Within a few hours of leaving port a great storm blew, and the ship on which Master Head was travelling became separated from the other ships. The storm raged for three days, after which the wind suddenly dropped and the ship was becalmed. The sailors considered that the presence of a mis-shapen child on board had brought bad luck to their ship, and they wanted to throw Master Head overboard. But Master Head said, 'Friends, be patient. Tie me to the top of the mast.' The sailors tied Master Head to the mast. He then gave a mighty puff, and at once the ship moved forward swiftly. The sailors felt so grateful that they told Master Head not to consider himself as their slave any longer. Master Head continued to blow from the mast until they reached a pleasant-looking island. He liked the island very much and wanted to stop there. The sailors begged him not to stop the ship for, although the island was not far away from their own country, they always avoided the island, as it was full of ogres. But Master Head said that he was not afraid of ogres. As he said these words a fresh wind started to blow, and Master Head said, 'Friends, your ship can now sail without me. So please leave me here.' So they put him ashore and sailed away.

On the island Master Head waited patiently, and at sunset the ogres of the island came down to bathe in the sea. Master Head greeted them and talked to them so sweetly that the ogres came to like him. He

lived with the ogres for many happy months, and they loved him so much that they taught him a magic formula to chant. One day Master Head saw his old ship sailing past the island and he gave a mighty shout. The sailors recognized his voice and steered the ship towards the island. The sailors were frightened to see the ogres standing round Master Head who, however, assured them that the ogres would not harm them. Master Head expressed his desire to go back to his own country and the sailors offered to take him back. The ogres bade farewell to their little friend and gave him a basketful of rubies as a parting gift. When the ship arrived at Master Head's own city he gave all his jewels to the sailors. 'I will give you more,' said he to the sailors, 'if you will become my men.' The sailors offered their services at once to Master Head.

Master Head ordered his men to take him to the king's palace. When he reached the palace gates he sent word to the king that, unless he was given the king's daughter in marriage and appointed crown prince, he would destroy the palace together with its inmates. The king's ministers came to the gates to see who the intruder was, and loud was their laughter when they saw Master Head. 'Why, you are only a head without a body,' they mocked, 'and your men are merely ragamuffins from a ship.' At this Master Head took out his snuff-box and chanted the magic formula, which the ogres had taught him. At once thousands of fully armed horse-soldiers came out of the snuff-box one by one, and surrounded the palace.

The king had no choice but to surrender. Master Head became the crown prince and married the king's daughter. When the marriage ceremony was over Master Head suddenly became a handsome young man with a fine head and a mighty body.

THE BIG EGG

THE queen was giving birth to a child and in the throne room the king and his ministers sat waiting. There was a chain of gold and another of silver connecting the queen's bed-chamber with the throne room, and the chain of gold was to be pulled from the bed-chamber if a boy was born, and the chain of silver was to be shaken if a girl. The king and his ministers waited in silence. Suddenly both chains were furiously shaken, and the ministers jubilantly shouted 'Twins', and congratulated the king. But a messenger soon arrived from the bed-chamber and informed the king that the queen had given birth to a big egg, and that a maid-of-honour, not knowing exactly which chain to shake, had shaken both the chains. The king, feeling disappointed and ashamed, ordered that the egg be thrown into the river, and the queen, with her head shaven as a sign of degradation, be sent to the royal gardens as an assistant to the chief gardener. His commands were obeyed.

The big egg floated down the river until it reached a place where ogres and ogresses lived. An old ogress who was having a dip in the river saw the big egg floating by and she swam out and caught it. She took

it to her home intending to eat it later, but she dropped it by accident on the kitchen floor. The big egg broke into pieces and a young boy came out of it. The ogress loved the boy as if he were her own son, so she assumed human form and told the boy that she was his mother. The boy believed her and they lived happily together for some time.

One day the ogress had to go into the forest to attend a meeting of ogres and ogresses and she said to the boy, 'Son, I shall be out the whole day, and so do not be a mischievous boy in my absence. Do not climb the tower. Do not go down the pit. Do not go into the kitchen.' The boy waited until the ogress was gone, and then he climbed the watch-tower. He reached the top and found an old man tied with ropes and dying. 'Who are you?' the boy asked in fear.

'I am a captive of the ogress,' replied the old man, 'and I shall die in a few moments and will be eaten up by the ogress!'

'Which ogress?' asked the boy.

'The old woman is not your mother, my boy,' explained the old man. 'She is an ogress in human guise, and one day she will eat you. Run away at once. As for me, I shall soon die.' The boy, however, did not believe him. 'If you doubt my story,' said the old man, 'go down into the pit, and you will find human bones and human flesh there. And before you leave, go to the kitchen and take the three medicine balls which you will find in the rice pot. They will save you from danger.' The boy went down the pit

and found human bones and human flesh. In great fear he rushed into the kitchen and, after taking the medicine balls, he ran away from the place.

After he had travelled for some miles he heard loud footsteps from behind and, looking back, saw the old ogress running after him. He was frightened, but he remembered the three medicine balls and he threw one towards the ogress. At once there appeared a thick forest seven miles long between him and the ogress. But the ogress ran through the forest in no time and nearly caught the boy again. The boy threw the second medicine ball, and at once seven mountains appeared between him and the ogress. But the ogress jumped over the mountains in no time and she approached the boy again. The boy threw the third medicine ball, and at once there appeared seven miles of fire between him and the ogress. The ogress ran into the fire and was burnt.

After resting for some time, the boy reached a village and saw some herd-boys playing marbles. The stake was the bundle of rice which each had brought for his meal. The boy offered to join but, as he had brought no bundle of rice with him, he had to undertake to look after their cattle for seven days should he lose. The boy played so well that he beat all the herd-boys and won all their bundles of rice. Out of pity he gave back half, and went on. He reached a place where there was a neglected spirit-shrine with an image of the *nat*-spirit in bits, broken through neglect and decay. The boy thought, 'Here is a starving *nat*, and he must be as famished as

myself.' So he offered some food to the *nat* and then ate the remainder. The *nat* in gratitude assumed human form and guided the boy to the palace of his father the king. Then the spirit introduced the boy to the king and testified that the boy was none other than the king's son born out of the big egg. The king appointed the boy crown prince, and restored the boy's mother to honour and respect. The boy built a special shrine in honour of the *nat*-spirit outside his palace.

MISTER LUCK AND MISTER INDUSTRY

Mister Luck and Mister Industry belonged to the same village, but they were very different in temperament. Mister Luck was not fond of work and he was a great believer in luck, whereas Mister Industry spent his time working and had no faith in luck. Mister Luck stayed at home, whereas Mister Industry went up the Irrawaddy River regularly, bringing down bamboo-rafts. As the bamboo fetched high prices in his own district, Mister Industry was rich and owned a lot of cattle. One day Mister Luck's parents scolded him for being a lazy fellow, and ordered him to go along with Mister Industry up the Irrawaddy as a raftsman. Mister Luck told all his friends that it was his luck which was forcing him to go and that he was certain the journey would be very lucky for him. On the outward journey Mister Luck met with no incident, and Mister Industry jeered at him, 'Well, where is that piece of great luck which you expected to find on your journey?'

'Wait,' said Mister Luck. 'Luck comes slowly but surely.'

On the return journey a great storm arose, and the bamboo-rafts had to be moored to the shore at once. The place where they stopped was wild and desolate, and Mister Industry taunted Mister Luck, 'Well, is this the piece of great luck which you expected to find on your journey?' which made the other raftsmen laugh. Mister Luck, getting bored with their sneers and jeers, went for a stroll on the river bank. 'We won't wait for you if you are too long,' shouted Mister Industry.

'If my luck wills that I should be left behind,' replied Mister Luck, 'I will not complain.' He walked on and came to a pool of water as clear as crystal. Wanting to bathe in the clear water he jumped into the pool; at once he was changed into a monkey. But he did not complain. 'If my luck wills that I should end my days as a monkey, I am satisfied,' he said to himself. He walked on a few yards, and found a pool of muddy water. 'Might as well try this also,' he said, and jumped into the pool; at once he became a human being again. Finding two pots near by, he filled one pot with the crystal-clear water and the other with the muddy water. Then he returned with the two pots to the rafts, which were still moored as the storm had not abated.

'What have you got there?' asked Mister Industry.

'Only water,' replied Mister Luck.

'What a wonderful gift from your luck!' jeered Mister Industry. 'A gift of water for a raftsman on the Irrawaddy.' Mister Luck made no reply. The storm now abated, and the rafts continued their journey down the river.

The rafts stopped at a city and Mister Industry went ashore to see some bamboo merchants. Mister Luck sat on his raft, idly watching a water-seller having a swim after filling his water-jars. Mister Luck had an idea and, taking his pot of crystal-clear water, he went towards the water-jars. He then chose a jar at random and, after half emptying it, he poured the crystal-clear water into it. 'Now let us see who is lucky enough or unlucky enough to use this water for his bath,' laughed Mister Luck. The water-seller came up and took away his water-jars to hawk them round the city. Now the king of that city had a beautiful daughter, and it so happened that on that particular morning there was not enough water in her bath, because her maid-servants had neglected to fill it up fully. The princess was very angry, and a maid-servant rushed out to fetch a pot of water. Meeting the water-seller, she bought a jar from him to save going to the river, and it befell that the jar she bought was the one into which Mister Luck had poured the crystal-clear water. No wonder the princess turned into a monkey the moment she took her bath! The king sent his gongsmen all over the city to announce that the princess had been transformed into a monkey by witchcraft, and that any wizard who could cure her would be given her hand in marriage. Mister Luck heard the gongsmen, and went to the palace with his pot of muddy water. He sprinkled the water

on the princess and at once she became a human being. Mister Luck married the princess, and became crown prince. Later the king died, and so Mister Luck became king.

One monsoon, misfortune befell Mister Industry. All his rafts foundered in a storm, all his money was stolen, and all his cattle died except one old cow. 'My old raftsman, Mister Luck, is now a king,' he thought to himself. 'If I take this cow to him and say that it is all I now possess, he will surely give me gold and jewels, out of pity.' So he went to the palace with the old cow. The palace guards stopped him at the gates and inquired what his business with the king was. Mister Industry lost his nerve at the sight of the gleaming swords of the palace guards, and he did not know what to say. One of the guards gave a prod with his sword and asked, 'Come, what is your business with the king?' At this he ran away leaving his cow with the guards, and so Mister Industry became a pauper.

THE BIG TORTOISE

Once there lived a fisherman and his wife and they had a very beautiful daughter by the name of Mistress Youngest. The mother was very fond of the daughter, but the father was a little indifferent. One day the couple went out fishing in a boat, and for some hours the husband could not catch anything at all. He became very short-tempered, whereas his wife became anxious lest she should not be able to cook any fish for her daughter. After great trouble a fish was caught,

and the wife cried, 'This is for Mistress Youngest and not for sale.' Another fish was caught, and again the wife cried out, 'I reserve this for Mistress Youngest.' Then another was caught, and the wife again cried out, 'I claim this for Mistress Youngest.' At this the husband became very angry and hit her with an oar, and she fell into the sea and was transformed into a big tortoise. The fisherman, of course, thought that she was drowned. When he arrived back at his village, he simply said that his wife fell into the sea and was drowned. Everybody assumed that it was all an unfortunate accident, and everyone felt sorry for the fisherman over his loss.

After some time the fisherman decided to marry again, and he chose as his spouse a hateful old witch. She was a widow and had a daughter by her first marriage. The daughter was a sour-tempered young woman with an ugly face made uglier by pock-marks. Both the mother and the daughter were jealous of Mistress Youngest because she was so beautiful and kind, and between them they made her life a misery. They made her do all the household work, and they scolded her and jeered at her. The fisherman took no interest in Mistress Youngest and just left her to the tender mercies of his wife and step-daughter.

One afternoon Mistress Youngest felt so unhappy that she slipped out of her house and went to the seashore. There she sat down and cried her heart out. Presently she saw an old tortoise swimming towards her and, to her surprise, she saw that the old tortoise was crying also. Now she guessed that the old tortoise

was her mother, and she took the animal in her arms. The tortoise, of course, could not speak to her, but it seemed so pleased to be with Mistress Youngest. So every afternoon Mistress Youngest came to the seashore and stayed with the tortoise until nightfall.

After a few days the step-mother and the step-sister noticed that, in spite of their ill-treatment, Mistress Youngest seemed happier than before, and also that she disappeared from the house every afternoon. So they followed her to the seashore and saw her sitting and talking to the tortoise. They were very furious that Mistress Youngest should have any friends, and they decided to deprive Mistress Youngest of her happy afternoons.

The next morning, the step-mother made a lot of crisp and dry pancakes, and put them under her bed. When her husband returned from his work in the afternoon the step-mother, pretending to be very ill, lay in bed; when she turned this way and that way, naturally the cakes underneath her made a crackling noise and she moaned repeatedly:

'This side I turn, crackle, crackle,
That side I turn, crackle, crackle,
I die of splintered bones.'

The husband became so anxious that he rushed out and brought back the village physician. The physician had been bribed beforehand by the step-mother, so he looked at the patient and said that it was a serious disease, but the remedy was easy. 'Give her tortoise flesh at once,' he prescribed, 'and she will be all right in no time.'

'How fortunate!' exclaimed the patient. 'My daughter tells me that a big, fat tortoise comes to the shore every afternoon, and so my husband can easily go and catch it at once.' Then the step-mother led the fisherman to the place where Mistress Youngest was sitting with the tortoise in her arms. The fisherman, in spite of the tearful entreaties for the animal's life on the part of Mistress Youngest, killed the tortoise at once, and ordered Mistress Youngest to cook it quickly for her step-mother.

Poor Mistress Youngest! How she cried and cried in the kitchen as she prepared her step-mother's dinner. She was stricken with grief and the work was tiring. As the tortoise was an exceptionally big one, she had to wash more than a hundred dishes to contain all the cooked flesh. At last all was ready, and the step-mother jumped up from bed, saying that the mere smell of the tortoise flesh had cured her. She invited her husband and daughter to share the meal with her. Out of sheer malice, she also invited Mistress Youngest who, of course, declined, saying that she was unwell. As there were so many dishes of tortoise flesh, the step-mother decided to send one dish to each neighbour, because her treatment of the gentle Mistress Youngest had made her unpopular with the neighbours and she wanted to become popular. So she ordered Mistress Youngest to take a dish to every cottage in the village with her compliments.

At every cottage Mistress Youngest was asked, 'What could we do to make you happy?' and she always replied, 'Please eat the flesh, but do not throw

away the bones. Please keep the bones in the eaves of your cottage, so that I can come and collect them without disturbing you.' Late that night, she went from cottage to cottage and brought back the bones from the eaves. Then she buried the bones just outside her cottage door, and she made this oath: 'If I truly love my mother, may a tree of gold and silver fruit grow here to mark her grave.' Early the next day, all the neighbours were surprised to see a wonderful tree which seemed to have grown overnight, right in front of the cottage of the fisherman. It was indeed a wonderful tree, for some of its fruit were of silver, and others were of gold. As the neighbours stood around and gaped at the tree, the king of the country passed by on his hunting elephant. 'A gold and silver tree in this remote village!' he said, 'and who owns it?'

The step-mother came out of the cottage and answered, 'My daughter owns it, your Majesty.'

'Call her here then,' ordered the king, and the step-sister came forward. 'Is that your tree?' asked the king.

'Yes, your Majesty,' answered the step-sister.

'If that is so, pluck your fruit and come with me,' ordered the king. The step-sister climbed up the tree and, although she pulled with all her strength, the fruit could not be plucked. 'I don't believe you own the tree,' said the king with a frown, 'and I wonder who is the real owner.'

'We think Mistress Youngest owns it, your Majesty,' said the neighbours. The king summoned

Mistress Youngest to his presence and asked her to prove that the tree belonged to her. So Mistress Youngest sat under the tree and made this oath: 'If this tree belongs to me, may all the fruits fall into my lap,' and all the fruits fell onto her lap. The king was very pleased, and took her away on his elephant to the capital where she was crowned as queen. The step-mother and the step-sister gnashed their teeth in anger and malice, and they cut down the tree out of sheer spite.

After four or five months the step-mother and the step-sister thought of a plan to kill Mistress Youngest, and so they sent word to her begging her to forgive them their past misdeeds and to come and stay with them for a few weeks. Mistress Youngest was a very kind and trusting young woman, and she believed them. So, asking permission from her husband the king she went to the village, taking only a few retainers, and these few she sent back the moment she reached her father's cottage, as she did not want her old friends in the village to think that she had become conceited with so many servants and followers round her. Before the retainers went away, however, she instructed them to come back after one month.

The step-mother and the step-sister were outwardly very sweet and loving to Mistress Youngest, but all the time they were waiting eagerly for an opportunity to kill her. One day, while sitting at dinner, the step-mother dropped a spoon down a hole in the kitchen flooring, and Mistress Youngest, ever dutiful, thinking that the spoon had been dropped accidentally,

went down to fetch it. When she was right underneath the step-mother emptied a cauldron of boiling water over her, and poor Mistress Youngest was transformed into a white paddy-bird which flew away swiftly. On the appointed day the retainers came back, and they were met by the wicked step-sister who was dressed up in the fine raiment of Mistress Youngest. 'You are not our Queen,' they exclaimed indignantly.

'I am,' replied the step-sister, 'but you cannot recognize me as I was attacked by the terrible disease of small-pox during your absence, and as a result my face is now disfigured.' The retainers were rather dubious, but all the same they had to escort her back to the king. When she arrived at the palace, the king said in anger, 'You are not Mistress Youngest, for your face is pock-marked, whereas her face was as fair as the lily.'

'My Lord,' replied the step-sister, 'I was attacked by the terrible disease of small-pox. Will you discard me just because I contracted the disease through no fault of my own?'

'You cannot be Mistress Youngest,' said the king, 'for your forehead is high and ugly, unlike her beautiful forehead.'

'I missed you so much, my Lord,' replied the step-sister, 'that I often cried, hitting my forehead against the floor, and it has now become swollen.'

'You cannot be Mistress Youngest,' said the king, 'for your nose is too long and ugly, so different from her beautiful nose.'

'My Lord,' replied the step-sister, I missed you so much that I was always weeping, and I had to wipe my nose so many times. No wonder my nose has become long.' The king, however, remained suspicious.

Now Mistress Youngest was a wonderful weaver, and all the king's dresses were woven by her. Wanting to test the step-sister, he now asked her to weave a dress for him. The step-sister went to the weaving room, but as she was a fool with her hands she sat at the loom in great fear lest her lack of skill in weaving should show that she was an impostor. But Mistress Youngest, in the form of the paddy-bird, came to her rescue, for even as a bird Mistress Youngest cared only for the happiness of her husband and wanted him to wear a fine dress. So the white paddy-bird flew into the weaving room by the window and, seizing the spindle in her beak, she wove a dress of wonderful pattern. The step-sister watched the paddy-bird in silence until it had finished weaving and had dropped the spindle; then she picked up the spindle and threw it at the paddy-bird, who fell down dead. She picked up the dead bird and, calling the cook, ordered him to roast it. When the king came into the room in the evening she showed him the dress, and said, 'My Lord, the dress would have been even better had not a white paddy-bird come and interfered with my weaving.' The king had to admit that the dress was well woven but he remained wrapped in gloom, for he still suspected that the step-sister was an impostor.

The king sat down to dinner and a servant brought in the roasted paddy-bird. 'What is this?' asked the king.

'It is that interfering paddy-bird,' said the step-sister. 'I killed it and had it roasted specially for you.'

'Poor little bird! I don't wish to eat you,' said the king, ordering his servant to take it away. The servant also felt sorry for the bird and, instead of eating it or throwing it away, he buried it behind the kitchen. The next day a big quince tree was seen growing behind the kitchen and the step-sister, being suspicious of trees which grew overnight, made careful inquiries, but nobody could say how the tree came to be there. The servant of the previous night, however, guessed that the tree had something to do with the paddy-bird, for the tree was growing out of the very place where he had buried the bird; but he did not say anything as he was frightened of the step-sister.

An old man and his wife came to the palace kitchen to sell their firewood. After selling it, they rested under the big quince tree and a big quince fruit fell on the woman's lap. 'Lucky it did not fall on our heads!' they laughed. They picked up the fruit meaning to eat it in the evening, but when they reached their home the woman thought that it was not ripe enough yet to be eaten. So she put it away in an earthen jar meaning to eat it a few days later. Early next morning the couple went out as usual to gather firewood, and as usual they returned at breakfast time. They were astonished to find that in their absence the cottage had been swept clean, and the meal cooked. They looked everywhere, but could not find any trace of the stranger who had so kindly tidied up the cottage and cooked the meal. The next

morning the same thing happened. 'I will solve the mystery tomorrow,' whispered the old man to his wife that night, 'for I have thought of a plan.'

Long before the first streak of daylight appeared the old man got up from bed and, giving a nudge with his elbow to his wife, he cried loudly, 'You old lazybones, get up, get up, and let us go earlier than usual, so that we can gather more firewood.' The old woman, realizing that her husband wanted all the world to think that they were going out, said loudly in reply, 'You are the lazybones, for I am ready to go out now.' They went out of their cottage shouting and pretending to quarrel but, after they had gone half a mile, they came back stealthily in the darkness and, entering their cottage silently, they hid behind the door to watch. When the sun had risen they saw a tiny little woman come out of the earthen jar, and run into the kitchen. 'It is a fruit maiden,' whispered the old woman, 'and I know how to catch her.' So saying she fetched one of her skirts and, spreading it, she stood by the jar. Then she gave a shout, which frightened the little fruit maiden, who now came running towards the jar. The old woman threw the skirt over the fruit maiden, and lo! Mistress Youngest stood before them. 'You are our queen,' they said, recognizing her, 'and we must take you to our lord the king.' At first Mistress Youngest refused as she did not want her step-sister to get into trouble, but in the end she agreed as she wanted to see her husband again so badly.

The king and the step-sister were giving an audience

to the courtiers when the old couple entered with Mistress Youngest. The king was very pleased to see Mistress Youngest again, but he was not too surprised at her return, for he had always suspected that the step-sister was an impostor.

'But I am Mistress Youngest,' protested the step-sister, 'and this woman is an impostor and a witch. She has bewitched you all to make you think that she is I.'

'She is the true Mistress Youngest,' said the old couple, who then proceeded to relate how they had found Mistress Youngest.

'Didn't I tell you?' shouted the step-sister in triumph. 'A fruit maiden, and a witch I should say!' Mistress Youngest then told the king how she was first transformed into a paddy-bird, and then into a fruit maiden.

'I demand that the custom of the people should be followed in this case,' exclaimed the step-sister, 'and I demand a trial by ordeal.' Now in a trial by ordeal, the parties to dispute had to fight a duel with swords; but, whereas the defendant was allowed to fight with an iron sword, the plaintiff had to use a wooden one, for on the plaintiff was the burden of proof and it was assumed that, if justice was really on his side, he would win in spite of the fact that his sword was wooden. But the step-sister had no faith in a trial by ordeal, she thought that she would be able to kill Mistress Youngest with one stroke of her iron sword.

The king and his courtiers were certain that the step-sister was an impostor, and did not want to put

Mistress Youngest to the ordeal; but what could they do? For even the king was not above the customary law of the people, and the step-sister's demand was a legitimate one. The king now ordered that the two swords be brought, and the wooden one given to Mistress Youngest, for she was the plaintiff and it was for her to prove her case. Mistress Youngest faced her step-sister, and made this oath: 'If I am really Mistress Youngest, may my step-sister's sword become harmless to me.' So she stood there calmly, making no attempt to use her wooden sword, while the step-sister hewed and hacked at her with the iron sword. But Mistress Youngest remained unscathed, for the iron sword became as soft as velvet whenever it touched her body. Suddenly, the wooden sword, of its own accord, slipped out of Mistress Youngest's hand and cut off the step-sister's head.

The king decided that the step-mother should be made to suffer also, although Mistress Youngest pleaded for her pardon. Accordingly he gave orders that the dead body of the step-sister be first cut into pieces, and then put into a jar and pickled. Afterwards he sent the jar to the step-mother with the message that it was a especial gift of pickled fish made by the queen herself. The old step-mother was so proud of the royal gift that she asked her husband to come and taste the pickle at once. As she served out spoonful after spoonful, she kept chattering about her dear daughter, the queen, until the husband lost his temper and said, 'Woman, don't talk rubbish, but eat on.'

The step-mother took out another spoonful from the jar, and cried out in alarm, 'This looks like a human finger, my daughter's finger.'

'Don't talk rubbish,' said the irate husband, 'but eat on.'

She took out another spoonful and cried out in alarm, 'This looks like a human toe, my daughter's toe.'

'Don't talk rubbish,' said the irate husband, 'but eat on.'

The step-mother peeped into the jar to see whether there was any pickle left, and she saw at the bottom the pock-marked face of her daughter. 'It is my daughter, it is my daughter,' she wailed. At this the husband got up and beat her soundly for talking nonsense.

THE SNAKE PRINCE

Long, long ago, there was an old fig tree near a river, and an old widow who had three daughters to support came to the tree every morning to pick up the figs which had been blown down by the wind during the night. One morning, however, there was not a single fig lying on the ground, and the old woman exclaimed in anger, 'It must be a low-down thief who would rob a poor widow.' At these words there came an angry hiss from above, and on looking up the old woman saw a big snake on the tree. She was afraid of the snake's wrath, and pleaded, 'My lord, if you want my eldest daughter, please drop me a fig.' One

fig was dropped. She pleaded again, 'My lord, if you want my middle daughter, please drop me a fig.' Again one fig was dropped. She became bolder, and said loudly, 'If you want my youngest daughter, Mistress Youngest, drop me a fig.' This time the Snake shook the branches, and all the figs fell on the ground. The woman gathered all the figs and went away quickly towards her home.

On the way, she passed by the Tree-Stump. 'What a lot of figs you have in your basket!' exclaimed the Tree-Stump.

'Yes, yes,' the old woman replied hastily, 'and I will give you one if you will tell the Snake, who might be following me, that I never came this way.'

'All right,' said the Tree-Stump. Giving him a fig, the old woman went away hastily. Then she passed by the Hillock.

'What a lot of figs you have in your basket!' exclaimed the Hillock.

'Yes, yes,' the old woman replied hastily, 'and I will give you one if you will tell the Snake, who might be following me, that I never came this way.'

'All right,' said the Hillock. Giving him a fig, the old woman went away hastily. Then she passed by the Cowshed.

'What a lot of figs you have in your basket?' exclaimed the Cowshed.

'Yes, yes,' replied the old woman hastily, 'and I will give you one if you will tell the Snake, who might be following me, that I never came this way.'

'All right,' said the Cowshed. Giving him a fig, the

old woman went away hastily. Then she reached her home, and laughed to herself, thinking that she had cheated the Snake.

But the Snake was following her. He passed by the Tree-Stump. 'Hello,' said the Snake, 'did an old woman pass this way?'

'I have not seen any old woman today,' replied the Tree-Stump.

'Go on,' said the Snake, 'I see a fig in your hand, and I know that you are a liar.'

The Tree-Stump became frightened and, pointing with his hand, he said, 'Yes, sir, yes, sir, she went that way.'

The Snake then passed by the Hillock. 'Hello,' said the Snake, 'did an old woman pass this way?'

'I have not seen any old woman today,' replied the Hillock.

'Go on,' said the Snake, 'I see a fig in your hand, and I know that you are a liar.'

The Hillock became frightened and, pointing with his hand, he said, 'Yes, sir, yes, sir, she went this way.'

Then the Snake passed by the Cowshed. 'Hello,' said the Snake, 'did an old woman pass this way?'

'I have not seen any old woman today,' replied the Cowshed.

'Go on,' said the Snake, 'I see a fig in your hand, and I know that you are a liar.'

The Cowshed became frightened and, pointing with his hand, he said, 'Yes, sir, yes, sir, she went that way.' So the Snake reached the old woman's house

and, slipping into the kitchen, hid himself in the big, earthen jar where the old woman kept her rice.

The old woman came into the kitchen and put her hand into the jar to get some rice. The Snake twined his body round her hand in a series of coils. 'My lord,' said the woman in great fear, 'if you want my eldest daughter, please undo one coil.' The Snake did as requested. 'My lord,' again pleaded the woman, 'if you want my middle daughter, please undo one coil.' The Snake did as requested. The woman now became bolder, and said loudly, 'My lord, if you want my youngest daughter, Mistress Youngest, undo one coil.' At this the Snake uncoiled itself completely and let go of the woman's hand. The old woman realized that the Snake would harm her if she did not marry him to one of her daughters. So she said to the eldest daughter, 'Will you please marry the Snake for my sake?'

'What! marry a snake?' the eldest daughter replied with contempt. 'Certainly not.'

So the woman said to the middle daughter, 'Will you please marry the Snake for my sake?'

'What! marry a snake?' replied the middle daughter with contempt. 'Certainly not.'

So the woman said to her youngest daughter, Mistress Youngest, 'Will you please marry the Snake for my sake?'

Mistress Youngest replied, 'Of course, Mother, I will do anything for your sake.' So Mistress Youngest was duly married to the Snake.

Mistress Youngest was kind to the Snake, which was

not surprising as she was such a kind-hearted young lady. She gave the Snake rice and milk and, when night fell, she put the Snake in a basket beside her bed. She had a strange dream that night; she dreamt that a handsome young prince came and shared her bed. The dream was repeated the next night and so in the morning Mistress Youngest told her mother about it. The mother was puzzled by the dream and so that night, without telling Mistress Youngest she waited and watched in the dark. When midnight approached she heard a rustling noise from the basket and then saw a young prince suddenly appear. She watched the prince get into her daughter's bed, and then she stealthily took the basket into the kitchen. As she expected, she found in the basket the cast off skin of the Snake, and she threw it into the fire.

At once the young prince came into the kitchen crying, 'Give me my skin,' and then he fell on the floor, moaning, 'Oh, I am hot. I am burning.' Mistress Youngest rushed into the kitchen and, seeing the prince in pain, threw a pot of water on him. The prince was now eased of his burning sensation, and as he had lost his skin he was no longer able to transform himself into a snake again. He came to be known as the Snake Prince, and lived happily with his wife, Mistress Youngest.

THE TRAGIC ENDING

Mistress Youngest and her Snake Prince were so happy that the two elder sisters became jealous. Now they also wanted snake-husbands. The old mother

begged them not to be in such a hurry to find husbands, as the right husbands would come to them of their own accord in time. But it was no good trying to make them see reason, and they worried and worried the poor old woman until she in turn worried her son-in-law the Snake Prince. But the Snake Prince pointed out that, as he was no longer a snake, his old snake-companions would not know him any more and, moreover, not every snake was a prince. The old woman, therefore, had no other course left to her but to go into the nearby forest with a big basket, in search of a snake.

However, all the snakes seemed to have disappeared, and the day was far spent when at last she found a snake. It was a huge python who had fallen asleep, and he did not wake up when he was put into the basket. When the woman reached home the two elder daughters fought over it, so the old woman asked the python, 'Do you want the younger or the elder.' But, as the python went on sleeping, she herself had to make the choice, and she gave the python to the eldest daughter.

The eldest daughter went to bed, hugging the basket with the python in it. At midnight the python, who was of course only an ordinary snake and not a Snake Prince, woke up and, feeling famished after his long sleep, started to swallow the girl, from the feet upwards. The girl woke up and cried out, 'Mother, mother, the snake has swallowed me up to my ankle.'

'Go on,' laughed the mother, 'your husband loves you and is merely teasing you.'

'Mother, mother, he has swallowed me upto my knees.'

'Your husband loves you and is merely teasing you.'

'Mother, mother, he has swallowed me up to my waist.'

'Your husband loves you and is merely teasing you.'

'Mother, mother, he has swallowed me up to my neck.'

'Your husband loves you and is merely teasing you.' After that, no more complaint came from the daughter, and the old woman laughed to herself, 'Ha, ha, my daughter no longer fears her husband.'

When morning came, the old woman found the python stretched on the bed full length and asleep, but of her daughter she could see no sign. However, on careful scrutiny, she noticed that the python's stomach was bulging, and she guessed her daughter was inside. She moaned and wept, and asked the Snake Prince to cut open the python's stomach. 'Madam,' said the Prince, 'please ask one of the neighbours to do that, for, if a single drop of snake blood falls on my body, disaster will follow.' But the old woman was adamant; she raved and she cried. She said that as the Snake Prince was the only man in the family, it was his duty to protect his womenfolk; and she pointed out that she would become the laughing stock of the village if the neighbours should come to know that she had married an ordinary snake to her eldest daughter. At last the Snake Prince seized a sword, and cut open the python's stomach; blood splashed out and the Prince's hand became

stained with the python's blood. The eldest daughter came out of the python's stomach none the worse for her adventure, but the Prince was at once retransformed into a snake. The Snake gave a glance of sorrow to his wife, Mistress Youngest, and slowly glided away from the house into the forest. And, although Mistress Youngest moaned and wailed, he never returned.

THE HAPPY ENDING

Mistress Youngest and her Snake Prince were so happy that the two sisters became jealous and were always trying to quarrel with their youngest sister. So Mistress Youngest and her Prince went and lived in a little cottage by themselves. Later a son was born to them. One day, a merchantship from overseas stopped at their village and the Prince said to his wife, 'Dearest Youngest, I want to become rich for your ake, and so I must go overseas in the ship as a merchant.' He stored in the cottage enough firewood, enough rice, enough dried fish, and enough water to last for many months, so that his wife would not have to go out during his absence. Then he made his wife promise never to leave the cottage until his return, because he was anxious lest her two sisters should do her some injury. After that he went away in the ship.

When the two elder sisters learnt that the Prince had gone on a voyage leaving his wife by herself, they plotted to kill her so that one of them should become the Prince's wife in her stead. They went to the cottage and suggested to Mistress Youngest that they

should go and gather some firewood. 'But I have enough in my cottage,' replied Mistress Youngest. Then they suggested to Mistress Youngest that they should go out together and fetch some rice. 'But I have enough in my cottage,' replied Mistress Youngest. Then they suggested to Mistress Youngest that they should go out together and fetch some fish. 'But I have enough in my cottage,' replied Mistress Youngest.

'Surely there cannot be enough water in your cottage,' said the elder sisters, 'so let us go out together and fetch some water.'

'But I have water also,' replied Mistress Youngest, and the two wicked sisters went away in a temper.

The next morning the two sisters passed by the cottage, laughing and singing. Mistress Youngest looked out of the window and shouted to them, 'Why are you so merry?'

'We are going to play on the swing under the mango tree by the sea,' replied the sisters. 'You remember how we used to play on it last year?'

'I wish I could come too,' sighed Mistress Youngest.

'We don't want you,' replied the sisters, 'for you have become too proud to be our play-fellow since you married the Prince.' Mistress Youngest had been suspicious the day before as the sisters were so eager to make her go out with them, but now she thought there could be no plot against her as they did not seem to want her to come at all. So she rushed out of the cottage with her child in her arms, and followed them to the mango tree by the sea.

As it had always been their custom when playing on the swing, the eldest sister first sat on the swing and the other two sisters had to rock it. Then it was the middle sister's turn to sit on the swing. Finally, it was Mistress Youngest's turn and, as she innocently sat on it with her child in her arms, the two wicked sisters gave the swing such a push that Mistress Youngest lost her balance and she and her child were thrown off the swing into the sea.

Luckily, however, there was a huge Stork nearby who was catching fish with his big beak, and he picked up Mistress Youngest and her child. He took them to his nest high up in a tree on an island. The silly old bird looked upon Mistress Youngest as his wife, and her child as his own child. That afternoon when Mistress Youngest put the child to bed, she sang:

'Hush-a-bye, my baby,
Son of the Snake Prince.'

At this the old Stork shouted, 'Shall I give you one peck, two pecks, with my big beak?' Mistress Youngest was frightened of the stork, and she sang:

'Hush-a-bye, my baby,
Son of the Stork Bird.'

and the old Stork was so pleased that he shouted, 'Ha, ha, ha, ha.' This happened every day, for Mistress Youngest could never forget her Snake Prince, and wanted to sing out his name.

One day, the ship which was bringing back the Snake Prince passed by the island, and the songs of Mistress Youngest and the shouts of the Stork were heard by the sailors, who thought sea-spirits were

trying to frighten them. They wanted to sail on, but the Prince, recognizing his wife's voice ordered them to drop anchor. The sailors obeyed, and the Prince went ashore to investigate. The Stork, seeing the Prince from the tree-top, flew towards him with his big beak raised for a fight, and the Prince drew his sword. Mistress Youngest now saw the Prince, and shouted, 'Don't fight but please listen to me first.' So the Stork lowered his big beak and the Prince lowered his sword. Mistress Youngest explained to the Stork that the Prince was her husband, and she explained to the Prince how the Stork had rescued her and her baby from the sea. 'Thank you, Stork,' said the Prince, 'and now I will take my wife and child away.'

'No, no,' replied the Stork, 'I rescued her and so I am entitled to have her.'

'Stork,' said the Prince, 'don't be stubborn. You know I can kill you with my sword, and moreover I have five hundred sailors to come to my help. However, I don't want to kill you because you saved the lives of my wife and my child.' But the Stork remained stubborn and challenged the Prince to a duel. The Prince, not wanting to kill the silly old thing, tried to persuade him not to be so obstinate, but it was of no avail. At last the Prince asked, 'Stork, which will you have, my wife or five hundred medium-sized fishes?'

'Five hundred medium-sized fishes of course,' replied the Stork, his beak watering. So the Prince ordered the sailors to cast their nets and catch five hundred medium-sized fishes. The fishes were duly

caught and given to the Stork, who at once surrendered Mistress Youngest and her child. So the Prince took them on board his ship and sailed away.

Mistress Youngest now told the Prince in detail how she fell into the sea, and the Prince was very angry with the sisters for their treachery. 'I will kill them at once when I get back to our village,' said the Prince, but Mistress Youngest, being a kind-hearted young lady, begged for their lives. 'Then I must at least shame them before the neighbours,' replied the Prince. With this end in view, he put Mistress Youngest and the child in a very heavy chest, just as the ship was casting anchor at their village.

The ship had been seen approaching and the two sisters, after dressing themselves in fine raiment, rushed to welcome the Prince. The Prince came down from the ship and, with an anxious look, asked after his wife and child. 'Oh, she and her child fell into the sea,' replied the two sisters. 'Very sad no doubt, but don't you fret, Snake Prince, for you can take one of us or both of us.' The Prince said that the news had made him weak and faint, which was rather unfortunate because there was a chest with gold and jewels so valuable that he ought to carry it himself instead of trusting it to the sailors. 'Now I will have to ask the sailors to carry it,' the Prince went on, 'and I only hope they won't run off with it.' The sisters saw with gaping eyes bales of silk and brocade and heavy iron-bound chests being taken down by the sailors from the ship to the Prince's cottage and they thought, 'That chest must be a thousand times as

valuable as the other chests now being handled by the sailors.' So, out of sheer greed, the sisters offered to carry the chest themselves. 'You are so kind,' said the Prince, 'and I am very grateful. Moreover, sisters, you can take the chest to your own cottage, for now that Mistress Youngest is dead I suppose you are entitled to all my wealth.'

So the two sisters carried the chest between themselves, and it was so heavy that they puffed and sweated. They refused all offers of help from the neighbours, because they were afraid lest they should have to give them a share of the treasure for their help. At last they reached their cottage and, no longer able to restrain their curiosity, they opened the box. Mistress Youngest and her child came out, and the two sisters had naught to do but to ask for her forgiveness. The neighbours saw all this through the window and they jeered at the two sisters.

RAIN CLOUD THE CROCODILE

An old fisherman and his wife found a crocodile's egg in their net, and they put it in a small pond at the back of their house. In due course the egg hatched and a little crocodile came out. The fisher couple had no children, and they loved the baby crocodile as if he were their own son. They gave him the name of Master Rain Cloud. Some months passed, and as Rain Cloud had grown too big for the pond the fisherman fenced off a part of the river near his home, and put the crocodile there.

After one or two years Rain Cloud became too big to be shut behind a fence, and the fisherman said to him, 'My son, I will now take down the fence, and you are free to go. But at noon every day I will call out to you and you must come to the river bank to take some food from me, and also to let me know that you are all right.' So every day at noon, the fisherman, sometimes alone, sometimes accompanied by his wife, would call out, 'Rain Cloud, Rain Cloud' across the water and the crocodile would swim towards him and take the food from his hands. This went on for many months. In the meantime, Rain Cloud became wild and conceited, for he became the master of that small river. The small river came to be known as 'The Stream of Master Rain Cloud', and even at the present day it bears the same name.

One day the old fisherman and his wife forgot to go to the river bank with food and call for Rain Cloud. The crocodile in his conceit had come to look upon the daily gift of food, not as a loving gift from his parents to a son, but as a tribute offered by a vassal to his overlord. So he felt very angry when the fisherman failed to turn up at the usual time. The next day the fisherman came along and called out, 'Rain Cloud, my son.' The crocodile swam towards him and suddenly seized hold of the fisherman's legs. 'What ails you, my son?' asked the fisherman gently.

'You neglected to bring me my tribute yesterday, and I will eat you now,' was the reply.

'Remember, my son, that I have been a father to you,' pleaded the fisherman.

'I will eat you all the same,' the crocodile replied insolently.

'Give me time to pray,' said the fisherman. When the crocodile consented, the fisherman prayed, 'I say that I am guiltless and do not deserve to die. If that is true, may I be reborn as a Master of White Magic, and may I be able to kill this ungrateful crocodile. I am ready now,' he then told the crocodile, who at once killed and ate him.

Rain Cloud wandered up and down the many streams of the Irrawaddy Delta, and he was feared by all, for he killed and ate hundreds of people. But, with the passing of years, he mellowed. Perhaps the memory of his happy childhood years with the fisher couple made him kinder to human beings when his youthful conceit and fiery temper had disappeared with age. He was full of remorse over the killing of the old fisherman. He became the friend of human beings, who learnt to love and trust him. He loved human company so much that when a female crocodile, by the name of Brownish, fell in love with him, he scorned her love, making her his mortal enemy.

Now when a crocodile attained the age of one hundred years, he could assume the form of a human being. So the moment Rain Cloud attained the age of one hundred years he assumed human form and, becoming a merchant, he traded up and down the Delta. At one of the Delta towns, he fell in love with a beautiful damsel, and married her. He spent some happy years with her.

By this time the old fisherman had been reborn, and at the age of sixteen he became a Master of White Magic. The Delta was full of tales about the prowess and power of Rain Cloud the Crocodile, and people were mystified over the long absence of the crocodile, of course not knowing that he had assumed human form. The Master Magician wanted to test the power of his magic wand, and so he went to the river bank. He struck the water once with his magic wand and commanded, 'Rain Cloud the Crocodile, come here at once.' Some miles away at his home, Rain Cloud heard the command, and he realized that the vengeful incarnation of the fisherman would kill him soon. So he told his wife at last that he was Rain Cloud the Crocodile and that he was going to his death at the hands of the fisherman now reborn as a Master Magician. He requested his wife to follow him and claim his dead body. The Master Magician struck the water for the second time and commanded, 'Rain Cloud the Crocodile, come here at once.' Poor Rain Cloud! He bade a tearful farewell to his beloved and, reassuming crocodile form, hurried down the river. The Master Magician for the third time struck the water with his wand and commanded, 'Rain Cloud the Crocodile, come here at once.' Rain Cloud appeared at his feet, and the Master Magician killed him with one blow of his wand. The half of the crocodile's body which was in the water became pure gold and the other half, which was on land, became rubies. The Master Magician was stricken with remorse after killing Rain Cloud and went away without touching

the gold and the jewels. Rain Cloud's wife later came and built a pagoda over the gold and jewel remains of her beloved Rain Cloud.[1]

THE RAINBOW

THE Queen of Syriam died while expecting the birth of a child. But, when her funeral pyre was being lit the child was born. It was a girl and the king, her father, named her Princess Mwaynûn. However, she could not be taken back to the city for it was believed that, as she was born in a cemetery, she would bring ill luck to it. So the king built her a palace near the cemetery. Later a town grew round the palace, which came to be known as Dalla.

Across the river-mouth there was the kingdom of Mingaladon, and the king's son, Prince Nandar, fell in love with the princess of Dalla. The king of Mingaladon and his people disapproved of the romance, as they also considered that, as she was born in a cemetery, she would bring ill luck to the kingdom. The king gave orders that no boatman should row his son across to Dalla, and prohibited the prince from ever going across the river again.

The city of Mingaladon was very near to the stream in which Rain Cloud the Crocodile lived and, as the prince sadly gazed across the river, Rain Cloud happened to swim by. The crocodile went to the prince, and offered his services. The prince was

[1] For a detailed discussion of this tale, see the Introduction.

grateful, but he remained sad. 'Master,' said Rain Cloud, 'can I do nothing for you?'

'You cannot help me, Rain Cloud,' replied the prince, 'for who can help me to go to my beloved across the river without my father knowing?'

Rain Cloud proposed to carry him in his mouth when darkness had fallen. 'Nobody can see you then,' explained Rain Cloud, 'and the king will never know that you have disobeyed his orders. Moreover, I will swim so swiftly that you will be in my mouth only for a few moments, and you cannot die for lack of air.' The prince accepted Rain Cloud's suggestion, and every night the prince went across the river in the crocodile's mouth to his beloved princess, returning the next morning at dawn.

A female crocodile, by the name of Brownish, fell in love with Rain Cloud, but as he scorned her love she became his bitter enemy. She felt very jealous to see Rain Cloud going across the river, looking so proud with the precious burden in his mouth. Brownish, being a crocodile who had attained the age of one hundred years, transformed herself into a human being, and became a serving-maid to the princess. She was so wily and cunning that she soon became the favourite lady-in-waiting and confidante of the princess. One day she said to the princess, 'My Lady, when your prince comes at night, do you sleep on his right or on his left?'

'On his left,' replied the princess innocently, 'using his left arm as my pillow.'

'That shows that he doesn't love you enough,' said

the crocodile Brownish slyly. 'If he really loves you, he will allow you to sleep on his right side, with his right arm as your pillow.'

'Of course he will let me do anything I like,' replied the princess indignantly.

'Try him tonight,' suggested Brownish. 'Ask to be allowed to sleep on his right, with your head on his right arm.' The cunning crocodile suggested this because she realized that if a woman should sleep with her head on the right arm of a hero or a prince, ill-luck would befall him. Of course Brownish had no enmity towards the prince, but she knew that Rain Cloud would get into trouble with the king of Mingaladon, should some accident happen to the prince while travelling across the river in his mouth.

That night when the prince came to the princess as usual, she asked to be allowed to sleep on his right side with her head on his right arm. 'Beloved,' replied the prince, 'do you not know that ill-luck would befall me if you should sleep with your head on my right arm?'

But the princess thought that he was merely giving her an excuse as he did not love her enough to comply with her request. 'You do not love me enough,' said the princess. In the end the prince allowed the princess to sleep with her head on his right arm, so as to assure her that he loved her dearly.

Dawn came and the prince went down to the shore where the faithful Rain Cloud was waiting. The prince entered the crocodile's mouth, and Rain Cloud started on the return journey. But something came over the crocodile's mind, and he entirely forgot that

the prince was in his mouth. He swam up and down the river for many hours and the prince fainted through the continued lack of air. In the city of Mingaladon the king and his courtiers were searching for the missing prince, and they came down in a body to the shore, hoping that the prince had gone only to his beloved, and that no untoward accident had befallen him. Rain Cloud saw the king on the river bank, and only then did he remember that his master the prince was in his mouth. Swimming swiftly to the shore, he opened his mouth and placed the prince at his father's feet. But the prince was dead. Rain Cloud was heart-broken and explained to the king how the prince came to be in his mouth. 'I am ready to die and follow my prince,' said Rain Cloud, 'so punish me swiftly, my Lord.'

'You have been a faithful servant to my son,' said the sorrow-stricken king. 'I pardon you. But for the sake of your dead master, swim back to the princess and acquaint her with the sad news.' Rain Cloud swam swiftly across the river again, and told the princess that her beloved was dead. The princess became stricken with sorrow and remorse, for she felt that she was the cause of the prince's death by bringing ill-luck upon him. She soon died of a broken heart.

That day at sunset, at Mingaladon, the funeral pyre of the prince was lit, and over at Dalla the funeral pyre of the princess was lit also. The people, on both sides of the river, watched with sorrow the smoke from the funeral pyres rising into the sky. As they

watched, they saw that the smoke from each pyre met over the river, and lo! a rainbow was formed.'

THE OLD MAN IN THE MOON

ONCE there was an old man in a village, and he earned his living by pounding rice on hire. He had no friend or companion, except for an old rabbit. The whole day, and part of the night when there was a moon, the old man pounded the paddy, and the old rabbit crouched nearby, eating the chaff that his master threw away.

One moonlit night the old man, while pounding the paddy, said to himself, 'It is sheer waste of time sifting the grain from the chaff after pounding. If only I had an old woman with me, she could do the sifting besides keeping me and my rabbit company.' The Moon-goddess heard his words, and felt sorry for him. The next day, assuming the form of an old woman, she came to the old man and kept him company. The whole day she sifted with a sieve the grain from the chaff, while the old man pounded the paddy. At nightfall, she went back to the sky.

Every day the Moon-goddess assumed the form of an old woman, and kept the old man and the rabbit company. At nightfall she always went away, for if it was a moonlit night she had to go and look after her Moon, and if it was a moonless night the old man did not need her help as he did not work in the dark.

For a detailed discussion of this tale, see the Introduction.

Weeks went by in this manner, until the old man asked, 'Who are you? Why do you go away when night falls?' and the old woman replied that she was the Moon-goddess. 'Take me and my rabbit to your Moon,' pleaded the old man, 'and let us live with you for ever, for we are so lonely without you.' So the Moon-goddess took the old man and the rabbit to her Moon, and let them stay with her for ever.

When the moon is full little children now-a-days gaze at it carefully, for, provided they are not 'cry-babies', they will see in the moon the old man still pounding rice, and the old rabbit still eating the chaff that the old man throws away.

THE ECLIPSE OF THE MOON

A POOR widow lay dying, and she called her two grandsons to her bedside. 'Lads,' she said, 'unlike other grandmothers I cannot leave gold and silver for you to inherit. But for the elder, I leave my mortar, and for the younger, my pestle, both of which you will find in the kitchen.' She died soon after. The elder brother said to himself, 'What could I do with this mortar? I am not a kitchen servant.' So he did not take the mortar, but went to another village where he prospered by sheer hard work.

The younger brother, however, had great faith in his dead grandmother. 'She wouldn't have left the pestle to me as my inheritance,' he argued to himself, 'unless it would be of some value to me.' So he carried the pestle with him everywhere, to the great amusement

of the neighbours. He earned his living by gathering firewood and selling it in the village. But he remained very poor.

One day, while he was gathering firewood, a big snake appeared and he climbed up a tree in fear. To his surprise, the snake spoke to him. 'I will not harm you,' the snake said. 'I only want to borrow your pestle.'

'Why do you want it?' the younger brother asked.

'My husband has just died,' the snake explained, 'but if your magic pestle is put against his nostrils, he will be restored to life.'

'I didn't know my pestle was a magic one,' said the younger brother incredulously.

'Come with me and you will know,' said the snake. So he followed the snake to another part of the forest, where he found a snake lying dead. He put his pestle against the nostrils of the dead snake, and at once the snake became alive. 'The power of the pestle is in its smell,' explained the first snake, 'and as long as you do not tell about it to any one, its power will remain.' The snake then thanked the younger brother, and went away.

The younger brother went back to his village, and on the way he found the body of a dog, which had been dead for some time and had become putrid. The younger brother put his pestle against the nostrils of the dog, and at once it jumped up alive. The younger brother named the dog 'Master Putrid', and the latter became his faithful servant and companion.

The younger brother soon became famous as the

great physician who could cure even the dead. But nobody guessed that it was the pestle which did the cure; people thought that he carried the pestle merely as a mascot. Some time after, the king's only daughter died, and the younger brother was sent for by the king. He duly restored the princess to life. The king, in gratitude, gave the princess to him in marriage. So the younger brother became the crown prince. He, however, went on with his great work of restoring the dead to life, until in the kingdom there was no grief or sorrow but only happiness.

The younger brother one day had an idea. 'My pestle can conquer death,' he mused, 'but surely it can conquer old age also.' So every day, as an experiment, he put the pestle against his nostrils, and also against the nostrils of the princess. Of course the princess was surprised at the action of her husband, but she put it down as merely a whim of a clever physician. After some weeks, he realized that he and the princess had not grown old at all, and that he had discovered the secret of eternal youth. But the Moon was jealous that two mortals should be eternally as youthful as herself. 'Even the sun grows old,' the Moon said to herself, 'for every evening he grows old and red and ugly.' So the Moon waited for an opportunity to steal the wonderful pestle.

One day it chanced that the pestle became wet and covered with mildew. So the crown prince put it in the sun to dry, and he sat watching it. 'My lord,' protested the princess, 'it is so unseemly of a prince to be drying an old pestle in the sun and to sit watching

it. Surely you can leave your soldiers to guard it.' She was so persistent that the crown prince gave way in the end. 'But I can't trust anybody to guard it, except my faithful Putrid,' he said. So Master Putrid sat and watched over the pestle. The Moon saw her chance and came down from the sky to steal the pestle. As it was broad daylight the Moon with her faint light was invisible to the faithful Putrid, who, however, smelt an intruder, and looked puzzled. The Moon picked up the pestle and ran off with it. The dog Putrid gave chase, led by the smell of the pestle which was stronger than the scent of the Moon.

From that day onward, the dog has been continually chasing the Moon. At night he can see the Moon, but during the day Putrid relies on the smell of the pestle to continue the chase. Because he is always inhaling the smell of the pestle, the dog has become eternally youthful and immortal. Sometimes he catches the Moon and, putting her in his mouth, tries to swallow her; but she is too big for the little dog's throat and, however hard he tries, he cannot swallow her; in the end, he vomits out the Moon. Then the chase begins anew. Thus the chase goes on for ever. So when there is an eclipse of the Moon, the Burmese say, 'The moon is caught by Master Putrid,' and when the eclipse is over, they say, 'The moon has been vomited out.'

THE THREE DRAGON EGGS

In the hills of Northern Burma there once lived a dragon-princess. She was very beautiful, and the sun-god fell in love with her. So he came down from the sky, and lived with her for some time. Then he returned to the sky. Later, the dragon-princess gave birth to three eggs, and she carefully looked after them. When the eggs were nearly hatched, she called the crow to her and asked him to go and tell the sun-god that his three children would soon be hatched. At that time the crow was snow-white in colour. The crow flew to the sun-god, and gave him the message. The sun-god brought out a ruby, which was worth a kingdom, from among his treasures and said to the crow, 'Tell my beloved that I cannot come and see the children. But give her this ruby, and ask her to buy a kingdom with it, so that my children can rule over it.' Then the sun-god wrapped up the ruby in a piece of cloth, and gave it to the crow, who flew towards the Northern Hills of Burma, with the bundle in his beak.

On the way the crow saw a caravan of five hundred merchants. The merchants were having their breakfast, and hundreds of birds were hopping about nearby, gobbling up the morsels of food thrown to them by the merchants. The crow felt hungry, and alighted not far away. After hiding his bundle under a bush, he joined the other birds. One of the merchants saw the crow hiding the bundle, and he stole towards the bush without letting the crow see him. He found the ruby in the bundle, and took the jewel, replacing it

with a piece of cow-dung. The crow after having his fill, picked up the bundle and, without realizing that the ruby had been stolen, flew on to the dragon-princess. The princess received the message and the bundle in great joy, but her joy soon turned to sorrow when she found only a piece of cow-dung in the bundle. She died soon after of a broken heart. When the sun-god learnt of the tragedy later, he scorched the feathers of the crow as punishment for losing the ruby. Since that time the crow has been black in colour.

The eggs lay neglected for many days and they did not hatch as there was no mother to look after them. When the rains came, the eggs were washed into the Irrawaddy, and they floated down the great river. When they reached Mogôk one of the eggs struck against a rock and broke and countless numbers of rubies fell out of it. That is why there are rubies at Mogôk. When the two remaining eggs reached Middle Burma one egg struck against a rock, and a tiger came out of the broken egg. The last egg reached Lower Burma, where it struck against a rock and a crocodile came out. So the tigers and the crocodiles of the present day are decendants of the tiger and the crocodile who were the children of the dragon-princess and the sun-god.

III. WONDER TALES

WHY THERE ARE SO MANY PAGODAS AT PAGAN

Long ago, when the people of Pagan were poor, there lived a monk, who was an alchemist trying to discover the Philosopher's Stone. His alchemistic experiments were costly, and he had to rely on his patron, the king, for financial support. The monk followed step by step the instructions given in an old parchment book. The instructions were many and various, and weeks and months passed. The royal treasury became empty, and the people refused to pay any more taxes, saying that the king was merely wasting his gold on an impostor. The monk at last reached the final instruction: 'Then put the lump of metal in acid, and it will at last be the Philosopher's Stone.' He appeased the people with the promise that after one more experiment, the Stone would be ready, and the people paid up their taxes to the king. The monk put the lump of metal, which was the result of all the earlier experiments, in acid. Seven days elapsed, but the lump of metal remained as before. The monk went to the king to acquaint him with the fact that the experiment had failed. The people heard that the experiment had failed, and thought that the monk had come to the king to ask for more gold, so they surrounded the palace, demanding that the monk be punished as an impostor and a cheat. The king was in a quandary for he knew that the monk was no impostor, but on the other hand he did not know how to pacify the people. The monk himself solved the problem by putting his own eyes out. He then stood

before the people and said, 'My sockets are now gaping, and do you not consider that I am punished enough?' The people were satisfied that justice had been done, and ceased their clamour.

For days the monk sat in his laboratory in the anguish of disappointment. At last he felt so bitter against the science of alchemy that he got up and broke all the jars and instruments. Then he told the little novice, who had been his assistant in all his experiments, to throw the useless lump of metal into the latrine. The little novice did as he was ordered. At nightfall the little novice noticed that the latrine seemed as if on fire and he went running to the monk, shouting, 'Master, master, look, the latrine must be full of fairies or ghosts!'

'Remember that I am blind,' replied the monk. 'Describe to me the phenomenon.' When he had listened to the novice's description of the brightly-lit latrine, the monk realized that the lump of metal had at last become the Philosopher's Stone. He realized also that the scribe who wrote the parchment book had written in mistake 'acid' for 'night-soil'.

The novice picked up the Philosopher's Stone from the latrine and gave it to his master. Then the novice was told by the monk to go to a meat-stall and get the two eyes of a bull or a goat. But as it was now late in the evening the meat had been sold out, and only one goat's eye and one bull's eye remained, which were bought and taken to the monastery by the little novice. The monk put the two eyes above his empty sockets and touched them with the Philosopher's Stone, and at

once the eyes entered the sockets. He recovered his full vision, although one eye was big and one was small. 'I shall be known from today as "Monk Goat-Bull",' said the monk jokingly to the novice. Then he went to the king's palace, and told the king of his good fortune. He announced his intention of leaving the world of human beings the next morning and requested the king to melt all his lead and brass in huge pots in front of the palace at sunrise. 'You can tell your subjects to do likewise,' said the monk as he left the palace to return to his monastery. Although it was past midnight by this time, the king sent his men to wake up the city by sound of gong, and to tell the people that they should melt all their lead and brass in huge pots in front of their houses at sunrise. When the sun appeared Monk Goat-Bull came forth from his monastery, attended by the novice. He went first to the palace and then to all the houses, and threw his Philosopher's Stone into every pot. The Stone jumped back into his hand every time, its mere touch having turned the lead in the pots into silver and the brass to gold. From that time onwards the people of Pagan became very rich, and with such a lot of gold and silver at their disposal they built the countless pagodas that still stand at Pagan today.

When he had passed every house Monk Goat-Bull, still attended by his novice, went to Mount Popa. As they stood at the foot of the hill the creepers from the mountain-side lowered themselves, and gently lifted the master and pupil to the mountain top. The monk dug up some magic roots and ground them with the

Philosopher's Stone. The ground roots formed themselves into six medicine balls, and the monk swallowed three. The other three he gave to the novice, who, however, could not put them in his mouth, for to him the roots looked like human flesh, and the juice from them looked like human blood. 'What ails you, pupil?' asked the monk.

'It is human flesh and human blood,' replied the novice with a sob.

'It is not,' said Monk Goat-Bull. 'Have I ever told an untruth?' But the novice was seized with a nausea when he tried to swallow the medicine balls. 'It is clear that you are not fated to share my success in alchemy,' said the monk sadly, 'and we must say farewell here.' The novice bade a tearful farewell to his master, who gave him a piece of gold as a parting gift. The creepers then gently twined themselves around the novice's body and lowered him to the foot of the hill.

The novice felt lost in the world without his master and, instead of going back to the monastery, he went to his widowed mother. 'Mother, cook me my breakfast,' he asked.

'Son, you know that I am poor and I have no money to buy the rice,' replied the mother. The novice remembered the little gold piece his master had given as a parting gift and, taking it out of his pocket, he gave it to his mother. When his mother was leaving the house, he felt a gold piece in his pocket. 'Mother, mother,' he cried, 'did I give you the gold piece?'

'Here it is, my son,' replied the mother, showing

the gold piece in her hand. The novice took out the gold piece from his pocket and gave it to his mother. But when he again felt in his pocket, there was another gold piece in his pocket. He took it out, and gave it to his mother. But again there was a gold piece in his pocket. This went on until the mother had ten gold pieces in her hand, and still there was a gold piece in the novice's pocket. Then only did the novice realize that his beloved master Monk Goat-Bull had given him a perpetual gift of gold.[1]

THE PINCERS OF PAGAN

In one of the many pagodas of Pagan there used to be a huge pair of Pincers. The king's judges used to bring all the parties to a suit to the Pincers, and each had to make his statement with his hands in between the Pincers. Whenever a person made a false statement the Pincers promptly pinched off his hands. So all over the country people did not dare to break contracts or commit torts, and the judges had an easy time with no cases to decide.

The lay-brother in a monastery, who was also its steward, was entrusted with a viss of gold by a merchant, one of the many patrons of the monastery, on the eve of his departure on a journey. During the merchant's absence the lay-brother racked his brains to discover a way of cheating, not only the merchant, but also the Pincers. At last he thought of a wonderful

[1] For a detailed discussion of this tale, see the Introduction.

plan. He hollowed out his staff and, after melting the viss of gold, poured the molten gold into it. Later he sealed up the opening with wax. When the merchant came back from his travels and asked for the return of the viss of gold, the lay-brother insisted that the gold had been returned to the merchant already.

So the merchant brought a suit against the lay-brother, and they were taken by the judge to the Pincers. The merchant, being the plaintiff, had to make his statement first. Putting his hands between the Pincers, he said, 'I say that I entrusted one viss of gold to the lay-brother and I say also that the viss of gold has not been returned to me.' The crowd, which had gathered to watch the proceedings, looked expectantly at the Pincers which, however, remained motionless. The lay-brother came forward, leaning on his staff. He said to the merchant, 'Friend, hold my staff while I put my hands between the Pincers,' and the merchant, suspecting nothing, held the staff. Then the lay-brother made his statement: 'I say that the merchant did entrust one viss of gold to me, but I say that I have returned the viss of gold to him, and the gold is now with him.' The crowd looked expectantly at the Pincers which, however, remained motionless. The judge was puzzled, but the crowd shouted, 'The Pincers are useless, the Pincers are unjust. One of the two parties to the suit must have told a lie, yet the Pincers let both go unpunished.' And they made fun of the Pincers.

The judge, however, thought over the case, and at last he guessed the trick of the lay-brother. The judge's surmise proving correct on investigation, the merchant received back his gold, and the lay-brother was punished for his trick. But the Pincers seemed to have become disgusted with human beings over the affair, and refused to co-operate any more in the administration of justice; the Pincers never again pinched off the hands of witnesses, even though they made grossly false statements.

THE FORTUNE-TELLER OF PAGAN

THE king's astrologer at Pagan read the horoscope of his new-born son, and the stars foretold that the son in later years would cut off his father's tongue. So the astrologer put the child in a pot and floated it down the Irrawaddy river, thinking that the pot with the child would be carried out to sea and lost. However, when the pot reached Lower Burma an old woman who was bathing in the river saw the pot floating by and swam to it out of curiosity. Finding the child inside, she brought him up as her own son. When the child grew up he went along with some merchants to a foreign city which had a university. He studied astrology at the university and, at the age of sixteen, he left it. He returned to his own village and, finding to his sorrow that his adoptive mother was dead, he went to Pagan. He set up practice as a fortune-teller, and became so famous that he was given the name of 'Master Correct' by the people. Even the king's astrologer (who, as it will be

remembered, was in reality his father) became jealous of the newcomer's reputation.

One day the king of Pagan wanted to build a monastery, and asked his astrologer to choose an auspicious site. When the site had been chosen the king went in state to the place to lay the foundation stone. The king requested the royal astrologer to indicate the place where the foundation stone should be laid. The astrologer, after consulting his books, made the following prediction: although it was mid-summer, at noon rain clouds would appear, and from behind the rain clouds an eagle would swoop down towards the ground and let fall a fish which was being held in his beak. 'This is where the fish will come to rest,' said the royal astrologer, indicating the place, 'and so this is the place for the foundation stone.' Master Correct was among the sightseers who had come to watch the laying of the foundation stone and, pointing to another place about a yard away, he said, 'No, sire astrologer, this is the place where the fish will come to rest and so this is the place for the foundation stone.' The royal astrologer was very angry, and called Master Correct an interfering young upstart. 'Let us bet,' challenged Master Correct boldly. 'The one whose prediction proves correct, shall cut off the other's tongue.' The royal astrologer accepted the bet. It was now nearing noon, and all waited in silence. Exactly at noon rain clouds suddenly appeared, and from behind them swooped down an eagle holding a fish in his beak. The bird then dropped the fish, and it fell at the place previously indicated by the

royal astrologer. The crowd gave a cheer for the royal astrologer. But the fish was not yet dead, and it wriggled and jumped until it came to rest at the place previously indicated by Master Correct. Now the crowd applauded Master Correct, and encouraged him to cut off his rival's tongue. Master Correct hesitated, but the royal astrologer shouted in his pride, 'Cut off my tongue quickly and be done with it.' Even then, Master Correct cut off merely the tip of the astrologer's tongue. Only when the tip of his tongue had been cut off did the royal astrologer remember his reading of his son's horoscope years ago. So he made discreet inquiries and discovered that Master Correct was his own son. Master Correct was full of remorse when he realized that he had cut off his own father's tongue, but the father soothed him, and publicly acknowledged him as a greater astrologer than himself.

There was a third famous astrologer at Pagan at the time, and he was a monk. He became very jealous of Master Correct, and plotted his downfall. One day he went to the young astrologer and asked him to read his horoscope. 'At sunrise on the seventh day from now,' Master Correct predicted, 'a thunderbolt will fall on your head.'

'Mark your words, young astrologer!' said the monk and went away. The monk thought out a plan to save his own life and shame the astrologer at the same time. On the seventh day before sunrise, the monk put a huge lump of clay on his head, and stood neck-deep in the river. He watched the sky carefully,

and when he saw a flash of lightning, he dived into the water. The thunderbolt hit the lump of clay and broke it to seven pieces, but the monk was unharmed. He then went to Master Correct, and said with a sneer, 'Well, my young master, the sun has risen, and my head is still intact. Where is your thunderbolt?' Master Correct did not suspect the monk of any falsehood, and really believed that his prediction had been proved wrong. He gathered all his notes and books and burnt them, saying that he had lost his faith in astrology. A servant ran with the news to Master Correct's father, who came in haste and said, 'Do not burn the books, my son, but give them to me.'

'It is too late, father,' replied Master Correct, 'I have burnt them.'

'Give me the ashes then,' said the father. But when Master Correct went and looked, he found that the ashes had been scratched away by a cock. That is why the leg of a cock can predict the future.

Master Correct brooded over the failure of his prediction so much that he became mentally deranged. He wandered about the city of Pagan, muttering predictions to himself. Master Correct was such a wonderful astrologer that he could see not only into the future, but also into the ground; so he saw all the buried treasure; but he had such a high conception of his profession that he never dug up the treasure, nor did he tell any one. However, now that he was insane, he pointed this way and that, saying, 'Here is a pot of gold, there is a pot of silver.' Many treasure seekers heard about this, and followed Master Correct with

slate and pencil, meaning to note down the secret places where the treasures lay. But Master Correct's high conception of his profession was able to assert itself even in his insanity, and he would run away shouting, 'Ding dong, ding dong,' whenever he saw people following him.

After some months of insanity, Master Correct became ill. A brief interval of sanity came back to him. 'For the sin of cutting off my father's tongue,' he said, 'I have become mad, although when I committed it, I did not know that he was my father.' He also predicted that his legs would be broken after his death. Soon afterwards he died. When the coffin had been made it was found to be too short, and Master Correct's legs had to be broken before his body could be put into the coffin. So even after his death Master Correct's prediction was found to be true.

IV. HUMOROUS TALES

THE ORIGIN OF THE COCONUT

MANY hundreds of years ago a raft with three people on it reached a city on the Burmese coast. The three strangers were taken before the king. In answer to the king's questions, the strangers said that they had been set adrift on a raft on the orders of the king of their own country across the sea, because they were found guilty of certain crimes. One of the strangers was a thief, another a witch, and the third a mischief-maker who harmed people by his tittle-tattle. The king gave a house and one thousand silver coins to the thief, and allowed him to settle in Burma. 'He was a thief only because he was poor,' explained the king, 'and now that he is no longer poor, he will make a good subject.' To the witch also the king gave a house and a thousand silver coins and allowed her to settle in Burma. 'She bewitched people merely out of jealousy,' explained the king, 'and she was jealous of others only because she was poor and unhappy. Now that she is rich, she will no longer be jealous of other people's happiness.' But the king ordered the mischief-maker to be executed at once. 'For,' said the king, 'once a mischief-maker, always a mischief-maker.' So the mischief-maker was taken to the place of execution, and his head was cut off.

The next day one of the king's officers passed by the place, and to his surprise he found the head of the mischief-maker rolling about on the ground. He was the more surprised when the head of the mischief-maker opened its mouth and said repeatedly, 'Tell your king to come and kneel to me here. Otherwise I

will come and knock off his head.' The officer ran back to the palace and reported the matter. But nobody believed him, and the king was angry, thinking that the officer was trying to make fun of him. 'Your Majesty can send another person along with me,' suggested the officer, 'and he will surely bear me out.' So another officer was sent along with the first officer to the place of execution. When they reached there, however, the head lay still and remained silent. The second officer made his report, and the king in anger ordered the first officer to be executed at once as a teller of lies. So the unfortunate officer was taken back to the place of execution, and his head was cut off in the presence of his fellow officers. When the execution was over, the head of the mischief-maker opened its mouth and said, 'Ha, ha, I can still make mischief by my tittle-tattle, although I am dead.' The officers, realizing that gross injustice had been done to the dead officer, reported what they had seen and heard and the king was full of grief and remorse.

The king, realizing that the head of the mischief-maker would make further mischief by his tittle-tattle if it was to remain unburied, ordered that a deep pit be dug and the head buried inside it. His orders were obeyed and the head was duly buried. But the next morning, a strange tree was seen growing from the place where the head had been buried. The strange tree had even stranger fruit, for the latter resembled the head of the mischief-maker. The tree is the coconut tree. It was originally called '*gôn-bin*', which in Burmese means 'mischief-maker tree', but during the

course of centuries, the pronunciation of the name has deteriorated, and it is now called '*ôn-bin*' or 'coconut tree'. And, if you shake coconut and then put it against your ear, you will hear a gurgling noise for, you see, although now a fruit, the head of the mischief-maker still wants to make tittle-tattle.

THE GREAT KING EATS CHAFF

THE great king, with only one attendant, went incognito for a stroll in his city. He stopped to watch an old woman pounding paddy. The chaff which the old woman threw away after her pounding smelt very sweet, and the king was seized with an overmastering desire to eat it. He walked on for a few yards, and then ordered his attendant to go back and bring some of the chaff as he wanted to eat it. The attendant was shocked and protested that it was a disgraceful thing for a great king to eat chaff, which was food fit only for cows and pigs. But the king refused to see reason. So the chaff had to be fetched, and the king ate it with relish. Then the great king said to the attendant, 'If you tell about this to anyone, off goes your head.'

When the attendant reached home he was seized with an itch to tell. He tried to eat, he tried to sleep, and he tried to sing, but to no purpose, the itch to tell remained. 'If only I could whisper it out,' he thought. Two or three days passed, and the attendant became ill and haggard, but the itch to tell still tortured him. At last, unable to bear it any longer, he rushed out of his house in search of a secluded spot where he could

whisper out what he wanted to say, without anybody hearing him. He rowed himself in a boat to mid-river, but he thought the fishermen would hear him. He went to the cemetery, but he thought the grave-diggers would hear him. In the end, he went to the forest and, putting his head in the hollow of a big tree, whispered fervently, 'The great king eats chaff. The great king eats chaff.' He felt better after that and returned home.

Many months later, as the big palace drum which announced the hours to the people was becoming too old to remain serviceable for long, a new drum had to be ordered. The drum-makers went to the forest and cut down a big tree, to use its wood for the new drum. It happened that the tree they cut down was the very tree in the hollow of which the attendant had whispered out his secret. At last the new drum was ready. It was a beautiful thing. The drum-makers looked at it, the people looked at it, the palace officials looked at it, and the great king looked at it; and all were satisfied. With great ceremony, and before a huge crowd of people, the new drum was installed; but, when the drum was beaten, it did not say 'boom, boom' as is usual with all drums, but said instead, 'The great king eats chaff. The great king eats chaff.'

THE DRUNKARD AND THE OPIUM-EATER

Once in a village there lived a Drunkard and an Opium-eater. Both outcasts of society, they became fast friends. Having no house of their own, they spent their time in the various rest-houses of the village. But they avoided one particular rest-house, namely the one at the cemetery, for all believed that it was the meeting place of the ghosts of the village every night. One evening, however, the Drunkard was more intoxicated than usual and, in spite of the entreaties and warnings of his friend the Opium-eater, he went to spend the night at the cemetery rest-house, taking with him many pots of toddy. He reached the rest-house and sat drinking. As he became more and more intoxicated he became bolder, and his mind more alert. He did not feel sleepy at all.

About midnight two or three ghosts came in but, before they could suspect that he was a human being, the Drunkard calmly said, 'Hello, fellows, you are late today, or am I early?' Other ghosts came in until the rest-house was absolutely full. One of the ghosts then looked round and said, 'I smell human flesh. I suspect the presence of a stranger.'

'Why not count us,' suggested another ghost.

The Drunkard at once stood up and shouted, 'One, two, three, four. One, two, three, four. All correct. All correct.'

The ghosts believed him, and settled down to talk about various matters. 'Do you know, gentlemen,' one talkative ghost said, 'that underneath where I am sitting, there lie buried seven pots of gold?' The

Drunkard carefully noted where the speaker was sitting. The talk went on until dawn, when the ghosts went away. The Drunkard dug up the seven pots of gold and became very rich. He bought a house, and lived in luxury with his friend the Opium-eater.

The Opium-eater, however, was not satisfied, and he wanted to have seven pots of gold also. So he prevailed upon his friend the Drunkard to tell him the secret of how he found the pots of gold. When the Opium-eater had listened to his friend's story, he decided to go and spend the night at the rest-house at the cemetery. He duly went there but, as he was full of opium, he became very sleepy, and when some ghosts came into the rest-house at midnight he was half-asleep. The ghosts looked at him with suspicion. Other ghosts came in, until the rest-house was absolutely full. One ghost said that as he could smell human flesh, he suspected the presence of a human being among them. Another ghost reminded the company of how some nights before a human being had been present at their meeting, and had run off with some pots of gold after listening to their talk. A third ghost stood up and started to count the company. All the time the Opium-eater was too sleepy to do anything to prevent his presence from being discovered. The ghost finished counting, and reported that there was one extra. Those ghosts who had suspected the Opium-eater from the beginning seized hold of him and carefully scrutinized him. When they saw that he was a human being, they pulled his nose until it became full three yards long. Then all the ghosts left the rest-house without saying anything more.

The next morning the Drunkard went to look for his friend at the rest-house and found him half dead with fear. The Drunkard helped the Opium-eater to his feet, and took him home. As the two friends walked through the village, all the villagers roared with laughter to see the three-yard long nose of the Opium-eater. 'Friend,' consoled the Drunkard, 'I will go to night, and find out the cure for your long nose.' When night came the Drunkard went to the rest-house, after fortifying himself with many pots of today. He waited until two or three ghosts came in. Then he said cheerfully, 'Hello, you fellows, I came early hoping to find a human being in the rest-house again. Last night I had no fun at all, for you people crowded round him and gave me no chance to get at his nose.' The ghosts laughed, and never suspected him. When the ghosts had all assembled, one ghost suggested that the company be carefully counted, as he could smell human flesh. But the Drunkard, alert as ever, stood up and shouted, 'One, two, three, four. One, two, three, four. All correct. All correct.' The ghosts believed him, and started to talk. 'By the way,' said the Drunkard during a lull in the conversation, 'we did have great fun last night with that fellow's nose. Out of sheer curiosity, I want to know whether that nose will ever be the right length again.'

'Yes,' answered a wise-looking ghost, 'provided, of course, that the right remedy is applied. If the fellow touches the tip of his nose with a pestle, the nose will shrink half an inch and, if he does that repeatedly, it will be the right length again.' The Drunkard

changed the conversation. When the ghosts had gone away with the coming of dawn, the Drunkard returned to his friend the Opium-eater and told him the glad news. The Opium-eater used the pestle with due care and deliberation, in case his nose should become too short, and at last it was the right size again.

THE OPIUM-EATER AND THE FOUR OGRES

Once four ogres came to a rest-house in a village, and ate up all the travellers who were sleeping there. Since that time, no one was ever bold enough to enter the rest-house, and it remained empty for a long time.

There was an Opium-eater in the village, and he was so lazy that he had no regular work. He moved softly, spoke softly, and was considered to be timid and cowardly. And he was always half-asleep. One evening he ran out of opium, and had no money even to buy a few grains. So he went round the village, boasting that he was the bravest man in it, until the young bloods of the village became annoyed and challenged him to spend the night at the rest-house. 'Gladly will I do that,' replied the Opium-eater, 'provided that you fill up my opium pipe, and also give me my dinner.' His pipe was duly filled, and he was given a bundle containing one fried lobster, one boiled egg, a bamboo-tube cake, and a pancake. He was then escorted to the rest-house by the young men, and left there.

The four ogres came into the rest-house at mid-

night, and they were surprised to find a human being in it. They came in with noisy footsteps, but the Opium-eater was so engrossed in his pipe that he did not hear anything. The ogres sat round the Opium-eater and rolled their big eyes to frighten him, but he did not see them as his eyes were closed in the ecstasy of opium. The ogres became a little nervous of this human being who took no notice of their presence. They became more frightened as they looked at him carefully, for they thought that he was eating fire. They did not know whether to eat him up or to run away. Fascinated, they watched him.

The Opium-eater now felt hungry and, without opening his eyes, he opened the bundle. 'What have we got here?' he asked himself, feeling the food with his hands. First of all, he felt the lobster. 'Master Whiskers, Master Whiskers, I am glad to have you here,' he addressed the lobster. But the first ogre's name happened to be Master Whiskers, for his chin was covered with hair; and he was sore afraid. Then the Opium-eater felt the egg, and said, 'Master Bald, Master Bald, I am glad to have you here.' The second ogre's name happened to be Master Bald, for he had no hair on his head or chin; and he was sore afraid. Then the Opium-eater felt the bamboo-tube cake, and said, 'Master Lanky, Master Lanky, I am glad to have you here.' The third ogre's name happened to be Master Lanky, for his body was thin and long; and he was sore afraid. Then the Opium-eater felt the pancake, and said, 'Master Round, Master Round, I am so glad to have you here.' The fourth ogre's name

happened to be Master Round, for he was short and fat and round; and he was sore afraid. Then the Opium-eater said to himself, 'First, I will eat the Whiskers. Then I will eat the Bald. Then I will eat the Lanky. And I will finish off with the Round.' At this the four ogres knelt down before the Opium-eater and begged for their lives. The Opium-eater now opened his eyes and saw them but he thought that they were asking for the cakes. So he said, 'No, no, I must eat for I am hungry.'

'My Lord,' pleaded the ogres, 'please let us go and we will give you the seven pots of gold which are buried underneath the rest-house stairs.'

The Opium-eater now realized that they were pleading for their lives and said, 'All right. Bring the gold pots here.' The four ogres dug up the pots and gave them to the Opium-eater, who told them that they were free to go. The ogres went away, and they never came to the rest-house again. As for the Opium-eater he became very rich and lived in great luxury.

THE DRUNKARD AND THE WRESTLING GHOST

A few miles outside the village there stood a ruined monastery which had an evil reputation, because anybody who entered it was later found dead with all his bones broken. One day the Drunkard of the village was very annoyed as he could not find a quiet spot where he could drink his toddy in peace. So he went to that ruined monastery and sat enjoying his drink.

With loud footsteps, a fat monk entered and said to the Drunkard, 'Layman, can you wrestle?'

The Drunkard was very annoyed because he was being disturbed in his drinking. 'Of course I can, Sire Monk,' he replied with a sullen look.

'Come and wrestle with me then,' invited the Monk. So the Drunkard and the Monk wrestled; and although the Drunkard used all the tricks of wrestling that he knew they were of no avail, for the Monk's body was as soft as a sack of chaff and as slippery as an eel. Moreover, although the Drunkard was puffing and blowing, the Monk never puffed or blew. Gradually it dawned upon the Drunkard that his opponent was the ghost of the monastery, who had assumed the form of a monk.

At last the Drunkard was caught in a vice-like grip and his body was being pounded against the floor repeatedly by the Monk. In desperation, the Drunkard gripped with his hands the shaven head of the Monk and, to his surprise, he felt a leather cap on the Monk's head although it was invisible to his eyes. He quickly snatched away the cap. At once the Monk let go his hold, and said to the Drunkard in a pleading tone, 'Layman, please return me my cap.'

'Why should I?' replied the Drunkard realizing that the Monk was in his power. 'I have been needing a leather cap for a long time.'

'Layman,' explained the Monk, 'the cap is a vanishing cap, which all ghosts possess. Without it we cannot disappear. Moreover, when a human being snatches it away from us, we cannot snatch it back.

We have to wait until he, of his own free will, gives it back to us.'

'Ho, ho,' laughed the Drunkard, 'thank you for the information. Now I can take you home with me and make you fetch toddy for me for three years. Then I will give you your cap as payment for faithful service.' But the Ghost was in no mood for joking and begged the Drunkard to return him his cap.

In the end, the Ghost in desperation told the Drunkard that seven pots of gold lay buried underneath the stairs of the monastery. 'Now, return me my cap,' said the Ghost, 'and you can dig up the pots later.'

'Dig them up yourself,' replied the Drunkard. So the poor Ghost had to dig up the pots. 'Now carry them and follow me,' ordered the Drunkard, and the poor Ghost had to do as he was told. But when they approached the village the Drunkard realized that the villagers would come out and beat him, if they should see him making a monk carrying his baggage. 'I will have to explain that he is a ghost and not a real monk,' thought the Drunkard, 'then all the villagers will come to my house and ask me questions and I shall not be allowed to drink my toddy in peace.' So, turning to the Ghost, he said, 'All right, Ghost. Thank you, and good-bye. Here is your cap.' The Ghost took the cap and at once vanished. The Drunkard became very rich and lived in great luxury.

THE TREE-SPIRIT WHO LIKES TO TICKLE

An old woman lived with her son and daughter-in-law, but she was hated by the daughter-in-law. The daughter-in-law was always complaining to her husband that the old woman ate up a lot of rice every day, and they could not afford to keep her any longer. In the end, the daughter-in-law succeeded in prevailing upon her husband to leave the old woman in the forest to be eaten up by the tigers. The next day, the old woman was taken to the forest by her son, and left tied to a big tamarind tree.

When night fell the tigers came to eat her, but the spirit of the tree to which she was tied said, 'Hey, fellows, wait a bit. I want to tickle her nose, and find out what sort of a person she is.' Then the spirit took a feather, and tickled the woman's nose. 'Atchoo! Atchoo!' sneezed the old woman, 'Buddha! Buddha!'

'Go away, you fellows,' said the tree-spirit to the tigers. 'She is a good woman, and you mustn't eat her.' The old woman of course could not see the spirit nor could she hear him. She saw only the tigers coming, and then going away. After some time she fell asleep, and when at dawn she woke up she found that the ropes which tied her had been cut, and a pot of gold was at her feet. So she took up the pot of gold and went back to her village. But she did not go back to her cruel son. She bought a house, and lived in great luxury.

The daughter-in-law was surprised that the old woman came back from the forest alive, and she felt very jealous of the latter's riches. So she worried her

husband to find out the secret of how the old woman came by the pot of gold. The husband went to his mother, and asked her about the pot of gold. The old woman loved her son in spite of his attempt to kill her, and told him the secret of how she came by the pot of gold.

That afternoon the daughter-in-law asked her husband to take her to the forest and to leave her tied to the tamarind tree, and the husband did as requested. The daughter-in-law waited patiently, and when night fell and the tigers came she was not at all afraid, but felt so happy as she thought the pot of gold would soon be hers. 'Hey, fellows,' said the tree-spirit to the tigers, 'wait a bit, as I want to tickle the woman's nose to find out what sort of a person she is.' The spirit then tickled the woman's nose with a feather. 'Atchoo! Atchoo!' sneezed the daughter-in-law. 'Where is my pot of gold? Where is my pot of gold?'

'She is an artful, greedy woman,' said the tree-spirit to the tigers. 'You may eat her, and I will not interfere.' So the daughter-in-law was eaten up by the tigers.

THE THIEVES AND THE POT OF GOLD

Once a poverty-stricken old couple rested under a tamarind tree outside their village. Said the old man to his wife, 'I feel so tired gathering fire-wood. I wish we were rich.'

'Don't worry, dear husband,' replied his wife. 'If we are lucky, we might discover a pot of gold buried

in the earth.' The old man laughed, pleased with the cheerful reply of his wife. The spirit of the tree overheard their remarks and, as he liked them, decided to give them a pleasant surprise.

That night the old man woke up his wife. 'Dear wife,' he said excitedly, 'I had a curious dream. The spirit of the tamarind tree outside the village appeared to me, and asked me to dig up the pot of gold buried three paces east of the tree.'

'How curious,' replied the wife, 'for I had the same dream, and I was meaning to wake you up when you woke me.'

'Oh, we shouldn't be so silly as to get excited,' said the husband. 'Of course we must have fallen asleep thinking of your joke about the gold, and the dream can't mean anything.' So they went to sleep again.

Some thieves were passing by the old couple's cot' ge, and they overheard their words. So they rushed to the tree and, digging at the place three paces east of the foot of the tree, they discovered an earthen pot. They took off the lid, struck a light, and saw a huge snake coiled in the pot, fast asleep. The thieves put back the lid again, and felt very angry with the old man. 'Of course he must have found the pot with the snake inside, and must have buried it again,' exclaimed the leader of the thieves indignantly. 'Then, when he heard our footsteps he told a lie meaning us to overhear. The sly old thing doubtless meant us to die of snake-bite. Well, he and his wife shall die instead.'

The thieves carefully tied the lid to the pot with

string, and then carried the pot to the old couple's cottage. Knowing from their snores that the old man and his wife were fast asleep, the thieves slipped into the cottage, and left the pot at the foot of the old couple's bed. When morning broke, the old woman got up and, seeing the pot, woke up her husband excitedly. The old man untied the string and took off the lid and found the pot to be full of gold. The old couple became rich, and lived in great luxury.[1]

THE FOOLISH BOY

ONCE there lived a foolish boy, and he was sent by his widowed mother to search for food in the forest. He found a wild fowl caught in a trap. After instructing it to go to his mother without fail and get cooked, he freed the bird and it flew away. Then the boy walked home at leisure, but when he reached home he was surprised to find that the bird had not arrived. He then told his mother about the bird. 'You foolish boy,' said his mother, 'next time you must kill the bird with your knife, and bring it home yourself.'

The next day, the boy went again to the forest to look for food, and he found some big mushrooms growing under a tree. 'Ha, Ha,' laughed the boy, 'you shall not escape me this time,' and he ran and cut the mushrooms into small bits with his knife, and then he took the mushrooms to his mother. 'Oh you foolish boy,' said his mother, 'you have spoilt the

[1] For the Burmese folk-beliefs regarding hidden treasure, see the Introduction.

mushrooms for cooking. Next time you must pluck them by the roots.'

The next day the boy went again to the forest in search of food, and he saw a bee-hive on a tree. 'Honey for me,' the boy said to himself, 'but I must pluck it by the root, as my mother instructed.' So he climbed the tree, and tried to pull off the hive from the branch, but he was attacked by the bees of the hive and badly stung. Crying in pain, he jumped down and ran home to his mother. 'You foolish boy,' said his mother, 'next time you must make a fire, and let the smoke drive away the bees.'

The next day the boy went out as usual in search of food, and he saw a monk. 'I will get him this time,' promised the boy to himself. He stealthily walked up to the monk, and then suddenly set fire to the yellow robes of the monk. When the monk rolled on the grass and put out the fire, the boy was persistent and again attempted to set fire to the robes. So the monk had to seize a stick and beat the boy. The boy ran crying to his mother. 'You foolish boy,' said his mother, 'you can always know a monk by his yellow robe, and the next time you see a monk, kneel down and show respect to him.'

The next day the boy went out again in search of food and, wandering into the thicker part of the forest, he met a tiger. Instead of climbing the nearest tree for safety, the boy looked carefully at the tiger and, on seeing the yellow stripes on the animal, he thought it was a monk. So he knelt down and made obeisance, and the tiger pounced upon him and ate him.

THE FOUR FOOLISH MEN

In a village there lived four men who were so foolish that nobody would employ them. At last they went to an old lady and pleaded for employment and, out of the kindness of her heart, the old lady asked them to bring from the thatch field some bundles of thatch for roofing her house. The four foolish men came back, each with a bundle of thatch. The first foolish man asked the old lady, 'Where shall I put the bundle, Mistress?' and the old lady replied, 'Put it behind the kitchen.' Although the other three foolish men heard the question and answer, each of them asked in turn, 'Where shall I put the bundle, Mistress?' and the lady made the same answer, 'Put it behind the kitchen.' The four foolish men went back to the field, and brought back another four bundles of thatch. Each in turn asked, 'Where shall I put the bundle, Mistress?' and the lady gave the same answer, 'Put it behind the kitchen.' The four foolish men went back to the field, and brought back another four bundles. The first foolish man asked, 'Where shall I put the bundle, Mistress?' and the lady shouted in anger, 'You fool, put it behind the kitchen.' The second foolish man asked, 'Where shall I put the bundle, Mistress?' This time the lady lost her temper altogether, and said sarcastically, 'You fools, you fools! Put all your precious bundles on my head.' And the foolish men threw down the bundles on her head and the poor lady was killed. When the neighbours discovered what the foolish men had done, they beat them. Then the villagers gave the foolish men an

axe and sent them to cut down a tree and make a coffin for the poor old lady.

The four foolish men wandered on aimlessly along the road, until they came to a big tree. 'Let us cut this down,' suggested the first foolish man.

'Good!' agreed the second foolish man. 'I will climb to the top of the tree, and help it to fall by my weight.'

'We will wait with our shoulders braced,' said the third and the fourth foolish men together, 'so that the tree will fall on our shoulders. Otherwise, we would have to lift the fallen tree on to our shoulders later.' So the first man started to hew down the tree, the second foolish man climbed to the top of the tree, and the other two stood with their shoulders braced, ready to receive the tree as it fell. At last the tree fell, killing the two foolish men who were waiting to receive it on their shoulders. The foolish man who was at the top of the tree helping it to fall with his weight fell down, but luckily he was merely stunned by the fall. The foolish man who cut down the tree, was puzzled; 'Are my companions dead, or are they merely asleep?' So he sat down and waited.

The foolish man who was merely stunned, recovered consciousness, and sat up. 'Have you woken up?' asked the first foolish man.

The other looked round and replied, 'I am awake, but our two companions are still asleep.' So the two foolish men sat down and waited for their companions to wake up.

After two or three days a woodcutter passed by,

and was surprised to see two dead bodies under a tree, and two men sitting calmly nearby. 'What is the matter, friends?' he asked.

'We are waiting for our friends to get up,' replied the two foolish men. 'They are so lazy, they do nothing but sleep.'

The woodcutter was astounded at their answer, and asked, 'Do you not know that they are dead?'

'Are they?' the foolish men asked in return. 'How do you know that they are dead?'

'You fools,' said the woodcutter, 'where are your noses? Can you not recognize the foul smell of rotting flesh that comes from a dead body?' Then the woodcutter went away, and the two foolish men stood up and walked aimlessly along the road.

As they had been without food for some days the first foolish man belched out some wind. 'A foul smell comes from your mouth,' said the second foolish man, 'and did not that wise man say that we should know a dead man by the foul smell of his rotting body?'

'What you say is true,' replied the first foolish man, 'and I am dead.' So saying, he lay down full length on the roadway.

At that moment, the second foolish man also belched out some wind. 'A foul smell issues from my mouth and I must be dead,' cried he. He also lay down full length on the road. By and by an elephant-driver on his elephant came along, and swore at the two foolish men for being in his way. 'How can we get up and make way for you?' said the foolish men indignantly, 'for we are dead.'

'I will soon restore you to life,' said the elephant-driver with feeling. Jumping down from his elephant, he gave two or three sharp pricks with his driving spear on the legs of the two foolish men who jumped up in pain. 'Your spear is a magic one,' the foolish men said, 'for it restores the dead to life. Please exchange it with our axe.' As the axe was more valuable than the spear, the elephant-driver made the exchange and drove away.

The two foolish men went on, until they came to the house of a rich man whose beautiful daughter had just died. 'We can restore your daughter to life,' boasted the foolish men, 'for we are physicians.' The doting father was overjoyed with this offer of the foolish men, and promised to reward them with gold and jewels if they could bring his daughter to life again. The two foolish men asked to be left alone with the dead girl and, when they were alone with the dead body, they pierced and cut it many times with their spear, but she remained dead. After some time the rich man came in, and was very angry to see the body of his beloved daughter disfigured with cuts and pricks. He called his servants and ordered them to beat the foolish men until they were black and blue. When the beating was over, the rich man asked the foolish men, 'You are strangers to my daughter and to me. Yet why did you want to harm even her dead body?'

'Master,' replied the foolish men, 'we only wanted to please you, so that we could get some food.'

The rich man, realizing that they were merely

foolish fellows, said, 'You stupid men! You should shed tears and say, "Oh, sister, why have you left us? We mourn and sorrow for you."' Then he allowed them to go away.

The two foolish men went on and came to a house where a wedding was being celebrated. They rushed in, and seizing hold of the bride and shedding tears, said, 'Oh, sister, why have you left us? We mourn and sorrow for you.' Of course this caused an uproar, and the bride's brothers beat the foolish men until they were black and blue. 'Oh, we only wanted a little food, and we were merely trying to please you!' explained the foolish men.

The brothers realized that they were merely foolish fellows, and said, 'You fools, you ought to dance and sing and say how happy you are!' Then they let the foolish men go away.

The two foolish men went on until they came to a house, where a man and his wife were quarrelling and beating each other. The foolish men rushed in and started to dance round the couple, singing, 'We are so glad, we are so happy.' At this insult, the couple stopped quarrelling, and turned round and beat the foolish men until they were black and blue. 'Oh, we only wanted a little food, and we were merely trying to please you!' explained the foolish men.

The couple realized that they were merely foolish fellows, and let them go, after saying to them, 'You fools, you ought to part us saying, "Curb your anger. After all you are man and wife."'

The two foolish men went on, until they saw two

buffaloes goring each other with their horns. The two foolish men rushed in between the buffaloes saying, 'Curb your anger. After all you are man and wife.' The buffaloes gored the two foolish men to death. And that was the end of the four foolish men.

THE FOUR MIGHTY MEN

THERE were four Mighty Men, whose fame rang throughout the country. They were Big Ear, Big Palm, Pointed Buttock, and Runny Nose. Each had distinguished himself separately in various feats of arms. One day they met together and said, 'Let us seek adventure together, instead of seeking separately. Let us go fishing. Perhaps our adventure on the water will surpass in fame our previous adventures on land.'

So the four Mighty Men went fishing in a boat. Big Ear put up his big ear as a sail, and the boat moved out to sea swiftly. They cast their nets and soon their boat was full to the brim with fish. Other fishing boats passed by, and the fishermen shouted to the Mighty Men, 'Sires, you have caught all the fishes in the sea, but we have caught none, for how could we ordinary people dare to compete against such mighty men as you? We have, however, a living to earn, so please spare us some fish to sell.' The four Mighty Men were not only brave but generous, so they decided to give a handful of fish to each boat, and the other three asked Big Palm to hand out the fish. Big Palm used his big palm and, as his handful was equivalent to a hundred times an ordinary

man's handful, all the fish in the boat were given away. Pointed Buttock stood up and protested but, as Big Palm took no notice of him, he became very angry and sat down with a bang; as a result, his pointed buttock pierced a hole in the boat. Water rushed in, and the four Mighty Men were in danger of drowning. But Runny Nose put his runny nose into the hole in the boat, and blew it; the water was blown out, and the hole became blocked with the mucus from the nose. So the four Mighty Men sailed back in triumph and all the people cheered them heartily.

THE FOUR YOUNG MEN

In a village there lived four young men, and they could make up strange and impossible tales. One day they espied a traveller resting in the rest-house outside the village and he was wearing fine clothes. The young men conspired to cheat him of his fine clothes. So they went to the traveller and engaged him in conversation. After some time one of the young men suggested, 'Let us make a bet. Let each of us tell his most wonderful adventure and any one doubting the truth of the story shall become the slave of the narrator.' When the traveller agreed to the suggestion the young men smiled to themselves thinking the traveller to be an old fool. They did not suspect that the traveller could tell impossible stories and, even if he could, they merely had to say that they believed his story. On the other hand, they expected that as their stories would be so strange and impossible the traveller

would forget himself and express his doubt as to the truth of the stories. Of course they did not really mean to make him their slave, but they meant to claim the clothes of the traveller, as a master owned not only the person of a slave but also his property. The young men went back to the village, and brought back the headman to act as a judge over their bet.

The first young man now narrated his wonderful adventure. 'When I was in my mother's womb my mother asked my father to pluck some plums from the tree in front of our house, but my father replied that the tree was too high for him to climb. My mother asked my brothers, but they gave the same answer. I could not bear to see my poor mother disappointed over her desire to eat a few plums, so I slipped out and climbed the tree. I plucked some plums and wrapped them up in my jacket. Then I left the plums wrapped in the jacket in the kitchen, and re-entered my mother's womb. Nobody guessed how the plums came to be there, but my mother was able to eat some plums. As there were many plums left over after my mother had eaten, she gave seven plums each to all the inmates of the house and to all the neighbours. Still there were many plums left over, so my mother piled them in front of the door and, do you know, the door could not be seen from the street, so high was the pile of plums!' The first young man looked at the traveller hoping that he would express some doubt as to the truth of the story, but the traveller merely nodded his head to signify that he believed the tale. The other three men also nodded their heads.

Now it was the second young man's turn, and he said: 'When I was a week old I took a stroll in the forest, and saw a big tamarind tree with ripe tamarinds. I climbed up the tree swiftly as I felt so hungry. When I had eaten my fill, I felt so heavy and sleepy that I could not climb down. So I went back to the village and, bringing a ladder, I propped it against the tree. Then I came down by the ladder. It was really fortunate that I found a ladder in the village, otherwise I would still be up that tamarind tree.' The second young man looked expectantly at the traveller who, however, nodded his head to signify that he believed the tale. The other three young men also nodded their heads.

The third young man now narrated his wonderful adventure. 'When I was of the ripe age of one year I chased what I thought to be a rabbit into a bush, but when I crawled into the bush I found that it was really a tiger. The animal opened his mouth wide, meaning to swallow me. I protested that it was grossly unfair of him, for I was looking for a rabbit and not for a tiger. But the tiger took no notice of my protest, and came nearer with his big mouth open. So I caught hold of his upper jaw with my left arm, and gave a jerk. To my surprise, the huge animal broke into two and died.' The third young man looked expectantly at the traveller who, however, merely nodded his head to signify that he believed the tale. The other three young men also nodded their heads.

The fourth young man then narrated his adventure. 'Last year I went fishing in a boat but I could not

catch a single fish. I asked other fishermen, and they said that they had not caught a single fish either. So, deciding to investigate what was happening at the bottom of the river, I jumped out of my boat and dived. After about three days I touched bottom, and I discovered that a fish as huge as a mountain was eating up all the other fishes. I killed the fish with one blow of my fist. By that time I was feeling so hungry that I decided to eat it then and there. So I lit a fire and, after roasting the fish, ate it at one sitting. Then I floated back to the surface and regained my boat, none the worse for my little excursion to the bottom of the river.' The fourth young man looked expectantly at the traveller, who merely nodded his head to signify that he believed the tale. The other three young men nodded their heads also.

The traveller now told his adventure. 'Some years ago I had a cotton farm. One cotton tree was unusually big, and was bright red in colour. For a long time it had no leaf or branch, but four branches later appeared. The branches had no leaves but they had a fruit each. I plucked off the four fruits and, when I cut them open, a young man jumped out from each fruit. As they came from my cotton tree they were legally my slaves, and I made them work on my farm. But, being lazy fellows, they ran away after a few weeks. Since that time I have been travelling all over the country in search of them, and only now have I found them. Young fellows, you know very well that you are my long-lost slaves. Come back to my farm with me now.'

The four young men hung down their heads in mortification, for they were in a hopeless position: if they should say that they believed the story, it would amount to an admission that they were the traveller's long-lost slaves. But on the other hand, if they should say that they did not believe the story, they would become his slave according to the bet. The headman asked the young men three times to indicate whether they believed the traveller's story or not but, as they remained motionless and speechless with downcast eyes, he declared that the traveller had won the bet. The traveller, however, was magnanimous. 'The clothes that you are wearing belong to me,' he said, 'for you are my slaves. Take them off and give them to me. After that I will give you your freedom.' So the young men had to surrender their clothes to him, and the traveller went away, shouldering the bundle of clothes that he had won by his wonderful story telling.

THE FOUR DEAF PEOPLE

ONCE there lived a deaf little novice in a monastery. One day the abbot said to him: 'Go to the village and ask for an offering of some tobacco.' The little novice thought that he was being asked to get some sauce.

The little novice went to the village and saw a deaf little girl working at her loom in front of her house. 'Lay-woman,' said the novice, 'please make an offering of sauce to our monastery.'

'My weaving reed is of three hundred and twenty divisions,' replied the little girl.

'No need to abuse me,' said the novice. 'If you are busy, I will get it myself.' So he walked into the kitchen and, taking some sauce out of the pot, he returned to the monastery.

The little girl went running to her mother who was washing some clothes and said, 'Mother, mother, please go and report to the abbot about his rude little novice. He came and asked me about my weaving reed and then, suddenly rushing into the kitchen, ran off with some sauce.'

'You naughty little girl,' replied the mother who was also deaf, 'you are very young to think about marriage. I shall get you a husband only when you are old enough.' The little girl went back to her loom and the mother went on with her washing.

After some minutes of deep thought, the mother decided that the matter was important enough to be reported to her husband. So she ran to her husband who was making baskets. 'Husband, husband,' she shouted, 'our daughter is getting ideas into her head. She has just asked me to get her a husband although she is but a kid. I'm afraid you will have to beat her.'

The husband, who was also deaf, gave her a tolerant smile, and replied, 'You shouldn't have argued, for you are mistaken. Of course all winnowing sieves are round; only baskets for putting paddy in are square.'

THE FOUR DEAF MEN

ONCE there lived four deaf men in a village. The first was a herdsman, the second earned his living by climbing toddy-trees and extracting the juice, the third was a farmer, and the fourth the headman of the village.

One morning the herdsman missed his cattle, which had strayed away during the night. He searched and searched but without success. Then he saw the toddy-climber up a toddy tree and asked, 'Have you seen my cattle?'

The toddy-climber, of course, could not hear him, but thought the herdsman was asking about the toddy trees. So he pointed to a grove of toddy trees some distance away and said, 'This tree is not so satisfactory this year. The trees over there are much better.'

'Thank you,' said the herdsman, thinking that the toddy-climber was telling him where to find the missing cattle. He went to the grove of toddy trees, and actually he found his cattle there.

The herdsman was now hot and tired with searching for the cattle the whole morning, and so he wanted to make a short-cut to his home. To do that, he had to pass over the land belonging to the farmer. The herdsman found the farmer burning the couch-grass on his land and, pointing to the cattle, he said, 'Do you mind if my cattle walk across your land?'

The farmer thought that the question was, 'Did you steal my cattle?' and he replied, 'No, no', shaking his head vigorously.

'Now, now,' said the herdsman, 'why are you so mean? Your land is not yet ploughed, and surely my cattle cannot spoil it.' The farmer went on shaking his head, saying, 'No, no.' At last they came to blows and each dragged the other to the headman's house.

The headman that morning had had an unfortunate misunderstanding with his wife, which resulted in his soundly beating her. The wife in disgust left the house and went to her mother. The herdsman and the farmer arrived; each sued the other for assault, and each pleaded his case with eloquent gestures. But the headman shook his head and waving his hands, he said, 'Go away! Go away! It is no good pleading on her behalf. I will not have her back. Let her stay on with her mother.' The herdsman and the farmer thought that both their suits had been dismissed and went away.

MASTER CROOKED AND MASTER TWISTED

SAID Master Crooked to Master Twisted: 'Let us earn some money by a trick.' So they went to a village and, after stealing a bullock, hid it away. When the owner wandered all over the village looking for the lost bullock Master Crooked said to him: 'My master, the great fortune-teller Twisted is newly arrived in the village. He is now staying in the village rest-house. Why not consult him?'

So the owner went and consulted Twisted who, after pretending to look at his books, said: 'Go due east from this rest-house until you come to a big mango tree. Then turn to the right and go until you come to a big tamarind tree. Then go due north

until you come to a big banyan tree. If you find your bullock there, give me my consultation fee of ten silver coins. If you do not find it, then I am a mountebank, and do not give any fee.' The owner went to the directed place, and of course the bullock was there. The owner gave ten silver coins to Twisted in gratitude.

Crooked and Twisted were just making ready to leave the rest-house when the village headman arrived. 'I want to consult the great master astrologer,' said the headman, 'whose wonderful prediction about the missing bullock is the subject of all talk in the village. My gold betel-box was stolen last night. Will you please find it for me?'

'The stars are not favourable for consultation at present,' replied Twisted. 'Please come in the morning, and I will tell you where to find the betel-box.'

When the headman had gone Twisted suggested to his companion that they should run away at once, but Crooked pointed out that the whole village would chase them if they were seen running away. 'Let us wait until night has fallen,' he suggested. When night fell Twisted said, 'Let us go now,' but Crooked replied, 'Let us wait for the moon.' Now it happened that the thief who stole the golden betel-box was a fellow named Luck and in the darkness he came stealthily to the rest-house, and listened from beneath the floor to find out whether the fortune-teller had learnt the truth from the stars. Twisted said to Crooked, 'Why did you ever make me start this game? Now

I have to run away as if I were a common thief, yes, a thief,' and Crooked replied, 'Do not blame me, blame luck! blame luck!' The thief from underneath the floor heard only the words 'common thief' and 'blame luck' and thought that they were speaking about him; so, trembling with fear, he said, 'Master Astrologer, I am the unfortunate Luck who stole the betel-box. I confess that I buried the betel-box underneath the stairs of the cemetery rest-house. Please do not give me away to the headman.'

'All right, Luck,' replied Twisted, 'you may go now.' Luck went away gratefully. The next morning when the headman came, Twisted was able to tell him where he would find the lost betel-box. The headman found it, and gave Twisted one hundred silver coins as consultation fee. He also took Crooked and Twisted to his house for breakfast.

Just as Crooked and Twisted were saying adieu to the headman, a king's messenger arrived, and gave the headman the following information. A fleet of seven merchant ships filled to the brim with jewels had arrived at the king's city that morning, and the merchant who owned the ships had challenged the king to a bet. He had a small iron box with him, and he had said to the king: 'If, on the seventh day from now, any astrologer in your kingdom can tell what is inside this small iron box, I will give you these seven ships with all their treasure. But if none of your astrologers can tell correctly, you must surrender me your kingdom.' The king accepted the bet, thinking that it would be an easy matter for the court

astrologer, but the court astrologer had confessed his inability to say what the box contained. So the king had sent messengers all over the kingdom to find a master astrologer.

The headman, after listening to the messenger's tale, said joyfully, 'Take Master Twisted to the king. He will surely be able to tell what the box contains.'

So Crooked and Twisted had to go along with the messenger to the king. Twisted assured the king that he would be able to tell what the box contained on the appointed day. The king was overjoyed, and gave Twisted a fine house with many servants and wonderful food.

The two cheats enjoyed themselves to the full and, on the night before the appointed day, Crooked said to Twisted, 'We have lived royally, and we have enjoyed ourselves. We will not run away, nor will we face disgrace tomorrow. Let us go and drown ourselves in the sea.'

'But we can swim,' protested Twisted, who did not quite like the idea of committing suicide.

'We will swim out to sea,' exclaimed Crooked, 'and we will swim on and on until we are exhausted. Then we shall drown.' So the two went and jumped into the sea.

As they swam past one of the seven treasure ships they heard a child's voice saying, 'Grandfather, you are the master merchant's cook, and surely you know the secret.'

An old man's voice replied, 'Child, why do you want to know what does not concern you?'

'I want to know, I want to know,' said the child petulantly. 'I will not go to bed until you tell me.'

'You naughty child,' said the grandfather. But the child went on asking, 'Please tell me, please tell me.' At last the grandfather gave in. 'Listen, child,' said he, 'inside the iron box there is a brass box; inside the brass box, there is a silver box; inside the silver box, there is a gold box; inside the gold box, there is an ounce of the choicest perfume. Now, go to bed.' Crooked and Twisted, who had been listening to the conversation, silently congratulated each other, and swam back to the shore. Next morning, needless to say, Twisted was able to tell correctly what the iron box contained, and the merchant had to surrender his treasure ships to the king. Twisted was appointed court astrologer on the spot, and was taken back to the palace by the king for a chat.

While Twisted was away at the palace, Crooked went back to their fine house and set fire to it. He also deliberately scorched his hands. He then rushed to the palace and, prostrating himself before Twisted, he said, 'Forgive me, my master, for all your books are burnt. A fire broke out in your house, and all my efforts to save your precious books were of no avail.' Twisted, on hearing the news, shed tears, beating his breast and tearing his hair. 'Oh, oh,' he cried, 'how can I make any more predictions, for all my books are lost!' The king soothed him with kind words, and appointed him a minister of state to console him. The king then looked at the scorched hands of Crooked, and said, 'Such true and faithful servants are rare.

You risked your life for the books of your master. I need men like you,' and he made Crooked commander of the royal armies.

CROOKED MASTER Z

MASTER Z spent his days cheating his playmates of their sweetmeats and toys. So he was called Crooked Master Z. He became so bold that he decided to cheat his own parents and waited for an opportunity. One day his father said to him, 'Z, come with me to the next village, and carry this bundle of rice and meat for the road.' Z followed his father some distance behind, and ate up the food.

After they had travelled some miles the father sat down by the roadside, and asked Z to open the bundle. 'But I threw it away on the road some moments ago,' replied Z.

'Why did you do that?' asked the surprised father.

'You said, father, that the food was for the road, so I thought I had to give it to the road,' explained Z. The father was furious, and sent his son home in disgrace.

Crooked Master Z went home very pleased with himself and, when he reached there, he said to his mother with tears, 'Mother, poor father is dead. He died of snake-bite on the road. Some kind villagers are bringing his body here.' The poor mother was grief-stricken. Then said Z, 'Mother, don't you think we ought to give something to the kind villagers who are bringing poor father's body? Shall I kill our

pig and roast it for them?' The sorrowful mother agreed. Master Z killed the pig, roasted it whole, and ate half of it.

After some time the father came back, and Master Z's roguery was discovered. After severely beating Z, the father said, 'Take away your pig, and never darken my doors again.' Shouldering the remaining half of the roasted pig, Z went away in great glee.

Z passed by the house of the village miser, and saw him digging in his front garden. 'Uncle,' said Z, 'may I give you some roasted pig?' The old miser was pleased and invited Z to come in. 'I will take away only a potful, uncle,' he said, 'and leave the rest with you. Can you lend me a small earthen pot?' The old miser got up to go and fetch the pot, but Z said, 'Don't bother, uncle. I will go and get it myself from your wife.' So Z went into the kitchen, and said to the wife of the miser, 'Aunt, here is my roasted pig which your husband has agreed to exchange with his bundle of gold pieces.' The wife of course did not believe him and looked at him in surprise. 'Aunt,' said Z impatiently, 'give me the bundle of gold pieces quickly, for I have a long way to go today.' Then he shouted to the miser, 'Uncle, she won't give it to me,' and the old man shouted back, 'You fool of a woman, give it to the young lad at once,' for the old man thought that Z was asking for a small pot from his wife. So the wife gave Z the bundle of gold pieces, and Z went out quickly by the back door.

When Z came to the cross-roads he took out some gold pieces and buried them at four or five places on

the roadside. Then he made a little stick from a tree-branch, and waited patiently. When he heard the sound of approaching horse-hoofs he walked up and down, hitting the ground with his stick and shouting, 'Come here, you gold piece. Come here, you gold piece.'

A man on a fine horse now appeared and, seeing the strange behaviour of Z, stopped his horse. 'What are you trying to do?' he asked.

'Merely using my magic wand,' replied Z nonchalantly.

'What can your wand do?' the stranger asked.

'Oh, don't ask questions,' replied Z. 'If you must know, dig in those places where my wand touched the ground,' and he indicated the places where he had buried the gold pieces.

The horseman dug and, to his surprise, he found the gold pieces. 'What a wonderful wand!' said the horseman. 'Will you exchange it for my horse?'

'Certainly not,' replied Z, walking away. The horseman followed behind and pleaded until Z consented. He gave the wand to the horseman and, jumping on the horse, rode away.

Master Z arrived at the house of a rich man, and asked for permission to put his horse in one of the rich man's many stables. Permission being granted, Z put his horse in a stable, and fell asleep in one corner. Before dawn, Z woke up and put some gold pieces among the horse's dung. When daylight came, Z went to the rich man and borrowed a sieve. The rich man thought that it was strange for a traveller to want a sieve early

in the morning, and sent a servant to watch secretly what Z did with the sieve. As Z had shut the door and the window, the servant looked through a hole in the wall of the stable and, when he saw Z sifting the dung with the sieve, he ran to fetch his master. The rich man looked through the hole in the wall, and saw Z sifting the dung and picking up the gold pieces. So the rich man knocked at the door and, when Z opened it, he offered one thousand gold pieces for the horse. Z refused the offer, until the rich man pointed out that as he had already done Z a favour by allowing his horse to be put in the stable for the night, Z was under an obligation to do a favour in return. So Z went away with one thousand gold pieces.

On the road Z passed an old man and his old wife who seemed to be romantically inclined in spite of their age, for they were behaving as if they were a pair of young lovers newly wed. Z went on until he came to a village where he bought some curtains and a pestle; and he engaged a young girl and her old mother to be his assistants, giving them some gold pieces. Then he went back with his assistants for one or two miles, so that they should be some distance from the village. He hung up the curtains and put the girl behind them and he carefully instructed the girl and the mother how to act when the romantic old couple arrived. After some time the old couple approached them, and Z touched the girl's mother again and again with the pestle. 'What are you trying to do,' the old man asked, surprised at Z's behaviour.

'Just making the old hag young again,' replied Z

nonchalantly. Z then asked the girl's mother to go behind the curtains. Some moments later the girl came out.

'Thanks so much, young magician,' said the girl, 'I am now young and pretty again.' The old couple of course thought that the girl was the old woman made young again, and begged Z to make them youthful also. 'No, no,' replied Z, 'I usually treat but one client a day.' The old couple begged and pleaded, until Z agreed to treat them. 'But my fee is one thousand gold pieces,' said Z.

'Is that all?' said the old couple. 'However, we will have to go back to our village and fetch the money, if you will wait here.' They went back to their own village and, when they had gone, Z quickly sent away his assistants. The old couple came back with the gold pieces. Z, saying that he would treat the old man first, touched him all over the body with the pestle. 'Now go behind the curtains and wait patiently,' ordered Z. The old man waited patiently behind the curtains for some time, but nothing happened. So he shouted, 'Master magician, I am still old.' Z went behind the curtains as if to ivestigate, and knocked the old fellow unconscious with the pestle. Then he came out, and said to the old woman, 'Your husband has a tough body, and it will take him one or two hours behind the curtains to become young again. But I am in a hurry to go as I have an important appointment. Will it be all right if I postpone your treatment till tomorrow?'

The old woman wept and pleaded, 'Young magician, if my husband comes out young from behind the

curtains and finds me still an old woman, he will leave me and take a young girl to be his lover. So please treat me today.'

Z said at last, 'All right, I will treat you now to save time, but I need curtains for my treatment to be successful. So please wait here while I go to the next village and get some curtains.' The old woman was very grateful and Z went away.

Z now possessed some two thousand gold pieces, and he decided to turn honest. He travelled on with the intention of settling down in some pleasant village. However, his misdeeds had been reported to the king, who now sent his soldiers to search for Z. Master Z was soon found, and brought before the king for trial. The king ordered Z to be put in a sack and thrown into the river. So Z was put in a sack and taken to the river, but as it was still some hours to sunset, the usual time for executions, the sack with Z in it was left tied to a tree on the river bank, while the executioners went for a drink of toddy. After some time Z heard the heavy footsteps of an elephant and the voice of its driver goading it to go quicker. Z started to shout at the top of his voice, 'I refuse to be crown prince. I refuse to be crown prince.'

'What is the matter, friend?' asked the elephant-driver.

'The king is childless and wants to adopt an heir,' explained Z, 'and as I was having a nap under this tree, the king's officers found me and wanted to take me to the king to be the heir. But because I refused, they tied me in this sack to force me to agree, and now they have gone for a drink of toddy.'

'Will you change places with me?' asked the elephant-driver hopefully.

'Consider, my friend, the cares of state,' warned Z.

'I am not afraid to bear them,' replied the elephant-driver. So the elephant-driver took Z's place in the sack, and Z tied up the sack carefully. Then Z rode away on the elephant's back, and the elephant-driver kept shouting loudly, 'I will be crown prince. I will be crown prince.'

Crooked Master Z killed the elephant by piercing it with the driving spear. He widened the wound until it was large enough to admit a vulture. He then went to sleep under a bush. Next morning he watched some vultures enter the carcass of the elephant one by one through the spear wound and, when he thought that there were enough, he ran and closed up the wound with rags, making the vultures prisoners. He then climbed on to the elephant, and gave a series of blows with a stick. The vultures rose in the air in fear, lifting the elephant with Master Z on it. When he stopped beating with the stick, the vultures gradually stopped flying, and the dead elephant fell down gently on the ground. The king and his officers came to investigate when they heard a rumour about a flying elephant. The king was surprised when he recognized Master Z. 'Were you not thrown into the river yesterday?' he asked.

'Of course I was,' replied Z, 'but the naga-king who lives at the bottom of the river, sent me back with the gift of a flying elephant.'

'Will you give the flying elephant to me?' asked the king.

'If you will make me the crown prince,' was the reply. So, appointing Z the crown prince, the king climbed on to the dead elephant and beat it with the stick, following Z's instructions. The elephant rose in the air and the king was very pleased. Unfortunately he noticed the rags and, out of curiosity, pulled them out. The vultures now escaped through the wound, and the carcass fell down with a bump on the ground, killing the king. So Z became king in his place. From that time onward Z was never crooked again, and people called him not 'Crooked Master Z', but 'King Z the Just'.

THE BOATMASTER AND THE BOATMAN

ONCE there lived a boatmaster, who was so greedy that he cheated his own boatmen of their wages. A voyage up and down the Irrawaddy river lasted for two or three months, and so the wages were considerable. The master gave his men food throughout the journey, but the actual wages were payable only when the voyage had been completed. Now on the last day of every voyage the boatmaster would play some trick or challenge his men to a bet, and the more gullible of them were cheated out of their entire wages.

On the last day of one voyage the boats were stopping at a village. It was January, and the water was icy cold. The boatmaster said, 'I wonder if there is any sturdy fellow among my boatmen. If any one can stay in the water without any clothes, and throughout the night, I will give him all my boats.

But, if he fails to stay in the water until dawn he loses his wages. It is a fair bet, and who will take it?' All the boatmen were strong and sturdy fellows, and in ordinary circumstances would have accepted the bet gladly; but they had been warned beforehand of their master's tricks, and did not accept the bet. One of them, however, was an obstinate fellow, who considered himself more cunning than his master, and he accepted the bet. The boatman stripped himself and entered the water. His teeth chattered and his body shivered because of the cold, but he remained in the water. Hours passed and it was now nearly dawn. As the boatmaster had foreseen, some fishermen on the other bank of the river got up from bed and made a fire in front of their hut, to warm themselves before going out fishing at dawn. After an interval the boatmaster cried out, 'Boatman, you are cheating. You are taking advantage of the fire on yonder bank. You have lost the bet by default.'

'But the fire is on the other side of the river,' replied the boatman indignantly, 'and surely a fire half a mile away cannot give me any warmth.'

'A fire is a fire,' replied the boatmaster, 'and as long as it is visible, it gives you warmth. You have lost the bet by default.'

'All right,' replied the boatman without any further protest.

The boatman left the water and, after dressing sat with his fellow boatmen. 'You may think,' he said 'that I am a fool because I have lost my wages. But, although I may be a fool in other matters, at least in

pig-roasting I have no equal. Even our clever master does not know how to roast pig's trotters properly.'

The boatmaster was feeling very pleased with himself over the trick he had played on the boatman, and he did not like it when the same boatman said that he was not clever enough to roast pig's trotters. 'I have just won your wages from you,' he said with due pride, 'and yet you say that I don't know how to roast pig's trotters.'

'You may be able to roast other meat,' replied the boatman, 'but, master, I am sure you don't know how to roast pig's trotters.'

'Of course I know how to do it,' shouted the master in anger, 'and I will accept any bet over it.'

'I have some pig's trotters with me,' replied the boatman, 'which I bought yesterday from a market boat, and I will give them to you to roast now. If you can roast them, I will serve you as a slave for seven years, but if you fail you must give me all your boats. It is a fair bet, and if you think you can really roast pig's trotters, you ought to accept it.'

'I accept the bet,' said the boatmaster.

The boatman, after fetching the pig's trotters, said, 'Here are the trotters. Roast them now.'

'But where is the fire?' asked the boatmaster.

'There is a fire on yonder bank of the river,' replied the boatman sweetly.

'But it is half a mile away,' said the boatmaster indignantly.

'A fire is a fire, as you said,' replied the boatman, 'and surely if it was hot enough to give me warmth,

it is hot enough for you to roast the trotters. Now I see that you do not know how to roast them. So the bet is won, and all the boats are mine.' But the boatmaster would not admit that he had lost the bet, and went to a court of law to dispute the matter. Needless to say, the Judge decided in favour of the boatman.

THE BOATMASTER AND THE MAN FROM THE HILLS

ONCE there lived a boatmaster, who was so greedy that he cheated his own boatmen of their wages. A voyage down the Irrawaddy river and back lasted for two or three months, and so the wages were considerable. The master gave his men food throughout the journey, but the actual wages were payable only when the voyage had been completed. Now on the last day of every voyage the boatmaster would play some trick or challenge the men to a bet, and the more gullible of them were cheated out of their entire wages.

While on one voyage the boatmaster had among his boatmen a man from the hills, and he seemed very simple. Although an efficient boatman, he was a man of few words and did not mix much with the other boatmen, with the result that he was never warned by the others as to the usual tricks of their master towards the end of a voyage. The boats reached Lower Burma and, before they started on the return journey up the river, the master said to the boatman from the hills, 'Why don't you buy a cock? Cock prices in Upper Burma are sky-high, but they are cheap here.'

The boatman thought that it was good advice and, hoping to sell it at a profit in Upper Burma, he duly bought a cock. The boats started on the return voyage and, throughout the journey, the boatman fed his cock every day with a handful of rice taken from the boat's kitchen. The boatmaster watched the boatman feeding his cock every day, but said nothing. On the last day of the voyage the master said to the man from the hills, 'Look here my man, you know that under our agreement I was to feed you during the voyage, and I was under no liability to feed your cock. But you have been feeding the animal with my rice every day, and I must now present my bill.'

'All right, master,' replied the man from the hills, 'and I am ready to pay.'

'My bill for feeding your cock,' said the master, 'is of the same amount as your wages. So I don't have to pay you any wages, for I will cancel them against my bill.'

'That's right,' said the man from the hills, making no protest. The other boatmen laughed at him, and said among themselves, 'These fellows from the hills are really simple, aren't they?'

The man from the hills went home and made himself two knives, very unusual in design, but exactly similar to each other. Then he went to the boatmaster and said, 'Master, I want to sign on for the next voyage.'

'By all means,' replied the greedy boatmaster, feeling pleased that the simple boatman was coming with him, for he hoped to cheat him of his wages again. The boats started on the voyage, and the other boatmen

mocked at the man from the hills, 'Hello, hoping to buy another cock again?'

'I don't know about that,' replied the man from the hills, 'but I know that this trip will be luckier than the previous one, for my father has given me his magic knife for use on the voyage.' He showed them one of his two knives; but the other knife he kept well concealed under his clothes.

'What can your knife do?' asked the other boatmen, laughing boisterously.

'I don't know what it can do,' replied the boatman simply, 'but it is a magic knife all right.'

Throughout the journey to Lower Burma the boatman was chaffed about his magic knife, but he did not seem to mind. The boats reached Lower Burma, and then sailed up the river again; and by that time the boatmen had become tired of teasing the man from the hills about his magic knife. But one afternoon, while the boats were stopping at a village, the knife attracted their attention again, for the man from the hills was polishing and sharpening it against the side of his boat. They chaffed the man from the hills about the knife and he turned round to give a pert answer, but the knife slipped out of his hands and fell into the water. 'Dive for it at once,' advised the boatmen. But the man from the hills replied that there was plenty of time and, borrowing a knife from one of his companions, he carefully marked with it the place on the side of the boat from where his knife had fallen into the water. 'I have marked the place,' he explained cheerfully, 'so I can dive for it any time.'

'But, you old fool,' said the other boatmen, 'we leave in a few moments' time, and do you think that your wonderful knife will follow the boats from underneath the water?'

'I don't know about that,' replied the man from the hills. 'All I know is that I have marked the place on the side of the boat from where the knife fell, so I can dive for it any time.'

The other boatmen, thinking that it would be merely a waste of time to argue with the stubborn old fool, made no further comment but the greedy boatmaster thought that it was a heaven-sent opportunity to cheat the man out of his wages. 'Look here, my man,' he said to the man from the hills, 'will you make a bet? Tomorrow we stop at another village some miles from here, and if you can dive and recover your knife there, I will give you all my boats. But if you fail to recover it, then you lose your wages.'

The boatman looked puzzled, and asked, 'What is the game, master? Surely you know that I will recover the knife for I have marked the place on the boat from where it fell.'

'I am a bit of a sport,' said the master, 'and I like to take a bet now and again.'

'All right, master, I accept the bet,' replied the man from the hills amidst roars of laughter from his companions.

The next day they stopped at the above-mentioned village, and the boatmen said, 'Here we are, man from the hills! Now dive for your knife.' The man from the hills carefully looked at the mark he had made on

the side of the boat and jumped into the water. While underneath the water, he took out the other knife from beneath his clothes and came up to the surface brandishing it. 'Here it is,' he said, showing it to the boatmaster and the other boatmen.

The other boatmen said, 'Man from the hills, we apologize for our past jeers and sneers. Your knife is indeed a magic knife.'

'There is some trick. There is some trick.' The boatmaster shouted in fury.

'I don't know about that,' replied the man from the hills. 'But didn't I tell you beforehand that it was a magic knife and that I would recover it?' The boatmaster protested but in the end had to surrender his boats to the man from the hills.

THE MUSICIAN OF PAGAN

In Pagan, there was a widow who was very rich. She had an only son by the name of Maung Pôn. When Maung Pôn attained the age of sixteen years, the fond mother considered for what profession the young lad should be trained. Pagan at the time was full of great soldiers, great statesmen, great scholars, great merchants, great builders, and great goldsmiths, but the mother decided that Maung Pôn should become a great musician. So she bought him a harp, and engaged a teacher for him. Now, as you know, the strings of a Burmese harp are made of silk threads twined together, and a person learning to play it usually breaks a great number of these

expensive strings before he becomes an accomplished harpist. So the fond mother went and bought seven cartloads of silk threads for her son.

Days passed, and the mother asked Maung Pôn, 'Have you learnt to play the harp?' 'Not yet, Mother,' was the reply. Weeks passed and the mother asked Maung Pôn, 'Have you learnt to play the harp?' 'Not yet, Mother,' was again the reply. Years passed and the seven cartloads of silk threads had been used up, but still Maung Pôn had not learnt to play the harp. Another seven cartloads of silk threads were bought, and a new teacher engaged, but with no better result for Maung Pôn. Maung Pôn grew up, and married, but still he had not learnt to play the harp. Yet another seven cartloads of silk threads were bought and used up, but Maung Pôn still had not learnt how to play the harp. In the end, he became an old man and died before he had learnt to play the harp.

APPENDIX I

THE ORIGIN OF THE ENMITY BETWEEN THE OWL AND THE CROW

LONG ago the birds, on hearing that human beings had elected from among themselves a king to rule over them, met together to choose their king. One bird proposed that the Owl, who looked so wise, should be the king, and many other birds were in favour of the suggestion. But the Crow stood up and protested. 'Friend birds,' he said, 'the Owl has a fierce and unpleasant expression even when he is in a good temper. But when he becomes king and full of power, his face will look even more fierce and unpleasant. Surely we do not want a king whose terrible aspect will keep us away from him.' The birds agreed that what the Crow pointed out was too true, and they rejected the Owl's candidature to be king. From that time onwards, the Owl and the Crow have hated each other, and there is eternal warfare between them.

APPENDIX II

THE WILD BOAR OF TAGAUNG

A WILD boar went about the kingdom of Tagaung destroying villages and killing people. The king sent his hunters and his soldiers after the boar, but they met with no success. At last he called his brother, the Crown Prince, and assigned him the task of killing the boar. 'I will not return,' promised the Prince, 'until I have killed the boar.'

When the boar saw the Prince coming towards it with his attendants, it turned tail and fled eastwards

into the Maw state of the Shans. The Prince followed hot-foot, leaving behind his attendants who could not keep pace with him. As the boar was very big it left large foot-marks and, although the animal ran swiftly, the Prince was able to follow it by its foot-marks. The boar thought that it had left the Prince behind, and stopped running. But the Prince appeared, and the boar ran into a narrow pass between two hills. That place is still known at the present day as 'Wet-win' or 'Where the boar went in'.

The boar needed water to wallow in and, as it was summer, the streams and streamlets in the Shan hills were dry. So it turned south-westwards from Wet-win, with the intention of getting to the Irrawaddy river. Some fifty miles before reaching the Irrawaddy, the boar found a tarn and, in great joy, he wallowed in the water. The place is still known at the present day as 'Wet-lu' or 'Where the boar wallowed'.

But the boar was not allowed to spend the rest of his days living peacefully at that place, for the Prince arrived on the scene, led by the foot-marks of the animal. The boar ran westwards until it came to the Irrawaddy. When it reached the river it paused, as it was at a loss to decide whether to swim to the other bank or to go southwards along the river. The Prince again appeared, and the boar in a panic fled southwards.

After it had travelled some fifty miles along the river bank the boar came to the place where a tributary stream flowed into the Irrawaddy. The boar stopped at that place, hoping against hope that the

Prince had lost its track. The Prince, however, appeared again and the boar in panic crossed the tributary stream, and fled south. The Prince observed that, as the boar was so big, it merely waded across the stream and the boar did not get soaked even, as the water only came up to its legs. The stream is still known as 'Wet-ma-sût', or 'Where the boar did not get soaked'.

The boar ran on, but still the Prince followed. In desperation, the boar left the river, and turned inland in a south-easterly direction towards a tarn. When it had gone a few miles inland and was approaching the tarn, however, it decided that it was safer not to lose sight of the river. So it turned towards the river again, and ran in a south-westerly direction. The tarn came to be known as 'Wet-chin-gan', or 'The pond which was approached by the boar'. The pond has become dry in the course of years, but a village stands on its site, bearing its name.

The boar ran southwards, until it came to a tributary stream some twenty miles above modern Prome. It went up that stream, so as to hide its tracks. That stream is still known as 'Wet-kyee-chaung' or 'The stream of the big boar'. After going up the stream for a few miles it turned south again, and hid in a tarn in the forest. The pond has dried up in the intervening centuries, but a village stands on its site, bearing the name of 'Wet-hti-gan', 'The pond where the boar lived alone'. After some time the boar, thinking that the place was still unsafe, went a few miles southward until it came to a small lake. There it lived for some

time. The lake dried up later but a village still stands on its site, which is still known as 'Wet-kyee-In' or 'The Lake of the big boar'. The place is situated a few miles south of modern Prome.

The boar thought that it was safe, and no wonder, for he was now almost at land's end, for southwards lay the sea, as in those days the Irrawaddy delta had not yet been formed. However, as relentless as fate, the Prince tracked the boar to its hiding place, and the boar was brought to bay on a small island in the lake. The boar was pierced by the Prince's spear, and it died. The island has become dry land in the course of centuries, but a village stands on its site, bearing the name of 'Wet-hto-gyun', or 'The island where the boar was pierced'. The Prince rested for a few days, and then returned northwards, carrying the dead boar on his shoulders. But, after a few miles, as the dead boar had become putrid, it was thrown away. A village now stands at the place, bearing the name of 'Wet-Pok' or 'Where the boar became putrid'.

The Prince went on, but after going a short distance he decided not to return to Tagaung. 'I have been absent for a long time,' he reflected, 'and perhaps the king, my brother has appointed someone in my place, presuming me to be dead. My return will only make it awkward for everyone. Moreover, without showing the body of the boar as proof, no one will believe that I have killed it,' So he became a hermit, and lived not very far away from the river bank.

APPENDIX III
THE LEGEND OF INDAW LAKE

ONCE there lived a poor old man and his wife in a village in a valley among the Northern Mountains. One night the old man had a dream: the spirit of a small tarn on a nearby mountain appeared to him and said, 'Old man, my fishes have greatly increased in number, and my tarn has become too small to contain them. So I will bring my tarn into your valley and turn it into a big lake. Tell the other villagers to move up to the top of the mountains until I have accomplished the transfer of my fishes and my tarn. The villagers will not suffer, for they will become rich as fishers and fish-merchants, provided they worship me and catch only those fishes which I indicate as ready to be caught.' In the morning the old man told his wife about the dream, and the two together went about the village giving the villagers the tarn-spirit's message; but the villagers laughed at the old couple. That night the old man again had a dream; and the spirit appeared and asked him to warn the villagers again. The next morning the old man and the old woman went round the village, begging the villagers to take heed, but the villagers called them insulting names. That night the old man again had a dream; the spirit instructed him to warn the villagers again the next day, and told him definitely that, the transfer of the tarn would be effected the next night. The old man and his wife went round the village the next day, and warned the villagers definitely that the tarn would move into their valley that very night, but the villagers

chased the old couple away with stones and curses. In the afternoon the old couple took their belongings, and went up one of the mountains overlooking the valley.

The old man and his wife watched the valley in the moonlight, but all was quiet for some time. But at midnight, they heard the sound of hoofs and saw herd after herd of cattle rushing down the mountain sides into the valley. The villagers down below woke up in alarm and tried to run to the mountains, but they were impeded by the thousands of cattle around them. At dawn the ground shook, there was a roar of water, and the valley became a great lake.

The Spirit of the Lake now appeared to the old couple in person. 'You believed in me, and I will reward you,' he told them. 'Found a village on the shore of this lake, and you shall be the headman of the village and the head fisherman of the lake. Build a breakwater only a few feet broad and a few yards long, and take it as the line dividing the lake. Cast your nets on the right side of the dividing line, and you will find the fishes fat and sweet, because those which I consider ready to be caught, I will send across the line.'

'But what has happened to the cattle and the villagers, my lord?' asked the old woman, unable to restrain her curiosity.

'The cattle were my fishes,' replied the Spirit. 'I had to transform them into cattle, so that they could run on dry land. The foolish villagers have been turned into fishes. Worship me as your god,' the Spirit continued, 'and call my lake "Lake Royal".'

The Spirit then disappeared, and the old couple faithfully followed his instructions. A cluster of fishing villages grew up on the shores of the lake, and the old man and his wife became rich and powerful as the master and mistress of them all.

APPENDIX IV
KING OUTSIDER

An old cock strutted about proudly and kept crowing, 'He who eats my head will become King Outsider.' An old monk to whom the cock belonged, thought that the cock was merely boasting. But every day the cock strutted and crowed, 'He who eats my head will become King Outsider' until the monk decided to test the truth of the cock's assertion. So he killed the cock and gave it to his faithful attendant, an orphan boy, to cook.

The boy cooked the cock with skill and care, but the head of the cock jumped out of the pot. As it fell on the dirty kitchen floor the boy thought that he should not serve it to his master, and so he ate it up. The monk sat down to breakfast but could not find the cock's head in the dish. He asked his faithful attendant about it, and learnt that the boy had eaten it up. But the monk was not angry, for he loved the boy and knew that he was faithful and obedient. He merely said, 'Perhaps Fate intended that you should be King and not I.' From that day onward he taught the boy many things and trained him up as one who would become king one day.

One day a minister of the king came to visit the monk, and was struck with the intelligence and sweet demeanour of the boy. He begged the monk to allow the boy to become one of his retainers. The monk agreed and the boy joined the service of the minister. Later on the king noticed him, and took him into his service. The boy distinguished himself so much that the king, who had no son of his own, declared him to be his heir. When the king died the orphan boy became king, and the people loved him much. They called him affectionately 'King Outsider', for he did not belong to the royal line.

NOTES

I. ANIMAL TALES

WHY THE SNAIL'S MUSCLES NEVER ACHE

It is a general belief among the Burmese that a diet of horseflesh is good for aching limbs and muscles.

Identification. This tale may be identified as No. 1074 in Aarne and Thompson, *Types of the Folk-Tale*. 'The trickster gets others like him to take places in the line of the race. The dupe sees them and thinks the trickster is outrunning him.' But in the European tale the dupe is a stupid ogre and the trickster is a human being. In other words it is not an animal tale but one of the tales dealing with the Stupid Ogre.

The Burmese tale is more similar in style and in theme to the West African tale of the Tortoise and the Hippopotamus. The Tortoise challenged the Hippopotamus to a swimming race across the river. The Tortoise put his Twin Brother on the other side of the river to impersonate him, and then set the condition that the swimmers should swim submerged until the other bank was reached. The race started, and the Hippopotamus swam submerged and reached the other bank in no time but, to his chagrin, he found the Twin Brother waiting for him, and thought that the Twin Brother was the Tortoise. The Twin Brother shouted, 'Oh, you slow coach! I will give you another chance. Let us race back' and jumped into the river. The Hippopotamus submerged also and swam but when he reached the bank, there was the Tortoise waiting for him and mocking him for his slowness in swimming. B. L. K. Henderson and C. Calvert: *Folk Tales of the Nations*.

WHY THE WREN IS SMALL

(i) 'Bird-clever' is the long-tailed Edolius.

(ii) A Burmese kiss is a touch, not with the lips, but with the nostrils.

Identification. Cf. Aarne and Thompson, No. 221, 'The Election of the Bird King'. The Wren wins by cleverness. Test: who can fly highest? The Wren hides in eagle's wings.

THE COMING OF DAYWAW

In a variant of this tale, the Thief and the Tiger overheard a mother saying to her naughty child, 'Hush, Daywaw is coming! Daywaw is coming!'

THE RABBIT HAS A COLD

This tale has crept into Burmese literature as a Proverbial tale illustrating the saying 'He has a cold', applicable to a person who refrains from giving his opinion on an important issue.

HOW THE RABBIT RID THE FOREST OF ITS TYRANT

Identification. The above tale may be compared to the Deccan tale of 'The Clever Jackal' (Mary Frere: *Old Deccan Days*) but of course in the Deccan tale the hero is the Jackal whereas in the Burmese tale the hero is the Rabbit.

WHY THE TIGER AND THE MONKEY ARE SWORN ENEMIES

Identification. This tale is very similar to the Malayan tale 'The Elephant has a Bet with the Tiger' (Skeat: *Fables and Folk Tales from an Eastern Forest*), but in the Malayan tale (i) the Mouse-deer is the hero who comes to the rescue of the Elephant, (ii) the Mouse-deer licks the molasses with which the Elephant has been smeared, so as to make the Tiger think that the Mouse-deer is drinking the blood of the Elephant, and (iii) the Tiger and the Ape are merely together when they meet the Elephant with the Mouse-deer on its back: whereas in the Burmese tale (i) the Rabbit is the hero, (ii) the Rabbit eats

some bananas so as to make the Tiger think that he is eating the brains of the Elephant, and (iii) the tails of the Tiger and the Monkey are tied together when they meet the Elephant with the Rabbit on its back, thereby making the end of the tale more amusing.

MASTER PO AND THE TIGER

This tale in a modified form has crept into Burmese literature as a Proverbial tale illustrating the saying 'Po at his usual place, Kyar at his usual place'; the Burmese equivalent of *status quo ante*. This is interesting as it clearly shows that the authors of the Proverbial tales were more eager to tell an entertaining story than to search for the real origin of a saying. 'Po' may refer to a person by the name of Po, but can also mean a piece used in the Burmese variant of the game of backgammon; it is more likely that in the saying Po refers to such a piece, for the prefix 'Nga' or 'Maung' for a personal name is absent. 'Kyar' may refer to a tiger, but it can also mean a piece used in the Burmese variant of the game of draughts. So the saying may mean simply 'The pieces are back in their places at the end of the game', and perhaps when the saying originated, it had no connexion with the folk-tale of 'Master Po and the Tiger'.

Indentification. Cf. Aarne and Thompson, No. 155. A man rescues a serpent (or a bear), who in return seeks to kill his rescuer. Fox, as judge, advises the man to put the serpent back into captivity.

'Master Po and the Tiger' is similar in theme to the Deccan tale of 'The Brahmin, the Tiger, and the Jackal' (Mary Frere: *Old Deccan Days*) but the differences are interesting. In the Burmese tale, the villainy of the Tiger

is heightened, for whereas in the Deccan tale the Brahmin is a stranger, in the Burmese tale Maung Po is the faithful friend of the Tiger. In the Deccan tale, the Brahmin and the Tiger seek 'The opinion of Six' and it is not clear why the opinion of six judges should be sought; but in the Burmese tale, the usual legal procedure of a civil dispute is followed: first the case is taken before a trial judge, then before an appellate judge, and then before the final court of appeal.

JUDGE RABBIT

Cf. Aarne and Thompson, No. 821B. The Devil as Advocate. 'Boiled peas may grow as soon as chickens can be hatched from boiled eggs.' Many years after the guest has eaten them, a host demands an enormous sum for twelve boiled eggs, claiming that by this time they might have hatched out chickens who in turn might have laid eggs, etc. The Devil as advocate comes in and demands that the host cook his peas for planting.

HOW THE CROCODILE LOST HIS TONGUE

The *Kyaung-shar* plant is the 'Indian Trumpet Flower', *Bignonia Indica*.

Identification. The tale may be compared with Aarne and Thompson, No. 6. The Fox in the Bear's mouth asks, 'What direction is the wind blowing?' The Bear opens his mouth to answer and the Fox runs away.

It may also be compared to the Japanese tale of the White Hare and the Crocodiles, in which the Hare uses the Crocodiles as a bridge to cross the sea. Yei Theodora Ozaki: *Japanese Fairy Book*.

It has only some similarity with the *Jataka* tale of the Monkey and the Crocodile, in which the Monkey, after being caught by the Crocodile, was able to escape by making the Crocodile believe that this (the Monkey's) heart was kept on top of a fig tree for safety. E. B. Cowell: *The Jataka*, Vol. II, No. 208.

GOLDEN RABBIT AND GOLDEN TIGER

Identification. Cf. Aarne and Thompson, No. 9, 'The Unjust Partner.' The Bear works in the field and in the stable; the idle Fox cheats the Bear.

A. In the stable the Bear threshes. The Fox pretends to hold up the roof so that it will not fall on the Bear's head.

B. In the division of the crop the Fox takes the corn and the Bear the mere bulky chaff.

C. In cooking dinner the Fox's porridge is light, the Bear's black. At dinner the Fox steals a spoonful of the Bear's porridge and lets the Bear taste t. The Bear believes that the Fox's porridge is as bad as his own.

THE OVER-CUNNING RABBIT

Identification. Cf. Aarne and Thompson, No. 1. The Fox plays dead: a man throws him on his wagon of fish. The Fox throws the fish off and carries them away. The Wolf imitates him and is caught.

WHY THE TIGER IS SO BITTER AGAINST THE CAT

The Burmese regard a period of apprenticeship under a craftsman and a period of learning under a teacher as involving the same kind of relationship. 'Three years' was the usual period of apprenticeship, and also for a course of studies in the University of Takkatho, the fabled university of Burmese literature. Cf. the medieval university which had many features of the medieval Craft Guilds.

There is another variant to this tale in which the art that the Cat did not teach was the art of climbing trees.

WHY THE CORMORANT HAS NO TAIL

The Gudgeon in the tale is the *cirrhina morighla*, or the 'large gudgeon'.

Identification. In a modified form and with the humorous touches left out, the tale is to be found in Burmese legal literature as a Juristic tale illustrating the principle that a host is liable for the safety of the property and person of his guest.

THE PUFFER FISH AND THE GRASSHOPPER

The fish in question is the Puffer Fish, and the Insect in question is the Grasshopper. The Burmese name for the Puffer fish is '*Nga-bu-boung*' which means 'Fish Bloated' and the Burmese name for the Grasshopper is '*Dah-goke-kaung*' which means 'Sword-wielding Insect'.

THE CROW AND THE WREN

Identification. Cf. Aarne and Thompson, Nos. 2000-2199. Cumulative Tales (Formula Tales).

HOW THE CROW'S LEG BECAME A PLANT

The plant in question is *Vitis Lanceolaria.*

The first part of this tale has crept into Burmese literature as a Juristic tale illustrating the legal right of a wronged husband to kill his wife's paramour caught *in flagrante delicto.*

HOW FRIENDSHIP BEGAN AMONG BIRDS

This tale is to be found in Burmese literature as a Proverbial tale, illustrating the saying, 'The Crow respects the Pheasant and the Pheasant respects the Crow' which means that respect begets respect.

WHY THE QUAIL STANDS ON ONE LEG

There must have existed among the Burmese a belief that there was something sinister about cripples. No one could become a king among the Burmese, unless he was sound of limb and muscle.

A BRIDEGROOM FOR MISS MOUSE

Identification: 'A Bridegroom for Miss Mouse' is similar in theme to the Indian tale of 'The Mouse that was turned into a Maiden' (C. H. Tawney: *The Ocean of Story*). But in the Indian tale (i) the heroine is a mouse who has been transformed into a maiden by a great hermit; (ii) the hermit summons the beings considered suitable to be the bridegroom to his presence; (iii) the beings considered to be suitable are the Sun, the Cloud, the Wind, the Himalayas, and the Mouse; (iv) it is not made clear whether the Sun, the Cloud, the Wind, and the Himalayas are really keen to marry the bride, and even the Mouse before accepting her, asks, 'Show me how she is to be got into my hole'; and (v) the maiden has to be turned again into a mouse. But in the Burmese tale, (i) the heroine is just a little mouse; (ii) the fond parents go out in search of a suitable bridegroom; (iii) the beings considered to be suitable are the Sun, the Rain, the Wind, the Mound, the Bull, the Rope and the Mouse; (iv) all of them are delighted with the idea of marrying Miss Mouse; and (v) the Mouse is found to be really worthy to be the mate of the bride. The Burmese tale is lighter in tone and does not attempt to point out a moral.

HOW THE BATS ESCAPED PAYING TAXES

Identification. This tale is similar in theme to Aesop's Fable of 'The Birds, the Beasts and the Bat' but in the Burmese tale there is no moral lesson and the bats are merely shown to be clever animals, and the joke is not on the bats, but on the tax-gatherers.

HOW THE GALON-BIRD BECAME A SALT-MAKER

This tale is to be found in Burmese literature as a Proverbial tale illustrating the saying, 'With no plans left, the *Galôn* becomes a Salt-maker', applicable to person making a last, but feeble effort towards success.

WHY THE BUFFALO HAS NO UPPER TEETH

To Burmese ears, the cry of the Buffalo can sound '*Nga-har*', which means 'It's mine': the cry of the Ox '*Hoke-te*', which means 'It's true'.

WHY THE BARKING DEER BARKS

To Burmese ears the cry of the stag can sound '*Tauk, Tauk, Boe-toe-toe*', which means 'Hello, like a soldier', and the cry of some monkeys can sound '*kyo-khway*', which means 'Coil up the rope'.

II. ROMANTIC TALES

LITTLE MISS FROG

Although the characters in this tale are animals, the tale is not an animal tale for the two frogs behave like human beings, and not like animals.

Identification. The tale has two themes, (*i*) the good girl rewarded and the wicked girl punished; (*ii*) the forbidden chamber. Both these themes are common in the folk-tales of various nations. However, the theme of the forbidden chamber is not developed in the Burmese tale.

THE FROG MAIDEN

Identification. Cf. Aarne and Thompson, No. 402. The Mouse (Cat, Frog, etc.) as Bride. The youngest of three brothers succeeds in the quests set by his father. He brings the best cloak, the most beautiful bride, etc. The mouse who has helped him changes herself into a beautiful maiden.

THE GOLDEN CROW

Identification. The theme is how kindness and humility are rewarded. Cf. Aarne and Thompson, 'Kind and Unkind', Nos. 403A, 480.

THE TWO FAITHFUL SERVANTS

Identification. Cf. Aarne and Thompson, No. 560. The Magic Ring is stolen from the hero. The grateful animals (cat and dog) recover it for their master. They swim to the island and compel a mouse to steal the ring from the thief. In the Burmese tale, however, the ring is stolen *from* the owner *for* the hero.

MASTER THUMB

(a) Sixteen was considered to be the age of maturity for princes and heroes, although the legal age of maturity was eighteen. Burmese princes, in exceptional cases, were given responsible appointments at the age of sixteen. Cf. Minye Kyawswa, one of the heroes of Burmese history, who became commander-in chief of the royal armies at sixteen, and was dead at nineteen, after three years of brilliantly conceived and recklessly fought campaigns.

(b) The usual form of greeting in Burmese when out of doors, is 'Where are you going?'

(c) 'Eat a bit of my cake.' Cf. the Burmese saying, 'If you eat his rice, you have to be brave for him.'

Variations. (a) There is a variant in which instead of the bamboo-thorn, the second follower of Master Thumb is a fish, which pricks the ogre with his fin.

(b) The tale given above is the Upper Burma version. The Lower Burma version has interesting variations. The four followers of Master Thumb are the Slab of Rock, the Village Rest House, the Tiger, and the Cat. There is no adventure with the ogre. The following is the end of the tale in the Lower Burma version:

Master Thumb travelled on until he came to the Sun. 'You wicked Sun!' challenged Master Thumb, 'come and fight me now.'

The Sun said to his follower the Thunderbolt, 'Go and kill Master Thumb.' The Thunderbolt rushed towards Master Thumb, but the Slab of Rock jumped out of the stomach, and protected his little master. The Sun then said to his follower the Rain, 'Go and kill Master Thumb.' The Rain rushed towards Master Thumb, but the Village Rest House jumped out of the stomach and protected his little master. The Sun then said to his follower the Bull, 'Go and kill Master Thumb.' The Bull rushed towards Master Thumb but the Tiger jumped out of the stomach and, by eating up the Bull, protected his little Master. The Sun then said to his follower the Cock, 'Go and kill Master Thumb.' The Cock rushed towards Master Thumb, but the Cat jumped out of the stomach, and saved his little master by eating up the cock. The Sun now had no follower left, and he himself rushed towards Master Thumb. In the

ensuing duel, the Sun was defeated, and had to ask for pardon from Master Thumb. Master Thumb, being a magnanimous young hero, pardoned the Sun, after making him promise that he would not lay curses on human beings again.

(c) The Lower Burma version itself has a variant, in which the fourth follower of Master Thumb is the Mynah bird, which eats up the fourth follower of the Sun, the white ant.

Identification. The idea of a diminutive figure fighting against great odds and eventually emerging victorious, has appealed greatly to the folk-mind, and we find a Tom Thumb in the folk-lore of almost every country. Cf. Type 700 in Aarne and Thompson, *Types of the Folk-Tale*. In England there is a Tom Thumb story differing in detail from the European type. In India there are many Tom Thumb tales, the most interesting being the Bengali tale of 'Master One-finger-and-a-half' who, riding on a tom-cat and leading an army of insects, gained a kingdom (F. Bradley-Burt: *Bengal Fairy Tales*). But I am reluctant to classify the Burmese tale under Type 700, for I consider that the Burmese tale is not a folk-tale proper, but a degraded myth. I think that the Tale of Master Thumb originally was a myth dealing with the sun-god.

In the Upper Burma version of the tale, which seems to be the original or earlier version, the Sun figures as the enemy of Master Thumb and his four followers; and to the people of Upper and Middle Burma, especially of the Dry Zone region, the Sun is a powerful enemy of human beings, of animals, and of vegetation itself, for in summer plants die, trees wither, streams dry up, the fields are barren, the animals look forlorn, and human beings suffer acute discomfort from the scorching heat of the Sun. Just as in the tale the Sun becomes hotter and hotter until the Rain comes to Master Thumb's rescue, so

in real life the heat of the summer increases until the monsoon breaks, bringing relief to the people. It is not surprising that the people should look upon the rain as their friend and ally for, with the coming of the rains, the countryside looks green and fresh, and the fields will soon be green with paddy; above all, in Upper Burma, the rainy season is the most pleasant time of the year, for the summer is too hot and in winter the days are hot and the nights are cold. Just as in the tale the return of Master Thumb is greeted with shouts and cheers by his village, so in real life the beginning of the rainy season is greeted with shouts and laughter by the villagers, turning out to work in the fields after the summer months of unemployment. It seems curious that Master Thumb should go to the North instead of the East in his quest for the Sun. Is it because the ancestors of the Burmese came from the North, down the valleys of the Irrawaddy, the Chindwin, and the Salween? Is it because these rivers have their sources in the North? Is it because the Northern part of Burma is hotter than the Southern? Or is it because the Northern mountains seem to be an outlandish feature, where strange things happen? In the Lower Burma version of the same tale, the Sun is looked upon as an enemy only by Master Thumb and not by his followers, who accompany him merely out of regard for him: and in Lower Burma, the heat in summer is not so intense as in Upper Burma, and although the inhabitants suffer discomfort the countryside is not scorched and made barren. The Rain figures as a follower of the Sun, and not as an ally of the human beings, because in Lower Burma the monsoon, although it helps the human beings in their paddy cultivation, is too wet and damp, and brings in its wake storms and sickness. The tale does not end with the boisterous welcome of the Upper Burma version, for

the people in Lower Burma do not become workless in summer as is the case in Upper Burma, for they can earn enough as fishers in the many streams of the Irrawaddy delta. The Bull and the Cock, although harmless and useful animals, figure as enemies of Master Thumb, perhaps because they are the followers of the Rain, in that they are in their best element when the fields are flooded. The Thunderbolt is also connected with the Rain, rather than with the Sun, for in Burma thunder and lightning occur usually only in the rainy season. So the Thunderbolt, the Bull, and the Cock are really the followers of the Rain and they become the followers of the Sun only because the Rain itself is described as a follower of the Sun.

THE DIMINUTIVE FLUTE PLAYER

Four is the favourite number in Burmese folk-tales. The hero in a Burmese folk-tale usually has either four followers, or four magic weapons, or four adventures. In some tales the fourth brother is the luckiest and the most handsome.

Identification. This conforms to type 700 in Aarne and Thompson:

(i) 'The Hero's Birth. A childless couple wish for a child, however small, and they have a boy the size of a thumb.'

(ii) 'His adventures. He drives the wagon by sitting in the horse's ear; he lets himself be sold and then runs away; he is carried up the chimney by the steam of the food; he teases the tailor's wife; he helps thieves rob a treasure house; he betrays the thieves by his cries; he is swallowed by a cow, makes an outcry, and is rescued when the cow is slaughtered; he persuades the wolf who has eaten him to go to his father's house and eat the chickens ; he then calls for help and is rescued.'

GOLDEN TORTOISE

Identification. For the theme of the 'lives' of the ogresses being kept in a little box, cf. Aarne and Thompson, No. 302. The 'External Soul' of an ogre; the hero finds the ogre's soul hidden away and kills the ogre by destroying the external soul.

For the theme of the enchanted husband, cf. Aarne and Thompson, Nos. 425-49, where the enchanted husband is a monster, bear, wolf, ass, bird, serpent, frog or hedgehog.

MASTER HEAD

This tale is similar to 'Golden Tortoise'. The hero here, however, is not an enchanted animal but a mis-shapen child.

THE BIG EGG

Identification. The tale conforms to Nos. 313 and 314, 'The Magic Flight', in Aarne and Thompson. The hero and heroine escape from the ogress taking with them three magic objects. When pursued by the ogress, they throw the magic objects and mountains, woods, and seas appear and prevent pursuit.

MISTER LUCK AND MISTER INDUSTRY

Gongsmen: Under Burmese kings public announcements were made by messengers who went round the town or village beating on their gongs and thus attracting attention.

Identification. Cf. Aarne and Thompson, No. 945. Luck and Intelligence, which is more powerful? The test proves that Luck is more powerful.

THE BIG TORTOISE

Identification. Cf. Aarne and Thompson, No. 403, 'The Black and White Bride'.

(i) The cruel step-mother. A step-mother hates her step-children.

(ii) Kind and unkind. The step-daughter is kind to a person she meets. . . She receives a gift of great beauty and the power of dropping gold or jewels from her mouth. The woman's own daughter is unkind and is made ugly and made to drop beads from her mouth. The

(iii) prince. The heroine is seen by the king who marries her.

(iv) The substituted bride. After marriage with the king, the step-mother throws the heroine and her child into the water. The woman's daughter is substituted for the bride without detection.

(v) Disenchantment. The true bride who is transformed into a goose comes to the king's court to suckle her child. One night the king wakes and disenchants her by cutting her finger or drawing blood or by holding her when she changes form.

(vi) Conclusion. The true bride is reinstated and the false bride and her mother are punished.

Also No. 405, 'Jorinde and Joringet'. A witch turns the girl into a bird. The youth with the help of a magic object changes her back into her former shape.

Also No. 40[illegible]. A maiden is transformed into a flower. A man breaks a stalk of the flower and she becomes human again. He takes her as his wife.

Also No. 510, 'Cinderella'.

(i) The persecuted heroine. The heroine is abused by her step-mother and step-sister.

(ii) Magic help. While she is acting as a servant, she is advised, provided for, and fed by her dead mother, or by a goat. When the goat is killed, there springs up from her remains a magic tree.

(iii) Meeting with the prince. She dances in beautiful clothing several times with a prince who seeks in vain to keep her.

(iv) Proof of identity. She is discovered through the slipper test, or because she alone is able to pluck the golden apple.

THE SNAKE PRINCE

Identification. For the theme of an Enchanted Husband cf. Aarne and Thompson, Nos. 425-49, where the enchanted husband is a monster, bear, wolf, ass, bird, serpent, frog, hedgehog.

For a detailed discussion of this tale, see the Introduction.

THE OLD MAN IN THE MOON

The Burmese believe that the figure of a rabbit is imprinted on the moon. This belief is based on a *Jataka*, which narrates that once a Rabbit, who was the future Buddha, was keeping the sabbath on a full-moon day: Sakka, the king of the gods, wanted to test the Rabbit and so, assuming the form of an old Brahmin, he appeared before the Rabbit and asked for alms; as the Rabbit had nothing else he offered his own body and, when the seeming Brahmin had lit a fire, the Rabbit jumped into it. But, because of the god's power, he was unharmed; Sakka, after praising the Rabbit, announced that in remembrance of his great deed of merit, the Rabbit's likeness would appear from that day onwards on the face of the moon (E.B. Cowell: *The Jataka*, Vol. III, No. 316). The belief that an old man and a rabbit are visible in the moon, as embodied in the above folk-tale, is obviously a pre-Buddhist belief. The same belief is to be found in a Burmese Nursery Rhyme which may be freely translated thus:

In the Moon, the Rabbit crouches,
While the Old Man pounds the rice,
Lo! Look, and behold!—
Although it is said so,
It is an exaggerated story,
To make the child stop crying;
It is merely an effect of shadow and light,
Made by the kindly old god of the Moon!

The nursery rhyme is really in two parts, and the second part explains away the assertion of the first. Perhaps the nursery rhyme in its present form represents a new version of an older rhyme, made when the old belief of an old man and a rabbit being in the moon had been discarded. Perhaps the unknown author of the new version was as prudish a person as the Quaker who changed:

Hey, diddle, diddle,
The cat and the fiddle,
The cow jumped over the moon;
The little dog laughed,
To see the sport,
And the dish ran after the spoon!

to

Hey, diddle, diddle,
The cat and the fiddle,
The cow jumped *under* the moon;
The little dog *barked*,
To see the sport,
And the *cat* ran after the spoon.

(Halliwell: *Nursery Rhymes and Tales*)

THE ECLIPSE OF THE MOON

(i) In the humorous tale of 'The Drunkard and the Opium-Eater', certain magical qualities are attributed to the pestle,

(ii) The tale is obviously a pre-Buddhist myth which was degraded to the status of a folk-tale with the coming of Buddhism and its mythology to Burma.

(iii) In Buddhist mythology the Moon is a god, but in the tale the Moon appears as a goddess. In the previous tale, 'The Old Man in the Moon' also, the Moon is a goddess.

THE THREE DRAGON EGGS

This is a myth which degenerated into a folk-tale.

For a detailed discussion of this tale, see the Introduction.

III. WONDER TALES

THE FORTUNE-TELLER OF PAGAN

(i) To the folk-mind, divination, telling the future and knowledge of the movements of the stars were more or less the same, to be grouped under the general term 'Fortune-telling'.

(ii) The Karens and the Chins use the legs of a cock for purposes of divination.

(iii) The incident of the mad Master Correct revealing hidden treasure is to be found in Burmese literature as a Proverbial tale illustrating the saying, 'When the writing is good, ding dong spoils it', which is applicable when important business is disturbed by a trivial matter.

IV. HUMOROUS TALES

THE ORIGIN OF THE COCONUT

(i) Of course 'the gurgling noise' is caused by milk in the coconut being shaken about.

(ii) 'The Origin of the Coconut' is a 'Name' tale, but it is a little involved in that it suggests that the present Burmese name for the coconut is a mispronunciation. It contains the humorous suggestion that the person who makes mischief by

his tittle-tattle is more dangerous than thieves and witches, which reminds one of the Burmese joke that a lawyer's tongue cannot burn even in the fires of hell.

Identification. The tale may be compared to the Papuan tale of 'Where the Coconut came from' (Annie Ker: *Papuan Fairy Tales*). In the Papuan tale, the coconut grew out of the head of a man who used a marvellous method of catching fish which, however, was considered by his fellows to be loathsome; but he was a benefactor to them in that he shared the many fishes that he caught. In contrast, in the Burmese tale the coconut originated from the head of a mischief-maker. This is explained by the fact that whereas, to the Papuans the coconut is their food and drink, to the Burmese the coconut is too rich a fruit to be eaten in large quantities and it is a common belief that the coconut usually produces fever and skin eruptions in the eater. The Papuan tale proves its authenticity by saying that the coconut inside its husk looks like the face of the man whose head became the first coconut, and the Burmese tale proves its authenticity by saying that if one shakes the coconut one can still hear the tittle-tattle of the mischief-maker.

THE GREAT KING EATS CHAFF

Identification. This humorous tale is similar in theme to the Greek legend of King Midas and his asses' ears.

THE OPIUM-EATER AND THE FOUR OGRES

Bamboo-tube cake: glutinous rice baked in a bamboo tube.

Identification. This is, of course not a ghost story, but a humorous folk-tale. The folk-tale conforms to the 'Stupid Ogre' type in Aarne and Thompson, where the ogre is repeatedly cheated by human beings.

THE DRUNKARD AND THE WRESTLING GHOST

Identification. The idea of a vanishing cap is not common in European folk-tales, but the idea of a vanishing cloak is common in the folk-lore of Europe. However, there are some Irish tales which embody the belief that a mermaid wears a cap which enables her to go down under the sea, and if the cap is seized by a human being she becomes helpless and at the mercy of the human being. The European vanishing cloak makes everyone who wears it invisible, but the vanishing cap of the Burmese tale does not make the human possessor of it invisible. In the Irish tales also, the cap does not enable its human possessor to go down under the sea.

THE TREE-SPIRIT WHO LIKES TO TICKLE

This tale probably grew out of a pre-Buddhist belief that a sneeze was caused by evil spirits. Even at the present day there exists the Burmese custom of saying, 'May you live more than a hundred years, and may you be free from all diseases', to a person who has just sneezed. Cf. similar customs in Europe and India.

The tale may be compared to the *Jataka* tale in which an ogre in a rest-house had the right to eat any person who did not say 'May you live a hundred years' when some one sneezed, E. B. Cowell: *The Jatakas*, Vol. II, No. 155.

THE FOOLISH BOY

Variations. There are many variations of this tale. Some of the variations have a town setting instead of the village setting of the above tale. But the ending is always the same; the boy knelt down before the tiger and was eaten.

Identification. This is a 'Numskull' tale. Cf. 'Numskull Stories' in Aarne and Thompson.

THE FOUR YOUNG MEN

Identification. Cf. Aarne and Thompson, No. 852. A princess is offered to the man who can tell so big a lie that she says, 'That is a lie.' Also Nos. 1815-1889, Tales of Lying and Munchausen Tales.

THE FOUR DEAF PEOPLE

Identification. Cf. Aarne and Thompson, No. 1698, 'Deaf Persons and Their Foolish Answers.'

THE FOUR DEAF MEN

Identification. Cf. Aarne and Thompson, No. 1698, 'Deaf Persons and Their Foolish Answers.'

MASTER CROOKED AND MASTER TWISTED

Identification. Cf. Aarne and Thompson, No. 1641, 'Doctor Know All', in which the Sham Doctor is able to solve difficult problems. He is asked to detect a theft, and he is feasted; at the entrance of the first servant, he remarks, 'That is the first one'; the servants confess. He is given a covered dish containing crabs, and he is asked to say what the dish contains; as his name is Crab, he says in despair, 'Poor Crab, Poor Crab' and the audience think he is a wonderful person. He hides a horse and then when the owner consults him, he is able to say where the horse is.

CROOKED MASTER Z

Identification. Aarne and Thompson, No. 1542. 'The Clever Boy.' The boy goes out to make a living by fooling people. He even fools the king. Finally he is caught and sentenced to be hanged, but he exchanges places with another and escapes.

THE BOATMASTER AND THE BOATMAN

A modified version of this tale is to be found in Burmese literature as a Juristic tale, which however does not illustrate any principle of law but merely illustrates the cleverness of a judge. In the juristic tale, the boatman refuses to accept the boatmaster's contention that he has taken advantage of the fire from across the river and brings a suit against his master in a court of law, and it is the judge who asks the boatmaster to roast the pig's trotters.

Identification. The theme is really how the man gets the better of the master. Cf. the Indian tale of 'The Farmer and the Money-lender' (Steel-Temple: *Wideawake Stories*) and the Scottish tale of 'Master and Man' (J. F. Campbell: *West Highland Tales*).

THE BOATMASTER AND THE MAN FROM THE HILLS

A modified version of this tale is to be found in Burmese literature as a Proverbial tale to illustrate the saying 'The Man from the Hills marks the side of the boat' applicable to person doing an apparently foolish thing with a definite purpose in view.

Identification. Cf. 'The Boatmaster and the Boatman.'

THE MUSICIAN OF PAGAN

(i) The mock-heroic tone of the tale parodies the Wonder tales dealing with Pagan as their theme.

(ii) This tale has also crept into Burmese literature as a Proverbial tale illustrating the saying, 'The silk is used up, but Maung Pôn has not yet learnt to play the harp', applicable to an indifferent scholar, whose rate of progress is slow.

APPENDIX I. THE ORIGIN OF THE ENMITY BETWEEN THE OWL AND THE CROW

This is a *Jataka* tale. Cf. E. B. Cowell: *The Jataka*, Vol. II, No. 270.

APPENDIX III. THE LEGEND OF INDAW LAKE

(i) 'In-Daw' means 'Lake-Royal'.

(ii) This is the first of the cycle of legends dealing with the Indaw Lake.