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From The Introduction by

FRANCIS HENRY SKRINE

Our author has passed through four Indian Universities; he is versed in Sanskrit and the dialects of Northern India. He has travelled through the length and breadth of the country and has had thus an opportunity of collecting the folk-lore which survive in every rural village. His knowledge of our language and literature is equally extensive. He attended His Highness the Maharaj-Rana of Jhalawar during a prolonged European tour, and assisted him to record his impressions in "Travel Pictures", which was published in London in 1912. He is, therefore, a trustworthy guide for western students who desire to gain a deeper knowledge of Indian modes of thought. But I fully believe that his collection of tales will appeal to a wider circle of readers. They have a flavour of their own, and may be placed between the purely fanciful Fairy-tale and the Fable which conceals a moral. Our young folks will enter a new world, radiant with quaint imaginings, and their parents will discover an underlying vein of philosophic thought, and one proof the more that human nature does not vary greatly on the banks of the Ganges and the Thames.

The rich and thrilling humor of these tales evokes laughter from young and old. But the real significance of this volume by this learned man of India is the deep and subtle moral of each tale, revealing that these seemingly light tales furnish sparks of serious wisdom.

As the author says in his Introduction: "One of the objects of studying the folk-lore of a country is to gain an insight into the primitive characteristics of the people.

"In India we have the richest mine of ancient wisdom and an inexhaustible treasure of folk-lore. I have only collected a few tales to present to the west the lighter side of the country and by no means pretend to deal with the serious aspect of Indian Wisdom.

"The predominance of stupid characters in the tales should not lead the readers to form a poor opinion of Indian intellect. The Aryans of India—inheritors of the world's most ancient civilization—are an intelligent people and can, with adequate culture, rank intellectually with any other nation.

"So many ladies and gentlemen, representing England's best intellect, have—after a hearty laugh on reading the tales—assisted and encouraged me, that I am constrained to deny myself the pleasure of acknowledging my indebtedness to them by names in this preface, as their list would be too lengthy."