

The Will of Siva.

Soli was a Hindoo maiden of 15 summers, who lived next door to the King of Behar, at Garden Beach, between two and three miles down the Hugh River from Calcutta.

Frogs this it must not be inferred that she was in any sense an important personage, being but a dhoabin, or wash girl of the lowest caste of Hindoos; while her neighbour was a great Indian Prince, for political reasons lying in magnificent semi-captivity, on his parole to the British Government not to leave the neighbourhood of Calcutta.

So while his Majesty of Behar resided in a fine palace, facing the river, and surrounded by a lordly park in which the most beautiful flowers were grown for his pleasure, and a snake mound, together with a menagerie of wild beasts kept for his amusement, Soli lived with her father and ten little brothers and sisters in a dilapidated thatched hut just outside the King's northern gate, and in the midst of a two-acre compound rank with overgrown vegetation. Two other creatures of widely different characteristics made up Soli's family circle—a lean, humble cow, for the greater part tethered out in the compound; and a monster cobra snake, that, uninvited had taken up his abode in the thatched roof of the hut, and who being regarded by the family, as the incarnate spirit of Siva, the terrible god of the lowest caste of Hindoos, was fed on milk and eggs at all costs, even when the rest of the household were nigh upon starvation.

Often had Soli gazed with awe upon their great neighbor, the King of Behar, as he occasionally drove forth, a blaze of jewels, for a turn in the Calcutta maidan, but only once had the eyes of the King fallen upon Soli.

"Doab, who is that girl?" demanded the King of Behar of a handsome harkara, footman, standing upon the splashboard of the equipage, as it swept past the hut on the occasion.

"Who is that girl over yonder?" The harkara purposely looked in the wrong direction, and replied that he did not know, but that he was as dust under the feet of the great king to do his bidding.

"Then find out," peremptorily ordered the king, for the girl's slender form and graceful pose had pleased his royal fancy. "Find out," said the king. "D'you hear me, Doab?"

Doab at once intimated that the king's command should be obeyed; but as he did so a frown clouded the brow of his usually placid countenance. For some minutes Soli stood watching her royal neighbor's progress, until as he passed out or view she turned to enter the hut, when a voice at hand stayed her footsteps.

"Soli! Hullo, Soli, there!" "Ah, sahib," quickly responded the girl, as she caught sight of the captain's steward of one of the ships lying at Garden Beach, who had approached the hut unobserved.

"How about that washing that was to have been on board to-day?" demanded the steward. "We sail at noon to-morrow, and it is now 5 o'clock."

"It shall be ready in time, sahib." "Not ready yet?" "I will see," replied the girl, turning sharply toward the door of the hut. Then she gave vent to a little cry and started back; for with a loud hiss a long, dark object glided away from under her feet and coiled itself in an attitude of aggressive defense.

"My God, a cobra!" exclaimed the steward, as he dashed forward, and aimed a blow with his cane at the serpent's uplifted head.

The blow fell, but not where it was intended, for the girl threw out her arms and interposing her own person received it instead, while the snake made off unharmed.

"Why! What did you do that for?" asked the steward, as he stared with the utmost astonishment at the trembling Hindoo maid.

"Oh, you must not strike him," she cried in terror. "You must not, indeed. He is Siva, the terrible god. If you had struck him he would have killed us all. He lives up in the thatch of the roof."

"Do you mean to say you let that reptile hang round your house?" asked the amazed steward.

"He was only waiting for his milk," replied the girl, as if making an apology for the cobra's act. "I had forgotten to give it him. If you had struck Siva it would have been terrible."

"I hope I didn't hurt you," said the steward in a tone of real concern. "Oh, no," replied the girl, as she thereupon ran inside, and shortly returned to say—that the captain sahib's clothes would surely be on board the ship early the next morning.

"All right, Soli," replied the steward. "But look here; you take my advice and kill that snake, god or no god, the next time you see him, or he'll kill you, that's truth."

In return Soli looked gravely out through her large dark eyes, but said nothing.

"Well I'm hanged," soliloquized the steward, as he cautiously picked his way out through the rank grass of the little compound. "Whoever would have thought of keeping a pet cobra on the estate? These Hindoos are a rum lot. I'll be hanged if they ain't."

Two or three hours later the King

of Behar again passed by Soli's hut, as he approached his own domain.

"Mind, Doab," said he to the harkara. "Mind you see about that girl yonder."

Doab intimated that the will of the Light of the Universe should be in that, as in all other respects, promptly obeyed. But the same dark look crossed his face as he sprang down to run before the horses and open the gate for the King's carriage to pass through.

By this time night had fallen upon the land, and darkness set in save for the brilliant illumination of the heavens, and those fairy lanterns of the East—the fireflies dancing in the void from tree to tree.

In a little, Soli again stood at the door of the hut, her hair decked with a wreath of stephanotis—the delicate perfume of which filled the air about her.

She was watching for some one. Soon a figure was seen moving across the little compound from the direction of the King's palace, while a familiar voice called out in tender accents—Soli!

"Ah, Doab, Doab," the girl responded with delight. "I feared you would not come!" Then as she ran quickly forward to greet the King's harkara, there came again a loud hiss, immediately followed by a cry of mingled pain and terror, and Soli fell into her lover's arms, exclaiming:

"Doab, I am bitten. It is Siva. I had forgotten. He has not been fed."

"Did you find out who that girl is?" asked the King of Behar of his harkara the next morning.

"I did, your Majesty," Doab sadly replied.

"Who is she, then?" Tell me, quickly, for I liked her looks," said the King.

"She was only Soli, the dhoabin girl," replied the harkara.

"Was only a dhoabin. Well, who is she now, then?"

"Siva alone knows," replied the harkara. "She died last night."

"Died last night!" replied the King, with as much emotion as his ease-loving nature would permit. "Of cholera?"

"No, your Majesty—a cobra."

"A cobra!—a pity," remarked the King. "A pity, for I liked her looks."

"It was the will of Siva," said the harkara, as he humbly bowed his head.

Note.—In this story the character of the King of Behar is drawn from the King of Oudh, residing in semi-captivity at Garden Beach near Calcutta. The main incident of the story came under my personal observation during one of two visits to Calcutta.

A LESSON FOR BUMPS.

"Yes," said Bumps, "poor Banx is a confirmed invalid."

"Why, John, how you talk—a 'confirmed invalid'—how very bad!" said his wife.

"Yes; it is pretty bad for Banx—"

"No, I wasn't thinking about him, it's your language, John. Do you think that is a good expression? If he is an invalid, isn't that enough? Confirmed, means strengthened; now what kind of a combination do you get out of 'confirmed invalid'?"

Banx looked up in a helpless kind of way. He didn't like the language lessons his wife administered to him periodically, but he knew he needed them, and took them like any other medicine.

"Well, anyway," he went on "Bumps is a fine fellow and I'm sorry he's sick—used to like to hear him talk. He's one of the finest conversationalists I ever—"

"What! Why, John, you don't mean that; you mean 'conversationalist.'"

"Yes, I know, but I disremember—"

"No, John dear, you never do any thing so improper, I am sure."

"Well, then, as the tramp said in the show, 'I remember, but I forget!'"

"John!"

"Well, Miranda dear, I doubt if you will ever be able to make me over. Now you look wild again, and I suppose I have said something wrong. What in the world can it be?"

"Two things, John dear. One is that you can learn to speak properly if you will only think of the words you use; and the other is that you made another mistake. You should have said 'I doubt whether you will be able to make me over instead of 'I doubt if.'"

"Well, what kind of a banker would I make if I spent all of my time thinking about these little fine points of speech? Why, some ignoramus would beat me out of all I had while I was running up a column of figures."

"No, dear, you'd learn to speak as quickly and as well as you now run up a column of figures."

"What's the reason you haven't corrected me on that last remark? It can't be possible that I didn't make a mistake."

"No—you made two. You should not have said 'what kind of a banker' but 'what kind of banker'; then you should not have used the word 'ignoramus'—it is not sanctioned by the best usage."

"Now, Miranda, I'm going to make one more trial. I say let's change the subject, put on our hats and depart for the theater. Is that all right?"

"Oh, no, John, dear—"

"Oh, very well, then I'll go alone!"

"That's right—go and not depart."

"I can't—it's contrary to one of the laws of natural philosophy."

"I mean it is proper for you to say, 'I will go.'"

"Oh, it is, is it? Then you'll stay at home?"

"Oh, no! I want to go too!"

"Ha! ha! It's hard to please a woman."

Miranda was about to substitute "difficult" for "hard," but womanly instinct sealed her lips.

The Home

CANNED GOODS.

An experienced packer and dealer, writing of canned goods, says that many more will be consumed when the women folk thoroughly understand that one-half of the people now, using this class of goods use them ignorantly, and fail to derive satisfaction possible from them.

As to the safety in the use of canned goods, hundreds of millions of cans of food are consumed yearly, and there never has been an authenticated case of poisoning proved against them that cannot be traced and attributed to the carelessness of the consumer.

Nine-tenths of all the cans made to-day are sealed by being revolved in a bed of molten solder, which seals them on the outside—not the inside—as can be seen by examining the line of solder about a quarter of an inch from the rim.

Before using canned goods see that the ends of each are sunk in. If this is the case, the contents are good and wholesome, and there need be no hesitation in using the fruit. If the ends of the can are springy or bulged outward do not open it but throw it away. A swelled or bulged can means fermented contents, and spoiled goods should under no consideration be used.

After the can has been opened, pour contents immediately into a porcelain or glass dish. Never leave them in a can, as this act is often the innocent cause of sickness, owing to the natural chemical action of the air upon the tin and fruit. First-class goods cannot be purchased at the price of second-class goods.

Always bear in mind that all canned goods have received a cooking varying in length of time from five minutes to even hours, according to the character of the goods, and that but little further cooking is necessary.

Canned fruits of all kinds should be emptied from the can several hours before being served, poured into an open porcelain or glass dish, and then chilled in a refrigerator. Served cold they are most delicious and refreshing, and taste totally different from what they did when first taken from the can.

As a general rule, peas, lima beans and string beans prove unsatisfactory, owing to the fact that two-thirds of the housewives serve them in the brine that is in the can. They should be prepared as follows, and it will then be difficult to distinguish between the canned and the freshly picked:

Pour off the brine, throw it away, then place the vegetables in cold water, washing well, and let stand a few minutes to freshen. Cook but a few minutes and season to taste. Many use milk instead of water with these vegetables. A small piece of pork added to string beans improves their flavor. Corn should be only thoroughly heated, as it has been sufficiently cooked in cans. Add butter, milk, salt and pepper as desired.

To retain the natural flavor of tomatoes they should be cooked quickly over a hot fire; allowing tomatoes to simmer long tends to extract the bitter taste from the seed and give dissatisfaction. Pumpkins as now packed have been run through a fine sieve and are sufficiently cooked in the hot processing of the cans and simply require spicing.

Asparagus is best cooked in the can before it is opened, by immersing the can in boiling water for from twenty to thirty minutes; then open the can and slide the contents carefully into a dish; taking care not to break the delicate tips. Always lay asparagus cans on the side, never upright, as the latter is apt to break the tips.

Canned meat should be kept in a cool place. It will then, when turned out of can, slice evenly and present a better appearance on the table. In order to prevent tearing out the contents of cans of meat or plum pudding, open them as follows: Cut away the larger end of the can first, then puncture a hole in the smaller end, to admit air, tap can lightly and then contents will drop out whole. Plum pudding cans should be immersed in boiling water for from one-half to one hour, according to size, then open in the same manner as canned meat.

There are many grades of canned soups on the market. Buy only the best, which are skillfully and scientifically made. To serve they simply need raising to the boiling point. Be careful not to scorch them. Use a double boiler if possible, or immerse the cans in boiling water for half an hour to thoroughly heat the contents, and then serve.

The finest Columbia river salmon steaks are delicious in cans. They are of a handsome pink color, flaky in texture, rich in oil, and the flesh is solid. A delicious salad can be made with salmon, lettuce and mayonnaise dressing.

SEASONABLE RECIPES.

Rhubarb Fritters.—Cut some sticks of young rhubarb into pieces about an inch long and boil them in water ten minutes; drain and place them in cold water. When cold, drain, lay on a dish, and strew finely crushed sugar over them. Moisten with a few table-spoonfuls of brandy, and allow them to stand for a couple of hours. Dip the pieces of rhubarb into some frying-batter, drop into boiling lard and fry to a nice color. Drain on paper for a few seconds to absorb the fat, then

place on a dish that has been spread with a folded napkin and serve.

Strawberry Shortcake.—Three gills flour, one gill milk, generous measure; one tablespoonful sugar, one-fourth teaspoonful salt, two heaped table-spoonfuls butter, one heaped table-spoonful baking powder. Mix together the dry ingredients and rub twice through a sieve. Rub the butter through this mixture; then wet with the milk. Butter a large, deep pie plate. Divide the dough into two parts and roll out the size of the plate. Lay them in the plate, one on top of the other, and bake in a quick oven. Take from the oven and tear gently apart; place the under one on a warm plate, butter well and cover with highly crushed and sweetened strawberries. Put the top on the cake and serve immediately with whipped cream.

Orange Roll.—Peel, slice and seed three large oranges. Roll them in powdered sugar, and lay on a paste made from a pint of flour, three table-spoonfuls of baking powder, one egg, beaten light, two table-spoonfuls of melted butter, one half teaspoonful salt and sweet milk to make a paste easily handled. Roll as a jelly roll, tie in a pudding cloth, and boil rapidly in sweetened salted water thirty minutes. Serve with thin lemon sauce.

Potatoes a la Brabanconne.—Take two coffee cups of hot mashed potato; add two table-spoonfuls of melted butter and half a cup of thin, hot cream, one-third of an onion grated; one table-spoonful of chopped parsley, six table-spoonfuls of chopped ham two salt spoons of salt. Mix thoroughly, and beat light. Pour into a buttered pudding dish; cover the top with a half cup of cracker crumbs, and moisten with a quarter cup of melted butter; put in a hot oven for fifteen minutes, then remove and make five or six, as is needed, depressions with the back of a spoon, drop in each a raw egg. Add a slight shake of salt and pepper, and return to the oven until the eggs are set. Serve hot.

Scalloped Finnan Haddie.—Melt two table-spoonfuls of butter in a saucepan add one-half cup of chopped mushrooms, canned, one teaspoonful of chopped onion, and one table-spoonful of chopped parsley. Fry a light brown, take from the fire and mix in one cup of bread crumbs. Have ready two cups of flaked finnan haddie previously soaked well in scalding water and freed from skin. Place alternately, fish and prepared bread crumbs in a buttered dish, having crumbs for the last layer. Pour over the top a half cup of sweet cream, and bake twenty minutes in a hot oven.

DAZZLING RICHNESS PREVAILS.

Russian Functions Generally Gorgeous Beyond Description.

The Russian court, military and ministerial dress is costly and rich in the extreme, and this richness is carried out even to the liveries of the servants, their scarlet coats being literally ablaze with gold. It is a fact that no court in the world presents such a picturesque and magnificent appearance as does that of Russia. At any function, therefore, the show is brilliant, but more especially, perhaps, at a ball, when the rich evening toilets of the ladies, ennobled by jewels of priceless worth, add much to the already brilliant effect. The Russian dances are of a very stately description and both the emperor and empress take part in them very thoroughly.

The aspect of the armorial hall where the supper is often laid, is grand beyond all description. This meal is not partaken of standing, as at the majority of courts, but the guests sit down at the long rows of tables. A procession is formed, which is headed by his imperial majesty and the most distinguished lady present, and the room is then entered in the order of precedence. Of course, an immense quantity of plate is displayed. This and the china that is also used are noted throughout Europe for their richness and beauty. There is one service alone capable of dining 50 persons that is composed entirely of the purest silver overlaid with gold. Added to all this the use of a variety of the choicest fruits and the rarest flowers, among which orchids figure largely, makes the scene one of most gorgeous magnificence.

During the evening a state progress through the suite of rooms is made by the imperial personages and the chief officers of the household, the guests forming up into a long avenue on either side. One special feature is that two or three of the largest halls in the palace are on the occasion of the ball fitted up as a huge conservatory, palms, exotics, ferns, banks of flowers and even fruit trees being transplanted thither with the most marvellous effect.

Electric light is carried throughout and glows down from myriads of globes of a variety of colors. In this veritable fairyland hundreds of seats are placed for the convenience of the guests between the dances. It would be utterly impossible to mention the rare works of art to be seen in this palace, comprising paintings, statuary, collections of jewels, antiquities and curios of every description. Everything is of oriental magnificence and to see it all the eye must weary of the continuous dazzle.

LANGUAGE AND RELIGION.

There are 3,064 languages in the world, and its inhabitants profess more than 1,000 religions.

PLUMING HER WINGS.

"She is getting to be a young lady now."

"I know it. And I'm not glad," said the father of the young miss of fourteen. It was the girl's mother who made the first remark, and she added:

"We cannot expect to have her under our eye every minute now, as when she was on the nursery floor; and for one, I'm not going to try. She must plume her wings, I suppose. We have to carefully instruct her as to the dangers of the outside world, and then trust her. God keep her!"

I think there is nothing more trying to the parents of a high and refined sense of propriety than the epoch in a child's life, be it son or daughter, when the little wings begin to appear. This question as to the hours after school; while the girl is in school you know where she is; after she comes out—where? She must have exercise, must have the fresh air, must have recreation, play, frolic. Yet, with whom? And where? We older people know that the streets of a great town, or a little village, for that matter, are full of perils; we know the frights, the possible insults, the lures and snares. Yet we do not quite wish to fully explain all these things to a child; the explanation itself is a tarnishing process. We do not like our child to look upon life with a horrible suspicion, nor hang the sweet outer air with ghostly shadows. Still, there is the fact—it is a bad world. If the little girl is out after dusk, we know there are lurking dangers; and if she does not appear at the tea table, we know not where to seek her. One might as well look for a needle in a haystack as to search for a person in a great town, when once that person has walked off your block.

It is indeed necessary to cultivate a child in self-reliance. The good wife was right. You may coddle till you spoil. The child must learn to take care of herself, in a measure, and it were better that she learn it while you parents are alive to help her than after you are gone. Then, too, there is no doubt that very sensitive natures imagine forty horrors which never did come and never will. There are parents who seem to become careless of the whereabouts of their growing children; and possibly their children get along just about as well as those over whom parents worry every minute that they are out of parental oversight. This last sentence might be disputed, but, for my part, I am sure that my children were never one-half the care to me while small that they have been since. I frankly confess that the most difficult thing has been for me to know just how far to trust them to themselves, and how far to keep a vigilant eye upon them. As each in turn has grown to the pluming period, I have suffered tortures, till I saw and fully knew the right tendency of character and force of will to do right.

The true place for care is at home. It is in that charmed circle that the work of protection must be done. A spirit of self-reliance is to be cultivated, founded on knowledge of good and evil. It is far better to instruct the young thing as to the wrongs and dangers of the outer world, than to leave her to discover these things. Discovery is attended with the danger of exploration. Discovery has an element of the unreal and partial in it; one wants to know more, one is lured on by a false seeming of attraction. Far better, with your own clean lips, inform the growing youth of the hideous sins that lie in wait to catch young lives. You can picture the thing in its native hatefulness, and win half the battle to begin with. Do not enter into noisome details; excite no curiosity; tell enough to make the evil seem dangerous, fatal and unattractive, but no more.

"If my child ever can go alone!" But though a parent sigh that, yet a parent ought to know that none of us ever come to the time when we can "go alone." Life is never safe. There are dangers to young wings; there are yet hawks for the oldest wings. There is truth in Solomon's lament: "The day of one's death is better than the day of his birth." That is, if he proposes not to be a strong, vigorous, fighting, virtuous soul. We are all children. We are all at school, and must meet the bears in the woods as we go and come. The protection of a keen wit, a pure heart and a watchful Providence—these are as much needed by the young girl's mother and father as by the child herself. The larger the game, the larger the beasts of prey; that's all the difference.

Still, for all that, it must ever remain true that the period of young plumes is the period of peril, above all others. The new-found powers of appetite and passion, as also of thought and aspiration, knock with great might against the young breast. Without these powers the child would be a stick, a flat; yet to manage them aright is the wisdom of age, and even age fails. The two infancies are the safest times—in fancy of youth and infancy of old age—for then appetite and passions are quiescent. Yet these are not the noblest periods of life, by any means. Philosophy denominates them "active powers," these desires and appetites. Any one can sleep innocently; but to be awake and in action, and yet remain innocent, oh, there's the rub!

My dear young readers, my friendship years over you as you begin to plume your wings. I pray you, try to be wise for yourselves. Control yourselves. Be your own masters in the sense that you keep yourselves with a tight rein in your own right guidance. May you learn what your wings are for—namely, the most intense activity and force of existence without hurt to self; the loftiest flight, yet keeping clear of the burning candle. Harkley Harker.