

**SANTAL FOLK  
TALES. TRANSLATED  
FROM THE SANTALI**

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Santal Folk Tales. Translated from the Santali by A. Campbell

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**A. CAMPBELL**

**SANTAL FOLK  
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FROM THE SANTALI**



G.L.  
GIFT  
H. H. Bennett  
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## PREFACE.

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OF late years the Folk tales of India have been the subject of much study and research, and several interesting collections of them have been published. But I am not aware that as yet the folk lore of the Santals, has received the attention which it deserves. The Santals as a people, have, to a remarkable degree, succeeded in resisting the subtle Hinduising influences to which they have long been exposed, and to which such a large number of aboriginal tribes have succumbed. They have retained their language, institutions, tribal organization, and religion almost intact. Their traditions show the jealousy with which these have been guarded, and the suspicion and distrust with which contact with their Aryan neighbours was regarded. The point at which they have been most accessible to outward influence and example, is in their relations with the aboriginal tribes, who in a more or less degree have merged themselves in Hinduism. Hindu ideas, customs and beliefs, filtering through these tribes, became considerably modified before they reached the Santals, and were therefore less potent in their effects than if they had been drawn from the fountain head of Hinduism itself. Still, in respect to their aboriginal neighbours they are always on their guard, ready to repel any innovation on their customs or religion with which they may be threatened. In the folk tales of such a people we may well expect to find something, if not altogether new, still interesting and instructive from an ethnological point of view, and this expectation, I believe, would be abundantly gratified if they were only made accessible to those who, by training and study, are competent to deal with them.

Santal folk-tales may be divided into two classes—those apparently purely Santal in their origin, and those obtained from other sources. Those of the first class are by far the more numerous, and besides showing the superstitious awe

with which the Santals regard the creations of their own fancy, they throw a flood of light upon the social customs and usages of this most interesting people. The second class embraces a large number of the more popular tales current among the Hindus and semi-Hinduised aborigines. These, although adapted and modified by the Santals to suit their language, modes of thought; and social usages, may generally be detected by the presence of proper names, or untranslatable phrases which unmistakably indicate the source form which they have been derived.

These tales were taken down in Santali at first hand, and are therefore genuine and redolent of the soil. In translating them I have allowed myself considerable latitude without in any way diverging so far from the original as to in any degree impair their value to the student of Indian Folk-lore.

It was to be expected that in the popular tales of a simple, unpolished people like the Santals, expressions and allusions unfitted for ears polite would be found. In all such cases the changes which have been made are in accord with Santal thought and usage, so that the tales are, notwithstanding these alterations thoroughly Santali.

I have aimed at making these Santal Folk-tales, in their English dress, true to the forests and hills of their nativity. I am not without hope, that in this I have succeeded in some small degree.

A number of the tales included in this volume have already appeared in the Indian Evangelical Review, but in this collected form they are more likely to prove of service to those who take an interest in the subject.

This volume of Santal Folk-Tales is offered as a humble contribution to the Folk-lore of India.

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## SANTAL FOLK-TALES.

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### THE MAGIC LAMP.

IN the capital of a certain raja, there lived a poor widow. She had an only son who was of comely form and handsome countenance. One day a merchant from a far country came to her house, and standing in front of the door called out, "dada, dada," (elder brother). The widow replied, "He is no more, he died many years ago." On hearing this the merchant wept bitterly, mourning the loss of his younger brother. He remained some days in his sister-in-law's house, at the end of which he said to her, "This lad and I will go in quest of the golden flowers, prepare food for our journey." Early next morning they set out taking provisions with them for the way. After they had gone a considerable distance, the boy being fatigued said, "Oh! uncle I can go no further." The merchant scolded him, and walked along as fast as he could. After some time the boy again said, "I am so tired I can go no further." His uncle turned back and beat him, and he, nerved by fear, walked rapidly along the road. At length they reached a hill, to the summit of which they climbed, and gathered a large pile of firewood. They had no fire with them, but the merchant ordered his nephew to blow with his mouth as if he were kindling the embers of a fire. He blew until he was exhausted, and then said, "What use is there in blowing when there is no fire?" The merchant replied "Blow, or I shall beat you." He again blew with all his might for a short time, and then stopping, said, "There is no fire, how can it possibly burn?" on which the merchant struck him. The lad then redoubled his efforts, and presently the pile of firewood burst into a blaze. On the firewood being consumed, an iron trap-door appeared underneath the ashes, and the merchant ordered his nephew to pull it up.

He pulled, but finding himself unable to open it, said, "It will not open." The merchant told him to pull with greater force, and he, being afraid lest he should be again beaten, pulled with all his might, but could not raise it. He again said, "It will not open," whereupon the merchant struck him, and ordered him to try again. Applying himself with all his might, he at length succeeded. On the door being raised, they saw a lamp burning, and beside it an immense quantity of golden flowers.

The merchant then said to the boy, "As you enter do not touch any of the gold flowers, but put out the lamp, and heap on the gold tray as many of the gold flowers as you can, and bring them away with you." He did as he was ordered, and on reaching the door again requested his uncle to relieve him of the gold flowers, but he refused, saying, "Climb up as best as you can." The boy replied, "How can I do so, when my hands are full?" The merchant then shut the iron trap door on him, and went away to a distant country.

The boy being imprisoned in the dark vault, wept bitterly, and having no food, in a few days he became very weak. Taking the lamp in his hand, he sat down in a corner, and without knowing what he was doing, began to rub the lamp with his hand. A ring, which he wore on his finger, came into contact with the lamp, and immediately a fairy issued from it, and asked, "What is it you want with me?" He replied, "Open the door and let me out." The fairy opened the door, and the boy went home taking the lamp with him. Being hungry, he asked for food, but his mother replied, "There is nothing in the house that I can give you." He then went for his lamp, saying, "I will clean it, and then sell it, and with the money buy food." Taking the lamp in his hand he began to rub it, and his ring again touching it, a fairy issued from it and said "What do you wish for?" The boy said "Cooked rice and uncooked rice." The fairy immediately brought him an immense quantity of both kinds of rice.

Sometime after this, certain merchants brought horses for sale, and the boy seeing them wished to buy one. Having no money, he remembered his lamp, and taking it up, pressed his ring against it, and the fairy instantly appeared, and asked him what he wanted. He said, "Bring me a horse," and immediately the fairy presented to him an immense number of horses.

When the boy had become a young man, it so happened, that one day the raja's daughter was being carried to the ghat to bathe, and he seeing her palki with the attendants passing, went to his mother and said, "I am going to see the princess." She tried to dissuade him, but he insisted on her giving him permission, so at length she gave him leave. He went secretly, and saw her as she was bathing, and on returning home, said to his mother, "I have seen the princess, and I am in love with her. Go, and inform the raja that your son loves his daughter, and begs her hand in marriage." His mother said, "Do you think the raja will consider us as on an equality with him?" He would not, however, be gainsaid, but kept urging her daily to carry his message to the raja, until she being wearied with his importunity went to the palace, and being admitted to an audience, informed the raja that her son was enamoured of the princess, his daughter, and begged that she might be given to him in marriage. The raja made answer that on her son giving him a large sum of money which he named, and which would have been beyond the means of the raja himself, he would be prepared to give his daughter in marriage to her son. The young man had recourse to his lamp and ring, and the fairy supplied him with a much larger sum of money than the raja had demanded. He took it all, and gave it to the raja, who was astonished beyond measure at the sight of such immense wealth.

After a reasonable time the old mother was sent to the raja to request him to fulfil his promise, but he, being reluctant to see his daughter united to one so much her inferior in station,