# CHENAR LEAVES: POEMS OF KASHMIR

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Chenar Leaves: Poems of Kashmir by Mrs. Percy Brown

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## **MRS. PERCY BROWN**

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## CHENAR LEAVES

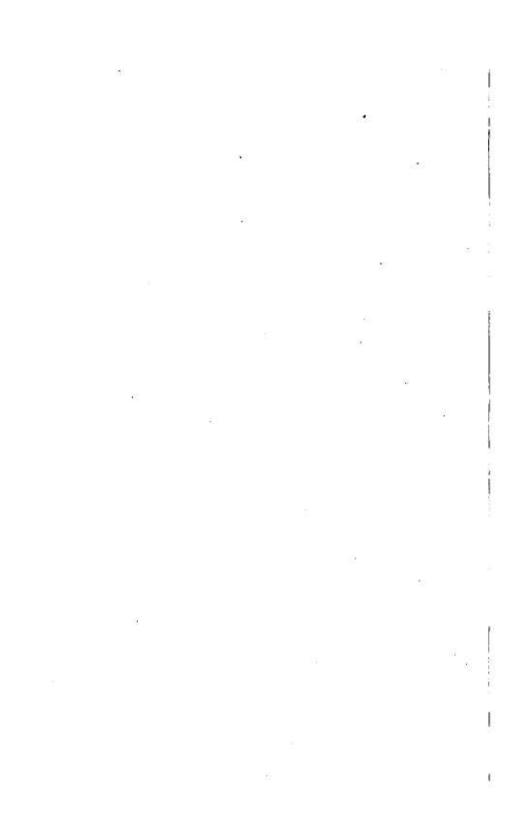
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by
Mrs. PERCY BROWN

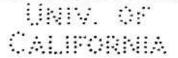


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### CHENAR LEAVES.

Poems of Kashmir

#### A KASHMIR SHAWL

Rich web of woven dreams! A Kashmir shawl, Its warp and woof of silky, pliant hair From choice pashmina goats, beyond the wall Of far Himâlaya brought, with toil and care, Then dyed in all the subtlest hues which art For eastern looms could cunningly devise, And spun in threads so fine, the great world's mart

Of patient skill can show no fairer prize. The pattern forms methinks a mystic shape In Jhelum's windings, or in "tree of life": Such blended colours artists' palettes ape Closer than weaver's shuttle plying strife.

The art is lost! The spirit of this age In love's laborious crafts will not engage.

#### CHENAR LEAVES

#### THE PILGRIMAGE TO AMARNATH

Mid lofty snows a mystic cavern lies.

And in its holy precincts dwells a Dove
Which sometimes to the pllgrim's longing eyes
Appears, as, filled with fervid ardent love
They mount the pathway to this sacred spot,
Their eager eyes all lit with wondrous zeal;
For blessed he, who has the happy lot
For ever his glad pilgrimage to seal
Successful in first gazing on the Dove.

In Palgam's wooded vale assembled there
The congregations vast of pilgrims rest—
A varied scene of interest most rare!
The camp is filled with stir and active zest:
A vision as of Vedic times 'twill seem
When all the world was primitive and young
And nature's worship the absorbing theme
While Vedic hymns the Hindu bards still
sung

What hymn more sweet than that unto the Dove?

At night, the camp fires with their ruddy glow
Against the forest dark send fitful gleams,
At day, a blue smoke ever soft will blow
In whirling drifts, which holy incense seems
Above the camp, to waft the fervent prayers
Of this great multitude of faithful souls,
Transported far above all worldly cares:
And as they march in deepest union rolls
A chant from voices praising aye the Dove.

How many dream in India's sunny plains
Of hoar Himâlaya's distant, blest retreat!
And treasure all their little hard-earned gains
To bring them, humble pilgrims, to her feet:
Decrepit beggars jostling side by side
With lordly merchants, who to make amends
For sordid lives perhaps, at last decide
To join the pilgrim's pathway as it wends
Onwards and upwards, still to reach the Dove.

And here an aged widow with a look
Of rapt devotion on her wrinkled face,
Her feeble form supported by a crook,
Seeks with the multitude to keep in pace,
She sinks exhausted, but her spirit still

Restores her trembling limbs once more to try

The steep ascent, and resolute of will

The Dove she strives to see 'ere she may die

Her voice still whispers faint the words "the

Dove."

A high-born lady in a palanquin

Lies half disclosed, between the curtains

drawn;

Pushing close by, his face so wild and thin A naked fakir presses eager on.

Strapped in a basket yonder there is seen
A dying youth, still ever upward borne,
Compelled upon another's strength to lean,
His spirit nearly leaves the body worn
Ah! will his glazing eyes behold the Dove?

And see! a group of sadhus halt hard by,
In saffron-tinted robes, on leopard skins,
Umbrellas all their shelter, bright of dye:
Their long and matted hair much merit wins!
And one, a consecrated vow has made
Between the hours of sunrise and sunset
Never to rest, nor speak—all over laid
With ashes, and with begging bowl will yet
Devoutly crave forgiveness from the Dove.