

Vindhya Mountains, which belonged to Chitravarna king of the peacocks, when he was challenged to tell who he was, and whence he came. After making respectful answer, the peacocks asked him, whether of the two countries and kings are the better, yours or ours? In reply, he said that his country was like a paradise, and his king was worthy of his country, but as for theirs, he would advise them to emigrate from such a desert. When he said this, they became exasperated, as the monkeys did when the birds in a rain storm advised them to build places of shelter. Advice to fools is like milk to a serpent, it only increases the natural flow of venom.

All this, after his return home, was related by the crane, to the goose-king, Hiranyagarbha, who was interested in its recital, and enquired what then was done. Sire, said the crane, they asked me who made you king; when I hurled back the taunt, and asked who made your peacock king; whereupon they tried to take my life. The king laughingly hinted that the crane did not prudently estimate his position in the midst of enemies, or he would have controlled his tongue better. Did not the ass, clad in a tiger's skin, come to grief through his voice? The crane, going on with his story, said: I was at length taken before the peacock-king, who bade me return home and warn your majesty to prepare for war, adding that he would send his own herald, the parrot, with me. The parrot refused to accompany me, giving as his reason stories showing the danger of being found in bad company. He knew of a traveller, who, one hot summer day, lay down to rest under the shade of a tree. He slept soundly, and so long that the shadow of the tree passed off his face, when a good-natured goose, who, with a crow, lived in the tree, spread his wings and kept the sun's glare off the traveller's face. The weary man slept pleasantly, and in his deep sleep opened his mouth. The crow, from his inborn ill-nature, could not bear to see another happy, even in sleep; so he bespattered the traveller's face with filth and flew away. The sleeper awoke, seized his bow, and in his anger shot the goose, whom he took to be the cause of his discomfiture. That is what came of living with a villain. I said, the parrot, as herald, represented his sovereign, and that if he came with me, I should so honour him. The parrot said my action in stirring up bad blood between the two countries branded me as a bad fellow, and fair words in the mouth of such an one were as flowers out of season. He was not to be