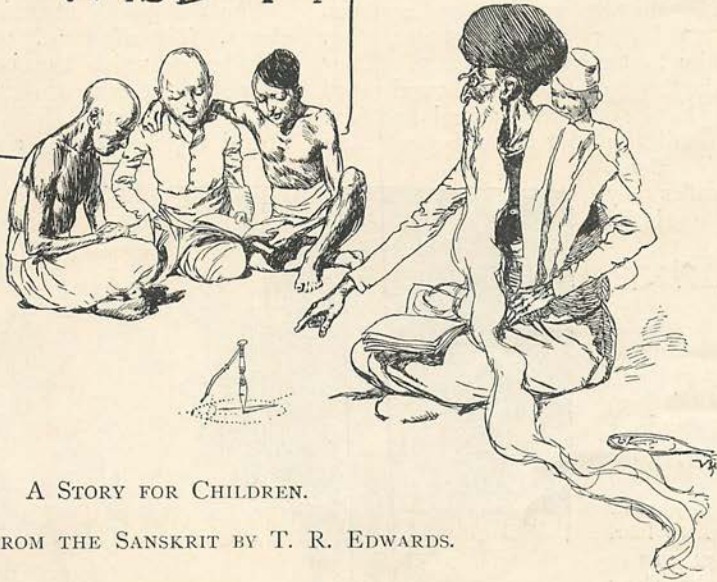


# KNOWLEDGE WITHOUT WISDOM

T. R. EDWARDS  
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A STORY FOR CHILDREN.

ADAPTED FROM THE SANSKRIT BY T. R. EDWARDS.



ONCE upon a time there lived four lads in an Indian village. Their parents had a great ambition that they should become learned in the Shasters. In those days, however, schools were rare. Only here and there a pundit could be found who was willing to take in disciples. After many fruitless inquiries they at last discovered an illustrious sage who consented to teach their sons. To his fatherly care the youths were committed.

Now, in those days disciples had to perform various menial offices for their master, as well as beg food in the towns and villages around. Pundits then supported their scholars in addition to teaching them.

In this humble way the four youths spent several years. A long course of study was absolutely necessary to master the intricacies of grammar, the rules of logic, and the profound teachings of philosophy.

Of the four, three proved themselves clever and industrious students. In them the sage felt he had found worthy disciples. Through them his vast stores of knowledge would be handed down to future generations unimpaired.

The fourth youth, however, was a failure. Notwithstanding all the patient teaching of his master, and all his own efforts, *he could not learn*. What he acquired one day he forgot the next. Learn though he could not, he yet possessed much natural shrewdness and a large share of common sense. His master could not help liking him even while he pitied his dulness.

Not so his companions. They only delighted to cast ridicule upon him, and to make him the butt of their cruel jibes. Were it not that they were kept in check by the good old sage, his life would have been unbearable.

At last the time came when the pundit had



exhausted all the resources of his learning. His disciples knew all he could teach them. Seeing which, they became vain of their accomplishments and puffed up with self-conceit.

The day of their departure for their own country at last arrived, and all four bade farewell to their kind old master.

On their journey homewards, the illustrious three discoursed of their profound knowledge, and indulged in boastful speculations as to their future. From talking of themselves they turned to deride their less fortunate companion walking beside them. Feeling no longer under restraint, they taunted him to their hearts' content. They pointed the finger of scorn at him and called him blockhead and dunce, stupid and fool. It was in vain the poor fellow begged them to let him alone. His entreaties only evoked peals of laughter.

Proceeding in this way, they at last came to the heart of a great forest. For many miles around them the country was uninhabited, save by wild beasts. Their levity now gave place to fear. Walking along cautiously, they espied lying scattered on the ground the skull and bones of some animal. They gazed in silence upon them, and tried to guess the creature to which they belonged.

Suddenly one of the learned trio burst out with this exclamation: "Friends, see you these bones all strewn about the ground in disorder? I possess a charm whereby I can cause them all to come together, each fitting to its fellow, until you will behold a perfect skeleton before you."

Whereupon another of the three youths exclaimed: "If you can do that, my friend, I also have a charm which can clothe your skeleton with flesh and skin and hair, and transform it into the perfect animal."

It was now the turn of the third to speak.

"Friends," said he, "I have the power to complete your work. I know of a potent charm which can confer life on the beast."

Elated with pride at the marvellous powers they possessed, they all said:—

"Come, let us put our great learning to the test. Let us show this dull fellow that he knows nothing at all. He shall have an ocular demonstration of our extraordinary resources."

Having thus spoken, and fascinated at the prospect of showing their skill, they at once began their incantations.

The first youth uttered aloud his magic charm. The effect of it was instantly seen. The bones, which had been lying so still, seemed all at once to become possessed of life. They leaped from the ground and rushed together. With a rattle and a clatter



"THE PERFECT SKELETON."

they fitted into one another, until the perfect skeleton of some wild animal stood before them.

The author of this wonderful feat was beside himself with delight, and the others gazed on in speechless admiration.

After a while, the second youth took upon him to try the effect of his charm. In clear and sonorous tones he pronounced the mystic words, and again the result was wonderful. Flesh and skin and hair immediately covered the skeleton frame before them, and the creature proved to be a full-grown lion.

Life only was now required to complete



their task, and this the third youth was about to confer by his charm, whereupon he whom they called fool cried out, vehemently :—

“Friend, hold! By the name of all the gods, do not utter the words. Do you not see that this creature is a lion? If you give it life, it will surely destroy us.”

The three paragons of learning, indignant at the interruption, and despising the quarter whence it came, rejected his advice with scorn.

“Fool,” said they, “hold your peace. You

beseech you to wait till I have climbed up into this tree.” And with that he made a dash for the nearest tree and scrambled up its trunk.

Scarce able to wait till he had climbed half-way up, the third infatuated youth now pronounced the final fateful charm.

Again the effect was instantaneous. The calm, lifeless form before them became instinct with life. *The lion was alive.* Its fierce eyes glared upon them. All too late they realized that *they* were the fools, and not their companion in the tree. With a roar and a bound the savage beast sprang upon them. In a few moments three lifeless forms were stretched upon the sword.

This done, the ravenous brute gorged itself on their remains. Soon nothing was



“THREE LIFELESS FORMS WERE STRETCHED UPON THE SWORD.”

know nothing about the matter. We are not going to be frightened by an ignoramus from seeing our work completed.”

Once more the sagacious youth implored them to desist, but it was in vain. They were blinded with anger and self-conceit. Seeing which he made this last request :—

“If you *will* give life to the beast, I

left of them save a few bones to mark the fatal spot. Only he whom they had called stupid escaped to relate their sad end.

Thus, instead of having their names handed down to posterity as pundits and philosophers, they were ever afterwards used to illustrate the baleful effects of knowledge without wisdom,