

that the gods have done in making my husband a victim thus ? They have called him here and destroyed him.

23. O ! O ! O lord Kāma, dearer to me than my vital airs, O bestower of happiness, what has happened here ? Hā, Hā, my dear, my dear !”

*Brahmā said:—*

24. Lamenting thus and crying out various piteous words she beat with her hands, kicked with her legs and plucked her hairs.

25. O Nārada, on hearing her lamentation even the beasts and residents of the forest, nay all the immobile trees and bushes became miserable.

26. In the meantime Indra and other gods remembered lord Śiva and consoled Rati saying as follows:—

*The gods said:—*

27. Take some ashes and preserve them. With effort check your fear. The lord will resuscitate your lover. You will regain your lover again.

28. There is none who gives us happiness or misery. All enjoy and experience the fruit of what they do. In vain do you curse the gods.

*Brahmā said :—*

29. After consoling Rati thus, all the gods approached Śiva and propitiated Him. With great devotion they spoke these words to Him.

*The gods said :—*

30. O lord, O great god, favourably disposed to those who seek refuge in you, be pleased to listen to these well intended words of ours.

31. O Śiva, be pleased to ponder over the action of Kāma. O lord Śiva, there is no tinge of selfishness in what Kāma has done.

32. O lord, he had been induced to do so by all the gods harassed by the wicked Tāraka. O Śiva, please know that it is not otherwise.

33. O lord, the chaste Rati is lonely and miserable