

you need not hesitate to employ even deceitful and critical remarks.

*Brahmā said :—*

18. Thus commanded, those sages quickly went there where the mother of universe, the brilliant daughter of the mountain, shone with refulgence.

19. There she was seen as the personified achievement of penance itself. She was shining brilliantly with great splendour.

20. Mentally bowing to her, the seven sages, of good rites, humbly spoke to her after being warmly welcomed and worshipped by her.

*The sages said :—*

21. O daughter of the mountain, listen. Why do you perform this penance ? Which god do you wish to propitiate ? For what purpose ? Please tell us now.

*Brahmā said :—*

22. Thus addressed by the brahmins, the goddess Śivā, daughter of the lord of mountains, replied truly before them though it was a great secret.

*Pārvatī said :—*

23. O great sages, listen to my words with hearty affection. I am saying only what I thought in my own way.

24. On hearing my words you will laugh at me considering my proposal impossible. O brahmins, I hesitate in revealing it but what can I do ?

25. This mind of mine is resolute helplessly attempting at a great task. Verily it is trying to erect a high wall on the surface of water.

26. At the bidding of the celestial sage I am performing this steady penance with the desire that Rudra be my husband.

27. The unfledged birdling of my mind flies up tenaciously. May lord Śiva, the storehouse of mercy fulfil its desire.