

being seized by a crab. Chitravarna demanded how it was whereupon the minister thus related—

PARLE VI.

There is, in the Malava (Malwa) country, a lake, Padma-garpha by name. There a certain crane who was old and decrepit stood showing himself to be sad at heart. He was observed by a crab and asked—Why do you stand thus without looking for food? The crane said—Friend, listen. The fish are the means of my sustenance. And they are certain to be killed by fishermen coming here. (For) such a talk I heard near the city. So for want of means of subsistence my death is imminent. Aware of this I am not thinking of eating even. Now all the fish are thought to themselves:—This time at least he appears to be our benefactor. So let us just consult him as to what is best to be done. For it is said—

An alliance should be formed even with an enemy disposed to do a service, and not with a friend doing injury: for a deed of benevolence and injury should be known to be the signs of these (i.e., a man being a friend or foe).

The fishes asked—O crane, what is the means of our safety now? The crane replied—There is a remedy for your protection, viz., going to another pond. I shall carry you one by one there. The fishes said—Let it be so done. Then the crane carried the fishes one by one and devoured them. After that the crab said—O crane, take me there also. Thereupon, the crane too, longing for the flesh of the crab which he had never tasted before, carried him there and placed him on the ground. The crab also, seeing the place strewn with the bones of the fishes, said to himself—Alas! I am undone, an unlucky creature. Well, I will act now as the time requires. For,

One should dread a danger so long as it has not come: but seeing that the danger has arrived, one should strike a blow like a hero (i.e., like one not daunted, or boldly). Moreover, When a wise man being attacked sees no benefit to himself (from not fighting) he dies fighting with his foe (or, he dies fighting, along with his foe). Again,

When without fighting destruction is certain, but in fighting there is some chance of living—that the wise declare to be the time for fighting.

Thus reflecting the crab cut off the neck of the crane, who thereupon died. Hence I say—Having devoured many fishes