

ety, and it is not at all improbable that the stringent rules, subsequently introduced, against the marriage of widows, were dictated by their feverish anxiety to prevent the possibility of an imitation of Draupadī's example, and to vindicate the purity of their moral code.

The third question had but little significance in itself, and could not call for an elaborate reply. Certainly nothing could possibly be urged in extenuation of a gross atrocity committed by one who personated the second form of the Supreme Brahma. Balarāma felt he was placed in a delicate situation when his brother Kṛishṇa was going to interfere in the domestic quarrel between the Kurus and the Pāṇḍavas. He was unwilling, by siding with either party, to give umbrage to the other. He accordingly resolved to go on a pilgrimage and thereby avoid the difficulty of choosing his side in the unnatural contest. But just on the eve of his departure, he indulged rather freely in spirituous liquor, and—"when drunk he went to the luxuriant Raivata forest, holding by the hand the exhilarated Revatī (his wife) resembling an Apsaras (in beauty). The intoxicated hero walked in the midst of a number of women with unsteady steps, and saw the charming and most excellent great forest which was filled with fruits and flowers of all seasons, crowded with monkeys, holy, and furnished with beds of lotus flowers, and pools of waters." He went from forest to forest until he encountered certain Brahmins who were reading the Vedas. The sacred fraternity, terrified at the sight of a strong man in a state of intoxication, provided for their safety by soothing him with a courteous salutation. One of them, however, Sūta by name, refused to prostrate himself before a *drunkard*, on which Balarāma was so infuriated