

ART. XVIII.—*An old Kumaonī Satire.* By GEORGE A. GRIERSON, C.I.E., Ph.D.

THE three great administrators of Kumaon were Mr. Traill (1815–1835), Mr. Batten (1848–1856), and Captain (afterwards Major-General Sir Henry) Ramsay, all of whom are remembered with affection by their whilom subjects. There were numerous short settlements of Kumaon, the first being in 1815–16, the second in 1817, and the third (for three years) in 1818. The fifth settlement (for five years) took place in 1823, and was subsequently extended for another five. In 1831 the Board of Revenue at Allahabad obtained jurisdiction over revenue matters in Kumaon. About the year 1837 proposals were made for a settlement of twenty years, which the landholders appear to have been unwilling to accept on account of its length. It was ultimately carried out in 1842–6 (ninth settlement).

The author of the following poem, Kṛṣṇā Pārai, is said to have died about fifty years ago at the age of a little over 50. He was therefore a contemporary of the early settlements of Kumaon, and could easily have written his poem in Mr. Traill's time, as is the popular tradition, which says that although the poet attacked the chief of the district so fiercely, he was patronized by him. Mr. Traill, they say, used to go to the village assemblies unattended by a single follower, and used to hear the satire sung in his presence.

Kṛṣṇā Pārai was a resident of a village in Paṭṭī Syūnarā Mallā in Almora District. This country was conquered in the year 1815 in the war with Nēpāl, and the verses (which show a striking contrast to the contented feeling of the

hill people at the present time, the result of the wise administration of the three great makers of Kumaon) were written not long after that event. They represent the popular dislike to the change from the happy-go-lucky methods of a native *régime* to the settled principles of British administration. The author was a professional singer, and, on the death of his only son, is said to have developed 'eccentricities' (such as writing poems like the one now printed). In it he attacks the land settlements, the new system of disposing of civil and criminal cases, the law which put husband and wife on the same level, and the employment of low-caste Brāhman in ministerial offices. He alludes to a scarcity which occurred at the time of writing, and, I need hardly say, lays the blame of it upon the new rulers.

The song is still remembered by old people in Kumaon, but few know it in its entirety. Only the other day (1899) a local newspaper published in Almora, which was 'agin the Government,' spoke of the hard condition into which Kumaon had fallen, and added that the prophecy of Kṛṣṇā Pāraī was about to be fulfilled.

The poem is an interesting specimen of the Kumaunī language, and contains some forms not mentioned by Kellogg. It shows the close connection which exists between these Himalayan Aryan dialects and those of distant Rajputana, especially Mewar.

I am indebted to Pandit Gōbind Prasād for the text.

कृष्णा पाँडे को कलियुग ।

कलकत्ता बटो फिरंगि आयो ।

जाऊ जमाऊ का बीजा बाँदि लायो ॥ १ ॥

लाट गवर्नल बाड बाड़ा भूप ।

मुक्त लुटण मुणि अनेक रूप ॥ २ ॥

फिरंगि राजा कलि अबतार ।  
 आपन पाप लै औरन मार ॥ ३ ॥  
 फिरंगि राजै की अकल देख ।  
 कुड़ि बाड़ि ब्यचि बेर इस्तब लेख ॥ ४ ॥  
 पितला को टुकड़ा को चपड़ास कियो ।  
 मुल्क को सुनो रूपो लुटि लुटि लियो ॥ ५ ॥  
 जाळ धौलड़िया है गे देवान ।  
 मुल्क उजड़ि गयो कै न्हाति फाम ॥ ६ ॥

दिन परि दिन कलि जुग आलो ।  
 चेला का हाता बाब मार खालो ॥ ७ ॥  
 हौशिया चारो कलि जुग सूण ।  
 घाघरि दी बेर जै न्हेति गूण ॥ ८ ॥  
 मुल्क कुमौँ में घुगतिया त्वार ।  
 खसम है बेर जै होलि न्यार ॥ ९ ॥  
 मुल्क कुमौँ में कपुव वासो ।  
 जै कणि है गयो खसम को शाशो ॥ १० ॥  
 कलि जुग माँज जोइ छ पधान ।  
 खसम का खोरा में हाण छ ठाँग ॥ ११ ॥  
 मुल्क कुमौँ में बाड़ो भारि चैन ।  
 नौ नाळि ब्वे बेर छै नाळि भैन ॥ १२ ॥

कृष्णा पाँडे ल कलि जुग खोलो ।  
 मुल्क कुमौँ को हुंगो हुंगो होलो ॥ १३ ॥

## TRANSLATION.

(1) From <sup>1</sup> Calcutta the Englishman came. He tied up and brought loads of <sup>2</sup> perjury and forgery. (2) Lieutenant-Governors, Viceroy's, <sup>3</sup> mighty mighty monarchs, (came) to plunder <sup>4</sup> the land by many methods. (3) The English Lord is the incarnation of the iron age. By his own sins he destroys others. (4) See the wisdom of the English ruler. He says, "Sell your house and garden and write a deed of relinquishment."<sup>5</sup> (5) He has made a badge <sup>6</sup> of a piece of brass, and with it has robbed the country of its gold and silver. (6) (The people of) Jāl and Dhaulār <sup>7</sup> have become high officials. The land is laid waste and no one <sup>8</sup> pays heed.

(7) Day by day the iron age will come,<sup>9</sup> and the father will

<sup>1</sup> *Baṭī* is a postposition of the ablative, and is the same as the Naipālī *bāṭō*. I may note with regard to *phuraṅgi*, 'Englishman,' that the word is also used in Kumaon to mean 'changeable in mood.' The use of the word in this sense illustrates the feeling of a native that he never knows where he is in dealing with a European. One moment he is all smiles and the next in a tury.

<sup>2</sup> The genitive postposition is *kō*, fem. *kī*, obl. *kā*. It is the same in Mēwārī. The plural termination of nouns in *ō* (equivalent to Hindi *ā*) is *ā* (equivalent to Hindi *ē*). Hence we have *bājā* (note the disaspiration of the usual *jh*), 'loads'; *bārā*, 'great' (kings). Similarly the oblique form ends in *ā*, as in *pitālā kō*, 'of brass'; *cēlā kā hātā*, 'by the hand of the son'; *khasam kā khōrā mē*, 'on the head of the husband.'

<sup>3</sup> *Lāt*, a corruption of 'Lord,' is the usual word for a Lieutenant-Governor. *Gavarnal* is a corruption of 'Governor,' i.e. Viceroy.

<sup>4</sup> *Lutan* is the infinitive: *sunu*, or *huṅi*, is a postposition meaning 'for.' In Garhwālī it is *sanu*. It means literally 'having heard.' Compare the Naipālī *dēkhi*, 'having seen,' equivalent to the Hindi *sē*.

<sup>5</sup> *Byachī* = Hindi *bēch*, 'having sold.' The representation of *ē* by *ya* is noteworthy. In Eastern India *ya* is the regular way of writing the sound of short *e*. Thus *byakti*, pronounced *bekti*, 'a person.' The allusion is to the settlement proceedings. If a person objected to the settlement of the land, he had to write a deed of relinquishment. The preparation of this cost money, for which the proprietor had, so the poet says, to sell his house and garden. *Istab* is a corruption of *istifā*.

<sup>6</sup> The brass badge worn by process peons who served notices on defaulters. We should expect *pitālā kā* instead of *pitālā kō*.

<sup>7</sup> Jāl and Dhaulār are two villages in Pattī Būrai Rau of Almora. They are inhabited by low-caste Brāhmins, who are despised by the higher septs such as the Pārais, to which the author belonged. Some of these men were employed by Mr. Traill.

<sup>8</sup> *Kai*, 'anyone'; *nḥātī*, 'is not'; compare *nḥaiti* in verse 8. *Phām* is for *fāhm*.  
<sup>9</sup> Here we have the typical Kumaunī future in *l*, which also occurs in Mārwārī, and sometimes also in Mēwārī. Dis-respect to parents is one of the signs of the *Kali-yuga* or iron age.

eat stripes at the hand of his son. (8) Ye rustic swains,<sup>1</sup> hear (the account of) the iron age, even if you give<sup>2</sup> your wife a (new) petticoat she will not be grateful. (9) The *Ghugatiyā* festival<sup>3</sup> is (the custom) of Kumaon, and (on that day) the wife will be separated from her husband. (10) In the land of Kumaon the *Kapur's*<sup>4</sup> voice was heard. The wife has begun to loathe her husband.<sup>5</sup> (11) In the iron age the wife has become the ruler,<sup>6</sup> and strikes blows on the head of her good man. (12) In the land of Kumaon, faith, there is great prosperity; from sowing nine *nālīs*, six *nālīs* are produced.<sup>7</sup>

(13) Kṛṣṇā Pārai<sup>8</sup> has disclosed (the evils of) the iron age. The land of Kumaon will be reduced to dust.

<sup>1</sup> *Hauśyā* is apparently a corruption of *hawāshī*, and is the equivalent of the Urdu *shauqīn*. *Yārō* is 'O friends.' Hence the compound means literally 'my loving friends,' but is commonly used in addressing a gathering of rustics, such as those to whom Kṛṣṇā Pārai recited, and has lost its original meaning.

<sup>2</sup> Literally, 'by giving': compare *hai-bēr*, 'from,' in the next line; also *hirē bēr*, 'by sowing,' in verse 12.

<sup>3</sup> The *Ghugatiyā* festival is celebrated in Kumaon on the Makara Saākrānti or day on which the sun enters Capricornus on its return from the south. Small images of pigeons (*ghugtā*) are made of flour and fried in *ghī* or oil. They are then strung as necklaces and placed round the necks of children on this day. On this festival all the members of a family feast together. The poet says that times will be so out of joint that on this day husband and wife will be separated.

<sup>4</sup> A kind of pigeon; it is an omen of evil to hear its song. Hence the verse means that a calamity has taken place.

<sup>5</sup> Literally, To (*lāni*) the wife loathing of the husband is come.

<sup>6</sup> *Padhān* for *pradhān*. The *ch* is the verb substantive, which is attached enclitically to the preceding word. The two are pronounced *jōich*.

<sup>7</sup> The statement about prosperity is, of course, sarcastic. A *nālī* is a grain-measure weighing about two *seers* or four pounds. *Bhain* is the plural masculine of *bhayō*. The cry of the di-contented that the ruler is responsible for famines is an old one. Dr. Fraser's *Golden Bough* gives numerous instances. Only the other day an Irish newspaper spoke of her late Most Gracious Majesty as a 'Famine-Queen.' A certain school of Indian politicians holds the present Government responsible for the famine which has lately devastated a wide area in that country. The leaders, I need hardly say, take a nineteenth-century view of the case, and lay the blame on the systems of Land Revenue Administration, but this is not the shape which the contention has assumed when it has filtered down to the masses. Taking the brighter side of the same superstition, the Viceroy, Lord Curzon, has been hailed by them as having brought rain with him in his recent tour in Western and Southern India, and, even as a modest District Collector, I myself have been credited with a heavy fall of rain which came to Gayā on the day of my return there from furlough.

<sup>8</sup> Here we have an enclitic *ī* used, instead of *ī*, as the sign of the case of the agent. This is the only instance of this case in the poem.

