ART. XVIII.—An old Kumauni Satire. By GEORGE A.
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The three great administrators of Kumaon were Mr. Traill
(1815–1835), Mr. Batten (1848–1856), and Captain (after-
wards 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 Brāhmaṇs 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 'again the Government,' spoke of the hard condition into which Kumaon had fallen, and added that the prophecy of Kṛṣṇā Pārai 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.

श्रण्णा पाँडे को कलियुग ।
कलबक्ता बटो फिरंगि आयो ।
बाढ़ जमाठ का वोजा बाँढ़ लायो ॥ १ ॥
लाट गवर्मेंल बाढ़ बाड़ा भूप ।
मुख्त लुटश मुशिण अनेक रूप ॥ २ ॥
फिरांगी राजा कलि अचतार।
आपन पाप ले चौरं मार। 3
फिरांगी राजी की अठन देख।
कुश्मज वाड़ि व्यचि बेर दखब लेख। 4
पितला की दुकड़ा का चपड़ा खियो।
मुख्क तो सुनो स्वयं सुटि सुटि लियो। 5
जाक धीरजीड़िया है गे देवान।
मुख्क उजर्दि गयो के न्हा निति पाम। 6

दिन परि दिन कलि जुग आलो।
चैला का हाता बाप मार खाली। 7
हौशिया यारी कलि जुग सूच।
घाघरि दृं बेरै जे है है निति गृह। 8
मुख्क अकली में घुसविया बार।
खसम है बेरै जे हौशि खार। 9
मुख्क अकली में कुपव बासी।
जे कलि है गयो खसम को गाघ्रो। 10
कलि जुग माँज बोद्ध छ पधान।
खसम का खोरा में हाय छ ठांग। 11
मुख्क अकली में बाड़ो भारी चैन।
नो नान्नि चे बेरै है नान्नि भेन। 12

छष्या पाँड़ि ल कलि जुग खोलो।
मुख्क अकली को दुंगो दुंगो होलो। 13
Translation.

(1) From Calcutta the Englishman came. He tied up and brought loads of perjury and forgery. (2) Lieutenant-Governors, Viceroy, mighty mighty monarchs, (came) to plunder 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." (5) He has made a badge of a piece of brass, and with it has robbed the country of its gold and silver. (6) The people of Jāl and Dhaulār have become high officials. The land is laid waste and no one pays heed.

(7) Day by day the iron age will come, and the father will

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1 Bați is a postposition of the ablative, and is the same as the Naipālī bātō. I may note with regard to phirangi, "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.

2 The genitive postposition is kō, fem. kī, obl. kā. It is the same in Mēwārī. The plural termination of nouns in ā (equivalent to Hindi ā) is ā (equivalent to Hindi ē). Hence we have bājā (note the dissipation of the usual jā), 'loads'; bārī, 'great' (kings). Similarly the oblique form ends in ā, as in pātā kā, 'of brass'; cēlā kā hātā, 'by the hand of the son'; khasān kā khārā wē, 'on the head of the husband.'

3 Lāt, a corruption of 'Lord,' is the usual word for a Lieutenant-Governor. Gavūnā is a corruption of 'Governor,' i.e. Viceroy.

4 Lūtān is the infinitive: suya, or hunā, is a postposition meaning 'for.' In Garhwāli it is suytē. It means literally 'having heard.' Compare the Naipālī dekhī, 'having seen,' equivalent to the Hindi sē.

5 Bhayē = Hindi bēchē, 'having sold.' The representation of ē by yā is noteworthy. In Eastern India yā is the regular way of writing the sound of short ē. Thus bhauktē, pronounced bektē, '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. Istāb is a corruption of īstītā.

6 The brass badge worn by process peons who served notices on defaulters. We should expect pātālā kā instead of pātālā ko.

7 Jāl and Dhaulār are two villages in Pātī Bōrai Rau of Almora. They are inhabited by low-caste Brāhmans, 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.

8 Kāt, 'anyone'; nhāti, 'is not'; compare nhātī in verse 8. Phām is for fahām.

9 Here we have the typical Kumauni future in l, which also occurs in Mārāwārī, 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, hear (the account of) the iron age, even if you give your wife a (new) petticoat she will not be grateful. (9) The Ghugatiya festival 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 voice was heard. The wife has begun to loathe her husband. (11) In the iron age the wife has become the ruler, and strikes blows on the head of her good man. (12) In the land of Kumaon, faith, there is great prosperity; from sowing nine nālis, six nālis are produced.

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

1. Hauśya is apparently a corruption of hauśi-hi, and is the equivalent of the Urdu shauqin. Yāro 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.

2. Literally, ‘by giving’: compare hai-bār, ‘from,’ in the next line; also bāre bār, ‘by sowing,’ in verse 12.

3. The Ghugatiya festival is celebrated in Kumaon on the Makara Sākraṇti or day on which the sun enters Capricornus on its return from the south. Small images of pigeons (ghugti) are made of flour and fried in ghūr 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.

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

5. Literally, To (kau) the wife loathing of the husband is come.

6. Padhan for padhān. The ch is the verb substantive, which is attached enclitically to the preceding word. The two are pronounced jāch.

7. The statement about prosperity is, of course, sarcastic. A nāli is a grain-measure weighing about two sōrs or four pounds. Bhoja is the plural masculine of bhaiya. The cry of the discontented 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 -ide of the same superstition, the Vicereoy, 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.

8. Here we have an enclitic l used, instead of b, as the sign of the case of the agent. This is the only instance of this case in the poem.