

## 8. THE INDIAN BOOMERANG.

SIR,—At the Oriental Congress in Paris, in the course of a paper read before the Indian Section, I alluded to the use of the boomerang among both the ancient and modern Dravidian tribes of the south of India, and hazarded the suggestion that this weapon was not known in the north. I was promptly corrected by several members present, and from what I could then gather its use seems to have been known, at least in modern times, to the Bhīls and other pre-Aryan tribes. There remains the question of its antiquity. Professor Ludwig stated that the boomerang was mentioned in the *Mahābhārata*. He has now favoured me with the reference, and I think it may be of interest to your readers if published. The passage is found in Nilakaṇṭha's Commentary on the *Mahābhārata* (V, 155, 9), where he explains *r̥ṣṭi*—*Dravideṣu prasiddham hasta kṣēpyam vakram kāṣṭhaphalakam* (a small board, flat and crooked, to be thrown out of the hand, well known amongst the Dravidas). Dr. Ludwig writes: "Other arms, partly of a similar sort, are explained before; for instance, *pāçāḥ samīpagatasya gale prakṣepārtham*, etc." (a noose to be thrown around the neck when near); and he then expresses his conviction that the above is the only passage in Nilakaṇṭha's commentary relating to the term *r̥ṣṭi*. Nilakaṇṭha was a southron, and alludes frequently to Mārāṭhi expressions.

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## 9. THE TEXT OF THE MAHĀBHĀRATA.

SIR,—I send you an extract from a letter received by me from Professor Ludwig, after obtaining his permission. It relates to the various recensions of the text of the *Mahābhārata*, and is of considerable interest.

"I have now compared a few thousand strophes of the Madras *Mahābhārata*, and have found to my astonishment that it is nearly identical with the *Mahābhārata* of the Calcutta

edition. Not absolutely identical, however; but what appears to me most strange is, that the Madras edition coincides in many instances with what one would consider as misprints in the Calcutta edition. As it is impossible to suppose that the editors of either should have merely transcribed the text of the other (the coincidence being far from complete), it is clear that the evidently faulty readings have in both editions been taken from manuscripts. It becomes therefore exceedingly difficult to decide what is only a misprint in either of the editions. Faulty readings which no one would suppose to be derived from manuscripts are common to all three editions, ex. gr.: I, 49, 27 B., *edam* instead of *ainam*; I, 51, 4, *tathā* instead of *yathā*; Calc., 14, 649, *hitvā karān*; M. 17, 15, *jitvā karān*; B., *jitvā jayyān*, where the reading of the Calcutta edition seems to me decidedly preferable. II, 74, 4, *satrusādagamayad* C., °*sādgamayad* B., °*sādagamad* M. Nevertheless the Madras edition is indispensable, because in not a few places it has readings decidedly preferable to those of the Calcutta and sometimes even of the Bombay edition. So III, 147, 1, *amitra karṣaṇam* instead of °*śana*; 146, 62, *siddhagatim* instead of *siddhigatim*; I, 804, *jaghanyajas Takṣakasya* instead of *j° Takṣakaṣcha*. Some errors may be more easily explained by the Telugu than by the Devanāgarī writing; so the frequent interchange of *v* and *p*, *t* and *l*; with others this is not the case."

R. SEWELL.

#### 10. GAṆĒŚA IN THE MAHĀBHĀRATA.

SIR,—I mentioned above, p. 147, that the legend of Gaṇēśa acting as a scribe for Vyāsa is omitted both in the Grantha MS. of the Mahābhārata and in Kṣēmendra's Bhārata-mañjarī. Dr. Bühler kindly draws my attention to the fact that the legend must have been known to *Rājasēkhara*, a poet who wrote a drama on the story of the Pāṇḍavas—the *Bālabhārata* or *Pracaṇḍapāṇḍava Nāṭaka*—ca. 900 A.D. In an introductory scene of this drama, Vālmiki and Vyāsa are introduced, complimenting each other on their works.