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ART. I.—*Notes on the Shrine of Mahábales'vara.* BY RA'O
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[Read 12th January 1871.]

MAHA'BALES'VARA is the shrine after which the chief sanitarium in Western India is named. It is a shrine at which the *linga* symbol is worshipped. There is no actual representation of the *linga* in the temple; but a rock from which water oozes out in some places is reckoned as a *linga*, and encircled by the usual accompaniments, which have been artificially supplied. In my last paper I have mentioned the seven sacred rivers said to take their rise at this spot. The temple is a common building, without any architectural pretensions. There is a *nandi* (or the sacred bull) seated at a distance and opposite to the *linga*. There is nothing peculiar about the worship offered to this shrine; but as a place laying claim to extraordinary sanctity in this part of India, it may be interesting to enquire and record what can be obtained with regard to its history as now received by its worshippers.

Like most other Hindu shrines, Mahábales'vara has a *Puránika* history of its own, of which annexed is a copy. It consists of two *Adhyáyas* or chapters, containing in all 163 *ślokas* (or verses). As a

literary performance, it is very poor; and in some places it is quite incorrect. The copy as now presented to the Society has been made and compared by myself with the original manuscript obtained from one of the priests at the shrine. This tract gives a description of the village, and the sacred places there, as now pointed out by the priests, and is evidently a modern composition. I content myself with a brief abstract of the poem, as there is nothing important to justify my placing the whole translation before the Society.

The poem states that on the top of the *Sahyádrí* mountain are five *Gangús* or rivers, and these take their rise in the locks of hair on the head of the God Mahábales'vara. They are (1) Krishṇá, (2) Veṇi [or Vepṇá], (3) Kakudmatí [or Koyaná], (4) Gáyatrí, and (5) Sávitrí. The first is accounted equal in sanctity to Vishṇu, the second to S'iva, and the third to Brahmá; the two last are the wives of the god Brahmá. The first three flow towards the East, and enter the Eastern sea (the Bay of Bengal); and the Sávitrí, combining with the Gáyatrí, flows into the Western (or Arabian) sea.¹ There are eight *Tírthas* (i.e. places for man's salvation); 1 Brahmá, 2 Rudra, 3 Vishṇu, ² 4 Chakra, 5 Hansa, 6 A'raṇya, 7 Malápaha, and 8 Pitrimuktida. There are three *lingas* of S'iva:—1 *Mahábala*, 2 *Atibala*,³ and 3 *Koṭṭá'vara*. A portion of this village, covered with jungle, is called *Brahmáraṇya* (or the forest of the god Brahmá, the creative principle of the Hindu triad). It is said that when Brahmá formerly performed sacrifices in this forest, the two rivers Gáyatrí and Sávitrí were produced. When Jupiter enters the sign of *Virgo*, once in twelve years, there is said to be a greater sanctity in bathing at this spot in that season. And this I have already mentioned in my previous paper. This place is also called Brahmá-Kshetra (see chapter ii., verse 73), and the places fit for devotion at this spot are termed *vedá'sramas*. In the Krishṇámáhátmya

¹ Where the river Sávitrí discharges its waters into the Western sea, it is said there is a *tírtha* named *Sukla*, the sanctity of which is reckoned equal to that of 350 crores of *tírthas*.

² It is stated that before the creation of the world Brahmá, Rudra, and Vishṇu were performing penances, &c., at these places; hence the names of these three *tírthas*.

³ There were two giants named Mahábala and Atibala, who propitiated Brahmá and other gods, and at their desire the gods granted that these two *lingas* should be named after the two giants.

(i.e. greatness of Krishná), also described as a portion of the *Skanda-purána*, the story of Mahábales'vara is also mentioned, and it likewise occurs in Kártika-máhátmya from the *Padma-purána*; but there are some important variations. I have said above that this tract appears to me to be a modern compilation. This I conclude from its language and style as compared with those of what I may call the genuine old *Puránas*. The *Skanda-purána*, of which it is said to form a part, is one of the lost *Puránas*. A few detached chapters occur here and there in the shape of *Sthala-mahátmyas* (i.e., descriptions of the greatness or sanctity of particular localities). A portion named the *Bramhottara Khaṇḍa*⁴ has been thus rescued from the ravages of time; and if other fragments could be collected and published, it would assist the student of Indian history and philosophy, and prevent the concoction of modern poems under ancient colours. This useful work is being done to a limited extent in Madras,⁵ though not so exhaustively as I should wish. How far the Bombay Manuals or Gazetteer would work to this end I do not know; but more can be done by private individuals to help this object than by the public authorities, to whom the inner strata of our social structure are not, as a rule, yet accessible. Besides the objects above stated, the *Mahátmyas* would subserve another useful purpose, and that is to place within our reach some information about things which are gradually passing away, and which must be gathered by personal enquiries by those who search for the MSS. As an example, I may mention that at a place near Basseen (Vasai is the correct spelling) called *Nirmaḷa*, a tomb of the great *S'ankarác'hárya*⁶ is shown to the pilgrims to this day. As the author of several *Vedántika* works of undisputed authority, and the apostle of the system of higher doctrines of Bráhmaism as they obtain to this day, the great *S'ankarác'hárya* has been no ordinary individual. That his place of interment is *Nirmaḷa*, in our own neighbourhood, is a statement for which there seems to be no authority, beyond local tradition. At all events the point has yet to be determined; and it is a question which may well be discussed when the *Nirmaḷa-mahátmya* comes under review. But the Society will be perhaps surprised to hear that there

⁴ See printed edition of *Saka* year 1788 (A. C. 1806) : Bombay.

⁵ See Part III. of the *Madras Manual*, by J. H. Nelson, M.A., Madras Civil Service. Madras: 1868.

⁶ The expounder of the Vedánta philosophy.

is a large published poem in Maráthí, which assumes the sanction of the *S'ankaráchárya*⁷ to a Maráthí *Nirmaḷi-máhátmya* (i. e., the greatness or sanctity of *Nirmaḷa*), and which professes to derive its inspiration from the *Padmapuráṇa*. Now the hollowness of these pretensions is apparent. Our oldest Maráthí authors now extant are Mukundarája and Dnyánes'vara; and they come long after *S'ankaráchárya*.⁸ They wrote in Maráthí, which is different in grammar, and style, from the Maráthí as we now speak and write it, and in which this poem has been written. The author's name does not appear; but it is published under the high sanction of the name of *S'ankaráchárya*, and as such no doubt may impose on many an unsuspecting devotee. I give this as one of the many instances wherein the course of contemporary history and morals is thus corrupted because of the clouds of uncertainty and obscurity which still enshroud our *Puráṇika* literature. I have already pronounced my opinion on the *Mahábales'vara-mahátmya* presented to the Society to-day.

I shall now return to the shrine again, and state what I conceive to be its place in Indian history. *Mahábales'vara* is mentioned in the poem above alluded to, and in the poem on the *Krishná*; and its importance dates from the time of the Maráthá⁹ kings of Satará. S'ivájí and his successors endowed it; and it is now one of the recognized Hindu places of pilgrimage in Western India. It has no pretensions to the antiquity of Gokarṇa Mahábales'vara in *Kánadá*, which is noticed in many of our oldest works, and above all in the *Skanda-Puráṇa*. This Mahábales'vara is therefore a modern establishment, after the older shrine in the South. It is nowhere mentioned in the enumeration of the *Jyotirlingas* (i. e., the 12 luminous symbols), the names of which are pronounced by all *S'aiva* (*Smárta*) and *Bhágavata* Hindus every morning either in Sanskrit or Prákrit prayers.¹⁰

⁷ शंकराचार्यसम्मत निर्मलमाहात्म्य. Bombay: S'ake year 1785 (A. C. 1863-64.)

⁸ Lived in the 8th century of the Christian era.

⁹ See "Life of Rámdás," in Maráthí. Bombay: S'ake 1792 (A.C. 1870-71.)

¹⁰ The following are prayers repeated in *Kdnadá*:—

“ सौराष्ट्रे सोमनाथं च श्रीशैले मल्लिकार्जुनं
उज्जयिन्यां महाकालं वाकिण्यां भीमशंकरं.

Nor have I met with it in the *Kedāra Khaṇḍa*, a portion of the *Brahmaivarta Purāṇa*, nor in the *Linga Purāṇa*. It is on this account

परळ्या वैद्यनाथं च भोकारं विमलेश्वरं
 सेतुबंधे तु रामेशं नागेशं दासकावने.
 वाराणस्यां तु विश्वेशं व्यंबकं गौतमोतटे
 हिमालये तु केदारं घृष्णेशं तु शिवालये.
 एतानि ज्योतिर्लिंगानि प्रातरुत्थाय यः पठेत्
 जन्मांतरकृतं पापं स्मरणेन विनश्यति.”
 “सौराष्ट्रदेशे विशदेतिरभ्यं ज्योतिर्मयं चंद्रकलावतंसं ॥
 भक्तिप्रदानाय कृपावतीर्णं तं सोमनाथं शरणं प्रपद्ये ॥ १ ॥
 श्रीशैलशृंगे विबुधातिसंगे तुलाद्रिगुंगेपि मुदा वसंतं.
 तमर्जुनं मल्लिकप्रमेकं नमामि संसारसमुद्रसेतुम् ॥ २ ॥
 अवंतिकायां विहितावतारं भक्तिप्रदानाय च सञ्जनानाम्.
 भकालमृत्योः प.रेरक्षणार्थं वंदे महाकालमहं सुरेशं ॥ ३ ॥
 काण्ठेरिद्वानमदयोः पवित्रे समागमे सञ्जनतारणाय ॥
 सदैव मां धातृपुरे वसंतमोकारमीशं शिवमेकमीडे ॥ ४ ॥
 पूर्वोत्तरे प्रञ्जलिकानिधाने सदा वसंतं गिरिजासमेतम् ॥
 सुरासुराराधितपादपद्मं श्रीवैद्यनाथं तमहं नमामि ॥ ५ ॥
 आमृदसंगे नगरेतिरभ्ये विभूषितांगं विविधैश्च भोगैः ॥
 सद्भक्तिमुक्तिप्रदमीशमेकं श्रीनागनाथं शरणं प्रपद्ये ॥ ६ ॥
 हिमाद्रिपार्श्वे चटुले रमंतं संपूज्यमानं सततं मुनीन्द्रैः ॥
 सुरासुरैर्यक्षमहोरगाद्यैः केदारमीशं शिवमेकमीडे ॥ ७ ॥
 सद्याद्रिशीर्षे विमले रमंतं गोदावरीतीरपवित्रदेशे ॥
 यद्दर्शनात्पातकमाशुनाशं प्रयाति तं व्यंबकमीशमीडे ॥ ८ ॥
 सुताम्रपर्णाजलराशियोगे विबद्धं च सेतुं विशिखैरसंख्यैः ॥
 श्रीरामचंद्रेण समार्चितं तं रामेश्वराख्यं नियतं नमामि ॥ ९ ॥
 योडाकिनीशाकिनिकासमाजि निषेव्यमाणः पिञ्जिताशनैश्च ॥
 सदैवभीमाद्यपदप्रसिद्धं तं शंकरं भक्तिहितं नमामि ॥ १० ॥
 सानंदमानंदवने वसंतमानंदकंदं इतपापवृद्धं ॥
 वाराणसोनाथमनाथनाथं श्रीविश्वनाथं शरणं प्रपद्ये ॥ ११ ॥

that I place this shrine amongst modern establishments, and its *Purāṇika* history, as now current, I certainly class, for the present at least, among poems of very doubtful antiquity.

इलापुरीरम्यशिवालयेस्मिन् समुद्रसंतं च जगद्वरेष्णं ॥
 वंदे महोदारतरस्वभावं घृष्णेश्वराख्यं शरणं प्रपद्ये ॥ १२ ॥
 ज्योतिर्मयं द्वादशलिंगकानां शिवात्मनां प्रोक्तामिदं प्रियेण ॥
 स्तोत्रं पठित्वा मनुजोविभक्त्या फलं तदालोचनजं भजेत् १३ ॥
 इति श्रीद्वादशलिंगात्मकं स्तोत्रं संपूर्णम् ॥ ० ॥”

॥ महाबलेश्वरमाहात्म्यम्. ॥

श्रीगणेशाय नमः ॥ श्री विष्णवे नमः ॥

मिलिता नैमिषारण्ये सूतं शास्त्रविशारदं ॥
 मुनयः सुकथां दिव्यां पप्रच्छुः पापनाशिनीं ॥ १ ॥
 सद्वाद्रिमस्तके गंगाः पंच ज्ञाताःसुपुण्यदाः ॥
 तद्वत्तस्मिन् ब्रह्मतीर्थं विष्णुतीर्थं तदग्रतः ॥ २ ॥
 तदग्रे रुद्रतीर्थं च चक्रतीर्थं तदग्रतः ॥
 तदग्रे हंसतीर्थं च तीर्थं चारण्यसंज्ञकं ॥ ३ ॥
 मलापहं तस्य वामे चाष्टमं पितृमुक्तिदं ॥
 तथा महाबलः शंभुर्द्वितीयोतिबलेश्वरः ॥ ४ ॥
 कोटीश्वरः क्षेत्रपालस्तथा धूर्जटिरीश्वरः ॥
 अरण्येष्वपि लिंगानि दिव्यदेवमयानि च ॥ ५ ॥
 वेदाश्रमाः संति यत्र सर्वे देवास्तथैव च ॥
 ब्रह्मविष्णुमहेशाद्या यत्र तिष्ठन्ति सर्वदा ॥ ६ ॥
 अश्वत्थवृक्षस्तत्रास्ति सुवर्णदलमंडितः ॥
 सर्वे ग्रहाः सानुकूलाः परं पुण्यप्रदं नृणां ॥ ७ ॥
 एतादृशं महाक्षेत्रं माहात्म्यं ब्रूहि तस्य च ॥
 सर्वकामप्रदं चैव भक्तिभुक्तिप्रदायकं ॥ ८ ॥
 सूतउवाच ॥ शृण्वंतु ऋषयः सर्वे क्षेत्रमाहात्म्यमुत्तमं ॥
 यच्च श्रवणमात्रेण सर्वकामप्रदं नृणां ॥ ९ ॥
 भूमिलोकं विना ब्रह्मा चकार सृष्टिमुत्तमां ॥
 पश्चाद् ब्रह्मा ब्रह्मलोके ध्यानयोगपरो भवत् ॥ १० ॥
 बहुकालं तपश्चक्रे तदा विष्णुं तुतोष यत् ॥
 परमात्मा ततस्तुष्टः प्रोवाच कमलासनं ॥ ११ ॥
 भूमिलोके नृणां सृष्टिः कर्तव्या जीवसौख्यदा ॥
 इत्याज्ञां हि समालभ्य आरेभे सृष्टिमुत्तमां ॥ १२ ॥

निर्मानुषीं महीं कृत्वा सशैलवनकाननां ॥
 हरिं शिवं गृहीत्वादौ प्राप सद्द्याद्रिमस्तके ॥ १३ ॥
 सरस्वतीं तथा श्रेष्ठां गंगां भागीरथीमपि ॥
 कश्यपादिऋषीन् वेदान् समानीय तपोतपत् ॥ १४ ॥
 ब्रह्मा चक्रे ब्रह्मतीर्थे विष्णुतीर्थे हरिहरः ॥
 रुद्रतीर्थे तपश्चक्रुः सर्वे देवर्षयस्तथा ॥ १५ ॥
 तपःसिद्धिस्तदा जाता सृष्टेरुत्पत्तिकारिणी ॥
 तपस्थलानि तीर्थानि जातानि स्नानहेतवे ॥ १६ ॥
 तदा ब्रह्महरीशाद्या यज्ञारंभं प्रचक्रमुः ॥
 महाबलेश्वर इति तथा चातिबलेश्वरः ॥ १७ ॥
 कोटीश्वरस्ततः पश्चाद्देवं ब्रह्मा प्रपूजयत् ॥ १८ ॥
 ऋषय उचुः ॥ श्रुतानि लिंगनामानि ब्रह्मणा कल्पितानि च ॥
 लिंगानां नामविख्यातिः कथं जाता भुवस्थले ॥ १९ ॥
 एतद्विस्तरतोस्माकं कृपया ब्रूहि तत्त्वतः ॥
 यस्य श्रवणमात्रेण पातकस्य क्षयो भवेत् ॥ २० ॥
 सूतउवाच ॥ लिंगानां भूमिलोकेस्मिन्नानाविख्यातिरुत्तमा ॥
 कारणं तस्य वक्ष्यामि शृणुध्वमृषिपुंगवाः ॥ २१ ॥
 कुंभयोनिः पुरा काश्यां बहुकालं स्त्रिया सह ॥
 मोक्षकामाय वसतिं चकार द्विजसत्तमः ॥ २२ ॥
 तदा विंध्याद्रिमागत्य नारदः स्वेच्छया क्वचित् ॥
 तमुवाच गिरं सूक्ष्मां मेरुस्त्वत्तोधिकः कथं ॥ २३ ॥
 इति विंध्याचलः श्रुत्वा परां वृद्धिं गतस्तदा ॥
 गतिं सूर्यस्य रुरुधे अंधकारो बभूवह ॥ २४ ॥
 अनेन कारणेनैव सर्वे देवर्षयस्तदा ॥
 काशीक्षेत्रं समागत्य कुंभयोनिं प्रतोष्य तु ॥ २५ ॥
 विंध्याद्रिवृत्तं सकलं प्रोचुर्देवर्षयस्तदा ॥
 विंध्योन्नतिं मुने न्हेस्वां कुरु त्वं शिष्यशिक्षया ॥ २६ ॥

कुंभयोनिस्त्वदा काशीं त्यक्त्वा गत्वाथ दक्षिणां ॥
 नर्धाकृत्य च विध्याद्रिं प्रययौ लोहपर्वतं ॥ २७ ॥
 लोषामुद्रा महाभागा भर्तुदेवा सहाध्वनि ॥
 चरन्ती तेन धर्माणां निर्णयं विदधे गिरा ॥ २८ ॥
 एवं चरन्ती कालेन लोहाद्रीं षण्मुखः पुरः ॥
 दृष्ट्वा विश्रामयित्वा तौ स्वाश्रमे विदधेर्हणं ॥ २९ ॥
 एतस्मिन् समयेगस्त्यः काशीविरहदुःखितः ॥
 यमच्छ षण्मुखं क्षेत्रं दक्षिणे काशिकासमं ॥ ३० ॥
 अगस्त्यउवाच ॥ अहो गौरीहृदानंद स्वामिन् सर्वार्थदर्शन ॥
 भवता भगवान् रुद्रः संपृष्टो गुह्यमप्युत ॥ ३१ ॥
 भगवान् भूतभव्येशः सर्वज्ञः सकलार्थदः ॥
 सर्वं तुभ्यमतिप्रीत्या जगद् गुणशालिने ॥ ३२ ॥
 काशीरहस्यं भवता सम्यङ् मे प्रतिपादितं ॥
 सद्वाद्रीं मुख्यतीर्थानि श्रुतानि भवतो मया ॥ ३३ ॥
 महाबलजटोद्भूताः पंच गंगाः कथं प्रभो ॥
 तथैव लिंगनामानि विख्यातानि कथं भुवि ॥ ३४ ॥
 कृष्णा वेणी तथैवान्या विख्याता या ककुद्गती ॥
 त्रयः पूर्णार्णवं याताः कस्मात्कार्यवशात्प्रभो ॥ ३५ ॥
 कृष्णया सह सावित्री पश्चिमायां कथं गता ॥
 एतद्विस्तरतो ब्रूहि सर्वशास्त्रविशारद ॥ ३६ ॥
 षण्मुखउवाच ॥ किमर्थं पृच्छसेगस्त्य रहस्यं सर्वदेहिनां ॥
 देवानामपि दुष्प्रापं कारणं वद मानसं ॥ ३७ ॥
 अगस्त्यउवाच ॥ काशीविरहदुःखेन दुःखितोहं न संशयः ॥
 तत्समं चाधिकं क्षेत्रं निवासाय ममास्तु तत् ॥ ३८ ॥
 एतदर्थं तपः स्थानं मोक्षसाधनकारणं ॥
 उत्तमं क्षेत्रमाहात्म्यं ब्रूहि षण्मुख तत्त्वतः ॥ ३९ ॥
 सूतउवाच ॥ श्रुत्वा प्रज्ञं कुंभयोनिःस्मरन् शिवपदांबुजं ॥
 षण्मुखो विस्तरादाह कथां पौराणिकीमिमां ॥ ४० ॥

आसीत्याग्ने पुरा कल्पे दैत्यो नाम महाबलः ॥
 तस्यानुजो प्यतिबलो महाबलपराक्रमः ॥ ४१ ॥
 ताभ्यां विश्वमिदं कृत्स्नं परिपूर्णमुपप्लुतं ॥
 तदा ब्रह्महरीशाना योद्धुं ताभ्यां समाययुः ॥ ४२ ॥
 ततोतिबलमायांतं दृष्ट्वा देवाः सवासवाः ॥
 भयेन वेपमानांगा दैत्यदर्पपराजिताः ॥ ४३ ॥
 ततः शस्त्रैर्महास्त्रैर्धिर्विष्णुनातिबलो रणे ॥
 पातितोरिभिरन्यैश्च पुष्पवृष्टिस्तदाऽभवत् ॥ ४४ ॥
 ततो हाहाकृतं वीक्ष्य स्वस्य सैन्यं महाबलः ॥
 भ्रातुर्हंतस्यापचितिं समिच्छन् रोषदुर्धरः ॥ ४५ ॥
 तस्यानुगच्छतः शंभुर्विष्णुर्वा चतुराननः ॥
 अनीशाः संमुखे स्थातुं ततो मायां प्रसस्मरुः ॥ ४६ ॥
 देवाञ्जुः ॥ नमामस्त्वामादिभूतां जगद्बीजां परां सतीं ॥
 महामायां गुणवतीं ब्रह्मेशानहरिस्तुतां ॥ ४७ ॥
 यया सर्वं भेदरूपं कृतं चैतस्त्वभावतः ॥
 त्वमीशानब्रह्मविष्णुस्वरूपा योगसिद्धिदा ॥ ४८ ॥
 यया विश्वस्य बीजानि देवाः सर्वे विनिर्मिताः ॥
 दत्तं देवान् परं रूपं सामर्थ्यं तैजसं वरं ॥ ४९ ॥
 परां वाचं शास्त्रवतीं स्मृतिर्यस्यातिसिद्धिदा ॥
 यस्मादस्मान्प्रसन्नासि दैत्यदर्पं विनाशय ॥ ५० ॥
 इति स्तुतिमतिस्फीतां श्रुत्वा माया विमोहिनी ॥
 सद्यो दैत्यं मोहयित्वा वारयामास संगरात् ॥ ५१ ॥
 तदा महाबलो दैत्यः प्रतापानलदुर्धरः ॥
 रणे प्रसादसुमुखः प्रोवाचेशाजमाधवान् ॥ ५२ ॥
 वरान् वृणुत भद्रं वः प्रसन्नोऽस्मि सुरोत्तमाः ॥
 करोमि यदभीष्टं वो मा संदेहः पदे मम ॥ ५३ ॥
 ब्रह्मादयञ्जुः ॥ भवान्प्रसन्नो यदि नः संदेहो बचने न ते ॥
 तर्हि वध्यस्त्वमस्माभिरेवं नोभीष्टदो वरः ॥ ५४ ॥