CHAPTER V.

The Panchatantra in World Literature:

Says Lord Francis Bacon in book the Assays:

"Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed and some few to be chewed and digested."¹ The stories in the Panchatantra and the Hitopadessa are to be chewed to and digested. Both of these works have stood the test of time and have been read, recited and enjoyed all over the world. "Indeed," says Franklin Edgerton, "the statement has been made that no book except the Bible has enjoyed such an extensive circulation in the world as a whole."² It has penetrated practically all the literatures of the countries in Europe, Southern and Western Asia. It is known to exist in about two hundred versions and translations. This unexampled popularity may itself be a tribute to the genius of the work. The work is, therefore, not for time

but for all times. "It is a work," say Dasgupta and De, "which has perhaps a more interesting history than any in the world." McDonald has also expressed a similar view: "The story of the migration of Indian tales from East to West is more wonderful and instructive than many of these fairy tales themselves."

Burzoe was a physician who lived in the sixth century under the famous Persian King Khusrau Anusherman. This physician travelled all over India and took back with him a collection of the fables. The first and major part of the work consisted of the Panchatantra. This work was translated into Persian under the title Kalila-Dimnah, the names of the two jackals Karatika and Damnak, who play an important role in the first part of the Panchatantra.

But the Pehlavi translation is not available now. Two translations were made of it and one of these was destined to carry a knowledge of the Panchatantra all over Europe. One of the translation was made

into Syriac. This version has not left any descendants and was therefore, itself unknown until the middle of the nineteenth century. Since then it has been translated into German. We have of it only copies of a single, incomplete and imperfect manuscript, but it has great historic value, since it throws light on the Pehlavi.

The other translation of the Pehlavi was made into Arabic, by Abdallah-ibn-at-Mogaffa. This was completed at the order of Abujaffer Mansour Zu Bikky, who was the second Khaliph of the Abessi reign. It is entitled Kalilah-wa-Dimnah, an Arabic transcription of the Pehlavi equivalent of Karataka and Damanaka, the names of the two jackals. The translation included the whole of Bursae's work and to it Abdallah prefixed a preface of his own and added various other stories. This book has become the most familiar and popular in Arabic literature. It now exists in countless manuscripts and has been reprinted repeatedly.

This Arabic version was translated into German by one Symeon Seth at the end of the eleventh...
century. This German text became very popular in Eastern Europe and from the sixteenth century on, it was repeatedly translated into Latin, Italian and German.

There was an early translation of this into Hebrew of uncertain date and authorship. This in turn was translated into the Latin under the title Liber Kelilae et Dimnae Directorium vitae Humanae (Book of Kalilah and Dimnah: Directory of Human Life) by a Jewish resident of Capua in Southern Italy, who became converted to Christianity and took the name of John, whence he is known as John of Capua. This was composed between 1260 and 1270 and was very popular in scholastic Europe during the Middle Ages.

The immediate off-shoot of John of Capua's work is a very celebrated book, the Ancient Sages by Anthonius von Pforz. It became so very popular that twenty editions were made of it within the first fifty years. It was later translated into Danish, Icelandic, Dutch and Yiddish.

John of Capua's work was then translated into Spanish, Czech and Italian. The Italian version is of importance because the first English version of the
Panchatantra was translated into English by Sir Thomas North. He called it The Moral Philosophie of Doni, which is a literal translation of the title of the Italian version. North’s English translation was first published in 1570. Thus this English version was translated from the Italian, from the Latin, the from the Hebrew, from the Arabic and from the Pehlevi.

A Persian version was made by Narvallah in the early twelfth century. From it was derived the much more celebrated later Persian the Anvari Suhaili of Hussain ibn Ali at Waiz in the fifteenth century. It was translated into several Indian languages like the Hindi, Bengali; and into Turkish and other Western and Central Asiatic languages. This in turn was translated into the French under the title Book of Lights, or the Conduct of Kings and this was often referred to as the Fables of Pilpay. The French fabulist drew a very good amount of his fables from the “sage Pilpay” as he calls in the work. About eighty years later, appeared another French work entitled the Contest Fables de Bidpai et de Lokman by one Gallard. This version was translated from the Turkish Humayun Nameh, which in turn is a translation
of the Persian Anvari Suhaili. The names of Pilpay and Bidpai became household words through these two works in European literature. They are variants of the names given in the Persian Anvari Suhaili. The English version of Pilpay was first brought out as early as 1699 and was frequently reprinted throughout the Eighteenth Century.