

**THE POOR MAN AND THE
FLASK OF OIL
A FABLE OF BIDPAI**

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There was once a Poor Man, who lived in a house next to a wealthy Merchant who sold oil and honey. As the Merchant was a kind neighbor, he one day sent a flask of oil to the Poor Man. The Poor Man was delighted, and put it carefully away on the top shelf. One evening, as he was gazing at it, he said half aloud,—

“I wonder how much oil there is in that bottle. There is a large quantity. If I should sell it, I could buy five sheep. Every year I should have lambs, and before long I should own a flock. Then I should sell some of the sheep, and be rich enough to marry a wife. Perhaps we might have a son. And what a fine boy he would be! So tall, strong, and obedient! But if he should disobey me,” and he raised the staff which he held in his hand, “I should punish him thus!” and he swung the staff over his head and brought it heavily to the ground, knocking, as he did so, the flask off the shelf so that the oil ran over him from head to foot.

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