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THE RAGHUVANÇA









*Titapara, Titin City.*

THE  
THE STORY  
OF RAGHU'S LINE  
BY KÂLIDÂSA

TRANSLATED BY  
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## PREFATORY NOTE

THE Introduction tells the story of the poet and the poem. For the Mythological Notes which follow, and which I hope will help English readers, I ask the special indulgence of Scholars. A Note on Pronunciation is added. The Index is intended only to supplement very shortly the Mythological Notes.

For the Illustrations which embellish my book I am indebted to the kind permission of Miss Growse, of Thursby Hall, Haslemere, Surrey. These are diminished reproductions of works by native Indian artists, prepared at great expense for her brother, the late Mr. Growse, C.I.E., of the Bengal Civil Service, to adorn his valuable and scholarly translation of the Hindî *Râmâyana*, which may be called the Sacred Book of North-Western Bengal. Mr. Growse's early death is a loss to Indian scholarship that will not easily be repaired.



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## INTRODUCTION

KĀLIDĀSA is little more than a name. There hangs over his personal history that mist of time and distance which seems to enwrap all things historical in the early life and thought of Ancient India. But his work is with us,—more of it probably than of any other great Sanskrit author; and he must always have a special interest for us, as the translation in 1781 of his drama *Çākuntalâ* by Sir William Jones gave the first impulse to the study of that wonderful literature of old India which has revolutionised philology, and has had very great influence in modifying our thoughts in the political domain also towards our Indian fellow-subjects. The pretty legend that made him one of the “nine gems” at the polished Court of a Vikramâditya reigning in the age of Roman Augustus has vanished before later research, but the charms of his tender Dramas, and of his noble Epics, abide with us.

Kâlidâsa lived probably about the middle of the sixth century of our era, but beyond this we know nothing of him personally. His fame is perennial, as that of India’s greatest dramatist, and the greatest epic poet of her classical days. With the noble simplicity of the *Râmâyana* his work does not come into comparison; but in respect of true poetic feeling for the aspects of nature, and insight into both the manly and the tender moods of human emotion, he stands very high among the great poets of all lands and ages. That he

fell in his epics occasionally into the snares laid for him by the technical perfection of classical Sanskrit, and played with words and sounds in a way that seems frivolous to us, should not blind us to his great and varied excellence. Nor should we forget how very much less *he* has done this than any other of the famous classical poets of India. Bhâravi in the *Kirâtârjuniyâ* and Bhaṭṭa in his poem shows us what temptations Kâlidâsa resisted, and will make us more highly value the self-restraint he has shown in this matter of artificiality.

As I have said, his Dramas are supreme in Indian literature,—which indeed is not rich in that province, considering the nature of the people, who seem apt for such branches of literary activity. But the beauties of *Çâkuntalâ and the Ring* and of *The Hero and the Nymph* have long been before the European and particularly the English public, and I need not dilate on them. Among his own countrymen, however, Kâlidâsa is at least equally renowned as an epic poet of the classical period, which extends over several centuries. There are different lists of the Six “great poems”—Mahâ-Kâvyas; but all name two (*Kumâra-sambhava*, the Birth of the War-God Kârtikeya, and *Raghuvanā*, the Story of Raghu’s Line) of Kâlidâsa’s among them; and one that is well accredited would include a third, the graceful Cloud-Messenger, in the short roll of fame. The poem which I have here translated is by far the most esteemed of them all. It is a storehouse of poetry and legend, while the varied metres and exquisitely beautiful language lend it in the original a charm that cannot be transferred into another tongue. It has long been a wonder to me that no one has hitherto done for it what Mr. Griffiths has so well done for its companion, the Birth of the War-

God, especially as it appears (from Stenzler's Preface, p. ii.) that the greater part of the poem had been already translated into English before the work of editing it was given to him. But name and fame of the translator seem to have vanished, nor have I been able to find any further trace of them. And here I must acknowledge my debt to the great scholar just named. While I have used for my work the best native editions of the poem, with constant reference to the Sanskrit commentators, I have always derived the greatest help from Stenzler's Latin translation: without it, indeed, my own would probably not have been undertaken. I must here add also, what only lately came to my knowledge, that Mr. Griffiths *has* made (but not published) what he calls, in his Notes to the translation of the whole *Râmâyana*, a "rough" translation of the *Raghuvaṅça*. He adds that fragments of it have appeared in print, but I have not seen them.

The Poem as we have it is certainly incomplete. Tradition tells us that in its original form it consisted of twenty-five Cantos, of which only nineteen have come down to us; and the abrupt ending of the poem confirms the tradition.

Its theme is the glories of the great Solar race of Ikshvâku, in which Vishṇu was pleased to become incarnate as Râma, that he might destroy the giant Râvaṇa, who had his capital in Ceylon (Lankâ), and might free gods and men from his tyranny. This supremacy Râvaṇa had won, supplanting Indra, the Thunderer, chief among the Gods inferior to the great Three (Brahmâ, Vishṇu, Çiva,—Creator, Preserver, Destroyer), by the power of his ascetic austerities, which could, according to Brahmanical notions, compel Fate. When therefore his yoke had become too hard to bear, when

the Gods were banished or made to serve him, they sought the aid of Vishṇu, who heard their prayer and promised his help. This he would afford them by taking birth as a man, in the noble kingly line of Raghu; for when Râvaṇa asked to be made invulnerable, he had omitted to secure himself against mere human foes. In our poem Cantos I to IX trace the fortunes of Râma's four immediate predecessors, from Dilîpa to Daçaratha; Cantos X to XV are occupied with the story of Râma himself,—from his wonderful birth, through his noble youth and manhood, his triumphant marriage with Sîtâ, victory over Râvaṇa, and happy reign, till the time when he shook off the veil of humanity and returned to his original glory as the Unconditioned God; and Cantos XVI to XIX carry on the tale of the Kings who succeeded him to (as we have it) a sad eclipse in the luxurious Agnivarma.

### THE STORY BRIEFLY TOLD IN PROSE

(1) The poet makes excuse for his rashness in attempting such an arduous task as that of celebrating the praises of this famous line of Kings. But he has been attracted by its very magnitude. The race is dazzling in its virtue and might, and the great Vâlmiki has trodden the path before him. In the line sprang Dilîpa, pious King, who grew old, rich in the love of his Queen Sudakshinâ and the devotion of his happy subjects, but not blessed with a son to succeed him. So, purifying himself and casting off for a season the cares of sovereignty, he goes with his Queen to seek counsel and help from the saintly Vaçishṭha in his hermitage. After a pleasant journey through lands prosperous and smiling with the

blessings of his rule, where all good omens attend them on the way, they reach the peaceful hermitage. Their errand is told, and the saint points out the remedy for their sorrow. The King had neglected to pay due honour to the Holy Cow, Surabhi, and must now (with his Queen) lead an ascetic life and pay all worship to her offspring—the Saint's own Cow—until she be propitiated, and grant him the desire of his heart.

(2) And the days went by. From early morning to dewy eve the noble, patient King assiduously tended the semi-divine Cow—and at evening the Queen welcomed them back, and herself took up the pleasant, hopeful task.

But one fateful day the King had followed his charge up the green slopes of the Himâlaya, and while he gazed on the beauties of the scene, secure that her own sanctity would protect her from all harm, he was startled by her agonised cry, and in dismay saw her prostrate under the paw of a fierce lion. He fitted an arrow to his bow, but could not draw it, and found himself powerless to help. The lion addressed him in human voice, told him he was set by Çiva to guard a favourite tree beloved by Umâ, that the Cow had trespassed and had justly forfeited her life, and bade him leave her to her fate and himself return, saving his own valuable life. But the King would hear of no desertion. He entreated that he might save his honour though he should lose his life, and offered his own body a ransom for that of his charge, that she might go unharmed. Then the magic scene rolled away: the Cow praised his devotion and promised him the boon he sought, and the two returned to the hermitage. The Queen and her husband drank the sacred milk, and were dismissed in peace and gladness to their own city.

(3) Then in due time the Queen bore to her husband a fair son, delighting all hearts and wearing from his birth the signs of worth and prosperity. His nurture in holy things was intrusted to the wisest Brâhmans in the land, and he richly rewarded their care, whilst the King himself instructed him in the arts of war and the chase. Raghu was he called, the vehement in battle, and he grew up noble and generous, the light of his father's eyes and the hope of his kingdom. Fully trained in all sacred and kingly lore, he was raised to association in his father's dignity, and happily wedded to noble princesses. And Dilipa, having devolved on his son the cares and honour of the kingdom, set himself to perform the long series of a hundred sacrifices, which is crowned by the great Offering of the Horse, and raises the sacrificer to the rank of Indra, King of Heaven. The God, ever on the watch to foil such enterprise, stole away the destined victim : and the Prince, to whose care it had been committed, pursued the aggressor. He plied him first with vain entreaties, and then boldly attacked him. A terrible battle ensued ; each inflicted wounds on the other ; but at length the God, moved by the courage and devotion of the young hero, relaxed his anger and granted that, though the crowning sacrifice might not be accomplished, yet Dilipa should win the prize of his sacred acts, and mount to the throne of Heaven. So Dilipa forsook Earth and Raghu reigned gloriously in his stead.

(4) Raghu, being seated on his father's throne, by his firm but mild rule soon took even a higher place in his people's affections than his father had held ; and the Fortune of the kingdom, like a loving bride, clung closely to him. Just and valiant, he ruled his people for a time in peace ; then,



nobly ambitious, he set forth with a mighty and well-appointed host on a career of universal conquest. In the mild autumn season, when calm skies and pleasant days invited him, and Earth and Heaven rejoiced, he set forth. Smiting down all foes, he led his victorious army across great rivers, over lofty mountains, through pathless forests, to the shores of ocean. Then, having set up everywhere pillars of victory, and restored the vanquished kings to their thrones as his vassals, the hero returned to his capital, Ayodhyâ, and there with magnificent pomp, swelled by the infinite treasures he had received in tribute, and graced by the presence of captive kings, celebrated the gorgeous sacrifice which only a Universal Conqueror may offer!

(5) But the sacrifice he had made involved the bestowal of all his wealth in alms, and at its close the Monarch was as bare of earth's riches as the meanest of his subjects, when there came before him an eminent Brâhman, Kautsa, to ask from his generosity the fee required by his Preceptor Varatantu. In gracious words the king first inquired of the welfare of the Saint and all his dependants, and then the purpose of his guest's coming. The Brâhman, seeing the King had stripped himself of all he possessed, was reluctant to make an unreasonable request; but, being pressed, he told his need. The King invited him to stay for a little while as his guest, and himself prepared to start forth to obtain, by force of arms, if necessary, the almost boundless treasure wanted, from Kuvera the Lord of Wealth. But while he slept, meaning to set forth in the morning, the God poured down, unconstrained, into his palace courtyard riches untold and unimagined. Then ensued a contest of generosity. The Brâhman at first refused to receive more than his Teacher's fee, but was at length persuaded by the generous King to

take the whole; then he blessed him with the promise of a glorious son to continue his race, and departed.

So to Raghu was born a son, Aja, called after Brahma the Uncreated, noble and brave and gentle as himself, the desire of all eyes and hearts. And when the Prince was fully perfect in wisdom and in arms, his father sent him to Vidarbha, whither King Bhoja had invited many a noble King and Chief, that his fair sister Indumatî might choose her husband from among them. Aja marched with such attendant army as befitted his royal rank, and was welcomed by King Bhoja, having on the way secured a friend in the demi-god Priyamvada, whom he freed from enchantment and who gave him a magic spear whose virtues could strike whole armies with sleep. One night the Prince slept before Vidarbha, and in the morning was roused from his slumbers by the sweet voices of minstrels, hymning him in soft lyrical strains, which form one of the gems of the poem.

(6) Then the Prince, nobly attired, went to join the company of suitor kings in the lofty hall where Princess Indumatî was to make her Maiden's Choice, of the lord of her love and her life. Waiting her entry, there sat round the hall on lofty thrones an anxious assemblage of all the most famous and noble Chiefs of the time, come from far and near to woo the peerless Maid. To hide their anxiety they trifled with their garlands, their jewels, their robes, or talked in whispers to one another. Then, to the sweet sounds of music, borne in a litter, came fair Indumatî into the hall, and the eyes of all were fixed on her. Her guide, Sunandâ, led her past the Kings in their order, eloquently praising each as the Princess slowly passed along the line. But neither the valiant and

pious lord of Magadha, nor he of Avanti, nor of Anga, nor the mighty King of Anûpa, before whom Râvaṇa stooped and who braved fierce Paraçu-Râma's axe; nor devout Sushena, who in beauty and valour rivals the mighty Gods,—found favour in her eyes. And as she passed, each one, silently rejected, felt the hue of glad hope fade from his face, shadowed by the gloom of failure. Then she passed on, and her guide commended to her the King of Kalinga, lord of the southern realm, bordering on Ocean, where palm-trees wave and spice-laden breezes blow; and next the Pându King, friend of Indra, ally even of mighty Râvaṇa; but neither of those powerful Kings won the Maiden's choice, and they too passed into darkness, "like wayside trees lit up but for a moment by a traveller's torch." Onward she went to Prince Aja, and her choice was no more doubtful. She heard his praises, she saw his noble beauty, and she cast over him the wreath that proclaimed her election, and the happy union was welcomed with loud acclaim!

(7) Then did King Bhoja pass to the city, with his sister and her chosen lover, while the disappointed wooers followed in their train. The glad procession was welcomed with loyal shouts of the citizens, while their ladies looked on eagerly from the lattices, hastening—though dishevelled or but half-attired—to see the goodly sight. Next the grave marriage ceremonies were accomplished, hallowed by the witness of Fire and hailed by all onlookers as fortunate. Then the King with lordly gifts dismissed to their own places the suitor-kings, who took their leave with pleasant words, but with thoughts of revenge in their hearts.

So when Aja and his bride on their homeward journey had parted from Bhoja, the banded Kings barred the way, to

carry off the bride. But Aja, placing Indumatî in safety, boldly charged them, and fierce battle was joined. Chariots with chariots, horse with horse, elephant with elephant, met in deadly strife. Heaven was obscured by the dust, and earth flowed with streams of blood. So swift came death that the disembodied warriors saw their lifeless trunks still tottering on the plain, as themselves mounted to heaven, there to renew the strife. The fortune of battle wavered, and Aja had more than once to rally his yielding battalions. At length, weary of slaughter, the Prince used the magical weapon given him by his friend Priyamvada. At once the foes were charmed into sleep, the noise of battle was stilled, the Prince wound his horn to rally his forces, and at his bidding blushing Indumatî set her foot on the necks of his prostrate foes. So, happy and triumphant, they returned to Ayodhyâ, and were welcomed by King Raghu.

(8) Thereafter, King Raghu, rejoicing in his son's glory and happiness, gave the kingdom to Aja, and himself prepared for the life of austerity and meditation with which the pious Kings of the Sun-Race make themselves fit to exchange earthly for heavenly crowns. But his son weeping besought him to stay in the city, and the loving King yielded. So the two remained together, the one by justice and wise counsel ruling his subjects, winning their love and fostering their well-being, while they saw his father live again in him; but the other, subduing all desire, fixing his thoughts on the Supreme,—waited for the call to heaven. When thus some years had gone by, the father passed to his rest, deeply mourned by his son.

Now Indumatî bore to Aja a noble boy, and the clouds of softened regret were dispelled by a new delight, while Aja's life

budded forth in wondrous fulness towards his son Daçaratha, fated father of the divine hero Râma.

But sorrow follows joy. As one day the loving pair sauntered through their pleasant gardens, there fell on Indumati's breast from the sky a wreath of flowers, fallen from the harp of the Minstrel-Saint Nârada, at touch of which she paled and fell dead. The King swooned, and on recovering burst into a passionate lament for the cruel loss. "Why, O my Beloved, hast thou so suddenly left me, whose heart was all thine own? Never wittingly did I aught to displease thee, yet without a word am I forsaken! Let me too die with thee. Yet was Death kind to slay thee with flowers! O Love, how couldst thou have the heart to leave me, and our son, and even the deer and trees thou hadst tended? All, all mourn for thee. Ah, Beloved, I scarce can think thee dead: the breeze stirs thy hair and rustles through thy dress. But thou art gone from me for ever! Counsellor, Friend, Queen of my heart and home, thou hast left me, and what good is my life now to me? Nought more can I do for thee. Thy fair body must lie on the rough funeral-pyre, and I must drag on my lonely life!" Yet for his people's sake the King lived on, and bore himself nobly though sorrowful. Duty he performed, but joy was gone from his life. The counsels of his Saintly Preceptor, who told him the true story of his lost Indumati—a Nymph of Heaven condemned for former sin to a period of exile on earth and now recalled to her home—fell on unheeding ears. For a few years he endured; then, committing the kingdom to his son, he peacefully departed, to be reunited for ever to his beloved Indumati.

(9) Thereafter did mighty Daçaratha rule in righteousness,

*Dakshinamurthy*

just as Yama, beneficent as Indra, terrible as the War-God. He also subdued all the Earth under him, made the Sacrifice for Universal Dominion, fought often side by side with Indra against the Demons, and raised his famous line to the pinnacle of glory and prosperity. Three noble princesses he wedded—of Magadha, Koçala, and Kekaya—with whom he lived in unclouded happiness, save that no son was born to him.

So the years rolled on. One fateful spring, when all the world rejoiced in new beauty, as the warmer Sun dispelled the chill numbness of winter, the King with his Queens went forth to enjoy the pleasures of that season of love. Earth put on her robes of fresh green, and the forest trees budded and blossomed; the air was filled with the glad hum of bees and the love-notes of birds of varied plumage. Youths and maidens rejoiced in the spring-time of life and snatched the bloom of the fleeting hour, careless of the morrow. Lovers decked their mistresses with fresh flowers, and feasted them with all that was choicest, and the sounds of laughter or the soft murmurs of love were heard throughout the land. The King, having drunk of this cup of pleasure to the full, sought the more manly delights of the Chase, sport of Kings. Through the forests went he with his great bow, rejoicing in his skill and might. Watched by the eager eye of forest-gods, he smote the fierce boars and lions but spared the gentle deer; breezes fanned his cheek, and great trees lent their shade. But one morning, fresh from his fragrant woodland couch, keen for sport, he heard in the reeds of the sacred river Tamasâ a gurgling sound as of an elephant drinking. In his eagerness he forgot the law forbidding a king to slay an elephant: his arrow is shot; horrified he hears

a human cry of pain, and bursting through the reeds finds a lad mortally wounded with his water-jar beside him. The boy, adopted son of a saintly Ascetic, is borne by the sorrowing King to his aged parents, and honoured with due funeral rites; and the Hermit lays on the penitent King the heavy weird that his heart too shall in old age be broken by the loss of his son. Meekly the King received the doom, carrying with it the promise of a son yet to be born. He thanked the grieving father, and returned, sorrowful yet in hope, to his home.

(10) But when many years had rolled by, and the King was aged, the Gods, led by Indra, sought—in the fulness of time—from the mighty Vishṇu rest and refuge from the terrible oppression of the Giant-Demon Râvaṇa, the ten-headed King of Lankâ, who had by his penitential austerities won from the Creator (Brahmâ) dominion over the Universe and invulnerability from all superhuman foes. Them the Supreme favourably received, and listened well-pleased to their hymn of praise. They hailed him Omnipotent, All-embracing, the Substance from which all other entities proceed and into which all are reabsorbed. “Passionless art Thou and All-wise, yet grantest to all their desires; Changeless, yet Author of all the vicissitudes of existence; Source of Duty and Law, Lord of Life and Death: Thyself untouched by pain or sin, yet All-pitiful for the sorrows and errors of Thy creatures!” Then Almighty Vishṇu, in a voice that rose above the thunderous roar of Ocean, on which he was seated, promised that He himself, becoming incarnate in the hero-line of Daçaratha, would slay the Oppressor and free Gods and men from his tyranny.

So, at the Sacrifice which Daçaratha was offering, the mighty

God entered the milk of the oblation : this the pious King divided among his three wives, who in due time bore four noble sons—Râma, Bharata, Lakshmaṇ, and Çatrughna. And the Princes grew up, trained to all royal virtues and knit together in brotherly love, desired of all mankind, dear before all things to their father.

(11) But, while they were still boys, the Brâhman Kauçika claimed from the King the help of Râma and Lakshmaṇ, who were bound together in special love, to guard his sacrifice from assaults of the Demons. So the Princes went with him, welcomed and helped on their way by all nature. The Sage lightened the road with legends of olden time, and sustained them by his magic powers. On the way Râma slew the Demon Târakâ, and at the Saint's hermitage he discomfited the Demon-hosts, shot their leaders, and enabled the Saint to perform his long-obstructed Sacrifice.

Thus having proved their valour, the princes went with Kauçika to a great Sacrifice which the King of Mithilâ had made. On the way favouring portents occurred, heartily were they welcomed, and Râma achieved the adventure of Çiva's Bow by bending and even breaking it—task which had baffled many famous warriors—and so won for his bride lovely Sîtâ, the mysterious daughter of King Janaka. On his invitation Daçaratha came with a gallant army to be present at the marriage, when Râma's brothers also were united to fair brides, and after due festivities he went home with his sons and their newly-wedded wives. But on the way they were terrified by evil omens. The wind was adverse, the sun was darkened, jackals howled : at last appeared awful Paraçu-Râma, with his dreaded axe, sworn foe of the Warrior-Race, whom twenty-one times he had swept from the face of the



earth—beginning the savage deed by slaying his own mother, who belonged to it. He taunted and defied his namesake, whose name and fame were equally a reproach to him; made light of his adventure with Çiva's bow, and offered him his own huge weapon to bend. Râma, to whom as Vishnu's bow it was familiar, lightly grasped and bent it, smiling the while. But the glory of his foe paled before his, the elder before the later manifestation of the God; he humbled himself, embraced the offer to purchase pardon at the expense of losing that heaven which his arduous austerities had won—and departed, after blessing and praising his Conqueror. Then in joy and triumph Daçaratha and his sons went home, amid the plaudits of the heavenly host rejoicing over Râma.

(12) Then the King, having drunk life's pleasure-cup to the full, prepared (according to the wont of his noble race) to establish Râma on the throne and himself to seek the hermit's cell. All the people rejoiced, but Râma himself grieved. And now the doom long-since pronounced was to overtake the aged King. His wife Kaikeyi, Bharata's mother, who had once saved his life when he was sore wounded, claimed fulfilment of a promise then made her of two boons,—whatsoever she should ask. She demanded the kingdom for her own son Bharata, and the banishment for fourteen years of Râma. The promise was fulfilled: Râma, with his faithful wife and his brother Lakshman, went into exile; Bharata, against his own will, was seated on the throne; and the aged King, after a short, sad term in the hermitage, passed away. Bharata, after duly performing the funeral-rites, followed Râma, and vainly besought him to return and take up his birthright. But the Hero would not be persuaded,

till the years of his exile should be complete, and to escape further importunity plunged into the great Southern forest. Then began for Râma a series of battles with the Râkshasas, allies and kinsfolk of the Demon-King of Lankâ. He slew Virâdha, who attempted to carry Sîtâ away ; and he dreadfully mutilated the terrible Sûrpanakhâ, when she furiously attacked him, frenzied at rejection of her proffered love. She fled for aid to Râvaṇa, and a great host came forth against the two mighty brothers. But Râma slew them with his death-dealing arrows, and only Sûrpanakhâ escaped to tell the tale in Lankâ. Râvaṇa himself then took the field ; he decoyed Râma away, and carried off Sîtâ to his island fortress.

Râma disconsolate made alliance with the great Monkey-King Sugrîva, whom he restored to his throne ; and whose general, Hanumân, Son of the Wind, discovered and comforted Sîtâ in Lankâ, and brought back tidings to Râma. The Hero then marched south with his allies. By their aid he built a causeway over the strait to Lankâ, and by it he crossed to storm Râvaṇa's capital. A terrible battle was fought before the walls. Apes and Giants performed prodigies of valour. Meghanâda with his deadly lasso was slain, and so was the terrible but slothful Kumbhakarna. Râvaṇa himself came forth to the battle, and nearly slew Lakshmaṇ, when Râma advanced against him, mounted on Indra's war-chariot. The champions encountered ; Gods and Giants looked anxiously on while the stupendous duel raged : each put forth his utmost valour against his foe : for long the strife seemed doubtful, and arrows flew thick and fast between them. But at last Râma smashed the Giant's mighty club, smote off his ten heads with unerring arrows,

and laid the Oppressor low. Then was he hailed with shouts of joy by the Gods, and celestial flowers were rained on his head. Sîtâ was recovered, and Fire attested her stainless purity; Vibhîshan, whom happy fate had led to desert his brother Râvaṇa, was crowned in the dead tyrant's stead; and the joyful victor turned his face homewards.

(13) Then he travelled with Sîtâ in the magic car Push-paka, which moved through the air obedient to his will,—the while he called on her to admire the varied loveliness of sea and land over which they passed. Ocean with its monsters, its foaming waves, its waterspouts; the shore fringed with sombre betel and waving palm-forests; the lofty mountains, crowned with clouds; the cool, dark woods through which he had sought his lost bride; the peaceful hermitages of saintly ascetics:—all he lovingly pointed out to her, telling the story (tender or terrible) of each. And as they drew near the place of their exile, he told her of the grief in which he had sought her, and how mute nature had shared his sorrow and helped his search. At length they reached the noble river Sarâyû, which washes the walls of Ayodhyâ, honoured as divine by Raghu's race, whose banks were studded with the pillars that marked each the completion of some great Sacrifice. There was he met by Bharata and his other brothers, with the Chiefs of his allies. They embraced one another, and rejoiced at their meeting: and Râma, the set term of his exile having now expired, received back the kingdom from loyal, unselfish Bharata, and entered Ayodhyâ in triumph.

(14) First of all the brothers and Sîtâ visited the widowed Queens, to comfort them in their bereavement, and were specially tender to remorseful Kaikeyî. The ceremonies of

consecration and enthronement were observed with unexampled splendour; Râma and Sîtâ entered the city amid the glad acclaims of the whole people, and a reign of peace and prosperity began. Living happily with her Lord, Sîtâ soon gave signs that she was about to become a mother, and the glad King redoubled his tenderness, and readily promised to indulge her wish to revisit the quiet hermitages by the Godâvarî.

Now on a day the King went up on his palace-roof, and his heart swelled within him as he marked the splendour of his city, the richness of her busy marts, the security and happiness of her citizens. He turned to a follower, and asked what the people said of him. The loyal servant answered that in all things they praised him, save for the matter of the Queen—whom he had taken back after long sojourn in Râvaṇa's palace. Struck with horror at the insinuated calumny, after fierce struggle with himself, Râma deemed it his duty to put away his innocent Queen, rather than the cloud of reproach should rest on his line, hitherto stainless. So he summoned his brothers to counsel, told them his decision, and charged Lakshmaṇ to escort Sîtâ to the hermitage of Vâlmîki, and leave her there. None dared to remonstrate, and Lakshmaṇ with heavy heart obeyed. Sîtâ innocently rejoiced at her Lord's kindness, but on the way—as she admired the pleasant scenes and sounds,—unfavourable omens roused her fears, and she prayed for her Lord's welfare. But when on their arrival at the hermitage, Lakshmaṇ told her the dreadful truth, at first she swooned away. Then graciously she forgave him his share in her sorrow, sent loving greetings to all her relations, and tender words of farewell to the King. The blame of her misery she

*Latter Act.  
Rama*

laid not to his charge, but bewailed it as the punishment for her own sin in a former life ; she promised to endure her sad life until his child should be born, and vowed that then she would devote herself to penance and prayer, that in a future existence they might be reunited for ever. Then Lakshman went back to Ayodhyâ, and Sîtâ entered the hermitage. The trees shed their blossoms, the deer ceased to feed and the peacocks to dance, all in mute sympathy with her. The Poet-Saint Vâlmiki welcomed her to the peace of his dwelling, soothed her sorrows, blamed her husband, and, for her father's sake and her own, blessed her and her future offspring. So the pure Queen lived on in hope and resignation : but Râma in his palace mourned her, and devoted himself solely to the duties of his rank, joy having passed from his life.

(15) Thus Râma all lonely ruled the world. Now there came from Yamunâ's banks hermits to seek help against the Râkshasa Lavana, who troubled their sacrifices. The king gave them as their champion his younger brother Çatrughna, who after a terrible fight slew the Giant and returned in triumph to Ayodhyâ. But on his homeward way he stopped at Vâlmiki's hermitage, and that same night Sîtâ gave birth to twin sons, Kuça and Lava. These the Poet-Saint brought up, performing for them all religious rites, and teaching them the sweet strains of the Epic of their father, which he himself had made (*Râmâyana*). Then did Çatrughna find the noble city of Mathurâ, after which he returned to Râma's court, where he was lovingly received, and where he told all his story, save the birth of Sîtâ's sons, which the Saint had forbidden him to tell.

Now there came to Râma's palace a Brâhman, weeping for his son who had died untimely, and reproaching the King.

Râma, all-pitiful, promised him relief, and set out on his celestial chariot to compel Death to restore his prey. But a warning voice told him as he started that first he must root out a grievous sin which was being committed in the land. This he found to be a Çûdra, who was seeking to win Heaven by the practice of severe austerities, a thing forbidden by the Law to his degraded order. The King slew him with his own hand, and by that happy death the sin was wiped away and the sinner passed to Heaven. Then Râma returned, found the Brâhman rejoicing over his son restored to life, and received his grateful blessings.

Râma now prepared to celebrate with extraordinary splendour the great Horse-sacrifice. To it came all the great Saints, gathering from the regions of Earth and Heaven ; and the Râkshasas, formerly disturbers, were now guardians of the rites! With the rest came Vâlmîki, at whose command Kuça and Lava went singing before the King and the people, melting them to tears when they heard the sweet story of Râma in the Poet's matchless verse. Then were his sons made known to Râma, and the Saint craved as a boon that he should take back his own true wife. Sitâ, summoned by the Saint, came forward, and solemnly prayed that Earth would proclaim her stainless and receive her to her bosom. A chasm opened, Earth appeared in glorious form, clasped her pure daughter to her breast, and vanished. The King was hardly restrained from a vain attempt to recover her, but at length submitted to Fate's decree.

Râma, having established his brothers' sons in separate kingdoms, now prepared for the end. Death himself came with a summons from the Supreme, and the Divine Hero returned to the repose of that eternity which he had quitted

for a time, to deliver Gods and men from Râvaṇa's tyranny. And when he departed, there followed him in one mighty stream the dwellers in Ayodhyâ; and his faithful allies, the Râkshasas and Monkeys, bitterly bewailed his loss.

(16) The sons of Râma and his brothers ruled their various realms in harmony, the chief rank being given to Kuça, who dwelt in Kuçâvati. But one night, when all the palace was still, he woke from sleep, to see in his chamber the guardian goddess of his ancestral capital, Ayodhyâ, clad as a mourning bride, who besought him to return to her. She bewailed the desolation of her streets and palaces, where jackals howled and spiders spread their webs; of the painted halls, where now fierce lions lurked; of the pleasant gardens, fallen a prey to apes; of the river-banks, where once fair women bathed and now wild buffaloes wallowed. Her houses were fallen into decay, grass grew on the roofs, and no fires burned on the hearths. So the King promised to return to her, his ministers approved, and on a propitious day he set out. His host was like a moving city, with its multitude of chariots and horses, its mountainous elephants, its forest of flagstuffs. He crossed Ganges, adoring the sacred stream, and came to Sarâyû, hard by his own city. He restored the buildings, worshipped the Gods in their temples, and established himself in the ancient capital of his race.

Then came the grievous heats of summer, when scarcely even the rich could escape from misery. The King with all the ladies of the palace went forth to bathe in the cool water of Sarâyû. There they played, delighting in the pleasant cold, splashing one another and the King, floating and dancing, displaying all their charms. But when the King left the water, he found he had lost a precious bracelet, the

gift of his father Râma. Fishermen searched the river, but in vain. They told the monarch of a Serpent-King who dwelt below the water, and had perhaps stolen it. Armed with his bow the King repaired to the bank, when at once there appeared the Nâga, with his fair sister Kumudvatî, who when playing at ball had seized the glittering bracelet as it fell. The bracelet was restored, and the appeased Kuça took Kumudvatî to wife, thus forming an alliance auspicious to the Worlds.

(17) To Kuça Kumudvatî bore a son Atithi, whom his father trained in all noble nurture ere he fell in battle with a Demon; Kumudvatî followed him in death, and Atithi reigned in his stead. Him did Brâhmans and ministers unite to consecrate King, stablishing him on an ivory throne in a new-built palace. When duly anointed he lavished gifts on the priests and set all his captives free. Fair in form, by his beauty and winning ways he made all hearts his own; his royal state was as Vishṇu's, his palace a second Paradise. Pious to the Gods, terrible in war, careful and just in administration, was he—and his kingdom flourished. Truthful and generous, resisting all temptation, trampling on the allurements of sense, tempering severity with mercy, he struck the roots of his Kingship deep in the hearts of his subjects. Carefully dividing his time, he daily held his council and watched both friends and foes. Boldly he attacked, but guarded his own realm well; nor by over-confidence did he put himself in the power of any. Riches he gathered as reserve of power and fostered his army therewith; commerce he protected, and religion; using power or policy as best served. Mighty, generous, modest—all bowed before his throne; his subjects adored, and the Gods favoured him.



(18) To him his Queen, Nishada's princess, bore a famous son, Nishâdha, who sat on the throne when Atithi passed to heaven. When Nishâdha's glorious rule was ended fiery Nala reigned, and after him mild, virtuous Pundarîka. Then valiant Devânîka came and after him magnanimous Ahînagas—lofty-souled, skilled to discern the thoughts of men. Next Çîla succeeded, and Kuça and Unnâbha; Vajranâbha, Çankhana, Dhushitâçya, Viçvasaha, Hiranyanâbha, pleasant Kauçalya, mighty Putra, Paushya, and peaceful Dhruvasandhi—Polar Star among Kings, slain untimely in the chase.

But when Dhruvasandhi died his son Sudarçana was but a child. Him the council installed, prince of high promise and mighty heart, whose dignity and grace delighted his people. Kings bowed before him, eloquent of speech, and earth rested in peace under the shadow of his boyish arm. Apt was he to learn, soon mastering the arts of wisdom and war; and when he grew to man's estate he wedded a lovely bride who bore him a fair son, Agnivarma.

(19) Now when Prince Agnivarma was of age, his father placed him on the throne, and himself retired to the hermit's cell. For some few years Agnivarma endured the cares of royalty; but then, fearing no foreign foes, he gave himself up entirely to sensual pleasure, nor recked of his people's welfare. Wasting his life in ignoble pursuits, lavishing his strength in vicious indulgence, heeding no counsel—he consumed away before his time, unblest with offspring. But his sage ministers, hastily and secretly performing his obsequies, honoured the widowed Queen as regent and performed the ceremonies of inauguration for her unborn son.

(So abruptly closes the Poem in its present state.)

## NOTES MYTHOLOGICAL AND EXPLANATORY

IN orthodox Hindu cosmogony Brahma is the Supreme Soul. All that exists proceeds from Him. In Him exists no will nor anything that (to human apprehension) indicates *soul*. But at determined periods—Kalpas—Brahma becomes energetic in the forms of the three Supreme Gods of Hindu mythology—Brahmâ, Vishṇu, and Çiva. At the end of these world-periods, whatsoever exists—Gods, men, all living creatures, and all matter—is reabsorbed in Brahma, who goes to sleep again for an equal period. But the object of each individual soul is to free itself from the chain of births within the world-age and be reabsorbed in Brahma, so losing individual being and responsibility. In our poem Vishṇu is identified, and made co-extensive with Brahma.

The function of Brahmâ, performed either directly, or through the Prajâpatis, “fathers of living souls,” ends with creation, except that He is represented as granting the boons won by asceticism. To him therefore no altars rise and no worship is paid. Vishṇu, the Preserver, is the chief God of adoration in the world, and to him incarnate as Râma the whole poem looks. Nine times has he been incarnate in the current World-Age—a period of stupendous length, 430,000,000,000 years for a Day of Brahma, divided into four

Ages, of which each is less long and more vicious than that which preceded it, gradually sinking from primeval goodness : and a tenth Descent in human form (Avatâr) remains to come, before all shall be reabsorbed, and the Divine shall go to sleep again.

Vishṇu's first four incarnations or Descents (Avatârs) took place in the first, the most perfect, Age ; the three that succeeded, of which the last was the divine Hero of our poem, in the second ; the eighth and most complete, Krishṇa, in the third Age ; whilst the last and most evil, and also the shortest, boasts of two, the Buddha and Kalki, who is yet to come. Each of the four Ages, corresponding in some sort to the Golden, Silver, Copper, and Iron Ages of Classic Mythology, is preceded and succeeded by a "twilight" equal in length to one-tenth of the period to which it belongs. But of what happens during these minor periods of rest we know nothing. In each succeeding Age the Great Sages, usually reckoned as Seven and sometimes identified with the stars of the Great Bear, come again into being and activity ; apparently they live through the World-Age, as does Vaçishṭha, the great spiritual Director (Guru) of Ikshvâku's line, Ikshvâku being himself the son of Manu, the seventh of the great succession of Manus, of whom Hindu mythological chronology numbers fourteen.

This seventh Manu has the Sun for his father, and is himself the progenitor of the mighty Solar line of Kings. A Manu presides throughout the whole of a Kalpa or Great Yuga, which is thence called also a Manu-period or Manvantara.

Until the individual soul by pious meditation and abstraction frees itself from the chain of individuality, it remains subject to the laws of transmigration, and is born in successive states

of existence—higher or lower, happy or miserable, according to the deeds done in the body. These previous births constitute Fate, as determining the course of life in subsequent existences.

In the human sphere the Creator placed on earth four orders of men—Brâhmans, Kshatriyas, Vaiçyas, and Çûdras : Priests, Warriors, Husbandmen, Slaves. The three former are bound by common rites and duties, admitted to common privileges ; but the last is a slave, and may not attempt to rise higher. On the other hand, it will be seen that whereas the earlier Râma is a Brâhman, the second (and mightier) is a Kshatriya ; and the Mythology tells of more than one Vaiçya, who was both Saint and King. Throughout the poem the extraordinary supremacy of the Brâhman is insisted on. Gods and Kings alike tremble before his curse, and alike seek his aid against calamity. The chief duty of Kings and heroes is to protect the Brâhmans in the performance of their sacrifices, and Râvaṇa's guilt lies at least as much in his obstruction of their rites as in his oppression of the worlds.

Now, while men are on earth, their lives are by Brahmanical rule divided into four stages—those of student, householder, recluse, and ascetic : in the poem the last two seem to merge into one. It was the duty of a boy of the three upper classes to spend the years between childhood and maturity in the study of the Vedas and other sacred lore : when perfect therein he was permitted *and was bound* to marry and have a household of his own. When he had a son to carry on his line, he was free to consult his own future happiness by withdrawing himself from the world, and by meditation on the Supreme fitting himself for that union with Brahma which is the final goal. But most awful consequences awaited the

man who had left no son to succeed him : the ghosts of his ancestors would be in misery : and he himself could never escape from the dread round of transmigration. (This is how the matter is presented to us, though if the ancestors in succession had attained—as Raghu's line did—to union with Brahma, one does not see how they could be affected by failure of the line ; *cf.* III. 26. It may be noticed too that the expedient of adoption is not contemplated.)

Inferior to the three Great Gods are many less mighty, in their origin elemental,—of whom the chief is Indra, the thundering god of the sky, who has won his place by performing a hundred sacrifices, and may be supplanted by any one who does the like (see C. III.) Indra too has been the champion of the Gods against the Demons, and he has drunk the Nectar produced by the Churning of Ocean with Mount Mandara for the churning-stick, which gave the gods strength to overcome their foes. He has a hundred eyes, drives seven bay horses, and is lord of the thunder ; the rainbow is his bow, and he clipped the wings of the mountains when they threatened heaven in their flight. His wife is Çachî, his son Jayanta, and his special heaven Svarga, on Mount Meru ; his followers are the Maruts or wind-gods. According to one legend Vishṇu is his younger brother, both being sons of Aditi. Agni is god of fire ; Yama, of death and of justice ; Kuvera, of wealth, his followers being the Yakshas, his home (and Vishṇu's) Kailâsa ; lastly, Varuṇa, of the waters.

In the earthly life each individual in his student-stage chooses as preceptor in Sacred Lore a Brâhman, his Guru, whom he is bound to venerate far beyond his natural father, and to whom he would seek on all occasions of special need. Such is Vaçishṭha to the whole Sun-descended Kingly line.

The Brâhmans, as we find them in the poem, live for the most part in little separate communities, in groves by sacred rivers, where they perform their sacrifices and lead holy, peaceful lives. They have their wives and children about them, live in huts, and wear robes of bark; their enemies the Râkshasas trouble their rites; and when Kings have solemn festivals—births, marriages, funerals, or other solemnities—they gather to them, and are graced with rich gifts.

The Râkshasas are spirits of evil. Of terrible aspect, feasting on raw flesh, delighting in darkness, able to assume varied shapes at will, they trouble the holy rites of the pious. Their King was Râvaṇa, whose brother was Kumbhakarṇa, his son Meghaṇâda or Indrajit, slain by Lakshmaṇ, his sister Sûrpanakhâ.

A King is imaged as having wedded the Earth, loving and protecting his realm as a bridegroom his bride. Also, Royal State is represented as his bride, the Fortune or Luck of the Kingdom; sometimes she is figured as jealous of his human bride (as of Sîtâ). The special insignia of royalty are the umbrella and the yâk-tail whisks or fans (Châmari). When the heir comes to manhood, he is usually installed as Yuva-râja or associate-King.

The elephant is a favourite subject of comparison, for dignity and strength, and also for the peculiar sweet-scented liquid that exudes from his temples in the season of love-passion (*mada*). Among plants the lotus or water-lily takes chief place,—for its two species, distinguished by the fact that the one opens up to the rays of the moon and closes during the day, while the other expands to the sun and remains closed at night. There is frequent allusion also to the phosphores-

cent plants, specially flourishing on Himálaya, which shine through the darkness as though the setting sun had left his light with them.

**Fire** is thought specially pure ; it ministers at the sacrifice, and pervades all nature, abiding even in the sea (which, perhaps, is its phosphorescence). The dead are consumed on the pyre, but perfect ascetics are buried : and Râma also buries the Râkshasas.

**The Law** under which all are set is the Code of the first Manu, —divine progenitor of the whole human race. This Code was revealed by Bhṛigu, son of the Creator, and is a *Smṛiti* or derivative sacred book, the authority on which it rests being the *Çruti*, or *Heard Revelation*,—the Veda. That Code, which in its present form was probably composed in the third century A.D., is a mine of information on the orthodox Brahmanical system. The perfect King orders himself by Manu's precepts, the cosmogony of the poem is his, and his, above all, is the exalted position of the Brâhman, whether as Preceptor (Guru), Sacrificer, Ascetic, or Counsellor. From his Law-book too are derived the ceremonies which consecrate the royal children, and the studies that fit them for their high position. There also are found the rules that regulate the solemn ceremonies of the *Çrâddha*, those sacrifices to departed Ancestors that were so imperatively incumbent on every Hindu, and the duty of which made a son the object of such fervent desire. [These sacrifices to the spirits of the dead probably point to an earlier stage of belief than most which we find prevailing among Hindus.]

As three of Vishṇu's incarnations are prominently brought before us in the poem, it may be interesting to give a catalogue of them all.

- 1st. The Fish—when he saved Manu and the seven Rishis in the great Deluge, and rescued the Vedas from destruction (*cf.* XIII. 20).
- 2nd. The Tortoise—when in that form he allowed the gods to pivot on his back the Mountain Mandara, with which they churned the Ocean to obtain the Nectar to strengthen them against the Demons (Asuras).
- 3rd. The Boar—when on his mighty tusk he raised up the solid earth above the waste of waters.
- 4th. The Man-lion—when he tore to pieces the Demon Hiranyakaçipu, who was oppressing the world, in defence of his son Prahlâda, a devout worshipper of Vishṇu.
- 5th. The Dwarf—who saved the world from the tyranny of Bali. Approaching him at the end of a great sacrifice, he obtained as a boon the grant of as much space as he could cover in three strides; then rising to his own Divine proportions, with the first stride he covered earth, with the second heaven (*cf.* XVI., “Vishṇu’s second stride”), and with the third he crushed Bali down to Pâtâla, the region of semi-divine snakes below the earth.
- 6th. Râma with the Axe, Paraçu-Râma, son of Jamadagni, descended from Bhṛigu (hence *Bhârgava*). He came to earth to deliver from the Demon Arjuna, King of the Haihayas, who provoked his death at Râma’s hands by stealing his father’s cow. Arjuna’s death was avenged by his sons on Jamadagni, and



then did Râma in his fury, twenty-one times in succession, sweep away the generations of the Warrior Class. In obedience to his father he had already slain his own mother Renukâ, for having entertained impure thoughts. But when his father, delighted at his obedience, granted him whatever he should ask, he obtained her restoration to life and pristine purity, the revocation of curses laid on his brothers, and for himself the highest renown as a warrior.

- 7th. Râma Candra—the Râma of our poem, incarnate for the destruction of Râvaṇa.
- 8th. Krishṇa—the most popular form of all Vishṇu's earthly manifestations. In him the whole God is said to have come down, whereas in the others He came only in part. Krishṇa is the Divine Hero of the Mahâbhârata, as Râma is of the Râmâyana. He was born in a humble home, for the destruction of Çiçupâla. His worship is the most widespread of any in India at the present day, and the god is a compound (one may say) of Hercules and Cupid.
- 9th. Gautama the Buddha—though this is by no means undisputed. This manifestation is said to have been made to restore religion to pristine purity. The inclusion of the arch-heretic among the Avatârs of Vishṇu is a masterpiece of Brahmanical craft.
- 10th, and last, is the Descent of Vishṇu as Kalki, which is still to come, when the earth—at length full of all evil and lawlessness—is to be restored for a while to primeval innocence, before the end of the Age and the Great Dissolution (Mahâ-Pralaya).

Vishṇu's special weapon is the Quoit (Chakra); he rides on Garuḍa, King of birds, foe of snakes, his constant attendant; he wears the jewel Kaustubha, won from Ocean at its Churning, and his breast is marked by a sacred curl, the Çrivatsa. His wife is Lakshmî, and in the intervals of his activity he slumbers on the waters seated on a lotus.

The Svayamvara, the maiden's choice of her bridegroom, is a great feature in both Sanskrit Epics—those of Sîtâ and Indumatî in the story of Râma, and of Draupadî in the Mahâbhârata. It points to a freedom of choice by the women of India which has now been curtailed or abolished, probably through the influence of Mohammedan modes of thought.

**Mount Himâlaya** has a divine character. From his slopes comes the sacred Gangâ, and on his peaks did the god Çiva perform his arduous austerities. His daughter was Umâ, specially Pârvatî, daughter of the mountain, who by her austerities won the love of Çiva and became thereby the mother of Kârtikeya (so called from his six nurses, the Kṛitikâs, now the Pleiades in heaven), born among the reeds of Skanda—leader of the armies of the gods. [See the *Kumârasambhava*.] She is invoked with Çiva at the beginning of the poem.

For the ordinary daily sacrifice were needed—1st, the butter-oblacion, *havis* (ghî)—clarified butter—laid on the holy fire; 2nd, the *Kuça* grass, a scented grass still much esteemed in India,—*Khas-Khas*.

The greatest of all sacrifices was that of the Horse—the Açvamedha—being the final one of a series of a hundred, the accomplishing of which would raise the sacrificer to the rank of Indra. For this final sacrifice it was necessary that the horse chosen as the victim should have been free to range

where he would for a full year before he was offered up. So was the victim carried off by Çiva, when Sagara tried to complete his series of sacrifices, and so also by Indra when Dilipa attempted it,—and Raghu attacked the god. (C. III.).

Çiva, the third of the Great Gods, is the Destroyer. With five heads, and in the principal one three eyes, he rides—clothed with a tiger-skin—on the bull Nandi. He wields the Trident and a mighty bow, bears on his brow the crescent moon; his neck is blue from the effect of drinking the poison produced at Ocean's Churning; and on his breast hangs a chaplet of human skulls. In one of his life-stages his wife was Satî, one of the daughters of Daksha. But Daksha slighted both by not inviting them to a great sacrifice he made. Satî in wrath leaped into the altar-fire and destroyed the ceremony, and Çiva with a flash from his terrible central eye smote off Daksha's head; but afterwards relented and replaced it with that of a ram.

His two most famous achievements are:—

1st. When the Ganges was to descend to earth from heaven to purify from sin the ashes of the sons of Sagara, he broke its fall with his head, lest it should overwhelm the earth. It wandered for a thousand years among his matted locks before its final descent to earth.

2nd. While he was engaged in severe austerities on Mount Himâlaya, Kâma, god of love (sent by the Gods), archer of the flowery bow, attempted to awake passion in his breast, that he might beget a son to lead the hosts of heaven, whereupon the angry God reduced him to ashes with one flash of his terrible eye. Hence Kâma is called (Ananga) Bodiless, —though at last, yielding to the prayers of Rati, his wife, and of the Gods, Çiva gave him a body again. The story is told

at length by Kâlidâsa in the *Kumârasambhava* ("Birth of the War-God"). It is an unending source of allusion and metaphor throughout Sanskrit poetry, especially in combination with beautiful descriptions of Spring, the gladsome season of love.

**Gangâ** was the daughter of Mount Himâlaya, and originally flowed only in heaven. But King Sagara having by austerities gained by one wife one son, and by the other 60,000,—prepared for the great Horse-sacrifice. When all was ready, the victim was stolen away by Çiva in guise of a monstrous snake. The 60,000 dug down through earth, enlarging the bounds of Ocean, hence called Sâgara, and were reduced to ashes by the angry God when they found him in Pâtâla. Their half-brother renewed the quest, and found the ashes. Garuda, Vishṇu's bird, told him from that God that the ashes could be purified only by the waters of heavenly Ganges. For four generations did Sagara and his descendants practise severe austerities to bring the river down. Then at last the Creator allowed the descent, and Çiva broke the fall. The mighty river, still—however—flowing also in heaven, descended in seven streams upon the earth, and flows also through the gloomy realms of Pâtâla, home of the Nâgas, or semi-divine snakes. On earth it bears the name of Bhâgîrathî, daughter of the saintly King, whose severe asceticism won the grace of her descent; but also by the name of "Jahnu's daughter," having been swallowed by Jahnu in his anger, and again released. Her pure waters washed the ashes of Sagara's sons, and they mounted to heaven. One legend makes the river proceed from Vishṇu's foot (*cf.* x. 38). Sagara was one of the earliest Kings of the Solar line (*cf.* XIII.). Kakutstha was grandson of Ikshwâku, and his name—"rider on the

hump"—was derived from his riding in battle against the Asuras on Indra himself in the form of a bull. It will be found that the strife between the gods and their enemies, Daityas, Asuras, Râkshasas, is never-ending, still-beginning.

**Agastya**, tutelary Saint of the southern region, and in heaven the star Canopus, led in Râma's age a hermit's life. He was born in a Jar. When Mount Vindhya aspired to eclipse Himâlaya in height, the Saint prevailed on him to bow to let him pass southward and so remain till his return—which never took place. Hence Vindhya's inferior height.

**The Churning of Ocean** was undertaken by the gods by Vishṇu's command, to recover various precious things that had been lost, and to obtain the draught of immortality (Amṛita). The churning was done with Mount Mandara for the churning-stick, the Serpent Vâçuki for the rope, Vishṇu himself as the Tortoise for the pivot. Then were produced—Surabhi, the Holy Cow; Vâruni, goddess of Wine; Pârijâta, the Celestial wishing-tree, glory of Indra's heaven; the Apsarases, Nymphs of exquisite loveliness; Lakshmi, goddess of beauty; Vishṇu's precious jewel, Kaustubha; Dhanvantari, the Hindu Æsculapius; the Moon; the deadly Halâhala poison; and last of all, the precious Amṛita, by drinking which the Gods became immortal, and with resistless might smote the Demons. The Dragon Râhu managed to steal some drops, and, becoming immortal, thenceforward periodically swallowed the sun and moon, so causing eclipses. (But the true theory is given in xiv. 159.)

The three mental qualities so often alluded to are Truth or Virtue, Passion, Ignorance. The perfect sage must have his senses completely subdued, and be dead to all disturbing emotion. Asceticism is in itself meritorious, independently

of any purpose to be served by it. So the great Gods are described as engaging in it, and one of Vishṇu's titles is the Great Ascetic. Āiva's austerities have been already referred to, and Brahmā engaged in them before the work of Creation.

In connection with the supreme power and authority of the Brāhmans, in seeming contradiction of their passionless character, it will be noted that, as their blessings are most potent for good, so their curses—of which they are not sparing—are the most awful engines of evil.

For a handy and accurate account of the mythology, religion, and modes of thought and life in Ancient India, no book is better than Sir Monier-Williams's *Indian Wisdom*. His *Indian Epic Poetry* gives an excellent analysis of both the Rāmāyaṇa and Mahābhārata. Dowson's *Dictionary of Hindu Mythology* is also very useful. The great source, however, for English readers is still Wilson's translation of the *Vishṇu Purāṇa*. Professor Macdonnell, of Oxford, has lately published a short but excellent *History of Sanskrit Literature*, which should be consulted.

## NOTE ON PRONUNCIATION

SANSKRIT names I have tried to transliterate, without losing sight of scientific accuracy, so as to enable ordinary readers to pronounce them correctly. Scholars are, however, unhappily not yet agreed upon a uniform system : that which I adopt is almost exactly what is known as the "Modified Jonesian," the official system of the Government of India.

Vowels, speaking generally, are to be pronounced as in Italian, consonants as in English ; the aspirate (*h*), however, preserves its own sound when combined with other consonants, except *ch* and *sh*, which are sounded as in English.

The following table will sufficiently explain any peculiarities :—

a	is pronounced as	u	in	but
â	,,	a	,,	father
e	,,	ay	,,	pay
i	,,	i	,,	bit
î	,,	ee	,,	feet
o	,,	o	,,	over
u	,,	oo	,,	foot
û	,,	oo	,,	food
ai	,,	ai	,,	aisle
au	,,	ou	,,	cloud

## CONSONANTS

Ç represents a modified *s*, hardly distinguishable from *sh*, and both are pronounced as *sh* in *she*.

Ch is pronounced as in *choose*.

G is always *hard*, as in *game*, *get*, etc.

Bh, Gh, Kh, Dh, Th, etc., are aspirated sounds as in *cab-horse*, *log-hut*, *blockhouse*, *madhouse*, *hothouse*, etc.

Y is always a consonant, as in *yoke*.

Dots below consonants are significant to the scholar, but the slight difference in sound between dotted and plain consonants the ordinary reader may neglect.



## CANTO I

*How King Dilîpa went to Vaçishtha's Hermitage.*

THE Lord Supreme and Pârvatî I praise,  
The parents of all worlds, close-joined in one  
As word with sense, and pray for gift of speech  
With mighty meaning fraught. How else could I,  
Weak-witted, dare to hymn the Kingly race  
Descended from the Sun,—daring not less  
Than one who ventures on a raft to cross  
Some pathless sea? For, dullard though I am,  
I seek a poet's fame, and risk men's jeers,  
A dwarf who stretches tiny arms to grasp  
Fruit hung well-nigh beyond a giant's reach.  
Yet Bards of old have entered, haply I  
May follow: where a diamond shows the way,  
A thread may go,—yea, pass through hardest gem.

10

So Raghu's line I sing,—pure from their birth,  
Who till they won success worked on, and ruled  
Earth to the Sea: their car-track reached to Heav'n.  
The altar-fire they tended, suppliants all  
Most fully satisfied, ill-deeds with stripes

They punished,—nor were slothful in their rule. 20  
 Wealth they amassed to scatter ; sparing words,  
 Ne'er spake they falsely ; fame in war they sought,  
 Not gain,—and wedded love for noble seed.  
 Their children studied, gravely youth pursued  
 Its decent pleasures, and in ripe old age  
 Ascetic lived they,—till through pious thought  
 At length they passed to win the Bliss Supreme.  
 Me, poor of words and foolish, has their fame  
 That sounded through the worlds late moved to write :—  
 May wise men hear ! for in their judgment lies 30  
 Or fame or shame, as fire parts gold from dross.

First King was Manu, whom the Sun begot,  
 Wise, reverend, as the Holiest Word begins  
 The sacred Hymns. In that unspotted line  
 Dilipa purer sprang,—'mong Kings a Moon.  
 As in the Milky Ocean Soma rose.  
 Broad-chested, tall as Çâl-tree, as a bull  
 Wide-shouldered, long of arm, the Warrior-race  
 He seemed embodied, fit for famous deeds.  
 All-glorious, all-surpassing, he bestrode— 40  
 Like Meru's self—the Earth. His vigorous mind  
 Matched with his beauty, while his Holy Lore  
 Was equal with them : valour and success  
 Were twinned : and still his Kingly virtues made  
 Him to his foes a terror, but his folk  
 Loved him and honoured,—as the Sea yields pearls

Yet nurtures monstrous births. He held the path  
That Manu traced, no hair's-breadth strayed his folk  
From that pure model. Save to guard the realm,  
No tax was taken : so the Sun derives 50  
From earth that moisture which a thousandfold  
He soon gives back in rain. His armed host  
Was escort only for the King, who used  
Two arms alone in war, his insight keen  
In Holy Lore, and bow well-strung. Mankind  
Knew his deep purpose when it came to fruit,  
Not sooner : fathomless his mind and ways :—  
So here we reap the fruit of former lives !

Fearless himself he guarded, duty's path  
He strictly followed, wealth he stored, nor grudged 60  
To spend that wealth, and unenthralled enjoyed  
His royal pleasures : wise, he spared his words,—  
Mighty yet patient, generous secretly,  
Opposedè virtues seemed in him twin-born.  
By sense unshackled, straining Brahma-wards,  
By duty curbed he pleasure,—that his age  
Brought no decay. For nurture, maintenance,  
And for protection looked his folk to him ;  
Their parents gave life only. So the King  
Repressed the sinful, held the world upright, 70  
Loved virtue, wedded for the Fathers' sake,  
Kept righteous ways. As Indra doth for corn,  
He drew from Earth her wealth for Sacrifice,—  
And both alternate mildly ruled the Worlds.

His glory other Kings despaired to reach,  
 For theft, ungrasping, lived in name alone.  
 A worthy foe he honoured, as one sick  
 Loves healing bitters ; friends unworthy proved  
 Like hand snake-bitten did the King cast off.  
 Him the Creator formed of choicest seed,  
 To rear for men rich crop of good ; alone  
 He reigned o'er Earth, sea-moated, girdled round  
 By Ocean-ramparts, like a single town.

80

Sudakshinâ his Queen, whose lucky name  
 Proclaimed her virtues, shared his pious home,  
 As Dakshâ pure ; in whom her royal spouse  
 Delighted chiefly, loving her and Earth  
 Before all other. Yet the noble pair  
 Were still unblest with offspring, and the King  
 Longed, and was weary, and well-nigh lost hope.

90

So, bent on Sacrifice to win a son,  
 The Kingdom's weight now casting off, the King,  
 Pure, with his consort, after prayer and fast,  
 Sought sage Vaçishṭha, lord of Saintly Lore,  
 As in the rains one cloud Airâvata  
 And lightning mount, deep-rumbling, so that pair  
 One chariot mounted, whom a modest train  
 Attended,—“lest the Hermits be disturbed,”—  
 Their glory like a host encircling them.  
 Scented with Çâl-tree gums a pleasant breeze,

100

That shook the forest, bearing fragrant dust  
Of flowers, followed : and a deep, sweet cry  
Was raised by peacocks, as the car swept past.  
Amazed the deer looked up, and left the path  
As on the chariot rolled ; their love-filled eyes  
Were on them bent,—that pair so like themselves.

Anon they watched the cranes, that overhead  
Flew tuneful, arching o'er the gate of Heav'n,  
Unpillar'd, while the favouring breeze foretold  
Success, and kept unsoiled both robes and hair.

110

Pale lilies' perfume, fragrant as their breath,  
They savoured, from the tanks which rippling waves  
Cooled ever. Priests, from wayside villages

Themselves had founded, blessed the Royal pair,  
Rich from their bounty, where the altars rose.

Butter of kine received they, herdsmen grey  
With kindly greeting questioned, asking them  
The names of shady trees that lined the roads.

Untold their glory, pure their hearts and robes,  
As through the sky speed Chitrâ and the Moon

120

They sped delighted, while the smiling King  
This pointed out and that,—nor knew the way  
Was ending, ere they reached the Sage's grove.  
He checked the horses, handed forth his Queen,  
And nobly courteous led her to their Host.

Now from the neighbouring woods, with grass and fruit  
And store of fuel, Saintly bands came home,—

Met by the Sacred Fire, unseen ; the deer  
 Thronged round the huts, and ate the allotted rice ;  
 Sweet maidens filled the trenches, where the birds  
 130 Unfearing drank ; then couched the timid roes  
 Where rice was heaped at eve, and chewed the cud.

Wind-shaken now the rising altar-smoke,  
 With butter fed, made pure the attentive guests  
 Around the Hermitage. That noble pair,  
 Alighting meekly, sought the Ascetic's home.  
 Then hailed the Saintly tribe their pious Lord  
 With worthy honour, grave in self-control,  
 Receiving him. When evening rites were o'er,  
 He saw the Sage supreme : close at his side  
 140 Arundhatî was seated : and the Saint  
 Shone like the Sacred Fire, like Svâhâ she.  
 The Royal pair saluting clasped their feet,  
 And lovingly with blessings were received.  
 Then, after rest and food, the glorious Saint  
 Asked of the Ascetic King how fared his realm,  
 And how himself. The patient Conqueror  
 Returned grave answer, speaking all his mind  
 Before the Saint, high Lord of Sacred Spells :—

“ All ways my Kingdom prospers, holy Sage !  
 150 Whom thou protectest neither Gods nor men  
 Can harm : thy Holy spells defeat far off  
 The foe malignant, while my feebler shafts  
 Smite those I see, superfluous ; and the rain  
 Abundant cheers the drought-consumèd corn,—

Bred by thy Sacred rites ; my subjects live  
 To man's full age, nor fear nor pain disturbs  
 Their happy lives :—all this we owe to thee.  
 Deep-rooted, flawless, is my prosp'rous state,  
 For thou art ever watching, Brahmâ's child !

160

“ Yet, O my Father, I myself, and this  
 My Queen, thy daughter, bowed with sorrow, long,  
 And vainly long, for offspring ; and the Earth,  
 Sea-girdled, rich in gems, delights me not.  
 The Fathers of my race, whom funeral cakes  
 Delight, foresee a failing of the rite,  
 And mourn my fate, the while with tears they fowl  
 Drink-offerings poured by me, their sonless son.

Thus pure by sacrifice, my eyes are dim  
 For longing, childless,—as the mountain-peak  
 Half sunlit, half in shade, my glory dimmed !

170

“ By gifts, and self-control, and holy life,  
 May Heav'n be won, but sons of noble line  
 Are blessings here and yonder, O my Guide !  
 Does not my childless state distress thy heart,  
 As 'twere a tree thou plantedst fruitless, bare ?  
 Three debts men owe :—this last alone, unpaid,  
 Torments me, as a shackle binds and pains  
 The lordly elephant : Oh, help me then,  
 Father, Protector, Stay of Manu's line !  
 And teach me how at length to pay this debt !”

180

One moment only sank the Priest in thought,

Like lake that slumbers, having heard the King.  
To pious thought the hindrance stood revealed,  
And thus the mighty Saint made grave reply :—

“Of yore returning home from Indra’s courts,  
By Pârijâta passing, where the Cow  
Surabhi rested in the grateful shade,  
To her by thee due reverence was not paid,  
As fearing to neglect thy loving Queen. 190  
Then was the curse of childlessness pronounced,  
Till by submission thou shouldst purge thy sin !  
But Gangâ roared, where heavenly monsters plunged,  
And so her curse was all unheard by thee.  
Hence is thy sin thy scourge ; as Sages teach,  
Scorn of the worthy works the scorner woe.  
Now in Pâtâla, where the gates are barred  
By mighty snakes, she helps a royal rite  
For bless’d Prachetas. Therefore, O my King,  
With due observance tend her holy Calf, 200  
Pure-living, with thy Queen, that so, well-pleased,  
She may bestow the priceless boon ye seek !”

Even as he spake, came Nandini, the Cow  
That gave the oblation, faultless, from the wood,  
In tender, tawny lustre, like a leaf  
All fresh, with arching eyebrow of white hair,  
Like crescent on night’s brows :—the streaming milk  
Flowed now in holy flood to feed her calf.

Then said the Saint, who knew Fate’s course, and knew  
The King should prosper :—“See, this fruitful Cow 210



Comes here unprompted : so shall thy success  
 Surprise thee ; hear my loving counsel then !  
 Attend her ever as she roams the woods,—  
 As Study follows Knowledge : while she walks,  
 Walk thou ; she standing, stand ; she couching, sit ;  
 She drinking, drink :—at dawn of day, thy Spouse,  
 Fasting, with close observance must attend  
 Her to the forest's edge, and thence at eve  
 Receive her coming home. So shall her grace  
 By constancy be won, and thou shalt stand,  
 Proud Father, Sire of Princely sons, and chief  
 Of Royal fathers !”

220

Then the grateful King  
 Bowed docile, with his Queen, and both retired.

Night fell : and Brahmâ's son, the eloquent  
 And true, dismissed to sleep the pious King,  
 For whom success was dawning ; well he could  
 Bestow the boon, but knew that grace divine  
 Is hard to win, nor won save after toil.

He gave him but a rustic hut, and there  
 The Queen reposed, where fragrant grass was spread,— 230  
 While saintly students passed all night in prayer.

## CANTO II

*Nandinî grants the King his Desire.*

WHEN morning broke, the King, in glory rich,  
 Rose, loosed the Cow, and—when her calf had drunk—  
 Again secured it. Next the gracious Queen  
 With wreaths and perfumes honoured Nandinî.  
 Then turned they to the forest, and the Cow  
 Their way made holy, while the Queen, renowned  
 For state and purity, pursued her steps,  
 As pious Learning follows Holy Texts.  
 The careful Monarch bade his spouse return,  
 And cheerful, glorious, herded Nandinî, 10  
 As though 'twere Earth embodied, Oceans four  
 Her udders : next, his penance to fulfil,  
 That royal Herdsman sent his guards away,  
 And walked alone, well-guarded :—Manu's race  
 Their own right arm defends. With freshest grass  
 He fed his charge ; he fanned her, smoothed her hide,  
 Nor checked her wayward steps ; as shadow close  
 He followed. When she stood, he also stood ;  
 When she went, on went he ; when she lay down,  
 He sat by patient ; when she drank, drank he. 20

A very King he strode, whose glory shone,  
 Unhelped by outward show,—like elephant,  
 Lord of the herd, whose passion undisplayed  
 Burns fierce within. His hair in woodland wreath  
 Was bound, his bow well-strung: so through the woods  
 He ranged, close guarding Nandinî the Cow.  
 The wild beasts fled; but birds in wayside trees  
 Hymned him with cheerful praises, Yama's peer,  
 Who strode along unguarded. Climbing vines,  
 Wind-shaken, showered their scented blooms on him,  
 Thus splendid, worshipful, as city-dames  
 Honour with parchèd rice a favourite Lord.

30

Unfearing watched the deer that Archer mild,  
 Whose face revealed a tender heart, and drank  
 His beauty with wide gaze. The Forest-gods  
 He heard, who sang his praise in shady bowers,  
 On rustling reeds, wind-shaken, for soft flutes.  
 Nigh fainting from the heat, no sunshade near,  
 Pure-hearted,—him the breeze refreshed, which bore  
 Sweet blossoms from the trees, and cooling spray  
 From foaming waterfalls. The woodland maze  
 Soon as he entered forest-fires were quenched,  
 More rich bloomed fruit and flower, and stronger brutes  
 No longer vexed the weak. At eventide  
 They took the homeward path: the copper Sun  
 And tawny Cow, each in its proper sphere,  
 Had cleansed both Earth and Sky: then to complete  
 The sacrifice to Gods, to Sires, and guests,

40

She turned : as Works on Faith the Lord of men,  
 By righteous souls revered, attended her,— 50  
 And gazed on darkening forests, whence the boars  
 Were trooping homeward from the pools ; tired deer  
 Now grassy glades received, and peacocks flew  
 To well-known roosts. Majestic paced the Cow,  
 Whose udders swept the ground ; the mighty King  
 Moved stately, following ; then his Queen received  
 At border of the wood, and longing gazed,  
 All open-eyed as thirsting. Thus the Cow  
 He followed, and she welcomed : Nandinî  
 Like twilight glowed, midway 'twixt Day and Night. 60  
 Then with a plate of grain Sudakshinâ  
 Revered the Cow, and bent to that broad front  
 Whereof the horns seemed door-posts, through whose  
 valves  
 Success might issue. King and Queen were glad,  
 Who thought,—“ Though longing for her calf, she yet  
 Stayed to receive our offering : such as She,  
 Once pleased, shows favour,—then success is sure ! ”  
 Dilîpa next, All-Conqueror, lowly paid  
 Due homage to the Saint ; the sacrifice  
 For closing day he offered, and the Cow— 70  
 Now milked—he followed home to where she lay.  
 While Nandinî was sleeping, King and Queen  
 Set lamps and flowers about her, then lay down,  
 Till with the dawn she rose,—and they rose too.  
 So thrice seven days went by. The noble King,

Who saved his realm from harms, still with his Queen  
Pursued their hopeful task, to win a son.

Thereafter one fair day the Cow, to try  
Her follower's valour, entered that famed grove  
Of Gauri's lord, where Gangâ falls in foam, 80  
And grass is green and fresh. At once, 'tis told,  
A lion sprang and roughly seized the Cow,  
While mused the King on Gauri's Father's might,  
And thought,—“No foe will dare to harm my charge!”  
Her long-drawn cries, re-echoing from the caves,  
Aroused him, and recalled his gaze, to see  
Where stood the lion with the tawny Cow  
Pressed 'neath his paw, as 'twere a *Lodhra*-tree  
High on a red-chalk mountain table-land  
Full-blossoming. The astounded King, himself 90  
In gait a lion, bowman bold, would snatch  
An arrow from his belt, to slay the foe,  
Deathworthy, as he oft had slain his foes.

He seemed a statue; for his fingers clave  
Tight to the arrow, lighting with their gleam  
The heron's wing,—while he stood powerless.  
Thus stayed from action, furious raged the King,  
To strike unable though the foe was nigh,—  
Like snake subdued by spells and drugs. But lo!  
In human voice,—amazing that great King, 100  
By noble souls beloved, a Lion bold,  
The Pride of Manu's line,—still holding down

The Cow, that lion spake :—"Cease, mighty King,  
 From futile efforts! vain would be thy shaft,  
 Though it should strike me, as a wind that fells  
 A tree blows harmless round a mountain-peak.  
 Know me Nīkumbha's friend, Kumbhodara,  
 Who serve the Eight-shaped God, who—when he deigns  
 To mount his snow-white bull,—rests on my back  
 His holy feet. That God has placed me here 110  
 To guard this tree, which as a son he loves,  
 Where Skanda's mother's milk divine has flowed,  
 As poured from golden jars,—who wept when once  
 A forest-elephant had torn its bark  
 By furious rubbing : scarcely grieved she more  
 To see Ganeṣa wounded by his foes.  
 The Trident-bearer placed me here, to scare  
 In lion-shape all roaming elephants,  
 And prey on beasts that venture near these haunts.

Now doomed to death by Ṣiva comes this Cow,— 120  
 'Twill stay my hunger : so the Moon's sweet sap  
 The Dragon drains,—a blood-stained feast I claim.  
 No shame is thine, a son's devotion thou  
 Hast shown. Return ! for know, when arms are vain  
 To fail can shame no warrior." Then the King  
 Took comfort from his words : by Ṣiva's might  
 Restrained, he bowed to fate, nor scorned himself.  
 Again he spake :—(now first his hand had failed  
 To loose his shaft, as Indra's self stood numbed  
 At Ṣiva's angry glance :)—"O King of beasts ! 130

My words will move thy laughter, since I stand  
 Restrained from action ; yet thou know'st my heart,  
 I therefore speak. That Lord I reverence  
 Whose power has made, sustains, and will destroy  
 Whatever is or moves ; yet can I not  
 Look on the slaughter of my Master's Cow,  
 His treasure, that supplies the sacrifice.  
 Oh, take my body for thy food ! her calf  
 Longs for the mother, and the night draws on."

Then Çiva's servant smiled : his flashing teeth 140  
 Shone through the darksome caves, and thus he spake :—  
 "O King, fair Lord of wealth ! bright life, and youth,  
 Thou wouldst in haste renounce, and sovereign sway :  
 'Tis madness, for the cause deserves it not.  
 Thy people all depend on thee ; thy death  
 Would only save one life, while living thou  
 Protectest all the World with constant care.  
 Fear not the fiery Saint ! though angry, he  
 Losing one Cow may quickly be appeased  
 By gift of millions. Save thy precious life, 150  
 Enjoy the goods of fate,—for Indra's state,  
 Save that thou dwell'st on Earth, scarce passes thine."

So spake the forest-King ; and mountain-caves,  
 Loud-echoing, urged that plea in flattering tones,  
 And wooed the King, who pitiful rejoined,  
 The while in mute appeal the Cow looked on,  
 Caught in the lion's paw :—"The Warrior's name  
 He only worthy bears who saves from harm :

'Tis proverb-lore : whoe'er betrays that trust  
 Would forfeit Royal state and earn foul scorn. 160  
 The Saint might well despise all other cows  
 If this were lost, Surabhi's child and peer,  
 Which only by the might of Çiva thou  
 Didst dare attack. My body freely now  
 I give as ransom ; scarcely wouldst thou find  
 In her one meal ; the Master's sacred rites  
 Will not be hindered ! Well thou know'st, who serve  
 Thyselves a Master, and with anxious zeal  
 Protectest here this tree, that if one lose  
 His charge, himself unwounded, 'twere not well 170  
 To face his Lord. Spare then my Fame, nor think  
 My body only precious ; such as I  
 Scarce value fleeting life, but Fame we prize  
 Beyond all other. Friendship, so men say,  
 By intercourse is ripened : meeting thus  
 On forest-bounds, I claim thee friend,—and claim  
 To have my boon, O Çiva's follower !”

Then was the charm reversed, the Monarch free :  
 He threw his weapons down, and cast himself  
 A prey before the lion, who well-pleased 180  
 Had said,—“So be it !” When the noble King  
 Looked up, expecting death from lion's paw,  
 A rain of flowers fell on him, and a voice  
 Sweet sounded in his ear :—“ Rise, O my son !”  
 That voice revived him ; straight he rose, and saw  
 No lion, but the Cow, whose udders streamed



Like mother's breasts. Amazed he heard her say :—  
 " O Hero-King, by magic art I raised  
 This scene to try thee ; for the Muni's power  
 Guards me so well that Yama, Lord of Death, 190  
 Must pass me by,—what other power could harm ?  
 Thy loyalty hath pleased me, and the care  
 Thou show'dst for me : choose now, my Son, thy boon !  
 My udders yield not milk alone, but gifts  
 Abundant where I love." Low knelt the King,  
 Himself a generous giver, clasping hands  
 Whose skill in fight had won him warlike fame,  
 And named his boon—a son of noble race,  
 Born of Sudakshiṇâ ! The prayer was heard,  
 And granted,—“ Draw and drink, fair Son,” she said, 200  
 “ Milk from my udder in a leafy cup !”  
 “ Nay, Mother !” answered he, “ first let thy child  
 Be satisfied, nor stint the sacred rites.  
 Then, if my Master bid me, *I* will drink :—  
 Thus to a King Earth yields the Royal sixth.”

At this yet more did Nandinî rejoice :  
 Then to the grove returned she, he behind.  
 Dilipa, chief of monarchs, first made known  
 (While like full moon his face beamed) to the Saint  
 How he had prospered : then he sought his Queen, 210  
 Repeating what a joy-lit face had told  
 To her who loved him. Then, what time the calf  
 Was satisfied, and evening-rites complete,  
 Vaçishṭha bidding, drank the noble King,

Blameless and virtuous, milk of Nandinî,—  
Thirsting for it as ever for fair Fame.

And now his task was ended, and a feast  
Was duly held ; the rites to speed his guests  
The Saint performed ; then to the Royal home  
Dismissed them, as they grateful took their leave, 220  
With fullest honours paid to him, his wife,  
To Fire and Sacrifice, to Cow and Calf,—  
More glorious still and purer for the rite.

Then with his Queen the much-enduring King  
Went in swift chariot on their prosperous way,  
With pleasant clangour, like a fruitful vow.  
Him like the crescent moon, through penance waned  
For noble offspring, whom his folk had mourned,  
They greeted now returning, nor could sate  
Their eyes with gazing. He, great Indra's peer, 230  
Hailed by glad subjects, to his city came  
All decked with flags,—whence with unwearied arm,  
Strong as the Serpent-King, he ruled the World.

As from great Atri's eye the sky receives  
Its light, or Gangâ Çiva's potent seed,  
The Queen conceived :—the Sun-race to prolong,  
The World's great Regents blessed her fruitful womb.

## CANTO III

*Raghu is born: Dilipa's Horse-sacrifice is stayed by Indra,  
with whom Raghu fights.*

THEN in her handmaids' sight Sudakshinâ  
Shone pregnant, whence Ikshvâku's stock should spring  
More vigorous, like an early crescent moon,  
To crown her husband's life. Her, pale as night,  
When dawn is near, when dimly shines the moon  
And stars are few, or like a *Lodhra*-tree,  
The King embraced; he knew earth's scent, and longed,  
Nor could be sated, as an elephant  
Scarce slakes his thirst at forest ponds, though filled  
By plenteous rain. "As Indra Heaven," she said, 10  
"So shall my son rule Earth; his car shall range  
To Earth's remotest bound!" So mused the Queen,  
On earthly savours fixing her desires.  
Her loving Lord, who feared that bashful mood  
Might check her utterance, asked her serving-maids  
Of all her fancies, bent to ease her mind.  
So as her months went on, whate'er she craved  
Was brought unasked,—since all in Earth or Heav'n  
The mighty King could for her needs provide.

And so conception's pain was soothed for her, 20  
 Whose frame shone stouter, as the climbing-vines  
 Their old leaves shedding don the bright array  
 Of new-born Spring. The months rolled swiftly past,  
 Her bosom swelled, and on her lovely breasts  
 The nipples rose, to shame fresh lotus-buds  
 Where black bees cluster :—and her Lord was glad.  
 As Earth which Ocean clothes, where treasure lurks,  
 Or as that tree which nurses secret fire,  
 Or as Sarasvatî in flood, she seemed  
 To him who constant-minded kept the feasts 30  
 Due for a Prince's birth, as love required  
 Owed to his Queen, with pomp that well might match  
 The wealth Earth yielded, and the joy he felt.

With eyes that swam with love the King at home  
 Watched as she slowly rose from cushioned seat,  
 Her womb weighed down with seed the Gods had  
 sown,

Weak hands that scarce could lift the offerings.  
 But skilled physicians watched the embryo birth  
 Until her time was near, when like the sky  
 At eventide she shrank from public gaze ; 40  
 Last, at due season she, fair Çachi's peer,  
 Brought forth a son, whose greatness stars foretold  
 That high in heaven shone, not quenched by dawn,  
 As threefold Virtue wins the Highest Bliss.

Calm was the vault of Heaven, soft winds blew  
 Clear rose the altar-flame, with butter fed ;

All augured happy days : such princes' birth  
Brings good to all mankind. Now round the bed  
Where lay the Queen at once the midnight-lamps,  
Dimmed by the native glory of the child, 50  
Showed but as pictured lights. From the happy maid,  
Who brought the joyful news his son was born,  
Three things alone the King withheld, but three,—  
The moon-bright parasol and royal fans.

With steady eye, like lotus in still lake,  
The King devoured his son's fair face, with joy  
So great it burst all bounds, as Ocean's tide  
At fulness of the moon. Then came a Priest  
From Hermits' grove, and perfectly performed  
All rites for birth, that so Dilîpa's son 60  
As gem new-polished shone with brightest gleam,  
The joy-drums' cheerful sound, and twinkling feet  
Of dancers echoed through the palace-halls,  
Nor less in courts of Heav'n. The happy sire  
Could set no prisoner free, for none lay bound  
Where crime was not ; himself alone he freed  
From coil of debt he owed the Blessed Shades.  
Then praying,—“ May this child through Sacred Lore  
Pass quickly, warring swiftly smite his foes !”  
He named him Raghu, “swiftly-moving” Prince. 70

The child grew up beneath his Father's eye,  
Lord of all wealth, and day by day his strength  
Increased, as summer Sun's still-growing power

Pervades the waxing moon. The Prince made glad  
 His parents, great as Çiva and Umâ,  
 Or Indra and his Queen :—since like themselves  
 He daily grew, as grew the Reed-born God,  
 Or famed Jayanta, while their mutual love—  
 Like love of rain-birds—burned the more intense  
 That each one's love was centred on their son. 80  
 What word his nurse first taught he docile spake,  
 Held as he walked her hand, obedient bowed  
 When so she bade him : thus his Father's joy  
 He perfected,—who took him to his breast,  
 As though he bathed in nectar when he clasped  
 The body of a son, with eyes askance  
 For perfect joy, delight he scarce had hoped !

Thus, following close the Law, he saw his line  
 In this fair son established, as the World  
 Great Brahmâ sees established, his own self 90  
 In form derived, with primal Virtue clothed.

The Prince's childish locks had now been cut  
 As Law ordained, his childhood's comrades still  
 Preserving their long hair : the principles  
 Of learning he acquired, as streams suck up  
 Great Ocean's water. Next the sacred cord  
 That marked his second birth the noble child  
 Assumed, and sages taught him, fruitful soil  
 For learning's seed : on well-prepared fields  
 What work men spend will prosper. Oceans four 100  
 Of knowledge soon he crossed, his mental strength

Concentring, as the Sun's untiring bays  
(Than wind more swift) pass through the sky's four  
zones.

The deerskin next he donned, and from his Sire  
The spell-ruled weapon's use he learned : the King  
Not only was sole Emperor, but in skill  
Excelled all archers bold. As bull's estate  
A steer attains, or elephant's the calf,  
So Raghu passed from childhood up to youth,  
And bore a form of gracious majesty.

110

His tonsure o'er, forthwith the careful King  
Procured him worthy brides, who lovely shone  
As Daksha's daughters wedded to the Moon.  
With arms like beams, broad shoulders, mighty neck,  
A chest like portal wide, though Raghu seemed  
In strength above his Father, modestly  
He took rank lower. But the King, who long  
Had borne the weight of rule, conferred on him  
The state of Sociate-King, by nature meek  
And training, to bear half the heavy charge.

120

So goddess Fortune, loving aye the best,  
Had left the King, who long had been her choice,  
And sought the Heir,—as leaving parent flower  
For opening bloom. As Fire grows, fanned by Wind  
His charioteer, or Sun when cloud-banks break,  
Or elephant when love-streams bathe his brows,—  
So did the Son enhance his Father's state,  
Till then unmatched.

At length, in season due,  
 With princes for his comrades, that high Prince  
 Was set as guard to keep the sacred horse, 130  
 While King Dilīpa, Indra's peer, performed  
 Save one a hundred sacrifices pure.

But Indra, all unseen, drove off the horse,  
 Set free to roam, to keep the rite unflawed.  
 Amazed the guards looked on ; that princely host  
 Stood by perplexed, confounded, till at length  
 Vaçishtha's Cow, unbidden, blessed their sight,—  
 Well known to all : through her great power the Prince  
 Received as from a mother grace to see  
 Things veiled from sense. Then looking East he saw 140  
 The God who curbed the hills, great Indra's self,  
 Drive off the steed reluctant, while his starts  
 The driver checked : the God he forthwith knew  
 By eyes unwinking and his bright bay steeds,  
 And challenged with a voice that pierced the sky,  
 To win him from his purpose :—“ King of Gods !  
 Thee Sages praise as chief of those who share  
 All sacred rites : why then impede my Sire,  
 Who seeks by sacrifice to win Heaven's bliss ?

Thine 'tis, O highest Lord, whose eyes are stars, 150  
 To smite our impious foes ; if then, my Lord,  
 Thyself shouldst spoil the offering, worship's dues  
 Would lie destroyed. Ah, let the horse go free,  
 Most needful for the Rite ! great guides in Law  
 Ne'er stoop to methods base.” In stark amaze



At those bold words the King of Gods restrained  
 His chariot, making answer :—" Noble Prince,  
 Thou speakest well. Yet know, that those who prize  
 Their fame must guard it ever 'gainst attack.  
 Thy father seeks to rob me of my name, 160  
 That fair renown which through the Worlds is mine.  
 Alone does Vishṇu reign Supremé, Great Lord  
 Is Çiva's title only, me the Saints  
 Call Lord of Hundred Sacrificial Rites :  
 Alone each keeps his Name. To save this now  
 I drive thy Father's horse, as Kapila  
 Drove off the sacred Victim. Vain thy toil  
 To win it back : seek not to tread the path  
 Which sons of Sagara trode !"—The Prince replied,  
 Undaunted keeper of the victim horse :— 170  
 "Take then thy weapon, King of Gods, since so  
 Thou choolest war ! Me thou must first lay low,  
 Or yield the horse." Then on his string the Prince  
 His arrow laid, and Çiva's self he seemed  
 Prone o'er the bow, fair, looking to the sky  
 Expectant : then he sped a golden shaft  
 Which pierced the God ; that God, who clipped the wings  
 Of mountains, losing patience, to his Bow—  
 That weapon dread which gathered clouds compose,—  
 Laid his unerring shaft : that awful dart, 180  
 With demon-gore familiar, drank the blood  
 Of men, before untasted, greedily,  
 Next, brave as Kârtikeya, that stout Prince

With name-marked arrow smote great Indra's hand,  
 All rough from hide of Heaven's elephants,  
 And marked with pictures from fair Çachî's arms.  
 Then with another, fledged with peacock's plume,  
 He rent the Lightning-flag : fierce raged the God,  
 As though he 'd torn the heavenly Lakshmî's hair.

Now joined they awful battle : quite apart  
 Stood Siddhas and the Prince's host : they twain  
 Strove for the mast'ry :—down they shot and up  
 Their arrows, hurtling, terrible as snakes  
 To look on, wingèd. Nor could Indra quench  
 The Prince's inborn courage, though he rained  
 His shafts in quick succession : so the cloud  
 In vain would quench the fire itself has bred.  
 With crescent-headed arrow Raghu cut  
 Resplendent Indra's bowstring, which the God  
 Grasped in a hand that gleamed with sandalwood,  
 Deep-sounding as the Ocean when 'twas churned.  
 The God laid down his Bow, and seized in wrath—  
 To slay his gallant foe—that flaming Bolt,  
 Wherewith of old he clipped the mountains' wings,  
 And hurled it. Then the Hero fell to earth  
 Sore-wounded, when his comrades' tears fell fast ;  
 But soon revived, undaunted, whom their shouts  
 Acclaimed on rising. Vṛitra's mighty foe,  
 Admiring much the valour which so long,  
 Sustaining fierce assault, defied his power :  
 For virtue aye is precious : called aloud :—

190

200

210

“Thou only hast withstood my mighty Bolt,  
Which mountains could not face! well-pleased I grant  
Whate'er thou wilt, except the Victim horse.”

Then to the King of Gods the Prince replied,  
Sweet-voiced, returning to his belt the shaft  
Half-drawn, whose feathers shone above his head:—

“If, mighty Lord, thou wilt nowise restore  
The horse, oh! let my pious father win  
The full reward of those long, arduous rites  
So near perfection, which he may not reach.

220

Grant this too, Lord of Heaven, that now the King  
In council set, by Çiva's glory kept,  
May know this from thy envoy!” Then the God  
Gave Raghu all he craved, and soared to Heaven.

Warned by the God, the King received his Son  
With joy, and stroked with love-numbed hand his limbs.  
By lightning scarred. Then, fixed to win Heaven's bliss,  
His honoured life now ending, ladder-like  
His ninety-nine great Offerings he stretched out,  
To ease the way. His soul from things of sense  
He quite withdrew, then solemnly gave o'er  
To his young son the Kingdom, and himself  
Went with his Queen to Hermits' shady grove,—  
The use of agèd Kings of Manu's race.

230

## CANTO IV

*Raghu succeeds his Father,—and conquers the World.*

THEN Raghu took the Kingdom which his Sire  
Had given, and shone more glorious, as at eve  
Fire gains fresh splendour from the setting Sun ;  
But at the news, in kings who hated him  
Blazed wrathful fire from smouldering envy bred.

His folk, in children rich, with hearts and eyes  
Alike uplifted, rank on rank, rejoiced  
To see him raised on high like Indra's flag.  
For, mounted on his elephant, he seized  
At once his Father's throne and foemen's realms.      10  
Him, consecrate to undivided rule,  
With lotus-parasol the Royal State,  
Sun-circled, hailed as Lord ; while Eloquence—  
In bards embodied—loudly sang his praise  
With verse sincere ; and treasure-yielding Earth,  
Whom Kings from Manu onwards well had loved,  
Wooded him as though she ne'er had loved before.

Like Southern breeze, which neither burns nor chills,  
While sternly smiting wrong he won men's hearts ;  
By virtues excellent with joy he chased      20

What grief the people felt his Sire to lose, —  
 As when the fruit appears the mango's flower  
 Is scarce remembered. Men of counsel spread  
 Both good and ill before him ; only good  
 He chose, but never ill ; peculiar grace  
 The Primal Virtues won,—that all the World  
 Beneath his sway seemed new. By her cool rays  
 The Moon refreshes, by his heat the Sun  
 Gives life ; and he, who shining charmed his folk,  
 True " King " appeared. His wide-expanded eyes  
 Lit up his face, but Sacred Lore it was,  
 Dividing subtle points of right and wrong,  
 That gave best insight. Firm he set his throne,  
 On virtue based :—the grateful Earth reposed.

30

Past Summer's heat, serene came Autumn on,  
 Like Royal State redoubled, lotus-decked :  
 Then in bright splendour cloudless Sun and he  
 Together ruled the world, invincible,  
 When after rain light clouds prepared their way.  
 The rainbow Indra drew, his mighty bow  
 Drew Raghu ; in his sphere each reigned supreme,  
 And blessed by ruling. Autumn with sunshade  
 And fan of waving grass his Royal state  
 Affected, but his glory could not reach.  
 The Moon, with clear cold rays, and his fair face,  
 Unruffled, drank the folk with equal zest ;  
 The radiance of their glory seemed dispersed,  
 In rows of swans, in stars, in liliated lakes

40

Resplendent. Seated in the cane-brakes' shade,  
 While women watched the crops they sang his praise, 50  
 As good as far-renowned, from childhood up.

Clear shone the waters when Canopus rose,  
 Great jar-born Saint, while fearful of defeat  
 The foes of Raghu quaked ; for furious bulls,  
 Of mighty frame, huge-humped, that tore the banks  
 Of rivers, shadowed forth his sportive strength.  
 His elephants, in seeming rivalry,  
 Poured sevenfold ichor, struck by fragrant blooms  
 Of *Sapta-parna*. Autumn now dried up  
 The roads, made rivers fordable, and stirred 60

The King to war and conquest, though his host  
 Was not yet ready. Rose the altar-fire,  
 With solemn rites for sacrifice prepared,  
 To bless his conquering arms : with lambent flame  
 It gave auspicious sign. His capital  
 The King safeguarded, and his frontier-posts,  
 Nor left his rear exposed : then with his host  
 Complete, six-membered, conquering he went.

As Milky Ocean churned with Mandara  
 On Vishṇu dashed its foam, so matrons staid 70  
 Showered rice on Raghu, when to the East his face  
 He turned, with wind-shook pennants threatening  
 His foes with chastisement,—while clouds of dust  
 His chariots raised and elephants, till earth  
 Seemed borne on high, and air a well-trod plain.

In front flashed armour, followed noise of war,

Next dust, then chariots, horses, men,—the host  
 Fourfold-divided marched. Then in his might  
 He made the desert plains to laugh with streams,  
 Made rivers fordable, not hard to cross, 80  
 And cleared the forests, cutting roads. He led  
 His valiant host, that rolled like Northern Sea,  
 Or as when heavenly Gangâ, by the Saint  
 Brought down to earth, strayed in the braided hair  
 Of Çiva. Passed the King, whose passing kings  
 O'erthrown, deposed, or brought to vassalage,  
 Marked by their fall, as march of elephant  
 Trees show uprooted. Eastward swept the King  
 (And one by one subdued the Eastern realms)  
 To Ocean's shore, which sombre palm-trees shade. 90  
 Chiefs who opposed he spoiled :—the Suhma power  
 Submitting, won his grace, who bowed like reeds  
 Before a mountain-torrent ; but in wrath  
 He smote the Bangal hosts, who proudly fought,  
 Vainglorious of their ships : triumphal stones  
 On Gangâ's isles he reared ; his stubborn foe,  
 Subdued and then re-settled, tribute brought,  
 And bowed like rice before his lotus-feet.

Then with his hosts he crossed the Kapiçâ  
 On living bridge (Utkalas showed the way), 100  
 Smote the Kâlingas, on Mahendra's crest  
 A pillar fixed of conquest, as Mahauts  
 In head of restive elephants their goads.  
 For, strong in elephants, with pomp of war

Kâlingas met him, as with rocky rain  
 Mountains met Indra's onslaught, when he came  
 To clip their wings. Their shower of darts the King  
 Sustained undaunted, winning glorious fight,  
 While hurtling shafts seemed but the cleansing drops  
 Of due lustration ; then his warriors drank 110  
 In shady betel-bowers at once the milk  
 Of cocoa-palms, and vict'ry o'er their foes.

The King—with lawful triumph—took his fame,  
 But not his country, from Mahendra's king,  
 And set him free ; then by the sea-coast way,  
 Where bowed with fruit Arcas, peaceful passed,  
 Since there Agastya ruled. In Kâveri  
 His soldiers plunged, all fragrant with the juice  
 Of elephants, and stirred the jealous rage  
 Of Ocean, spouse of rivers. Pepper-groves 120  
 On Mount Mahendra's skirts, lov'd home of birds,  
 His forces occupied, as on he marched  
 To conquest. Trampled by his steeds, the bloom  
 Upflying from the fruit of cardamums  
 Clung to the foreheads of his elephants,  
 And challenged their rich scent ; like hooded snakes  
 The strong neck-chains embraced the sandal-trunks,  
 And bound the elephants that mocked at ropes.  
 The Sun himself glows dim on Southern shores,  
 Yet could the Pândyas not endure e'en there 130  
 The beams of Sun-like Raghu,—who his fill  
 Sported on Malaya and Dardura,



Which, sandal-clad, like twin breasts crown the shore.  
 Invincible in might, the Sahya range  
 He crossed, by Ocean left—as 'twere Earth's loins  
 Reft of their garment : Jamadagni's son  
 Of old disjoined them, but as Raghu's hosts  
 Marched further west, the sea and mountain met.

Low bowed the Sahyas, and their choicest pearl—  
 From Ocean won where Saptaparnî flows 140  
 Down to the Sea,—presented, symbol fair  
 Of spotless fame. Fine-powdered sandalwood,  
 Which women of Karela wore, with dust  
 Raised by his army soon the King replaced.  
 Unforced the yellow seed of *Ketakas*,  
 Which river-breezes waft from Muralâ,  
 Was scented powder for his mail-clad host.  
 Through forests sighed the wind : their harness clanked  
 On swiftly-moving steeds, that overpowered  
 Areca-trees deep-rustling, while black bees 150  
 Dropped from *Punnâgas* on the streaming brows  
 Of elephants love-maddened, tied to trunks  
 Of smooth date-bearing palms. The Sea, men tell,  
 At Jamadagni's bidding ceased to flow,—  
 But through the Western King its tribute gave  
 To Raghu. He Trikûta's mountain made,—  
 Where furious elephants had graved his fame  
 For all to see,—the record of his deeds,  
 A mighty pillar. 'Gainst the Persians next  
 He through the desert marched, as holy men 160

By Sacred Learning smite their inbred foes,  
 The senses. Scarcely could the King withstand  
 Soft wiles of Yavan women, lotus-faced,  
 That sought his love,—as Autumn-clouds must fade,  
 Untimely-risen, when the Sun new-born  
 Beams bright above the lotus. Fiercest war  
 He with the Westerns waged, in horses strong,  
 While twang of bows alone revealed their place.  
 The bearded heads his warriors had cut off  
 Now strewed the plain, as bees swarm thickly round  
 The honeycomb : the remnant bared their heads,  
 And claimed his mercy : rage in hero-souls  
 Submission will appease. Their toils of war  
 His host forgot, carousing in choice bowers  
 Which vines surrounded, spread with costly furs.

170

Thence Northward marched the King, resolved to quell  
 The Northern princes with his dreaded shafts,  
 As, when his beams have drained moist Southern lands,  
 The Sun too turns him North. His mighty acts,  
 Wrought on their husbands, Hûna dames proclaimed,— 180  
 Recorded on their cheeks in angry scars.  
 His horses, resting after toils of war,  
 Refreshed on Sindhu's banks, their shoulders shook,  
 Where saffron-tendrils clung. *Akshota* trees,  
 Bruised by the chains that bound his elephants,  
 Bent low : bowed too Kambojas, fain to yield  
 Before his prowess : heaps of gold, fine steeds,  
 In tribute offering, which the mighty King  
 Accepted graciously, and spared their pride.

Famed for his horses, next Himâlaya 190  
 He mounted, where the clouds of dust they raised  
 From trampled rocks exalted more the peaks.  
 Couched in their caves, great lions—brave as he—  
 Gazed on him undisturbed, nor feared the noise  
 His warriors made ; while murmuring winds that coursed  
 Through *Bhûrja* trees, or rustled in the canes,  
 Moist from the waves of Gangâ, cherished him  
 As on he swept to conquest. On the rocks  
 His soldiers rested, fragrant of musk-deer,  
 That couched in shade of great *Nameru* trees. 200  
 Tall phosphorescent plants that gleamed at night,  
 Their lustre doubled by the glancing chains  
 Which bound great elephants to *Sarâla* trees,  
 Were lamps for Raghu,—lamps not fed with oil.  
 Where he encamped the towering *Devadârs*  
 Told hillmen of his march, with bruised bark  
 By halters torn. A grim and bloody fight  
 With mountain tribes he fought, where darts, and stones,  
 And arrows mingled hurtling, striking fire.

The Utsavasanketas from their feasts 210  
 He stopped, and taught the Kinnaras to sing  
 New anthems for his conquests. Tribute there  
 The tribes presented : Raghu owned the might  
 Of great Himâlaya, and was by him  
 Acknowledged peerless : there the Monarch fixed  
 His glory's mound secure, and shamed the Hill  
 Paulastya raised of yore. He traversed next  
 Lauhitya, and Prâgyotish quaked, as shook

Black alocs where he bound his elephants.  
 Scarce could he bear with Raghu's chariots' dust, 220  
 Which veiled the sun and darkened all the sky,  
 Yet brought no rain ; how then should he withstand  
 The armèd host ? Him Kâmarûpa's king  
 Served with his elephants, those mighty beasts,  
 Love-maddened, which he used to smite his foes ;  
 And gems for flowers he offered at those feet,  
 Which—laid on golden footstools—shone divine.

All realms subdued, home came the mighty Lord,  
 While humbly kings, with heads unshaded now,  
 Received the dust raised by his chariot-wheels. 230  
 Then Sacrifice he made for Rule Supreme  
 By conquest won, when all his wealth a King  
 Bestows in alms ;—as clouds store up the rain,  
 To feed their bounty generous kings take tax.  
 But when the solemn Sacrifice was o'er,  
 Great Raghu, whom his ministers loved well,  
 With signal honours healing first the wounds  
 Defeat had branded, sent away the kings  
 Who graced his triumph,—and who yearned to clasp  
 Their long-forsaken queens,—dismissed in peace. 240

Low bowed that royal band before his feet,  
 Not boastingly stretched out, with lines, and flags.  
 And thunderbolts adorned, and jasmine white,  
 Which from their diadems those kings let fall.

## C A N T O V

*Raghu's splendid Generosity: Aja is born, and, when grown to  
Manhood, starts to woo Indumatî.*

Now when the Imperial Sacrifice the King,  
All-Conqueror, had performed, and all his wealth  
Was lavished, came to seek his Teacher's fee  
Kautsa, whom mighty Varatantu taught  
Till he in Lore was perfect. Him the King  
Met courteous, mighty, splendid,—gave his gift  
In earthen vessel, for his gold was done.  
Low bowed the King: then, rich in fame, and taught  
To know the right, observant of his due,  
He seated him, and thus addressed:—“How fares           10  
Thy Master, keen of insight, chief of Saints  
Who frame the Veda's hymns? from whom thy Lore  
Thou tookst as from the Sun this world gets life.  
Oh, say not that the Sage's triple toils  
Austere, of limb, speech, thought—which Indra fears—  
Are now disturbed! Have storms laid waste the trees  
That shade and guard your dwellings, which with care  
Ye've watered, fostered, nurtured from the seed!

And are the deer unharmed, which Munis tend,  
 That couch on *Kuça* kept for sacred use, 20  
 And bear their young while clasped in Saintly arms?  
 And are those streams unsullied, which erst pure  
 Libations yielded both for Gods and Shades,  
 Where stood the holy pillars? Is the rice,  
 Self-springing food for you and for your guests,  
 Spoiled by the rabble, whom the husks should feed?  
 Has the great Saint dismissed thee perfect, Saint,  
 That now thou shouldst take wife, and guide thy home,  
 That second life to pass, whence draws the world  
 Most earthly profit? All my care, thou know'st, 30  
 Is still to serve: oh, tell me how I may  
 Best serve thee, or thy Teacher,—for that grace  
 I look for from thee!"

Now, dismayed, the Saint

Looked on the earthen dish, and knew the cause;  
 Then, hopeless to obtain it, spake his need:—  
 "Know, famous King, that all is well with us!  
 Thou rulest, men must prosper: while the Sun  
 Is high in heav'n, no darkness can prevail  
 To dim men's sight. Still has thy glorious race  
 Revered the worthy; yet my need is such 40  
 As scarce thou canst supply, though thou surpass  
 In that thy Sires: untimely I have come,  
 Unhelped must go! For, clad in glorious fame,  
 Else thou art bare, thy riches well bestowed,—  
 Stripped as the wild-rice stalk, when savage hands

Have spoiled its fruit. Thou, Lord of all, show'st well,  
 Thus seeming poor, as still the cold-rayed Moon,  
 Which Gods drink up wins blessing as it wanes.  
 No further errand mine : my Teacher's fee  
 Elsewhere I'll seek,—so fare thee well, O King !  
 The rain-bird craves not rain from emptied clouds,  
 Nor missing grieves !”

50

The King called back the Saint,  
 As he was turning, asked him :—“ Say how great,  
 Or what the fee he asks.” The perfect Sage  
 Thus answered him, the lowly Lord of all,  
 For whom was made the mighty Sacrifice :—

“ I asked the Sage, when I had won all lore,  
 What meed was his. He first pronounced his fee  
 My long-proved, loyal love : but, further urged,  
 In hasty wrath, nor thinking of my state,  
 How poor I am,—‘ The sciences,’ he said,  
 ‘ I taught thee scarce can fourteen millions pay :  
 That bring me !’ Coming here, full plain I see  
 The name of King is left thee, not the wealth :  
 That earthen bowl proclaims it. How dare I  
 Ask from thee then the boundless meed he claims ?”

60

So spake the Sage :—but quick the King supreme,  
 As Vishṇu lovely, clean of heart and pure  
 From base affections, pleaded :—“ Strange dis fame  
 It were to Raghu, if a perfect Sage  
 Who sought his Teacher's fee, should turn away,  
 To seek his guerdon from another Lord !

70

Be thou my guest, O Sage ! like Holy Fire  
 Keep pure my hearth for me two days or three,  
 That I may help thee." Gratefully the Saint  
 Consented, while the King, whose plighted word  
 None e'er knew fail, set forth to wrest the boon  
 From famed Kuvera, since Earth teemed with wealth.

So great his glory, which Vaçishtha's spells  
 At his Anointing gave, his car unchecked 80  
 Would course through air, o'er mountains and o'er seas,  
 Like wind-borne cloud. Then in his car at eve,  
 With store of arms, brave, pious Raghu slept,—  
 To smite at dawn Kuvera, whom he deemed  
 A neighbour-king, no more. But lo ! at dawn  
 Amazed his treasure-keepers told the King,  
 What stayed his march, that while men slept there fell  
 From Heav'n a rain of gold and filled his store.

The whole bright heap Kuvera fearing sent,  
 The King to Kautsa gave, as 'twere a crag 90  
 By lightning split from Meru ; and the folk  
 Praised both the Saint, who asked his fee, no more,—  
 And praised the generous King, who pressed on him  
 More than his asking. Now, the well-pleased Saint,  
 At last consenting, took the golden store,  
 Which camels bore and mares, and laid his hands  
 On Raghu bending low, and parting blessed :—

“While such a King rules men, well may the Earth  
 Yield wealth with which she teems ; yet how conceive  
 Thy fame, for whom e'en Heav'n pours forth such store 100



Beyond men's asking? All things else thou hast,  
 Save what I now bestow : receive a son  
 Rich as thyself in virtue, as thy Sire  
 Got thee, praiseworthy!" Him the Saint thus blessed,  
 Then sought his Master : and the King ere long  
 Received the promised son, as living souls  
 From sunlight power of seeing : for the Queen  
 At Brahmâ's hour, 'tis told, brought forth a prince,  
 As Umâ's child resplendent,—whom his Sire  
 Named Aja, Unborn, from the Soul Supreme.

110

His Father's joy was he : like him in might,  
 Tall as himself, as vigorous, grew the Prince,  
 As shines a fresh-lit lamp with equal light  
 To that it springs from. Teachers trained the boy  
 In lofty learning, radiant beamed his youth,  
 And Fortune loved him well, yet seemed to wait  
 (Like bashful virgin) till the King his Sire  
 Should mate her with him.

Now great Bhoja, King  
 Of Krathakaiçakas, to Raghu sent  
 A noble envoy, bidding Aja come  
 To fair Indumatî's Swayamvara,  
 His sister's Maiden Choice. The King, well-pleased,  
 Both deeming Aja come to manly prime,  
 And her a peerless bride, sent forth the Prince,  
 With lordly host well-guarded on the way  
 To high Vidarbha. Ever on the march  
 Pavilions fair received him, while the folk

120

With blessings and with gifts his favour sought.  
 His journey o'er, on Narmadâ's green banks,  
 Where, gently stirred and moistened by the breeze, 130  
 Waved *Karang* trees, his weary host found rest,  
 And reared their standards, dusty from the road.

Sudden a mighty Tusker reared his front  
 Amid the waves, where hovering swarms of bees  
 Betrayed his presence, washing ichor sweet  
 From his broad temples,—while his blunted tusks  
 Showed by the dark-blue streak (the ore washed off)  
 How on Rikshâvan's rocks he spent his rage.  
 Up rose he, faced the bank, and nimbly waved  
 His mighty trunk before him and behind, 140  
 Roared loudly, and with all-resistless strength  
 Burst through the torrent, breaking watery chains.  
 Broad-chested as a mountain, tangled nets  
 Of clinging weeds he drew, the while in front  
 A threatening mass of waters rose,—then climbed  
 The river-bank. His captive peers he marked,  
 And from his cloven brows the ichor-stream,  
 Checked only by the wave, returned in flood.

That much exciting savour when they knew,  
 As acrid as the *Saptachada's* sap, 150  
 The mighty beasts of Aja's host broke bounds,  
 Unheeding sharpest goads, and fled. The camp  
 At once confusion seized: in headlong flight  
 Yoke-oxen broke their bands, threw o'er the cars  
 (Their axles smashed),—and active warrior-hands

Scarce saved the timid dames. The Prince alone  
 Availed to stay the rout : who slightly drew,—  
 To lightly wound, not slay (so runs the Law),—  
 His bowstring, loosed a shaft, and 'twixt the eyes  
 The mighty brute he smote. The bestial shape 160  
 At once, being struck, the wondering army saw  
 Shed like a garment, while in radiant guise,  
 In heavenly beauty clad, with light-rays crowned,  
 A princely form appeared. A rain of flowers,  
 Won by his power from Heav'n, he grateful poured  
 On Aja's head ; then spoke in winning tones,  
 The while his flashing teeth lit up the gems  
 That clung about his neck :—“ Of old my pride  
 Drew down Matanga's curse, and doomed my stay  
 In hateful tusker's shape ; for I, fair Prince, 170  
 Priyamvada am named, great Indra's son.

“ Moved by my humble prayers, the Saint appeased  
 More mild became, as water which the flame  
 May raise to boiling, yet by nature's law  
 Resumes its grateful cold,—and thus decreed :—  
 ‘ When Aja, sprung in high Ikshvâku's line,  
 With iron-pointed shaft shall cleave thy brow,  
 Thy proper glorious shape thou shalt regain !’  
 To see thee long I've yearned : now, mighty Prince,  
 Freed by thee from my curse, with worthy gift 180  
 I must requite thee,—else my power restored  
 Were useless. Take, O friend, this magic shaft  
 Named Sleep-compeller, launched and then recalled

By spells diverse, which to its master gives  
 Sure triumph o'er his foes, those foes unhurt.  
 Blush not for shame at only seeming harm !  
 Thy blow was kindness ! grieve me not, I pray,  
 By scorning this my gift."

The courteous Prince,  
 That Moon of men, gave thanks; then faced the  
 North,

Touched the pure waters of the Moon-born stream, 190  
 And, skilled in arms, received the magic dart  
 Which his high friend now gave. Thus Fate decreed  
 How these, once seeming foes, wayfaring met,  
 Should join fast friendship :—Chaitraratha's groves  
 The one now sought, well-ruled Vidarbha's realm  
 The other welcomed soon, whom courteously  
 Before the city gates the joyful King  
 Received, as Ocean swells to greet the Moon  
 With heaving waves, and to the city brought,  
 His glory waiving, with observance sweet 200  
 And lowly bearing,—till the crowds might deem  
 Their King was guest, and Aja was the King.  
 Then as the God of Love, his boyhood past,  
 Takes on the pride of youth, so Raghu's heir  
 Possessed the lovely palace, newly-built,  
 Before whose gates an altar stood, and jars  
 Brimful of water, destined for his use.

Then Sleep, as loving wife who seeks her lord,  
 To Aja's eyes came late, who sighed and longed

To win the peerless Maid, to woo whose Choice 210  
 The rival kings had come in pomp and state.

Him ere 'twas day, that all-accomplished Prince,  
 Whose shoulders bore the scars of ear-drops gemmed,  
 From whose dark limbs the ointment had been wiped  
 By silken bedding, with sweet songs his peers,  
 Well-skilled to sing, roused for the auspicious day.

“Awake, wise Prince! for darksome night is past!  
 And Brahmâ now has cleft the weight of rule,  
 Which half thy Sire bears up and half Thyself.

“The waning Moon now sinks, and yields the prize 220  
 Of beauty to thy face,—whom Lakshmi wooed,  
 Forsaken and despised by thee for Sleep.

“Unclose thine eyes, that so by mutual gift  
 Their beauty and the lily's may increase,  
 Where roll or pupils dark or black wild bees.  
 The morning breeze, that vainly seeks to win  
 From other source the scent of thy sweet breath,  
 Tears from their stalks the flowers that loosely hang  
 On blossoming trees, or woos the lotus bright  
 New opening to the Sun. 230 Now on the leaves  
 Tinged ruddy rests the dew, a pearly band  
 With double lustre, as thy gladsome smile  
 Plays o'er the gleaming teeth. The dawn, fair Prince!  
 Dispels night's clouds until the Sun arise,  
 Then ceases: shall thy Sire then crush the foe,  
 Now thou art come to lead his armed host?

“Thy elephants have burst the bands of sleep,

They drag their clanking chains, and quit their couch ;  
 Their tusks like fresh buds gleam when bathed in light  
 Shed by the morning sun, a glittering show, 240  
 As stained with ochre from the mountain-sides.

“ These steeds Vanâyu-bred, O mild-eyed Prince,  
 Bound with long tent-ropes, shaking slumber off,  
 Stain with hot breath the rock-salt left to lick.

“ Thy flower-wreaths languish now, and now the lamps  
 Burn dim, and lose the halo of their rays,  
 And thy caged parrot, warbling cheerful notes,  
 Mocks this our morning hymn ! ”

So sang the bards.

The Prince, fresh roused from sleep by tuneful praise,  
 Forsook his couch, as Heav'n's great elephant 250  
 By cranes' clear song aroused an islet leaves  
 Of holy Gangâ. Due devotions paid,  
 Commanded in the Law for morning's prime,  
 The bright-browed Prince, by skilful hands arrayed  
 In fitting vesture, sought the lofty hall,  
 Where Kings were met to grace the Maiden's Choice.

## CANTO VI

*The Wooing of Indumati, and her Choice of Aja.*

THEN fair as Gods who mount celestial cars,  
 In royal robes arrayed, and seated high  
 On thrones, refulgent, raised on dais-steps,  
 The noble range of suitor-kings he saw.  
 These looked dismayed on Aja, for he seemed  
 A second Love, at Rati's prayer restored  
 To that bright form which Çiva's wrath burnt up,—  
 Nor longer hoped to win Indumati.  
 By carven stair he mounted to the throne  
 The King assigned him, as a lion stalks  
 O'er rocks to gain a mighty mountain-peak.

10

Then sat he down on diamond-sparkling seat,  
 With costliest cushions spread, that glorious Prince,  
 As Kârtikeya mounts his favourite bird.  
 His beauty much enhanced his stately mien,  
 A dazzling lustre which perplexed men's eyes,  
 Like lightning-flash o'er gloomy banks of cloud:—  
 So by his flawless grace high Raghu's son,  
 Amid their gorgeous thrones and splendid robes,  
 In simple vesture shone as 'mongst Heaven's trees

20

Famed Pârijâta shines. The eyes of men  
 Forsook all other Kings to gaze on him :  
 So, leaving woodland blossoms, wild bees swarm  
 To streaming brows of elephants. As they sat,  
 Their royal lineage, drawn from Sun and Moon,  
 Bards skilled in olden story fitly praised ;  
 Rose from the smouldering aloes fragrant smoke,  
 Which all-pervasive round the banners curled ;  
 Auspicious music floated from the conchs  
 In ambient air, and through the city-groves  
 Glad peacocks madly danced. The Princess came,  
 In wedding-vesture clad, on litter borne  
 With solemn pomp, to choose herself a Lord,—  
 And down the eager rows of suitors passed.

30

That perfect woman, Brahmâ's last best work,  
 The goal of countless hearts, drew all their souls  
 Out through their eyes,—the lumpish clay alone  
 Remained behind. When Spring reviving comes,  
 It decks in varied charms the forest-trees:—  
 So showed those Kings by various arts their love.

40

One toying twirled a lotus, sportive struck  
 The clustering bees with petals, balling so  
 The golden pollen. Smiling playfully,  
 Another turned his beaming face askant ;  
 His flower-wove necklet fall'n, a moment caught  
 On jewelled bracelet, careless he replaced.  
 One, sidelong glancing, with his lotus-foot  
 Traced lines on golden footstool, where the nails



Like summer lightning gleamed. Another prince  
 In seeming earnest talk his neighbour held, 50  
 His left arm resting on his chair, that so  
 His shoulder raised and back broke through his wreath.  
 Of *Ketaka* one fashioned with his hands,—  
 Those hands that lately clasped his queen in love,—  
 An earring blossom apt to win the heart  
 Of that fair Princess. One tossed dice in sport,  
 The while his jewelled bracelets gleamed on hands  
 Light-brown as lotus, seamed with banner-lines.  
 One fixed his coronet with nervous hand,  
 Ablaze with diamonds,—though it had not fall'n. 60

Then eloquent Sunandâ, high-born dame  
 Who ruled the palace, led the royal Maid  
 To where the mighty Lord of Magadha  
 Sat gorgeous; then with clear, deep voice proclaimed  
 His worth,—well-taught the name and fame of each:—

“Deep are his thoughts, and strong his arm to save!  
 In Magadha he rules, his people's joy,  
 Whose blazing wrath burns up his stubborn foes.  
 Alone he's Spouse of Earth, though thousand Kings  
 Usurp the style; as Soma rules the night 70  
 'Mid stars and planets, pale beside his throne,  
 So rules he Earth. By constant rites devout,  
 Where Indra still appears, he pales the cheek  
 Of Çachî, while her curls hang limply down  
 Undecked with Svarga's flowers,—a mourning bride,  
 Her husband absent, Give, O give thy hand

To him in wedlock : charm bright, loving eyes  
 By festal entry to his noble town,  
 Whose dames expectant wait !” She spake, and paused :  
 The Princess slightly bowed, thus silently 80  
 Rejecting him, her wreath of fragrant flowers  
 With *dūrva* intertwined, a shade displaced.

Then to a second King she led the Maid,  
 As wind-stirred, rippling wave on Mânasa  
 To second lotus brings a graceful swan,—  
 And praised him thus :—“ Behold great Anga’s Lord,  
 Whom heavenly brides themselves have vainly wooed,  
 Such youth and beauty his : his elephants,  
 Trained by skilled masters, match Airāvata :  
 He rules like Indra. Pearl-like tears were shed 90  
 By his foes’ brides,—a necklace all unstrung.  
 Fair speech and noble presence dwell apart,  
 Except in him ; with Fame and Eloquence  
 Thou mayst be third, if thou wilt choose this mate.”

“Go forward !” said the Maiden, turning so  
 Her eyes from Anga’s Lord, though well she knew  
 Him worthy of all love, save only hers.

Then, passing onward with her fair Princess,  
 The Lady praised another noble King,  
 Renowned for virtue, terrible to foes, 100  
 Fair as new-risen moon :—“ Avanti’s Lord  
 Behold, long-armed, broad-chested, thin of flank,  
 With doubled radiance shining, like the Sun  
 By Viçvakarma polished and refined.

When he in dauntless might goes forth to war,  
 The gems that flash from rivals' crowns are dimmed  
 By dust his steed casts up, as evening clouds  
 Obscure the Sun. Hard by that mighty God,  
 Whose brow the Moon adorns, this noble King  
 Dwells in great Kâla, so through all the months  
 He with his queens takes joy in lightsome nights.  
 O slender-waisted Maid, wilt thou not yield,  
 And find thy bliss in wandering through fair groves,  
 That wave 'neath Sipra's breeze, with this great King?"

110

But not on him the peerless Maiden fixed  
 Her tender love, though lily-like he charmed  
 Friends, scorching foes as Sun dries up a marsh:—  
 So close at dawn those flowers which love the Moon.

Sunandâ next before Anûpa's Lord  
 Led her fair Lady, Brahmâ's loveliest child,  
 For virtues eminent, whose teeth like pearls  
 Flashed white; then spake once more her winning words:—

120

"In days of old great Kârtavîrya, King  
 And Saint, whose thousand arms in battle swayed  
 His rivals crushed, till all alone he ruled,  
 And triumph-pillars planted through the worlds.  
 So holy he, that even thought of sin,—  
 Appearing with his Bow to tempted souls,  
 He smote through all his realm. He kept in bonds  
 Proud Lankâ's Lord, to whom e'en Indra bowed,  
 Who languished, sighing through his many mouths,  
 Till he released him, humbled. In his line

130

Pratâpa rules, devout, firm friend of Saints,  
 Whom Fortune loves, not fickle—as the world  
 Defames her. Blazing fire he wields in fight,  
 Nor fears the mighty Axe which Râma bore,  
 To Warriors fatal, more than lotus-leaf.  
 Be thou this Hero's bride! so shalt thou gaze  
 Enraptured from the palace on soft curves  
 Seductive of fair Revâ, where she clasps  
 The mighty loins of strong Mahishmatî.”

140

Nor he, for all his beauty, favour found  
 In her pure fancy, as the silvery Moon,  
 Dispersing Autumn's clouds, can win no grace  
 From lotuses that woo the Sun. The Maid  
 Next heard Sunandâ praise Sushena's worth,  
 Of Surasena Lord, whom heavenly choirs  
 Hymn ever, light of both his high descents:—

“This King devout is flower of Nîpa's race,  
 To whom the Virtues sought, as timorous deer  
 Seek Hermits' peaceful grove, and waive the strife  
 That Nature sets between them. Calmly brave  
 He ever guards his palace, moon-like bright,  
 And blazing smites his foes,—o'er whose blank roofs  
 Grass grows. His lovely queens, who frequent sport  
 In waves of Yamunâ, so tinge the stream  
 With fragrant sandal from their breasts, 'twould seem  
 That Gangâ's yellow waters mingled there  
 Ere Mathurâ was reached. The gem he wears  
 Upon his chest, was lost by Kâliya

150

160

Who fled from Garuḍa, and almost shames  
 Kaustubha, Kriṣṇa's pride. Ah, Maiden, choose  
 That noble Prince for mate! then pass thy youth  
 Rejoicing in Brindāban, not less fair  
 Than Chaitraratha, couched on soft flower-sprays,  
 Reclining on smooth rocks with foam-drops wet,  
 With salt too pungent: feast thine eyes, Fair Maid,  
 On peacocks of Govardhan, dancing free  
 In Autumn rains among the hollow rocks!"

170

Him too the Maiden passed with stately mien,  
 Another's destined bride, as rivers pass  
 Great mountains on their way to Ocean's breast.

Then came the Princess to Kalinga's King,  
 Hemāngada,—and then Sunandā spake,—  
 While beamed like full fair moon the peerless Maid,—  
 Designing him whose wrists were clasped with gems,  
 From foes fit tribute:—"See Mahendra's King,  
 Lord too of Ocean, mighty as the hill  
 That seems to lead his host, an elephant  
 In pride of youth! Of archers chief is he,  
 With long strong arms all rough with bowstring-scars,  
 Like streams of brackish tears from pain-dimmed eyes  
 Of foemen's brides. Great Ocean's thunderous roar,  
 Whose boisterous waves he from his palace marks,  
 A fitting time-drum, wakes him at day-dawn  
 With voice o'erpowering all his martial strains.  
 Choose him thy Lord! and walk by Ocean's shore,  
 Where palm-trees whisper, where moist breezes fan

180

The wearied brow, and waft from distant isles 190  
 The clove's rich scent!" Vidarbha's sister turned,  
 Nor heeded all her praise, unloving, loved,  
 As royal Fortune turns, though wooed with skill,  
 If Fate be adverse. Next to Nâgpur's King  
 The Lady passed, and thus proclaimed his worth :—  
 "O bright-eyed Princess! see this generous King,  
 The Pândus' Lord: wreaths from his shoulders hang,  
 His arms sweet sandal stains, a mountain-lord  
 He seems, amid whose crests the rising Sun  
 Glows, while the roaring torrents dash and foam. 200  
 Him great Agastya greeted,—he who bowed  
 The pride of Vindhya, who wide Ocean drained,—  
 And of his welfare asked, when he had bathed  
 When the Great Rite was over. Lankâ's King,  
 For Janasthâna fearing when he led  
 His serried hosts to conquer Indra's world,  
 Was fain to make him friend,—for he had won  
 The Bow of Çiva. Give to him thy hand  
 In happy wedlock! Steadfast as the world,  
 Be co-wife with the sunny Southern land, 210  
 Which Ocean rich in pearls clasps lovingly;  
 And joyous ever sport where Malaya  
 Slopes terraced, where the dark-green betel-boughs  
 Are intertwined, where creepers clasp smooth trunks.  
 Dark is he, thou art fair: let each enhance  
 By union other's beauty, as do cloud  
 And lightning-flash!" Unmoved the royal Maid

Passed on : the lotus waits the rising Sun,  
Nor heeds the Moon's pale beams, but stays close shut.

Now as the Maid went by, each suitor-King, 220

Lit for a moment by her dazzling eyes,  
Like wayside tower by passing lamp, sank back  
In deepest gloom. Then Aja's heart was stirred,  
Who questioned with himself, "Shall I find grace,  
Or fail like them?" His right arm throbbing checked  
The rising doubt, and well-nigh snapped the cords  
That bound his wrist ; but him the bright Princess  
Found faultless, yielded him her love, and stopped—  
Nor further passed—as rests a swarm of bees

Contented on the mango in full flower, 230

Nor seeks beyond it. Then Sunandâ skilled  
To know the rank of men, perceiving soon  
How all her heart the royal Maid had set,—  
That fair, full Moon,—on him, took up her tale :—

"In high Ikshvâku's line Kakutstha sprang,  
'Mong Kings a King, for virtue eminent,  
Whose royal race still rules North Koçala,  
And bears his famous name. That King renowned,  
As Çiva swift in fight, ascended high

On Mount Mahendra, made the Demons' wives 240

To spoil their cheeks of unguents, weeping loud ;  
And, with his bracelet touching Indra's own,  
Loosed by the rubbing of Airâvata,  
In dignity possessed an equal seat  
With him, when even in most dazzling shape.

More splendid shone the fame of that proud race,  
 When bright Dilîpa rose, its radiant lamp,  
 Who—wanting one of his full tale of Rites,—  
 One hundred,—calmed the fears of Svarga's Lord,  
 Nor further laboured. 'Neath his calm, strong rule 250  
 The very breeze disturbed not lovers' skirts  
 As through the groves they strayed, or sank to rest,  
 Far less dared rude men's hands. Dilîpa's throne  
 His son, unconquered Raghu, fills, who late  
 Made sacrifice for Empire Won : bestowed  
 His treasure wholly, all he'd gathered up  
 From Earth's four quarters and increased, nor kept  
 Aught save an earthen vessel. His renown  
 Cannot be measured, weighed, or told in words :  
 It scaled high mountains, crossed wide seas, and passed 260  
 The portals of Pâtâla,—yea, has risen  
 To Heaven, immortal. From his kingly loins  
 Prince Aja sprang, as fair Jayanta sprang  
 From Indra. Now this Prince bears half the weight  
 Of that high charge his Sire erst bore alone,  
 Unwearied, as a mighty bull-calf bears  
 One half the yoke. Choose him, bright Maid ! thy peer  
 He only is in beauty, lineage, youth,  
 In virtues all, with modesty the chief :—  
 Ah, let the pearl be set in finest gold !” 270

When now Sunandâ ceased, the royal Maid  
 Dropped veil of coyness, by her favouring glance,  
 Bright with pure love, proclaiming blameless choice,



As 'twere with fateful wreath : but modesty  
 Restrained her tongue, though o'er her slender form  
 The hair upstanding showed her ardent love.

Then smiling spake Sunandâ, when she marked  
 The Maid's confusion :—“ Gracious Lady, now  
 Pass we to others !” She from angry eye  
 Flashed fire, indignant. Graceful as a swan, 280  
 Helped by her handmaid, laid she then the wreath,  
 With golden sandal scented, on the neck  
 Of mighty Raghu's son,—a present Love.

Clasped by that wreath, where all auspicious flowers—  
 And they alone—were woven, Raghu's child,  
 The dauntless Prince, such rapture felt as though  
 Already he were clasped in love's embrace  
 By that bright Princess. “ Here the cloudless Moon  
 Wins clear effulgence ! Gangâ's self unites  
 With her fit mate, wide Ocean !” Loud rejoiced 290  
 In shouts like these, harsh to the rival Kings,  
 The happy people, who delighted saw  
 Their virtues, else unmatched, now fitly joined  
 In perfect union. Then the Bridegroom's friends  
 Beamed bright for gladness : gloomy ranks of Kings,  
 Their hopes dashed down, opposed a hostile front.  
 So, when the Sun has risen, his glorious beams  
 Expand the flowers that love him, but seal up  
 Those other flowers that open to the Moon.

## CANTO VII

*Aja's Wedding : and how he smote his treacherous Rivals  
on his Way Home.*

VIDARBHA'S King then led the joyous train  
To wed his sister to that worthy Lord,—  
Like Skanda mating with the Heavenly Host.  
As morning-planets when the day begins,  
Went to their camps the rival-Kings chagrined,  
Scorned by Indumatî. Both mien and dress  
Revealed their angry mood ; but Çachî's power  
Prevailed, and none disturbed the marriage-rite.

Then with her Bridegroom went the royal Bride,  
Where o'er their way fresh garlands stretched, and where 10  
Like Indra's bow flashed paintings on the gates,  
While shading banners kept away the heat.  
Bright maids at golden lattices looked out,  
To see the Prince, nor heeded other work,  
But lit with glancing motions all the house.  
Thus shone they various :—one in hot haste ran  
To reach the lattice, while her hand held up  
Her clustered locks, from which the loosened wreath

Had well-nigh fall'n, nor stayed to bind her hair.  
 Another changed her mincing gait, and sped 20  
 To gaze, her footsteps marking with red lac,  
 Still dripping liquid from that dainty foot  
 Her handmaid stained ; a third one held the brush,  
 One brow well-darkened and the other bare,—  
 Yet so she went to gaze ; her dress one maid  
 Held up, which down had slipped and left unclad  
 Her form irradiate by the bracelet's gleam,  
 Nor tied her zone,—so hurried was her pace.  
 And one with cramped toes kept up the belt,  
 Where half its gems were strung, and limping ran 30  
 To see the wondrous sight. Most brilliant shone  
 Those windows lit within by glancing eyes,  
 That swam with joy, as scented with red wine,  
 And keen to know the least detail, like bees  
 They swarmed. Their eyes, fixed full on him alone,  
 Drank in the Prince's charms, as though their hearts  
 And senses all were merged and lost in sight.

The Princess, worthy of her suitor-Kings,  
 Deemed well her Choice had ended : only so  
 Could she have found an equal mate, as found 40  
 Fair Lakshmî hers,—the mighty Lord of all.  
 Like Love they were and Springtime ; she had found  
 'Mong myriad Kings the soul that halved her own,  
 And claimed her beauty,—for the soul re-born  
 Knows of its former fates. The Prince, rejoiced  
 To hear sweet strains which city-matrons sang,

Passed to the palace, where with welcoming wreath,  
 His royal brother waited. There the Priest  
 Revered of Bhoja, having duly served  
 The fire with butter clear, and set it forth 50  
 As witness of the wedding, joined that pair,  
 Pure bridegroom with pure bride. Prince Aja clasped  
 Her hand in his, and greater lustre gained,  
 As when a mango clasps with answering sprout  
 The *Açõka's* tendril. On his limbs the hair  
 Stood stiff for joy, while tender love made her  
 Glow radiant : 'twas as though their joinèd hands  
 Shared passion's fire between them ; pleasing pain  
 Shone in their meeting eyes, where mutual love  
 Stood self-revealed. Then round the blazing fire 60  
 They circled to the left, as day and night  
 Course round Mount Meru, and conjunctive beamed.  
 Next at the Priest's command, great Brahmâ's peer,  
 With love-lorn partridge-eyes the modest Bride  
 Threw on the fire her offering of rice,  
 While,—fed with cassia-shoots, fried grain, and oil,—  
 Auspicious rose the flame, and round her cheek  
 Its tongue curled gently, winning for a space  
 Such lustre as the lotus in her ear  
 That trembled,—while her face grew rosy-red, 70  
 And ointment melted round her eyes diffused,  
 And barley-ears hung on her, at the Fire  
 That sanctified the rite. The princely pair  
 Sate on their golden throne, and glad received

What moist rice-grains the King, most noble host,  
And householders, and matrons, threw on them.

That Monarch, mighty, lamp of his high race  
(When now his sister's marriage was complete),  
Sent to each suitor-King befitting gifts

By honoured hands, which they with feignèd joy 80  
Received ; but hid deep anger, as a lake  
Whose quiet face hides many a scaly foe.

They thanked their host, requiting him with gifts  
Of treacherous import ; then departing, planned  
A conjoint subtle scheme to seize the Bride,—

Which to work out they close beset the road  
Whereby the Prince must go. Rich dowry gave,  
As well beseemed, King Bhoja to the Maid,  
And convoyed Aja on his journey home.

Three nights he camped with that world-famous Prince, 90  
Then left him,—as the Moon deserts the Sun,  
When fades her borrowed light. The rival-Kings,

Recalling earlier grievance 'gainst his Sire,  
For tribute taken, now combined in wrath  
To smite the Prince, who won from them the Pearl

Of women, Bhoja's sister. Bride and Prince  
The haughty band of Kings stayed, as they drove,  
As when Prahlâda Vishṇu's steps opposed,

When Bali's boon was given. The mighty Prince  
Consigned his Bride for safety to the care

Of one both warrior tried and counsellor sage, 100  
Then dashed impetuous on the hostile ranks,

As Çoṇa's waves smite Gangâ. Armies met  
 In equal shock of battle: foot to foot  
 Fought warriors, horse to horse, and car to car,  
 While clarions brayed. No tribal war-cry rose,  
 But famous names were known by hurtling shafts,  
 That smote the foe reluctant. Dust of strife,  
 By horses stirred and chariots, veiled the Sun  
 (Spread by the flapping ears of elephants), 110  
 And tempered heat; the while rich pennons waved,  
 Which, rent by rushing wind, devoured the dust  
 Raised by the hosts, as fish drink eagerly  
 Fresh Autumn's pools though muddy. Through thick clouds  
 The noise of wheels proclaimed a chariot, bells  
 Betrayed huge elephants, while friend and foe  
 Were only known from shouted names of chiefs.

Blood streamed from horses, elephants, and men,  
 By weapons wounded, shining as the Sun  
 New-risen, ruddy, o'er a field obscured 120  
 By dust-born darkness, hemming in men's sight.  
 That dust, whose root the blood had cut, streamed up  
 As smoke from fire new-kindled, while the wood  
 Lies in the hearth, blown sideways by the wind.  
 Now car-borne heroes, waking from their swoon  
 Sore-wounded, angry at their steeds' retreat,  
 Rebuked the drivers, turned their cars, dealt death  
 To those who gave them wounds,—by pennon known.  
 Now skilful archers' shafts, split in mid flight  
 By darts opposing, kept their onward course, 130

Infixing deadly barbs : in battle-shock  
 Met elephants, whose drivers' heads—smit off  
 By keen-edged quoits,—kites snatched with eager claw,  
 And lingering dropped. A horseman spared his foe  
 (Ev'n in the attack) if bruised by shock of horse,  
 And stayed his leisure. Like Death's banquet-hall  
 Showed that dread field,—with dead men's skulls for fruit,  
 For beakers fallen helmets, blood for wine.

But wounded elephants, whose mighty trunks  
 Sharp swords of mailed warriors half cut through, 140  
 High-frenzied, quenched with water-streams the sparks  
 Struck from the flashing steel :—so raged the fight.

One broken arm, which swooping vultures seized,  
 A greedy jackal caught, and hurt his jaw  
 On bracelet-buckle. Where a foeman's sword  
 Had cut the neck, straight to his Heavenly car  
 The warrior rose, and clasped his bride divine,  
 While still his lifeless trunk danced on the plain.

In mutual slaughter other two had fall'n,  
 Drivers and fighters ; leaping from their cars, 150  
 With clubs they first engaged ; when these were broke,  
 Close-locked in fiercest strife, by mutual wounds  
 At once they died :—then, suitors in the skies  
 To one fair Nymph, forthwith renewed the fight.

Now conquering, now defeated, swayed the hosts  
 Like Ocean's waves, that winds drive to and fro,  
 By dust-clouds veiled, as through damp morning-mist  
 The rising Sun shows dimly. Last the Prince,

Fair as the God of Love, unwearied still,  
 Launched at his foes that sleep-compelling dart, 160  
 Which—heaven-derived—Priyamvada had given.  
 Then, struck to sleep, the Kings' whole armed host  
 Stood motionless : no strength to draw the bow  
 Was in their hands, while on their shoulders drooped  
 The helmet-chains ; they leaned against the staves  
 That bore the flags. Then raised he to his lips,  
 Whose sweets his Bride had tasted,—only she,—  
 And blew the conch-shell, drinking (so it seemed)  
 Embodied glory, by his right hand won.

His warriors knew the note, faced round, and saw 170  
 Where slept his foes around him, as the Moon  
 Shines o'er closed lotuses on quiet lakes.  
 Then on their banners with his blood-stained shafts  
 Thus wrote the Prince,—“ Your glory Raghu's son  
 Has taken from you, but your lives he spares  
 Of his mere mercy !” Resting on his bow,  
 The garland breaking as he raised his helm,  
 His brow with sweat-drops moist,—his trembling Bride  
 He then approached, and spoke :—“ Vidarbha's Child !  
 Behold our foes, I bid thee : infant hands 180  
 Might seize their weapons now. Could such as they,  
 So fighting, win thee from me ?” Then her face,  
 Recovering from alarm the foe had caused,  
 Shone brightly, as a mirror when damp breath  
 Is wiped away. Rejoicing, yet for shame  
 She praised him not herself, but by the lips



Of handmaids,—as the fallow thanks the rain,  
 When early sprinkled, by the peacocks' song.  
 Then set he his left foot upon the crowns  
 Of those proud Kings ; this done, that faultless Prince 190  
 Bore off his blooming Bride, whose ringlets bright  
 The dust from hoofs and wheels had stirred and tinged,—  
 While like incarnate Victory she shone !

Now came he home, whom with his lovely wife  
 King Raghu welcomed, knowing all the news  
 And what had chanced. He then transferred the yoke  
 Of Kingship to his son, and eager turned  
 To tread himself the quiet way of Peace :  
 Such in the Solar line is ever use  
 For Monarchs when their sons have come to age. 200

## CANTO VIII

*Aja's early Happiness : Death of Indumati,  
and his Lament.*

THUS mighty Raghu gave Prince Aja Earth,  
 A second bride with fair Indumati,  
 While still he wore the sacred marriage-ring.  
 What others seek by wrong to make their own,  
 He took submissive from his father's hand,  
 Not lusting after power. Then Earth with him,  
 By water hallowed and Vaçishṭha's spells,  
 In wedlock joined, by exhalations dense  
 Showed joy untold. The King, anointed such  
 By Saint deep-learnèd in Atharva texts,  
 Foes could not hope to vanquish. Sacred Lore  
 And warlike glory twinned resistless work,  
 Like Wind and Fire : the people deemed their King  
 Was Raghu's self restored to second youth :  
 For with the Royal State all Kingly grace  
 He had received. Two things with other two  
 Shone doubly-bright : his father's fame revived  
 By Aja, prudent age by vigorous youth.  
 The newly-subject Earth like virgin-bride

He used with tender love, and curbed his strength, 20  
 Lest she should be dismayed. His subjects all  
 Thought each,—“’Tis me the King loves best!” for none  
 He scorned, as Ocean, wived with countless streams,  
 Meets all with equal love. Not over-harsh,  
 Nor yet too lenient, still the golden mean  
 He followed, causing neighbouring Kings to bow  
 Without uprooting, as the tender grass  
 Inclines before the wind. King Raghu then,  
 Who saw the Kingdom stablished in his son,  
 As he himself had ruled it, ceased from care 30  
 Of all things earthly, nay, of Heavenly joys :—  
 Such still the wont of great Dilipa’s race,  
 Who in their green old age make o’er the realm  
 To sons of equal virtue, while themselves,  
 Self-centred, tread the bark-clad Hermits’ path.

But when the father sought to take his place  
 Among the pious band, his new-crowned son,  
 With head bowed low before him, prayed his Sire  
 Not so to leave him orphaned. Then the King  
 Vouchsafed the boon—for well he loved his son, 40  
 But took not up again his former state,  
 As snakes resume not sloughs once cast away.

So Raghu entered on life’s latest stage,  
 And, freed from every care, in safe retreat  
 Hard by the City dwelt, while daughter-like  
 The Royal State performed her duteous part.

Now in that Kingly house the reverend Sire

Had chosen Peace ; the Son in vigour ruled.  
 Bright as is Heav'n when day's great orb mounts high  
 And sinks the moon ; so Sire alike and Son 50  
 Were both supreme,—one in the realm of war,  
 And one of pious work : each wore the dress  
 Which best befitted either, in the quest  
 Of earthly glory or of Final Bliss.

Then Aja, who was moved to conquer realms  
 Not yet subdued, took counsel sage with men  
 Deep-versed in statecraft : Raghu companied  
 With holy hermits, seeking joys Supreme.  
 On throne of justice Aja sat to watch  
 His people's weal ; his Sire, with senses quelled, 60  
 Slept on pure *Kuça*, far from haunts of men,  
 And weaned his thoughts from earth. By warlike might  
 That smote the Kings around him, this—by thought  
 On sacred subjects fixed—smote down the lusts  
 Which mortals feel. The younger King burnt up  
 The fruits his foes most longed for, while his Sire  
 With flame of Holy Lore consumed the deeds  
 Which else might bar Salvation. Seeking fruit  
 By earthly wisdom, Aja truces made,  
 Used other crafts of statesmen :—Ignorance, 70  
 Wrath, Virtue, Raghu stemmed to reach calm Bliss,  
 And gold he viewed as clods. The new-set King  
 Assiduous worked, nor ceased from worthy acts  
 Till dawned success ; while plunged in thought his Sire,  
 Detached from every earthly bond or wish,

Sent forth his soul to join the Soul Supreme.

Thus in his sphere each watched to quell his foes :—

The one proud Kings, the other worldly thoughts,

(One glory sought, the other Final Bliss,)

And each obtained his end. So Raghu passed,

80

That loving father, years of calm repose :

Then, breaking from the gloomy chains of life,

Devotion joined him to the Changeless Soul.

When this was told to Aja, long he wept,

Then summoned pious hermits, sacred Fire

Laid on the altar, and placed him in earth,

Untouched by fire : then Offerings to the Shades

He from mere love presented,—for 'tis known

That Saints departed need no funeral cake,

Nor claim it from their sons. By R̥ishis schooled,

90

In Holy Learning perfect, overmuch

He grieved not for that father passed to Heaven ;

But strung his conquering bow, and smiting down

All rival Kings, alone he ruled the World.

Him Earth had won and fond Indumatī

For spouse, the glorious Hero : many gems

Earth gave him, and his mortal bride one son,

Whom, bright as sunshine, famous through the worlds

As Daçaratha, after ages knew

The Sire of R̥âma, ten-necked R̥âvaṇ's foe.

100

So paid the King by study, sacrifice,

And fatherhood, that triple debt which men

Owe to the Saints, the Gods, the Blessed Shades,—

And like the Sun shone glorious when he 'scapes  
 From misty halo. War's array he used  
 To free the oppressed from fear, his Sacred Lore  
 Served but to honour Saints, his wealth alike  
 He used and virtue for his people's good.

Thus in unclouded happiness he lived,  
 But grief lay ambushed. One sad, fatal day,  
 With loved Indumatî the King, who watched 110  
 His people like a flock, through pleasant groves  
 That girt the City strayed, as Çachî's Lord  
 And lover, Lord of Maruts, haunts the groves  
 That spread round Nandana. Then Nârada,  
 Minstrel Divine, who sought Gokarṇa's Lord  
 To praise him with his lute, passed through the South  
 To northern climes,—while, greedy of the scent,  
 The rushing wind bore off the flowery crown  
 That decked the lute celestial. \ Like a tear 120  
 From painted eye those flowers shone as they fell  
 By bees attended, ravished by the breeze.  
 That Heavenly wreath, before whose potent scent  
 Shrank shamed the blooming creepers, lighted soft  
 Down on the Queen's broad breasts, † which when she felt  
 A moment only on her ample chest,  
 The King's Beloved paled, and tottering swooned,  
 As fails the moonlight when the Moon is hid :  
 She lifeless fell, and his life followed hers,  
 As lamp-spark falling takes the burning wick 130

Fed with rich oil. Scared by the loud laments  
 Their followers raised, the lotus-haunting birds  
 Screamed sympathetic ; they with fans revived  
 The King, but lifeless lay the Queen : unless  
 The vital spark be left all help is vain,  
 All tendance useless. He his Spouse raised up  
 Like lute untuned, and laid her in his lap,  
 Fit resting-place : she pale in death reclined,  
 As in grey dawn the Moon shows weird and wan.

Deep mourned he, tears nigh choked him, his firm mind  
 Was broken—even as heat intense will melt 141  
 The rigid iron ; ah ! how much the more  
 Grief melts men's hearts ! Thus wailed the stricken King :—

“ If Fate by touch of flowers can kill, what dart  
 May not be deadly when He seeks to slay ?  
 Or haply Death, to take a tender life  
 Chose shaft as tender : so, soft flakes of snow  
 Destroy the yielding lotus. Death perchance  
 To slay me launched his arrow ; while the tree  
 Yet stands unharmed, the creeper smitten falls. 150  
 Ah, why—who oft forgavest wrong I did—  
 Dost thou unwarning shut those lips from me,  
 Who now have done no wrong ? Thou doubt'st my love,  
 O smiling Lady ! wherefore, scorning fraud,  
 (My leave unasked) thou took'st thy way to Heaven.  
 My maimèd life pursued thee, but alone  
 Has now returned ; why can not I alone  
 Bear all the grief ? Still on thy face, fair Spouse,

Tired love has left its trace, but soul is fled :  
 Alas, how transient are the lives of men !

160

“No thought had I to vex thee,—why hast thou  
 Left me forlorn? Thee only have I loved,  
 Though Earth too calls me Lord,—Lord but in name.

Ah, stately Lady, now thy rippling curls,  
 Bee-coloured, wreathed with flowers, wave in air,  
 And bid me hope that yet thou wilt return

Again to bless my life :—wake soon, O Love !  
 Soon bid my sorrow cease ! the Snowy Mount

Has caves lit up by plants that nightly shed  
 Light through them : so return to melt my gloom !

170

I grieve to see thy face, which locks dispersed  
 Disfigure, mute—once eloquent, as when  
 A lonely lotus slumbers, stilled the hum  
 Of bees that sleep there. Night regains her Moon,  
 The Cuckoo finds his mate, and parting's pangs  
 Are cured by meeting :—how canst thou, O Love,  
 Destroy my life by leaving me for aye ?

“Thy slender limbs scarce rested as they lay  
 On couch of freshest leaves :—how wilt thou then,  
 Fair Lady, bear the roughness of the pyre,

180

All bristling? / See ! this zone, which first received  
 The tones of love, is mute, since thou liest still,  
 As 'twere a sorrowing friend that ev'n in death

Attends a loved one,—if thou wake no more !

Thy dulcet tones the Cuckoos have assumed,  
 To Swans hath passed thy slow and languorous gait,



Thy glance of love Gazelles now use, thy grace  
 The Creepers waving in the wind :—these all  
 Thou leftest me when soaring up to Heaven,  
 Yet soothe they not my heart, weighed down with woe 190  
 At thy departing. || Didst not thou betrothe  
 This scented Mango to his Creeper-bride?  
 How leave them then unwed, deserting me  
 Untimely? Shall these hands weave funeral wreaths  
 Of that *Açoka's* blossoms, which thyself  
 Hast coaxed, made coy, and fostered lovingly,  
 To deck thy ringlets? | Lady of fair limb!  
 The *Açoka* mourns thee, tearful shedding flowers,  
 To miss thy graceful steps, thy tinkling gait,  
 For ever lost. O sweet-voiced Queen of Love! 200  
 That zone is yet unfinished, which with me  
 Thou half hast fashioned of these fragrant blooms,  
 Fresh-scented as thy breath: how canst thou sleep,  
 And leave thy task undone? || In joy, in grief,  
 Thy maidens shared; and this, thy noble Child,  
 Shows like a waxing Moon; my constant love  
 Is for thee only;—stern and pitiless,  
 Thou leavest all, unloving. || Joy is sped,  
 Endurance broken: cheerful songs have ceased;  
 Spring charms no longer, gauds are laid aside; 210  
 My couch henceforth is widowed, desolate. ||  
 House-mistress, Friend, Beloved, Counsellor,  
 In all Love's arts apt pupil! cruel Death,  
 Bereaving me of thee, bereaves of all!

O Liquid-eyed ! to thee my loving lips  
 Gave all their sweetness ; canst thou bear to drink  
 The lukewarm draughts, all troubled by my tears,  
 Wherewith we tempt the Sires? Now thou art gone,  
 No more has prosperous course my widowed life  
 Which owned no other joys, but all on thee  
 Was centred !” So the King with grieving words  
 Mourned for his Love, while sympathetic trees  
 Condoling shed their gums, like floods of tears.

220

Then hardly from his lap his loyal men  
 Removed the Queen, now dead, and reverent laid  
 On pyre of sandalwood with aloes mixed,  
 Clad rich for Death. His royal heart thought scorn  
 That men should say, “ A King by private grief  
 Sank overwhelmed !” So, though he cared no more  
 To live his life, yet—fearing men’s reproach—  
 He dared not mount the pyre that now consumed  
 His Spouse, but ’twas not love of life withheld.

230

Ten days he spent, given o’er to sorrow’s sway,  
 Then in that grove for ever left his dear,—  
 Wise King, whom now her virtues only charm,  
 Since life was fled. Dejected, widowed, sad  
 (As when Night yields to Morning pale and wan),  
 He entered his fair City,—and beheld  
 The tears that ladies shed, as ’twere the floods  
 Of grief that overflowed his sorrowing heart.

240

Now to his Teacher in the Hermitage,  
 For sacrifice prepared, the grief was known

Which numbed his senses : pitying he sent  
 Wise words of comfort (since himself was stayed)  
 By well-taught pupil, who spake gravely thus :—

“ Absorbed in sacrifice the perfect Saint,  
 Though well he knows thy grief, perforce must send,  
 Not come, to teach thee patience, and restore  
 The calm thou ownedst ere this heavy blow  
 Fell on thee. Me he sends to brace thy heart,  
 O pious King, and speak thee words of peace !  
 O much-enduring Hero, lay to heart

His words of comfort ! He whose perfect sight  
 Unchecked sees all that has been, all that is,  
 Or shall be in the fortunes of men's souls,  
 Bids tell thee how, when Tṛiṇabindu's toils  
 Of old made Indra fear, the God sent forth  
 To check his arduous penance Hariṇî,

The Nymph Celestial. Then the Saint, in wrath  
 That like world-whelming wave flowed o'er his soul,  
 Else patient, cursed her wanton charms, displayed  
 Delusive,—bidding her be born 'mongst men.

Then bowed she trembling, humbly sought his grace,  
 And pleaded the compulsion of her Lord  
 On her a servant,—till the Saint forgave,  
 And said :—‘ When thou shalt see Heaven's flowers once more,  
 The curse I spake shall end !’ In Bhoja's house  
 The Nymph was born : her thou didst win for Bride,  
 Who long has made thee happy,—till at length  
 Those Heavenly flowers proclaimed the Curse's end :

Fate called her home, she could not choose but go !

“Oh, mourn her then no longer ! Fate’s decree  
Brings grief for joy : let Earth have all thy love,  
That regal Bride beloved of Kingly souls !  
In prosperous times, O King, no vaunting words  
E’er passed thy lips, while perfect Sacred Lore  
Shone in thy patience ; now that sorrow comes,  
Be man and quell it ! Though thou die with her,  
Scarce shouldst thou find her more ; for souls of men  
Take fateful paths that vary with their deeds.

280

Quit then thy grief ; prepare the funeral cake,  
Nor weep preparing,—since the tears of friends  
Disturb departed souls. Know, earthly life  
Is bondage to the Soul, which Death sets free :  
If then one breathe an instant, and depart,  
His gain is highest : only fools regard  
As deadly darts infix the death of friends ;  
The constant-minded know that Death draws out  
Life’s painful barb, and opens up for men  
The gate of Bliss. \ Thou know’st the soul must meet,  
Then leave the destined body : shall the wise  
Grieve when the soul casts off those coils of sense  
Which bind in life ? Fall never, wisest King,  
Before unreasoning grief, as fools may fall :  
Trees bend, but rocks stand firm when tempests rage !”

290

“’Tis well !” he said assenting, bowed, and blessed  
The Saint departing ; but the words of peace  
Took on his sorrow-laden heart no hold,

So to the Sage returned. The King bereaved,  
 To rear his son to manhood, hardly bore  
 Eight widowed years, which only dreams relieved  
 When she appeared, or marble forms that mocked  
 Her matchless beauty. Sorrow's dart had struck  
 Deep-rooted in his soul, as strikes a Fig  
 Deep roots in palace-roofs : when sickness came  
 To end his life, he welcomed its stern dint,  
 As one that set him free to join his Love.

300

First perfectly he trained his warrior-son  
 The folk to guard, to smite the stubborn foe :  
 Then, pining sore to quit the frame diseased  
 That fettered him, the pious King resolved,  
 Renouncing earthly food and drink, to win  
 Bliss Endless. Wherefore to that holy place  
 He went where Gangâ meets Sarâyû's stream,  
 There shed his body, and regained his Spouse,  
 More beauteous than on earth :—now in the groves  
 Of Nandana they love and live for aye !

310

## CANTO IX

*The Prosperous Reign of Daçaratha, and his  
Fatal Hunting.*

So mighty Daçaratha to his Sire  
Succeeded, self-controlled : in Koçala,  
Of royal Sages first, he ruled his folk,  
Who knew him noble Kârtikeya's peer  
In righteous glory, spreading wide his power.

Great Sages tell that Indra and this King  
Poured forth their bounties duly : Bali's foe  
And he who sprang of Manu's royal line,  
Untiring, 'mongst whose folk no illness set  
Its foot, while Earth brought forth her generous fruit      10  
For him, the pride of Aja, peaceful King.  
Broad Earth's ten regions Raghu had subdued,  
Succeeding Aja made them fairer still,  
And after him his son, that ruler sage,  
Increased its lustre. Just, dispensing wealth,  
Chastising ill men,—Yama, Varuṇa,  
He rivalled, and Kuvera : as the Sun  
Drives Dawn before him, so him, self-restrained  
For Glory's winning, neither women's love,

Nor dice, nor youth's fair spring-time led astray, 20  
 Nor wine moon-mirroring. No abject word,  
 Not even to Lord Indra, would he use ;  
 Nor, even jesting, falsely speak ; nor foes  
 Would he with passion meet, nor nurse revenge.

Earth's Kings received from Aja's son the fates  
 That raised them or destroyed ; for he was friend  
 To such as did his bidding, harsh and stern  
 To all who dared defy. He with strong bow  
 Went conquering in one car sea-girdled Earth,—  
 While elephants and horses, huge and swift, 30  
 Did but proclaim his triumph. Thus the World  
 Alone he, mighty archer, quite subdued,  
 Rich as Kuvera, while the thunderous sea  
 Beat drums auspicious. Indra with his bolt,  
 One-hundred-pointed, clipped the mountains' wings :  
 He, lotus-faced, poured forth from sounding bow  
 A rain of arrows, breaking hostile ranks.  
 By hundreds Kings did homage,—Maruts so  
 Bow down to glorious Indra,—while the pearls  
 That decked their diadems fresh lustre won 40  
 From his bright toe-nails. Wives disconsolate  
 Of foemen pitied he, whose infant sons  
 The counsellors taught to bow : so turned he back  
 From Ocean's shores to where Ayodhyâ's towers,  
 As Alakâ's resplendent, ruled the plain.

Yet, though o'er Earth he power supreme had won,  
 Nor rival raised his canopy towards heaven,

He sank not back in sloth, whose glory blazed  
 Like fire, or moon-like beamed : for still he thought  
 The pinnacle of fame was not yet won. 50

Clear-minded King, he made the river-banks  
 With golden altar-posts to flash, where flowed  
 Sarâyû's streams or Tamasâ,—and doffed  
 His crown to sacrifice the Horse, and spent  
 All wealth late yielded by the conquered World.  
 Such Çiva's self might seem, in deerskin clad,  
 With *Kuça* girdled, staff and horn in hand,  
 With voice restrained, and dight for sacrifice,—  
 Incarnate, crowned with matchless lustre, pure,  
 By due ablutions cleansed, and fit to move 60  
 Among the blessed Gods. He Indra served,

But served none other. Vishṇu, Highest Lord,  
 And him from Raghu sprung, the poor man's stay,  
 Did lotus-handed Lakshmî serve, for so  
 She kept her vow. But he, the mighty Lord,  
 Oft side by side with Indra led Heaven's host,  
 And by his archery freed from fear the hearts  
 Of maids Divine, who hymned his warlike fame.  
 Oft too that matchless Hero, bowman skilled,  
 In front of Indra fighting, laid with blood 70  
 Of vanquished Demons dust that veiled the Sun.

The King, whose arrows pierced his foemen's breasts,  
 Espoused the virtuous daughters of three Kings,—  
 Of Koçala, Kekaya, Magadha,—  
 As rivers from the mountains wed the Sea.



So, threefold wedded, skilled to smite the foe,  
 Like Indra's self he seemed, with Virtues three  
 Come down to earth, to rule the world in peace :

Came in his season Spring, that gracious Lord,  
 In might all-worshipful, the peer alike 80  
 Of Gods of Earth, and Sky, and Wealth, and Sea,  
 To deck the world with new-born flowers. The Sun  
 Turned towards Kūvera's realms his steeds, and cleared  
 The morning-hours of frost, and left the slopes  
 Of well-loved Malaya. First burst the buds,  
 Then sprouted fresh green twigs, with hum of bees  
 And cuckoos' wooing note :—through tree-clad glade  
 In order due thus Spring revealed himself.

At Winter's ending smiled the glowing year :  
 The *Kinçuka* took on her wealth of buds, 90  
 Like red scars laid by fingers of a bride,  
 With wine deep-drunk and passion, on her spouse.  
 Not yet the Sun dispelled, but made less keen  
 The frost by women hated, swollen-lipped  
 From biting, while their zones slipped down from waists  
 That shrank with cold. From southern Malaya  
 Fresh buds of mango, shaken by warm winds,  
 Learned arts enticing,—in ascetic breasts  
 By charm of waving twigs to fix Love's power.  
 As suitors sought the King, whose fortunate rule 100  
 His virtues doubled, lavish to the good,  
 So to the lotus-clusters in the lakes—

Fresh-blown by present Spring—swarmed bees and birds.

*Açoka's* spring-like flower was lamp of Love,

And tender blossoms which their fair brides wore

As ear-drops, lit in youthful wooers' hearts

Love's gentle fires. Now *Jhinti's* purple flowers,

In honey rich, fresh picture from Spring's hand

Of dainty beauty, stirred the bees to hum

In joyous concert. Wine from beauteous lips

110

Made fertile bursting blooms, which fragrant blush

On *Vakulas*, where long-drawn swarms of bees

Greedy of sweetness clung. Fresh-blossoming glades

The early Cuckoo haunted with sweet notes,

Like short and broken words of loving brides.

In garden-borders tuneful creepers sang

With pleasing hum of bees, while tender flowers

Seemed gleaming teeth, and wind-shook buds were hands

To beat the dance's time. Fair women quaffed

The grateful wine, which stirred to wanton grace,

120

More fragrant than Love's ally, *Vakula*,

That never fosters strife. House-tanks, made glad

By lotus-flowers and waterfowls' soft notes,

Shone bright as women's faces lit with smiles,

Whose tinkling zones hang loose. Thin grew the Night,

Close-pressed by Spring; her face's lustre paled

As waxed the Moon;—as pales a maiden's cheek

Whose lover fails her. Now the Moon's clear beams

In cloudless lustre heal Love's sweet fatigue,

And sharpen Kāma's darts, the God who wields

130

The flower-strung bow, his flag a crocodile.  
 That bloom which glows like fire oblation-fed,—  
 Fit ear-drop for the Goddess of the wood,—  
 Soft-petalled, limber-tendrilled, lovers gave,  
 And brides twined in their locks. Shone *Tila*-trees,  
 Where clustered bees by contrast heightened charms  
 Of flowers, as ointment charms of fairy eyes,  
 Or patch on woman's cheek. *New-mallikā*,  
 The tree's fair spouse, slim, graceful, honey-sweet  
 With scented blossoms, fresh red sprouts her lips, 140  
 Ensnared men's hearts. Fond lovers welcomed Love  
 With garments red as dawn, and barley-heads  
 Made ear-rings, Cuckoos' song,—his whole array.  
 The full-blown flowers of *Tila*, clustering, shone  
 (The pollen white contrasting with black swarms  
 Of bees) not less than bright pearls, intertwined  
 With ladies' locks. Swift chased the honied tribes  
 That fragrant pollen, which the zephyrs light  
 Stirred, Love's own token, by that doughty Lord  
 Laid on the face of Spring, to keep her fair. 150  
 Now sought fair women, languishing though strong,  
 The swings Spring brought them, that their lovers' necks  
 They might unblamèd clasp, scarce touching ropes  
 That bound their seats. "Be bold!" "Ah, cease from  
 strife!"  
 "Life's pleasure-time comes once, nor e'er returns!"  
 So Kokils sang Love's mind, and yielding maids  
 Their passion owned.

Then he, the King, high peer  
 Of Vishṇu, Spring, and Love, the feast enjoyed  
 With his fair wives to fulness. Next, he longed  
 To know a hunter's joys. The Chace gives skill 160  
 To cleave swift-moving marks, by outward signs  
 To ken both fear and rage : the hunter's will,  
 Fatigue despising, braces all his frame :  
 Wherefore his Council much approved the thought.  
 Dressed then in hunter's garb that Sunlike King,  
 With quiver on broad neck, obscured the sky  
 With dust of horses' hoofs ; with woodland wreaths  
 His locks he braided, wearing mail of green,  
 His ear-rings trembling from the horses' speed.  
 So through deer-haunted glades he glanced, and Gods 170  
 Of woods, who veiled their forms in slender vines,  
 Black bees their eyes, marked well the bright-eyed King,  
 Whose righteous rule spread joy through Koçala,  
 And watched him passing. Men with dogs and nets  
 He sent before him, robbers fled, and fires  
 Were quenched ; the soil was firm with plenteous wells,  
 And deer and birds and bisons swarmed around.  
 As Indra's bow with golden bowstring armed  
 Nabhanga bears, so bore that King his bow  
 Well-strung, his passions quelled, whose angry twang 180  
 Enraged the lion. Broke a herd of deer,  
 Led by a twelve-tined stag, where suckling fawns  
 Oft checked the fleeing does, while *Kuça* blades  
 Hung from their muzzles. Them the well-horsed King

O'ertook, and from his quiver drew a shaft :  
 They burst their ranks, their troubled glances seemed  
 To light up all the wood, as breezes fling  
 From sombre lotus-leaves the balmy drops.

Like Indra skilled in bowcraft, passed the King :—  
 If hind-protected stag he'd marked for death 190  
 (His love-swayed soul with pity smit)—he checked  
 The shaft he thought to loose. At other deer  
 When he would shoot, his firm-clenched hand, full drawn  
 Up to the ear, as of itself unclasped,—  
 Moved by the liquid orbs that rolled in fear,  
 Recalling loving looks of tender wives.

A path he followed, where the half-chewed grass  
 Had fallen, and broad wet footprints clearly showed  
 Where ran a herd of boars, escaped with speed  
 From muddy pools they rolled in. Bristling high, 200  
 They charged him boldly, while with death-fraught shafts  
 (His chest slight-bending from his horse) he shot  
 So dexterously they knew not they were pinned  
 To trees 'gainst which they leaned. One shaft he sped,  
 Which in a charging bison's eyeball lodged,  
 Slew the fell beast, and, dashing through the flesh,  
 Dropt to the ground, its feathers clean of blood.

The fearless King, whose hand long use had trained,  
 Rained deadly arrows down the yawning throats,  
 As from their caves to tear him tigers sprang, 210  
 Like blooming *Asan*-sprouts by tempest broke.

To slay the lions crouching in their dens,

He roused them first with thunderous bowstring's twang,  
 Harsh-sounding,—for he grudged the Royal name,  
 Which—prize of valour—'mong the beasts they bore :

Them, known the fiercest foes of elephants,

Whose forehead-pearls they tear with crooked claw,

Kakutstha's son shot down, and paid the debt

He owed his mighty servants, staunch in war.

The *yâks* he next pursued with arrows keen,

220

Drawn to his ear ; seized their white tails as prize,—

That royal badge which oft from Kings he tore ;

Then let them lie. At peacock splendid-tailed,

Though next his horse it rose, he aimed no shaft,—

So like it seemed to braided hair, his Queen's,

With bright flowers intertwined, when loving sport

Had loosed its tangles. Heavy drops of sweat,

Which bathed his brows,—fit streams from huntsman's toil,

The dewdrop-laden breeze absorbed, which wooed

The new-born buds to burst. With skilful wiles

230

Coquetting thus, the Chace enthralled the King,

By service made more loving, wiping out

All thought of graver duties, since he cast

The weight of Kingship on his Council sage.

The night he passed on couch of flowers and twigs,

At times unguarded ; phosphorescent plants

Alone gave light ; at dawn he woke refreshed,

When sounded in his ear like deep-toned drums

His elephants loud-trumpeting, and joyed

To hear the birds' sweet warbling, tuneful bards

240

To sing his praises ; thus his days sped past.

But—so Fate willed it—one unlucky day,  
 Unmarked by all his train he tracked a stag  
 Through forest-paths, and reached the Tamasâ  
 (His horse all foaming, spent, foredone with heat),—  
 Whose banks grave Hermits haunt. There on his ear  
 From waterpot one filled fell gurgling sounds,  
 As of an elephant that quenched his thirst ;  
 The King his arrow loosed, which hurtling sped ;  
 That act the Law forbids to virtuous Kings, 250  
 Yet he transgressed :—when passion blinds, a Sage,  
 Though versed in Sacred Lore, will tread ill paths.  
 “ Oh, Father ! ” rang a cry : grief-struck, the King  
 Pressed on to find its source among the reeds,  
 And found a Muni’s son, with jar in hand,  
 Pierced by an arrow ; like a dart deep pain  
 Transfixed the King’s own heart. Dismounting then,  
 The high-descended Hero asked his race,—  
 When, propped against his jar, with faltering tongue  
 He named his sire—no Brâhman, though a Sage. 260

Then, as desired, he bore the wounded boy  
 (The barb not drawn) to where his parents blind  
 Were waiting, and rehearsed the dreadful hap  
 Which he unwitting brought upon their son.  
 Sore grieving did those parents from his breast  
 Draw out the shaft which murderous hand had sped ;  
 The lad expired : next, washing his old hands  
 In floods of tears, the father cursed the King,

And said :—“When age comes on thee, for thy son  
Thou too shalt die of grief, as now I die !”

270

Thus, as a snake provoked its venom pours,  
He vented fatal words ; the offending King  
Meek answered :—“Saintly Sage ! not all in wrath  
Thy curse has smit me, whom no lovely son  
With lotus-face has charmed : so fire consumes  
Corn-bearing land, yet from the sterile ash  
Makes seed the more productive.”—So they spake.

Next said he to the Saint :—“I well deserve  
For ill-deed done that thou shouldst take my life :  
How may I serve thy need ?”—The Saint required  
Pure fire and kindling-wood ; for with his wife  
Their son he fain would follow to the pyre.  
Then came the escort, and in haste the King  
Did as they bade him ; then betook him home,  
His courage damped by sin. The curse he bore,  
Deep-graven on his heart, fell root of woe,  
As Ocean in its womb bears quenchless fire.

280



## CANTO X

*Vishnu, invoked by the Gods, becomes incarnate as Râma,  
to destroy the Tyrant Râvaṇa.*

LONG ruled the King, in fadeless splendour robed,  
Like Indra mighty—till ten thousand years  
Were well-nigh sped. Yet gained he not the wealth,  
“Son” named, to pay the debt he owed the Sires,  
That light which swiftly chases sorrow’s gloom.  
Long stayed the King, and yearned for grace divine  
To give him issue,—Ocean thus of old,  
As yet unchurned, delayed to yield its pearls.  
Then pious Priests, ascetic, self-controlled,  
By Rishyaçringa led, began the Rite  
To win the King a son to heal his care.  
At that same time, by Fate’s supreme decree,  
The Gods, by Râvaṇ vexed, to Vishṇu went  
As heat-worn wayfarers to shade resort.

10

Soon as they reached wide Ocean, the Supreme  
Woke from his sleep, foreboding good success  
By timeous welcome. Him the Gods beheld,  
On Çesha seated, where around his limbs

The flashing gems set in its sparkling hood  
 Shed radiance, while bright Lakshmî, lotus-throned, 20  
 Held in her lap His feet, and wrapped her zone  
 In silk, and spread her hands like clinging vines.

There clear as full-blown lotus beamed his eyes,  
 Like new-born Sun his robes—calm autumn day  
 He seemed, as gracious on their sight He rose.  
 The jewel Kaustubha on his broad chest  
 He wore, that pearl of Ocean, in whose rays  
 Shines out the wonder of His breast, the glass  
 Where Lakshmi's beauties play. His branching arms,  
 With gems of Heaven bedecked, amid the waves 30  
 Like Pârijâta seemed ; while living darts,  
 That paled the cheeks of Daityas' wives, upraised  
 Their song triumphant. There the King of Birds,  
 With talons sheathed, relaxing warlike rage  
 Against the Snake, scarred by the lightning-stroke,  
 Attended watchful. Thus with shining eyes,  
 Mild-beaming as He woke from fateful sleep,  
 The Saints by Bhṛigu led He greeted well—  
 Who first had greeted Him with lowly words.

Then falling prostrate, Him the Gods extolled, 40  
 Who smote the Demon-host, who speech and thought  
 Transcends alike, Praise-worthy :—"Hail!" they cried,  
 "Threefold yet One, who first didst all things frame,  
 Upholdest now, and wilt at last destroy!  
 As rain from Heaven is one, yet forms diverse  
 In various lands assumes, so Thou, unchanged

In essence, workest various ; Thou all worlds,  
 Thyself unmeasured, metest ; feeling none,  
 Thou fillest all desires ; Unconquered, all  
 Thou conquerest ; veiled Thyself, Thou dost display 50  
 The World of seeming. Thee men know far off,  
 Yet dwelling in their hearts ; from passion free,  
 Primal Ascetic ; quick to sympathise,  
 Though Thee no pain can touch ; by Age's hand  
 Untouched art Thou, yet Ancient ; all unknown,  
 All-Knowing ; Womb of all things, sprung from none ;  
 Supreme, Thou know'st no ruler ; One, yet manifold !

“Thee all adore : praised in the Seven Hymns,  
 On Oceans seven Thou sleep'st—Whose lips breathe out  
 The seven Fires, sole Refuge of seven Worlds. 60

Four-branched is knowledge, Ages four bound Time,  
 Four orders hath mankind, from Thy four mouths  
 Proceed all worlds. Oh, heart's resplendent goal !  
 For Thee ascetics yearn, their lusts subdued  
 By painful exercise, and seek from Thee  
 The Good Supreme. Unborn, yet taking flesh ;  
 Not seeking triumph, Thou dost smite Thy foes ;  
 Thou sleep'st, yet watchest ever :—who can tell  
 Thy being's truth ? The binding chains of sense,  
 Of hearing and all else, at will Thou tak'st ; 70  
 Endurest harshest toil,—dost shield Thy worlds,—  
 Yet dwellest high apart. The ways of Bliss,  
 Diversely shown and taught, all lead to Thee,  
 As Gangâ's parted streams seek Ocean's breast.

“ Who fix their hearts on Thee, and trust to Thee  
 All working, free from lust,—these find in Thee  
 That happy way which none need travel more.  
 Thy greatness none can grasp, though in the worlds  
 Thou clothe Thyself in matter : who shall tell  
 Thy worship forth, which Holy Writ alone 80  
 And thought profound can reach? The soul of man  
 Thou purgest wholly, if his thought on Thee  
 Be purely fixed : how fruitful then must be  
 Soul-union with Thee ! Yet as Ocean far  
 Outshines the gems he hides, as o’er his rays  
 The Sun shines glorious, so Thy greatness, Lord,  
 Transcends our halting praise ! Nor want hast Thou,  
 Nor aught allures Thee ; Birth Thou tak’st and Toil,  
 That through the Worlds Salvation may be wrought !  
 Here cease we from Thy praise, exhausted, weak : 90  
 Thou art exhaustless, boundless spreads Thy might ! ”

So hymned the Gods that Soul unthinkable,  
 And strove to paint His essence, not exalt.

The Almighty Lord propitious greeted well  
 The radiant Gods, who told their anxious fear  
 Lest Earth should sink o’erflowed by Râkshas-wave.  
 To them the Blessed spake, with thunderous voice  
 That stilled the Ocean-roar, re-echoing  
 Through sea-girt caverns :—so the Ageless Lord  
 In hallowed tones replied, the while His words 100  
 All-holy half-conferred the promised boon.

As Gangâ, heavenly stream, springs from His foot,  
 And gleams with foam, so gleamed the mighty word  
 Lit by His shining teeth—as thus He spake :—

“Well know I how the Râkshas has smit down  
 Your glorious might, as Ignorance in man  
 Annihilates both Truth and Passion's force.  
 And as a good man's heart unwitting sin  
 Disturbs and tortures, so with Demon-might  
 He tortures the Three Worlds. Great Indra's prayers 110  
 I needed not to rouse my will to help,  
 For our desire is one, as Wind and Fire  
 Are eager allies. Yea, in ages past,  
 When nine were smitten with his own great sword,  
 The Giant's tenth head stood, a destined prey  
 For my resistless Quoit. Long since his fate  
 Had overta'en him, but for Brahmâ's boon :  
 His insolence I suffered, as a tree  
 Long bears insulting serpents. For of yore,  
 Pleased with his rites austere, from Brahmâ's hand 120  
 The Demon won this boon, to dread no foe  
 Of Heavenly race—he feared not arm of man.

“Incarnate then as Daçaratha's son,  
 With biting arrow I his clustering heads  
 Will cleave like lotus-clusters, sacrificed  
 Upon the foughten field. Thereafter soon  
 The holy offerings which pure priests present,  
 By skulking ghosts untainted, once again  
 Ye shall enjoy ! And you, ye Saints, who now,

In cars celestial riding through the sky, 130  
 Seek refuge in dark clouds, dismayed no more  
 At sight of Pushpaka, resume your calm !  
 The captive brides of Heaven, by Râvaṇ's rapes  
 No more disturbed, their locks shall now unbind."

Then melted Vishṇu's cloud, whence blessed words  
 Like rain of nectar on the parchèd fields  
 Of hopes of Gods, by Râvaṇ scorched, had fallen.

But Indra and his peers in subtle shapes  
 Went after the great God, whose mighty will  
 Was bent to aid them, ev'n as blossoming trees 140  
 Waft pollen on the path of favouring gales.

Now when the Rites were ended, which the King  
 Performed to win him offspring, sudden came  
 From out the altar-fire a Form Divine,  
 And awed the Priests. High in His hands he bore  
 A golden dish of mingled rice and milk,  
 And scarce could bear, for there the Almighty lay.  
 That draught God-given drank the King, as erst  
 Did Indra drink the essential Nectar, churned  
 From Ocean's heart. How excellent that King, 150  
 In virtue eminent, without a peer,  
 From whom the Soul Supreme now sought His birth !

The sacred draught, where Vishṇu's self lay hid,  
 To his two Queens he parted, as the Sun  
 His morning-beams divides 'twixt Sky and Earth.  
 Kauçalyâ high he prized, Kaikeyi loved,

And fain would have Sumitrâ loved by both,  
 As well they knew : so, gracing their wise Lord,  
 Each with Sumitrâ shared the holy milk,  
 Nor grudged to share ; for she alike to both 160  
 Showed equal love, as seeks a honey-bee  
 Both fragrant streams that from the mighty brows  
 Of elephants exude. All three conceived :  
 And in their wombs divided grew the God,  
 As grows a lotus quickened by Sun-rays.  
 Their time went on : with paly gold they beamed,  
 As gleams the corn blade while the golden grain  
 Swells in the ear. By night in happy dreams  
 They saw themselves girt round by sworded dwarfs,  
 With conch, and club, and bow, and quoit ; they rode 170  
 (It seemed) on Garuḍa, who spread in air  
 The gauzy glory of his golden wings,  
 And in swift flight drew in his wake the clouds.  
 And Lakshmi served them, wearing on her breast  
 Kaustubha lent by Vishṇu, waving soft  
 Her lotus-fan ; while all the Saints supreme,  
 The holy Seven, fresh bathed in Gangâ's flood,  
 In solemn chant extolled the Holiest Name.

These dreams they told their Lord, who joyed to hear,  
 And, proud of promised offspring, thought his lot 180  
 Transcended even great Prajâpati's ;  
 For in their wombs the Soul Supreme now dwelt,  
 One Essence, self-divided, manifold,  
 Like moonbeams shimmering on a quiet lake.

So when her time was come the chaste chief Queen  
 Brought forth a son, Sun fit to banish gloom,  
 As phosphorescent plants receive at night  
 The dying sunlight. But the King, rejoiced  
 To see his winsome beauty, "Râma" named  
 His son, chief blessing to a longing world.

190

He, lamp of Raghu's line, of peerless beam  
 Outshone the brightness of the chamber-lights,  
 Which paled before him. Lightened now, the Queen,  
 With Râma cradled near her, shone as shines—  
 Slim in the autumn—Gangâ, lily-banked.

Kaikeyî bore a son, with beauty dowered,  
 Great Bharat, whose reflected loveliness  
 Made her more fair, as Fortune is enhanced  
 By virtuous Conduct. Sumitrâ brought forth  
 Twins, Lakshmaṇ and Çatrughna :—Foresight so  
 And Temperance Wisdom fully-followed bears.

200

Now stainless showed Creation, and the Earth  
 Displayed her virtues : Heaven to Earth came down  
 In train of the Supreme. At Vishṇu's birth,  
 The Four-faced God, those regions breathed anew  
 With purest gales, where erst fell Râvaṇ's dread  
 Had cowed the Gods. Fire rising clear of smoke,  
 And Sun in cloudless sky, shook sorrow off,  
 Who late had groaned beneath the Giant's yoke.

Then shed the Fortune of the Râkshasas  
 Hot tears, that fell as jewels from the crowns  
 Ten-headed Râvaṇ wore. Through all high Heaven

210



The drums celestial preluded, on earth,  
 The royal trumpets hailed the Princes' birth.  
 The Tree of Paradise rained down its blooms  
 On palace-roof, fit preface to the rites  
 That Fortunes high demand, with wreaths from Heaven.

Cleansed as the Law required, with fostering care  
 The Princes grew, while grew their Father's joy,  
 As 'twere their elder brother. Self-restraint,  
 Inborn, by modest actions still increased,  
 As, fed with fragrant unguents, Fire's bright flame  
 More brilliant shows. They four, harmoniously—  
 Not envying each the other—nobly graced  
 Great Raghu's blameless line, as each in turn  
 The seasons four adorn the groves of Heaven,  
 So love fraternal ruled; but closest ties  
 To Râma Lakshman bound, while Çatrughna  
 With Bharat went, by love peculiar joined.  
 Yet was not either pair dissevered from  
 That other: Wind with Fire is closest joined,  
 And Moon with Ocean—yet this breeds no strife.

220

230

True Princes of their people, splendidly  
 They bore them, yet not haughtily,—and won  
 All men's great love,—as at hot summer's end  
 Days of dark cloud are pleasant. Gloriously  
 So shone the King's four sons, as though to Earth  
 Came Virtue, Wealth, and Joy, and Final Bliss.  
 Their Father well they loved: by virtuous deeds

They made him glad, as the Four Seas with pearls  
Served him, sole Monarch of Four Continents.  
As with his tusks Heaven's mighty elephant  
Breaks the sword-edges of the Daitya-host,  
As kingcraft wins success by skilful wiles,  
As by His league-long arms great Vishṇu's self  
Shines glorious,—so by these four sons Divine  
Shone the great Monarch o'er his world-wide realm!

CANTO XI

*Râma's Triumph and Marriage with Sitâ, and his Defeat of  
Paraçu Râma.*

HEAR now my tale :—While Râma still was young,  
 And wore a boy's dark curls, came Kâuçika  
 To beg him from the King, those foes to curb  
 Who marred his sacrifice : in hero-souls  
 Mere age is not regarded. Him the King,  
 Though hardly he had won him, honouring  
 The perfect Sage, with Lakshman gave at once :  
 No suppliant ere went back ungratified  
 From Lord of Raghu's race, not though he asked  
 As boon the Monarch's life. Forthwith the King  
 Bade deck the highways for their passing out,  
 Forthwith the clouds wind-driven arched the sky,  
 And rained down flowers. That mighty warrior-pair,  
 Swift to obey their Father's will, bent low  
 Before his feet, and as they bowed his tears  
 Fell on them passing forth to far-off toils.

10

Now, deeming that the Saint had only craved  
 Râma with Lakshman following, the great King

His all-prevailing prayers bestowed as guard,  
 But not an armèd host. The archer-boys, 20  
 Their locks bedewed with tears their Father shed,  
 Went with the Saint, the people's anxious looks  
 Half-shading all their way. The Hero-pair,  
 Their mothers leaving, kissed their royal feet,  
 Then followed where the glorious Saint led on,—  
 Like summer months that course behind the Sun.  
 Childlike, unsteady paced they, fair to see,  
 With lissom arms like crested waves that dance,  
 As streams, when rain-clouds gather, work and whirl,  
 As suits their name. Till now they only trode 30  
 Smooth inlaid floors, yet by the potent spells,  
*Balâ, Atibalâ* named, which the Saint  
 Had taught them on the road, they walked untired  
 As at their mother's side. Time-olden tales,  
 Told by their Father's friend, in legend skilled,  
 So lifted them and carried, scarce they felt  
 That now they walked—nor missed a chariot's ease.

The lakes sweet waters gave, and birds gay songs,  
 Winds scented pollen waved, and clouds spread shade  
 For them so passing. More than lakes that stretch 40  
 Bright with the lotus, more than restful trees,  
 They beamed on hermits' eyes, and cheered their hearts.  
 The grove of penance when with lifted bow  
 Sweet Râma entered, by his lovely shape—  
 But not by wanton act—he showed like Love  
 Whom Çiva scorched. Then passing on the way

Which thrice-accursèd Târakâ laid waste,  
 (For so the Saint had taught them), all in sport  
 They bent their bows and strung them. At the sound  
 The Demon-maid appeared, black as dark night 50  
 When wanes the moon—her ear-drops polished skulls,  
 That on her swarthy neck gleamed white as cranes  
 Lined 'gainst a dense cloud-bank. On Râma then  
 She swooped, and rushing shook the wayside trees,  
 In ghostly grave-clothes clad, with gruesome screech,  
 As whirlwind issuing from a charnel-house.

But Râma, when he marked her onslaught fell,—  
 One lean arm raised, men's entrails hanging low  
 Down to her waist—at once let fly his shaft,  
 Nor shamed to slay a woman. Such a wound 60  
 His arrow in her flinty bosom made,  
 That Death therethrough among the Demon-hosts  
 First won an entrance. For the arrow cleft  
 Her heart ; she clanging fell, and shook the Earth ;  
 Not only so, but Râvaṇ's kingdom too  
 Her falling shook—the Master of the worlds.  
 Struck to the heart by lovely Râma's shaft  
 Resistless, spite of all her horrid charms,  
 Her sandal-wood and gore, the Demon-queen  
 Passed to the home where Death reigns Lord of life. 70  
 When Târakâ was slain, the Saint, well-pleased  
 With Râma's prowess, gave the missile dread,  
 Spell-wielded, Demon-slaying,—as the Sun  
 Gives to the Sun-gem flaming fire to hold.

Thereafter Râma, coming to the grove  
 Once hallowed by the Dwarf, as told the Saint,  
 Unwitting of his former life, was nathless seized  
 With eager longing. Thence the Sage passed on  
 To where himself did penance, where his host  
 Of pupils sacrificed, and as in prayer 80  
 The tree-tops lowly bowed, and deer looked up  
 To greet their coming. There the Princely boys  
 Stood firm to guard the duly-cleansèd Saint  
 From all disturbing foes, as Moon and Sun  
 Alternate rising with their radiance save  
 The world from blinding darkness. Sudden fell  
 A terror on the priests, for they beheld  
 The altar-floor defiled with blood-gouts, broad  
 As *Bandhujiva* blossoms—at which sight  
 They ceased their pious rites, and cast away 90  
 The sacrificial ladles. Instantly  
 Upgazing, Râma from his quiver drew  
 His arrow, saw in air a Demon-host  
 With banners waving, fanned by vulture's wings.  
 Then at the two Chiefs only, not the rest,  
 He launched his shaft : so Vishṇu's bird, whose might  
 Mates Çesha, Serpent-King, deigns not to war  
 On water-snakes. Skilled archer, on his string  
 He laid the keen, swift shaft, the Wind-god's child,  
 And at Mârîcha loosed it ; like a stone, 100  
 Or withered leaf, the ponderous Demon fell,  
 The second leader then, Subâhu named,

Who flitted to and fro, by magic art,  
 With steel-shod shafts the cunning Archer smote,  
 And gave him to the woodland birds a prey.

Then, freed from fear and unimpeded now,  
 The pious Priests praised both the hero-boys,  
 Next in due order all the sacred rites  
 Performed for their great Chief, to silence vowed.  
 He, purified and hallowed, solemnly  
 Blessed both the Princes, bowing reverently  
 With waving locks, and on them laid his hand,  
 Pierced by the holy grass :—Age blessing Youth.

110

But now the King of Mithilâ had made  
 A mighty sacrifice, and bade the Sage.  
 He thither went, and with him Raghu's sons,  
 Whose keen desire he spurred to see the Bow  
 World-famous. And at night they took their rest  
 Where wave the pleasant trees of Gautama,  
 Sainted Ascetic, whose fair spouse—deceived—  
 Short space to Indra yielded. For that sin  
 She turned to stone, nor sooner her fair form  
 Regained, till, after ages, holy dust  
 From Râma's blessed feet fell on her limbs.

120

Now, when King Janaka had heard the Saint  
 Was come, with Raghu's sons attending, straight  
 He went to meet them, showing honour due  
 To Virtue's self, with Wealth and Pleasure joined.  
 The dwellers in Videha, glad at heart,

With longing looks devoured the Princes twain, 130  
 Like Punarvâsu come once more to earth,  
 Nor dared to wink, lest haply they might miss  
 One moment's joy. Now, when the Sacrifice  
 And altar-rites were over, Kauçika—  
 Who knew all fitting seasons—told the King  
 How Râma longed to try the mighty Bow.

He, when he saw the lovely, high-born Boy,  
 And knew the Bow, how stiff it was to bend,  
 Grieved he had set his daughter's hand a prize  
 For thews and sinews :—"Nay," he soon replied, 140  
 "Great Saint, it were not meet a noble calf  
 Should vainly try a task which all the strength  
 Demands of full-grown forest elephants.  
 For, Sire and Saint ! thou knowest—many kings,  
 Skilled archers, brawny-armed from bowstring's use,  
 Have failed to draw the Bow, and wrung their hands,  
 And crying—"Fie !" departed." But the Sage  
 Quick answered :—"Know, O King, this Hero's might  
 Transcends all words : thyself shalt see the proof  
 Upon thy Bow—as shows a shattered rock 150  
 The lightning's power." The Monarch, soon convinced  
 Of Râma's might, though veiled in boyish mien—  
 As Indra's beetle holds the power of flame—  
 Gave order that the attendant host should bring  
 The Bow renowned, as Indra thousand-eyed  
 Commands the ranged clouds to show his Bow  
 Mild-beaming. Soon as Râma saw the Arm,





THE TRIAL OF THE BOW



Fell as great Çesha sleeping, eagerly  
 He seized it : 'twas the Bow that Çiva used,  
 That mighty God whose standard bears a bull, 160  
 To shoot the escaping Victim as it fled.  
 On Râma wondering all the assembly gazed  
 With fixed eyes, and saw him string the Bow,  
 Unyielding as a rock, not using more  
 Of strength (it seemed) than Love puts forth to string  
 His own soft bow of flowers. Nay more, that Bow,  
 Drawn by the Hero's careless hand too far,  
 Snapped with harsh thunderous sound, proclaiming loud  
 To wrathful Bhṛigu's son the Warrior-race  
 Again had raised its head. The Monarch, glad 170  
 To hail such might transcendent, snapping thus  
 Great Çiva's Bow, to Râma gave Sitâ,  
 His lovely daughter, not of woman born,  
 Like Lakshmi born on earth. His child the King,  
 Fulfilling so his promise, straight bestowed  
 In presence of the Saint :—fit witness he,  
 Not less than sacred Fire, to bind their vows.  
 Then noble Janaka—his household Priest  
 Revered—as envoy sent to Koçala,  
 This message bearing :—“ Grant me, noble King, 180  
 That through my daughter's marriage Nimi's race  
 Be made thy servants ! ”

Now the Father's heart

Was set for Râma e'en on such a bride,  
 When lo ! the Brâhman came, and crowned his wish :

So speedily a good man's thoughts bear fruit,  
 As doth the Wishing-Tree! The Brâhman's speech,  
 With lowly words due prefaced, when he heard,  
 Great Indra's friend, the Ascetic-King, set forth,—  
 The Sun eclipsing with his army's dust.

Surrounding Mithilâ, he pressed the woods 190

That girt it round, with close-investing host,—  
 A friendly pressure, which the capital

Endured, as brides their bridegrooms' close embrace

Rejoice in. Those two Kings, like Varuṇa

And Indra meeting, skilled to mark fit times,

Then son with daughter wedded, in such state

As suited with their splendour. Raghu's Fame

Earth's daughter took to wife; and Urmilâ,

Her younger sister, Bharat; while the Twins,

Their mighty younger brethren, mated them 200

With Kuçadhvaja's slender-waisted maids.

So wedded to fair brides the Princes four,

With Râma chief, shone glorious,—as in States

Successful Kingcraft shines by peace or war,

Or bribing foes, or sowing discord dire.

Harmonious matched, King's daughters with King's sons,

Each in the other found their bliss complete,

In closest union joined, as words unite

In ordered speech. The King of Koçala,

The Princes four thus wedded, well content, 210

Three marches by the King of Mithilâ

Escorted on his journey, homeward passed.



RÁMA'S MARRIAGE



The host swept on :—but fierce opposing winds  
 Blew down the flagstaffs, made the march a toil,  
 As river-torrents overflow their banks,  
 And tear the fallow. Then a stormy ring,  
 Portentous, clasped the Sun,—as 'twere a gem  
 Borne by a snake the King of Birds had slain  
 Amid the lissom coils. The expanse of heaven,  
 Swept by grey vulture-wings, and hung with clouds 220  
 Blood-dripping, awed the sight. Grim jackal-troops  
 With hideous howling hied them to the west,  
 To rouse (it seemed) fierce Bhṛigu's Son, long used  
 To appease his father's ghost with Warrior-blood.

At these ill omens, this tempestuous wind,  
 Awestruck, the prudent King besought his Priest  
 To read the portents : soothing, he replied—  
 "All will be well, my King !" Then suddenly  
 A dazzling splendour rose before the host,  
 Which soon with clearer sight they pierced, and saw 230  
 A glorious Warrior-shape. The Hero bore  
 His Brâhman father's cord, a mighty bow  
 Proclaimed his mother born of Warrior-blood,—  
 Like Sun and Moon together met he seemed,  
 Or snake-girt sandal-tree. For he it was  
 Who, when his Sire's fierce rage burst bounds of right,  
 And bade him slay his mother, did the deed,—  
 First triumphed o'er his heart, then o'er the world.  
 From his right ear a string of *Akshu* seeds  
 Hung down, a score and one, as numbering 240

The times he had destroyed the Warrior-race,  
 An awful chaplet. Then the King despaired  
 At sight of Bhṛigu's Son, in whom fell wrath  
 (Stirred by his father's fate) worked to destroy  
 The Warrior-seed ; for yet his sons were boys,  
 And he defenceless. Joy and dread at once  
 The name of Râma brought him, borne alike  
 By his loved son and by the mighty foe,—  
 So snakes and chaplets bear one common name.  
 Yet, "Welcome, Saint!" he cried : the cruel foe  
 Disdained his greeting, rolling baleful eyes,  
 That blazed with wrath 'gainst all the Kshatriya race,  
 To where young Râma stood,—and thus addressed  
 The Prince advancing fearless, while his bow  
 He firmly grasped, and 'twixt his fingers laid  
 The arrow on the string, as hot for strife :—

250

"I hate the Warrior-brood : they wronged me first,  
 And I destroyed them, winning rest ; but now  
 Thy valour and renown have stirred my wrath,  
 As when a sleeping snake at blow of staff  
 Starts up enraged. 'Tis rumoured thou hast broke  
 The Bow of Mithilâ, not bent before,  
 Though oft attempted : exploit this, I deem,  
 Which blunts my horn of glory. Yea, my name,  
 The name of Râma, famous through the world,  
 Thou also bearest, and thy thirst for fame  
 Must cast reproach on me. Know then, I hate  
 With equal hatred only two,—the King

260



Who stole away the sacred Calf, and thee,  
 Offending equally, whose hand would snatch 270  
 My honour from me : yet I bear an Axe  
 That splits the stubborn rock, and my renown  
 Is stablished on the smiting of thy race,—  
 Which yet delights me not if thou be left  
 Unconquered ; for the might of Fire is shown  
 By blazing in the waves no less than when  
 Dry tinder feeds it. Know that Çiva's bow,  
 Which thou didst break, had lost through Vishṇu's power  
 Its primal virtue : so a soft-breathed gale  
 Lays low a tree which, on the river's brink, 280  
 The stream has undermined. But take *my* bow  
 (Be this the test !), string *it*, and draw when strung,  
 The arrow firmly laid : then, only then,  
 Will I confess thee Victor, and avow  
 Thy prowess mates my own. But, if thou blench  
 And dread my flaming Axe-edge, then submit !  
 And sue for mercy, though that prayer be vain."

So spake with aspect fierce great Bhrigu's Son :  
 But Râma, while a soft smile curved his lips,  
 For fitting answer stretched his hand to grasp 290  
 The offered bow :—that weapon, once his own,  
 Again he clasped, and laughed for joy : so clouds,  
 In new-born beauty smile, but tenfold fair  
 Shine when the Bow of Indra lends its hues.

Then, resting the great bow a moment's space  
 Upon the ground to string it, high aloft

The mighty Hero raised it : but the foe  
 Of all the Warrior-race, like dying lamp,  
 Lost all his lustre. Wondering gazed the host  
 Upon the twain, while one in splendour grew  
 And waned the other fast, like Sun and Moon,  
 When sets the Sun and rises the Full Moon.

300

With mild-eyed pity Râma saw his foe  
 Bereft of strength, and saw the fatal shaft  
 Which on the string he laid,—not less in might  
 Than Çiva's peerless son,—and thus he spake :—

“O Brâhman-hero ! not without remorse  
 Can I resolve to smite thee, though thyself  
 Wast first the aggressor : choose thou then thy doom !  
 Shall this my shaft destroy for thee this world,  
 Or that beyond, thy pious actions' meed ?”

310

The humbled Saint replied :—“ I know Thee now,  
 The Soul Supreme incarnate ! wherefore, Lord,  
 Shouldst Thou be angry that I longed to see  
 Great Vishṇu's majesty in Thee come down  
 To earth ? My chastisement by Thee, my Lord,  
 Itself exalts me, though my Father's foes  
 By me were burnt to ashes, and I deemed  
 'Twas but a little thing to give away  
 The World of land and ocean. Wherefore now,  
 O Sage Divine ! I pray Thee, leave me free  
 To haunt Earth's holy places : loss of Heaven  
 Will scarce affect whom pleasure least attracts.”

320

And Râma answered :—“ Have thy wish !” and turned,

And shot his arrow Eastward, barring so,  
 Spite of his merits, for all time to come,  
 To Bhṛigu's Son the path to Paradise.  
 Then Râma clasped his feet, and pardon craved :  
 To bear him humbly toward a conquered foe  
 Fits well a Hero ! Then that Saint replied :—  
 “ My mother's sinful nature now at length  
 Is cast off wholly ; peace I win from strife,  
 My Sire's blest state ; yea, loss itself bears fruit  
 Matured and perfect, by 'Thy favour, Lord !  
 Now I depart :—unhindered be Thy course  
 To work deliv'rance for the Blessed Gods ! ”

330

The Brother-princes thus the Saint addressed,  
 And vanished from men's sight. Then Râma's Sire  
 Embraced his Hero-son, in pride and love,  
 As snatched from Death ; and now new-born delight  
 Dispelled his transient fear, as cooling showers  
 Soon quench a forest-fire around a tree,  
 The woodland's pride. So, after certain nights  
 Spent on the march in pleasant rustic bowers.  
 The Monarch, far-renowned as Çiva's self,  
 Reached his Ayodhyâ, where the city-dames  
 Came crowding fast, and filled the lattices  
 With eager eyes, to gaze on Sîtâ fair !

340

## CANTO XII

*The Banishment of Râma ; the Carrying-away of Sîtâ ; her  
Rescue, and Râvâṇa's Defeat and Death.*

Now Daçaratha, having known all joys  
Of sense, and entering on life's final stage,  
Neared his eclipse, as fades before the dawn  
The lamplight. Fearing Kaikeyî, Old Age—  
Squat at his ear and hidden in grey hairs—  
Urged that the Kingdom be to Râma given.

Then rumour spread that Râma should be King,  
'The people's Darling, gave to every man  
His inmost heart's desire, as springs refresh—  
Spread through a garden—every tree alike.

10

But when for his Anointing all was ripe,  
Kaikeyî interposed with fell resolve,  
Marred all the pomp, and drew hot tears of grief  
From her Lord's agèd eyes. In vain he sought  
To soothe her rage,—who urged more veh'mently  
Two promises erst made, as flooded plains  
Drive hissing from their holes two monstrous snakes.  
One promise now she used, for fourteen years





DACARATHA'S DISTRESS

To banish Râma,—with the next she claimed  
 (Though well she knew the cost, her husband's life), 20  
 For her own son the Royal throne. With tears,  
 At bidding of his Father, Râma took  
 The world-wide Realm, but with all cheerfulness  
 Received the doom of exile. Sore amazed,  
 The people marked his aspect all unchanged,  
 Both when he wore the robes of royal state,  
 And when the bark-dress. Lakshman and Sitâ  
 He took for his companions, and possessed  
 Both Daṇḍaka's wide forest and the hearts  
 Of all who virtue loved : so he discharged 30  
 From stain upon his truth his Kingly Sire.  
 That Sire, heart-broken at his exile, knew  
 How by rash act of yore he earned the curse ;  
 And, deeming only Death could make him pure,  
 Forsook the throne and sought for ways to die.

Then foes, that eager watched for wasting flaws,  
 Pounced on the realm, whose King was now eclipsed,  
 And Râma banished. Agèd councillors  
 The people, masterless, sent to recall  
 Prince Bharata, then with his mother's kin, 40  
 And dried their tears. But when that noble Prince  
 Heard how his Father died, the Kingly state  
 Grew hateful to him,—and his mother too.  
 With armèd host he followed Râma's steps,  
 And marked with many a tear where Hermits showed  
 The trees 'neath which with Lakshman he had slept.

When found in Chitrakûṭa's forest, first  
 He told their Father's passing ; next, he urged .  
 Persistent his return, to wed the Realm,  
 Whose charms now withered unenjoyed.   Himself                   50  
 He deemed a mere supplanter, gathering  
 The fruits of Earth, while Râma still delayed,  
 His elder brother, Fortune's hand to claim.  
 But Râma yielded not ; he rather chose  
 His sainted Father's doom to abide,—and gave,  
 Long-urged, as pledges of his right as King,  
 The Royal sandals.   Then the Prince went back,  
 Yet entered not the city ; but, encamped  
 In Nandî, ruled the Kingdom as a trust,  
 Not as his own : firm in his loyalty,                                   60  
 Not grasping at the crown, pure Bharata  
 Made expiation for his mother's crime.

But Râma with bright Sîtâ lived content  
 A forest-life, sustained on forest-food,  
 And—with his younger brother—while in youth  
 Took up the life austere and rigid vows  
 That bind in age Ikshvâku's mighty line.

Now on a day when, wearied with the chase,  
 His head awhile he laid in Sîtâ's lap,  
 Beneath a forest-king, whose spreading shade                                   70  
 Was fixed by power divine, great Indra's bird,  
 As 'twere in scorn of Râma's love-contests,  
 Scratched with his claws her breasts.   She quickly roused





BHARATA'S ARRIVAL AT CHITRAKÛTA



Her mighty Lord, who with a blade of grass  
The offender smote, and blinded one rash eye.


But Râma deemed his refuge all too near,  
Lest Bharat might return to urge his suit,  
And left the glades on Chitrakûṭa's slopes,  
Whose deer lamented when he left. He passed  
Far to the South, as welcome guest received 80  
In Hermits' huts ;—so in the Autumn months  
The Sun for southern quarters quits the North.  
Him following Videha's Princess shone,  
Bright as the Kingdom's Genius, fain to woo  
His Royal virtues, by Kaikeyi's wiles  
Forbid to wed him. Perfumes strangely sweet,  
From Anasûyâ's ointment on her limbs,  
She shed around her, luring so the bees  
From forest-blossoms. Black as cloud of night,  
A Râkshasa, Virâdha named, stood up, 90  
Opposing Râma's march, as Râhu's bulk  
Obstructs the moon. Then sudden from between  
The guardian Brothers he the Princess tore,  
As drought licks up the rain in Autumn months.  
But him the Heroes slew, Kâkutstha's sons,  
And,—ere the fetid stench from his foul limbs  
Could taint the world,—they quickly buried him.

Then at Agastya's bidding Râma fixed,  
The bounds of right observing, his abode  
In wide Panchâvatî, as Vindhya high 100  
Stands stablished in his might. To Râma there

Came Râvaṇ's sister, faint with love, as seeks  
 A snake oppressed with heat on Malaya  
 The forest's grateful shade. Her shameless love  
 The crook-clawed Demon told, nor shamed to tell  
 In Sîtâ's very presence : true it is,  
 That woman's high-strung love respects no bounds.  
 She told her lineage too :—but he replied,—  
 “ Ah, Maiden, I am wedded ! seek the love  
 Of my young brother ! ”—so the love-sick maid 110  
 Bull-shouldered Râma counselled. She forsooth  
 Had sought out Lakshmaṇ first, and so returned  
 Again to Râma, as alternately  
 A stream sweeps either bank. Her Sîtâ's laugh  
 From momentary softness roused to rage,  
 As Ocean's waves that sleep 'neath windless skies  
 Are swollen by the Moon. “ Beware ! ” she cried,  
 “ This scorn thou 'lt dearly rue ! Thou, timid roe,  
 Hast dared a tiger's fury ! Look, and fear ! ”  
 So spake the Demon threatening : Sîtâ shrank 120  
 Against her husband's breast, dismayed to see  
 The foe resume her hideous shape, and spread  
 Her murderous claws. Heroic Lakshmaṇ too,  
 Who heard a gentle, dove-like cooing first,  
 Then wolfish howlings, knew her for transformed,—  
 He drew his sword, swift burst into the hut,  
 And hacked with blow on blow that awful shape.  
 She flying upward shook a threatening hand,  
 With fingers crooked, thick as knotted reeds,

Then flew to Janasthân, and told her wrongs 130  
 To Khara and his peers,—new insult heaped  
 By Râma on the Demon-host. In wrath  
 They made her wrongs their own, whose lips and mouth  
 Were scored and scarred, and courted foul defeat,  
 Attacking Râma. On they boldly came,  
 With arms uplifted, whom when Râma saw,—  
 His hope of victory laying on his bow,—  
 His Spouse he left to Lakshman's guard. The foes  
 Were full a thousand, Râma only one,—  
 Yet in the fight each several Demon found 140  
 A foe to meet him. Dûshana he smote,  
 Sent as their champion, as pure-living men  
 Smite fleshly lusts :—him first, and Khara next,  
 And Triçiras : so swift he slew the three,  
 They seemed to fall together. His bright darts  
 Pierced through them, and—unstained—drank their foul  
 lives,

The birds their blood. Soon of that Demon-host,  
 By Râma's arrows quelled, save headless trunks  
 Nought on the plain stood up ; beneath the rain  
 He showered on them all that dread array 150  
 Lay lapt in endless slumber, while foul wings  
 Of filthy vultures hovered o'er their heads.

Alone escaping, Sûrpanakhâ bore   
 The news of foul defeat at Râma's hands  
 To mighty Râvaṇ, sore dismayed, who deemed  
 That by his sister's maiming, then defeat

And slaughter of his kinsmen, his ten heads  
Lay trampled in the dust by Râma's heel.

By magic art a Demon at his word  
Took form of deer, and Raghu's sons deceived 160  
By futile chase, and—though a while delayed  
By staunch Jatâyû—Sîtâ bore away.

The brothers seeking her the Vulture found  
With mangled pinions, who with failing breath  
Love's final debt to Daçaratha paid.  
In faltering words he told how Râvaṇ fell  
The Princess tore away : his wounds declared  
His brave resistance : then he died. The twain,  
Who late, had mourned a Father's loss, renewed  
For him as for a parent funeral rites, 170

And reared a lofty pyre. Bold Râma then,  
Kabandha's counsel following, who by death  
Escaped from lifelong curse, made treaty firm  
And strong alliance with the Monkey-King,  
Sugrîva, mourning like himself a bride  
Late torn away. The Hero quick discrowned  
Usurping Bâli, and his friend restored—  
Sugrîva—to his throne, as fitter word  
Displaces one less fit. The Monkey-hosts  
At Râma's bidding sped to every clime, 180  
And like his own sad thoughts searched through the world.

Sampâtî meeting, Hanumân at length,  
The Wind-god's son, had news where Sîtâ dwelt,  
And crossed the Ocean,—as a happy soul

The stream of Death. Last, searching Lankâ through,  
 He found the fair Princess, but compassed round  
 By Demon-guards,—a fair mimosa clasped  
 By poisonous creepers. Râma's token first,  
 The ring, he gave, which she with joyful tears  
 Bedewed,—then with her husband's love-words cheered. 190  
 Stout Aksha next he slew, and—high of heart—  
 Set Lankâ all in flames, then for brief space  
 Sustained unequal fight. His work so done,  
 He hied him back to Râma, and the ring—  
 His Sitâ's token—showed, as 'twere the heart  
 She fain had sent. As Râma touched the gem,  
 He closed his eyes in rapture, and in thought  
 Felt her heart beating on his own : so keen  
 His longing was to meet his prisoned Love,  
 That Ocean circling Lankâ round appeared 200  
 A narrow moat, no more. ✕ At once he marched,  
 The Demon-foes to quell,—while Monkey-hosts  
 Behind him swarmed, careering through the air  
 Not less than on the earth. On Ocean's shore  
 He fixed his camp ; to whom Vibhîshaṇ came,  
 His brother's side deserting, sage advice  
 In love to Râma offering,—wise in time.  
 To him did Râma give the Demon-realm  
 In recompense : so ever counsel sage  
 And timely bears rich fruit. Across the sea 210  
 The Hero laid a bridge, resembling much  
 That mighty Serpent which for Vishṇu's sleep

Above the waters rises. So he crossed,  
 And Lankâ close besieged with tawny Apes,  
 That like a doubled golden rampart showed.

Then Demons joined in deadly strife with Apes,  
 And Heaven resounded with their battle-cries,—  
 For Râvaṇ or for Râma. Steel-bound clubs  
 By trees were shattered, maces split on rocks,  
 And claws gave wounds more terrible than steel, 220  
 While elephants dashed rocks in splinters small.  
 Fair Sîtâ watched the fight: and swooned at sight  
 Of Râma's head struck off, but soon revived  
 When good Trijâta told that Râma lived,  
 And 'twas but glamour. At this healing word,  
 Her sorrow turned to joy; yet loving shame  
 Still ruled her as she thought,—“I yet could live,  
 While thinking *He* was dead!” Now in the fight  
 Bold Meghanâda's noose one moment bound  
 The mighty Brethren, whom the Bird of Heaven 230  
 Loosed, swooping down; so soon that peril passed,  
 It seemed a dream, no more. The Demon-King  
 Pierced Lakshmaṇ's breast with deadly spear,—whereat  
 The heart of Râma, though himself unharmed,  
 Was cleft in twain by sorrow. Healing herbs  
 The Monkey-monarch brought, and salved the wound,—  
 And Lakshmaṇ swift reviving with keen shafts  
 Again taught Lankâ's wives to weep. No more  
 He suffered Meghanâda's shout, but snapped  
 His bow that rivalled Indra's,—Autumn so 240



Dissolves a cloud. Stout Kumbhakarṇa next,  
 By Hanumân to woeful straits reduced,  
 Like his fell sister, Râma's self assailed,—  
 Wide-gaping like a rocky cave. Him soon  
 The Hero's arrows sent to sleep in death :  
 And Râma mused,—“ Much lovedst thou sleep, my foe !  
 And wert untimely roused in evil hour.”

The Brethren many a famous Râkshas more  
 Smote with their arrows till the battle-dust  
 Was smothered with their blood in copious streams. 250

At length came Râvaṇ forth again to fight,  
 His palace leaving, well resolved that now  
 The Worlds that day should either Râma lose  
 Or Râvaṇ. On he drove his fencèd car  
 To where the Hero stood,—till Indra sent  
 His chariot and bay steeds to Râma's help.  
 That car auspicious, leaning on the arm  
 Of Mâthali, He mounted,—while its flag  
 Waved in the breeze, cool from the waters pure  
 Of Heaven's own river. Indra's mail he donned, 260  
 Helped by the charioteer,—that mail from which  
 Repelled the Daityas' arrows fell to earth,  
 Soft as frail lotus-stems. Fierce battle raged  
 Between the mighty foes, who found at last,  
 So meeting, scope to show their matchless might.

Fell Râvaṇ fought alone, his hosts withdrawn,  
 But by his many necks, and heads, and arms,  
 Appeared encircled by his mother's kin.

The Demon-foe, whose might prevailed of yore  
 Against the world's great Guardians, who had won 270  
 His boon from Brahmâ—offering up his heads,  
 Who poised aloft Kailâsa, Râma held  
 A worthy foeman. Râvaṇ, fiercely wroth,  
 Drove deep his arrow in that strong right arm,  
 Which, wildly-throbbing, told he should redeem  
 His fair Princess. Then Râma loosed a shaft  
 Which, piercing Râvaṇ's breast, lodged in the ground,  
 Glad tidings bearing to the Serpent-world.

The fight grew stern ; each hero matched his foe,  
 With sword for sword, and taunt for taunt, as when 280  
 Two rival speakers strive for mastery.  
 Swayed by their equal valour Victory  
 Long wavered, as a rampart set between  
 Two raging elephants. The showers of shafts  
 That either poured on other stayed the fall  
 Of flowers rained down by Gods and Demons, keen  
 To mark the rapid interchange of blows.

Then Râvaṇ dashed an iron-studded mace,  
 Fell as the club of Death, of silkwood formed,  
 Full at his foe. But Râma with keen shafts, 290  
 Curved-headed, cut the mace in twain or e'er  
 It reached the chariot,—like a slender twig,—  
 Thus shattering the Demons' soaring hopes.  
 Then did the matchless archer to his string  
 Lay that unerring arrow, Brahmâ named,  
 A simple meet to heal the stinging pain

That gnawed his Sitâ's heart. With flaming points,  
 Split in a hundred parts, resembling most  
 The Serpent-King's huge frame, when baleful gleams  
 His awful hood, it hurtled through the air. 300

Then in a moment, winged with spells, the shaft  
 Smote off,—the wound unfelt,—the whole ten heads  
 Of Râvaṇ. But the line of headless necks  
 Shone, as the body fell, with fitful gleams,  
 Like morning sunbeams sparkling on a lake,  
 By wavelets broken. Even then the Gods,  
 Though all the heads had fallen, scarce rejoiced  
 With full rejoicing ; for they feared those heads  
 (As erst befell) might join the trunk once more.

Then fell on Râma's head, which soon should wear 310  
 The Kingly crown, a rain of fragrant flowers,  
 Poured by the joyful Gods,—while on them swarmed  
 (Their wings with honey laden) bees that late  
 Forsook the perfumed streams which from the brows  
 Distilled of Elephants that guard the Worlds.

Now Râma soon unbent his mighty Bow,  
 The Gods' high mandate well fulfilled ; and now  
 The Charioteer of Indra bade farewell,  
 And drove to Heaven his car with thousand bays,  
 While waved aloft the flags which Râvaṇ's shafts 320  
 Pierced through and through. The Lord of Raghu's  
 line

Took back his well-loved Bride from purging fires,  
 And to his loyal friend Vibhîshaṇ gave

The crown he tore from Râvaṇ. Then by him  
Followed, by Lakshmaṇ, and by Hanumân,—  
King o'er the Monkey-host,—the radiant Car  
Won by his valour from proud Râvaṇa  
He mounted joyfully, and homeward sped.

## CANTO XIII

*Râma's Triumphant Return with Sîtâ*

INCARNATE now in Râma, Vishṇu's self,  
 High Judge of virtue, crossed in Heavenly Car  
 His sound-pervaded realm,—and, as He gazed  
 On Ocean rich in pearls, his Spouse addressed  
 In love's soft tones :—“ See, Fairest! how my bridge  
 Yon foamy mass now spans, as Autumn's skies  
 Unruffled, bright with stars, the Milky Way  
 Divides in twain. This sea, old stories tell,  
 Of yore my Sires made flow, when in their quest  
 They tore up Earth to reach the Victim-horse  
 By Bâli to Pâtâla led, to stop  
 Their father's sacrifice. The sunbeams hence  
 Derive engendering virtue, riches swell,  
 And viewless fire is bred, and moonlight mild.  
 Like Vishṇu's self almighty, multiform,  
 Unmeasured, subtle, all ten spheres it clasps,  
 Transcendent in its worth as in its power.

“ The Soul Supreme, by Brahmâ's praise extolled  
 (From whom the Lotus springs whereon he sleeps),

Upon its breast reclines, when ends the Age 20  
 Of working, when—absorbing all that is—  
 He sinks again to rest. To Ocean's arms  
 The mountain-hosts dismayed in hundreds fled,  
 Shorn of their pride when Indra clipped their wings,  
 As to a King revered when whelmed by foes  
 The neighbouring monarchs flee. Its waters clear  
 Swelled at the Deluge, and one moment's space  
 Earth's cheeks made lovely, till the Mighty God  
 Upheaved her from Pâtâla. All his wives,  
 Impartial in his love, he greets alike, 30  
 With wavy lips receiving kisses sweet  
 From eager river-mouths. Those monsters see!  
 With yawning mouths they drink the fishy flood,  
 Close with a snap their mighty jaws, and spout  
 Great streams of water through their fissured skulls.  
 Sudden leap up the monster crocodiles,  
 And cleave the foam, while on their cheeks the spray  
 Like sparkling eardrops clings. Here piled-up shells,  
 Which rushing waters tear from coral-sprays  
 That mock thy ruby lips, hang on the points 40  
 Of slender branchlets, till at length they fall—  
 Their strength exhausted. Wide-backed Ocean now,  
 Grazed by the waterspout that stooped to drink  
 Till by fierce storm-wind driven, milk-white gleams,  
 As when of yore with mighty Mandara churned  
 By hosts Divine. Along the salt deep's shore,  
 That stretches slender like a copper rim,

Wave dark *Tamâlas* mixed with forest-palms,  
Like streak of rust on polished metal's gleam.

“Bride with dark almond-eyes! the landward breeze      50  
With *Ketak*-pollen dusts thy cheek,—a care  
By me omitted, while I pine to taste  
Thy ruby lips. Our swiftly-rolling car  
Now in a moment brings us to that shore,  
Where from cleft shells lie pure pearls richly heaped,  
Where betel-trees fruit-laden sweep the sands.  
Look down, O Queen, whose roe-like eyes delight  
And form of ample curves, and mark our way!  
As Ocean vanishes see how boon Earth,  
Clothed with green woods, seems sinking as we gaze!      60  
Obedient to my will this Car Divine  
Cleaves now the sphere of Gods, anon of clouds,  
Now skims the path of birds. A breeze from Heaven,—  
Sweet-laden by Airâvat's fragrant brows,  
Cooled by the spray from triple Gangâ's flood,  
Wipes from thy brows those drops that morning's heat  
Had raised. The cloud, by lightnings braceleted,  
Touched by thy curious hand through lattice stretched,  
My hasty Queen! with double gold is decked.  
These bark-clad Eremites, who deem that now      70  
This *Danḍaka* is free from hindrances  
To Saintry works, well-pleased rebuild their homes,  
Too long forsaken. In this very glade  
I vainly sought thee, found an anklet dropped,  
Struck dumb with sorrow, riven from thy foot,

That mocks the lotus' hue. Ah, timid Fair !  
 These creepers, dumb yet pitying, bent their arms  
 To show the path by which the Râkshasa  
 Had borne thee,—bending low the tender tips  
 Of all their boughs. Their fragrant food the roes 80  
 Neglecting, gazed with moveless brows full south,  
 And taught my ignorance the way thou 'dst gone.

“There in our front soars Malaya to Heaven,  
 Whereon the clouds dropped rain, and I salt tears  
 For loss of thee. There, reft of thee, the scents  
 Which lakes, fresh-filled by clouds, exhaled I loathed ;  
*Kadamba* flowers, half-opened, pleased me not,  
 Nor peacocks' low, sweet tones ; the thundering clouds,  
 From caves resounding, harshly struck my ear,  
 Who thought on thee, my timorous Love ! who erst 90  
 Didst sportive hide thee, teasing. There thine eyes,  
 Beauteous, yet clouded by the smoke that rose  
 From marriage-fires, tormented,—while half-oped  
 Bright fungus-growths (earth yet in cloud-mist veiled)  
 Were vainly emulous. Scarce can the sight,  
 Far-darting downwards, Pampá's lake descry,  
 With storks at play, shut in 'mid circling brakes  
 Of mighty reeds. There, Love ! I fondly gazed  
 On happy *Chakravákas*, in their love  
 United still, in gracious ministry 100  
 Each giving to his mate fresh lotus-blooms,  
 While I was reft of thee ! When all in tears  
 By river-bank a lithe *Açoka*-trunk,



Bent by its swelling clusters like fair breasts,  
 I vainly clasped, and thought I held thee, Queen !  
 Lakshmaṇ forbade me. O'er Godâvari's waves  
 Now soar the cranes, scared by the golden bells  
 That tinkle round our Car, so welcoming thee  
 With all their white array. This sacred grove,  
 Where thou didst nurse the mango, tender-framed, 110  
 With daily watering,—where the deer look up  
 Expectant of thee,—now once more I see  
 More gladly for long absence. I recall  
 How on a day, worn out by toil of chase  
 By this Godâvari's streams, while spray-cooled winds  
 Dried off my face the sweat, my weary head  
 I rested on thy breast in reed-built hut.  
 Here while on earth that famous Saint had dwelt,  
 Who cleared the streams of mud, whose wrinkling brow  
 Hurl'd Nahusha of old from Indra's realm. 120

“ Free from all lust, here takes my soul delight  
 To sniff the scented smoke from altar-fires  
 Well-fed, that triple rise full in our path,  
 And lightly meet the Car,—by spotless Saint  
 Enkindled. Here, high Lady ! gleams the lake  
 Of Çâtakarṇi's pleasures,—‘ Five Nymphs ’ named,  
 Embowered in distant woods, a second moon  
 Half-seen amid the clouds. Of old, men tell,  
 Amid the deer he lived, and *Darbha* grass  
 Alone he ate, till Indra, much dismayed 130  
 At such strict penance, bound him in the toils

Of five celestial Nymphs. The cymbal's clang  
 Harmonious and the music of the voice,  
 Still rising from his palace closely-hid,  
 Wake momentary echoes from the hood  
 That shades our Car.

“ Here mild Sutikshṇa dwells,  
 High merit storing up, 'mid four fierce fires,  
 The blazing Sun a fifth. Him Indra sought,  
 Anxious, to tempt through wanton Nymphs' bright eyes,  
 With laughter beaming, and coquettish wiles  
 That half-revealed their zones,—but vainly sought.

140

With arms uplifted now he waves the right,  
 With holy beads encircled, graciously  
 Requiting courtesy,—that arm wherewith  
 He strokes the hinds and gathers sacred grass.  
 Vowed to strict silence, only with his head  
 Bowed slightly he returns my courteous words,  
 And—now the Car is past—his constant gaze  
 Again has sought the Sun. Yon penance-grove  
 Afforded Çarabhanga's rites austere

150

Pure shade, who long the fire with fuel fed,  
 And last his body gave, by Holy Texts  
 From sin redeemed. The welcome of his guests  
 His worthy sons, those trees, give now, whose shade  
 Dispels long journeying's toil, whose luscious fruit  
 Weighs down their branches. Chitrakūṭa's peak,  
 O lithe-limbed Lady! now enchants the eye;—  
 Like stately bull he stands, his mouth a cave,

With cascade-roar loud-bellowing, highest peaks  
 Cloud-capped like horns lime-whitened from a wall. 160  
 Low at his base, with rapids smooth, shines out—  
 By distance thread-like made,—Mandâkinî,  
 A pearly band on Earth's sweet neck! 'Twas here  
 That from a tall *Tamâla* fragrant blooms,  
 Hard by the mountain-side, I plucked, and twined  
 Bright earrings for thy cheeks, as barley pale.

“ Here in the wood doth pious Atri keep  
 His vows austere ; with herds of beasts 'tis filled  
 That fear no harm,—nor need his trees to flower  
 Before they fruit. Here Anasûyâ brought 170  
 The threefold Gangâ, Çiva's crown, to earth,  
 That Holy men, in merit rich, might bathe  
 Where erst the mighty Seven golden blooms  
 Of lotus gathered. Hermits' very trees,  
 While they within their huts are plunged in thought,  
 Amid the altar-precincts motionless,  
 Their leaves unstirred by wind, themselves seemed  
 wrapped

In pious contemplation. Here, my Love !  
 Behold the dark-leaved fig-tree thou didst choose,  
 Which, bowed with fruit, glows like an emerald-heap 180  
 With rubies interspersed. A necklet here  
 Thou seest of pearls, 'midst which the emerald gleams,  
 There a pure lily-crown, where sapphire-like  
 The lotus glows : that string of birds beheld,  
 That love the Mânas-lake, where swans appear,

White-winged : there on the Earth a yellow band  
Of sandalwoods, picked out with aloes dark.

“See here the Moon’s bright orb with sable shade  
Streaked sharply,—therethrough rifted autumn-clouds  
Resplendent shows Heaven’s blue. Here, might one  
say,

190

Is Çiva’s body dark, with black snake girt,  
And smeared with ashes : there see, peerless Queen !  
Where Gangâ rolls her flood, by Jamnâ cleft.  
Those souls, men say, that cast the mortal coil,  
Washed in the confluent waters of these twain,  
Unknowing even of the Soul Supreme,

No more are sent to earth. Nishâda dwells  
In yon fair city : there, when I refused

The crown and bound my locks up Hermit-wise,  
Sumantra mourning cried :—‘ Ah, Kaikeyi !

200

Thy wish is now fulfilled !’ Sarâyû here,  
Whose source the wise have traced to Brahmâ’s lake,  
Where golden lilies charm fair Yakshîs’ hearts,  
Rolls mighty : so flows Mind from Soul Supreme.

Its banks well lined with sacrificial stones,  
Past proud Ayodhyâ sweeps its flood,—where bathe,  
After Horse-Sacrifice, Ikshvâku’s sons,

And sanctify its waves. It fills my soul  
With reverence, common Mother of the Kings  
Of Northern Koçala, who find delight  
In her sand-islets and abundant stream.

210

“Sarâyû now, my noble Father lost,

Indeed my Mother seems, and clasps me round—  
 Though distant yet—with wavy arms that stir  
 A cooling breeze. As dusky twilight grey,  
 Before us dust-clouds rise: I augur thence  
 That Bharata from Hanumân has heard  
 News of my coming, and with all his hosts  
 Prepares to welcome me. My Father's realm,  
 That Father's vow to keep, I left; but now, 220  
 My penance o'er, that virtuous Prince restores  
 The Royal State unblemished: rescued so,  
 Thee Lakshman gave, won back by slaughter grim  
 Of Khara and his peers. To meet me now  
 On foot comes Bharata, our household Priest  
 Placed in the van, his army's serried ranks  
 Close following: he in Hermit-dress comes forth,  
 And old-time councillors bear gifts in hand.  
 From love to me the Prince, in flush of youth,  
 Wed not fair Lakshmi, whom his Sire bequeathed, 230  
 Who sought herself his arms: yea, all these years  
 Abiding with her, yet he tasted not  
 Pure wedlock's joy!"

As Râma spake, the Car,—  
 That knew by sense divine his unspoke will,—  
 Swift glided from the sky, by wondering eyes  
 Of Bharat's hosts observed. Then, on the hand—  
 Apt for all service—of the Monkey-King  
 One moment leaning, Râma lighted down,—  
 On well-wrought ladder stepping, crystal-runged,

Held by Vibhīṣaṇ. First the reverend Sage, 240  
 Priest of Ikshvāku's line, he greeted well,  
 Then took the gifts, and—bathed in tears—embraced  
 His brother Bharat, kissing that leal head,  
 Which, reigning in his stead, refused the Crown.

Courteous he welcomed old-time ministers,  
 With beards untrimmed, and hair like Peepal-roots  
 Close-matted; they with tuneful voices asked  
 Respectful of his welfare. Spake the King:—  
 “Behold my friend, of Riksha's Monkey-hosts 250  
 Great Chief, my stay in trouble: next the stout  
 Vibhīṣaṇ know!” Then Bharat hailed the twain,  
 By Râma praised, ere Lakshmaṇ he embraced,  
 Sumitrâ's son, upraising his bent head,  
 And to his bosom clasping,—close, more close,  
 He well-nigh bruised his breast on cruel scars  
 Which Indrajit had left. At Râma's word  
 At once the Monkey-chiefs took human shapes,  
 And mounted elephants, whose mighty brows  
 Streamed ichor sweet, rejoicing as to climb  
 Great mountains. At his word the Râkshas-King, 260  
 With all his hosts ascended cars unmatched  
 In splendour by their own, by magic art  
 Fair-fashioned. Then the Chief of Raghu's line  
 Once more sat in his car, and with him sat  
 His Brothers, and the banner at his will  
 Moved or was steady,—as the stars' high Lord,  
 The Moon, shines glorious climbing up a bank

Of dusky clouds at evening, lightning-streaked,  
With Jupiter attending and his Sire.

Then Bharat praised the beauteous Maithili, 270  
From Râvaṇ's grasp by Râma's might set free,  
As from dark flood the Lord of worlds saved Earth,  
Or when the rains are over clears the moon  
From cloudy masses. So her dazzling feet,  
Who faithful kept her vow and dashed the hopes  
Presumptuous Râvaṇ nursed, set on the head  
Of him whose matted locks proclaimed the faith  
He kept unswerving to his elder's claim :—  
Each to the other greater lustre lent.

Then glorious Râma half a kos advanced, 280  
Escorted by his folk, while Pushpaka,—  
His Car Celestial,—checked its magic speed ;  
Then in the pleasure-forest dwelt well-pleased,  
That round Ayodhyâ stretched, where Çatrughna  
With careful foresight had prepared the Camp.

## CANTO XIV

*The Restoration of Râma to his Kingdom,  
and the Divorce of Sîtâ.*

THEN did the Princely Brothers seek the homes  
Where dwelt their mothers, sorrow-stricken Queens,  
Of husband late bereaved,—like clinging-plants  
Forlorn and left of strong protecting trunk.

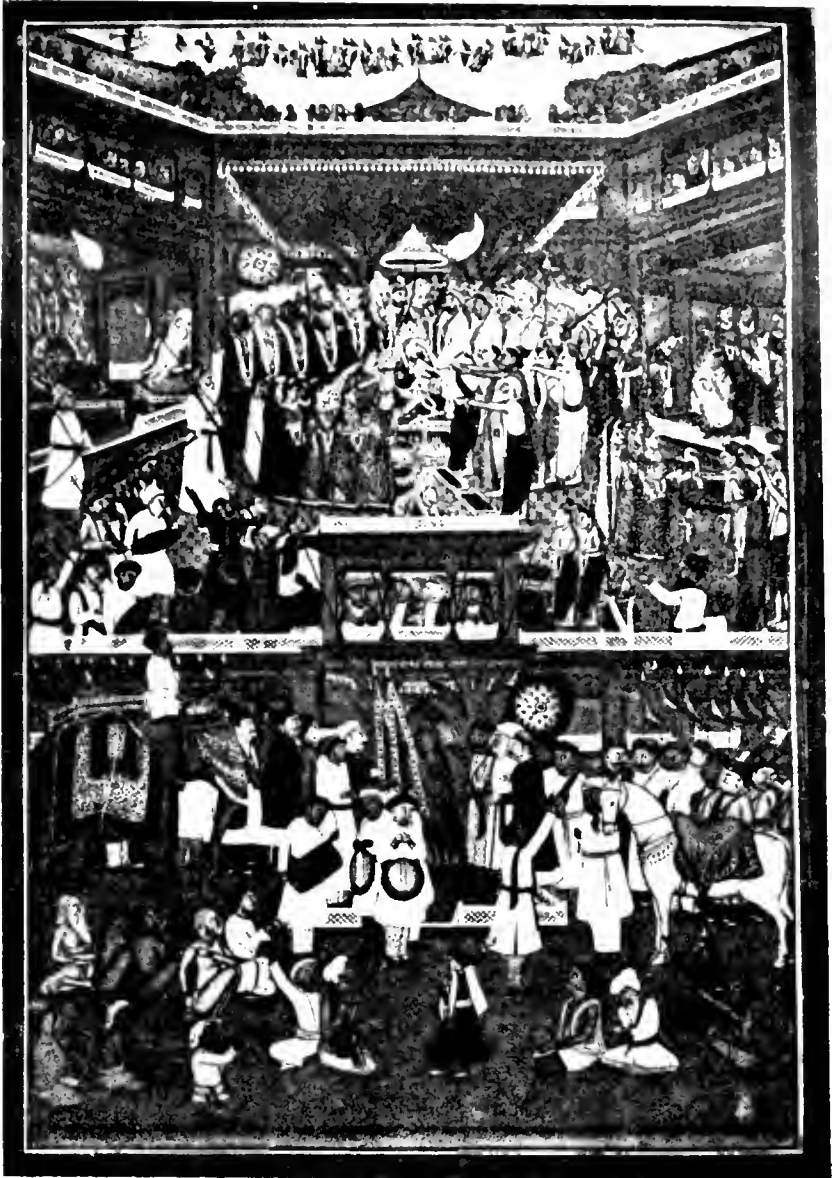
The Heroes twain, resplendent in their might,  
Bent low before the Queens, whose happy eyes  
(By tears half-blinded) scarce discerned their forms,  
Though each was blessed, as in her mother's arms  
She clasped her son. But in the Heroes' eyes  
The soothing tear of joy cut sorrow short, 10  
As Jamnâ's torrent rushing from the rocks  
Cleaves Gangâ's heated wave. Condolingly  
They touched the scarce-healed scars the Demon's wounds  
Left on their bodies : nay, the much-prized name,  
“Mother of heroes,” brought them little joy  
Who felt its pains. Then Sîtâ, bending low,  
Her Husband's mother greeted, nor transgressed  
The line of awful duty, while she said :—



“Lo, here is Sitâ, fatal to her Lord,  
 Not worthy your regard!” “Dear Daughter, rise!” 20  
 (So said they) “’Twas thy spotless life alone  
 That brought thy Lord and Lakshmaṇ through their toils  
 Triumphant.” Then with loving words and true  
 They praised her, worthy Wife of worthy Lord.

Thus with their joyful tears the widowed Queens  
 Began the sacring,—which with hallowed stream,  
 From many a sainted river, poured from jars  
 Of gold unmixed, the Kingdom’s Senators  
 Completed,—of pure Raghu’s Hero-son.  
 From seas and streams and lakes the loyal Chiefs 30  
 Of Demons and of Monkeys brought great store  
 Of water, pouring it on Râma’s head,  
 As rain in torrents falls on Vindhya’s peaks  
 From Autumn-clouds. The splendid robes of state  
 To Him fresh lustre gave, whose lovely limbs  
 The ascetic’s dress scarce veiled, nor feared reproach  
 Of over-gorgeousness. Then with his hosts,  
 His sage advisers, loyal Demons, Apes,  
 He to his Father’s home passed : arches spanned  
 The roads, and rice from lattices was poured 40  
 In welcoming showers. High in his Car of State  
 The Hero sat, while Lakshmaṇ gently waved  
 The royal fan, and Bharat screened his head,  
 Like Kingship’s triple powers to Earth come down  
 Rose from the palaces wind-cloven smoke,  
 As ’twere the long-bereavèd City’s hair,

Its braids unloosing at the King's return.  
 Next Sîtâ, Râma's Queen, in litter borne,—  
 Dressed by her husband's kin in glorious robes,—  
 Ayodhyâ's matrons hailed, with claspèd hands 50  
 From palace-windows gazing. She the rare,  
 Exhaustless unguent, Anasûyâ's gift,  
 Had deftly used ; a halo round her shone ;  
 And doubly pure she beamed, shown by her Lord  
 From cleansing fires come forth. That King himself,  
 Deep mine of friendship, to his friends assigned  
 Well-ordered dwellings ; then with tears went in  
 To that reverèd home, where dwelt his Sire,  
 His image only left. With claspèd hands,  
 And loving words, he soothed Kaikeyî's shame, 60  
 And hailed her "Mother!" "Well," he said, "thou didst :  
 To thee we owe it that our Sire held firm,  
 Nor swerved from truth, and by that truth won Heaven!"  
 Sugrîva, and Vibhishan, and the rest,  
 With splendid courtesies he entertained,  
 That, though to have they needed but to wish,  
 Their minds sank overpowered. To Saints Divine,  
 Come down from Heaven to do him reverence,  
 He paid due honour : they His might extolled,  
 And told in sacred numbers all the tale 70  
 Of His high birth, His acts, and foe subdued.  
 So like a dream the days uncounted flew,  
 Till half a month was spent :—the Saints were gone ;  
 Then, richly guerdoned by the Queen's own hand,



THE ENTHRONEMENT OF RÂMA



The Kings of Apes and Demons home returned.  
 And Pushpaka, that Flower of Heaven, the Car  
 A thought could swift recall, which with his life  
 He wrested from His mighty foe,—no more  
 Required, back to Kailâsa's Lord He sent.

Then Râma sat at last upon his throne,  
 Who first obeyed his Father's word, and spent  
 Long years in banishment ;—and now maintained  
 'Midst Virtue, Wealth, and Love unswerving course,  
 And ruled his Brothers with an equal love.  
 In equal honour too, as duty claimed,  
 The Queens,—his own dear mother and the rest,—  
 He held, as He who leads the hosts of Heaven  
 His Foster-mothers six loves equally.

80

A happy world he ruled, that generous King,  
 Whose arm prevailing curbed ignoble fears :  
 As father he corrected, like a son  
 He smoothed all griefs away. The people's weal,  
 Unwearied, first he sought, and love's delight  
 At fitting season he with Sîtâ took :—  
 So fair the Queen, it seemed that Lakshmi's self  
 Had ta'en her form to know pure marriage-bliss.  
 And as they tasted all the joys of love  
 Whene'er they would in gorgeous palaces,  
 The memory of hardship past, endured  
 In Daṇḍaka's dark shades, enhanced delight.

90

100

Then Sîtâ, softly smiling, now with face

Pale as the yellow reed, all silently  
 Put forth the signs of fruitfulness, and gave  
 Her Lord new happiness. He longingly  
 Pressed to his heart her slender form, and marked  
 How her ripe breasts assumed a deeper tinge,  
 And joyfully in whispers craved to know  
 If aught she longed for. Blushingly she owned  
 Her strong desire to seek the Hermits' huts  
 On pure Godâvari's banks, where *Kuça* grass  
 Luxuriant waves, and roaming cattle crop  
 Unchecked the growing rice, where Sainly maids  
 Bound in close friendship dwell. The noble King  
 Consented to her prayer. Then with a squire  
 He sought the palace-roof, which soared to heaven,  
 To feast his eyes on fair Ayodhyâ's streets.

110

He marked the thronged highway, the busy mart,  
 Sarâyû ploughed by keels, and where the parks,—  
 Gay with rejoicing crowds,—spread round the walls,  
 Enraptured at the sight, Then, stainless King,  
 Most noble Conqueror, most eloquent,  
 Whose mighty frame vied with the Serpent-King's,  
 He asked his faithful squire the general mind  
 And sentence on his life. Reluctantly,  
 At length that squire made answer :—"O my Lord!  
 All that thou doest all thy people praise,  
 Save this one thing,—that thou receivedst back  
 Thy Queen from Râvan's palace, where she dwelt."

120

That slanderous word, imputing foul disgrace

To Sîtâ, smote his heart with crushing force,  
 As falls the smashing weight of iron sledge  
 On anvil tough. Then doubtfully he mused,—  
 “Shall I despise this slanderous talk? or yield,  
 My blameless Spouse divorcing?” Unresolved  
 He wavered long, his mind in helpless gloom  
 Swayed like a swing. Deep pondering he resolved  
 To end the slander in the only way,  
 Dismissing his pure Queen : exalted souls  
 Prize Fame above their lives,—far, far beyond  
 All earthly pleasures. So, his joy eclipsed,  
 He called his Brethren : they with sorrow marked  
 The gloom that marred his features, as He told  
 The stain upon his honour, ending thus :—

130

140

“Behold how dark a blot my act has brought  
 On all the Sun-descended race, so pure,  
 So flawless in its virtue,—stock of Kings  
 And famous Saints,—till now by me ’tis soiled,  
 As zephyrs moist bedim the polished steel.  
 Such slander spreading wide among my folk,  
 As spreads a drop of oil o’er troubled waves,  
 I could not bear,—so hates the elephant  
 The post and chain that bind him. Therefore I,  
 Though seeming careless of the seed she bears  
 Now in her fertile womb, must put away  
 My well-loved Queen,—as at my Father’s word  
 I sternly put from me sea-girdled Earth.

150

“The Queen I know is stainless, yet I dread  
 My people’s blaming :—Earth’s dark shadow cast

Across the spotless Moon, by vulgar minds  
 Is held to stain her. So my glorious deeds, 160  
 In slaying Giant Rāvaṇ, would be vain :  
 Not only so, my triumph would itself  
 Let loose fresh springs of hate : not unprovoked  
 A deadly snake bites at the heel that strikes.  
 My purpose then is fixed, nor can be swayed  
 By aught your pitying hearts might urge,—my life  
 Would wither soon, exposed to slanderous tongues !”

When thus the King declared his stern resolve  
 Against fair Sitā,—silence held them bound,  
 Who durst not hinder, nor could praise his will. 170  
 Then called he Lakshmaṇ, famous through the  
 worlds,

To all his will obedient, telling him  
 In secret conference, wise and eloquent,  
 His weighty purpose, saying :—“ Brother dear,  
 My Spouse, my Sitā, coyly has made known  
 Her strong desire to seek the penance-groves :  
 Now therefore, this pretending, drive with her  
 In thy swift chariot to Vālmiki’s home,  
 And leave her there !” Devoted Lakshmaṇ knew  
 That at his Sire’s command dread Bhṛigu’s son 180  
 Had slain his mother : Rāma’s high behests  
 Unquestioning, though reluctant, he received :  
 A Monarch’s mandates must be aye obeyed.

Fair Sitā, much rejoiced to have her wish,  
 He lifted to the car, by staunch steeds drawn,



And driven by Sumantra. Sītā praised  
 The pleasing prospects by the way, and thought  
 Within her loving heart, "My dearest Lord  
 Does all to please me!" Knowing not the truth,—  
 Her Tree of Life to deadly Upas turned.

190

Yet as she journeyed, though kind Lakshman hid  
 The heavy grief appointed,—banishment  
 For ever from her husband's face, a chill  
 Ran through her as she felt her right eye throb,—  
 Dread omen of ill fate, In fear and doubt,  
 At once her lotus-face grew deadly pale,  
 And to herself she murmured loving prayers  
 Both for her Lord and for his Brethren three.

But when, fulfilling his high King's command,  
 He thought to leave chaste Sītā, Gangā's self—  
 The Holy River—raised protesting waves,  
 And stayed his course. Yet faithful to his vow,  
 He checked the car, then helped the Queen to alight,  
 And in a shallop crossed the mighty stream:  
 No barrier stops a trusty envoy's way!  
 Then scarce his voice controlling for the sobs  
 That choked his utterance, Lakshman—like a cloud  
 That looses from its womb a rain of stones,  
 Portentous,—told her Rāma's fatal will.

200

With sudden terror smitten, Sītā fell  
 To Earth, her own dear Mother,—fell, as falls  
 A creeper torn by rushing blast of wind  
 From its supporting trunk, and shed her gauds

210

Like withered blossoms. But soon Earth denied  
 Her Daughter refuge, nor believed it true,—  
 That, save for some dark stain, her Hero-lord,  
 The Glory of his race, had put away  
 His darling Queen. She for a moment's space  
 Swooned, and forgot her woes ; but sense returned,  
 And with it gnawing grief, when Lakshman's care  
 To life recalled her, bitterer far than death. 220

Yet no reproachful word that noble Queen  
 Breathed 'gainst her Lord, who so unjustly drove  
 Her sinless from him : all the guilt she laid  
 Upon herself, foredoomed to endless grief  
 For sins of former lives. With tender words  
 Consoling her, pure Wife, great Lakshman led  
 To where Válmiki dwelt ; then humbly sued  
 For pardon, pleading,—“ O my Queen ! forgive  
 The wrong I do thee. 'Tis thy Lord's command,  
 I but his minister !” She raised him up,  
 With gracious answer :—“ Brother, Sítâ's heart  
 Is glad that so thou servest her dear Lord,  
 As Vishṇu's self served Indra, elder-born,  
 Unquestioning : live many happy years !  
 Greet well the Queens from me, and say to them,  
 Each in her order,—Sítâ bids you pray  
 For Râma's seed, which in her womb she bears.  
 Next to the King my message thus convey :—  
 ‘ ThyselF hast seen me purified by Fire,  
 Yet now forsakest, fearing scandal's breath,— 240

Mere words : does this beseem Thy noble race ?  
 Or shall I think it was no willing deed,  
 But forced upon thee, O most glorious King,—  
 A fate inexorable, by my sins  
 Drawn down from former lives? It must be so :  
 For once, Beloved ! thou didst rather choose  
 Exile with me than Lakshmi's offered charms :  
 I ousted her, abiding in thy home :  
 Her jealous fury triumphs o'er me now !

250

“ ‘ Befits it me, who through thy favour late  
 Myself was styled Protectress of my sex,  
 When Demons plagued their husbands, now forlorn  
 To seek protection at a stranger's hand,  
 While Thou still reignest glorious? Thinkest Thou  
 That I would longer bear this maimèd life,  
 All empty now that Thou hast cast me off,  
 Did not I bear in me thy precious seed,—  
 Which bids me live? But, once Thy son is born,  
 Unswerving I shall fix my weary eyes  
 On yon bright Sun, and by severest modes  
 Of penance strive that in some future life  
 Thou only be my Lord,—my Lord for aye !  
 And since all ranks and classes claim the care  
 (For so the Law ordains) of virtuous Kings,  
 So in my banishment I claim Thy care,  
 No less than Holy men with whom I dwell ! ’ ”

260

So Lakshman promised to fulfil her hest,

And left her presence : then, by grief o'erborne,  
 With straining throat she wailed like stricken hind. 270  
 In sympathy gay peacocks ceased their dance,  
 Trees shed their blossoms, deer the fragrant grass  
 They scarce had cropped : through all the forest passed  
 A moan unending. Guided by the sound,  
 The Poet-Saint, whose sympathetic grief—  
 When he beheld the bird so ruthlessly  
 Slain by a huntsman,—found heroic verse,  
 Came to her from his quest of fragrant grass  
 And altar-fuel. Sitâ reverently  
 Saluted him, restraining her lament, 280  
 And driving back hot tears that dimmed her eyes :  
 To whom the Saint, who marked her fruitful womb,  
 Gave blessing for her offspring :—then he spake :—  
 “By Holy intuition well I know,  
 My daughter, that thy Lord, by slander moved,  
 Put thee away though guiltless : grieve not then,  
 Fair Princess of Videha ! Thou shalt reach  
 Thy father's home, not distant from these groves.  
 Thy glorious Husband, well I know, has drawn  
 The barb of sorrow from this Triple World, 290  
 Is faithful to his word, all boasting hates,—  
 Yet for his cruel dealing with thee, Queen,  
 I greatly blame him ! His renownèd Sire  
 Claimed me as friend ; thy father saves from tears  
 All pious Hermits ; 'midst true, loyal wives  
 Thou hast chief place :—all this my heart constrains

To pity and to shield thee. Dwell secure  
 Here in the Sacred grove, where savage beasts  
 With us consorting milder moods assume !  
 Here shall thy cleansing be, when thou shalt bear 300  
 Unblemished offspring. Here in Tamasâ,  
 Whose waves dispel the gloom of ignorance,  
 Whose banks with Hermits' huts are thronged, whose isles  
 Smoke ever with the fragrant sacrifice,  
 Thou day by day shall bathe, till peace return  
 To bless thy spirit. Munis' daughters here,  
 With offerings in their time of flowers or fruit,  
 Soft-voiced, who for the altar gather grain  
 From land untilled,—will charm thy grief away.  
 And, fostering the nurslings of the grove 310  
 With slender water-jars, as suits thy strength,  
 Doubt not that, ere thine own dear Son be born,  
 Thou 'lt know a mother's joy !”

Most gratefully

His kindness she received : the Poet-Sage,  
 Whose heart for pity melted, led her home  
 To where around his hut-door tamed wild beasts  
 And timid deer were clustered. There the Queen,  
 Bowed down with sorrow, he to the Saints' pure wives  
 Gave in strict trust, well-pleased that she was come :—  
 So, when the Moon's sweet essence has been drunk 320  
 By Saints Divine, she to the moon-plants yields  
 Her latest light,—and straight begins to wax.

When night drew on, to crown his welcoming,

They gave a hut to dwell in, where was spread  
 A couch of hallowed skins ; and light shone soft  
 From well-trimmed lamp, with fragrant oil new-filled.  
 There dwelt She, set apart by holy chrisin,  
 By all who came high-honoured, clad in bark,—  
 And throve on rustic fare, till at full time  
 She bore her noble Husband offspring pure.

330

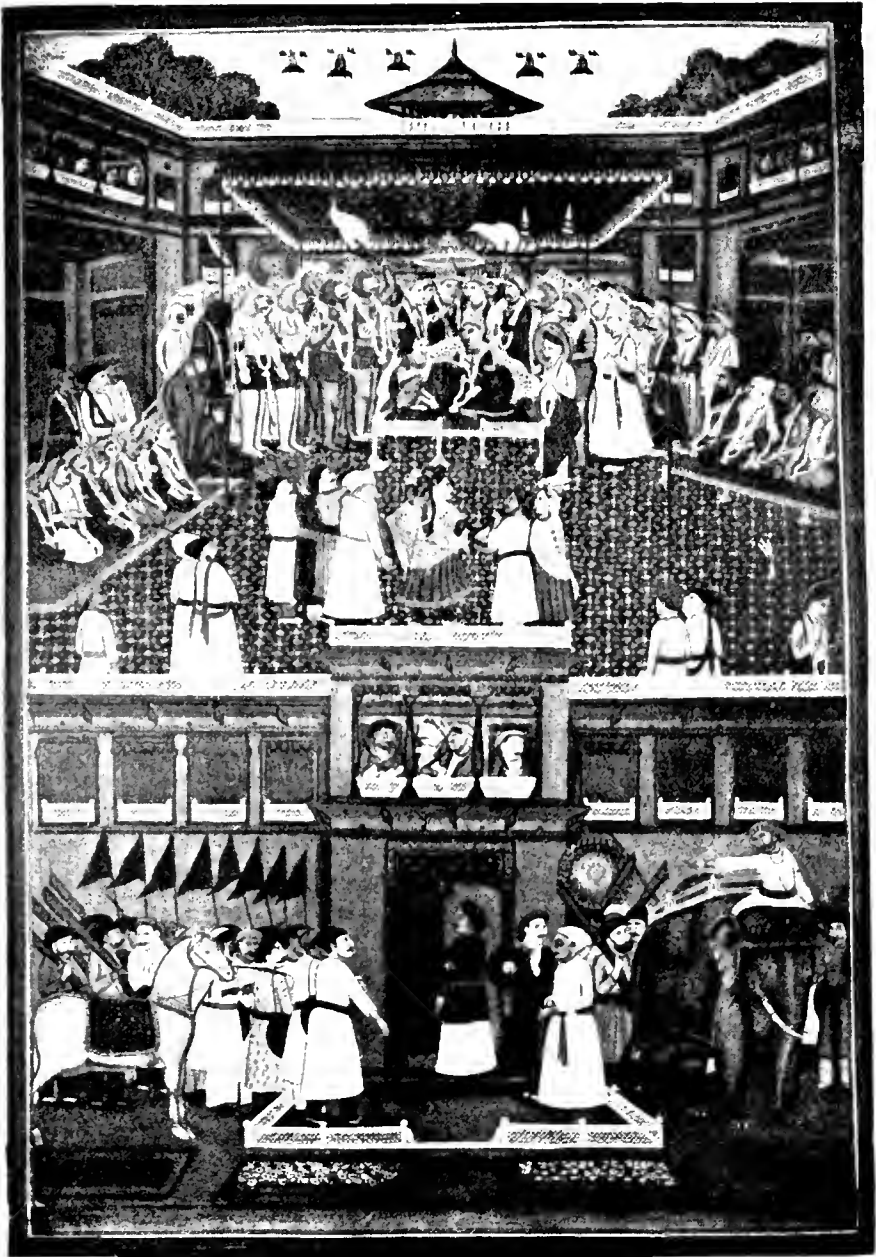
But Lakshman bore her message to the King,—  
 And hoped that when He heard her sad reproach  
 Remorse might move him to recall the doom.  
 Then Râma fell a-weeping, as the Moon  
 In winter showers down snow ;—by slander stung,  
 He thrust his Sitâ from his home, yet still  
 Alone she ruled his heart. By strength of will  
 And wisdom's lessons He restrained his grief,  
 Gave all his mind to guard the tribes of men,  
 And—freed from passion's sway—his people ruled,  
 Not more enriched than others. Brighter shone  
 The Kingdom's Fortune, reigning now sole Queen,  
 Sole mistress of the King, who, moved by fear  
 Of slanderous tongues, had banished his dear Wife.

340

But Sitâ, when she knew her mighty Lord,  
 Dread Râvan's victor, took no second spouse,  
 But—worshipping her image—spent his days  
 In sacrifice, was greatly comforted,  
 And much endured, nor sank beneath the weight  
 Of grief for severance from her loyal Lord.

350





RÁMA'S COURT



## CANTO XV

*The slaying of Lavaṇa : Râma vanquishes Death : Sitâ bears twin Sons, and at a Sacrifice is restored, and vanishes : the passing of Râma.*

So, Sitâ banished, Râma took delight  
No more with any, save sea-girdled Earth.

Then came the Ascetics, who by Jamnâ dwelt,  
And sought from him, the World's Protector, help,  
For that the Demon Lavaṇa destroyed  
Their Holy rites. On Râma they relied,  
And so refrained their hands, nor smote the foe  
With those tremendous weapons which they owned,—  
Those awful curses which to use destroys  
The need of holy penance. Sure relief  
From every hindrance Râma vowed to send,  
For surely Vishṇu's life on earth below  
Had this one object,—virtue to uphold.  
They told the Hero how this Demon-foe  
Was to be slain,—“For,” said they, “once he's armed  
With his dread spear, he scarce can be o'ercome :  
Fall on him then when 'tis not in his hand !”

Then sent the King as champion Çatrugna,  
 That he might quell the foe, and justify  
 The name he bore. Each Prince of Raghu's stock 20  
 Foes well could smite,—as in the rules of speech  
 Exceptions test a law. Him Râma blessed :  
 The Prince undaunted mounted his swift car,  
 And drove adown the scented forest-glade  
 That blazed with blossom. That well-ordered host,  
 Which Râma's care sent with him as his aid,  
 Served but as ornament, superfluous.  
 He, flower of mighty warriors, held the way  
 Which guiding Hermits showed ; his outriders  
 Proclaimed his glory, ev'n as far-shot rays 30  
 The Sun's great majesty. Now on the march,  
 So long his journey was, one night he stayed  
 Where dwelt Vâlmiki sage, whose deer looked up  
 At rattling of his car. With special grace,  
 Won by his rites austere, the noble Saint  
 Received the Prince, and bade his tired steeds rest.

While there he tarried, even that same night,  
 The Queen, great Râma's spouse, gave birth to twins,—  
 Two perfect sons, as fruitful Earth two hosts  
 Might bear for some great King. With pure delight 40  
 The noble Prince heard of the happy birth  
 Of Râma's sons ; then at first dawn, the Saint  
 First reverently saluting, he his car  
 Made quickly ready, thence unwearied passed.

Soon reached he Lavan's stronghold, where oppressed

By Demon-power the woods their tribute paid,  
 Great herds of cattle,—and the Râkshas came  
 To meet his foe. All sooty-black he strode,  
 With hair aflame, besmeared with fetid oils,  
 Like some great funeral-pyre that stalked the plain, 50  
 By Demon-hosts attended. Çatrughna  
 Straightway attacked him, caught without his spear:—  
 Who take their foes unharnessed win the fight!

With boastful words the Demon fell advanced:—  
 “Sure the Creator saw my daily meal  
 To-day was scanty: so in fear he sent  
 Thee to complete it.” Threatening thus, and keen  
 To swallow down his foe, a lofty tree,  
 As ’twere a corn-stalk, fiercely he tore up  
 And hurled it. In mid-flight Çatrughna’s shaft 60  
 Split the great trunk—which, as a shower of dust,  
 Not solid block, his body struck. Forthwith,  
 When so the tree was shattered, a great rock,—  
 Huge as Death’s fist, detached and firmly clenched,—  
 The Giant cast; that too, with Indra’s bolt  
 The Hero smote, and ground to pieces small,  
 Less than sand-grains. Then, raising his right hand,  
 The Demon hurled himself upon his foe,  
 A very mountain crested with one tree,  
 Dashed to the plain by awful whirlwind-blast. 70  
 But Kṛishṇa’s arrow cleft his heart: he fell:  
 And falling shook the earth, but by his fall  
 Took fear and trembling from all Hermit-hearts.

Down on his carcase swooped the vulture-hosts,  
But on the Victor's head rained flowers from Heaven.

O'er Lavaṅ slain in this he most rejoiced,  
He now was worthy shown of brotherhood  
With Lakshmaṅ, far-renowned for overthrow  
Of Indrajit. And, as the Hermits poured  
Their thanks for aid vouchsafed upon his head, 80  
He bowed it meekly, heightening so the worth  
Of valour with the grace of modesty.

Then, clothed in manhood, free from low desires,  
In form all lovely—on pure Jamnâ's banks  
He founded Mathurâ, in days to come  
For happy folk renowned, and nobly ruled,  
And from the first with Heaven's best blessings dowered.  
There from his palace-roof he looked, and saw  
Well-pleased the course of Jamnâ, gleaming white  
With flocks of *Chakravâkas*,—like a braid 90  
Of golden tresses, kissing Earth's fair cheek.

Now, sage Vâlmiki, who bore equal love,  
To Daçaratha and to Janaka,  
Himself with solemn rites gave Sîtâ's sons  
The second, higher birth ; and named the twins  
Kuça and Lava, since with fragrant grass  
And hair of kine their mother had been cleansed.  
First they the Word were taught, and Sacred Lore ;  
Next, children still, they gathered from his lips  
And sang the Hero-song himself had made. 100

They sang the Life of Râma, grand and sweet,  
 And singing charmed their mother's grief away,—  
 Her deep-set mourning o'er her banished state.

Now to the younger sons of Raghu's line—  
 Who blazed like steady fires—fair sons were born,  
 To each one two, from loving, faithful wives.  
 Then Çatrughna, whom Râma loved, to his—  
 To Çatrughâtin and Subâhu famed—  
 Gave each a city, Mathurâ the bright  
 To one, and to his brother Vidiçâ.

110

Then, fearing further to disturb the Sage,  
 And check his pious course, he left the groves  
 Where deer unmoving stood to hear the songs  
 Of Sîtâ's boys. Thence, self-subdued, he turned  
 To fair Ayodhyâ, gay with bannered streets,  
 Whose townsfolk bore him infinite regard  
 For slaying Lavaṇ. There amid his court,  
 With all his senate round him, Râma sat,  
 Now (since his Sîtâ was divorced) by Earth  
 Claimed only hers. He, as the victor bowed,  
 With joy received him : even as Indra hailed  
 Great Vishṇu, Kâlanemî's vanquisher.  
 He told him all his story, nought concealed,  
 But of the birth of Sîtâ's sons told not :  
 For so the Poet-Sage required, who thought  
 Himself to bring them when the time was ripe.

120

One day a Brâhman came, and brought his son—

A child untimely dead, thus making moan  
 Before the palace-gate :—" O wretched Earth !  
 What fate is thine, that from his Father's grasp 130  
 Thou 'rt fallen to Râma's hand,—bad changed for worse !"  
 His plaint heard Râma, learned the cause, and grieved  
 That now fell Death remorseless smote his realm,—  
 A thing which shamed him. First with pitying words  
 He soothed the father's grief, then bade him stay  
 Awhile his guest :—" For I will seek out Death,  
 And bring thy child again !" The Magic Car  
 By thought he summoned, seized his warlike bow,  
 And straight the Pride of Raghu's line went forth  
 To smite the Lord of life. But suddenly— 140  
 He scarce had started !—came a warning Voice  
 From form unseen :—" Grave sin," it said, " defiles  
 Thy land, O King ! Search, root it out !—this done,  
 Thou shalt obtain thy wish !" This heard, the King  
 Flew through wide Heaven to take away the sin  
 Which plagued his people : sped the flying Car,  
 Its pennon motionless, till soon he came  
 To where, red-eyed from smoke, with head hung down,  
 He saw one self-tormented on a tree.

Then Râma asked his name, and whence he sprang, 150  
 Who answered him :—" Çambuka, Çûdra, I  
 Thus seek high place in Heaven." But Râma knew  
 'Twas sin he practised, who transgressed the Law  
 Forbidding him to aspire ;—He grasped his sword  
 To slay the sinner, and cut off his head,

Whose beard fierce sparks had singed, like frost-bit flower  
 Of lotus from the stalk. The slave, so slain  
 By Royal hands, then rose to Perfect Bliss,  
 His foul transgression washed away by death.

Then came the Saint Agastya, on the road 160  
 Greeting great Râma :—so the placid Moon  
 Is met by Autumn :—gem of price he gave,  
 A God might covet, which to win his grace  
 The Sea bestowed when he had drunk it up.  
 This on his arm he bound, which now no more  
 Clasped Sîtâ's neck, then took the homeward way ;  
 And found the Brâhman's son restored to life.  
 Appeased the Saint blessed where he cursed before,—  
 "Who else," he cried, "can rescue ev'n the dead?"

Thereafter Râma loosed for Sacrifice 170  
 A perfect Horse : then showered their choicest gifts,  
 As clouds pour water on the thirsty fields,  
 The Kings of Apes, of men, of Râkshasas.  
 Next, at his bidding, all the mighty Saints  
 From every quarter came, in Heaven or Earth,  
 To grace the Rite. They camping through the groves  
 Around Ayodhyâ made her glorious,—  
 With four great gates for mouths, like Brahmâ's self  
 Fresh from Creation's work. The Monarch's throne  
 In right was fixed : nay, Sîtâ's banishment 180  
 Itself enhanced his glory, since he took  
 No second wife, but lived in lonely state,  
 While still her golden image ruled his house.

The solemn Sacrifice began, with state  
 More splendid far than Sacred Law requires,  
 For Demons, loyal grown, no more disturbed,  
 But guarded it from harm. Then Sitá's sons,  
 At bidding of their great Preceptor, sang  
 In many places to the attentive throngs  
 Válmiki's Song of Râma; to their depths 190  
 They stirred the souls of men with Râma's deeds,  
 Válmiki's matchless strains, their own sweet tones  
 Like Heaven's minstrelsy. With strange delight,  
 Throned 'midst his brothers, Râma marked their forms  
 That charmed all eyes, and heard their soft, sweet song.  
 The assembled crowd, attent to hear their strain,  
 Dissolved in tears, as when a forest-glade  
 In early morning stillness drips with dew.  
 Amazed they saw, with fixed unwinking eyes,  
 How like the minstrel-boys were to the King,— 200  
 By age and dress distinguished, only so.  
 Nor moved their skill such wonder in men's hearts  
 As when they saw them carelessly put by  
 The King's rich, loving gifts. Whereat the King  
 Asked who had taught them? Who had framed the song?  
 But when they named Válmiki, Râma went  
 To meet the Sage, his brothers following,  
 And at his feet the Kingdom and Himself  
 Laid freely down. The Bard, all-pitiful,  
 Presenting Sitá's boys, the King's own sons, 210  
 Chose as his boon that She should be called home.



The King, rejoicing yet perplexed, replied :—  
 “Thou knowest, Father, how thy Child, my Spouse,  
 By Fire’s ordeal proved herself to me  
 A stainless wife ; but, wiled by Demon-craft,  
 The people held her soiled. Bid Sîtâ then  
 Convince them too ; so will I, at thy word,  
 Receive her back, pure mother of my sons !”

Thus Râma pledged his faith : forthwith the Saint  
 By trusty messengers bade Sîtâ come,—  
 As pious deeds call blessings from the Gods. 220  
 Then on the morrow Râma summoned all  
 Ayodhyâ’s citizens, and bade the Saint  
 Fulfil his promise : who led Sîtâ up  
 With her two sons to where the Monarch sat,  
 As when with Hymn of consecrated verse  
 Men hail the blessed Sun. Her very mien,  
 Unruffled, clad in red, with eyes cast down,  
 Proclaimed her pure. The people, deep abashed,  
 Scarce raised their heads, like rice-blades bowed with  
 grain, 230

And shunned her quiet gaze. With aspect grave  
 The Saint assumed his seat, and solemn spake :—  
 “Now, Daughter, show the people thou art pure  
 Beyond all cavil : here thy husband sits  
 To mark the trial !” Then an acolyte  
 Brought her clear water, which she drank, then spake  
 These words sincere :—“All-fostering Goddess Earth !  
 If I in word, in thought, in deed have still

Held to my Lord, nor strayed from duty's path  
 One hair's-breadth,—hide me in thy loving arms!" 240

So spake the unsullied Wife ;—the plain was rent,  
 And from the gulf rose as a thunderbolt,  
 With shining halo crowned ; then Earth was seen,  
 Enthronèd high above a serpent's crest,  
 And girdled with the Sea. She strongly drew  
 Fair Sîtâ to her breast, though still her eyes  
 Were fixed on Râma, who in anguish cried,—  
 "Forbear, forbear !" yet all in vain he prayed,  
 For with his Spouse Earth vanished from men's eyes.  
 Then Râma rose, to snatch his Sîtâ back, 250  
 Enraged with Earth,—until Vaçishṭha sage,  
 Who saw in all the hand of Fate, restrained  
 The furious Hero. Then, the Rite being o'er,  
 The King with feasting and with noble gifts  
 The high Saints honoured and his friends, when all  
 Went home well-pleased :—and to his Sîtâ's sons  
 He gave the perfect love that had been hers.

So, being blessed with heirs, by sage advice  
 Of Yudhajît, as Kingly appanage  
 He gave to Bharat all the Sindhu land : 260  
 Who vanquished in fierce fight Gandharva hosts,  
 Forbade them use of arms, and them restrained  
 Henceforth to minstrel-craft ; his noble sons,  
 Taksha and Pushkala, he crowned as chiefs,  
 Each in a city named from him ; and straight

Himself went back to Râma. Lakshmaṇa,  
 At Râma's bidding, in Karâpatha  
 Set up as Kings his sons,—great Angada  
 And famous Chandraketu. Those three Kings,  
 Their sons thus settled, stately obsequies 270  
 Paid to their mothers, who had lately passed  
 To meet their Lord in Heaven's unfading bowers.

Then Death in Muni's semblance came, and thus  
 Addressed the King:—" Bid all withdraw, that so  
 Our conference may be secret!" and 'twas done.  
 Death told his name, and said:—" By God's command  
 I bid thee mount to Heaven!" Now Lakshmaṇa  
 Stood at the door, and—though he knew 'twas sin—  
 Broke in upon their secret talk; for more  
 He feared Durvâsa's curse, who urgently 280  
 Desired to see the King. Then, to atone  
 For having made his Brother break his word,  
 In deep devotion on Sarâyû's banks  
 He shed his earthy vesture. Râma now,  
 One quarter of his essence so being gone  
 To Heaven before him, staggered,—as on Earth  
 Fair Virtue scarce can stand, one foothold lost.

Then in Kuçâvatî he Kuça placed,  
 Sharp goad to all his foes;—Çarâvatî  
 To Lava he assigned, whose tender words 290  
 Could move men's hearts to tears. Then steadfast-souled  
 With Bharata he mounted up to Heaven,

The God of Fire preceding, while behind  
 (In fealty to her Lord) Ayodhyâ came,  
 Her buildings only left. The Monkey-hosts  
 And Râkshasas, who knew the King's desire,  
 Came after on the path his people's tears,—  
 Big as *Kadamba*-blossoms,—had marked out.

Yet, though in Car Celestial He had passed  
 To highest Heaven, in mercy to his folk  
 He made Sarâyû's stream a watery way  
 For them to follow. To its holy banks  
 Men thronged thenceforward, as when herds of kine  
 Crowd thirsting to cool streams,—and gave the name  
 Gopratâṇa, now famous through the Worlds.

300

And Vishṇu, when his scattered particles  
 Again were gathered in the Soul Supreme,  
 Framed a new Heaven, that there might dwell for aye  
 Those souls of men, at once immortal grown.

Thus by his incarnation having wrought  
 Deliv'rance for the Gods, and slain their foe,—  
 Ten-headed Râvaṇa,—the God resumed  
 That all-embracing, formless State, in which  
 All worlds at last are merged, and left on Earth,  
 To spread His glory through the realms of men,  
 The Wind-god's son to rule the North: the South  
 Vibhîṣaṇ ruled from Lankâ's scented isle.

310

## CANTO XVI

*The Reign of Kuça:—how he returned to Ayodhyâ, and wedded Kumudvatî.*

Now did the heroes seven of Raghu's line  
 Raise Kuça, eldest-born and most renowned  
 Of all their race for virtue, to the throne  
 Of sovereign power ;—for, ever in their house  
 Ruled love fraternal. All alike far-famed  
 For commerce and bridge-building, skilled to tame  
 The mighty elephant, they wisely ruled ;  
 Nor sought to overstep their mutual bounds,  
 As Ocean's waves encroach not on the shore.  
 So smoothly flowed the current of their blood,  
 Eight-fold divided, sprung from Vishṇu's heart,—  
 The God four-armed,—who showered on men their gifts  
 Ungrudging, like the Guardian Elephants,  
 Sprung from the Sâma-Veda's holy verse.

10

One dark midnight, while burned with steady flame  
 The chamber-lamps, and all the palace slept  
 Save only he, to Kuça there appeared  
 A woman's form, unknown before, and robed

As one who mourns a husband far away.  
 So stood that shape before him, mighty Prince, 20  
 As Indra splendid, victor o'er his foes,  
 Dear to his friends, not prizing Kingly state  
 Beyond its worth,—then, clasping suppliant hands,  
 She hailed him, “King!” Whereat, half-starting up  
 From where he lay, the Prince, amazed to see  
 How, like a shadow falling on a glass,  
 Through bolted doors she passed,—now questioned thus :  
 “How, Lady, couldst thou to my chamber come  
 Through fast-barred doors? no Hermit-dame thou seem'st,  
 But rather wearest garb of those that mourn, 30  
 Like lotus-clusters withered by the frost.  
 Who art thou, Fair one? who thy Lord? to me  
 Why com'st thou thus? Speak freely: yet beware,  
 For Raghu's noble race, self-disciplined,  
 Abhors all thought of sin!” She gravely spake:—  
 “I am, my Lord, that mourning City's Queen,  
 Blameless, deserted, since thy Father passed,  
 And took His subjects to the home above.  
 So I, more splendid once than Alakâ  
 For Royal festival, now in *thy* days, 40  
 Prince of the high Sun-race! lie desolate,  
 By thee neglected. Myriad empty homes,  
 With halls all silent, couches bare, are seen  
 Like sunset-skies, when at the death of day  
 Winds rend the clouds. Now jackals fiery-mouthed  
 Haunt the roads howling, seeking prey,—where girls

With gleam of tuneful anklets lately thronged.  
 Once did the water of my lakelets, struck  
 By dainty fingers, mock the lute's deep tone :  
 Now, wounded by the buffalo's sharp horn, 50  
 It shrinks sore hurt. And where pet peacocks homed  
 The trees are broken, silent is the lute ;  
 They, terrified, scarce 'scaping forest-fires,  
 Have turned to wildness. Blood-stained tigers couch,  
 And mark with traces of late-slaughtered deer  
 Stairways once painted by fair ladies' feet,  
 Bound for the bath. And pictured elephants,  
 That haunt the lotus-groves, and by their mates  
 Are fed with tender blossoms, lions tear  
 With crookèd claws ; the marble forms of sylphs, 60  
 Grey through the loss of paint, wear squalid robes  
 Of slimy cobra-sloughs. The fair Moon's beams,  
 Though pure as virgin-pearl, get back no ray  
 From tiles time-blackened of the palace-roof,  
 Now flecked with grass-tufts. Where sweet women plucked  
 With careful hands the garden-creeper flowers,  
 Foul apes and savage tear the boughs. At night  
 Unlighted now the windows, nor by day  
 Shine they with fairy faces ; spiders' webs  
 Defile the chambers, and the hearths are cold. 70  
 "All scentless flows Sarâyû : tender forms  
 Bathe there no longer, nor do altars rise  
 Upon its islets,—nay, the hermits' huts  
 Deserted fall to ruin. Oh, my King !

Return, revive thy City's old renown !  
 Here is no home for thee : in me thy Sire  
 His mortal form resigned, and soared to Heaven !”

So prayed the City : then the gracious King,  
 Well-pleased, consented : she with lightened heart  
 Departed. Soon as morning dawned, the King 80  
 Told to his Brâhman councillors what passed  
 In that strange nightly vision : when they knew  
 His stately Capital had sought his love,  
 They blessed him highly. When a day was come  
 Auspicious for his march, to holy Priests  
 He gave Kuçâvatî : then with his Queens  
 He sought Ayodhyâ, followed by his hosts,  
 As showers of rain attend a cooling breeze.

The marching host a moving city seemed,  
 Its banners waving groves that spread around, 90  
 Its elephants like mounds for pleasure formed,  
 Like palaces its stately chariots.  
 The mighty army, sent to clear the way  
 To his ancestral home by that great King,  
 O'er whom alone Imperial ensigns waved,  
 Seemed like majestic Ocean urged to shore  
 By lunar impulses. The solid earth,  
 Unfit to bear the chariots' crushing weight,  
 As on he marched, fled in a cloud of dust  
 And filled the sky. Complete that army showed, 100  
 Where'er 'twas seen,—preparing for the march,



Or moving stately on, or when encamped,  
 Not lacking aught. As on the Monarch swept,  
 So mighty was the trampling of his steeds,  
 Such plenteous ichor-streams his elephants  
 Rained from their brows,—that dust was turned to mud,  
 And mud to dust again. That host of men,  
 To thread its way through Vindhya's strait defiles,  
 Divided into bands, which, with their shouts  
 Like loudly-roaring Revâ, taught the caves 110  
 Resounding music. Through the Vindhya chain  
 The Monarch passed : crushed metal gilt his wheels,  
 His trumpets mingled with the myriad shouts  
 Of trampling hosts, and graciously he touched  
 The hillmen's offerings. Gangâ's sacred stream  
 At its most holy place he bridged, and crossed  
 With mighty elephants : the conscious waves  
 In awe flowed backward, while the snowy swans  
 Swift gliding through the air were royal fans.  
 The Triple River's waters he adored, 120  
 Now thronged with stately ships, on whose bright waves  
 Of yore his Fathers passed to Heavenly seats,  
 When Kapila in fury burnt them up,—  
 And those pure waters cleansed them from all stain.  
 At length the King reached clear Sarâyû's bank  
 By rapid marches, marked by monuments  
 Set up in hundreds by his mighty Sires,  
 In memory of continuous Sacrifice.

Now, as with wearied hosts he neared his goal,

Forth came to welcome them reviving airs, 130  
 Fresh from green groves round his ancestral home,  
 With pollen laden of bright-blossoming trees,  
 Cooled by Sarâyû's waves. The mighty King,  
 His people's darling, chief of all his race,  
 His foes all humbled, made the bannered hosts  
 Camp in his City's outskirts :—that fair town,  
 So captured, swarms of workmen from the King  
 Renewed in splendour, as with plenteous rain  
 Clouds cheer the earth, long parched by summer heat.

By his command the craftsmen skilled to build 140  
 First fasted, then did sacrifice, and paid  
 Due honour to the City, far-renowned  
 As home of sacred images. Himself  
 Thereafter occupied the palace-home  
 Ancestral, as a bridegroom claims his bride,  
 And gave his followers, as beseemed their rank,  
 To each a noble dwelling. So the town,  
 Its stables filled with steeds, great elephants  
 Tied in its courts, its market-places thronged,  
 Shone glorious as a bride whose every limb 150  
 With gems is laden. In his Father's home,  
 Its olden splendour all revived, the King—  
 Pure Sîtâ's son,—dwelt happy, nor desired  
 The state of Swarga's Lord or Alakâ's!

Now Summer's heat came on,—and taught the fair  
 To don fine, jewel-studded robes, while hung

On radiant breasts their necklets, over stuff  
 So thin it yielded to the softest sigh.  
 When from the region which Canopus rules  
 The Sun returned, the North a shower of snow 160  
 Sent from Himâlaya, like rain of tears—  
 Cool from a joyful heart. The days were long,  
 As swoln by heat, night like a shadow seemed,  
 Or both like spouses showed, whom angry words  
 Had parted, now relenting. Pleasure-ponds,  
 Whose waters daily shrinking left the steps  
 With moss and lichen clothed, while lotus-stems  
 Waved on the surface, like a fair one's waist.

Now through the groves of scented *Mallikâs*  
 Bees, lighting with a flutter on the blooms 170  
 That opening flung their sweets abroad,—one bee  
 To every blossom,—numbered them. Now dropped  
 From amorous maidens' ears *Çirîsha* flowers,  
 Yet slowly fell to earth adown their cheeks,  
 Fresh-marked with scars of love and damp with sweat,  
 To which the petals clung. The rich, reclined  
 On marble couches, safe in darkened halls,  
 Where cooling streams were forced and scented spray  
 Thrown on them, shunned the heat. Love gathered  
 strength,  
 Relaxed when Spring went by, in ringlets hid 180  
 That after bathing hung down limp, or twined  
 (To charm the eye) with flowers of *Mallikâ*.  
 The *Arjun*-tree's long shoot, with pollen grey,

Seemed like Love's bowstring, smashed by Çiva's wrath,  
Not satisfied with burning up the God.

Now all that lovers lacked the season gave,—  
Sweet-scented mango-blossoms, strong rice-wine,  
And fresh *Pâtâla* flowers. The burning heat  
Made two delights most precious, Soma's beams  
That cooled men's throbbing limbs, and their mild Prince 190  
Whose goodness soothed their hearts :—both now were high.

Then longed the King in pure Sarâyû's stream,  
More grateful for the heat,—whose dancing waves  
Bore gladsome swans and dropping creeper-blooms  
On their clear breasts,—to sport with his fair Queens.  
So in fit pomp and splendour for the Bath  
The King set forth, like Vishṇu in his might,  
To where by placid waters tents were pitched,  
While skilful arms had swept the river clear  
Of scaly monsters. Maidens tripped in haste 200  
Down by the stairways to the bank, and scared  
With clanging of their armlets gliding swans,—  
Their anklets tinkling as they moved. The King  
Looked on approving while they bathed and splashed  
In full delight ; then with a handmaid skilled  
To ply the oar embarked in pleasure-skiff,  
And thus addressed her, as with yâk-tail fan  
She gently cooled his brow :—“ See, maiden, see !  
Sarâyû's stream, where bathe my happy Queens,  
Tinged with the varied colours from their limbs, 210  
Shows like a sunset-cloud with rainbow streaked.

"Now from fair ladies' eyes the wavelets, stirred  
 By passage of our boat, have washed away  
 The healing unguents, soon again laid on  
 As joyous blushes mantle in their cheeks.  
 The languorous beauties, whose luxuriant charms  
 Impede their motions, yet in pure delight  
 Forget their weakness, spread their jewelled hands,  
 And nimbly cleave the waves. *Çirîsha* flowers,  
 Their brilliant ear-drops, as they swim fall off, 220  
 Float on the current, lure for silvery fish  
 In quest of water-weeds. Absorbed in play  
 They strike the stream, while on their bosoms  
 bright

The pearly necklets rest, and drops of foam  
 Between them falling mock their silvery sheen.  
 Here may we see whate'er the poet's mind  
 Compares with women's beauties: eddy waves  
 Like rounded navels, ripples for their brows,  
 And ruddy geese show like their shapely breasts.

"Now on the ear a gladsome murmur strikes 230  
 Of tuneful waters, blending with their songs,  
 Like note of drum, while peacocks on the banks  
 Spread wide their tails and answer with soft notes.  
 Tight cling their garments to their waists, the belts  
 Are limp and wet, nor tinkle now their gems  
 But sparkle silent, as through darksome night  
 The still stars shine. In joyous sport they splash  
 Each one her fellow, each in turn shakes out

From her damp tresses drops with sandal red,  
 A ruby shower. Disordered are their locks, . . . 240  
 The skin washed clear of paint, the pearl-nets fall'n, —  
 As in the waves they sport ; yet round men's hearts  
 Those winsome tresses twine !”

So spake the King :

Then leaped among them sporting in the tide ;  
 His necklace shook around his mighty throat,  
 As when a noble elephant disports  
 Among the herd, and lotus-clusters cling  
 About his shoulders. When the stately King  
 Appeared among them, brighter shone his Queens,—  
 As pearls that charm the eye show doubly fair 250  
 When matched with gleaming emeralds. Sportively  
 With coloured water shot from golden tubes  
 They splashed the King, whose beauty excellent  
 Shone more for this, as high Himâlaya's slopes  
 With streamlets trickling down vermilion-stained.

Now while amid his lovely Queens the King  
 Plunged in that Queen of rivers, rivalling  
 Great Indra sporting with the Nymphs of Heaven  
 In godlike Gangâ,—all unmarked there slipped  
 And sank beneath the waves that priceless gem 260  
 Which, sign of lordship, erst Agastya gave  
 To Râma, he to Kuça, when he gave  
 The Kingdom also. When their sport was done,  
 And—sated with their merriment—the King  
 Had got him to his tent, ere yet he donned

His royal robes, he saw his arm was bare,  
 And knew the bracelet lost. Sore grieved was he :  
 For much he prized it, gift of his great Sire  
 And pledge of victory, not for sordid greed :—  
 For light as worthless flowers he held mere gauds. 270

Then straight he ordered fishers, boatmen, all  
 Who haunt the stream, to seek the gem : they toiled,  
 And dived untiring, but in vain : then told,—  
 Their faces marred and troubled,—how they sped :—  
 “ We spared no toil, great King ! but thy rich gem,  
 Sunk in the wave, we found not : much we fear  
 That mighty Kumuda, the Nâga-Prince,  
 Who dwells beneath the waters, coveted  
 And stole the jewel.” Flashed his eyes with rage,  
 He strung his war-bow, strode in fury down 280  
 Straight to the river-bank, and fixed the shaft  
 Unerring, named from Garuḍa, to slay  
 The Serpent-Prince. But scarce the shaft was laid,  
 When, panic-struck, the stream raised quivering waves  
 As suppliant hands, and smote the banks, and roared—  
 As from a pit a captured elephant.

In terror fled its scaly monsters too,  
 And from the waters swift the Serpent-Prince  
 Rose, with his virgin Sister :—so of yore  
 Sprang from the churnèd Ocean Indra's tree 290  
 With fairest Lakshmî. On they came, with hands  
 Outstretched the gem restoring : his keen bolt  
 The King held back,—for good men quickly quench

Their fury when entreated. Kumuda,  
 Bold warrior, did obeisance to the King,  
 Son of the Mightiest, scourge of all his foes,  
 Anointed Monarch ; bowed his haughty head,  
 And thus addressed him :—“ Well I know thee, Lord !  
 Great Vishṇu’s Son, His other self, thou art,  
 Begotten when He came to work for men 300  
 The great Deliv’rance ! How should I oppose  
 Thy mighty will, who rather seek thy grace ?  
 ’Twas this my sister who, in eager play,  
 Her ball was seeking driven from her hand,  
 And saw and caught, as meteor-like it fell,  
 Thy precious bracelet, emblem of success.  
 Restore it to thy long and potent arm,  
 Scarred by the bowstrong’s use, which like a shield  
 Protects the worlds ! Disdain not now, O King !  
 Kumudvatī, my sister, who would serve 310  
 Before thy feet, and from thy mind erase  
 The memory of her crime !”

The Nāga-Prince

Then ceasing humbly offered back the gaud,  
 To whom the King made answer :—“ Joyfully  
 I hail thee brother !” Then with all his train  
 Kumuda joined by solemn marriage-rite  
 His sister, pride of all her kin, to him,  
 High Chief of Raghu’s line ; who, when he took  
 The maiden’s hand before the sacred Fire,  
 Bound with auspicious knot of purest wool, 320



Heard through the skiey realms Celestial songs  
With Heavenly music joined, while wondrous clouds  
Poured down soft, copious rain of sweetest flowers.

When now alliance firm that King had made,  
Whom Sîtâ bore to Râma, mighty Lord  
Of all Three Worlds, with royal Kumuda,  
Fifth son of Takshaka, the Serpent-King—  
Two Worlds rejoiced :—since fear of Vishṇu's Bird,  
Who ever rages for his father's death,  
The Nâgas now dismissed ; and over Earth,  
No more by Serpents vexed, loved Kuça reigned.

## CANTO XVII

*The wise Rule of King Atithi.*

IN happy wedlock joined Kumudvatī  
 Bore to her Lord a son, great Atithi,  
 Who soothed their hearts, as sleep most peaceful comes  
 Just at the dawn. He cheered his Father's soul,  
 Rich blessing to both parents and their kin,  
 Unmatched for splendour: so the radiant Sun  
 With bright beams purifies both North and South.

Him first his Sire, of Sages chief, that Lore  
 Essential taught which graced through each descent  
 The line of Raghu; then sought fitting brides  
 From royal houses. Well he deemed, high King,  
 Heroic, self-controlled, that in his Son,—  
 Not less high-born, heroic, self-controlled,—  
 His single self was nobly multiplied.  
 For Kuṣa's virtues, and his high descent,  
 Great Indra called him friend,—with whom he joined  
 In war against the Daityas, and was slain  
 By Durjaya,—whom he too slew in fight.

So died he; and the fair Kumudvatī,

His faithful Spouse, soon followed him in death, 20  
 As moonlight fails when fails the waning Moon,  
 Loved by the lily. Kuça high in Heaven  
 Held half great Indra's throne, Kumudvati  
 Was bosom-friend of Çachî, and enjoyed  
 The fruit of Pârijâta, Tree of Boons.

Now, as their Lord had bidden when he went  
 To smite the Daityas, his grave Senators  
 Anointed to the Kingdom his wise son,  
 The famous Atithi. To crown him King  
 By skilful hands a Royal residence, 30  
 With lofty altar hallowed,—pillars four  
 Supporting it,—they ordered to be built.  
 There on a throne of state he took his place,  
 And nobles of the Kingdom served, and brought  
 In golden vessels from the holiest streams  
 Pure waters ; deep, entrancing notes the drums  
 Boomed forth, presaging prosperous, endless reign,  
 Then, as was taught by Elders of his house,  
 He sprinkled *Dûrva*-grass and barley-stalks,  
 The fig-tree's bark and lotus-buds,—for rites 40  
 Of solemn cleansing. Next the Brâhmans came,  
 The royal House-Priests first, with solemn pomps  
 And anthems high, to crown that noble King.

The sacring waters plashed upon his head,  
 Then riverlike flowed down, as Gangâ's streams  
 Erst flowed through Çiva's locks. At once the King,  
 Whom heralds loudly praised, showed like a cloud,

Majestic, hailed by thirsting cuckoos' song.  
 Thus purified with water, which the Priests  
 With Holy Texts had blessed, the King flashed forth 50  
 In brighter glory,—as the lightning-flame  
 Spreads wide when dashed with water. When the rites  
 Of Coronation were complete, he gave  
 Rich gifts to tribal patriarchs, loading them  
 With largesse far beyond their offered gifts.  
 Amazed and joyful, blessings they called down,  
 Which yet his great achievements cast in shade,  
 So mighty waxed he. Mercy next he showed,  
 Whose high command loosed every prisoner's chain,  
 Gave life to those condemned to die, unyoked 60  
 The patient oxen, gave the kine relief  
 From cruel milking :—yea, all caged birds  
 That pined for freedom he released, to fly  
 Where'er they would. Anon the ivory Throne  
 He mounted, where in stately hall it stood,  
 Pure, curtained round, to assume the Royal robes.

His locks were first with fragrant unguents dressed,  
 Next careful tiremen choicest jewels gave,  
 Last on his head, where rows of pearls reposed  
 Twined in the diadem, a ruby rare 70  
 (Bathed in its flashing rays) they set. His limbs  
 With sandalwood they rubbed, as sweet of scent  
 As purest musk ; they stained his velvet skin  
 With comely *Rochana*. Enthroned he sat,  
 In fullest Royal state, with crown on head,

Clad in soft silken robe, where swans were wrought,—

And drew the eyes of all men, worthiest seen

To woo and win the Genius of the realm.

Resplendent was the form that met his gaze,

Reflected from the golden mirror's plane :

80

On Meru's slopes so shines the Wishing-tree

Beneath the Sun's first beams. He entered then

The audience-hall, which rivalled Indra's own,

'Mid loud acclaim of pursuivants, who bore

The Royal standards. Glorious then he sat

Upon his Father's throne, well-canopied,

Before whose footstool Kings were wont to lay

Their jewelled crowns. New lustre shed the King

Through all the festal palace when he came,

As when the famous jewel *Kaustubha*

90

Gleams on great Vishṇu's breast, not unadorned

By rich Çrīvatsa. Thus, his nonage past,

To Royal state advanced, more splendid still

He shone than e'en before : as shines the Moon

With brighter lustre when its crescent shape

Has grown to fulness. Cheerful looks he wore,

And spoke to all his servants smiling, so

That in their eyes he seemed Persuasion's self.

In glory matching Indra rode the King,

High on an elephant whose might could vie

100

E'en with Airāvata's—and made his town

To rival Svarga, while his standards waved

Like Wishing-trees. Now o'er his head alone

The parasol of Royal state was raised,  
Which, white, unspotted, purged from all men's hearts  
Their poignant sorrow for his Father's death.

In nature smoke comes first ere fire appears,  
Mist veils the Sun's rays till he gather strength ;  
But Atithi, by no such law restrained

To weakness, shone at once with all the might

110

Of gathered virtues. City-matrons gazed  
Where'er he passed, with eyes of loyal love,  
As in clear Autumn night's unwinking eyes  
Attend the Polar Star in steadfast groups.

Revered in stately shrines, Ayodhya's Gods  
In chiselled shapes stood round about the King,  
And richly blessed him. Ere the altar stones,  
Wet with the Anointing waters, dried again,  
His burning fame had reached far Ocean's shore.

Keen shafts he wielded, sage Vaçishtha's spells

120

Lent aid resistless : what could e'er withstand  
Their power united ? Daily in his court  
Himself sat with his judges, patient heard  
The cause of each contestant, straitly sought  
Where truth might lurk, maturely weighed the proof,—  
Then gave his sentence, cleaving fast to right.

The people who, in his great Father's time,  
Had grown as rivers do with vernal showers,  
New-ruled by him—as these with Autumn rains—  
Reached Fortune's flood-mark. Not a word untrue  
E'er passed his lips, no gift was e'er sought back,—

130

Nor e'er his word recalled,—save only when  
He pardoned and restored a humbled foe.

Youth, power, and beauty,—each alone breeds pride ;  
And all in him were met, yet his great heart  
Swelled not with pride unduly. Day by day  
Devotion in his subjects stronger grew,  
Till, like a tree whose roots are firmly fixed,  
In vigorous youth no force could shake his throne.

But foreign foes are distant, nor will give 140  
Perpetual trouble ; with unweari'd care  
'Gainst banded foes within, the passions six,  
He waged unceasing war. Fair Fortune too,  
Inconstant else, for him unchanging wore  
A smiling aspect : so a streak of gold  
Cleaves to the touchstone. Harsh and mild by turns,  
The Monarch sought his ends ; for grace unmixed  
Soon warps to weakness, harshness unrestrained  
Is in its issue savage cruelty.

Whate'er was done on Earth straightway he knew, 150  
For spies he scattered round him, as the Sun  
Unclouded darts his rays on every side.  
All duties which by night or day the Law  
Prescribes for Kings, unswerving and untired  
The King fulfilled. For daily with the pure  
He held his council,—yet his purposes  
(Debated with closed doors) were ne'er betrayed.  
For needful rest he slept, yet ever watched  
Through spies spread all abroad 'mongst friends and foes,

Yet each from other hid. When he made war, 160  
 Though his own fortresses defied attack,  
 He ever sought the foe : the king of beasts,  
 Who tears down elephants, skulks not in caves.  
 His plan he thought out well, prepared his paths,  
 Success securing : rice-grains in the blade  
 Mature in secret. High his fortunes rose,  
 Yet turned he not aside to crooked ways,  
 Like Ocean which in highest floodtide shapes  
 Its course up river-mouths. Strong to repress,  
 If discontent had ever reared its head, 170  
 So wisely ruled he that among his folk  
 No stern reproof was needed. Only foes  
 Of equal might that valiant, powerful King  
 Made war upon : so forest-fires, though urged,  
 By rushing winds, attack not running streams.  
 'Mid Justice, Pleasure, Profit,—undismayed  
 He held the balance even, nor allowed  
 That any should prevail beyond its due,  
 Nor crush another. Knowing well that friends  
 Avail not in misfortune, but when swoln 180  
 With too great power resist the hand that raised,  
 He kept them in the mean. His foemen's strength  
 Or weakness well he pondered, and his own  
 For strength or wealth ;—if his the better part,  
 Assailing boldly,—else he abode attack.  
 Well knowing " power to help from riches comes,"  
 He stored up treasure ; so the cloud, well-stored



With watery wealth, is thanked by Châtakas.

His own designs promoting, still to nought

He brought his foemen's counsels ; each weak spot

190

He fortified, but smote where *they* were weak.

A warlike King, the army, which his Sire

Had wisely fostered, exercised in arms

And apt to fight, was ever at his call.

The triple Kingly power he firmly held,

Fixed like the jewelled crest a serpent wears ;

No foe could win it from him, while he drew

Their power from them, as magnet's hidden force

Attracts the iron. Through his peaceful realm

Merchants unhindered plied their trade in boats

200

On mighty streams as on calm lakes, through woods

Safe as in royal parks, on mountain roads

Secure as in their homes. Protecting well

Ascetic works from hindrance, wealth from thieves,

He took the royal sixth throughout his realm,

From every man as each with ease could pay.

In valour he was Kârtikeya's peer,—

Well-versed in policy, used force or craft

As either best might serve. The Kingly power

In phases four by just proportion used,

210

Of all he took the fruit ; no favourite

Absorbed the gains. All crafty ways of war,

All treacherous wiles he knew, but never used :

But fought uprightly, so that Victory—

Fair Goddess—who on Hero-souls attends,

Loved and clave to him. Wherefore all his foes  
 By his great might he quickly smote, as smites  
 An elephant in pride the rival bulls,  
 And seldom was provoked to take the field.

Now when the Moon is full it quickly wanes, 220  
 And Ocean after floodtide quickly falls,—  
 Like both the Monarch waxed, but waned not so.  
 To him, the mighty, generous King, repaired,—  
 As clouds to Ocean—beggars destitute,  
 And got such guerdon that themselves grew rich,  
 And gave to others. Hating words of praise,  
 His actions all yet won their glorious meed ;  
 No flattering tongue he favoured, yet his fame  
 Spread through the world. Now on the lily pale  
 Alone the moonbeams fall, the Sun's hot rays 230  
 The lotus only hails : his virtues' light  
 His foes not less illumined than his friends.  
 His very aspect scared away the wrong,  
 By truth's bright essence darkness he dispelled,  
 And all men held beneath his sovran sway,—  
 As rules the Sun in strength this nether World.  
 To crush his foes he put forth all his might,  
 Yet was his purpose worthy,—since he sought  
 This only, to complete the great Horse-sacrifice.

Thus in his valour struggling on the road 240  
 Prescribed by Holy Writ,—as Indra rose  
 To Heaven's high throne, so he on Earth became  
 King o'er all Kings ; and, for his excellence,

Fifth Guardian of the World, Sixth Element,  
Eighth mountain with the Seven,—he was named.  
In reverence Kings received his high commands,  
And placed the scrolls above their diadems,  
As though to shade them, now their parasols  
Were torn away :—so Indra rules the Gods.

Now with such wealth at his Horse-sacrifice 250  
He guerdoned all the sacrificing priests,  
That they his name extolled as equalling  
Kuvera's own. From Indra plenteous rains  
Were showered, and Yama kept back deadly plagues ;  
The Lord of Ocean and its monsters gave  
To merchants prosperous voyage, who crossed in ships  
His mighty waters : mindful of the past,  
And Raghu's threats, Kuvera still increased  
The Monarch's treasure ; while the mighty Four  
Who guard the Worlds so highly honoured him, 260  
As though themselves were suppliants for his aid.

## CANTO XVIII

*The later Kings of Raghu's Race.*

King Atithi, triumphant o'er his foes,  
 On his fair Queen, Princess of Nishadha,  
 A son begat that matched the Serpent-King,  
 As Nishadha thence known to all mankind.  
 Great was his Sire's delight to see the youth  
 High-souled, and destined to his folk to bring  
 Rich blessing, as the eye delights to view  
 A waving cornfield, whence with fostering rains  
 Rich harvest shall be won. His mighty Sire,  
 Kumudvatî's great son, who all Earth's joys  
 Had in their fulness drained, content resigned  
 The Royal State, and mounted up to Heaven,  
 Well won by stainless deeds on Earth below.

10

Then Kuça's grandson ruled, whose eyes were bright  
 And languished like the lotus, hiding deep  
 His purposes, unmatched in might, whose arm  
 Stretched wide, as stretch a city's girdling walls;  
 And while he ruled the sea-girt Earth, save his  
 No Royal fans were waved o'er Kingly head.

He died ; and Nala came, and ruled mankind. 20

Fierce as red fire, like lotus shone his face,

Who crushed his foes as elephants crush reeds :

So great his glory that 'twas sung in Heaven !

To him a son was born, fair as the sky,

Renowned as Nabhas, pleasant to his folk

As clouds of Autumn. To that mighty son

North Koçala's fair realm he glad gave o'er,

And—as in age 'tis meet—with savage beasts

He made his home, escaping once for all

From earthly shackles. Nabhas King begat 30

Great Pundarika, famous in the worlds,

'Midst Kings most kingly, who received the realm

Devolving from his Sire, who passed to Heaven :—

When Lakshmî, Lady of the lotus-face,

Embraced him, Vishṇu's likeness :—strong his bow,

His shafts unerring :—He gave o'er the realm

To Kshemadhanvan, dear for patient love,

Well-skilled to rule the people, and himself

As Hermit gave his strength to rites austere.

Of Kshemadhanvan sprang a godlike son, 40

A skilful Lord of war, Devânika,

Extolled in highest Heaven. Their mutual love

So brightly beamed, the Father loved his son

As Sire ne'er loved before,—which love that son

In full requited. That most virtuous Sire

Gave to his son the yoke of Royal rule,

And by the merit of pure Sacrifice

Passed to the Sacrificer's home on high.

Then Devânika reigning next begat

Ahînagas, Lord of himself and Lord

50

Of sweet, persuasive words, by friends and foes

Beloved alike ; for tender words of love

Enthral e'en timorous deer. He ruled the Earth,

That strong-armed Hero, when his Sire went home :

Who turned in early youth from vile men's paths,

And shunned all wasteful vice ; men's secret thoughts

He surely knew,—and wisely ruled the Worlds,

Scarce less in might than Vishṇu come to earth,

With fourfold Royal powers in equipoise.

He triumphed o'er his foes ; then took the road

60

That leads to Final Bliss, and in his stead

Fair Lakshmî Pâriyâtra, his great son,

Took to her arms,—who held his haughty head

Above the mountains. Çîla followed him,

A noble nature, strong and broad of chest,

Who with flint-headed arrows smote his foes,

Yet modest blushed to hear his actions praised.

That King of blameless soul devolved the realm,

While yet a youth, on Kuça, prudent Prince,

And turned to pleasure ;—for a King's high place,

70

Beset with cares, keeps pleasure far away.

Yet him, with beauty dowered nor sated yet

With love, did envious Age,—that takes in love

No more delight,—first seize, and then cut off.

Unnâbha followed Kuça, mighty-framed,

A very Vishṇu, round whom pivoted  
 The circle of Earth's kings. Came after him  
 His son, high Vajranâbha, Indra's peer,  
 Who thundered in the war,—and wedded Earth,  
 With diamond mines resplendent. Heaven he won 80  
 By mighty deeds, and Earth sea-girdled gave  
 To Çankhana his son, who all his foes  
 Uprooted, offering gems from all her mines.

When he was gone, there mounted Raghu's throne  
 A King renowned, far-famed as is the Sun,  
 Lord of bay-steeds,—fair as the Açvins,—known  
 As Dhushitâçva, sending far his steeds  
 To Ocean's margin. Çiva's grace he won :  
 And of his loins sprang Viçvasaha, loved 90  
 By all men, son indeed, yet strong to shield  
 The whole broad Earth ;—who, holding fast the right,  
 Begat Hiranyanâbha bearing part  
 Of Vishṇu's essence, scorching thus his foes  
 More fiercely as a forest-fire gains strength  
 When winds attend it. Dhushitâçva then,  
 The debt he owed his Ancestors discharged,  
 And longing for Eternal pleasures, crowned  
 His son, long-armed and mighty, and himself—  
 In virtue perfect—donned the dress of bark.

His heir, pride of the Sun-race, Priestly King 100  
 Of Northern Koçala, begat a son,  
 Kauçalya named, a second Moon for grace,  
 Delighting all men's eyes :—who reigned, when passed

His Sire to Glory. He, whose fame had spread  
 To Brahmâ's council, crowned as King his son,  
 Brahmishṭha, yearning for the Bliss Supreme  
 Of union with the Highest. In his son,  
 Crown of his race, who reigned in perfect peace,  
 His subjects long rejoiced,—nay, wept for joy.  
 Fair sons made glad his heart,—but Putra chief,  
 In form like Viṣṇu, served by Garuḍa,  
 By duteous service of his Sire made great,  
 Whose eyes were like the lotus, made him head  
 Of happy fathers. To maintain the line  
 He left him firmly stablished, then forsook  
 All earthly objects, bathed in Gangâ's streams,  
 And passed to Heaven. To Putra his fair Queen  
 Bore Paushya, at the full of Pusha's moon,  
 More splendid than the topaz : under him,  
 As 'neath new stars auspicious, men rejoiced  
 In boundless happiness. When age crept on,  
 The noble King gave to his son the realm,  
 Himself he gave to saintly Jaimini,  
 And, shrinking from re-birth, by works austere  
 Attained absorption in the Soul Supreme.

110

120

Then Dhruvasandhi, steadfast as the Pole,  
 Ruled all wide Earth, a loyal, upright Prince,  
 With whom consenting all his foes made peace.  
 Him lion-like, wide-eyed as is a fawn,  
 While yet his son Sudarçana,—whose grace  
 Charmed all men's sight as doth the waxing Moon,—

130



Was but a child, too eager in the chase,  
 A mighty lion slew. When so to Heaven  
 That King had passed, the council with one voice  
 With solemn rites enthroned his only son  
 Lord of Ayodhyâ, to uphold the race ;—  
 For all the people mourned their Kingless state.

Thus Raghu's line, whose chief was now a child,  
 Showed like the night while still the Moon is young,  
 Or like a forest where one Lion-cub 140  
 Alone doth range, or as a silent lake  
 Before its lilies bloom. When on the Throne  
 He sat, the people deemed his riper age  
 Would prove him equal to his mighty Sire :  
 Full oft they'd seen a cloud that seemed no more  
 Than handbreadth wide, by East wind driven, veil  
 The whole broad sky. So stately was his mien,  
 The people gazed on him with not less awe  
 Than on his Father, when—scarce six years old—  
 In Royal robes he passed along the ways 150  
 On noble elephant, yet childlike clung  
 Fast to the driver. Though as yet too small  
 To fill his Father's throne, his glory shone  
 So wide about him that he seemed to swell—  
 As clothed in lustrous gold—and filled the seat.

Kings laid their crowns in homage at his foot,  
 Which, tinged with red and hanging from the Throne  
 A little way, scarce touched the golden stool.

Well is the sapphire named the "great blue stone,"  
 Most precious though 'tis small: so, well besemed 160  
 That Royal child the title "Mighty King!"

Such potent words came from his infant lips,  
 On either side fan-guarded, boyish curls  
 Still hanging down his cheeks,—their sound went forth  
 Far to great Ocean's shores, nor died e'en there.  
 Silk gold-embroidered twined around his brow,  
 Whereon impressed he bore the Royal Mark,  
 With which—though still he smiled—he turned to tears  
 The smiling faces of his foemen's wives.

Soft as *Çirîsha* buds, too heavy gems 170  
 Had tired his limbs: yet in him dwelt such force  
 And dignity, he bore the unmeasured weight  
 Of all the careful World. Ere yet he learned  
 His letters all, traced on a writing-board,  
 By converse with the wise he fully grasped  
 All lessons of right rule and policy.

Not yet had Lakshmî in his heart won place,  
 But—longing for his manhood—bashfully  
 Embraced him only 'neath the umbrella's shade.  
 Though still unpractised in the archer's craft, 180  
 Nor marked as yet with scars from bowstring wound,  
 Nor yet he grasped the sword-hilt,—Earth dwelt safe,  
 Protected by his arm. As time rolled on,  
 His limbs gained strength and bulk; the Virtues too  
 That win a people's love, blest heritage,  
 At first but seedlings, grew to stately trees.

No toil it was to teach him ; for he learnt  
 The threefold Science, root of three-branched Lore,  
 And seemed in learning merely to recall  
 What in a former life he well had known,—  
 And therewithal he won his people's hearts.

190

In arms at length made perfect, he shone forth  
 A glorious Archer ; swelling out the chest,  
 Poised lightly on the foot, with crest erect,  
 He laid his arrow to the string, and drew  
 The notch right to his ear. Full soon he reached  
 The flower of youth, sweet season of delight,—  
 A charm for women's love, the perfect bloom  
 That crowns Desire's fair tree, from passion's plant  
 Luxuriant shoot,—or charm of loveliness  
 Spread over all his limbs, boon nature's gift.  
 Then did the Kingly State and Earth herself,  
 At first his only brides, no more suffice  
 To fill his heart ; now paled their charms, compared  
 With royal maidens' portraits, which those maids  
 In beauty far excelled,—by envoys brought,  
 And shown by faithful councillors, who longed  
 To see pure offspring more confirm the throne.

200

## CANTO XIX

*Agnivarma's voluptuous Reign and Death.*

Now after years of wise and glorious rule,  
 The Son of Raghu placed upon his throne  
 His son, great Agnivarma, bright as Fire,  
 And, first 'mid pious students, self-restrained,  
 In life's last stage passed to Naimisha's grove.  
 There washed he from his soul all earthly thoughts :—  
 Instead of pleasure-halls sought Holy ponds,  
 Strewed on the ground a couch of sacred grass  
 Instead of silken cushions, dwelt apart  
 In lowly hut instead of Palace-home,  
 And careless of reward stored merit up.  
 No toil he left his son to guard his realm,—  
 To whom he gave Earth, where all foes were crushed  
 Beneath his mighty arm,—to eat the fruit,  
 Not labour to produce. This Prince's mind  
 Was turned to pleasure : wherefore for some years  
 Himself dealt justice to the subject World,  
 Then to his Elders turned the charge of rule,  
 And gave his own fresh youth to Love's delights.

Then through the Palace of the amorous King  
 Fair women thronged, the lute's soft music rolled,  
 And each day's splendid festival was chased  
 By feast more splendid. Day and night he spent  
 In love's soft raptures, careless of his folk ;—  
 And when, much urged by faithful Councillors,  
 He yielded to his loyal people's wish  
 To show himself, 'twas but one foot he showed,  
 Hung from the palace-window ; to that foot,  
 Resplendent with the beauty of its nails,  
 A lotus touched with rays of morning-sun,  
 They did obeisance,—then went home content.

20

30

So, plunged in sensual pleasure, recking not  
 Of royal duty, goaded on by Love,  
 The King passed through the seasons of each year  
 Diversified, but still the same to him.  
 Yet was his valour dreaded ; rival Kings  
 Durst not attack him, maddened though he seemed ;  
 But, as the curse of Daksha wastes the Moon,  
 Disease, by passion bred, consumed his life.

Still he pursued all pleasure-seeking ways,  
 Nor hearkened to wise counsel, though he saw  
 The fatal consequence :—no easy task  
 Have they who would a man from Pleasure turn,  
 When once it has seduced him. Pale he grew,  
 And fell consumption ravaged all his limbs ;  
 He left his ornaments, and walking, leaned  
 His weight upon his servants,—while his speech,

40

Weak, hollow, marked the ruin wrought by Love,  
 And as he slowly wasted in disease,  
 His race was like the sky when wanes the Moon, 50  
 Or as a lake when only mud is left—  
 Its waters dried, or as a dying lamp.

His Ministers long hid the fatal truth,  
 And told the people, struck with heavy fears :—  
 “The King makes Sacrifice to win a son,  
 And therefore lives retired !” Untrue their words ;  
 For He, though Lord of many wives, unblest,  
 Died miserably ere he paid the debt  
 Due to his mighty Sires ; and fell disease, 60  
 Defying treatment, snapped his thread of life,  
 Ere yet he saw his son : so dies a lamp  
 Before the chilling blast. In darkling grove  
 Hard by the palace met the Senators,  
 And with a Priest well-skilled in funeral-rites  
 In secret laid the body on a pyre :—  
 Nor told the people what was done, but feigned  
 Some hope of healing. Next in haste they called  
 The Chiefs to council, seated on the Throne  
 The rightful Queen, in whose bright body shone  
 The hope of Royal seed. That unborn Child,— 70  
 Whom with hot tears of sorrow for her Spouse,  
 Untimely dead, she scalded in her womb,—  
 Was soon revived by healing waters poured  
 (Such was the tribal rite !) from golden jars,  
 To consecrate the Babe. The widowed Queen,

Who carried 'neath her breast the Royal seed,  
Which ripened for the universal weal,  
As Earth hides in her womb the late-sown grain,—  
Longed for her time to come :—meanwhile she sat  
High on her golden throne, and sagely ruled  
(Advised by loyal Senators) the State,—  
Where all the people honoured her commands !

80

## INDEX

(Of Names and Words not already explained, which may want explanation : the numerals refer to pages).

- Açoka*, 60, a flowering tree, bearing orange and scarlet blossoms.  
*Açvins*, 187, Vedic sun-gods, "twin-sons of the dawn."  
*Agastya*, 54, one of the great Rishis (*see* Introduction).  
*Aksha* seeds, 107, berries used as necklace-beads.  
*Akshota*, 34, the walnut-tree.  
*Alakâ*, 79, the city of Kuvera, god of riches.  
*Anasîyâ*, 115, the wife of Atri, mother of Durvâsa, who gave Sîtâ an unfailing cosmetic.  
*Arjun*-tree, 167, a stately forest tree.  
*Arundhatî*, 6, the wife of Vaçishtha, "the morning-star," a model of wifely virtues.  
*Atharva*, 66, the fourth Veda, chiefly regarded as a storehouse of magical incantations.  
*Atri*, 18, one of the Seven Rishis.  
*Ayodhyâ*, 79, "Impregnable," the capital of North Koçala, Raghu's city.  
  
*Bali*, 61, the Demon tyrant, overthrown by Vishnu as the Dwarf.  
*Bandhujîva*, 102, a tree bearing beautiful red blossoms, which open at noon and fall off the following morning (*Pentapetes phœnicea*).  
*Bathing* is a daily religious duty of high importance.  
*Bay horses* are special steeds of the Sun.  
*Bhṛigu*, 90, a great Rishi, son of Manu, to whom was committed the sacred Law-book.  
*Bhṛigu's son*, 105, patronymic of Paraçu-Râma, who was Bhṛigu's grandson.  
*Bhârja*-tree, 35, a birch.  
*Brindâban*, 53, the scene of Kṛishṇa's early life.



Çâl-tree, 2, a lofty and stately forest tree (*Vatica robusta*).

Çarabhangā, } 129, two saintly ascetics.  
Çâtakarṇi, }

Çatruḡhna, 96, "queller of foes," a younger brother of Râma.

Çeṣha, 89, the mythical Serpent on which Vishṇu sleeps.

Çakravâka, 128, the ruddy-goose, emblem of conjugal love: the birds are fabled to be condemned to constant separation at night.

Çaitraratha, 44, Kuvera's pleasure-garden.

Çhâtaka, a kind of cuckoo, fabled to live only on rain-drops.

Çitrâ, 5, the star *Spica Virginis*.

Çitrakûta, 114, the mountain, scene of Râma's exile.

Çirîsha, 169, a graceful variety of flowering Acacia.

Daksha, 193, a Saint, whose twenty-seven daughters were wedded to Chandra, the Moon; and whose curse, the punishment of partiality to one of his wives, is the fabled cause of the Moon's periodic waning.

Darbha grass, 129, sacrificial grass, of which *Kūça* is a variety.

Durjaya, 174, a Demon, "hard to conquer."

Dûrva grass, 50, a kind of millet (*Panicum dactylon*).

Durvâsa, 159, son of Atri, and a specially choleric Saint.

Dûshana, 117, a Demon, slain by Râma.

Elephants (Celestial), 161, are fabled to uphold the extremities of the world.

Fig-tree, the Indian fig, *Ficus religiosa*: the Peepal.

Gandharvas, Minstrels of heaven, inhabiting Indra's heaven: Southey's "Glendoveer."

Ganeça, 14, the elephant-headed God of wisdom, son of Çiva and Pârvatî.

Gaurî, 13, the "white" Goddess, a name of Pârvatî.

Gokarṇa, 70, a favourite shrine of Çiva.

Govardhan, 53, a mountain in Brindâban.

Hanumân, 121, son of the Wind, general of Râma's monkey-allies.

Indra's beetle, 104, the cochineal-insect.

*Indrajit*, 134, surname of Meghanâda, son of Râvaṇa, a valiant Râkshas warrior, who once overcame and bound Indra himself.

*Jaimini*, 188, a famous Saint, founder of a school of philosophy (the *Pûrva-Mimâmsâ*).

*Janaka*, 103, the reputed father of Sîtâ, whom he found in a plough-furrow.

*Janasthâna*, 54, Râvaṇa's capital.

*Jatâyû*, 118, the Vulture-ally of Râma, slain in defence of Sîtâ.

*Kadamba*, 160, a flowering tree, bearing orange-coloured blossoms.

*Kâlanemi*, 153, a Demon slain by Vishṇu.

*Kapila*, 25, a Sage who, being falsely accused by Sagara's sons of stealing their father's horse for the Sacrifice, burnt them up: by some identified with Çiva.

*Kârtavîrya*, 51, a famous warrior-king of the Haihayas, who once held Râvaṇa himself in chains.

*Kârtikeya*, 47, the leader of Heaven's armies, son of Çiva and Pârvatî, the "nursling of the Pleiades (*Kṛittikâs*)": also called Skanda, etc.

*Ketaka*, 13, a sweet-scented blossoming tree.

*Kinçuka*, 81, a flowering tree, bearing scentless red blossoms.

*Kinnaras*, 35, attendants on Kuvera.

*Kṛishṇa*, the "dark" God: in our poem a surname of Çiva.

*Kos*, 135, a measure of distance, about a mile and a half.

*Kumbhakarna*, 121, Râvaṇa's brother, doomed—lest he should devour the world—to sleep six consecutive months in each year.

*Lakshmî*, 26, the wife of Vishṇu; also, Fortune, esp. the Glory of Kingship.

*Lauhitya*, 35, the Brahmaputra river.

*Lodhra-tree*, 13, a forest tree bearing a yellow flower.

*Mânasa lake*, 131, a fabled source of Gangâ.

*Mârîcha*, 102, a Demon emissary of Râvaṇa: he tricked Râma, and was by him slain.

*Meru*, Mt., 60, the Hindu Olympus. The Sun, circling round Meru, so causes alternate day and night.

*Mithilâ*, 103, the capital of Vidarbha.

*Muni*, 147, a saintly recluse, especially one vowed to silence.

*Nabhangā*, 84, Indra's armour-bearer.

*Nāgas*, 171, semi-divine Snakes, dwelling in Pâtâla, beneath the earth.

*Nahusha*, 129, a Demon who had supplanted Indra, and was dashed down to earth by Agastya, whom he had insulted.

*Naimisha*, 192, a sacred grove.

*Nandiana*, 77, the pleasure-garden of Indra.

*Nārada*, 70, the Divine Minstrel, friend and counsellor of men.

*Nimi*, 105, founder of the dynasty of Mithilâ, a son of Ikshvâka.

(*Om*), 2, the "mystic word," beginning the Veda, etc., symbolical of the Hindu Triad: it is equally sacred for Buddhists.

*Omens*, 55, 143, throbbing of the *right* side in men, of the *left* in women, is auspicious; and *vice versa*.

*Pâtâla*, 8, the abode of the Nāgas.

*Pâtâla*, 168, a flower.

*Paulastya*, 35, patronymic of Râvaṇa, descended from Pulastya.

*Peepal*, 134, the sacred fig-tree (*Ficus religiosa*), distinguished by its twisted roots.

*Prachetas*, 8, one of the Prajâpatis, *q.v.*

*Prahlâda*, 61, the pious son of Hiranyakaçipu, a Daitya tyrant of the world.

*Prajâpati*, 95, a son of Brahmâ, progenitor of mankind: they were ten in number.

*Punarvâsu*, 104, the fifth and seventh lunar mansion.

*Pushpaka*, 94, Indra's Magic Car, wrested from him by Râvaṇa, and won back by Râma.

*Râhu*, 115, the Dragon who devours the Moon, so causing eclipses.

*Rain-birds*, 39, the Châtakas, *q.v.*

*Râkshasas*, 115, the Demon-foes of the Gods.

*Rati*, 47, "Delight," the wife of Kâma, Love.

*Reed-born God*, 22, Kârtikeya.

"*Regents of the World*," 18, the eight secondary Gods, Indra, Agni, etc.

*Sacred Cord*, 22, the symbol of investiture for the three "twice-born" classes, marking entrance into the "second life."

*Sâma Veda*, 161, the Veda specially of ritual, arranged for *chanting*.

*Sampâtî*, 118, the Vulture-King, brother of Jatâyâ.

(*Sāvitrī*), 157, the Hymn to the Sun, which must be recited every morning.

*Seven*, 91, a sacred number.

*Siddhas*, a class of specially pure celestial beings.

*Skanda*, 38, the God of War, Kārtikeya.

*Soma*, 49, the Moon.

"*Sound-pervaded* realm," 125, the atmosphere.

*Sugrīva*, 118, King of Rāma's monkey-allies.

*Śvāhā*, 6, the prayer of the oblation (? = *faustum sit* !).

*Tila*, 83, the sesamum.

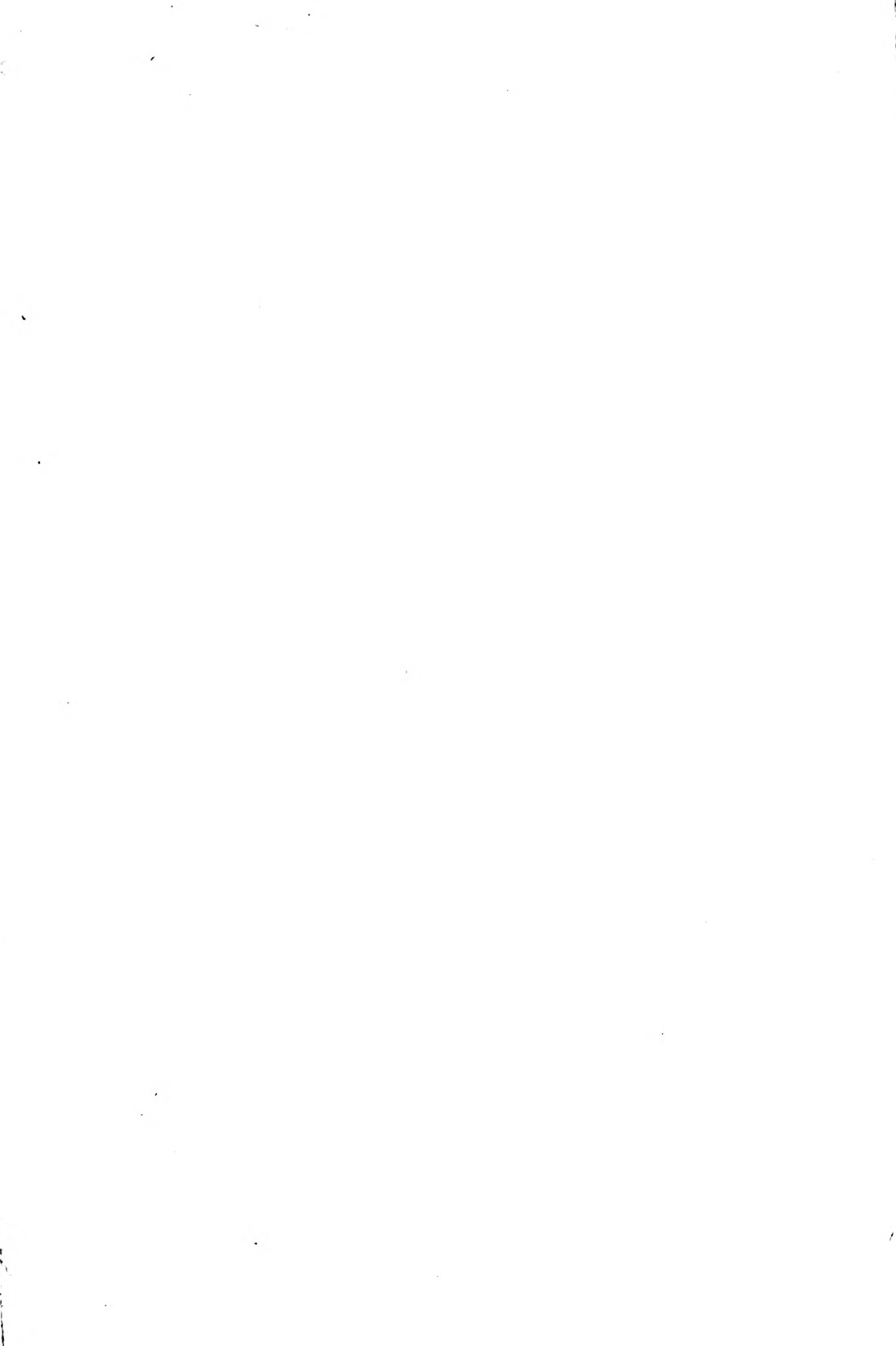
*Trinabindu*, 75, a famous ascetic.

*Vakula*, 82, a fragrant flowering tree, fabled to be fertilised by wine sprinkled by women.

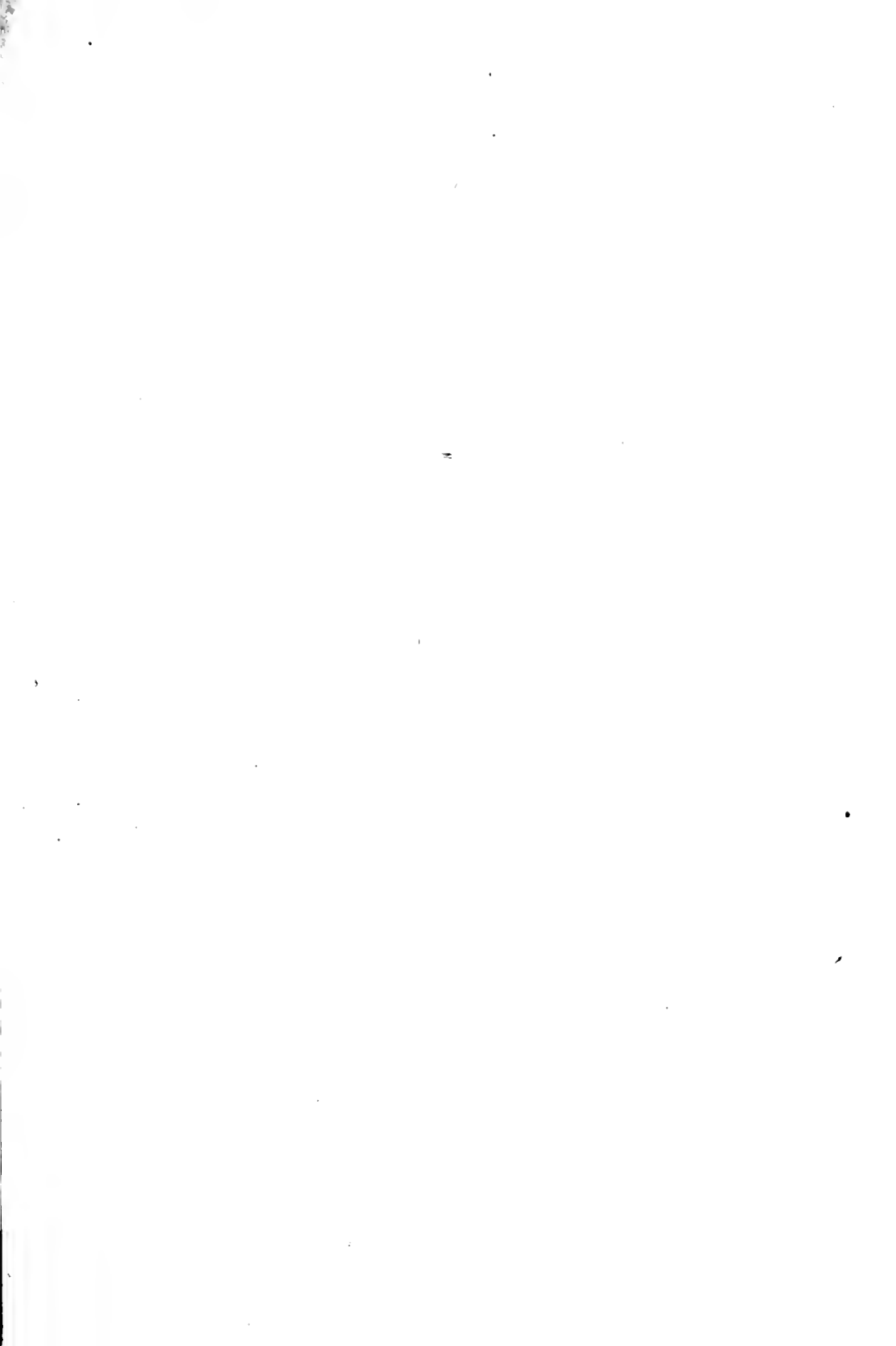
*Vedas*, 37, the three Vedas are the foundation of all wisdom and knowledge, and are held to be eternal.

*Viçvakarma*, 50, the Hindu Vulcan, fabled to have pared down on his lathe the Sun, when his heat became intolerable.

*Yakshas* are attendants on Kuvera.







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