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TWO CENTURIES OF BHARTRIHARI.



# TWO CENTURIES OF BHARTRIHARI.

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH VERSE

BY

C. H. TAWNEY, M.A.

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## P R E F A C E.

THE first duty of a translator seems to be to give some account of the author whose work he attempts to translate. In the case of most Sanskrit writers we have to be content with brief legendary notices of doubtful authenticity. Bhartrihari is no exception to this rule. Few Orientalists admit the truth of the legend attached to his name, though it must be confessed that it harmonizes in a wonderful way with the character of some of the stanzas attributed to him. He is said to have been the brother of the celebrated Vikramâditya, who, reigned at Ujjayinî, the capital of Avantî, or Mâlava, about the year 56 before Christ. On discovering the faithlessness of his wife, Anangasenâ, he became disgusted with the world, abdicated in favour of his younger brother Vikramâditya, and retired

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to the forest. Kâshinâth Trimbak Telang, the latest editor of the Śatakas<sup>1</sup> of Bhartrihari, tells us that "a cave is still pointed out at Ujjayinî as "Bhartrihari's, and is popularly called Bhartrihari's "Gumphâ. Within this cave is shown a recess at "which he used to make his offerings. And it is "supposed that there is from this cave a subterra- "nean passage to Benares, which is, however, said "to be now blocked up. A beam-like block of "stone broken in twain appears in the roof of the "cave about to fall down, and its visible side has "some hollows and unevennesses which are inter- "preted to be the marks left by Bhartrihari's hand "held up to support the beam from falling." M. Regnaud, in the preface to his prose translation, contends that this legend cannot be accepted, as some of the stanzas attributed to Bhartrihari must be subsequent to the period of Śankara Áchârya, the

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<sup>1</sup> *i. e.*, Centuries, or collections of one hundred stanzas. It must be remarked that most editions contain many more than one hundred.

great organiser of Vedantism, since they are deeply coloured with the doctrines of that sect. But it is argued, on the other hand, that a school holding doctrines coinciding with his existed before his time. "Śankara," says the Bombay editor, "may be deservedly regarded as the best expositor of Vedantic doctrines, but he must not be regarded as their first expositor." Accordingly he fixes the date of the writer of these poems about the close of the first or the beginning of the second century of the Christian era, and states it as his opinion that we "had better adhere to the received tradition of King Bhartrihari's authorship until we are in possession of more positive and cogent reasons for deserting it, than are at present available." At the same time he gives up that part of the legend which connects Bhartrihari with the great Vikramāditya, the conqueror of the Śakas, and founder of the Samvat era.

The theory that these Śatakas are merely a collection of Subhâshitas or *γνώμαι*, current in

India, and published under the name of Bhartrihari, is worthy of some attention. Many of the stanzas occurring in them are found in other works still extant, as the Bombay editor observes. But they seem to be characterized by a certain similarity of tone and style which may perhaps justify us in looking upon them as the offspring of one mind. On the other hand, if the genuine productions of Bhartrihari's muse have not been interpolated, they have enjoyed an immunity exceptional in Sanskrit literature.

The late Professor Lassen places the date of our author at the end of the third century after Christ. He does not accept the tradition that he was Bhartrihari. In his opinion, "it probably  
"arose from the circumstance that, according to one  
"story, he is said to have retired to Benares after  
"he resigned the crown; for the last hundred  
"stanzas in the collection of poems attributed to  
"him contain the praises of a contemplative life,  
"and the city of Benares is mentioned as one in

“ which such a life can be profitably spent. On the  
“ other hand, as soon as Bhartrihari’s authorship  
“ became generally believed, a strophe, in which  
“ the faithlessness of women is dwelt upon, and  
“ a curse invoked on them and the God of Love,  
“ may well have given rise to the notion, that he  
“ became disgusted with life on discovering the  
“ faithlessness of his wife Anangasenâ, and there-  
“ upon retired to the forest.”

Considering the great uncertainty which attaches to Hindu literary history, we may, perhaps, consider ourselves fortunate that there is something like a *consensus* as to the date of these poems. A century more or less is after all of trifling moment in Indian chronology. The question of their authorship we must be content to leave in the mist in which it has been involved by the traditions of Indian sages and the conjectures of Western critics. So much at any rate is certain that our author, if not himself a king, was thoroughly at home in the details of Indian court-life.

It is interesting to find that the stanzas of Bhartrihari have been known to the European world for more than two centuries. M. Regnaud tells us that “a protestant pastor, by name Abraham Roger, “who travelled to India in 1640, brought back the “materials of a work which he published in 1651, “under the title of ‘*A history of the religion of the “Brahmans,*’ in which were contained two hundred “proverbs of the sage Bhartrihari, translated “into Dutch from the version of the Brâhman Padmanâba. These were the stanzas on Nîti which “Roger translated by ‘the reasonable conduct “of men,’ and those on Vairâgya, which he rendered by ‘the road which leads to heaven.’ “The Brâhman Padmanâba was prevented by “motives of delicacy from explaining the Śringâra “Śatakam to Roger. The pastor’s work was subsequently translated into French under the title “of ‘*Theâtre de l’Idolatrie ou la porte ouverte pour “parvenir à la connaissance du paganisme caché “Amsterdam,*’ 1670. More than two centuries

“ elapsed before our poet was introduced to the world in his native Sanskrit dress. Von Bohlen published in 1833 at Berlin the first European “ edition.” The Centuries of Bhartrihari are also contained in the Sanskrit anthology of Hæberlin. M. Galanos translated the second and third Centuries into Greek under the title of *Ινδικων μεταφρασεων Προδρομος*. They were included by professor Böhrling in his *Indische Sprüche* St. Petersburg, 1863-65. They were translated into French by M. Hippolyte Fauche in 1852, and M. Regnaud in 1875. An edition of the second and third Centuries was published in Bombay in 1874, forming No. XI of the admirable Bombay Sanskrit series edited under the superintendence of Drs. Bühler and Kielhorn. I have followed in my translation the arrangement of this edition, my obligations to which I take this opportunity of acknowledging.<sup>1</sup> It varies considerably from that of M. Regnaud.

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<sup>1</sup> The commentary is copious and instructive.

Though the word 'Nîti' is usually translated policy, most of the stanzas arranged under this head are rather of an ethical and social character. They inculcate maxims of worldly prudence, and seem designed to teach knowledge of men as individuals, rather than as members of political communities. The truth seems to be that, under the personal governments of the East, Achiophel and Chânakya have always been the types of a successful politician. The art of the model Indian statesman, if we may trust the testimony of the Nîti S'âstras, consists in the power of managing the king's wives and astrologers, of conciliating the feudal chiefs, and above all of humouring the caprices of the sovereign himself, and using them for the advantage of his subjects and the prosperity of his rule.

The word 'Vairâgya' means literally disgust with the world. The particular cause assigned in the legend for Bhartrihari's disgust with the world was the faithlessness of his wife. There is nothing to



our eyes very meritorious in a king who has felt the "sad satiety" of pleasure, and is as weary of the joys as of the cares of empire, exchanging them for grass and the fruits of the jungle. But such retirements seem frequently to have taken place in India. Some princes appear, even in early youth, to have become penetrated with a deep sense of the uncertainty of all worldly pleasures and the misery of human life, and to have sought refuge in the solitudes of the forest.<sup>1</sup>

No European philosopher has expressed the spirit of Hindu asceticism better than Arthur Schopenhauer. The pessimism of the following passage<sup>2</sup> is entirely in accordance with the Vairâgya of Bhartrihari :

"If the awful pains and miseries to which our life is perpetually exposed were displayed before the eyes of any individual, he would be seized with horror, and if we were to take the most

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. the Story of Buddha.

<sup>2</sup> Lichtstrahlen aus Schopenhauer's Werken, p. 190 and ff.

“hardened optimist through the hospitals, lazar  
“houses, and operation rooms ; through the prisons,  
“torture-chambers, and slave dungeons ; over the  
“battle-fields and Calvaries of the world, and then  
“were to lay open to him the dingy dens of misery  
“into which it creeps to avoid the gaze of cold curi-  
“osity, and at last were to reveal to him the  
“hunger-tower of Ugolino, even he would at last  
“perceive the real character of this best of all  
“possible worlds. \* \* \* There is one and only  
“one error innate in every man—that we are born  
“to be happy. Whoever is emancipated from this  
“will find the world in accordance with his under-  
“standing, if not with his wishes. Misfortunes of  
“every kind and degree, though they may still  
“afflict, will no longer perplex him, for he will see  
“that all pain and misery tend towards the real  
“object of life, the estrangement of the will from it.  
“This will produce in him a wonderful feeling of  
“equanimity under all that may befall, resembling  
“the satisfaction with which a patient who is

“undergoing some long and painful surgical treatment looks upon his sufferings as a token of its efficacy.” Schopenhauer declares the great object of life to be the elimination of *Mâyâ*,<sup>1</sup> or the *principium individuationis*, with the result of identifying oneself with the universe, and so attaining resignation, equanimity, and utter freedom from will. This principle seems to him to lie at the root of all religion. “Quietism, that is to say, the abandonment of all volition, and Askesis, *i. e.*, the deliberate mortification of self-will, and mysticism, *i. e.*, the consciousness of the identity of one’s own essence with that of all things, are most intimately connected, so that whoever adopts one principle will find himself insensibly led on to adopt the others, even though contrary to his preconceived purpose. Nothing is more surprising than the absolute harmony that prevails among the writers who set forth these views, in

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<sup>1</sup> Here he is using the terminology of Indian philosophy.

“spite of the greatest difference of epoch, nationality, and religion, as well as the unshaken assurance and heartfelt confidence with which they proclaim the facts of their spiritual experience.”

Schopenhauer exults in the thought that even Goëthe, Greek as he was, felt the charm of this “best side of human nature” which he has described in his *Bekennnisse einer schönen Seele*. But after all, the quietism of the modern European differs in its outward details from that of the Hindu. The latter resembles more nearly the asceticism of those mediæval hermits, who are popularly supposed to have abandoned all care of their vile bodies. Indeed, though Schopenhauer opposes the Greek ideal to the Hindu, the Hindu saintly mendicant has much in common with the Greek cynic. Many expressions in Bhartrihari’s stanzas on Asceticism will remind the classical scholar of the habits of Diogenes thus described by M. Lewis :

“Diogenes ate little, and what he ate was of the

“coarsest. He tried to live upon raw meat and  
 “unboiled vegetables, but failed. His dress con-  
 “sisted solely of a cloak. When he asked Antis-  
 “thenes for a shirt, he was told to fold his cloak in  
 “two; he did so. A wallet and a large stick com-  
 “pleted his accoutrements. Seeing a little boy  
 “drinking water out of his hand, he threw away  
 “his cup, declaring it superfluous.<sup>1</sup> He slept  
 “under the marble porticos or in his celebrated  
 “tub. Decency of every kind he studiously out-  
 “raged.” This fierce disgust with life has been  
 described by Goëthe in the famous passage begin-  
 ning—

*Wenn aus dem schrecklichen Gewühle, &c.*, and  
 students of Timon and King Lear are well aware  
 that this phase of feeling has not escaped the  
 attention of Shakspeare.

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<sup>1</sup> This idea occurs more than once in Bhartrihari's stanzas  
 on Vairâgya.

We are, therefore, justified in claiming for our poet some affinity with western thought. Moreover, the terse and epigrammatic character of these stanzas distinguishes them from the mass of Indian literature, and brings them more into accord with European canons of taste. Professor Lassen, in his *Indische Alterthumskunde* (Vol. II, p. 1174) expresses his opinion that this character “ renders “ them conspicuous among the productions of the “ Indian muse. They place before us in terse and “ pithy language the Indian views about the chief “ aspirations of youth, manhood, and old age ; about “ love, about concern with the things of this world, “ and about retirement from them into lonely con- “ templation. On account of the perfect art with “ which they are composed, these short poems are “ worthy of being ranked among the masterpieces “ of Indian Genius. Some of them are connected “ in sense as the description of the seasons, others “ form a whole by themselves, and may most fitly be “ compared to miniature paintings as presenting to

“us a complete picture in the narrow frame of one  
“strophe.”

Professor Lassen has here hit on the characteristic which these poems share with so many epigrams in the Greek Anthology. I cannot help thinking that if Sanskrit were as well known as Greek, they would be favourites with scholars. This is all that can be said of most classical writers, who are seldom read even in translations by any but school-boys and enthusiasts. Indeed, translations are seldom popular either in prose or verse, unless they depart widely from the spirit of the original. I am sensible that, in the present attempt, I have retained too much local colouring. For instance, the idea of worshipping the feet of a god or great man, though it frequently occurs in Indian literature, will, undoubtedly, move the laughter of Englishmen unacquainted with Sanskrit, especially if they happen to belong to that class of readers who rivet their attention on the accidental, and remain blind to the essential. But a certain measure of

fidelity to the original, even at the risk of making oneself ridiculous, is better than the studied dishonesty which characterizes so many translations of oriental poets.

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# Contents.

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## Part I.

### THE NITISATAKAM.

On Fools . . . . .	1
The Praise of the Wise Man . . . . .	7
The Praise of Self-respect and Valour . . . . .	12
On Wealth . . . . .	16
The Description of the Wicked Man. . . . .	21
The Praise of the Good Man . . . . .	25
The Path of Altruism . . . . .	29
The Praise of Firmness. . . . .	33
The Praise of Destiny . . . . .	35
The Praise of Works . . . . .	37
Some Verses of an opposite tendency . . . . .	41
Some Miscellaneous Stanzas . . . . .	43

---

## Part II.

### THE VAIRAGYASATAKAM.

Against the Desire of Worldly Things . . . . .	53
Of Worldly Enjoyments . . . . .	60
Against the Love of Beauty. . . . .	61
Of Evil Men and Oppressors . . . . .	61
Of Vain-glory . . . . .	62
Of Indifference to Worldly Things . . . . .	62
The Misery of a Courtier's Life . . . . .	64
Of the Proud Man . . . . .	65
Of Self-renunciation . . . . .	66
Of the Terrors that beset the path of Pleasure . . . . .	67
Of Time the Destroyer . . . . .	68
Miscellaneous Stanzas . . . . .	98



Part I.

THE NITISATAKAM.



# THE NITISATAKAM;

OR,

## HUNDRED STANZAS ON ETHICS AND POLITICS.

—:0:—

Eternal, Holy Spirit, free from bonds of space and  
time,

Whose essence is self-knowledge, Thee I call to bless  
my rhyme.

---

### *On Fools.*

---

She whom I worship night and day, she loathes  
my very sight,

And on my neighbour dotes, who in another takes  
delight ;

A third she in my humble self nothing but good  
can see :

Now out upon the god of love, and him, and them,  
and me !<sup>1</sup>

Easy is a fool to manage, easier still a man of  
sense,

Brahmâ's self is foiled by one of little brains and  
great pretence.

Snatch a jewel, if it please you, from the tiger's  
ravening throat ;

Cross the ocean, though its billows toss in foam-  
wreaths round your boat ;

Fearless twine an angry cobra like a garland round  
your head ;

But with fools forbear to argue,—better strive to  
wake the dead.

<sup>1</sup> It is supposed that the poet here refers to circumstances in his personal history. See Kâshinâth Trimbak Telang's note.

If you squeeze with might and main,  
Oil from sand you may obtain ;  
If with parching thirst you burn,  
Some mirage may serve your turn ;  
If you wander far and wide,  
Rabbits' horns<sup>1</sup> may grace your side ;  
But you 'll never—trust my rule—  
Please a headstrong, bumptious fool.

As well attempt to pierce with flowers the diamond  
of the mine,  
As well attempt with honey-drops to sweeten  
ocean's brine,  
As well go bind with lotus-bands the lord of forest  
herds,<sup>2</sup>  
As strive to lead in wisdom's ways the bad with  
sugared words.

---

<sup>1</sup> A proverbial expression for anything impossible or extraordinary.

<sup>2</sup> *i. e.*, the elephant.

When the Creator made the dolt,<sup>1</sup>  
 He left him not without his bolt ;  
 That fool shows best the wise among  
 Who strokes his beard and holds his tongue.

When but a little I had learned, in my own partial  
 eyes

I seemed a perfect Solon and immeasurably wise ;  
 But when a little higher I had climbed in wisdom's  
 school,

The fever-fit was over and I knew myself a fool.

See that *pariah* making off there with a filthy  
 greasy bone,

How he 'll mumble and enjoy it when he finds him-  
 self alone !

<sup>1</sup> Compare the epigram of Palladas :

Πᾶς τις ἀπαιδευτος φρονιμώτατος ἐστι σιωπῶν  
 Τὸν λόγον ἐγκρύπτων ὡς πάθος ἀισχροτατον.



Not, if Indra's self reproved him, would he blush  
 and leave his treat,  
 For the mean abhor no meanness if it only yield  
 them meat.

From Heaven to Śiva's head, and thence to Himâ-  
 laya's<sup>1</sup> snows,  
 To India's plain, thence to the main, the sacred  
 Ganges flows—  
 A sad descent! but rivers go astray, like foolish  
 men,  
 From heaven's crown they tumble down and never  
 rise again.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The reader is requested to pronounce this word as it is usually pronounced in England.

<sup>2</sup> Bhagîratha, the son of Dilîpa, and great grandson of Sagara, king of Ayodhyâ, brought the sacred Gangâ from heaven to earth by the aid of Siva, who is fabled to have received the stream on his head: he then conducted this river to the ocean in order to purify the ashes of his ancestors, the 60,000 sons of Sagara, who were reduced to ashes by Vishnu in the form of Kapila, when they dug through the earth in order to recover the sacrificial horse which had been stolen from their father.

Water will serve to put out fire, umbrellas 'gainst  
the heat,

A sharp hook guides the elephant, the ox and ass  
we beat,

Disease we cure with doctor's stuff, the serpent's bite  
with charms,—

Against the fool, the worst of ills, Nature provides  
no arms.

Deem him who verse and music scorns

A beast without the tail and horns ;

What though he never feed on grass,

I hold him none the less an ass.

Those slaves who neither fast nor give,

Unjust, unthinking, idle live,

Are beasts, though men by right of birth,

Unwieldy burdens, cumbering earth.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> ἐτώσιον ἄχθος ἀρούρης.

Iliad, 18, 104.

The parallel is striking.

I'd sooner live in mountain caves with lions, bears,  
and apes,  
Than dwell in Indra's heavenly halls with brainless  
human shapes.

---

The Praise of the Wise Man.

---

Kings in whose country tuneful bards are found  
Naked and starving, though for lore renowned,  
Are voted dullards by all men of sense ;  
Poets are ever lords, though short of pence,  
And he who spurns the diamond's flawless ray  
Himself degrades, not that he flings away.

Those who possess that treasure which no thief can  
take away,  
Which, though on suppliants freely spent, in-  
creaseth day by day,

A source of inward happiness which shall outlast  
the earth—

To them e'en kings should yield the palm, and  
own their higher worth.

Scorn not those sages who have scaled the topmost  
heights of truth ;

Who snap the cords of wealth like bonds of  
straw.

For lotus-strings will never hold in awe  
Th' infuriate sovereign of the herd, drunk with  
the pride of youth.

Neither rings, bright chains, nor bracelets, perfumes,  
flowers, nor well-trimmed hair,  
Grace a man like polished language, th' only jewel  
he should wear.

Knowledge is man's highest beauty, knowledge is  
his hidden treasure,

Chief of earthly blessings, bringing calm content-  
ment, fame, and pleasure ;

Friends in foreign lands procuring, love of mighty  
princes earning ;  
Man is but a beast without it : such a glorious  
god is Learning.

Better silence far than speaking,  
Worse are kinsmen oft than fire,  
There's no balm like friendly counsel,  
There's no enemy like ire,  
Rogues have keener teeth than vipers,  
Brains outweigh the miser's hoard,  
Better modesty than jewels,  
Tuneful lyre than kingly sword.

Ever liberal to kinsmen, to the stranger ever kind,  
Ever stern to evil-doers, ever frank to men of mind,  
Ever loving to the virtuous, ever loyal to the crown,  
Ever brave against his foemen, ever honouring the  
gown,

Womankind distrusting ever—such the hero I would  
see,—

Such uphold the world in order; without them  
't would cease to be.

What blessings flow from converse with the wise !  
All dulness leaves us, truth we learn to prize ;  
Our hearts expand with consciousness of worth,  
Our minds enlarge, our glory fills the earth.

Those bards of passion who unfold  
The secrets of the heart,  
Their glory never groweth old,  
Nor feels Death's fatal dart.

A duteous son, a virtuous wife, a lord to kindness  
prone,  
A loving friend, a kinsman true, a mind of cheerful  
tone,

A handsome shape, a well-filled purse, a soul-  
illuminated face,  
Are theirs on whom great Hari<sup>1</sup> smiles, and sheds  
peculiar grace.

Abstinence from sin of bloodshed, and from speech  
of others' wives,  
Truth and open-handed largess, love for men of  
holy lives,  
Freedom from desire and avarice,—such the path  
that leads to bliss,  
Path which every sect may travel, and the simple  
cannot miss.

Cowards shrink from toil and peril,  
Vulgar souls attempt and fail ;  
Men of mettle, nothing daunted,  
Persevere till they prevail.

---

<sup>1</sup> *i. e.*, Vishnu.

Not to swerve from truth or mercy, not for life to  
stoop to shame ;

From the poor no gifts accepting, nor from men  
of evil fame ;

Lofty faith and proud submission,—who on  
Fortune's giddy ledge

Firm can tread this path of duty, narrow as the  
sabre's edge ?

---

### The Praise of Self-respect and Valour.

---

Worn with hunger, faint and feeble, shorn of glory  
and of power,

Still the king of beasts is kingly, even to his dying  
hour ;

Will he graze on hay like oxen ? No, he longs to  
meet once more

Tusk-armed elephants in battle, and to drink their  
spouting gore.



Fling a dry and gristly cow's-bone<sup>1</sup> to a low-bred  
 cur to gnaw,

Straight he wags his tail delighted, though it can-  
 not fill his maw.

Lions spare the prostrate jackal, but the forest-  
 monarchs smite,

E'en by fortune pressed the valiant scorns to waive  
 his proper right.

Dogs fawn on those who bring them meat,  
 And grovel whimpering at their feet

With upturned throat, and wag their tails in game-  
 some mood ;

But the huge elephant erect

Bates not one jot of self-respect,

And after thousand coaxings deigns to taste his food.

---

<sup>1</sup> The poet's meaning certainly is that a special impurity attaches to eating the flesh of the cow. But Bâbû Râjendra Lâla Mitra has shown that this notion is of very recent origin. It does not appear to have been prevalent in the time of Bhavabhûti, who is generally placed in the eighth century. So that this stanza seems to have been written at a far later date than that assigned by Professor Lassen to the majority of Bhartrihari's poems.

In this revolving world the dead  
Are ever born again,  
But he is truly born whose race  
By him doth praise attain.

Two paths are open to the proud,  
As to the woodland flowers,  
Which flourish high above the crowd,  
Or wither in the bowers.

Râhu spares the lesser planets  
As unworthy of his might,  
But he wreaks his lawful vengeance  
On the lords of day and night.

On his hood the serpent Śesha doth this triple  
world uphold,  
On the broad back of the tortoise he lies stretched  
in many a fold,

On the ocean's breast the tortoise like a speck  
eludes the sight :

Who in thought can limit greatness, or set bounds  
to Nature's might ?

Better had the mount Mainâka borne the brunt of  
Indra's ire,

Than thus plunged beneath the ocean severed from  
his sorrowing sire :

Though he saved unharmed his pinions from the  
blazing thunder-stone,

Yet he mourns amid the waters for his self-aban-  
doned throne.<sup>1</sup>

The sun-gem<sup>2</sup> touched by Heaven's rays,  
Though void of sense, is all ablaze ;

<sup>1</sup> Name of a mountain (son of Himavat by Menâ or Menakâ), who is said to have alone retained his wings when Indra clipped those of the other mountains.

<sup>2</sup> A kind of crystal cool to the touch, and supposed to possess fabulous properties, because like a glass lens it gave out heat when exposed to the rays of the sun. (Monier Williams, s. v.) The word here translated "rays" means also "feet," so that there is a double meaning in the passage.

How then can men of spirit brook  
A fellow-mortal's scornful look ?

A lion's whelp will boldly face th' earth-shaking  
monarch's rage,  
For valour dwells in valourous kind, without regard  
of age.

---

### On Wealth.

---

Down to the lowest pit with rank, and gifts that  
all admire ;  
Hurl virtue headlong from the steep, burn pedigrees  
with fire ;  
On valour let the bolt descend : for wealth alone  
we pray,  
Without which noble qualities are vile as mouldy  
hay.

With mind and senses unimpaired,  
 In act and voice the same,  
 He moves among us like a ghost,  
 Wealth's warmth<sup>1</sup> has left his frame.

The man of means is eloquent,  
 Brave, handsome, noble, wise ;  
 All qualities with gold are sent,  
 And vanish when it flies.

The king by evil counsel falls,  
 By worldliness the saint,  
 Brâhmans by want of sacred lore,  
 Bad friends good manners taint ;  
 Indulgence spoils a son, and he  
 Upon his race brings shame,  
 Continual absence poisons love,  
 Neglect cools friendship's flame ;

---

<sup>1</sup> This translation is quite literal. Compare our expression  
 "a warm man."

Carelessness ruins husbandry,  
Wrong saps a nation's health,  
Wine chases modesty, unthrift  
And largess squander wealth.

Three courses open lie to wealth, to give, enjoy,  
or lose,  
Who shrinketh from the former two, perforce  
the third doth choose.

Less in size the polished jewel, but its rays far  
brighter gleam,  
Who regrets the dwindling sandbanks when  
boon autumn swells the stream ?  
Glorious we hold the victor, though his life-blood  
gild the plain,  
Such the generous soul's undoing, that which  
seemeth loss is gain.

Lo! the same man who longs for a handful of  
meal

As a treasure of infinite worth,

When his hunger is sated, esteems not a straw

All the riches and glories of earth ;

Hence this moral we draw—in this transient world

Nothing 's trifling or great in itself,

'Tis the mind that projects its own hues on the  
mass,

Now 'tis gold, now 'tis counted but pelf.

King, if thou wish the earth to yield to thee the  
milk of wealth,

Cherish its offspring,<sup>1</sup> let thy care be for thy  
people's health ;

For if thou watch to do them good with seldom-  
sleeping eyes,

Thy realms with golden fruits shall bloom like  
trees of Paradise.

---

<sup>1</sup> The original has "like a calf."

Grasping and bountiful, cruel and kind,  
Savage and merciful, watchful and blind,  
Truthful and treacherous, policy's art  
Changeth its shape as an actress her part.

Fame, might, the power to give and spend,  
To nourish Brâhmans, help a friend,  
These blessings are a courtier's lot ;  
What boots his toil who gains them not ?

Fate writes upon thy brow at birth the limits  
of thy store,  
In barren wilds, on Meru's peak,<sup>1</sup> 'tis neither  
less nor more ;  
Then cringe thou not to wealthy men, but let  
thy looks be free,  
A pitcher from a pool is filled, as well as from  
the sea.

---

<sup>1</sup> This mountain consists of gold and gems.



Well spake the *châtak*<sup>1</sup> to the cloud,  
 “By thee alone we live,  
 This all men know, then why require  
 Our prayers before thou give?”

O *châtak*, listen but a while, and to my speech  
 give ear—

Not all alike the clouds that on the face of  
 heaven appear,  
 Some fertilize the earth with showers, some  
 fruitless thunders hurl:  
 This lesson learn—a suppliant speech is wasted  
 on the churl.

---

### The description of the Wicked Man.

---

A cruel mind intent on strife,  
 Envyng his neighbour's gold and wife,  
 Hating the virtuous and his kin,  
 Denotes and brands the man of sin.

---

<sup>1</sup> A bird that lives on rain drops.

What though the scoundrel learned be, avoid him,  
cut him dead :

Men shudder at the snake that wears a jewel in  
his head.

The modest man's accounted dull, the pure a  
prudish knave,

Th' austere a sour-faced hypocrite, the meek a  
heartless slave,

The orator is tedious, the ascetic but a fool,

The dignified is haughty, stolid and obtuse the cool,

The hero savage ; thus the bad do all things good  
despise,

Each virtue with its kindred vice is tainted in  
their eyes.

Treachery is of crimes the blackest,

Avarice is a world of vice,

Truth is nobler far than penance,

Purity than sacrifice.

Charity 's the first of virtues,  
Dignity doth most adorn,  
Knowledge triumphs unassisted,  
Better death than public scorn.

The moon when dimmed by daylight, and a maid  
whose charms have fled,

A lake with faded lotuses, a good man ill bested,

A speechless mouth, a grasping king, a scoundrel  
in his train,

Are seven thorns that fret my soul with never-  
ending pain.

I would not be the kinsman of a monarch prone  
to ire,

Not e'en the sacrificing priest unharmed can touch  
the fire.

Not e'en a wonder-working saint

Can hope to please the great,

The silent man is said to sulk,

The eloquent to prate,

Patience is held but cowardice,  
 Impatience disrespect,  
 Officiousness is impudence,  
 And modesty neglect.

Those do not lead an easy life who fall into the power  
 Of one in whom the seed of vice matures in perfect  
 flower,  
 Who with a herd of fawning rogues delights  
 t' engird his throne,  
 Whose lawless will no bonds of faith nor ties of  
 blood doth own.

The kindness of the bad at first  
 Is great, and then doth wane ;  
 The good man's love, at th' outset small,  
 Slowly doth bulk attain ;  
 Such difference between these two  
 In nature doth abide,  
 As 'twixt the shadow of the morn  
 And that of eventide.

Hunters entrap the harmless deer,  
 Fishers the finny brood,  
 So bad men causeless interfere  
 To persecute the good.

---

### The Praise of the Good Man.

---

All-hail to those who love the good,  
 And sinful men eschew,  
 Who honour their religious head,  
 And sacred lore pursue,  
 Who undisturbed their neighbours' wives  
 And neighbours' merits view,  
 Who firm on Siva fix their faith,  
 And vain desires subdue !

Firmness when fall'n on evil days, restraint when  
 fortune smiles,  
 Courage to look with steady eye on war's embat-  
 tled files,

Persuasive speech in council, and a burning thirst  
for fame,  
Joined with a love of holy writ, th' heroic soul  
proclaim.

Alms to bestow in secret, and the houseless wan-  
derer feed,  
To hide one's own and loud proclaim another's  
kindly deed,  
Humbly to bear prosperity, and mourn with those  
who weep—  
Behold a vow which all the saints as yet have  
failed to keep !

Charity best adorns the hand,  
And reverence the head,  
Truth is the virtue of the mouth  
In th' ears is scripture read,

Valour lends glory to the arms,  
 Contentment calms the heart,  
 Thus lofty souls, though poor, are decked  
 With grace in every part.

In times of joy the hero's soul  
 Is soft as lotus-flower,  
 But when misfortune's billows roll  
 Stands stiff as granite tower.

Raindrops on heated iron flung dissolve in airy  
 steam,  
 The same on lotus-leaflets hung like rows of dia-  
 monds gleam,  
 In sea-shells, if Arcturus shine, they harden into  
 pearl,<sup>1</sup>—  
 E'en so doth intercourse refine and elevate the  
 churl.

---

<sup>1</sup> The notion that drops of water fallen into sea-shells under the influence of the star Arcturus, is, as Kâshinâth Trimbak Telang informs us, found in the Mâlavikâgnimitra. See page 6 of my translation.

*turn  
 into  
 pearls*

He only can be called a son who gratifies his sire,  
She only is a wife who doth to please her lord  
aspire,

He only is a friend who bides the same in weal and  
woe,—

These blessings three the righteous gods on vir-  
tuous men bestow.

The world conspires to honour those  
Who rise by gentle arts,  
Who show their own heroic strain  
By praising others' parts,  
Who patiently reproaches bear,  
Nor scorned revile again,  
Who still to selfish ends prefer  
The good of other men.

---



## The Path of Altruism.<sup>1</sup>

---

Trees are bowed down with weight of fruit,  
 Clouds big with rain hang low,  
 So good men humbly bear success,  
 Nor overweening grow.

No earrings deck the good man's ears, which still  
 on scripture feed ;  
 His hands, still open to the poor, no golden  
 bracelets need ;  
 The perfume of his kindly acts, like flowers in  
 leaves concealed,  
 Exceeds the fragrant scent which nard and sandal  
 unguents yield.

He brings thee joy, thy foes dismays,  
 Thy secrets hides, proclaims thy praise,  
 With timely gifts relieves thy need,  
 Thus may'st thou know the "friend indeed."

---

<sup>1</sup> In the original *paropakârapaddhati*.

The sun awakes the lotus-bower,  
The moon cheers up her favourite flower,  
The cloud unasked its rain bestows,  
Self-moved the good man's bounty flows.

Some generous souls forbear their own, and seek  
another's gain ;

Most men, neglecting not their own, their neigh-  
bour's cause maintain ;

Those are mere demons who would build their  
wealth on other's loss,

But what are those who profitless their neigh-  
bour's interest cross ?

Milk to the water with it mixed its native vir-  
tues gave,

Which, pitying sore its tortured friend, rushed  
on a flaming grave ;

The milk, unwilling to be left, must share its  
fellow's fate,—

True friendship envy cannot reach, nor fiery pains  
abate !<sup>1</sup>

Here Vishnu sleeps, and there his foes,<sup>2</sup>  
Yonder the suppliant hills repose,<sup>3</sup>  
Here lurk the quenchless fires of doom,<sup>4</sup>—  
Ocean's broad breast for all hath room.

Subdue desire, and vanquish pride,  
Bear scorn, in wrong take no delight,  
Speak truth, for sages' wants provide,  
And follow still the path of right,

<sup>1</sup> This stanza, says K. T. Telang, gives a moral aspect to an actual physical phenomenon,

<sup>2</sup> *i. e.*, the demons.

<sup>3</sup> K. T. Telang says he is not aware that any mountain except Mainâka sought shelter in the ocean.

<sup>4</sup> According to Hindu notions the fires that are to roll everything together and destroy the world at the period of universal dissolution, are concealed beneath the sea.

Honour the worthy, love thy foes,  
Hide thy own virtues, cheer the faint,  
Pursue renown till life doth close,  
Such conduct marks the perfect saint.

How few there are in mind and speech and body  
free from stain,  
Who fill with linked benefits earth, heaven, and  
Pluto's reign,  
Who, telling others' virtuous acts, small grains to  
hills increase,  
In whose unruffled soul expands the flower of sin-  
less peace !

Nor Meru nor Himâdri's heights adore,  
Where trees are simply trees and nothing more,  
For Malaya's nobler mount thy praises keep,  
Whose woods sweet gums and odorous balsams weep.

---

### The Praise of Firmness.

---

The gods with priceless jewels were not bought,  
Nor with the poison-chalice made aghast,  
Nor ceased until they held the nectar fast,  
The firm forsake not what they once have sought.

Sleeping sometimes upon the ground, sometimes on  
gorgeous bed,  
Sometimes with simple herbs content, sometimes  
on dainties fed,  
One moment clothed in rags, anon ruffling in gal-  
lant show,  
The hero, following still his end, recks not of joy  
or woe.

Mercy 's the ornament of power, of courage courte-  
ous rede,  
Of learning modesty, of wealth bounty to those  
that need,

Of hermits gentleness and truth, longsuffering of  
 a king,  
 Of all men virtuous character, whence all these  
 glories spring.

Let cunning statesmen praise or blame,  
 Let Fortune turn or go her way,  
 Come instant death, or lingering shame,  
 Firm souls from virtue will not stray.

A snake lay helpless in the box pining for lack of  
 meat,  
 A rat by night gnaws through the side, and yields  
 his foe a treat,  
 With strength recruited then the snake by that  
 same hole escapes,—  
 Behold how vain our efforts are ! Fate all our for-  
 tune shapes.

Flung down with force, the higher springs the ball,  
 So good men rise victorious from their fall.

Sloth is the foe that makes our souls his lair,  
Vigour the friend that saves us from despair.

The moon her wasted orb renews,  
The tree when pruned puts forth fresh leaf,  
Th' afflicted sage this course pursues,  
Nor yields to unavailing grief.

---

### The Praise of Destiny.

---

Under Vrihaspati's<sup>1</sup> own eyes  
Entrenched on heaven's height  
Wielding th' artillery of the skies,  
Followed by gods in fight,  
Indra, in spite of all his skill,  
Has seen his host give way ;  
Strength nought avails.—To whom she will  
Fortune assigns the day.

---

<sup>1</sup> He is the regent of the planet Jupiter, and preceptor of the gods.

Our fates, our minds, depend on deeds  
Done in the soul's career,  
But each can gain the wit he needs  
By careful conduct here.

A bald man felt the sun's fierce rays  
Scorch his defenceless head,  
In haste to shun the noontide blaze  
Beneath a palm he fled :  
Prone as he lay, a heavy fruit  
Crashed through his drowsy brain :  
Whom fate has sworn to persecute  
Finds every refuge vain.

When sun and moon eclipsed I see,  
And elephants in bonds,  
And wise men vexed with poverty ;  
I own, my soul desponds.



No wonder sages figure Fortune blind ;  
She first creates a hero to her mind,  
Whom all men own the glory of the age,  
Then breaks her model in her childish rage.

If thorns and briars bear no leaves we do not  
blame the Spring,  
Nor yet the sun, if blinking owls fly not till even-  
ing,  
That *châtaks* gape in vain for showers is not the  
cloud's disgrace ;  
Fate's sentence written on the brow no hand can  
e'er efface.

---

### The Praise of Works.

---

Why honour gods, who must submit to Fate,  
Or Fate, who gives but what our deeds have won ?  
Upon our deeds alone depends our state  
By these exalted, as by these undone.

Mighty are works, which Brahmâ's self confined  
 within the egg,<sup>1</sup>  
 Which forced e'en Śiva, skull in hand, from house  
 to house to beg,  
 Made Vishnu through ten tedious births his deity  
 disguise,  
 Which daily bind th' unwilling sun to wander  
 through the skies!

Our merits in a former life  
 Preserve us in the midst of foes,  
 In woods, flood, fire, in peace and strife,  
 On ocean waves, and mountain snows.

Kindness can turn the bad man's heart, and fools  
 convert to wise,  
 Make poison into nectar-juice, and friends of  
 enemies,

---

<sup>1</sup> The two halves of which subsequently became Heaven and Earth. (Cf. Aristophanis Aves, 695.)

Bring distant objects near: then strive that talis-  
man to gain,  
Nor set thy heart on glorious gifts acquired with  
endless pain.

Before he act, the man of sense  
Looks forward to the consequence,  
For heedless acts infix a dart,  
That rankles in the tortured heart.

In emerald vessels tallow boil,  
And light the fire with spice,  
With golden ploughs turn up the soil  
And then sow worthless rice,  
Thus wiser far than if thou spend  
An easy life on earth ;  
Since all things must on works depend,  
Why throw away thy birth ?

What though we climb to Meru's peak, soar bird-  
like through the sky,  
Grow rich by trade, or till the ground, or art and  
science ply,  
Or vanquish all our earthly foes, we yield to Fate's  
decree,  
Whate'er she wills can ne'er take place, whate'er she  
wills must be.

Whoe'er of merit hath a plenteous store,  
Will savage woods a glorious city find,  
With gold and gems abounding every shore,  
All regions blissful and all people kind,

---

*Some Verses of an opposite tendency.*<sup>1</sup>

What is the use of living with the wise ?  
 As well be friends with those that truth despise.  
 Who loses time suffers no loss at all,  
 Who justly deals shall find his profit small,  
 Count him no hero who his sense subdues,  
 A virtuous wife's no blessing one should choose,  
 Knowledge is not a jewel men retain,  
 And sovereign sway's a burden on the brain.

Once in a way the earth is blessed  
 With one who breaks no bitter jest,  
 But kindly speaks and all commends,  
 Faithful to kinsmen, wife, and friends.

---

<sup>1</sup> I have taken these headings from the Bombay edition. They are not always very apposite ; for instance, this heading is only applicable to the first stanza included under it.

Though scorned the man of constant soul  
Preserves unchanged his self-control,  
In vain men trample on the fire,  
For upward still its flames aspire.

That hero whose obdurate breast is steeled  
'Gainst sidelong shafts of love and anger's fire,  
Nor devious drawn with cords of vain desire,  
Might stand against three worlds in open field.

Whoe'er with gentle nature charms  
The world, all hurtful things disarms,  
Finds flames as mountain streamlets cool,  
And ocean calm as summer pool,  
The lion as the roe-deer meek,  
Mount Meru but a tiny peak,  
A cobra but a wreath of flowers,  
And poison-draughts like nectar-showers.

Great-hearted men would sooner part with life  
Than honour, as their mother ever dear,  
To which in evil days they still adhere,  
Nor wage with self-respect unholy strife.

---

*Some Miscellaneous Stanzas.*

---

A woman's heart is like a glass, reflecting every face,  
Her secret thoughts, like mountain paths, are  
difficult to trace,  
Her fancy wavers, like the dew which lotus-leaves  
enclose,  
Her faults, like deadly Upas-buds, develop as  
she grows.

Who falls in sight of either host  
Upon th' ensanguined plain,  
Though victory and heaven be lost,  
From both sides praise doth gain.

The Boar's and Râhu's<sup>1</sup> mighty deeds our reverence command ;  
The one upheld with gleaming tusks the sea-o'erwhelmed land ;  
The other, sorely maimed in fight, while head and throat remain,  
Makes shift to swallow still the foes he must release again.

The land is limited by sea, the sea its bounds must keep,  
The ever-wandering orb of day measures heaven's trackless deep ;

---

<sup>1</sup> The Boar is a reference to the third incarnation of Vishnu, in which the god, in the form of a boar, raised up, on one of his tusks, the earth which lay buried beneath the waters when the earth had become one ocean. Râhu was a Daitya, or demon, who drank part of the nectar obtained by the churning of the ocean. The Sun and Moon revealed the fact, whereupon Vishnu severed his head and throat from the rest of his body. He wreaks his vengeance on them by occasionally swallowing them.



All things are fettered and restrained, except  
the sage's mind,  
Which springs beyond the bourn of death, and  
ranges unconfined.

Between Vishnu and Śiva there's nothing to choose,  
Be thy home but a cave, it will serve thee as well,  
Man in woods and in deserts the same course pursues,  
And a friend's but a friend in a court or a cell.

By tortoise, hills, and king of snakes  
Upheld and poised, earth's centre shakes ;  
Men of firm faith and constant soul  
Swerve not, while endless ages roll.

Does not the tortoise feel the load he bears  
without complaint ?  
Is not the flaming lord of day with ceaseless  
wandering faint ?

Are not good men though sore distressed ashamed  
 their troth to break ?

Great spirits love to carry through whate'er  
 they undertake.

Cymbals to hármonize their tone,  
 Must first with flour be fed ;<sup>1</sup>  
 So he can call all bards his own  
 Who fills their mouths with bread.

The mean pursue a thousand ways to satisfy  
 their greed,

But he will ne'er be chief of saints whose gain 's  
 his highest meed,

The Aurva-fire<sup>2</sup> drinks up the sea to still its  
 craving maw,

The cloud, to cheer a thirsty world, the waves  
 doth upward draw.

<sup>1</sup> Flour is applied to a Mridanga before it is played upon.

<sup>2</sup> The submarine fire, fabled to be at the South Pole, and not extinguishable by water.

Hard fate to minister and bard assigned,  
One must new turns and one new taxes find ;  
By honeyed language both aspire to climb,  
This slowly builds his power, and that his rhyme ;  
A captious public both must toil to please,  
And part unthanked with liberty and ease.

Though fortune shower her blessings every where,  
But few will reach the poor man's lowly head ;  
Though rain-clouds all day long their treasures  
shed,  
Three drops at most reward the *châtak's* prayer.

A man should reverence the sage,  
Not only when he gives advice,—  
The random words of prudent age,  
If rightly weighed, are pearls of price.

The good man, like a bounding ball,  
Springs ever upward from his fall ;

The wicked falls like lump of clay,  
And crumbles into dust away.

What though by some untoward fate no lotus  
on the lake be born,  
The swan will ne'er, like barndoor fowl, rake in  
the dust for grains of corn.

The heart of the contented man enjoys perpetual  
peace,  
The covetous pine with lust of wealth ; their  
cravings never cease ;  
Not Meru's peak, of gold entire, can captivate  
my soul,  
Let him, who likes it, clamber up and carry off  
the whole.

From nature comes the lotus' rosy hue,  
By nature good men others' good pursue,  
And cruel men have cruel ends in view.

Truth is the ornament of all mankind,  
Slim elephants delight the keeper's mind,<sup>1</sup>  
Learning and patience are a Brâhman's boast,  
Each creature's highest good becomes it most.

Better to fall from mountain height,  
And dash thy life out on the plain,  
Better th' envenomed serpent's bite,  
Better the death in fiery pain,  
Than once to swerve from virtue's path,  
Which they who lose ne'er find again.

Abandon, fool, thy hope to see  
The brave man dread calamity ;  
When the great doom shall earth o'ertake  
Nor seas, nor mighty hills will quake.

---

<sup>1</sup> More literally 'slimness' is considered a beauty in a female elephant.

The moon the lord of healing herbs,  
Whose gleaming horn is Śiva's crest,  
Is doomed with dim eclipse to pine ;  
None can avoid grim Fate's behest.

A splendid palace, lovely brides, the symbols all  
of kingly sway,  
Are jewels strung on merit's thread stretching  
through many a toilsome day ;  
As pearls are from a necklace shed, when breaks  
the bond that held them fast,  
Light they disperse, when merit fails, whirled  
from us by misfortune's blast.

---

Part II.

THE VAIRAGYASATAKAM.





# THE VAIRAGYASATAKAM,

OR,

HUNDRED STANZAS ON ASCETICISM.

---

Eternal, Holy Spirit, free from bonds of space and  
time,

Whose essence is self-knowledge, Thee I call to  
bless my rhyme.

---

## *Against the Desire of Worldly Things.*

---

Envy possesses those that know,  
Great men are drunk with pride,  
The vulgar no discernment show ;  
Who shall for bards provide ?

I tremble at my merit gained in this revolving  
world,  
Bitter shall be its after-taste, when back to life I'm  
hurled,  
Those carnal pleasures won by long-continued acts  
of right,  
Lay heavy burdens on the soul and check its up-  
ward flight.<sup>1</sup>

I've boldly crossed the stormy brine, I've striven  
kings to please,  
In grave-yards plied my midnight spells, nor cured  
that fell disease,  
Earth's bowels have I searched for wealth, and  
melted stones with fire,  
Thou see'st, no doit rewards my pains, then leave  
me now, Desire!

---

<sup>1</sup> It must be remembered that, according to the Vedântic system, the acquisition of Heaven or Svarga itself is nothing compared to Moksha, or the liberation of the soul from the necessity of future transmigration.—*K. T. Telang.*

I've wandered over many lands, and reaped withal  
 no fruit,  
 I've laid my pride of rank aside, and pressed my  
 baffled suit,  
 At stranger boards, like shameless<sup>1</sup> crow, I've  
 eaten bitter bread,<sup>2</sup> [be fed.  
 But fierce Desire, that raging fire, still clamours to

Much have I borne rich hosts to please  
 Who love to taunt their guests,  
 I've laughed with spirit ill at ease,  
 And praised their vapid jests ;  
 I've mastered wrath with strong control,  
 And bent the supple knee ;  
 Then, hopeless hope, why rack the soul,  
 Proof against all but thee ?

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Homer *Odyssey*, VII, 216—

*ὄν γὰρ τι στυγερῆ ἐπὶ γάστρι κύντερον ἄλλο*

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Dante, *Paradiso*, canto XVII.

Tu proverai sì come sa di sale  
 Lo pane altrui, e com'è duro calle  
 Lo scendere e'l salir per l'altrui scale.

Morn after morn dispels the dark,  
 Bearing our lives away ;  
 Absorbed in cares we fail to mark  
 How swift our years decay ;  
 Some maddening draught hath drugged our souls,  
 In love with vital breath,  
 Which still the same sad chart unrolls,  
 Birth, eld, disease, and death.<sup>1</sup>

What man of sense e'er craves the means of life,  
 To feed himself alone ? His ragged wife,  
 With starving children clinging to her side,  
 And wistful looks, o'ercomes his selfish pride ;  
 Sooner than see his babes with hunger pine,  
 He rushes forth prepared to fawn and whine.

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Palladas in the Palatine Anthology, X. 81—

Ἡμεῖς καθεζόμεσθα καὶ κοιμώμεθα  
 μοχθοῦντις ἢ τρυφῶντες· ὁ δὲ χρόνος τρέχει  
 τρέχει καθ' ἡμῶν τῶν τάλαιπύρων βροτῶν  
 φέρων ἐκάστου τοῦ βίου καταστροφῆν.

The joys of life have ceased to please,  
 Honour and fame are fled,  
 The dear-loved friends of early youth  
 Are numbered with the dead,  
 Propped on a staff I limp along,  
 Dim mists obscure my sight,  
 But this frail flesh still dreads the doom  
 Of everlasting night !<sup>1</sup>

God satisfies the snake with air,<sup>2</sup>  
 Grass to the cows is food and bed,  
 Man's nobler soul is clogged with care,  
 Struggling to gain his daily bread.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. The verses of Mæcenas:—

Debilem facito manu,  
 Debilem pede, coxa ;  
 Tuber adstrue gibberum  
 Lubricos quate dentes,  
 Vita dum superest, bene est.  
 Hanc mihi, vel acuta  
 Si sedeam cruce, sustine.

<sup>2</sup> One of the names of the snake is *pavanâsana*, the eater of air.—K. T. Telang.

I've never sought release from births by honouring  
 Siva's feet,  
 Nor oped by merit huge the gate of Indra's heavenly  
 seat,  
 Nor wandered with my youthful feres in Pleasure's  
 giddy maze,  
 Then vain my mother's cares and woes, and profit-  
 less my days.

I have not wasted life, but life hath wasted me,  
 I have not chosen pain,<sup>1</sup> but pain hath been my  
 lot,  
 Some men make Time their fool, but here Time's  
 fool you see,  
 I've long been dead to joy but passion dieth not.

Insults I've borne, but not with patient mind,  
 Pleasures forborne, to which my heart inclined ;

<sup>1</sup> *i. e.*, I have not, of my own accord, practised asceticism.

Put up with hunger, nakedness, and cold,  
Not for the love of God, but love of Gold ;  
Thought much on wealth, but not on Śiva's feet,  
And broke my slumbers not to pray, but cheat ;  
I've lived a hermit's life without his creed,  
Made earth a hell, but gained no heavenly meed.

Wrinkles deform my face,  
And hoary hairs my head,  
Withered my youthful grace,  
But avarice blooms instead.

The joys of sense will vanish soon, what do we  
gain thereby ?  
Those only store up merit who in all them-  
selves deny ;  
When pleasures flee, they leave behind a never-  
ending smart,  
But he who hurls them from him fills with hea-  
venly peace his heart.

As knowledge grows, content expands, and fell  
 desire abates ;  
 But worldly joys, if long embraced, a baneful  
 influence gain ;  
 Thus Indra, like a mortal king, hopes, trembles,  
 loves, and hates,  
 From having held through endless years an  
 undisputed reign.

---

### Of Worldly Enjoyments.

---

I'm forced to beg my loathsome daily mess,  
 My couch the earth, myself my only guard,<sup>1</sup>  
 Of filthy patched unseemly clouts my dress,  
 And yet these worldly longings press me hard.

---

<sup>1</sup> More literally, retinue, attendants. This expression falls in with the legend that Bhartrihari was a king, and quitted his throne in a fit of disgust.



### Against the Love of Beauty.

---

The moth unwitting rushes on the fire,  
Through ignorance the fish devours the bait,  
We men know well the foes that lie in wait,  
Yet cannot shun the meshes of desire.

---

### Of Evil Men and Oppressors.

---

My drink is of the crystal brook, of fruits my  
banquet's spread.  
My frame is swathed in strips of bark, the  
earth's my sumptuous bed.  
Thus happier far, than forced to bear the upstart  
insolence  
Of those the new strong wine of wealth hath  
robbed of every sense.

### Of Vain-glory.

---

By mighty sages' will this world first saw its  
 natal day,  
 Others have conquered it, and thrown with scorn  
 its wealth away,  
 Others rule fourteen higher worlds all happier  
 than ours,  
 Why then should lords of some few towns  
 thus vaunt their petty powers ?

---

### Of Indifference to Worldly Things.

---

Thou art a king, I grant, but we are famed for  
 boundless lore,  
 Thy wealth's renowned, our skill by bards  
 proclaimed on every shore,

Between us no vast gulf is set : what though  
thou scorn our name,  
Yet we, to all indifferent, heed not thy praise or  
blame.

This world still groans 'neath many hundred kings  
All emulous to snatch their neighbour's share,  
Each paltry gain some fresh enjoyment brings,  
To fools whose greed should fill them with  
despair.

This earth is but a lump of clay girt with a briny  
ditch,  
Where hosts of squabbling kings contend, all  
striving to be rich,  
One cannot blame these grovelling slaves for  
clinging to their store,  
But out on those who stoop to beg at any royal  
door !

## The Misery of a Courtier's life.

---

What can I do in princely courts,  
 Unskilled in vice, and idle sports,  
 Nor singer, actor, rogue, nor clown,<sup>1</sup>  
 Nor bent on pulling others down?

Of old time learning courted saintly bliss,  
 Then stooped to be the slave of base desire,  
 But now that kings 'gainst intellect conspire  
 Each day she plunges deeper in th' abyss.

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Burke, Vol. II, p. 106, l. 33 (Bohn's ed) "Kings are naturally lovers of low company," &c. K. T. Telang compares Juvenal's lines:

Quid Romæ faciam? Mentiri nescio, librum  
 Si malus est nequeo landare et poscere.

### Of the Proud Man.



Those men may boast of being born, whose skulls  
 gleam white on Śiva's head,<sup>1</sup>  
 The final meed of holy saints, and chiefs whose  
 souls in battle fled ;  
 But oft I muse how men can swell with pride  
 at causing those to bow,  
 Who, if they save their precious lives, care little  
 for the when and how.

You are a lord of acres,  
 But we are lords of song ;  
 And we subdue the subtle,  
 If you subdue the strong ;  
 The rich of you are speaking,  
 In me the wise believe,  
 And if you find me irksome,  
 Why then—I take my leave.

---

<sup>1</sup> This honour, according to the commentator quoted by K. T. Telang, is reserved for the liberal, the temperate, those who are faithful to their promises, and heroes slain in battle.

## Of Self-renunciation.

---

The day of pleasure's past and gone,  
Long through this world we've wandered on,  
And weary reached the brink :  
By Gangâ's stream shrills forth our cry,  
"O Śiva, Śiva, Lord most high,  
Help, Śiva, or we sink."

When honour fades, and wealth departs, and boons  
are craved in vain,  
And friends are dead, and servants fled, and joy  
exchanged for pain,  
This course alone becomes the wise—to seek those  
mountain caves  
Whence softly flow through woods below the  
sanctifying waves.

Why suffer endless woes in vain  
The favour of the great to gain ?  
Let false ambition's longings cease,  
Learn to possess thy soul in peace,  
And thou hast won the wishing-cap  
That pours earth's treasures in thy lap.

---

**Of the Terrors that beset the Path of Pleasure.**

---

In happiness men fear disease, the haughty shrink  
from scorn,  
The rich, the wise, the men of might, dread princes,  
critics, foes ;  
Envy blights virtue, old good looks, death threatens  
all things born,  
The hermit's humble life alone gives undisturbed  
repose.

For life fast slipping from my hold  
 I've borne the last and worst disgrace,—  
 I've sat 'mongst wealthy fools, and told  
 My merits with unblushing face.

We speak with awe of glorious kings, of haughty  
 lords, and knights,  
 Of courtiers ranged in glittering rows, of triumphs  
 and of fights,  
 Of tuneful bards that hymn their praise : who  
 honours as he ought  
 That “eloquent and mighty Death” that sweeps  
 them into nought ?

---

### Of Time the Destroyer.

---

Our parents long have passed away,  
 All old familiar faces fled,  
 Destruction nears us day by day,  
 Like trees in sandy river-bed.



Where many dwellers once were seen, one only now  
 survives,  
 Again that house is filled with store of joyous  
 human lives,  
 Then all are swept away again; thus wielding  
 night and day  
 As dice, destruction's wedded powers<sup>1</sup> with help-  
 less mortals play.

<sup>1</sup> *i.e.*, Siva and Pârvatî. For the idea compare Voltaire:—

“Celui qui nous appelle les marionettes de la Providence me  
 parait nous avoir bien definis.”

Also Plautus *Captivi*, v. 22 of the Prologue:—

“Nimirum Dî nos quasi pilas homines habent.”

And Lear, Act IV, Sc. 1:—

As flies to wanton boys, are we to the gods,  
 They kill us for their sport.

And the following epigram of Palladas:—

Παίγνιόν ἐστι Τύχης μερόπων βίος, οἰκτρὸς,  
 ἀλήτης,  
 πλοίου καὶ πενίης μεσσόθι ῥεμβόμενος.

Also Philo 2, 85. τύχη ἄνω καὶ κάτω τὰ ἀνθρώπεια πεττευει.

[And the Fragment of Heraclitus: “Time is a child at chess.”  
 Also the well-known lines of Omar Khayam; Professor Lewis  
 Campbell in the Academy of June 9.]

Shall we retire to Gangâ's brink,  
 Or cull the sweets of honeyed lays,  
 Or court a wife whom all men praise ?  
 Life's short—we know not what to think.

O for those days when I shall dwell alone  
 Among the snowy hills by Gangâ's stream,  
 In stony torpor stiffened on a stone,  
 Inly conversing with the One Supreme,  
 Rapt in devotion, dead to all beside,  
 And deer shall fray their horns against my senseless  
 hide.

When shall we, sick of life's entangling bands,  
 Sit on the holy river's moonlit sands,  
 Through windless nights, with rapture-streaming eyes,  
 And thrice on Śiva call with plaintive cries ?

Still Śiva's arm is strong to save,  
 Still may we plunge in Gangâ's wave,

Still one blue heaven bends over all,  
Still Time sees mortals rise and fall,  
Still poverty's our best defence,  
Enough—renounce the joys of sense.

Hope is a stream, its waves desires, by stormy  
passions tossed,  
With cruel longings lurking deep,<sup>1</sup> by light-winged  
visions crossed,  
Resolves like firmly planted trees its floods uproot-  
ing bear,  
Its madness swirls in eddy rings beneath its  
banks of care ;  
But those, who in devotion's bark attain its further  
shore,  
Rejoice, for this unstable world enslaves their souls  
no more.

---

<sup>1</sup> Like alligators ; the visions are compared to birds.

I've searched for years through earth and air and  
sky,

Nor yet one perfect saint hath met my eye,  
Nor have I heard of one who could restrain  
Desire's fierce elephant with reason's chain.

The days seem long to those who drudge for pay,  
And short to those who fritter life away ;  
When shall I sit and think how vain their moans,  
A hermit pillowed on a bed of stones ?

When all our wealth is wasted, we'll seek some  
calm retreat,

And spend the night in thinking on Śiva's holy  
feet,

When streams the autumn moonlight into our  
melting hearts,

How false that world will glimmer where once we  
played our parts.

Bark garments satisfy my needs,  
But you are pleased with silken weeds,  
    Who counts you better off than me ?  
But woe to him whose wants are great !  
Contentment equals men's estate,  
    And makes the rich and poor agree.

Unfettered wandering, and meals from degradation  
    free,  
The friendship of the wise and good ; and sober  
    piety,  
A heart that beats not for the world—none, that  
    my thoughts can trace,  
Not e'en by strictest discipline hath gained this  
    heavenly grace.

The hand 's a lordly dish,  
The mouth with alms is fed,  
The sky 's a glorious robe,  
The earth 's a sumptuous bed,

Those live in high content  
Who're free from passion's chain,  
And works with all their brood  
Of ignorance and pain.

King's fancies swiftly pass like coursers in the race,  
In vain to them we look for favour, wealth, and  
place,  
Eld robs our frame of strength, death slays us at a  
blow,  
None but the hermit's life can happiness bestow.

Our joys are short-lived as the flash  
That cleaves the cloudy veil,  
Our life is fleeting as the mists  
That drive before the gale ;  
Youth's pleasures fade—then fix your minds  
On that untroubled peace  
Which patient meditation brings  
To those whose longings cease.

To roam some woodland hermitage where Brâh-  
mans' chants resound,  
And smoke of sacrificial fires blackens the trees  
around,  
Begging one's bread from cell to cell, plants in the  
breast no thorns,  
Like living poor amongst one's kin, bearing their  
hourly scorns.

While gaping idlers turn the head and say,  
"What stamp of man can yonder pilgrim be,  
Saint, sophist, outcast, Brâhman, slave, or free?"  
Nor pleased nor wroth the hermit wends his way.

Happy are those who've ceased to walk by sight,  
Slain passion's snake, and make good deeds their  
stay,  
Who spend in woodland nooks the tranquil night  
Illumined by the moon's autumnal ray.

Be still, my fluttering heart, and leave this crowded  
show

Of worldly toys 'midst which thou eddiest to and fro,  
Abandon fleeting forms, and seek that settled state  
Of grounded peace enthroned above the storms of  
fate.

Pillowed on banks of moss, with roots and berries fed,  
Enwound with strips of bark, our wants shall all  
be sped—

Off to the woodland shades, and gladly leave behind  
These men of stammering speech, with wealth-  
bewildered mind.

Abandon empty hopes, and place thy trust, my  
breast,

In Gangâ, and in him who bears the moony  
crest;<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> *i.e.*, Siva. The moon's crescent round or above the central eye of the god is supposed to refer to the measurement of time by months. See Monier Williams. s. v.



Whoe'er confides in snakes, waves, women, bubbles,  
flames,  
Lightnings or mountain streams, his want of sense  
proclaims.

If song resound thy steps before,  
And Dekhan' lyres behind,  
And nymphs with jingling bracelets pour  
The *Chowri's* perfumed wind,  
Scorn not this world's broad easy ways,  
And drink of pleasure's bowl;  
If not—then fix thy steadfast gaze  
On that undying soul.

Kind Fortune, seek some other love, I long not  
for thy dower;  
And what to those whose lusts are dead avails  
thy golden shower?

---

<sup>1</sup> The poets of the Dekhan being especially skilful.

Leave me to beg from day to day my dole of  
barley-meal,  
The fig's broad leaf supplies a dish that none  
would care to steal.

Once I was thou, and thou wast I,  
In perfect union blent ;  
Say, what hath severed friendship's tie,  
And souls asunder rent ?

Why sidelong cast thy languid eyne ?  
Vain is thy hope to tangle mine,  
My nature's changed ; no more a child  
With every wanton toy beguiled,  
To cloistered cell I'd fain withdraw,  
This world's bright nets I count but straw.

'Tis sweet in palaces to dwell,  
Where music's strains voluptuous swell ;  
'Tis sweet to hear the loved one's voice ;  
But wise men, of deliberate choice,

Have run from these to forest glades,  
Assured all earthly pleasure fades,  
Swift as the moth in heedless game  
Puffs out the taper's feeble flame.

Are roots extinct in mountain caves ? have streams  
forgot to flow ?

Do vests of bark and woodland fruits on trees  
no longer grow ?

Else why endure the haughty mien and eye-brows  
arched in scorn

Of men who 've scraped together wealth to which  
they were not born ?

Say, whither are those slabs of stone

All moist with Gangâ's dew,

And Dryad-haunted thickets flown,

That men can bear to sue

For alms and insults at the door of some proud  
*parvenu* ?

Mount Meru's golden mass shall melt at that last  
 awful day,  
 The monster-peopled seas dry up, the earth dis-  
 solve away ;  
 What hope for feeble human frames, whose breath  
 doth come and go,  
 As swiftly as the elephant flaps his ear to and  
 fro ?

When, when, O Śiva, shall I be  
 Lonely and calm, from passion free ;  
 My only robe the liberal air,  
 My hand the dish that holds my fare,  
 But able Action to uproot,<sup>1</sup>  
 The tree that bears Life's bitter fruit.

---

<sup>1</sup> The bodies and conditions of transmigrating souls are, according to their works, good or evil in antecedent states from time without beginning. The merits and demerits and the embodiments are from eternity. Seed from plant, and plant from seed, but who shall assign priority to either ? From such fruition of merits as long as soul is implicated with body, there is no escape. \* \* \* \* This implication of soul with bodies animal, vegetable, human, ultra-human, and divine, is the source of all

Suppose thy fortune's boundless as the main,  
 Suppose thy years a world's great age complete,  
 Suppose thy foes all placed beneath thy feet,  
 And friends rewarded richly : where's thy gain ?

The hermit's tattered patchwork robe, or courtier's  
 silken weeds,  
 One wife to tend thy home, or troops of elephants  
 and steeds,  
 One simple meal at close of day, or many a gor-  
 geous feast,  
 It matters not, be but thy soul from earthly cares  
 released.

misery. In all its stages the soul tastes little but pain, sickness, death, and severance from all that it would fain cling to. Even in the highest embodiments there is disparity, and a consequent sense of insufficiency, and there is the certainty of their expiring upon the exhaustion of the merits which procured them. Paradise and places of torment are only stages in the endless journey.

\* \* \* *This repeated embodiment of souls results from merits, merit from activity, activity from desires and aversions, desires and aversions from identifying the soul with that which is not soul, with the body, the senses, the intellect. (Gough—in Calcutta Review).*

My faith in Śiva wavereth not, I shrink from  
future birth,  
I care not for my friends or kin, I scorn the joys  
of earth,  
I love the lonely forest-glades, from worldly tur-  
moil free,  
No greater bliss can fall to man than falleth unto  
me.

Think upon that self-developed, everlasting One  
Supreme,  
Fling aside all vain delusions, all the worldling's  
baseless dream,  
Pity those dull slaves of custom who are caught  
with empty toys,  
Kingly crowns, and thrones imperial, and a round  
of sensual joys.

You mount to heaven, again you sink to hell,  
You roam the world around with anxious  
    breast,  
And yet not e'en by chance your thought doth  
    dwell  
On Him who only gives the spirit rest.

Night follows night, and day succeedeth day,  
And thoughtless men hurry to work and play,  
But sages ought to blush when treading found,  
Year after year, the same dull weary round.

Stretched out at ease upon the ground, and pil-  
    lowed on his arm,  
The houseless hermit sleeps in peace, secure from  
    nightly harm,  
The breeze his fan, his lamp the moon, his canopy  
    the sky,—  
What royal palace of this earth can such delights  
    supply ?

Feasts, flatteries, and idle hours  
     Make up a prince's day,  
 Let not the saint employ his powers  
     To compass kingly sway :  
 But quaff the ever-brimming stream  
     Of pure and holy mirth ;  
 Who that hath tasted bliss supreme  
     Can sink to joys of earth ?

What profit are the Vedas,  
     Or books of legal lore,  
 Or those long-winded legends,  
     Repeated o'er and o'er ?  
 What gain we by our merits ?  
     A dwelling in the skies—  
 A miserable mansion,  
     That men of sense despise—  
 All these are huckstering methods,—  
     Give me that perfect way  
 Of self-contained fruition,  
     Where pain is done away.



Our life is like th' unstable wave,  
Our bloom of youth decays.  
Our joys are brief as lightning flash  
In summer's cloudy days,  
Our riches fleet as swift as thought ;  
Faith in the One Supreme  
Alone will bear us o'er the gulfs  
Of Being's stormy stream.

Can all this earth encloses  
Flutter the sage's breast ?  
Say, can the darting minnow  
Trouble the ocean's rest ?

I love the moon's soft beams, I love the grassy wood,  
I love to talk of verse among the wise and good,  
I love the fair one's face gleaming with angry tears,  
I think how fleeting all, and pleasure disappears.

Lonely among his kind,  
     Breaking on alms his fast,  
 Free as th' unfettered wind,  
     The hermit wanders past,  
 Of tattered rags his dress,  
     He knows no care nor pride,  
 He longs for quietness,  
     And has no want beside.

My mother Earth,  
     My kinsman Fire,  
 Water my friend,  
     And Wind my sire,  
 My brother Heaven,  
     A long adieu !<sup>1</sup>  
 By merit gained  
     When linked to you

---

<sup>1</sup> Compare Green's History of the English People, p. 144 :—

“The life of Francis falls like a stream of tender light across the darkness of the time. He strips himself of all, he flings his very clothes at his father's feet, that he may be one with Nature

I've purchased grace  
To break my chains,  
And merge in that  
Which all sustains.

While the soul's temple still stands firm, and old  
still bides afar,  
While sense is keen, and Life with Death still  
wages equal war,  
The wise to gain the spirit's peace should strive  
with strong desire,  
What boots to dig a well when all the house is  
wrapped in fire ?

I have not learnt the wrangler's art or less preten-  
tious lore,  
Nor cleft in fight the war-beasts' skulls on Fame's  
broad wings to soar,

---

and God. His passionate verse claims the moon for his sister, and the sun for his brother ; he calls on his brother the Wind, and his sister the Water. His last cry was a Welcome, Sister Death.

Nor sipped the fair one's honeyed lip while soft the  
moonbeam falls ;—

My youth is wasted like a lamp in vast unpeopled  
halls.

Knowledge abates the wise man's pride,  
But kindles it in all beside ;  
That loneliness which shields the saint  
Lets sinners sin without restraint.

The youthful freshness of my heart is worn with  
old decay,  
The beauty of my limbs hath passed unrecognized  
away,  
Grim Fate brings nigh with giant strides the  
unrelenting hour ;  
What hope but in the feet of him who smote  
Love's wanton power ?<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> *i. e.*, Siva.

If parching thirst dries up the throat,  
 How sweet the brimming stream ;  
 If hunger pinches, rice and herbs  
 Imperial dainties seem.

We hug this fond belief,—that we  
 A solid pleasure gain,  
 When all we've done is to remove  
 The momentary pain.<sup>1</sup>

When shall I bathe in Gangâ's stream and please  
 Thee, Lord, with fruits and flowers,  
 Thinking of that one worthy theme, on beds of  
 stone through midnight hours,

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Plato's Republic, 584 A—

Πῶς οὖν ὀρθῶς ἔστι τὸ μὴ ἀλγεῖν ἢ δὴ ἡγῆισθαι ἢ τὸ μὴ χαίρειν ἀνιαρόν; Οὐδαμῶς. Ὅτι οὐκ ἔστιν ἄρα τὸντο, ἀλλὰ φαίνεται, ἦν δ' ἐγὼ παρὰ τὸ ἀλγεινὸν ἢ δὴ, καὶ παρὰ τὸ ἢ δὴ ἀλγεινὸν τότε ἢ ἡσυχία, καὶ οὐδὲν ὑγιὲς τούτων τῶν φαντασμάτων πρὸς ἡδονῆς ἀλήθειαν, ἀλλὰ γοητεία τις ὣς γοῦν ὁ λόγος, ἔφη, σημαίνει. Ἰδὲ τοίνυν, ἦν δ' ἐγὼ, ἡδονάς αἱ οὐκ ἐκ λυπῶν εἰσιν, ἵνα μὴ πολλάκις οἰηθῆς ἐν τῷ παρόντι οὕτω τούτω πεφυκέαι, ἡδονὴν μὲν πάνταν λύπης εἶναι, λύπην δὲ ἡδονῆς.

Honouring my Father in the faith, striving to lift  
my heart above ?

When shall I fling my woes aside ? Help me, thou  
enemy of Love.<sup>1</sup>

The man whose bed is made of rock, whose mansion 's  
but a cave,

Who's clothed in bark and fed on fruits, who drinks  
the crystal wave,

Whose friends are deer, alone can boast of splendour  
on this earth ;

For he alone ne'er bows the head to power, or  
wealth, or birth.

Out of Banâras who can live that boasts the  
sage's name,

Where rags are counted splendid clothes, and  
begging held no blame,

<sup>1</sup> i. e., Siva.

Where gardens yield to all who need their  
bounteous supplies,  
Where saints subdue the flesh, where Death's  
the gate of Paradise ?

Leave those proud doors where surly slaves growl  
out "our lord's asleep,  
"We cannot wake him: if we do, his wrath no  
bounds will keep,"  
But haunt the temple of that god who rules this  
mighty whole,  
Whose gate no ill-bred porter keeps, who fills with  
bliss the soul.

Our mind is but a lump of clay  
That Fate, grim potter, holds  
On sorrow's wheel that rolls away,  
And, as he pleases, moulds.



Śiva controls earth, heav'n, and hell,  
 Vishnu pervades each part,  
 Their rank in being who can tell ?  
 But Śiva has my heart.

Why, Cupid, wound thy hand with twanging still  
 the bow ?

Why, cuckoo, sound for nought thy soft love-  
 moving strain ?

Why bashful maiden, still thy sidelong glances  
 throw ? [drain.

My soul the nectarous wine of Śiva's love doth

What though the hermit's cloak be torn with many  
 a rent,

What though he sleep in tombs or under forest  
 trees,

Heeding not friend or foe, on self-communion bent,  
 From pride and anger free, his mind is still at  
 ease.



Enjoyments quickly lose their zest ; of them our  
life is made ;<sup>1</sup>

Then why extend the hand to grasp these flowers  
that bloom to fade ?

If for my words you care at all, then fix your  
constant soul

On that eternal Fount of light whose beams can  
Love control.

Happy who dwell in mountain caves, praising the  
One Supreme,

Upon whose breasts sleep fearless birds that drink  
their tears of joy,

While we are sporting in the groves, and wander-  
ing by the stream

Of some aërial pleasure ground, our wayward  
fancy's toy.

---

<sup>1</sup> The meaning is the same as the 'Sed vitam faciunt balnea,'  
&c., of Martial.

Death swallows Birth, and Youth's brief flash the  
 jaws of Age devour,  
 Desire of wealth eats up Content, and Love the  
 peaceful hour,  
 Fell Envy's tooth gnaws Virtue's bud, and snakes  
 infest the wood,  
 Kings' courts are overrun with knaves : thus bad  
 things feed on good.

Hundreds of various pains and griefs uproot the  
 health of man,  
 Where Fortune takes up her abode mishaps soon  
 crowd the gate,  
 Nothing is born which Death makes not a subject  
 of his state,  
 How full of faults is Destiny ! how ill-conceived  
 her plan ! <sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> tantâ stat prædita culpâ.

Hard is our lot within th' imprisoning womb,  
Our youth beset with separation's doom,  
Loathsome our age, the theme of woman's mirth,  
Say then, ye men, what joy ye find on earth ?

A hundred years complete our span, half that is  
passed in night :

Childhood and age devour the half of what belongs  
to light :

The rest is torn with parting pangs, of ceaseless toil  
the slave ;

What profit in our human life, unstable as the  
wave ?

Those who distinguish that which is from fleeting  
outward shows,

Do well to give up wealth and joys to gain secure  
repose ;

What therefore must be said of us who cannot bear  
to part  
From that which never can be ours, on which we've  
set our heart ?

Eld like a tiger threatens our careless bliss,  
Diseases wound our frame like angry foes,  
As water from a broken pitcher, flows  
Our life away ; and yet men do amiss.

Once in a way Dame Nature makes  
A perfect crystal free from stain,  
And then, like careless workman, breaks  
The piece which cost her so much pain.

The limbs contract, the gait's infirm, the teeth drop  
from the gums,  
The eyesight dims, the hearing fails, and senile  
drivelling comes ;

No more relations heed our words, our wife e'en  
disobeys,  
Our son becomes a foe: alas! what ills in length  
of days!

Man is an actor who plays various parts:—  
First comes a boy, then out a lover starts,  
His garb is changed for, lo! the beggar's rags!  
Then he's a merchant with full money-bags;  
Añon an aged sire, wrinkled and lean;  
At last death drops his curtain on the scene.

Night, day, friend, foe, dross, gems, are all the same  
to me,  
'Twixt stones and rose-strewn beds no difference  
I see;  
In some lone hermitage I let the hours glide by,  
And loud on Śiva call with thrice-repeated cry.

### Miscellaneous Stanzas.

---

The man of firm and constant soul,  
 Who nought possessing, nought desires,  
 Nor burns with passion's raging fires,  
 Finds happiness from pole to pole.

Time passes never to recede,  
 But careless mortals take no heed :  
 The woes that in past years we bore  
 Leave us no wiser than before ;  
 What folly do we lay aside ?  
 Though sorely by our errors tried,  
 We learn not prudence, but begin  
 Once more a fresh career of sin.

The belly clamours for its rights, and will not be  
 denied,  
 Its keen-set longings cut the purse that holds our  
 human pride,

It withers virtue as the moon the lotus of the day,<sup>1</sup>  
 The mantling vine of modesty it lops and shreds  
 away.

Let 's live on offerings, sleeping on the ground,  
 Clothed with the air, and not in courts be found.

“ Rise up and bear one second's space

“ Grim penury's awful load ;

“ Let me o'erwearied take thy place

“ In Pluto's dark abode.”—

A poor man thus a corpse bespake ;

The corpse, preferring death

To want, would not its silence break

For all his waste of breath.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The moon patronizes the *kumuda*, but is an enemy to the lotus, which comes out in the day.

<sup>2</sup> Compare Chaucer, Man of Lawe's Prologue  
 Herkne what is the sentence of the wise—  
 “ Bet is to dyen than have indigence.”

Śiva is chief of those who fleshly lusts despise,  
 Though linked to Umá's form by everlasting ties ;  
 We, racked with venom-pangs which Cupid's arrow  
     brings,  
 Can neither leave nor yet enjoy these worldly  
     things.

They smile and weep to gain their end,  
 Cajole, but never trust a friend,  
 So wise men keep from women far  
     Shunning them like the funeral jar.<sup>1</sup>

Here sounds the tuneful lyre, and there loud shrieks  
     appal,  
 Here is a sage discourse, and there a drunken brawl,  
 Here maids in prime of youth, there wrinkled  
     forms you meet ;  
 Of what consists our life, of bitter or of sweet ?

---

<sup>1</sup> Used in cemeteries, and therefore impure.



With gestures forced, cracked voice, and smiling  
face,

Your part is now to sue for rich men's grace,  
Half fool, half knave; but when your hair is  
grey

What part in life's great farce remains to play ?

Breath, fortune, life, and youth are swiftly  
ebbing tides,

In this unstable world virtue alone abides.

Siva's a guiding lamp, that burns in hermits'  
hearts,

Dispels delusion's gloom and light and heat  
imparts,

He shrivelled like a moth the frivolous god of  
Love,

His flame's the moon's white streak that gleams  
his crest above.

My soul, for Fortune sigh no more, that blind  
capricious fair,  
That dwells in princes' nods and frowns, unstable  
as the air ;  
Rags are the wise man's "coat of proof;"<sup>1</sup> in  
these from door to door  
We beg through wide Banâras' streets, and one  
hand holds our store.

That tortoise really lives its life which bears the  
world on high,  
We bless the pole star's birth, round which  
revolves the starry sky,  
But all those buzzing summer flies, that serve not  
others' gain,  
Dead to all useful purposes e'en from their birth  
remain.

---

<sup>1</sup> Henry VI, Pt. II, Act IV, Sc. 2.

“ My house is high, my sons renowned, my wealth  
beyond compare,”  
“ My wife is lovely, young my age”—thus  
thoughtless men declare,  
Thinking this world will last for aye, they don  
delusion’s chains ;  
The sage knows all will pass away, and straight  
this world disdains.

Revile, revilers ! I, ’tis true,  
Cannot return your scorn :  
We give but what we know, for who  
E’er gave a rabbit’s horn ?

Alms are not difficult to gain, great Râma showed  
the way ;  
The earth yields roots, the deer skin<sup>1</sup> keeps the  
winter’s cold away ;

---

<sup>1</sup> Worn by ascetics.

Whether we joy or grieve we 're still of destiny the  
slaves ;

Why should I leave the three-eyed god to court  
blind purse-proud knaves ?

Why wander without end ? find rest at last, my  
soul :

What will be, must be ; none can Fate's decree  
control,

Leave thinking of the past, and let the future be,  
Reap joys which come by chance and unexpected  
flee.

Their hand their only dish,  
    Begging their wants supplies,  
They sleep where Fate may wish,  
    The world as straw they prize,  
Such is the hermit's life :  
    Few souls, by Śiva's might,  
Can win through toil and strife  
    To that supreme delight.

Bali ' you've not released from hell nor Death the  
 monster slain,  
 Nor cleansed from spots the moon's fair disk nor  
 put an end to pain,  
 Nor bearing up the earth awhile eased Śesha<sup>2</sup> from  
 the load,  
 Do you not blush to wear the wreath to matchless  
 heroes owed ?

What folly 'tis o'er musty texts to brood,  
 Or charm with plays and songs the idle mood !  
 All fancies vain my soul hath flung aside,  
 Resolved in Śiva only to confide.

<sup>1</sup> A celebrated Daitya who made himself lord of the three worlds. Vishnu appeared before him in the form of a dwarf, and asked for as much land as he could pace in three steps. This was granted, and Vishnu deprived him in two steps of heaven and earth, but left him Pâtâla, or the lower regions.

<sup>2</sup> The thousand-headed serpent who bears the three worlds on one of his heads.

The forest trees yield fruit which men may pluck  
at will,

The wave runs pure and cold in many a holy rill,  
Soft is the bed of leaves which wind-swept creepers  
pour, [door.

And yet mean spirits court scorn at the rich man's

Begging supplies my wants,  
My rags keep out the cold,  
My faith in Śiva's firm,—  
What need have I of gold ?

The chief of saints declare no joy can vie with theirs  
Who fling on Śiva's breast the burden of their cares,  
Taking no thought for wealth, by daily bounty fed,  
Blessed and pure, exempt from envy, pain, and dread.

Our joys are like the wave in foam-flakes hurled,  
Youth, life, and love like lightning come and go.  
Learn this, ye wise, and teach the people so,  
That all may know how hollow is this world.

Say, hast thou gained this bliss by long ascetic pain,  
Deer, that thou flatter'st not the rich nor feel'st  
their scorn,  
Nor runnest here and there some trifling boon to  
gain,  
But feed'st on tender grass, and sleep'st from eve  
till morn ?

When maidens see a tinge of white  
Streak a man's hair, they shun his sight,—  
'Tis like the white bone<sup>1</sup> on the brink  
Of wells whence only outcasts drink.

Thou fool, how oft thy schemes have missed their  
aim !

And yet this gold-mirage thy soul allures,  
That still thou hop'st, and still thy heart endures,  
Shows it is wrought of adamant frame.

---

<sup>1</sup> The bit of bone suspended over a well belonging to Chândâlas.

They bewilder, enchant, and deceive,  
Plunge in anger, delight, and despair ;  
Woe to those who in pity receive  
To their credulous bosoms the fair !

A hermit's forest cell, and fellowship with deer,  
A harmless meal of fruit, stone beds beside the  
stream,  
Are helps to those who long for Śiva's guidance  
here ;  
But be the mind devout, our homes will forests  
seem.

Sweeter than honey are the nectar'd strains  
The goddess Speech sends forth to cheer our souls ;  
Content with these and charitable doles,  
We will not purchase wealth with slavish pains.





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