

RAMAYANA

Valmiki

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SYNOPSIS OF RAMAYANA

Ramayana is an Indian epic dating from the third century BC and whose authorship is attributed to Vālmīki. Hinduism is the religion on which this story is based and it has become one of the most celebrated in Indian literature.

King Dashratha is married to three women and had four sons, Rama, Bhárata, Shatrughna, and Laxmana. The eldest son, Rama, was the most beloved in the court and by the people because of his character and good behavior. One day, at the request of the palace, he faces a battle against the demons that prevent prayer and wins despite his youth.

Subsequently, Rama married Sita, the daughter of King Jánaka. Dashratha inherits his throne and retires to seek his spiritual liberation. It is there that Rama's challenges begin, not only as king but in his marriage to Sita.

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BOOK I

Canto I. Nárad.⁷

OM.⁸

To sainted Nárad, prince of those Whose lore in words of
wisdom flows. Whose constant care and chief delight Were
Scripture and ascetic rite,

[02] The good Válmíki, first and best

Of hermit saints, these words addressed:⁹ “In all this world, I
pray thee, who

Is virtuous, heroic, true?

Firm in his vows, of grateful mind, To every creature good and
kind? Bounteous, and holy, just, and wise, Alone most fair to all
men’s eyes? Devoid of envy, firm, and sage,

⁶ Called in Sanskrit also Bála-Kár:❖a, and in Hindí Bál-Kár:❖,
i.e. the Book describing Ráma’s childhood, bála meaning a boy
up to his sixteenth year.

⁷ A divine saint, son of Brahmá. He is the eloquent messenger of
the Gods,

a musician of exquisite skill, and the inventor of the vír:á or
Indian lute. He bears a strong resemblance to Hermes or
Mercury.

8 This mystic syllable, said to typify the supreme Deity, the Gods collectively,

the Vedas, the three spheres of the world, the three holy fires, the three steps of Vishr,u etc., prefaces the prayers and most venerated writings of the Hindus.

9 This colloquy is supposed to have taken place about sixteen years after

Ráma's return from his wanderings and occupation of his ancestral throne.

Whose tranquil soul ne'er yields to rage? Whom, when his warrior wrath is high, Do Gods embattled fear and fly?

Whose noble might and gentle skill The triple world can guard from ill? Who is the best of princes, he

Who loves his people's good to see? The store of bliss, the living mine Where brightest joys and virtues shine?

Queen Fortune's¹⁰ best and dearest friend,

Whose steps her choicest gifts attend? Who may with Sun and Moon compare, With Indra,¹¹ Vishr,u,¹² Fire, and Air? Grant, Saint divine,¹³ the boon I ask, For thee, I ween, an easy task,

To whom the power is given to know If such a man breathe here below.” Then Nárad, clear before whose eye The present, past, and future lie,¹⁴

10 Called also Srí and Lakshmi, the consort of Vishnu, the Queen of Beauty as well as the Dea Fortuna. Her birth “from the full-flushed wave” is described in Canto XLV of this Book.

11 One of the most prominent objects of worship in the Rig-veda, Indra was

superseded in later times by the more popular deities Vishnu and Siva. He is the God of the firmament, and answers in many respects to the Jupiter Pluvius of the Romans. See Additional Notes.

12 The second God of the Trimúrti or Indian Trinity. Derived from the root

vis to penetrate, the meaning of the name appears to be he who penetrates or pervades all things. An embodiment of the preserving power of nature, he is worshipped as a Saviour who has nine times been incarnate for the good of the world and will descend on earth once more. See Additional Notes and Muir’s Sanskrit Texts passim.

13 In Sanskrit devarshi. Rishi is the general appellation of sages, and another

word is frequently prefixed to distinguish the degrees. A

Brahmarshi is a theologian or Bráhmanical sage; a Rájarshi is a

royal sage or sainted king; a Devarshi is a divine or deified sage or saint.

14 Trikálajna. Literally knower of the three times. Both Schlegel and Gorresio

Made ready answer: “Hermit, where Are graces found so high and rare? Yet listen, and my tongue shall tell In whom alone these virtues dwell. From old Ikshváku’s¹⁵ line he came,

Known to the world by Ráma’s name:

With soul subdued, a chief of might, In Scripture versed, in glory bright, His steps in virtue’s paths are bent, Obedient, pure, and eloquent.

In each emprise he wins success, And dying foes his power confess.

Tall and broad-shouldered, strong of limb, Fortune has set her mark on him.

Graced with a conch-shell’s triple line,

[03] His throat displays the auspicious sign.¹⁶

futurorum eventuum in unguibus atque etiam in dentibus.”

Though the palmy days of Indian chiromancy have passed away, the art is still to some extent studied and believed in.

quote Homer’s.

Ος ρί ρί ΈΌvρα, ρά: ρί ΈοοΌμEva,
ρρπό ρί ΈΌvρα.

“That sacred seer, whose comprehensive view, The past, the present, and the future knew.”

The Bombay edition reads trilokajna, who knows the three worlds (earth, air and heaven.) “It is by tapas (austere fervour) that rishis of subdued souls, subsisting on roots, fruits and air, obtain a vision of the three worlds with all things moving and stationary.” MANU FNS, XI. 236.

15 Son of Manu, the first king of Kosala and founder of the solar dynasty or family of the Children of the Sun, the God of that luminary being the father of Manu.

16 The Indians paid great attention to the art of physiognomy and believed that character and fortune could be foretold not from the face only but from marks upon the neck and hands. Three lines under the chin like those at the mouth of a conch (Sankha) were regarded as a peculiarly auspicious sign indicating, as did also the mark of Vishnu's discus on the hand, one born to be a chakravartin

High destiny is clear impressed On massive jaw and ample
chest, His mighty shafts he truly aims, And foemen in the battle
tames.

Deep in the muscle, scarcely shown, Embedded lies his collar-
bone.

His lordly steps are firm and free,

His strong arms reach below his knee;¹⁷ All fairest graces join to
deck

His head, his brow, his stately neck, And limbs in fair proportion
set:

The manliest form e'er fashioned yet. Graced with each high
imperial mark, His skin is soft and lustrous dark.

Large are his eyes that sweetly shine With majesty almost
divine.

His plighted word he ne'er forgets; On erring sense a watch he
sets.

By nature wise, his teacher's skill Has trained him to subdue his
will. Good, resolute and pure, and strong,

He guards mankind from scathe and wrong, And lends his aid,
and ne'er in vain,

The cause of justice to maintain. Well has he studied o'er and
o'er

or universal emperor. In the palmistry of Europe the line of fortune, as well

as the line of life, is in the hand. Cardan says that marks on the nails and teeth also show what is to happen to us: “Sunt etiam in nobis vestigia quædam 17 Long arms were regarded as a sign of heroic strength.

The Vedas¹⁸ and their kindred lore. Well skilled is he the bow to draw,¹⁹ Well trained in arts and versed in law; High-souled and meet for happy fate, Most tender and compassionate;

The noblest of all lordly givers, Whom good men follow, as the rivers Follow the King of Floods, the sea: So liberal, so just is he.

18 “Veda means originally knowing or knowledge, and this name is given by the Bráhmans not to one work, but to the whole body of their most ancient sacred literature. Veda is the same word which appears in the Greek οἶδα, I know, and in the English wise, wisdom, to wit. The name of Veda is commonly given to four collections of hymns, which are respectively known by the names of Rig-veda, Yajur-veda, Sáma-veda, and Atharva-veda.”

“As the language of the Veda, the Sanskrit, is the most ancient type of the English of the present day, (Sanskrit and English are

but varieties of one and the same language,) so its thoughts and feelings contain in reality the first roots and germs of that intellectual growth which by an unbroken chain connects our own generation with the ancestors of the Aryan race,—with those very people who at the rising and setting of the sun listened with trembling hearts to the songs of the Veda, that told them of bright powers above, and of a life to come after the sun of their own lives had set in the clouds of the evening. These men were the true ancestors of our race, and the Veda is the oldest book we have in which to study the first beginnings of our language, and of all that is embodied in language. We are by nature Aryan, Indo-European, not Semitic: our spiritual kith and kin are to be found in India, Persia, Greece, Italy, Germany: not in Mesopotamia, Egypt, or Palestine.”

Chips from a German Workshop, Vol. I. pp. 8. 4.

19 As with the ancient Persians and Scythians, Indian princes were carefully

The joy of Queen Kausalyá's²⁰ heart, In every virtue he has part:

Firm as Himálaya's²¹ snowy steep,

Unfathomed like the mighty deep:

The peer of Vishnu's power and might, And lovely as the Lord of Night;²² Patient as Earth, but, roused to ire, Fierce as the world-destroying fire;

In bounty like the Lord of Gold,²³

And Justice self in human mould.

With him, his best and eldest son, By all his princely virtues won King Dasaratha²⁴ willed to share His kingdom as the Regent Heir.

But when Kaikeyí, youngest queen, With eyes of envious hate had seen The solemn pomp and regal state Prepared the prince to consecrate, She bade the hapless king bestow Two gifts he promised long ago, That Ráma to the woods should flee, And that her child the heir should be.

By chains of duty firmly tied,

The wretched king perforce complied. [004]

instructed in archery which stands for military science in general, of which, among Hindu heroes, it was the most important branch.

²⁰ Chief of the three queens of Dasaratha and mother of Ráma.

²¹ From hima snow, (Greek $\chi\epsilon\ \mu\text{-}\nu\upsilon$, Latin hiems) and álaya abode, the Mansion of snow.

²² The moon (Soma, Indu, Chandra etc.) is masculine with the Indians as with

the Germans.

23 Kuvera, the Indian Plutus, or God of Wealth.

24 The events here briefly mentioned will be related fully in the course of the poem. The first four cantos are introductory, and are evidently the work of a later hand than Valmiki's.

Ráma, to please Kaikeyí went Obedient forth to banishment.

Then Lakshmar,'s truth was nobly shown, Then were his love and courage known, When for his brother's sake he dared

All perils, and his exile shared. And Sítá, Ráma's darling wife, Loved even as he loved his life,

Whom happy marks combined to bless, A miracle of loveliness,

Of Janak's royal lineage sprung, Most excellent of women, clung To her dear lord, like Rohir,í Rejoicing with the Moon to be.²⁵

The King and people, sad of mood, The hero's car awhile pursued.

But when Prince Ráma lighted down At Sringavera's pleasant town, Where Gangá's holy waters flow,

25 "Chandra, or the Moon, is fabled to have been married to the twenty-seven daughters of the patriarch Daksha, or Asviní and the rest, who are in fact personifications of the Lunar Asterisms. His favourite amongst them was Rohir,í to whom he so wholly

devoted himself as to neglect the rest. They complained to their father, and Daksha repeatedly interposed, till, finding his remonstrances vain, he denounced a curse upon his son-in-law, in consequence of which he remained childless and became affected by consumption. The wives of Chandra having interceded in his behalf with their father, Daksha modified an imprecation which he could not recall, and pronounced that the decay should be periodical only, not permanent, and that it should alternate with periods of recovery. Hence the successive wane and increase of the Moon. Padma, Purá:a, Swarga-Khar:á, Sec. II. Rohir:í in Astronomy is the fourth lunar mansion, containing five stars, the principal of which is Aldebaran.” WILSON FNS, Specimens of the Hindu Theatre. Vol. I. p. 234.

The Bengal recension has a different reading:

“Shone with her husband like the light Attendant on the Lord of Night.”

He bade his driver turn and go. Guha, Nishádas' king, he met,
And on the farther bank was set.

Then on from wood to wood they strayed, O'er many a stream,
through constant shade, As Bharadvája bade them, till

They came to Chitrakúta's hill.

And Ráma there, with Lakshmar,'s aid, A pleasant little cottage
made,

And spent his days with Sítá, dressed In coat of bark and
deerskin vest.²⁶ And Chitrakúta grew to be

As bright with those illustrious three As Meru's²⁷ sacred peaks
that shine With glory, when the Gods recline Beneath them:
Siva's²⁸ self between The Lord of Gold and Beauty's Queen.

26 The garb prescribed for ascetics by Manu.

27 "Mount Meru, situated like Kailása in the lofty regions to the
north of the Himálayas, is celebrated in the traditions and
myths of India. Meru and Kailása are the two Indian Olympi.
Perhaps they were held in such veneration be- cause the
Sanskrit-speaking Indians remembered the ancient home where
they dwelt with the other primitive peoples of their family
before they descended to occupy the vast plains which extend
between the Indus and the Ganges." GORRESIO FNS.

28 The third God of the Indian Triad, the God of destruction and
reproduction.

See Additional Notes.

The aged king for Ráma pined, And for the skies the earth
resigned. Bharat, his son, refused to reign,

Though urged by all the twice-born²⁹ train.

Forth to the woods he fared to meet His brother, fell before his
feet,

And cried, "Thy claim all men allow: O come, our lord and king
be thou." But Ráma nobly chose to be Observant of his sire's
decree.

He placed his sandals³⁰ in his hand

A pledge that he would rule the land: And bade his brother turn
again.

Then Bharat, finding prayer was vain, The sandals took and
went away;

Nor in Ayodhyá would he stay. But turned to Nandigráma,
where

He ruled the realm with watchful care, Still longing eagerly to
learn

Tidings of Ráma's safe return.

Then lest the people should repeat Their visit to his calm retreat,
Away from Chitrakúta's hill

[05] Fared Ráma ever onward till

29 The epithet *dwija*, or twice-born, is usually appropriate to *Bráhmans*, but is applicable to the three higher castes. Investiture with the sacred thread and initiation of the neophyte into certain religious mysteries are regarded as his regeneration or second birth.

30 His shoes to be a memorial of the absent heir and to maintain his right.

Kálidása (*Raghuvansa*, XII. 17.) says that they were to be *adhivates* or guardian deities of the kingdom.

Beneath the shady trees he stood Of Darśaká's primeval wood,
Virádha, giant fiend, he slew,

And then Agastya's friendship knew. Counsell'd by him he
gained the sword And bow of Indra, heavenly lord:

A pair of quivers too, that bore Of arrows an exhaustless store.

While there he dwelt in greenwood shade The trembling hermits
sought his aid, And bade him with his sword and bow

Destroy the fiends who worked them woe: To come like Indra
strong and brave,

A guardian God to help and save. And Ráma's falchion left its
trace Deep cut on Súrpar,akhá's face: A hideous giantess who
came

Burning for him with lawless flame. Their sister's cries the giants
heard. And vengeance in each bosom stirred: The monster of
the triple head.

And Dúshar, to the contest sped. But they and myriad fiends
beside Beneath the might of Ráma died.

When Rávar,, dreaded warrior, knew The slaughter of his giant
crew: Rávar,, the king, whose name of fear

Earth, hell, and heaven all shook to hear: He bade the fiend
Márícha aid

The vengeful plot his fury laid. In vain the wise Márícha tried
To turn him from his course aside: Not Rávar,'s self, he said,
might hope

With Ráma and his strength to cope. Impelled by fate and blind
with rage He came to Ráma's hermitage.

There, by Márícha's magic art,

He wiled the princely youths apart, The vulture³¹ slew, and bore
away The wife of Ráma as his prey.

The son of Raghu³² came and found Jatáyu slain upon the
ground.

He rushed within his leafy cot;

He sought his wife, but found her not. Then, then the hero's
senses failed;

In mad despair he wept and wailed. Upon the pile that bird he
laid, And still in quest of Sítá strayed.

A hideous giant then he saw, Kabandha named, a shape of awe.

The monstrous fiend he smote and slew, And in the flame the
body threw;

When straight from out the funeral flame In lovely form
Kabandha came,

And bade him seek in his distress A wise and holy hermitess.

By counsel of this saintly dame

To Pampá's pleasant flood he came, And there the steadfast
friendship won Of Hanumán the Wind-God's son.

Counselled by him he told his grief

31 Jatáyu, a semi-divine bird, the friend of Ráma, who fought in
defence of Sítá.

32 Raghu was one of the most celebrated ancestors of Ráma whose commonest

appellation is, therefore, Rághava or descendant of Raghu.

Kálidása in the Raghurasa makes him the son of Dilípa and great-grandfather of Ráma. See Idylls from the Sanskrit, "Aja" and "Dilípa."

To great Sugriva, Vánar chief, Who, knowing all the tale, before
The sacred flame alliance swore. Sugriva to his new-found
friend Told his own story to the end: His hate of Báli for the
wrong And insult he had borne so long. And Ráma lent a willing
ear

And promised to allay his fear. Sugriva warned him of the might
Of Báli, matchless in the fight, And, credence for his tale to gain,
Showed the huge fiend³³ by Báli slain.

The prostrate corse of mountain size Seemed nothing in the
hero's eyes; He lightly kicked it, as it lay,

And cast it twenty leagues³⁴ away.

To prove his might his arrows through Seven palms in line,
uninjured, flew. He cleft a mighty hill apart,

And down to hell he hurled his dart. Then high Sugriva's spirit
rose, Assured of conquest o'er his foes.

With his new champion by his side To vast Kishkindhá's cave he
hied. Then, summoned by his awful shout, King Báli came in fury
out,

First comforted his trembling wife, Then sought Sugriva in the
strife. One shaft from Ráma's deadly bow The monarch in the
dust laid low.

33 Dundhubi.

34 Literally ten yojanas. The yojana is a measure of uncertain
length variously reckoned as equal to nine miles, five, and a
little less.

Then Ráma bade Sugriva reign In place of royal Báli slain.

Then speedy envoys hurried forth Eastward and westward,
south and north, Commanded by the grateful king Tidings of
Ráma's spouse to bring.

Then by Sampáti's counsel led, Brave Hanumán, who mocked at
dread, Sprang at one wild tremendous leap Two hundred
leagues across the deep. To Lanká's³⁵ town he urged his way,

[06] Where Rávar, held his royal sway. There pensive 'neath
Asoka³⁶ boughs He found poor Sítá, Ráma's spouse. He gave
the hapless girl a ring,

A token from her lord and king.

A pledge from her fair hand he bore; Then battered down the
garden door. Five captains of the host he slew, Seven sons of
councillors o'erthrew; Crushed youthful Aksha on the field, Then
to his captors chose to yield.

Soon from their bonds his limbs were free, But honouring the
high decree

Which Brahmá³⁷ had pronounced of yore,

³⁵ Ceylon.

³⁶ The Jonesia Asoka is a most beautiful tree bearing a
profusion of red blossoms.

³⁷ Brahmá, the Creator, is usually regarded as the first God of
the Indian

Trinity, although, as Kálidása says:

“Of Brahmá, Vishnu, Siva, each may be First, second, third,
amid the blessed Three.”

Brahmá had guaranteed Rávar,'s life against all enemies except
man.

He calmly all their insults bore.

The town he burnt with hostile flame, And spoke again with
Ráma's dame, Then swiftly back to Ráma flew With tidings of
the interview.

Then with Sugriva for his guide, Came Ráma to the ocean side.

He smote the sea with shafts as bright As sunbeams in their
summer height, And quick appeared the Rivers' King³⁸
Obedient to the summoning.

A bridge was thrown by Nala o'er The narrow sea from shore to
shore.³⁹ They crossed to Lanká's golden town,

Where Ráma's hand smote Rávar, down. Vibhishar, there was
left to reign

Over his brother's wide domain. To meet her husband Sítá
came;

But Ráma, stung with ire and shame, With bitter words his wife
addressed Before the crowd that round her pressed. But Sítá,
touched with noble ire,

Gave her fair body to the fire.

Then straight the God of Wind appeared, And words from
heaven her honour cleared. And Ráma clasped his wife again,
Uninjured, pure from spot and stain, Obedient to the Lord of
Fire

And the high mandate of his sire. Led by the Lord who rules the sky,

38 Ocean personified.

39 The rocks lying between Ceylon and the mainland are still called Ráma's Bridge by the Hindus.

The Gods and heavenly saints drew nigh, And honoured him with worthy meed, Rejoicing in each glorious deed.

His task achieved, his foe removed, He triumphed, by the Gods approved. By grace of Heaven he raised to life The chieftains slain in mortal strife; Then in the magic chariot through The clouds to Nandigráma flew.

Met by his faithful brothers there, He loosed his votive coil of hair:

Thence fair Ayodhyá's town he gained, And o'er his father's kingdom reigned. Disease or famine ne'er oppressed

His happy people, richly blest With all the joys of ample wealth, Of sweet content and perfect health.

No widow mourned her well-loved mate, No sire his son's untimely fate.

They feared not storm or robber's hand; No fire or flood laid waste the land: The Golden Age⁴⁰ had come again

To bless the days of Ráma's reign.

From him, the great and glorious king, Shall many a princely
scion spring.

And he shall rule, beloved by men,

40 "The Bráhmans, with a system rather cosmogonical than
chronological, divide the present mundane period into four ages
or yugas as they call them: the Krita, the Tretá, the Dwápara,
and the Kali. The Krita, called also the Deva-yuga or that of the
Gods, is the age of truth, the perfect age, the Tretá is the age of
the three sacred fires, domestic and sacrificial; the Dwápara is
the age of doubt; the Kali, the present age, is the age of evil."

GORRESIO.{FNS

Ten thousand years and hundreds ten,⁴¹ And when his life on
earth is past

To Brahmá's world shall go at last."

Whoe'er this noble poem reads That tells the tale of Ráma's
deeds, Good as the Scriptures, he shall be From every sin and
blemish free. Whoever reads the saving strain,
With all his kin the heavens shall gain. Bráhmans who read shall
gather hence The highest praise for eloquence.
The warrior, o'er the land shall reign, The merchant, luck in trade
obtain; And Súdras listening⁴² ne'er shall fail To reap
advantage from the tale.⁴³

[07]

Canto II. Brahmá's Visit

⁴¹ The ancient kings of India enjoyed lives of more than
patriarchal length as will appear in the course of the poem.

42 Súdras, men of the fourth and lowest pure caste, were not allowed to read

the poem, but might hear it recited.

43 The three slokes or distichs which these twelve lines represent are evidently a still later and very awkward addition to the introduction.

Válmíki, graceful speaker, heard, To highest admiration stirred.

To him whose fame the tale rehearsed He paid his mental worship first; Then with his pupil humbly bent Before the saint most eloquent.

Thus honoured and dismissed the seer Departed to his heavenly sphere.

Then from his cot Válmíki hied To Tamasá's⁴⁴ sequestered side, Not far remote from Gangá's tide. He stood and saw the ripples roll Pellucid o'er a pebbly shoal.

To Bharadvája⁴⁵ by his side

He turned in ecstasy, and cried:

“See, pupil dear, this lovely sight,

The smooth-floored shallow, pure and bright, With not a speck or shade to mar,

And clear as good men's bosoms are. Here on the brink thy
pitcher lay, And bring my zone of bark, I pray. Here will I bathe:
the rill has not,

To lave the limbs, a fairer spot. Do quickly as I bid, nor waste
The precious time; away, and haste."

44 There are several rivers in India of this name, now corrupted
into Tonse. The river here spoken of is that which falls into the
Ganges a little below Allahabad.

45 "In Book II, Canto LIV, we meet with a saint of this name
presiding

over a convent of disciples in his hermitage at the confluence of
the Ganges and the Jumna. Thence the later author of these
introductory cantos has borrowed the name and person,
inconsistently indeed, but with the intention of enhancing the
dignity of the poet by ascribing to him so celebrated a disciple."

SCHLEGEL.{FNS

Obedient to his master's hest

Quick from the cot he brought the vest; The hermit took it from
his hand,

And tightened round his waist the band; Then duly dipped and bathed him there, And muttered low his secret prayer.

To spirits and to Gods he made Libation of the stream, and strayed Viewing the forest deep and wide That spread its shade on every side. Close by the bank he saw a pair

Of curlews sporting fearless there. But suddenly with evil mind

An outcast fowler stole behind, And, with an aim too sure and true, The male bird near the hermit slew. The wretched hen in wild despair With fluttering pinions beat the air, And shrieked a long and bitter cry When low on earth she saw him lie,

Her loved companion, quivering, dead, His dear wings with his lifeblood red; And for her golden crested mate

She mourned, and was disconsolate.

The hermit saw the slaughtered bird, And all his heart with ruth was stirred. The fowler's impious deed distressed His gentle sympathetic breast,

And while the curlew's sad cries rang Within his ears, the hermit sang:

“No fame be thine for endless time, Because, base outcast, of thy crime, Whose cruel hand was fain to slay

One of this gentle pair at play!” E’en as he spoke his bosom
wrought

And laboured with the wondering thought What was the speech
his ready tongue Had uttered when his heart was wrung.

He pondered long upon the speech, Recalled the words and
measured each, And thus exclaimed the saintly guide To
Bharadvája by his side:

“With equal lines of even feet,

With rhythm and time and tone complete, The measured form
of words I spoke

In shock of grief be termed a sloke.”⁴⁶

And Bharadvája, nothing slow His faithful love and zeal to show,
Answered those words of wisdom, “Be The name, my lord, as
pleases thee.”

As rules prescribe the hermit took Some lustral water from the
brook. But still on this his constant thought Kept brooding, as
his home he sought; While Bharadvája paced behind,

A pupil sage of lowly mind, And in his hand a pitcher bore

With pure fresh water brimming o’er. Soon as they reached their
calm retreat The holy hermit took his seat;

His mind from worldly cares recalled, And mused in deepest
thought enthralled.

46 The poet plays upon the similarity in sound of the two words: soka, means grief, sloka, the heroic measure in which the poem is composed. It need scarcely be said that the derivation is fanciful.

Then glorious Brahmá,⁴⁷ Lord Most High,

Creator of the earth and sky, [008]

The four-faced God, to meet the sage Came to Válmíki's hermitage.

Soon as the mighty God he saw,

Up sprang the saint in wondering awe. Mute, with clasped hands, his head he bent, And stood before him reverent.

His honoured guest he greeted well, Who bade him of his welfare tell; Gave water for his blessed feet,

Brought offerings,⁴⁸ and prepared a seat.

In honoured place the God Most High Sate down, and bade the saint sit nigh. There sate before Válmíki's eyes

The Father of the earth and skies;

But still the hermit's thoughts were bent On one thing only, all intent

On that poor curlew's mournful fate Lamenting for her
slaughtered mate; And still his lips, in absent mood, The verse
that told his grief, renewed:

47 Brahmá, the Creator, is usually regarded as the first person of the divine triad of India. The four heads with which he is represented are supposed to have allusion to the four corners of the earth which he is sometimes considered to personify. As an object of adoration Brahmá has been entirely superseded by Siva and Vishnu. In the whole of India there is, I believe, but one temple dedicated to his worship. In this point the first of the Indian triad curiously resembles the last of the divine fraternity of Greece, Aïdes the brother of Zeus and Poseidon. "In all Greece, says Pausanias, there is no single temple of Aïdes, except at a single spot in Elis." See Gladstone's *Juventus Mundi*, p. 253. 48 The argha or arghya was a libation or offering to a deity, a Bráhma, or other venerable personage. According to one authority it consisted of water, milk, the points of Kúsa-grass, curds, clarified butter, rice, barley, and white mustard, according to another, of saffron, bel, unbroken grain, flowers, curds, dúrbá-grass, kúsa-grass, and sesamum.

“Woe to the fowler’s impious hand That did the deed that folly
planned; That could to needless death devote The curlew of the
tuneful throat!”

The heavenly Father smiled in glee, And said, “O best of hermits,
see,

A verse, unconscious, thou hast made; No longer be the task
delayed.

Seek not to trace, with labour vain, The unpremeditated strain.

The tuneful lines thy lips rehearsed Spontaneous from thy
bosom burst. Then come, O best of seers, relate The life of
Ráma good and great, The tale that saintly Nárada told,

In all its glorious length unfold. Of all the deeds his arm has
done Upon this earth, omit not one, And thus the noble life
record

Of that wise, brave, and virtuous lord. His every act to day
displayed,

His secret life to none betrayed:

How Lakshmar,, how the giants fought; With high emprise and
hidden thought: And all that Janak’s child⁴⁹ befell

Where all could see, where none could tell. The whole of this
shall truly be

Made known, O best of saints, to thee. In all thy poem, through
my grace,

No word of falsehood shall have place. Begin the story, and
rehearse

The tale divine in charming verse.

49 Sítá, daughter of Janak king of Míthilá.

As long as in this firm-set land

The streams shall flow, the mountains stand, So long throughout
the world, be sure,

The great Rámáyan shall endure.⁵⁰

While the Rámáyan's ancient strain Shall glorious in the earth
remain, To higher spheres shalt thou arise And dwell with me
above the skies.”

He spoke, and vanished into air, And left Válmíki wondering
there. The pupils of the holy man, Moved by their love of him,
began To chant that verse, and ever more

They marvelled as they sang it o'er: “Behold, the four-lined
balanced rime, Repeated over many a time,

In words that from the hermit broke In shock of grief, becomes
a sloke.” This measure now Válmíki chose Wherein his story to
compose.

In hundreds of such verses, sweet With equal lines and even
feet, The saintly poet, lofty-souled, The glorious deeds of Ráma
told.

50 “I congratulate myself,” says Schlegel in the preface to his,
alas, unfinished edition of the Rámáyan, “that, by the favour of
the Supreme Deity, I have been allowed to begin so great a
work; I glory and make my boast that I too after so many ages
have helped to confirm that ancient oracle declared to Válmíki
by the Father of Gods and men:

Dum stabunt montes, campis dum flumina current, Usque tuum
toto carmen celebrabitur orbe.”

Canto III. The Argument.

The hermit thus with watchful heed Received the poem’s
pregnant seed,

And looked with eager thought around

[009]If fuller knowledge might be found. His lips with water first
bedewed,⁵¹ He sate, in reverent attitude

On holy grass,⁵² the points all bent Together toward the
orient;⁵³

And thus in meditation he Entered the path of poesy.

Then clearly, through his virtue's might, All lay discovered to his
sight,

Whate'er befell, through all their life, Ráma, his brother, and his
wife:

And Dasaratha and each queen At every time, in every scene:

His people too, of every sort; The nobles of his princely court:

Whate'er was said, whate'er decreed, Each time they sate each
plan and deed:

For holy thought and fervent rite Had so refined his keener sight
That by his sanctity his view

The present, past, and future knew, And he with mental eye
could grasp, Like fruit within his fingers clasp,

51 "The sipping of water is a requisite introduction of all rites:
without it, says the Sámha Purána, all acts of religion are vain."

COLEBROOKE. FNS

52 The darhha or kusa (Pea cynosuroides), a kind of grass used
in sacrifice by

the Hindus as cerbena was by the Romans.

53 The direction in which the grass should be placed upon the ground as a seat for the Gods, on occasion of offerings made to them.

The life of Ráma, great and good, Roaming with Sítá in the wood. He told, with secret-piercing eyes, The tale of Ráma's high emprise, Each listening ear that shall entice, A sea of pearls of highest price.

Thus good Válmíki, sage divine, Rehearsed the tale of Raghu's line, As Nárada, heavenly saint, before Had traced the story's outline o'er. He sang of Ráma's princely birth, His kindness and heroic worth; His love for all, his patient youth, His gentleness and constant truth, And many a tale and legend old By holy Visvámitra told.

How Janak's child he wooed and won, And broke the bow that bent to none. How he with every virtue fraught

His namesake Ráma⁵⁴ met and fought.

The choice of Ráma for the throne; The malice by Kaikeyí shown, Whose evil counsel marred the plan And drove him forth a banisht man.

How the king grieved and groaned, and cried, And swooned away and pining died.

The subjects' woe when thus bereft; And how the following
crowds he left: With Guha talked, and firmly stern Ordered his
driver to return.

How Gangá's farther shore he gained; By Bharadvája
entertained,

54 Parasuráma or Ráma with the Axe. See Canto LXXIV.

By whose advice he journeyed still And came to Chitrakúta's hill.

How there he dwelt and built a cot; How Bharat journeyed to
the spot; His earnest supplication made; Drink-offerings to their
father paid; The sandals given by Ráma's hand, As emblems of
his right, to stand:

How from his presence Bharat went And years in Nandigráma
spent.

How Ráma entered Dar,9ak wood And in Sutíkhra's presence
stood. The favour Anasúyá showed,

The wondrous balsam she bestowed. How Sarabhanga's
dwelling-place They sought; saw Indra face to face; The
meeting with Agastya gained; The heavenly bow from him
obtained. How Ráma with Virádha met;

Their home in Panchavata set. How Súrpar,akhá underwent The
mockery and disfigurement. Of Trisirá's and Khara's fall,

Of Rávar, roused at vengeance call, Márícha doomed, without
escape; The fair Videhan⁵⁵ lady's rape.

How Ráma wept and raved in vain, And how the Vulture-king
was slain. How Ráma fierce Kabandha slew; Then to the side of
Pampá drew, Met Hanumán, and her whose vows
Were kept beneath the greenwood boughs.

⁵⁵ Sítá. Videha was the country of which Míthilá was the capital.

How Raghu's son, the lofty-souled, On Pampá's bank wept
uncontrolled, Then journeyed, Rishyamúk to reach, And of
Sugriva then had speech.

The friendship made, which both had sought:

How Báli and Sugriva fought. How Báli in the strife was slain,
And how Sugriva came to reign. The treaty, Tára's wild lament;
The rainy nights in watching spent. The wrath of Raghu's lion
son; The gathering of the hosts in one. The sending of the spies
about, And all the regions pointed out.

The ring by Ráma's hand bestowed; The cave wherein the bear
abode. The fast proposed, their lives to end;

Sampati gained to be their friend. [010]

The scaling of the hill, the leap Of Hanumán across the deep.

Ocean's command that bade them seek Maináka of the lofty peak.

The death of Sinhiká, the sight Of Lanká with her palace bright
How Hanumán stole in at eve; His plan the giants to deceive.

How through the square he made his way To chambers where
the women lay, Within the Asoka garden came

And there found Ráma's captive dame. His colloquy with her he
sought,

And giving of the ring he brought. How Sítá gave a gem
o'erjoyed; How Hanumán the grove destroyed.

How giantesses trembling fled,

And servant fiends were smitten dead. How Hanumán was
seized; their ire When Lanká blazed with hostile fire. His leap
across the sea once more; The eating of the honey store.

How Ráma he consoled, and how

He showed the gem from Sítá's brow. With Ocean, Ráma's
interview;

The bridge that Nala o'er it threw. The crossing, and the sitting
down At night round Lanká's royal town. The treaty with
Vibhíshar, made: The plan for Rávar,'s slaughter laid. How
Kumbhakarr,a in his pride And Meghanáda fought and died.

How Rávar, in the fight was slain, And captive Sítá brought
again.

Vibhíshar, set upon the throne; The flying chariot Pushpak
shown.

How Brahmá and the Gods appeared, And Sítá's doubted
honour cleared.

How in the flying car they rode To Bharadvája's cabin abode.
The Wind-God's son sent on afar; How Bharat met the flying
car.

How Ráma then was king ordained; The legions their discharge
obtained. How Ráma cast his queen away; How grew the
people's love each day. Thus did the saint Válmíki tell Whate'er
in Ráma's life befell,

And in the closing verses all

That yet to come will once befall.

Canto IV. The Rhapsodists.

When to the end the tale was brought, Rose in the sage's mind
the thought; "Now who throughout this earth will go, And tell it
forth that all may know?"

As thus he mused with anxious breast, Behold, in hermit's
raiment dressed, Kusá and Lava⁵⁶ came to greet

Their master and embrace his feet. The twins he saw, that
princely pair

Sweet-voiced, who dwelt beside him there None for the task
could be more fit,

For skilled were they in Holy Writ; And so the great Rámáyan,
fraught With lore divine, to these he taught:

The lay whose verses sweet and clear Take with delight the
listening ear, That tell of Sítá's noble life

And Rávar,'s fall in battle strife. Great joy to all who hear they
bring, Sweet to recite and sweet to sing.

For music's sevenfold notes are there, And triple measure,⁵⁷
wrought with care With melody and tone and time,

And flavours⁵⁸ that enhance the rime;

56 The twin sons of Ráma and Sítá, born after Ráma had
repudiated Sítá, and brought up in the hermitage of Válmíki. As
they were the first rhapsodists the combined name Kusílava
signifies a reciter of poems, or an improvisatore, even to the
present day.

57 Perhaps the bass, tenor, and treble, or quick, slow and middle
times. we

know but little of the ancient music of the Hindus.

58 Eight flavours or sentiments are usually enumerated, love, mirth, tender-ness, anger, heroism, terror, disgust, and surprise; tranquility or content, or

Heroic might has ample place, And loathing of the false and base, With anger, mirth, and terror, blent With tenderness, surprise, content.

When, half the hermit's grace to gain, And half because they loved the strain, The youth within their hearts had stored The poem that his lips outpoured, Válmíki kissed them on the head, As at his feet they bowed, and said; "Recite ye this heroic song In tranquil shades where sages throng: Recite it where the good resort, In lowly home and royal court."

The hermit ceased. The tuneful pair, Like heavenly minstrels sweet and fair, In music's art divinely skilled,

Their saintly master's word fulfilled. Like Ráma's self, from whom they came,

[11] They showed their sire in face and frame, As though from some fair sculptured stone Two selfsame images had grown. Sometimes the pair rose up to sing, Surrounded by a holy ring,

Where seated on the grass had met Full many a musing
anchoret.

Then tears bedimmed those gentle eyes, As transport took them
and surprise, And as they listened every one

Cried in delight, Well done! Well done!

paternal tenderness, is sometimes considered the ninth.

WILSON FNS. See the Sáhitya Darpar:a or Mirror of
Composition translated by Dr. Ballantyne and Bábú
Pramadádása Mittra in the Bibliotheca Indica.

Those sages versed in holy lore

Praised the sweet minstrels more and more: And wondered at
the singers' skill,

And the bard's verses sweeter still, Which laid so clear before
the eye The glorious deeds of days gone by. Thus by the
virtuous hermits praised, Inspirited their voice they raised.

Pleased with the song this holy man Would give the youths a
water-can; One gave a fair ascetic dress,

Or sweet fruit from the wilderness.

One saint a black-deer's hide would bring, And one a sacrificial
string:

One, a clay pitcher from his hoard, And one, a twisted munja
cord.⁵⁹ One in his joy an axe would find, One braid, their plaited
locks to bind. One gave a sacrificial cup,

One rope to tie their fagots up; While fuel at their feet was laid,
Or hermit's stool of fig-tree made. All gave, or if they gave not,
none Forgot at least a benison.

Some saints, delighted with their lays, Would promise health
and length of days; Others with surest words would add Some
boon to make their spirit glad.

In such degree of honour then That song was held by holy men:
That living song which life can give,

⁵⁹ Saccharum Munja is a plant from whose fibres is twisted the
sacred string which a Bráhmaṇ wears over one shoulder after
he has been initiated by a rite which in some respects answers
to confirmation.

By which shall many a minstrel live. In seat of kings, in crowded
hall, They sang the poem, praised of all. And Ráma chanced to
hear their lay,

While he the votive steed⁶⁰ would slay,

And sent fit messengers to bring The minstrel pair before the king.

They came, and found the monarch high Enthroned in gold, his brothers nigh; While many a minister below,

And noble, sate in lengthened row. The youthful pair awhile he viewed Graceful in modest attitude,

And then in words like these addressed His brother Lakshmar, and the rest:

“Come, listen to the wondrous strain Recited by these godlike twain, Sweet singers of a story fraught With melody and lofty thought.”

The pair, with voices sweet and strong, Rolled the full tide of noble song,

With tone and accent deftly blent To suit the changing argument. Mid that assembly loud and clear

Rang forth that lay so sweet to hear, That universal rapture stole

Through each man's frame and heart and soul. “These minstrels, blest with every sign

That marks a high and princely line, In holy shades who dwell, Enshrined in Saint Válmíki's lay,

60 A description of an Asvamedha or Horse Sacrifice is given in Canto XIII. of this Book.

A monument to live for aye, My deeds in song shall tell.”

Thus Ráma spoke: their breasts were fired, And the great tale,
as if inspired,

The youths began to sing,

While every heart with transport swelled, And mute and rapt
attention held

The concourse and the king.

Canto V. Ayodhyá.

“Ikshváku’s sons from days of old Were ever brave and mighty-
souled. The land their arms had made their own Was bounded
by the sea alone.

Their holy works have won them praise, Through countless
years, from Manu’s days. Their ancient sire was Sagar, he

Whose high command dug out the sea:61

With sixty thousand sons to throng Around him as he marched
along. From them this glorious tale proceeds: The great
Rámáyan tells their deeds. This noble song whose lines contain
Lessons of duty, love, and gain,

We two will now at length recite, While good men listen with
delight.

61 This exploit is related in Canto XL.

On Sarjú's62 bank, of ample size,

[12] The happy realm of Kosal lies,

With fertile length of fair champaign

And flocks and herds and wealth of grain. There, famous in her
old renown, Ayodhyá63 stands, the royal town,

In bygone ages built and planned By sainted Manu's64 princely
hand. Imperial seat! her walls extend

Twelve measured leagues from end to end, And three in width
from side to side,

With square and palace beautified. Her gates at even distance
stand; Her ample roads are wisely planned. Right glorious is her
royal street

Where streams allay the dust and heat. On level ground in even
row

Her houses rise in goodly show:

Terrace and palace, arch and gate The queenly city decorate.

High are her ramparts, strong and vast, By ways at even
distance passed,

62 The Sarjú or Ghaghra, anciently called Sarayú, rises in the
Himalayas, and after flowing through the province of Oudh,
falls into the Ganges.

63 The ruins of the ancient capital of Ráma and the Children of
the Sun may

still be traced in the present Ajudhyá near Fyzabad. Ajudhyá is
the Jerusalem or Mecca of the Hindus.

64 A legislator and saint, the son of Brahmá or a personification
of Brahmá

himself, the creator of the world, and progenitor of mankind.

Derived from the root man to think, the word means originally
man, the thinker, and is found in this sense in the Rig-veda.

Manu as a legislator is identified with the Cretan Minos, as
progenitor of mankind with the German Mannus: "Celebrant
carminibus antiquis, quod unum apud illos memoriæ et
annalium genus est, Tuisconem deum terra editum, et filium
Mannum, originem gentis conditoresque." TACITUS FNS,
Germania, Cap. II.

With circling moat, both deep and wide, And store of weapons
fortified.

King Dasaratha, lofty-souled, That city guarded and controlled,

With towering Sál trees belted round,⁶⁵

And many a grove and pleasure ground, As royal Indra, throned
on high,

Rules his fair city in the sky.⁶⁶

She seems a painted city, fair

With chess-board line and even square.⁶⁷ And cool boughs
shade the lovely lake Where weary men their thirst may slake.

There gilded chariots gleam and shine, And stately piles the
Gods enshrine.

There gay sleek people ever throng To festival and dance and
song.

A mine is she of gems and sheen,

The darling home of Fortune's Queen. With noblest sort of drink
and meat, The fairest rice and golden wheat, And fragrant with
the chaplet's scent With holy oil and incense blent.

With many an elephant and steed,
And wains for draught and cars for speed. With envoys sent by
distant kings,
And merchants with their precious things With banners o'er her
roofs that play,

65 The Sál (Shorea Robusta) is a valuable timber tree of
considerable height.

66 The city of Indra is called Amarávatí or Home of the
Immortals.

67 Schlegel thinks that this refers to the marble of different
colours with which the houses were adorned. It seems more
natural to understand it as implying the regularity of the streets
and houses.

And weapons that a hundred slay;68 All warlike engines framed
by man, And every class of artisan.

A city rich beyond compare

With bards and minstrels gathered there, And men and damsels
who entrance The soul with play and song and dance. In every
street is heard the lute,

The drum, the tabret, and the flute, The Veda chanted soft and low,
The ringing of the archer's bow;

With bands of godlike heroes skilled In every warlike weapon,
filled, And kept by warriors from the foe, As Nágas guard their home below.⁶⁹ There wisest Bráhmans evermore

The flame of worship feed, And versed in all the Vedas' lore,
Their lives of virtue lead.

Truthful and pure, they freely give; They keep each sense controlled,

And in their holy fervour live Like the great saints of old.

Canto VI. The King.

⁶⁸ The Sataghní i.e. centicide, or slayer of a hundred, is generally supposed to be a sort of fire-arms, or the ancient Indian rocket; but it is also described as a stone set round with iron spikes.

⁶⁹ The Nágas (serpents) are demigods with a human face and serpent body.

They inhabit Pátála or the regions under the earth. Bhogavatí is the name of their capital city. Serpents are still worshipped in India. See Fergusson's Tree and Serpent Worship.

There reigned a king of name revered, To country and to town
endeared, Great Dasaratha, good and sage,

Well read in Scripture's holy page: [013]

Upon his kingdom's weal intent, Mighty and brave and
provident; The pride of old Ikshváku's seed

For lofty thought and righteous deed. Peer of the saints, for
virtues famed, For foes subdued and passions tamed: A rival in
his wealth untold

Of Indra and the Lord of Gold.

Like Manu first of kings, he reigned, And worthily his state
maintained. For firm and just and ever true Love, duty, gain he
kept in view, And ruled his city rich and free, Like Indra's
Amarávatí.

And worthy of so fair a place There dwelt a just and happy race

With troops of children blest.

Each man contented sought no more, Nor longed with envy for
the store

By richer friends possessed. For poverty was there unknown,
And each man counted as his own

Kine, steeds, and gold, and grain.

All dressed in raiment bright and clean, And every townsman
might be seen

With earrings, wreath, or chain.

None deigned to feed on broken fare, And none was false or
stingy there. A piece of gold, the smallest pay, Was earned by
labour for a day.

On every arm were bracelets worn, And none was faithless or
forsworn,

A braggart or unkind.

None lived upon another's wealth,

None pined with dread or broken health, Or dark disease of
mind.

High-souled were all. The slanderous word, The boastful lie, were
never heard.

Each man was constant to his vows, And lived devoted to his
spouse.

No other love his fancy knew,

And she was tender, kind, and true. Her dames were fair of form
and face, With charm of wit and gentle grace, With modest
raiment simply neat, And winning manners soft and sweet. The
twice-born sages, whose delight Was Scripture's page and holy

rite, Their calm and settled course pursued, Nor sought the
menial multitude.

In many a Scripture each was versed, And each the flame of
worship nursed,

And gave with lavish hand.

Each paid to Heaven the offerings due, And none was godless
or untrue

In all that holy band.

To Bráhmans, as the laws ordain, The Warrior caste were ever
fain

The reverence due to pay;

And these the Vaisyas' peaceful crowd, Who trade and toil for
gain, were proud

To honour and obey;

And all were by the Súdras⁷⁰ served,

⁷⁰ The fourth and lowest pure caste whose duty was to serve
the three first

Who never from their duty swerved, Their proper worship all
addressed To Bráhman, spirits, God, and guest. Pure and
unmixt their rites remained,

Their race's honour ne'er was stained.⁷¹

Cheered by his grandsons, sons, and wife, Each passed a long and happy life.

Thus was that famous city held By one who all his race excelled,
Blest in his gentle reign,

As the whole land aforetime swayed By Manu, prince of men,
obeyed

Her king from main to main.

And heroes kept her, strong and brave, As lions guard their
mountain cave: Fierce as devouring flame they burned, And
fought till death, but never turned. Horses had she of noblest
breed,

Like Indra's for their form and speed, From Váhlí's⁷² hills and
Sindhu's⁷³ sand,

classes.

⁷¹ By forbidden marriages between persons of different castes.

⁷² Váhlí or Váhlíka is Bactriana; its name is preserved in the modern Balkh. ⁷³ The Sanskrit word Sindhu is in the singular the name of the river Indus, in the plural of the people and territories on its banks. The name appears as Hidku in the cuneiform inscription of Darius' son of Hystaspes, in which the nations tributary to that king are enumerated.

The Hebrew form is Hodda (Esther, I. 1.). In Zend it appears as Hendu in a somewhat wider sense. With the Persians later the signification of Hind seems to have co-extended with their increasing acquaintance with the country. The weak Ionic dialect omitted the Persian h, and we find in Hecatæus and Herodotus Iv8oc and Iv8 K . In this form the Romans received the names and transmitted them to us. The Arabian geographers in their ignorance that Hind and Sind are two forms of the same word have made of them two brothers and traced their decent from Noah. See Lassen's Indische Alterthumskunde Vol. I. pp. 2, 3.

[014]Vanáyu⁷⁴ and Kámboja's land.⁷⁵ Her noble elephants had strayed

Through Vindhyan and Himálayan shade, Gigantic in their bulk and height,

Yet gentle in their matchless might. They rivalled well the world-spread fame

Of the great stock from which they came, Of Váman, vast of size,

Of Mahápadma's glorious line, Thine, Anjan, and, Airávat, thine.⁷⁶

Upholders of the skies.

With those, enrolled in fourfold class, Who all their mighty kin surpass,

Whom men Matangas name,

And Mrigas spotted black and white, And Bhadras of unwearied might, And Mandras hard to tame.⁷⁷

Thus, worthy of the name she bore,⁷⁸ Ayodhyá for a league or more

Cast a bright glory round, Where Dasaratha wise and great

74 The situation of Vanáyu is not exactly determined: it seems to have lain to the north-west of India.

75 Kámboja was probably still further to the north-west. Lassen thinks that

the name is etymologically connected with Cambyses which in the cuneiform inscription of Behistun is written Ka(m)bujia.

76 The elephants of Indra and other deities who preside over the four points of

the compass.

77 “There are four kinds of elephants. 1 Bhaddar. It is well proportioned, has an erect head, a broad chest, large ears, a long tail, and is bold and can bear fatigue. 2 Mand. It is black, has yellow eyes, a uniformly sized body, and is wild and ungovernable. 3 Mirg. It has a whitish skin, with black spots. 4

Mir. It has a small head, and obeys readily. It gets frightened when it thunders.” Aín-i-Akbarí.. Translated by H. Blochmann, Aín 41, The Imperial Elephant Stables.

78 Ayodhyá means not to be fought against.

Canto VII. The Ministers. 43

Governed his fair ancestral state, With every virtue crowned.

Like Indra in the skies he reigned

In that good town whose wall contained High domes and
turrets proud,

With gates and arcs of triumph decked, And sturdy barriers to
protect

Her gay and countless crowd.

Canto VII. The Ministers.

Two sages, holy saints, had he, His ministers and priests to be:
Vasishtha, faithful to advise, And Vámadeva, Scripture-wise.

Eight other lords around him stood, All skilled to counsel, wise
and good: Jayanta, Vijay, Dhrishti bold

In fight, affairs of war controlled: Siddhárth and Arthasádhak
true Watched o'er expense and revenue, And Dharmapál and
wise Asok

Of right and law and justice spoke. With these the sage
Sumantra, skilled To urge the car, high station filled.

All these in knowledge duly trained Each passion and each
sense restrained: With modest manners, nobly bred

Each plan and nod and look they read, Upon their neighbours'
good intent, Most active and benevolent:

As sit the Vasus⁷⁹ round their king, They sate around him
counselling. They ne'er in virtue's loftier pride Another's lowly
gifts decried.

In fair and seemly garb arrayed,

No weak uncertain plans they made. Well skilled in business, fair
and just, They gained the people's love and trust, And thus
without oppression stored The swelling treasury of their lord.

Bound in sweet friendship each to each, They spoke kind
thoughts in gentle speech. They looked alike with equal eye

On every caste, on low and high. Devoted to their king, they
sought,
Ere his tongue spoke, to learn his thought, And knew, as each
occasion rose,
To hide their counsel or disclose. In foreign lands or in their own
Whatever passed, to them was known. By secret spies they
timely knew What men were doing or would do.
Skilled in the grounds of war and peace They saw the monarch's
state increase, Watching his weal with conquering eye That
never let occasion by,
While nature lent her aid to bless Their labours with unbought
success. Never for anger, lust, or gain,
Would they their lips with falsehood stain. Inclined to mercy
they could scan
The weakness and the strength of man.

79 Attendants of Indra, eight Gods whose names signify fire,
light and its phenomena.

They fairly judged both high and low, And ne'er would wrong a
guiltless foe; Yet if a fault were proved, each one Would punish
e'en his own dear son. But there and in the kingdom's bound No
thief or man impure was found:

None of loose life or evil fame, No tempter of another's dame.

Contented with their lot each caste [015]

Calm days in blissful quiet passed; And, all in fitting tasks
employed, Country and town deep rest enjoyed, With these wise
lords around his throne

The monarch justly reigned, And making every heart his own
The love of all men gained.

With trusty agents, as beseems, Each distant realm he scanned,

As the sun visits with his beams Each corner of the land.

Ne'er would he on a mightier foe With hostile troops advance,

Nor at an equal strike a blow In war's delusive chance.

These lords in council bore their part With ready brain and
faithful heart,

With skill and knowledge, sense and tact, Good to advise and
bold to act.

And high and endless fame he won With these to guide his
schemes,

As, risen in his might, the sun Wins glory with his beams.

Canto VIII. Sumantra's Speech.

But splendid, just, and great of mind, The childless king for
offspring pined. No son had he his name to grace, Transmitter
of his royal race.

Long had his anxious bosom wrought, And as he pondered rose
the thought:

“A votive steed ’twere good to slay, So might a son the gift
repay.” Before his lords his plan he laid,

And bade them with their wisdom aid:

Then with these words Sumantra, best Of royal counsellors,
addressed:

“Hither, Vasishtha at their head, Let all my priestly guides be
led.”

To him Sumantra made reply: “Hear, Sire, a tale of days gone
by. To many a sage in time of old, Sanatkumár, the saint,
foretold

How from thine ancient line, O King,

A son, when years came round, should spring. “Here dwells,”
’twas thus the seer began,

“Of Kasyap’s⁸⁰ race, a holy man,

Vibhár, dak named: to him shall spring A son, the famous
Rishyasring.

Bred with the deer that round him roam, The wood shall be that
hermit's home. To him no mortal shall be known Except his holy
sire alone.

Still by those laws shall he abide

80 Kasyap was a grandson of the God Brahmá. He is supposed
to have given his name to Kashmír = Kasyapa-míra, Kasyap's
Lake.

Which lives of youthful Bráhmans guide, Obedient to the
strictest rule

That forms the young ascetic's school: And all the wondering
world shall hear Of his stern life and penance drear; His care to
nurse the holy fire

And do the bidding of his sire. Then, seated on the Angas'81
throne,

Shall Lomapád to fame be known. But folly wrought by that
great king A plague upon the land shall bring; No rain for many
a year shall fall And grievous drought shall ruin all. The troubled
king with many a prayer

Shall bid the priests some cure declare: "The lore of Heaven 'tis
yours to know, Nor are ye blind to things below: Declare, O holy
men, the way

This plague to expiate and stay.” Those best of Bráhmans shall
reply: “By every art, O Monarch, try Hither to bring Vibhár,dak’s
child, Persuaded, captured, or beguiled.

And when the boy is hither led To him thy daughter duly wed.”

81 The people of Anga. “Anga is said in the lexicons to be
Bengal; but here certainly another region is intended situated at
the confluence of the Sarjú with the Ganges, and not far distant
from Dasaratha’s dominions.” GORRESIO FNS. It comprised
part of Behar and Bhagulpur.

But how to bring that wondrous boy His troubled thoughts will
long employ, And hopeless to achieve the task

He counsel of his lords will ask,

And bid his priests and servants bring With honour saintly
Rishyasring.

But when they hear the monarch’s speech, All these their master
will beseech,

With trembling hearts and looks of woe, To spare them, for they
fear to go.

And many a plan will they declare And crafty plots will frame,

And promise fair to show him there, Unforced, with none to blame.

On every word his lords shall say, The king will meditate,

And on the third returning day Recall them to debate.

Then this shall be the plan agreed, That damsels shall be sent

Attired in holy hermits' weed, And skilled in blandishment,

That they the hermit may beguile

[16] With every art and amorous wile Whose use they know so well,
And by their witcheries seduce The unsuspecting young recluse

To leave his father's cell.

Then when the boy with willing feet Shall wander from his calm retreat

And in that city stand,

The troubles of the king shall end, And streams of blessed rain descend

Upon the thirsty land.

Thus shall the holy Rishyasring To Lomapád, the mighty king,

By wedlock be allied; For Sántá, fairest of the fair,

In mind and grace beyond compare, Shall be his royal bride.

He, at the Offering of the Steed, The flames with holy oil shall
feed, And for King Dasaratha gain

Sons whom his prayers have begged in vain.” “I have repeated,
Sire, thus far,

The words of old Sanatkumár, In order as he spoke them then
Amid the crowd of holy men.”

Then Dasaratha cried with joy,

“Say how they brought the hermit boy.”

Canto IX. Rishyasring.

The wise Sumantra, thus addressed, Unfolded at the king’s
behest

The plan the lords in council laid To draw the hermit from the
shade: “The priest, amid the lordly crowd, To Lomapád thus
spoke aloud:

“Hear, King, the plot our thoughts have framed, A harmless trick
by all unblamed.

Far from the world that hermit’s child Lives lonely in the distant
wild:

A stranger to the joys of sense, His bliss is pain and abstinence;

And all unknown are women yet To him, a holy anchoret.

The gentle passions we will wake That with resistless influence
shake

The hearts of men; and he

Drawn by enchantment strong and sweet Shall follow from his
lone retreat,

And come and visit thee.

Let ships be formed with utmost care That artificial trees may
bear,

And sweet fruit deftly made; Let goodly raiment, rich and rare,

And flowers, and many a bird be there Beneath the leafy shade.

Upon the ships thus decked a band Of young and lovely girls
shall stand, Rich in each charm that wakes desire,

And eyes that burn with amorous fire; Well skilled to sing, and
play, and dance And ply their trade with smile and glance Let
these, attired in hermits' dress, Betake them to the wilderness,

And bring the boy of life austere A voluntary captive here.”

He ended; and the king agreed, By the priest's counsel won.

And all the ministers took heed To see his bidding done.

In ships with wondrous art prepared Away the lovely women
fared,

And soon beneath the shade they stood Of the wild, lonely,
dreary wood.

And there the leafy cot they found Where dwelt the devotee,

And looked with eager eyes around The hermit's son to see.

Still, of Vibhár, dak sore afraid, They hid behind the creepers'
shade.

But when by careful watch they knew The elder saint was far
from view, With bolder steps they ventured nigh To catch the
youthful hermit's eye.

Then all the damsels, blithe and gay, At various games began to
play.

They tossed the flying ball about

With dance and song and merry shout, And moved, their
scented tresses bound With wreaths, in mazy motion round.

Some girls as if by love possessed, Sank to the earth in feigned
unrest, Up starting quickly to pursue Their intermitted game
anew.

It was a lovely sight to see

Those fair ones, as they played, While fragrant robes were
floating free, And bracelets clashing in their glee

A pleasant tinkling made.

The anklet's chime, the Koil's⁸² cry With music filled the place

As 'twere some city in the sky Which heavenly minstrels grace.

With each voluptuous art they strove To win the tenant of the
grove,

And with their graceful forms inspire

82 The Koil or kokila (Cuculus Indicus) as the harbinger of
spring and love is a universal favourite with Indian poets. His
voice when first heard in a glorious spring morning is not
unpleasant, but becomes in the hot season intolerably
wearisome to European ears.

His modest soul with soft desire.

With arch of brow, with beck and smile,

[17] With every passion-waking wile Of glance and lotus hand,

With all enticements that excite The longing for unknown delight

Which boys in vain withstand.

Forth came the hermit's son to view The wondrous sight to him
so new,

And gazed in rapt surprise, For from his natal hour till then On
woman or the sons of men He ne'er had cast his eyes.

He saw them with their waists so slim, With fairest shape and
faultless limb, In variegated robes arrayed,

And sweetly singing as they played. Near and more near the
hermit drew, And watched them at their game,

And stronger still the impulse grew To question whence they
came.

They marked the young ascetic gaze With curious eye and wild
amaze,

And sweet the long-eyed damsels sang, And shrill their merry
laughter rang.

Then came they nearer to his side, And languishing with passion
cried:

“Whose son, O youth, and who art thou, Come suddenly to join
us now?

And why dost thou all lonely dwell In the wild wood? We pray
thee, tell, We wish to know thee, gentle youth; Come, tell us, if
thou wilt, the truth.”

He gazed upon that sight he ne'er

Had seen before, of girls so fair, And out of love a longing rose
His sire and lineage to disclose:

“My father,” thus he made reply, “Is Kasyap’s son, a saint most
high, Vibhár,dak styled; from him I came, And Rishyasring he
calls my name. Our hermit cot is near this place:

Come thither, O ye fair of face; There be it mine, with honour
due, Ye gentle youths, to welcome you.”

They heard his speech, and gave consent, And gladly to his
cottage went.

Vibhár,dak’s son received them well Beneath the shelter of his
cell

With guest-gift, water for their feet, And woodland fruit and
roots to eat,

They smiled, and spoke sweet words like these, Delighted with
his courtesies:

“We too have goodly fruit in store, Grown on the trees that
shade our door; Come, if thou wilt, kind Hermit, haste The
produce of our grove to taste;

And let, O good Ascetic, first

This holy water quench thy thirst.” They spoke, and gave him
comfits sweet Prepared ripe fruits to counterfeit;

And many a dainty cate beside

And luscious mead their stores supplied. The seeming fruits, in
taste and look, The unsuspecting hermit took,
For, strange to him, their form beguiled The dweller in the lonely
wild.

Then round his neck fair arms were flung,

And there the laughing damsels clung, And pressing nearer and
more near With sweet lips whispered at his ear; While rounded
limb and swelling breast The youthful hermit softly pressed.

The pleasing charm of that strange bowl, The touch of a tender
limb,

Over his yielding spirit stole And sweetly vanquished him.

But vows, they said, must now be paid; They bade the boy
farewell,

And, of the aged saint afraid, Prepared to leave the dell.

With ready guile they told him where Their hermit dwelling lay:

Then, lest the sire should find them there, Sped by wild paths
away.

They fled and left him there alone By longing love possessed;

And with a heart no more his own He roamed about distressed.

The aged saint came home, to find The hermit boy distraught,

Revolving in his troubled mind One solitary thought.

“Why dost thou not, my son,” he cried, “Thy due obeisance pay?

Why do I see thee in the tide

Of whelming thought to-day?

A devotee should never wear A mien so sad and strange.

Come, quickly, dearest child, declare The reason of the change.”

And Rishyasring, when questioned thus,

Made answer in this wise: “O sire, there came to visit us

Some men with lovely eyes.

About my neck soft arms they wound And kept me tightly held

To tender breasts so soft and round, That strangely heaved and swelled.

They sing more sweetly as they dance Than e'er I heard till now,

And play with many a sidelong glance And arching of the brow.”

“My son,” said he, “thus giants roam Where holy hermits are,

And wander round their peaceful home Their rites austere to mar.

I charge thee, thou must never lay Thy trust in them, dear boy:

They seek thee only to betray, And woo but to destroy.”

Thus having warned him of his foes That night at home he
spent.

And when the morrow's sun arose [018]

Forth to the forest went.

But Rishyasring with eager pace Sped forth and hurried to the
place Where he those visitants had seen Of daintly waist and
charming mien. When from afar they saw the son

Of Saint Vibhár,dak toward them run, To meet the hermit boy
they hied,

And hailed him with a smile, and cried: "O come, we pray, dear
lord, behold Our lovely home of which we told

Due honour there to thee we'll pay,

And speed thee on thy homeward way." Pleased with the
gracious words they said He followed where the damsels led.

As with his guides his steps he bent, That Bráhmañ high of
worth,

A flood of rain from heaven was sent That gladdened all the
earth.

Vibhár,dak took his homeward road, And wearied by the heavy
load

Of roots and woodland fruit he bore Entered at last his cottage
door.

Fain for his son he looked around, But desolate the cell he
found.

He stayed not then to bathe his feet, Though fainting with the
toil and heat, But hurried forth and roamed about Calling the
boy with cry and shout, He searched the wood, but all in vain;
Nor tidings of his son could gain.

One day beyond the forest's bound The wandering saint a
village found,

And asked the swains and neatherds there Who owned the land
so rich and fair, With all the hamlets of the plain,

And herds of kine and fields of grain. They listened to the
hermit's words, And all the guardians of the herds, With
suppliant hands together pressed, This answer to the saint
addressed: "The Angas' lord who bears the name Of Lomapád,
renowned by fame, Bestowed these hamlets with their kine

And all their riches, as a sign

Of grace, on Rishyasring: and he Vibhár,dak's son is said to be."

The hermit with exulting breast The mighty will of fate

confessed, By meditation's eye discerned; And cheerful to his home returned.

A stately ship, at early morn, The hermit's son away had borne.
Loud roared the clouds, as on he sped, The sky grew blacker overhead;

Till, as he reached the royal town, A mighty flood of rain came down.

By the great rain the monarch's mind The coming of his guest divined.

To meet the honoured youth he went, And low to earth his head he bent.

With his own priest to lead the train, He gave the gift high guests obtain. And sought, with all who dwelt within The city walls, his grace to win.

He fed him with the daintiest fare, He served him with unceasing care, And ministered with anxious eyes Lest anger in his breast should rise; And gave to be the Bráhmaṇ's bride His own fair daughter, lotus-eyed.

Thus loved and honoured by the king, The glorious Bráhmaṇ Rishyasring Passed in that royal town his life

With Sántá his beloved wife.”

Canto X. Rishyasring Invited.

“Again, O best of kings, give ear: My saving words attentive
hear, And listen to the tale of old

By that illustrious Bráhmaṇ told.

“Of famed Ikshváku’s line shall spring (’Twas thus he spoke) a
pious king, Named Dasaratha, good and great, True to his word
and fortunate.

He with the Angas’ mighty lord Shall ever live in sweet accord,
And his a daughter fair shall be, Sántá of happy destiny.

But Lomapád, the Angas’ chief, Still pining in his childless grief,
To Dasaratha thus shall say:

“Give me thy daughter, friend, I pray, Thy Sántá of the tranquil
mind,

The noblest one of womankind.”

The father, swift to feel for woe, Shall on his friend his child
bestow; And he shall take her and depart

To his own town with joyous heart. The maiden home in triumph
led, To Rishyasring the king shall wed. And he with loving joy
and pride

Shall take her for his honoured bride. And Dasaratha to a rite
That best of Bráhmans shall invite With supplicating prayer,
To celebrate the sacrifice

To win him sons and Paradise,⁸³

That he will fain prepare. [019]

From him the lord of men at length The boon he seeks shall
gain,

And see four sons of boundless strength His royal line maintain.”

“Thus did the godlike saint of old The will of fate declare,

And all that should befall unfold Amid the sages there.

O Prince supreme of men, go thou, Consult thy holy guide,

And win, to aid thee in thy vow, This Bráhman to thy side.”

Sumantra’s counsel, wise and good, King Dasaratha heard,

Then by Vasishtha’s side he stood And thus with him conferred:

“Sumantra counsels thus: do thou My priestly guide, the plan
allow.”

Vasishtha gave his glad consent, And forth the happy monarch
went With lords and servants on the road That led to
Rishyasring’s abode.

Forests and rivers duly past,

He reached the distant town at last Of Lomapád the Angas'
king, And entered it with welcoming.

On through the crowded streets he came, And, radiant as the
kindled flame,

83 “Sons and Paradise are intimately connected in Indian belief.
A man desires above every thing to have a son to perpetuate
his race, and to assist with sacrifices and funeral rites to make
him worthy to obtain a lofty seat in heaven or to preserve that
which he has already obtained.” GORRESIO{FNS.

He saw within the monarch's house The hermit's son most
glorious.

There Lomapád, with joyful breast, To him all honour paid,
For friendship for his royal guest His faithful bosom swayed.

Thus entertained with utmost care Seven days, or eight, he
tarried there, And then that best of men thus broke His purpose
to the king, and spoke: “O King of men, mine ancient friend,

(Thus Dasaratha prayed)

Thy Sántá with her husband send My sacrifice to aid.”

Said he who ruled the Angas, Yea, And his consent was won:

And then at once he turned away To warn the hermit's son.

He told him of their ties beyond Their old affection's faithful
bond:

"This king," he said, "from days of old A well beloved friend I
hold.

To me this pearl of dames he gave From childless woe mine age
to save, The daughter whom he loved so much, Moved by
compassion's gentle touch. In him thy Sántás father see:

As I am even so is he.

For sons the childless monarch yearns: To thee alone for help he
turns.

Go thou, the sacred rite ordain To win the sons he prays to gain:

Go, with thy wife thy succour lend, And give his vows a blissful
end."

The hermit's son with quick accord Obeyed the Angas' mighty
lord,

And with fair Sántá at his side To Dasaratha's city hied.

Each king, with suppliant hands upheld, Gazed on the other's
face:

And then by mutual love impelled Met in a close embrace.

Then Dasaratha's thoughtful care, Before he parted thence,

Bade trusty servants homeward bear The glad intelligence:
“Let all the town be bright and gay With burning incense sweet;
Let banners wave, and water lay The dust in every street.”

Glad were the citizens to learn The tidings of their lord’s return,
And through the city every man Obediently his task began.

And fair and bright Ayodhyá showed, As following his guest he
rode

Through the full streets where shell and drum Proclaimed aloud
the king was come.

And all the people with delight Kept gazing on their king,

Attended by that youth so bright, The glorious Rishyasring.

When to his home the king had brought The hermit’s saintly son,

He deemed that all his task was wrought, And all he prayed for
won.

And lords who saw that stranger dame So beautiful to view,

Rejoiced within their hearts, and came And paid her honour too.

There Rishyasring passed blissful days, Graced like the king with
love and praise And shone in glorious light with her, Sweet
Sántá, for his minister,

As Brahmá’s son Vasishtha, he Who wedded Saint Arundhati.⁸⁴

Canto XI. The Sacrifice Decreed.

The Dewy Season⁸⁵ came and went; The spring returned again:

Then would the king, with mind intent,

[20] His sacrifice ordain.

He came to Rishyasring, and bowed To him of look divine,

And bade him aid his offering vowed For heirs, to save his line.

Nor would the youth his aid deny: He spake the monarch fair,

And prayed him for that rite so high All requisites prepare.

The king to wise Sumantra cried Who stood aye ready near;

“Go summon quick each holy guide, To counsel and to hear.”

84 One of the Pleiades and generally regarded as the model of wifely excellence.

85 The Hindu year is divided into six seasons of two months each, spring,

summer, rains, autumn, winter, and dews.

Obedient to his lord's behest Away Sumantra sped,
And brought Vasishtha and the rest, In Scripture deeply read.
Suyajna, Vámadeva came, Jávali, Kasyap's son,
And old Vasishtha, dear to fame, Obedient every one.
King Dasaratha met them there And duly honoured each,
And spoke in pleasant words his fair And salutary speech:
"In childless longing doomed to pine, No happiness, O lords, is
mine.

So have I for this cause decreed To slay the sacrificial steed.
Fain would I pay that offering high Wherein the horse is
doomed to die, With Rishyasring his aid to lend, And with your
glory to befriend."

With loud applause each holy man Received his speech,
approved the plan, And, by the wise Vasishtha led,
Gave praises to the king, and said: "The sons thou cravest shalt
thou see, Of fairest glory, born to thee,

Whose holy feelings bid thee take

This righteous course for offspring's sake." Cheered by the
ready praise of those Whose aid he sought, his spirits rose,
And thus the king his speech renewed With looks of joy and
gratitude:

“Let what the coming rites require Be ready as the priests
desire,

And let the horse, ordained to bleed, With fitting guard and
priest, be freed,⁸⁶ Yonder on Sarjú’s northern side

The sacrificial ground provide; And let the saving rites, that
naught Ill-omened may occur, be wrought. The offering I
announce to-day

Each lord of earth may claim to pay, Provided that his care can
guard The holy rite by flaws unmarred.

For wandering fiends, whose watchful spite Waits eagerly to
spoil each rite,

Hunting with keenest eye detect The slightest slip, the least
neglect;

And when the sacred work is crossed The workman is that
moment lost.

Let preparation due be made:

Your powers the charge can meet: That so the noble rite be paid

In every point complete.”

And all the Bráhmans answered, Yea, His mandate honouring,

And gladly promised to obey The order of the king.

They cried with voices raised aloud: "Success attend thine aim!"

Then bade farewell, and lowly bowed, And hastened whence they came.

King Dasaratha went within, His well loved wives to see:

And said: "Your lustral rites begin,

86 It was essential that the horse should wander free for a year before immolation, as a sign that his master's paramount sovereignty was acknowledged by all neighbouring princes.

For these shall prosper me. A glorious offering I prepare

That precious fruit of sons may bear." Their lily faces brightened fast

Those pleasant words to hear, As lilies, when the winter's past,
In lovelier hues appear.

Canto XII. The Sacrifice Begun.

Again the spring with genial heat Returning made the year
complete. To win him sons, without delay His vow the king
resolved to pay: And to Vasishtha, saintly man,

In modest words this speech began: "Prepare the rite with all
things fit As is ordained in Holy Writ,

And keep with utmost care afar Whate'er its sacred forms might
mar. Thou art, my lord, my trustiest guide, Kind-hearted, and my
friend beside; So is it meet thou undertake

This heavy task for duty's sake."

Then he, of twice-born men the best, His glad assent at once
expressed: "Fain will I do whate'er may be Desired, O honoured
King, by thee."

To ancient priests he spoke, who, trained In holy rites, deep skill
had gained: "Here guards be stationed, good and sage

Religious men of trusted age.

And various workmen send and call, Who frame the door and
build the wall: With men of every art and trade,

[21] Who read the stars and ply the spade, And mimes and
minstrels hither bring, And damsels trained to dance and sing."

Then to the learned men he said, In many a page of Scripture
read: "Be yours each rite performed to see According to the
king's decree.

And stranger Bráhmans quickly call To this great rite that
welcomes all. Pavilions for the princes, decked With art and
ornament, erect,

And handsome booths by thousands made The Bráhman
visitors to shade,

Arranged in order side by side,

With meat and drink and all supplied. And ample stables we
shall need

For many an elephant and steed:

And chambers where the men may lie, And vast apartments,
broad and high, Fit to receive the countless bands

Of warriors come from distant lands. For our own people too
provide Sufficient tents, extended wide,

And stores of meat and drink prepare, And all that can be
needed there.

And food in plenty must be found For guests from all the
country round. Of various viands presents make,

For honour, not for pity's sake, That fit regard and worship be

Paid to each caste in due degree. And let not wish or wrath
excite

Your hearts the meanest guest to slight; But still observe with
special grace Those who obtain the foremost place, Whether for
happier skill in art

Or bearing in the rite their part. Do you, I pray, with friendly
mind Perform the task to you assigned, And work the rite, as
bids the law, Without omission, slip, or flaw”

They answered: “As thou seest fit So will we do and naught
omit.” The sage Vasishtha then addressed Sumantra called at
his behest:

“The princes of the earth invite,

And famous lords who guard the rite, Priest, Warrior, Merchant,
lowly thrall, In countless thousands summon all.

Where'er their home be, far or near, Gather the good with
honour here, And Janak, whose imperial sway The men of
Mithilá⁸⁷ obey.

The firm of vow, the dread of foes, Who all the lore of Scripture
knows, Invite him here with honour high, King Dasaratha's old
ally.

And Kási's⁸⁸ lord of gentle speech,

Who finds a pleasant word for each,

87 Called also Vidcha, later Tirabhukti, corrupted into the modern Tirhut, a province bounded on the west and east by the Gaudakí and Kausikí rivers, on the south by the Ganges, and on the north by the skirts of the Himálayas.

88 The celebrated city of Benares. See Dr. Hall's learned and exhaustive

Monograph in the Sacred City of the Hindus, by the Rev. M. A. Sherring.

In length of days our monarch's peer, Illustrious king, invite him here.

The father of our ruler's bride, Known for his virtues far and wide,

The king whom Kekaya's⁸⁹ realms obey,

Him with his son invite, I pray. And Lomapád the Angas' king,

True to his vows and godlike, bring. For be thine invitations sent

To west and south and orient.

Call those who rule Suráshtra's⁹⁰ land, Suvíra's⁹¹ realm and Sindhu's strand, And all the kings of earth beside

In friendship's bonds with us allied: Invite them all to hasten in

With retinue and kith and kin." Vasishtha's speech without delay

Sumantra bent him to obey. And sent his trusty envoys forth
Eastward and westward, south and north. Obedient to the
saint's request

Himself he hurried forth, and pressed Each nobler chief and lord
and king To hasten to the gathering.

Before the saint Vasishtha stood

All those who wrought with stone and wood, And showed the
work which every one

In furtherance of the rite had done, Rejoiced their ready zeal to
see, Thus to the craftsmen all said he:

89 Kekaya is supposed to have been in the Panjáb. The name of
the king was Asvapati (Lord of Horses), father of Dasaratha's
wife Kaikeyí.

90 Surat.

91 Apparently in the west of India not far from the Indus.

“I charge ye, masters, see to this, That there be nothing done
amiss, And this, I pray, in mind be borne, That not one gift ye
give in scorn:

Whenever scorn a gift attends Great sin is his who thus
offends.”

And now some days and nights had past, And kings began to
gather fast,

And precious gems in liberal store As gifts to Dasaratha bore.

Then joy thrilled through Vasishtha's breast As thus the monarch
he addressed:

“Obedient to thy high decree

The kings, my lord, are come to thee. [022]

And it has been my care to greet And honour all with reverence
meet. Thy servants' task is ended quite, And all is ready for the
rite.

Come forth then to the sacred ground Where all in order will be
found.” Then Rishyasring confirmed the tale: Nor did their
words to move him fail. The stars propitious influence lent When
forth the world's great ruler went.

Then by the sage Vasishtha led The priest begun to speed

Those glorious rites wherein is shed The lifeblood of the steed.

Canto XIII. The Sacrifice Finished.

The circling year had filled its course,

And back was brought the wandering horse: Then upon Sarjú's
northern strand

Began the rite the king had planned. With Rishyasring the forms
to guide, The Bráhmans to their task applied, At that great
offering of the steed Their lofty-minded king decreed.

The priests, who all the Scripture knew, Performed their part in
order due,

And circled round in solemn train As precepts of the law ordain.

Pravargya rites⁹² were duly sped:

For Upasads⁹³ the flames were fed.

Then from the plant⁹⁴ the juice was squeezed, And those high
saints with minds well pleased Performed the mystic rites begun

With bathing ere the rise of sun They gave the portion Indra's
claim,

And hymned the King whom none can blame. The mid-day
bathing followed next, Observed as bids the holy text.

Then the good priests with utmost care, In form that Scripture's
rules declare,

92 “The Pravargya ceremony lasts for three days, and is always performed twice a day, in the forenoon and afternoon. It precedes the animal and Soma sacrifices. For without having undergone it, no one is allowed to take part in the solemn Soma feast prepared for the gods.” Haug’s Aitareya Bráhmaṛ:am. Vol. II. p. 41. note q.v.

93 Upasads. “The Gods said, Let us perform the burnt offerings called Upasads

(i.e. besieging). For by means of an Upasad, i.e. besieging, they conquer a large (fortified) town.”—Ibid. p. 32.

94 The Soma plant, or *Asclepias Acida*. Its fermented juice was drunk in

sacrifice by the priests and offered to the Gods who enjoyed the intoxicating draught.

For the third time pure water shed
On high souled Dasaratha’s
head. Then Rishyasring and all the rest
To Indra and the Gods
addressed

Their sweet-toned hymn of praise and prayer,
And called them
in the rite to share.

With sweetest song and hymn entoned
They gave the Gods in
heaven enthroned,
As duty bids, the gifts they claim,

The holy oil that feeds the flame. And many an offering there
was paid, And not one slip in all was made.

For with most careful heed they saw That all was done by Veda
law.

None, all those days, was seen oppressed By hunger or by toil
distressed.

Why speak of human kind? No beast Was there that lacked an
ample feast. For there was store for all who came, For orphan
child and lonely dame; The old and young were well supplied,
The poor and hungry satisfied.

Throughout the day ascetics fed,

And those who roam to beg their bread: While all around the cry
was still,

“Give forth, give forth,” and “Eat your fill.” “Give forth with
liberal hand the meal,

And various robes in largess deal.” Urged by these cries on
every side Unweariedly their task they plied: And heaps of food
like hills in size In boundless plenty met the eyes:

And lakes of sauce, each day renewed, Refreshed the weary
multitude.

And strangers there from distant lands, And women folk in
crowded bands The best of food and drink obtained At the
great rite the king ordained.

Apart from all, the Bráhmans there, Thousands on thousands,
took their share Of various dainties sweet to taste,

On plates of gold and silver placed, All ready set, as, when they
willed, The twice-born men their places filled. And servants in
fair garments dressed Waited upon each Bráhman guest.

Of cheerful mind and mien were they, With gold and jewelled
earrings gay. The best of Bráhmans praised the fare Of
countless sorts, of flavour rare: And thus to Raghu's son they
cried: "We bless thee, and are satisfied."

Between the rites some Bráhmans spent

[23] The time in learned argument, With ready flow of speech,
sedate, And keen to vanquish in debate.⁹⁵

There day by day the holy train Performed all rites as rules
ordain. No priest in all that host was found

95 "Tum in cærimoniarum intervallis Brachmanæ facundi,
sollertes, crebros sermones de rerum causis instituebant, alter
alterum vincendi cupidi. This public disputation in the assembly
of Bráhmans on the nature of things, and the almost fraternal
connexion between theology and philosophy deserves some
notice; whereas the priests of some religions are generally but
little inclined to show favour to philosophers, nay, sometimes

persecute them with the most rancorous hatred, as we are taught both by history and experience.... This sloka is found in the MSS. of different recensions of the Rámáyan, and we have, therefore, the most trustworthy testimony to the antiquity of philosophy among the Indians.” SCHLEGEL{FNS.

But kept the vows that held him bound:

None, but the holy Vedas knew, And all their six-fold science⁹⁶ too. No Bráhman there was found unfit To speak with eloquence and wit.

And now the appointed time came near The sacrificial posts to rear.

They brought them, and prepared to fix Of Bel⁹⁷ and Khádir⁹⁸ six and six;

Six, made of the Palása⁹⁹ tree, Of Fig-wood one, apart to be:

Of Sleshmát¹⁰⁰ and of Devadár¹⁰¹

One column each, the mightiest far:

So thick the two, the arms of man Their ample girth would fail to span.

All these with utmost care were wrought By hand of priests in Scripture taught, And all with gold were gilded bright

To add new splendour to the rite:

Twenty-and-one those stakes in all, Each one-and-twenty cubits tall:

And one-and-twenty ribbons there Hung on the pillars, bright and fair.

96 The Angas or appendices of the Vedas, pronunciation, prosody, grammar, ritual, astronomy, and explanation of obscurities.

97 In Sanskrit vilva, the *Ægle Marmelos*. “He who desires food and wishes

to grow fat, ought to make his Yúpa (sacrificial post) of Bilva wood.” Haug’s

Aitareya Bráhmaṇam. Vol. II. p. 73.

98 The *Mimosa Catechu*. “He who desires heaven ought to make his Yúpa of Khádira wood.”—*Ibid*.

99 The *Butea Frondosa*. “He who desires beauty and sacred knowledge ought

to make his Yúpa of Palása wood.”—*Ibid*.

100 The *Cardia Latifolia*.

101 A kind of pine. The word means literally the tree of the Gods. Compare the Hebrew “trees of the Lord.”

Firm in the earth they stood at last, Where cunning craftsmen
fixed them fast; And there unshaken each remained, Octagonal
and smoothly planed.

Then ribbons over all were hung,

And flowers and scent around them flung. Thus decked they
cast a glory forth

Like the great saints who star the north.¹⁰²

The sacrificial altar then

Was raised by skilful twice-born men, In shape and figure to
behold

An eagle with his wings of gold,

With twice nine pits and formed three-fold Each for some
special God, beside

The pillars were the victims tied;

The birds that roam the wood, the air, The water, and the land
were there, And snakes and things of reptile birth,

And healing herbs that spring from earth:

As texts prescribe, in Scripture found, Three hundred victims
there were bound. The steed devoted to the host

Of Gods, the gem they honour most, Was duly sprinkled. Then
the Queen Kausalyá, with delighted mien,

With reverent steps around him paced, And with sweet wreaths
the victim graced; Then with three swords in order due

She smote the steed with joy, and slew. That night the queen, a
son to gain, With calm and steady heart was fain By the dead
charger's side to stay

102 The Hindus call the constellation of Ursa Major the Seven
Rishis or Saints.

From evening till the break of day.

Then came three priests, their care to lead The other queens to
touch the steed, Upon Kausalyá to attend,

Their company and aid to lend. As by the horse she still reclined,
With happy mien and cheerful mind, With Rishyasring the twice-
born came And praised and blessed the royal dame. The priest
who well his duty knew,

And every sense could well subdue, From out the bony
chambers freed And boiled the marrow of the steed. Above the
steam the monarch bent, And, as he smelt the fragrant scent, In
time and order drove afar

All error that his hopes could mar. Then sixteen priests together
came And cast into the sacred flame

The severed members of the horse, Made ready all in ordered
course.

On piles of holy Fig-tree raised [024]

The meaner victims' bodies blazed: The steed, of all the creatures slain, Alone required a pile of cane.

Three days, as is by law decreed, Lasted that Offering of the Steed. The Chatushtom began the rite,

And when the sun renewed his light, The Ukthya followed: after came The Atirátra's holy flame.

These were the rites, and many more Arranged by light of holy lore,

The Aptoryám of mighty power,

And, each performed in proper hour, The Abhijit and Visvajit With every form and service fit; And with the sacrifice at night

The Jyotishtom and Áyus rite.¹⁰³ The Atirátra, literally lasting through the night, is a division of the service of the Jyotishtoma.

The Abhijit, the everywhere victorious, is the name of a sub-division of the great sacrifice of the Gavámanaya.

The Visvajit, or the all-conquering, is a similar sub-division. Áyus is the name of a service forming a division of the Abhiplava sacrifice.

The Aptoryám, is the seventh or last part of the Jyotishtoma, for the performance of which it is not essentially necessary, but a voluntary sacrifice instituted for the attainment of a specific desire. The literal meaning of the word would be in conformity with the Prauhamanoramá, “a sacrifice which procures the attainment of the desired object.” GOLDSTÜCKER’S DICTIONARY{FNS.

103 A minute account of these ancient ceremonies would be out of place here. “Ágnishtoma is the name of a sacrifice, or rather a series of offerings to fire for five days. It is the first and principal part of the Jyotishtoma, one of the great sacrifices in which especially the juice of the Soma plant is offered for the purpose of obtaining Swarga or heaven.” GOLDSTÜCKER’S DICTIONARY{FNS.

“The Ágnishtoma is Agni. It is called so because they (the gods) praised him with this Stoma. They called it so to hide the proper meaning of the word: for the gods like to hide the proper meaning of words.”

“On account of four classes of gods having praised Agni with four Stomas, the whole was called Chatushtoma (containing four Stomas).”

“It (the Ágnishtoma) is called Jyotishtoma, for they praised Agni when he had risen up (to the sky) in the shape of a light (jyotis).”

“This (Ágnishtoma) is a sacrificial performance which has no beginning and no end.” HAUG’S{FNS Aitareya Bráhmam.

“The Ukthya is a slight modification of the Ágnishtoma sacrifice. The noun to be supplied to it is kratu. It is a Soma sacrifice also, and one of the seven Sar,sthās or component parts of the Jyotishtoma. Its name indicates its nature. For Ukthya means ‘what refers to the Uktha,’ which is an older name for Shástra, i.e. recitation of one of the Hotri priests at the time of the Soma libations. Thus this sacrifice is only a kind of supplement to the Ágnishtoma.” HAUG{FNS. Ai. B.

The task was done, as laws prescribe: The monarch, glory of his tribe, Bestowed the land in liberal grants Upon the sacred ministrants.

He gave the region of the east, His conquest, to the Hotri priest.
The west, the celebrant obtained:

The south, the priest presiding gained:

The northern region was the share

Of him who chanted forth the prayer,¹⁰⁴ Thus did each priest obtain his meed

At the great Slaughter of the Steed, Ordained, the best of all to be,

104 “Four classes of priests were required in India at the most solemn sacrifices.

1. The officiating priests, manual labourers, and acolytes, who had chiefly to prepare the sacrificial ground, to dress the altar, slay the victims, and pour out the libations. 2. The choristers, who chant the sacred hymns. 3. The reciters or readers, who repeat certain hymns. 4. The overseers or bishops, who watch and superintend the proceedings of the other priests, and ought to be familiar with all the Vedas. The formulas and verses to be muttered by the first class are contained in the Yajur-veda-sanhitá. The hymns to be sung by the second class are in the Sama-veda-sanhitá. The Atharva-veda is said to be intended for the Brahman or overseer, who is to watch the proceedings of the sacrifice, and to remedy any mistake that may occur. The hymns to be recited by the third class are contained in the Rigveda,” Chips from a German Workshop.

By self-existent deity. Ikshváku's son with joyful mind
This noble fee to each assigned,

But all the priests with one accord Addressed that unpolluted
lord: “Tis thine alone to keep the whole

[025]Of this broad earth in firm control. No gift of lands from
thee we seek:

To guard these realms our hands were weak. On sacred lore our days are spent:

Let other gifts our wants content.”

The chief of old Ikshváku’s line Gave them ten hundred thousand kine, A hundred millions of fine gold,

The same in silver four times told. But every priest in presence there With one accord resigned his share. To Saint Vasishtha, high of soul,

And Rishyasring they gave the whole. That largess pleased those Bráhmans well, Who bade the prince his wishes tell.

Then Dasaratha, mighty king, Made answer thus to Rishyasring: “O holy Hermit, of thy grace,

Vouchsafe the increase of my race.” He spoke; nor was his prayer denied: The best of Bráhmans thus replied: “Four sons, O Monarch, shall be thine, Upholders of thy royal line.”

Canto XIV. Rávan Doomed.

The saint, well read in holy lore, Pondered awhile his answer o'er,
And thus again addressed the king, His wandering thoughts
regathering:

“Another rite will I begin

Which shall the sons thou cravest win, Where all things shall be
duly sped And first Atharva texts be read.”

Then by Vibhár,dak's gentle son Was that high sacrifice begun,
The king's advantage seeking still And zealous to perform his
will.

Now all the Gods had gathered there, Each one for his allotted
share:

Brahmá, the ruler of the sky, Sthár,u, Náráyar,, Lord most high,
And holy Indra men might view With Maruts¹⁰⁵ for his retinue;
The heavenly chorister, and saint, And spirit pure from earthly
taint,

With one accord had sought the place The high-souled
monarch's rite to grace. Then to the Gods who came to take
Their proper share the hermit spake:

“For you has Dasaratha slain The votive steed, a son to gain;

Stern penance-rites the king has tried, And in firm faith on you
relied,

105 The Maruts are the winds, deified in the religion of the Veda like other mighty powers and phenomena of nature.

And now with undiminished care A second rite would fain
prepare. But, O ye Gods, consent to grant The longing of your
suppliant. For him beseeching hands I lift, And pray you all to
grant the gift, That four fair sons of high renown

The offerings of the king may crown.” They to the hermit’s son
replied:

“His longing shall be gratified. For, Bráhman, in most high
degree We love the king and honour thee.”

These words the Gods in answer said, And vanished thence by
Indra led.

Thus to the Lord, the worlds who made, The Immortals all
assembled prayed: “O Brahmá, mighty by thy grace, Rávar,,
who rules the giant race, Torments us in his senseless pride,
And penance-loving saints beside. For thou well pleased in days
of old Gavest the boon that makes him bold, That God nor
demon e’er should kill His charmed life, for so thy will.

We, honouring that high behest,

Bear all his rage though sore distressed. That lord of giants
fierce and fell Scourges the earth and heaven and hell. Mad with
thy boon, his impious rage Smites saint and bard and God and
sage. The sun himself withholds his glow, The wind in fear
forbears to blow;

The fire restrains his wonted heat

Where stand the dreaded Rávar,'s feet, And, necklaced with the
wandering wave, The sea before him fears to rave.

Kuvera's self in sad defeat

Is driven from his blissful seat. We see, we feel the giant's might,
And woe comes o'er us and affright. To thee, O Lord, thy
suppliants pray To find some cure this plague to stay."

Thus by the gathered Gods addressed He pondered in his secret
breast,

And said: "One only way I find To slay this fiend of evil mind.

He prayed me once his life to guard From demon, God, and
heavenly bard, And spirits of the earth and air,

And I consenting heard his prayer. But the proud giant in his
scorn Recked not of man of woman born. None else may take

his life away, But only man the fiend may slay.” The Gods, with
Indra at their head, Rejoiced to hear the words he said.

Then crowned with glory like a flame, Lord Vishnu to the council
came;

His hands shell, mace, and discus bore,

And saffron were the robes he wore. [026]

Riding his eagle through the crowd, As the sun rides upon a
cloud,

With bracelets of fine gold, he came Loud welcomed by the
Gods’ acclaim. His praise they sang with one consent, And cried,
in lowly reverence bent:

“O Lord whose hand fierce Madhu slew, Be thou our refuge,
firm and true;

Friend of the suffering worlds art thou, We pray thee help thy
suppliants now.” Then Vishnu spake: “Ye Gods, declare, What
may I do to grant your prayer?”

“King Dasaratha,” thus cried they, “Fervent in penance many a
day, The sacrificial steed has slain, Longing for sons, but all in
vain.

Now, at the cry of us forlorn, Incarnate as his seed be born.

Three queens has he: each lovely dame Like Beauty, Modesty, or
Fame.

Divide thyself in four, and be

His offspring by these noble three. Man's nature take, and slay
in fight Rávar, who laughs at heavenly might:

This common scourge, this rankling thorn Whom the three
worlds too long have borne For Rávar, in the senseless pride
Of might unequalled has defied

The host of heaven, and plagues with woe Angel and bard and
saint below, Crushing each spirit and each maid

Who plays in Nandan's¹⁰⁷ heavenly shade.

O conquering Lord, to thee we bow; Our surest hope and trust
art thou. Regard the world of men below, And slay the Gods'
tremendous foe.”

106 A Titan or fiend whose destruction has given Vishnu one of
his well-known titles, Mádhava.

107 The garden of Indra.

When thus the suppliant Gods had prayed, His wise reply
Náráyar,¹⁰⁸ made:

“What task demands my presence there, And whence this
dread, ye Gods declare.”

The Gods replied: “We fear, O Lord, Fierce Rávar,, ravener
abhorred.

Be thine the glorious task, we pray, In human form this fiend to
slay.

By thee of all the Blest alone This sinner may be overthrown.

He gained by penance long and dire The favour of the mighty
Sire.

Then He who every gift bestows Guarded the fiend from
heavenly foes, And gave a pledge his life that kept From all
things living, man except.

On him thus armed no other foe Than man may deal the deadly
blow. Assume, O King, a mortal birth, And strike the demon to
the earth.”

Then Vishr,u, God of Gods, the Lord Supreme by all the worlds
adored,

To Brahmá and the suppliants spake:

“Dismiss your fear: for your dear sake In battle will I smite him
dead,

The cruel fiend, the Immortal's dread. And lords and ministers
and all

His kith and kin with him shall fall. Then, in the world of mortal
men,

108 One of the most ancient and popular of the numerous
names of Vishnu. The word has been derived in several ways,
and may mean he who moved on the (primordial) waters, or he
who pervades or influences men or their thoughts.

Ten thousand years and hundreds ten I as a human king will
reign,

And guard the earth as my domain.”

God, saint, and nymph, and minstrel throng With heavenly
voices raised their song

In hymns of triumph to the God Whose conquering feet on
Madhu trod:

“Champion of Gods, as man appear, This cruel Rávar, slay,
The thorn that saints and hermits fear, The plague that none
can stay.

In savage fury uncontrolled His pride for ever grows:

He dares the Lord of Gods to hold Among his deadly foes.”

Canto XV. The Nectar.

When wisest Vishr,u thus had given His promise to the Gods of
heaven, He pondered in his secret mind

A suited place of birth to find, Then he decreed, the lotus-eyed,
In four his being to divide,

And Dasaratha, gracious king,

He chose as sire from whom to spring. That childless prince of
high renown, Who smote in war his foemen down, At that same
time with utmost care

Prepared the rite that wins an heir.¹⁰⁹ Then Vishr,u, fain on
earth to dwell, Bade the Almighty Sire farewell, And vanished
while a reverent crowd

Of Gods and saints in worship bowed.

The monarch watched the sacred rite, When a vast form of
awful might,

Of matchless splendour, strength, and size

Was manifest before his eyes. [027]

From forth the sacrificial flame, Dark, robed in red, the being
came.

His voice was drumlike, loud and low, His face suffused with
rosy glow.

Like a huge lion's mane appeared The long locks of his hair and
beard. He shone with many a lucky sign, And many an
ornament divine;

A towering mountain in his height, A tiger in his gait and might.

No precious mine more rich could be, No burning flame more
bright than he. His arms embraced in loving hold, Like a dear
wife, a vase of gold Whose silver lining held a draught

Of nectar as in heaven is quaffed: A vase so vast, so bright to
view,

They scarce could count the vision true. Upon the king his eyes
he bent,

And said: "The Lord of life has sent His servant down, O Prince,
to be A messenger from heaven to thee." The king with all his
nobles by

109 The Horse-Sacrifice, just described.

Raised reverent hands and made reply:

“Welcome, O glorious being! Say How can my care thy grace
repay.” Envoy of Him whom all adore

Thus to the king he spake once more:

“The Gods accept thy worship: they Give thee the blessed fruit
to-day. Approach and take, O glorious King, This heavenly
nectar which I bring, For it shall give thee sons and wealth, And
bless thee with a store of health. Give it to those fair queens of
thine, And bid them quaff the drink divine:

And they the princely sons shall bear Long sought by sacrifice
and prayer.”

“Yea, O my lord,” the monarch said, And took the vase upon his
head,

The gift of Gods, of fine gold wrought, With store of heavenly
liquor fraught. He honoured, filled with transport new, That
wondrous being, fair to view,

As round the envoy of the God With reverential steps he
trod.¹¹⁰ His errand done, that form of light

¹¹⁰ To walk round an object keeping the right side towards it is
a mark of great respect. The Sanskrit word for the observance is

pradakshir:á, from pra pro, and daksha right, Greek 8E❖íoc, Latin dexter, Gaelic deas-il. A similar ceremony is observed by the Gaels.

“In the meantime she traced around him, with wavering steps, the propitia- tion, which some have thought has been derived from the Druidical mythology. It consists, as is well known, in the person who makes the deasil walking three times round the person who is the object of the ceremony, taking care to move according to the course of the sun.”

SCOTT{FNS. The Two Drovers.

Arose and vanished from the sight. High rapture filled the monarch's soul, Possessed of that celestial bowl,

As when a man by want distressed With unexpected wealth is blest. And rays of transport seemed to fall Illuminating bower and hall,

As when the autumn moon rides high, And floods with lovely light the sky. Quick to the ladies' bower he sped, And thus to Queen Kausalyá said: “This genial nectar take and quaff,” He spoke, and gave the lady half.

Part of the nectar that remained Sumitrá from his hand obtained. He gave, to make her fruitful too, Kaikeyí half the residue.

A portion yet remaining there, He paused awhile to think.

Then gave Sumitrá, with her share.

The remnant of the drink.

Thus on each queen of those fair three A part the king
bestowed,

And with sweet hope a child to see Their yearning bosoms
glowed.

The heavenly bowl the king supplied Their longing souls relieved,
And soon, with rapture and with pride, Each royal dame
conceived.

He gazed upon each lady's face, And triumphed as he gazed,
As Indra in his royal place
By Gods and spirits praised.

Canto XVI. The Vánars.

When Vishr,u thus had gone on earth, From the great king to
take his birth, The self-existent Lord of all

Addressed the Gods who heard his call: “For Vishr,u’s sake, the
strong and true, Who seeks the good of all of you, Make helps,
in war to lend him aid,

In forms that change at will, arrayed, Of wizard skill and hero
might, Outstrippers of the wind in flight, Skilled in the arts of
counsel, wise, And Vishr,u’s peers in bold emprise;

With heavenly arts and prudence fraught, By no devices to be
caught;

Skilled in all weapon’s lore and use

[028]As they who drink the immortal juice.¹¹¹ And let the
nymphs supreme in grace, And maidens of the minstrel race,
Monkeys and snakes, and those who rove Free spirits of the hill
and grove,

And wandering Daughters of the Air, In monkey form brave
children bear. So erst the lord of bears I shaped,

Born from my mouth as wide I gaped.”

111 The Amrit, the nectar of the Indian Gods.

Thus by the mighty Sire addressed They all obeyed his high
behest, And thus begot in countless swarms

Brave sons disguised in sylvan forms. Each God, each sage
became a sire, Each minstrel of the heavenly quire,¹¹²

Each faun,¹¹³ of children strong and good Whose feet should
roam the hill and wood. Snakes, bards,¹¹⁴ and spirits,¹¹⁵
serpents bold Had sons too numerous to be told.

Báli, the woodland hosts who led, High as Mahendra's¹¹⁶ lofty
head, Was Indra's child. That noblest fire, The Sun, was great
Sugriva's sire, Tára, the mighty monkey, he

Was offspring of Vrihaspati:¹¹⁷

Tára the matchless chieftain, boast For wisdom of the Vánar
host.

Of Gandhamádan brave and bold The father was the Lord of
Gold.

112 Gandharvas (Southey's Glendoveers) are celestial musicians
inhabiting In- dra's heaven and forming the orchestra at all the
banquets of the principal deities.

113 Yakshas, demigods attendant especially on Kuvera, and employed by him

in the care of his garden and treasures.

114 Kimpurushas, demigods attached also to the service of Kuvera, celestial musicians, represented like centaurs reversed with human figures and horses' heads.

115 Siddhas, demigods or spirits of undefined attributes, occupying with the

Vidyádhara the middle air or region between the earth and the sun.

Schlegel translates: "Divi, Sapientes, Fidicines, Præpetes, illustres Genii, Præconesque procrearunt natos, masculos, silvicolas; angues porro, Hip- pocephali Beati, Aligeri, Serpentesque frequentes alacriter generavere prolem innumerabilem."

116 A mountain in the south of India.

117 The preceptor of the Gods and regent of the planet Jupiter.

Nala the mighty, dear to fame, Of skilful Visvakarmá¹¹⁸ came.

From Agni,¹¹⁹ Nila bright as flame, Who in his splendour, might, and worth, Surpassed the sire who gave him birth. The heavenly Asvins,¹²⁰ swift and fair, Were fathers of a noble pair,

Who, Dwivida and Mainda named, For beauty like their sires
were famed, Varur,¹²¹ was father of Susher,,

Of Sarabh, he who sends the rain,¹²² Hanúmán, best of monkey
kind,

Was son of him who breathes the wind: Like thunderbolt in
frame was he,

And swift as Garu9's¹²³ self could flee.

These thousands did the Gods create Endowed with might that
none could mate, In monkey forms that changed at will;

So strong their wish the fiend to kill. In mountain size, like lions
thewed, Up sprang the wondrous multitude, Auxiliar hosts in
every shape, Monkey and bear and highland ape.

In each the strength, the might, the mien Of his own parent God
were seen.

118 The celestial architect, the Indian Hephæstus, Mulciber, or
Vulcan.

119 The God of Fire.

120 Twin children of the Sun, the physicians of Swarga or
Indra's heaven.

121 The deity of the waters.

122 Parjanya, sometimes confounded with Indra.

123 The bird and vehicle of Vishr,u. He is generally represented as a being something between a man and a bird and considered as the sovereign of the feathered race. He may be compared with the Simurgh of the Persians, the 'Anká of the Arabs, the Griffin of chivalry, the Phœnix of Egypt, and the bird that sits upon the ash Yggdrasil of the Edda.

Some chiefs of Vánar mothers came, Some of she-bear and minstrel dame, Skilled in all arms in battle's shock; The brandished tree, the loosened rock; And prompt, should other weapons fail, To fight and slay with tooth and nail.

Their strength could shake the hills amain, And rend the rooted trees in twain, Disturb with their impetuous sweep

The Rivers' Lord, the Ocean deep, Rend with their feet the seated ground, And pass wide floods with airy bound, Or forcing through the sky their way The very clouds by force could stay.

Mad elephants that wander through The forest wilds, could they subdue,

And with their furious shout could scare Dead upon earth the birds of air.

So were the sylvan chieftains formed; Thousands on thousands still they swarmed. These were the leaders honoured most,

The captains of the Vánar host,
And to each lord and chief and guide Was monkey offspring
born beside. Then by the bears' great monarch stood

The other roamers of the wood, [029]

And turned, their pathless homes to seek, To forest and to
mountain peak.

The leaders of the monkey band

By the two brothers took their stand, Sugríva, offspring of the
Sun

And Báli, Indra's mighty one.

They both endowed with Garuḡ's might, And skilled in all the
arts of fight,

Wandered in arms the forest through, And lions, snakes, and
tigers, slew. But every monkey, ape, and bear Ever was Báli's
special care;

With his vast strength and mighty arm He kept them from all
scathe and harm. And so the earth with hill, wood, seas, Was
filled with mighty ones like these, Of various shape and race
and kind, With proper homes to each assigned,

With Ráma's champions fierce and strong The earth was
overspread,

High as the hills and clouds, a throng With bodies vast and
dread.¹²⁴

Canto XVII. Rishyasring's Return.

Now when the high-souled monarch's rite, The Asvamedh, was
finished quite,

Their sacrificial dues obtained,

The Gods their heavenly homes regained. The lofty-minded
saints withdrew,

Each to his place, with honour due, And kings and chieftains,
one and all,

¹²⁴ This Canto will appear ridiculous to the European reader. But it should be remembered that the monkeys of an Indian forest, the "bough-deer" as the poets call them, are very different animals from the "turpissima bestia" that accompanies the itinerant organ-grinder or grins in the Zoological Gardens of London. Milton has made his hero, Satan, assume the forms of a cormorant, a toad, and a serpent, and I cannot see that this creation of semi-divine Vánars, or monkeys, is more ridiculous or undignified.

Who came to grace the festival. And Dasaratha, ere they went,
Addressed them thus benevolent:

“Now may you, each with joyful heart, To your own realms, O
Kings, depart. Peace and good luck attend you there, And
blessing, is my friendly prayer; Let cares of state each mind
engage To guard his royal heritage.

A monarch from his throne expelled No better than the dead is
held.

So he who cares for power and might Must guard his realm and
royal right. Such care a meed in heaven will bring Better than
rites and offering.

Such care a king his country owes As man upon himself
bestows, When for his body he provides Raiment and every
need besides.

For future days should kings foresee, And keep the present
error-free.”

Thus did the king the kings exhort:

They heard, and turned them from the court And, each to each
in friendship bound, Went forth to all the realms around.

The rites were o'er, the guests were sped: The train the best of
Bráhmans led,

In which the king with joyful soul, With his dear wives, and with
the whole Of his imperial host and train

Of cars and servants turned again, And, as a monarch dear to
fame, Within his royal city came.

Next, Rishyasring, well-honoured sage, And Sántá, sought their
hermitage.

The king himself, of prudent mind, Attended him, with troops
behind. And all her men the town outpoured With Saint
Vasishtha and their lord. High mounted on a car of state, O'er
canopied fair Sántá sate.

Drawn by white oxen, while a band Of servants marched on
either hand. Great gifts of countless price she bore,

With sheep and goats and gems in store. Like Beauty's self the
lady shone

With all the jewels she had on, As, happy in her sweet content,
Peerless amid the fair she went.

Not Queen Paulomí's¹²⁵ self could be

More loving to her lord than she. She who had lived in happy
ease,

Honoured with all her heart could please, While dames and
kinsfolk ever vied

To see her wishes gratified,
Soon as she knew her husband's will Again to seek the forest,
still
Was ready for the hermit's cot, Nor murmured at her altered lot.
The king attended to the wild
That hermit and his own dear child, And in the centre of a
throng
Of noble courtiers rode along. The sage's son had let prepare
A lodge within the wood, and there

125 The consort of Indra, called also Sachí and Indrár,í.

While they lingered blithe and gay. Then, duly honoured, went
their way. The glorious hermit Rishyasring
Drew near and thus besought the king:

“Return, my honoured lord, I pray, Return, upon thy homeward
way.” The monarch, with the waiting crowd, Lifted his voice and
wept aloud,

And with eyes dripping still to each

Of his good queens he spake this speech:

“Kausalyá and Sumitrá dear, And thou, my sweet Kaikeyí, hear.
All upon Sántá feast your gaze, The last time for a length of
days.” To Sántá’s arms the ladies leapt, And hung about her
neck and wept, And cried, “O, happy be the life

Of this great Bráhman and his wife. The Wind, the Fire, the
Moon on high,

The Earth, the Streams, the circling Sky, Preserve thee in the
wood, true spouse, Devoted to thy husband’s vows.

And O dear Sántá, ne’er neglect To pay the dues of meek
respect

To the great saint, thy husband’s sire, With all observance and
with fire.

And, sweet one, pure of spot and blame, Forget not thou thy
husband’s claim;

In every change, in good and ill,

Let thy sweet words delight him still, And let thy worship
constant be:

Her lord is woman’s deity.

[030]

To learn thy welfare, dearest friend, The king will many a
Bráhmaṇ send. Let happy thoughts thy spirit cheer, And be not
troubled, daughter dear.”

These soothing words the ladies said.

And pressed their lips upon her head. Each gave with sighs her
last adieu, Then at the king’s command withdrew. The king
around the hermit went

With circling footsteps reverent,

And placed at Rishyasring’s command Some soldiers of his
royal band.

The Bráhmaṇ bowed in turn and cried, “May fortune never leave
thy side.

O mighty King, with justice reign, And still thy people’s love
retain.” He spoke, and turned away his face,

And, as the hermit went,

The monarch, rooted to the place, Pursued with eyes intent.
But when the sage had past from view King Dasaratha turned
him too,
Still fixing on his friend each thought. With such deep love his
breast was fraught. Amid his people's loud acclaim
Home to his royal seat he came, And lived delighted there,
Expecting when each queenly dame, Upholder of his ancient
fame,
Her promised son should bear. The glorious sage his way
pursued Till close before his eyes he viewed Sweet Champá,
Lomapád's fair town,

Wreathed with her Champacs'126 leafy crown. Soon as the
saint's approach he knew,
The king, to yield him honour due, Went forth to meet him with a
band Of priests and nobles of the land:
“Hail, Sage,” he cried, “O joy to me! What bliss it is, my lord, to
see
Thee with thy wife and all thy train Returning to my town again.
Thy father, honoured Sage, is well, Who hither from his
woodland cell Has sent full many a messenger For tidings both
of thee and her.” Then joyfully, for due respect,

The monarch bade the town be decked. The king and
Rishyasring elate Entered the royal city's gate:

In front the chaplain rode.

Then, loved and honoured with all care By monarch and by
courtier, there

The glorious saint abode.

Canto XVIII. Rishyasring's Departure.

126 The *Michelia champaca*. It bears a scented yellow blossom:

“The maid of India blest again to hold

In her full lap the Champac's leaves of gold.”

Lallah Rookh.

The monarch called a Bráhmaṇ near And said, “Now speed
away

To Kasyap’s son,¹²⁷ the mighty seer,

And with all reverence say The holy child he holds so dear, The
hermit of the noble mind, Whose equal it were hard to find,

Returned, is dwelling here. Go, and instead of me do thou
Before that best of hermits bow,

That still he may, for his dear son, Show me the favour I have
won.” Soon as the king these words had said, To Kasyap’s son
the Bráhmaṇ sped.

Before the hermit low he bent And did obeisance, reverent;

Then with meek words his grace to crave The message of his
lord he gave:

“The high-souled father of his bride Had called thy son his rites
to guide: Those rites are o’er, the steed is slain; Thy noble child is
come again.”

Soon as the saint that speech had heard His spirit with desire
was stirred

To seek the city of the king

[031] And to his cot his son to bring. With young disciples at his
side Forth on his way the hermit hied,

While peasants from their hamlets ran To reverence the holy man.

Each with his little gift of food, Forth came the village multitude,

127 Vibhár,dak, the father of Rishyasring

And, as they humbly bowed the head, “What may we do for thee?” they said. Then he, of Bráhmans first and best, The gathered people thus addressed: “Now tell me for I fain would know, Why is it I am honoured so?”

They to the high-souled saint replied: “Our ruler is with thee allied.

Our master’s order we fulfil;

O Bráhman, let thy mind be still.”

With joy the saintly hermit heard Each pleasant and delightful word, And poured a benediction down On king and ministers and town.

Glad at the words of that high saint Some servants hastened to acquaint Their king, rejoicing to impart

The tidings that would cheer his heart. Soon as the joyful tale he
knew

To meet the saint the monarch flew, The guest-gift in his hand
he brought, And bowed before him and besought: “This day by
seeing thee I gain

Not to have lived my life in vain, Now be not wroth with me, I
pray, “Because I wiled thy son away.¹²⁸

128 A hemisloka is wanting in Schlegel’s text, which he thus fills
up in his Latin translation.

The best of Bráhmans answer made: “Be not, great lord of
kings, afraid.

Thy virtues have not failed to win My favour, O thou pure of sin.”

Then in the front the saint was placed, The king came next in
joyous haste, And with him entered his abode,

Mid glad acclaim as on they rode. To greet the sage the
reverent crowd

Raised suppliant hands and humbly bowed. Then from the
palace many a dame Following well-dressed Sántá came,

Stood by the mighty saint and cried:

“See, honour’s source, thy son’s dear bride.” The saint, who
every virtue knew,

His arms around his daughter threw, And with a father’s rapture
pressed The lady to his wondering breast.

Arising from the saint’s embrace She bowed her low before his
face,

And then, with palm to palm applied, Stood by her hermit
father’s side.

He for his son, as laws ordain,

Performed the rite that frees from stain,¹²⁹ And, honoured by
the wise and good, With him departed to the wood.

Canto XIX. The Birth Of The Princes.

¹²⁹ Rishyasring, a Bráhmaṇ, had married Sántá who was of the
Kshatriya or Warrior caste and an expiatory ceremony was
necessary on account of this violation of the law.

The seasons six in rapid flight

Had circled since that glorious rite. Eleven months had passed away; 'Twas Chaitra's ninth returning day.¹³⁰ The moon within that mansion shone Which Aditi looks kindly on.

Raised to their apex in the sky

Five brilliant planets beamed on high. Shone with the moon, in Cancer's sign, Vrihaspati¹³¹ with light divine.

Kausalyá bore an infant blest

With heavenly marks of grace impressed; Ráma, the universe's lord,

A prince by all the worlds adored. New glory Queen Kausalyá won Reflected from her splendid son. So Aditi shone more and more, The Mother of the Gods, when she The King of the Immortals¹³² bore,

The thunder-wielding deity. [032]

¹³⁰ "The poet no doubt intended to indicate the vernal equinox as the birthday of Ráma. For the month Chaitra is the first of the two months assigned to the spring; it corresponds with the latter half of March and the former half of April in our division of the year. Aditi, the mother of the Gods, is lady of the seventh lunar mansion which is called Punarvasu. The five planets and their positions in the Zodiac are thus enumerated by both commentators: the Sun in Aries, Mars in Capricorn, Saturn in Libra, Jupiter in Cancer, Venus in Pisces.... I leave to

astronomers to examine whether the parts of the description agree with one another, and, if this be the case, thence to deduce the date. The Indians place the nativity of Ráma in the confines of the second age (tretá) and the third (dwápara): but it seems that this should be taken in an allegorical sense.... We may consider that the poet had an eye to the time in which, immediately before his own age, the aspects of the heavenly bodies were such as he has described.” SCHLEGEL FNS.

131 The regent of the planet Jupiter.

132 Indra = Jupiter Tonans.

The lotus-eyed, the beauteous boy, He came fierce Rávar, to
destroy; From half of Vishr,u's vigour born, He came to help the
worlds forlorn. And Queen Kaikeyí bore a child Of truest valour,
Bharat styled, With every princely virtue blest, One fourth of
Vishr,u manifest.

Sumitrá too a noble pair,

Called Lakshmar, and Satrughna, bare, Of high emprise,
devoted, true, Sharers in Vishr,u's essence too.

'Neath Pushya's¹³³ mansion, Mina's¹³⁴ sign,

Was Bharat born, of soul benign.

The sun had reached the Crab at morn When Queen Sumitrá's
babes were born, What time the moon had gone to make His
nightly dwelling with the Snake.

The high-souled monarch's consorts bore At different times
those glorious four, Like to himself and virtuous, bright

As Proshthapadá's¹³⁵ four-fold light.

Then danced the nymphs' celestial throng, The minstrels raised
their strain;

The drums of heaven pealed loud and long, And flowers came
down in rain.

Within Ayodhyá, blithe and gay, All kept the joyous holiday.

133 "Pushya is the name of a month; but here it means the
eighth mansion. The ninth is called Asleshá, or the snake. It is
evident from this that Bharat, though his birth is mentioned
before that of the twins, was the youngest of the four brothers
and Ráma's junior by eleven months." SCHLEGEL FNS.

134 A fish, the Zodiacal sign Pisces.

135 One of the constellations, containing stars in the wing of
Pegasus.

The spacious square, the ample road With mimes and dancers
overflowed, And with the voice of music rang

Where minstrels played and singers sang, And shone, a wonder
to behold,

With dazzling show of gems and gold. Nor did the king his
largess spare,

For minstrel, driver, bard, to share; Much wealth the Bráhmans
bore away, And many thousand dine that day.

Soon as each babe was twelve days old 'Twas time the naming
rite to hold.

When Saint Vasishtha, rapt with joy, Assigned a name to every
boy.

Ráma, to him the high-souled heir, Bharat, to him Kaikeyí bare:

Of Queen Sumitrá one fair son

Was Lakshmar,, and Satrughna¹³⁶ one Ráma, his sire's supreme
delight,

Like some proud banner cheered his sight, And to all creatures
seemed to be

The self-existent deity.

All heroes, versed in holy lore,

To all mankind great love they bore. Fair stores of wisdom all
possessed, With princely graces all were blest. But mid those
youths of high descent, With lordly light preëminent.

Like the full moon unclouded, shone Ráma, the world's dear
paragon.

136 Ráma means the Delight (of the World); Bharat, the
Supporter; Lakshmar,, the Auspicious; Satrughna, the Slayer of
Foes.

He best the elephant could guide.137 Urge the fleet car, the
charger ride: A master he of bowman's skill, Joying to do his
father's will.

The world's delight and darling, he Loved Lakshmar, best from
infancy And Lakshmar,, lord of lofty fate, Upon his elder joyed
to wait, Striving his second self to please With friendship's sweet
observances. His limbs the hero ne'er would rest Unless the
couch his brother pressed; Except beloved Ráma shared

He could not taste the meal prepared. When Ráma, pride of
Reghu's race, Sprang on his steed to urge the chase, Behind him
Lakshmar, loved to go And guard him with his trusty bow. As
Ráma was to Lakshmar, dear More than his life and ever near,
So fond Satrughna prized above His very life his Bharat's love.
Illustrious heroes, nobly kind

In mutual love they all combined, And gave their royal sire
delight

With modest grace and warrior might: Supported by the
glorious four

Shone Dasaratha more and more,

As though, with every guardian God

137 Schlegel, in the *Indische Bibliothek*, remarks that the proficiency of the Indians in this art early attracted the attention of Alexander's successors, and natives of India were so long exclusively employed in this service that the name Indian was applied to any elephant-driver, to whatever country he might belong.

Who keeps the land and skies, The Father of all creatures trod
The earth before men's eyes.

Canto XX. Visvámitra's Visit.

Now Dasaratha's pious mind

Meet wedlock for his sons designed; [033]

With priests and friends the king began To counsel and prepare
his plan.

Such thoughts engaged his bosom, when, To see Ayodhyá's lord
of men,

A mighty saint of glorious fame, The hermit Visvámitra¹³⁸
came. For evil fiends that roam by night Disturbed him in each
holy rite,

And in their strength and frantic rage Assailed with witcheries
the sage.

He came to seek the monarch's aid To guard the rites the
demons stayed, Unable to a close to bring

One unpolluted offering.

Seeking the king in this dire strait He said to those who kept the
gate: "Haste, warders, to your master run,

And say that here stands Gádhi's son."

¹³⁸ The story of this famous saint is given at sufficient length in
Cantos LI-LV. This saint has given his name to the district and
city to the east of Benares. The original name, preserved in a
land-grant on copper now in the Museum of the Benares
College, has been Moslemized into Ghazeepore (the City of the
Soldier-martyr).

Soon as they heard the holy man, To the king's chamber swift
they ran With minds disordered all, and spurred To wildest zeal
by what they heard.

On to the royal hall they sped,

There stood and lowly bowed the head, And made the lord of
men aware

That the great saint was waiting there. The king with priest and
peer arose

And ran the sage to meet,

As Indra from his palace goes Lord Brahmá's self to greet.

When glowing with celestial light The pious hermit was in sight,
The king, whose mien his transport showed, The honoured gift
for guests bestowed.

Nor did the saint that gift despise, Offered as holy texts advise;
He kindly asked the earth's great king How all with him was
prospering.

The son of Kusik¹³⁹ bade him tell

If all in town and field were well,

All well with friends, and kith and kin, And royal treasure stored
within:

“Do all thy neighbours own thy sway?

Thy foes confess thee yet? Dost thou continue still to pay
To Gods and men each debt?" Then he, of hermits first and best,
Vasishtha with a smile¹⁴⁰ addressed, And asked him of his
welfare too, Showing him honour as was due.

139 The son of Kusik is Visvámitra.

140 At the recollection of their former enmity, to be described
hereafter.

Then with the sainted hermit all Went joyous to the monarch's
hall, And sate them down by due degree, Each one, of rank and
dignity.

Joy filled the noble prince's breast Who thus bespoke the
honoured guest: "As amrit¹⁴¹ by a mortal found,

As rain upon the thirsty ground, As to an heirless man a son
Born to him of his precious one, As gain of what we sorely miss,
As sudden dawn of mighty bliss, So is thy coming here to me:

All welcome, mighty Saint, to thee. What wish within thy heart
hast thou? If I can please thee, tell me how.

Hail, Saint, from whom all honours flow, Worthy of all I can
bestow.

Blest is my birth with fruit to-day, Nor has my life been thrown
away. I see the best of Bráhmaṇ race

And night to glorious morn gives place. Thou, holy Sage, in days
of old

Among the royal saints enrolled, Didst, penance-glorified, within
The Bráhma caste high station win. 'Tis meet and right in many
a way That I to thee should honour pay.

This seems a marvel to mine eyes: All sin thy visit purifies;

And I by seeing thee, O Sage,

Have reaped the fruit of pilgrimage.

141 The Indian nectar or drink of the Gods.

Then say what thou wouldst have me do, That thou hast sought
this interview.

Favoured by thee, my wish is still, O Hermit, to perform thy will.

Nor needest thou at length explain The object that thy heart
would gain. Without reserve I grant it now:

My deity, O Lord, art thou.”

The glorious hermit, far renowned, With highest fame and virtue
crowned, Rejoiced these modest words to hear Delightful to the
mind and ear.

Canto XXI. Visvámitra's Speech.

The hermit heard with high content That speech so wondrous
eloquent,

[34] And while each hair with joy arose,142

142 Great joy, according to the Hindu belief, has this effect, not causing each particular hair to stand on end, but gently raising all the down upon the body.

Canto XXI. Visvámitra's Speech.109

He thus made answer at the close: "Good is thy speech O noble King, And like thyself in everything.

So should their lips be wisdom-fraught Whom kings begot, Vasishtha taught. The favour which I came to seek

Thou grantest ere my tongue can speak. But let my tale attention claim,

And hear the need for which I came. O King, as Scripture texts allow,

A holy rite employs me now.

Two fiends who change their forms at will Impede that rite with cursed skill.143

Oft when the task is nigh complete, These worst of fiends my toil defeat, Throw bits of bleeding flesh, and o'er The altar shed a stream of gore.

When thus the rite is mocked and stayed, And all my pious hopes delayed,

Cast down in heart the spot I leave, And spent with fruitless
labour grieve. Nor can I, checked by prudence, dare Let loose
my fury on them there:

The muttered curse, the threatening word, In such a rite must
ne'er be heard.

Thy grace the rite from check can free. And yield the fruit I long
to see.

Thy duty bids thee, King, defend

The suffering guest, the suppliant friend. Give me thy son, thine
eldest born, Whom locks like raven's wings adorn.

143 The Rákshasas, giants, or fiends who are represented as
disturbing the sacrifice, signify here, as often elsewhere, merely
the savage tribes which placed themselves in hostile opposition
to Bráhmanical institutions.

That hero youth, the truly brave, Of thee, O glorious King, I
crave. For he can lay those demons low

Who mar my rites and work me woe:

My power shall shield the youth from harm, And heavenly might
shall nerve his arm.

And on my champion will I shower Unnumbered gifts of varied
power, Such gifts as shall ensure his fame

And spread through all the worlds his name. Be sure those
fiends can never stand

Before the might of Ráma's hand, And mid the best and bravest
none Can slay that pair but Raghu's son. Entangled in the toils
of Fate Those sinners, proud and obstinate, Are, in their fury
overbold,

No match for Ráma mighty-souled. Nor let a father's breast
give way Too far to fond affection's sway.

Count thou the fiends already slain:

My word is pledged, nor pledged in vain. I know the hero Ráma
well

In whom high thoughts and valour dwell; So does Vasishtha, so
do these

Engaged in long austerities.

If thou would do the righteous deed, And win high fame, thy
virtue's meed, Fame that on earth shall last and live, To me,
great King, thy Ráma give.

If to the words that I have said, With Saint Vasishtha at their
head Thy holy men, O King, agree, Then let thy Ráma go with
me.

Ten nights my sacrifice will last, And ere the stated time be past
Those wicked fiends, those impious twain, Must fall by
wondrous Ráma slain.

Let not the hours, I warn thee, fly, Fixt for the rite, unheeded by;
Good luck have thou, O royal Chief, Nor give thy heart to
needless grief.”

Thus in fair words with virtue fraught The pious glorious saint
besought.

But the good speech with poignant sting Pierced ear and
bosom of the king,

Who, stabbed with pangs too sharp to bear, Fell prostrate and
lay fainting there.

Canto XXII. Dasaratha's Speech.

His tortured senses all astray, While the hapless monarch lay,
Then slowly gathering thought and strength To Visvámitra
spoke at length:

“My son is but a child, I ween; This year he will be just sixteen.
How is he fit for such emprise, My darling with the lotus eyes? A
mighty army will I bring

That calls me master, lord, and king, And with its countless
squadrons fight Against these rovers of the night.

My faithful heroes skilled to wield

The arms of war will take the field; Their skill the demons' might
may break: Ráma, my child, thou must not take.

I, even I, my bow in hand, Will in the van of battle stand,

And, while my soul is left alive,

With the night-roaming demons strive. Thy guarded sacrifice
shall be Completed, from all hindrance free.

Thither will I my journey make: Ráma, my child, thou must not
take. A boy unskilled, he knows not yet

The bounds to strength and weakness set.

No match is he for demon foes

[35] Who magic arts to arms oppose. O chief of saints, I have
no power, Of Ráma reft, to live one hour:

Mine aged heart at once would break: Ráma, my child, thou
must not take. Nine thousand circling years have fled With all
their seasons o'er my head, And as a hard-won boon, O sage,

These sons have come to cheer mine age. My dearest love amid
the four

Is he whom first his mother bore, Still dearer for his virtues'
sake: Ráma, my child, thou must not take. But if, unmoved by all
I say,

Thou needs must bear my son away, Let me lead with him, I
entreat,

A four-fold army¹⁴⁴ all complete.

What is the demons' might, O Sage?

¹⁴⁴ Consisting of horse, foot, chariots, and elephants.

Who are they? What their parentage? What is their size? What
beings lend Their power to guard them and befriend? How can
my son their arts withstand?

Or I or all my armed band?

Tell me the whole that I may know To meet in war each evil foe

Whom conscious might inspires with pride.”

And Visvámitra thus replied:

“Sprung from Pulastya’s race there came A giant known by
Rávar,’s name.

Once favoured by the Eternal Sire

He plagues the worlds in ceaseless ire, For peerless power and
might renowned, By giant bands encompassed round.

Visravas for his sire they hold, His brother is the Lord of Gold.
King of the giant hosts is he, And worst of all in cruelty.

This Rávar,’s dread commands impel Two demons who in might
excel, Márícha and Suváhu hight,
To trouble and impede the rite.”

Then thus the king addressed the sage: “No power have I, my
lord, to wage

War with this evil-minded foe; Now pity on my darling show,
And upon me of hapless fate, For thee as God I venerate.

Gods, spirits, bards of heavenly birth,¹⁴⁵

145 “The Gandharvas, or heavenly bards, had originally a
warlike character but were afterwards reduced to the office of
celestial musicians cheering the

The birds of air, the snakes of earth Before the might of Rávar,
quail, Much less can mortal man avail.

He draws, I hear, from out the breast The valour of the mightiest.

No, ne'er can I with him contend, Or with the forces he may send. How can I then my darling lend, Godlike, unskilled in battle? No, I will not let my young child go.

Foes of thy rite, those mighty ones, Sunda and Upasunda's sons,

Are fierce as Fate to overthrow:

I will not let my young child go. Márícha and Suváhu fell

Are valiant and instructed well. One of the twain I might attack.

With all my friends their lord to back.”

Canto XXIII. Vasishtha's Speech.

banquets of the Gods. Dr. Kuhn has shown their identity with the Centaurs in name, origin and attributes.” GORRESIO{FNS.

While thus the hapless monarch spoke, Paternal love his
utterance broke.

Then words like these the saint returned, And fury in his bosom
burned:

“Didst thou, O King, a promise make, And wishest now thy word
to break? A son of Raghu's line should scorn To fail in faith, a
man forsworn.

But if thy soul can bear the shame I will return e'en as I came.

Live with thy sons, and joy be thine, False scion of Kakutstha's
line.”

As Visvámitra, mighty sage,

Was moved with this tempestuous rage,

Earth rocked and reeled throughout her frame, And fear upon
the Immortals came.

But Saint Vasishtha, wisest seer, Observant of his vows austere,

Saw the whole world convulsed with dread, And thus unto the
monarch said:

“Thou, born of old Ikshváku’s seed, Art Justice’ self in mortal
weed.

Constant and pious, blest by fate, The right thou must not
violate.

Thou, Raghu’s son, so famous through The triple world as just
and true, Perform thy bounden duty still,

Nor stain thy race by deed of ill.

If thou have sworn and now refuse Thou must thy store of merit
lose. Then, Monarch, let thy Ráma go, Nor fear for him the
demon foe.

The fiends shall have no power to hurt

Him trained to war or inexpert, Nor vanquish him in battle field,
For Kusik’s son the youth will shield. He is incarnate Justice, he
The best of men for bravery. Embodied love of penance drear,

[36] Among the wise without a peer.

Full well he knows, great Kusik’s son, The arms celestial, every
one,

Arms from the Gods themselves concealed, Far less to other
men revealed.

These arms to him, when earth he swayed, Mighty Krisásva,
pleased, conveyed.

Krisásva's sons they are indeed,

Brought forth by Daksha's lovely seed,¹⁴⁶ Heralds of conquest,
strong and bold, Brilliant, of semblance manifold.

Jayá and Vijayá, most fair,

And hundred splendid weapons bare. Of Jayá, glorious as the
morn,

First fifty noble sons were born, Boundless in size yet viewless
too, They came the demons to subdue. And fifty children also
came

Of Vijayá the beauteous dame, Sanháras named, of mighty
force, Hard to assail or check in course. Of these the hermit
knows the use, And weapons new can he produce. All these the
mighty saint will yield To Ráma's hand, to own and wield;

¹⁴⁶ These mysterious animated weapons are enumerated in
Cantos XXIX and

XXX. Daksha was the son of Brahmá and one of the Prajápatis,
Demiurgi, or secondary authors of creation.

And armed with these, beyond a doubt Shall Ráma put those
fiends to rout.

For Ráma and the people's sake,

For thine own good my counsel take, Nor seek, O King, with
fond delay, The parting of thy son to stay.”

Canto XXIV. The Spells.

Vasishtha thus was speaking still: The monarch, of his own free
will, Bade with quick zeal and joyful cheer Ráma and Lakshmar,
hasten near.

Mother and sire in loving care

Sped their dear son with rite and prayer: Vasishtha blessed him
ere he went;

O'er his loved head the father bent, And then to Kusik's son
resigned Ráma with Lakshmar, close behind. Standing by
Visvámitra's side,

The youthful hero, lotus-eyed,

The Wind-God saw, and sent a breeze Whose sweet pure touch
just waved the trees. There fell from heaven a flowery rain,
And with the song and dance the strain Of shell and tambour
sweetly blent

As forth the son of Raghu went. The hermit led: behind him
came

The bow-armed Ráma, dear to fame,

Whose locks were like the raven's wing:¹⁴⁷ Then Lakshmar,,
closely following.

The Gods and Indra, filled with joy, Looked down upon the royal
boy,

And much they longed the death to see Of their ten-headed
enemy.¹⁴⁸

Ráma and Lakshmar, paced behind That hermit of the lofty
mind,

As the young Asvins,¹⁴⁹ heavenly pair,

Follow Lord Indra through the air.

On arm and hand the guard they wore, Quiver and bow and
sword they bore;

Two fire-born Gods of War seemed they.¹⁵⁰

He, Siva's self who led the way.

Upon fair Sarjú's southern shore

They now had walked a league and more, When thus the sage in accents mild

To Ráma said: "Beloved child, This lustral water duly touch:

My counsel will avail thee much. Forget not all the words I say,

147 Youths of the Kshatriya class used to leave unshorn the side locks of their hair. These were called Káka-paksha, or raven's wings.

148 The Rákshas or giant Rávar,, king of Lanká.

149 "The meaning of Asvins (from asva a horse, Persian asp, Greek ί.rrrroc, Latin equus, Welsh ech) is Horsemen. They were twin deities of whom frequent mention is made in the Vedas and the Indian myths. The Asvins have much in common with the Dioscuri of Greece, and their mythical genealogy seems to indicate that their origin was astronomical. They were, perhaps, at first the morning star and evening star. They are said to be the children of the sun and the nymph Asviní, who is one of the lunar asterisms personified. In the popular mythology they are regarded as the physicians of the Gods." GORRESIO FNS. 150
The word Kumára (a young prince, a Childe) is also a proper name of Skanda or Kártikeya God of War, the son of Siva and Umá. The babe was matured in the fire.

Nor let the occasion slip away. Lo, with two spells I thee invest,
The mighty and the mightiest.

O'er thee fatigue shall ne'er prevail, Nor age or change thy limbs
assail.

Thee powers of darkness ne'er shall smite In tranquil sleep or
wild delight.

No one is there in all the land

Thine equal for the vigorous hand. [037]

Thou, when thy lips pronounce the spell, Shalt have no peer in
heaven or hell.

None in the world with thee shall vie, O sinless one, in apt reply,
In fortune, knowledge, wit, and tact, Wisdom to plan and skill to
act.

This double science take, and gain Glory that shall for aye
remain.

Wisdom and judgment spring from each Of these fair spells
whose use I teach.

Hunger and thirst unknown to thee, High in the worlds thy rank
shall be. For these two spells with might endued, Are the Great
Father's heavenly brood, And thee, O Chief, may fitly grace,
Thou glory of Kakutstha's race.

Virtues which none can match are thine, Lord, from thy birth, of
gifts divine, And now these spells of might shall cast Fresh
radiance o'er the gifts thou hast." Then Ráma duly touched the
wave,

Raised suppliant hands, bowed low his head, And took the spells
the hermit gave,

Whose soul on contemplation fed.

From him whose might these gifts enhanced,

A brighter beam of glory glanced:

So shines in all his autumn blaze The Day-God of the thousand
rays.

The hermit's wants those youths supplied, As pupils use to holy
guide.

And then the night in sweet content On Sarjú's pleasant bank
they spent.

Canto XXV. The Hermitage Of Love.

Soon as appeared the morning light Up rose the mighty
anchorite,

And thus to youthful Ráma said, Who lay upon his leafy bed:

“High fate is hers who calls thee son: Arise, 'tis break of day;
Rise, Chief, and let those rites be done Due at the morning's
ray.”¹⁵¹

At that great sage's high behest Up sprang the princely pair,
To bathing rites themselves addressed, And breathed the holiest
prayer.

Their morning task completed, they To Visvámitra came
That store of holy works, to pay The worship saints may claim.
Then to the hallowed spot they went

¹⁵¹ “At the rising of the sun as well as at noon certain
observances, invocations, and prayers were prescribed which
might under no circumstances be omitted. One of these
observances was the recitation of the Sávitrí, a Vedic hymn to
the Sun of wonderful beauty.” GORRESIO{FNS.

Canto XXV. The Hermitage Of Love. 121

Along fair Sarjú's side

Where mix her waters confluent With three-pathed Gangá's
tide.¹⁵²

There was a sacred hermitage Where saints devout of mind
Their lives through many a lengthened age To penance had
resigned.

That pure abode the princes eyed With unrestrained delight,
And thus unto the saint they cried, Rejoicing at the sight:

“Whose is that hermitage we see? Who makes his dwelling
there?

Full of desire to hear are we: O Saint, the truth declare.”

The hermit smiling made reply To the two boys' request:

“Hear, Ráma, who in days gone by This calm retreat possessed.

Kandarpa in apparent form, Called Káma¹⁵³ by the wise,

Dared Umá's¹⁵⁴ new-wed lord to storm And make the God his
prize.

'Gainst Sthár,u's¹⁵⁵ self, on rites austere

¹⁵² Tripathaga, Three-path-go, flowing in heaven, on earth, and
under the earth. See Canto XLV.

¹⁵³ Tennyson's “Indian Cama,” the God of Love, known also by
many other

names.

154 Umá, or Parvatí, was daughter of Himálaya, Monarch of mountains, and wife of Siva. See Kálidasa's Kumára Sambhava, or Birth of the War-God.

155 Sthár:u. The Unmoving one, a name of Siva.

And vows intent,¹⁵⁶ they say,

His bold rash hand he dared to rear, Though Sthár,u cried,
Away!

But the God's eye with scornful glare Fell terrible on him.

[038]Dissolved the shape that was so fair And burnt up every
limb.

Since the great God's terrific rage Destroyed his form and
frame,

Káma in each succeeding age Has borne Ananga's¹⁵⁷ name.

So, where his lovely form decayed, This land is Anga styled:

Sacred to him of old this shade, And hermits undefiled.

Here Scripture-talking elders sway Each sense with firm control,

And penance-rites have washed away All sin from every soul.

One night, fair boy, we here will spend, A pure stream on each
hand,

And with to-morrow's light will bend Our steps to yonder strand.

Here let us bathe, and free from stain To that pure grove repair,

156 “The practice of austerities, voluntary tortures, and mortifications was anciently universal in India, and was held by the Indians to be of immense efficacy. Hence they mortified themselves to expiate sins, to acquire merits, and to obtain superhuman gifts and powers; the Gods themselves sometimes exercised themselves in such austerities, either to raise themselves to greater power and grandeur, or to counteract the austerities of man which threatened to prevail over them and to deprive them of heaven.... Such austerities were called in India tapas (burning ardour, fervent devotion) and he who practised them tapasvin.” GORRESIO FNS.

157 The Bodiless one.

Sacred to Káma, and remain One night in comfort there.”

With penance' far-discerning eye The saintly men beheld
Their coming, and with transport high Each holy bosom swelled.
To Kusik's son the gift they gave That honoured guest should
greet,

Water they brought his feet to lave, And showed him honor
meet.

Ráma and Lakshmar, next obtained In due degree their share.

Then with sweet talk the guests remained, And charmed each listener there.

The evening prayers were duly said With voices calm and low:
Then on the ground each laid his head And slept till morning's glow.

Canto XXVI. The Forest Of Tádaká.

When the fair light of morning rose The princely tamers of their foes
Followed, his morning worship o'er, The hermit to the river's shore.

The high-souled men with thoughtful care A pretty barge had stationed there.

All cried, "O lord, this barge ascend, And with thy princely followers bend
To yonder side thy prosperous way With naught to check thee or delay."

Nor did the saint their rede reject: He bade farewell with due respect,
And crossed, attended by the twain, That river rushing to the main.

When now the bark was half way o'er, Ráma and Lakshmar,
heard the roar, That louder grew and louder yet,
Of waves by dashing waters met. Then Ráma asked the mighty
seer:

“What is the tumult that I hear Of waters cleft in mid career?”

Soon as the speech of Ráma, stirred By deep desire to know, he
heard, The pious saint began to tell

What paused the waters' roar and swell:

“On high Kailása's distant hill There lies a noble lake

Whose waters, born from Brahmá's will, The name of Mánas¹⁵⁸
take.

Thence, hallowing where'er they flow, The streams of Sarjú fall,
And wandering through the plains below Embrace Ayodhyá's
wall.

Still, still preserved in Sarjú's name Sarovar's¹⁵⁹ fame we trace.

The flood of Brahma whence she came

¹⁵⁸ “A celebrated lake regarded in India as sacred. It lies in the lofty region between the northern highlands of the Himálayas and mount Kailása, the region of the sacred lakes. The poem, following the popular Indian belief, makes the river Sarayú (now Sarjú) flow from the Mánasa lake; the sources of the river are a little to the south about a day's journey from the lake. See

Lassen, Indische Alterthumshunde, page 34.” GORRESIO FNS.
Manas means mind; mánasa, mental, mind-born.

159 Sarovar means best of lakes. This is another of the poet's
fanciful etymolo-
gies.

To run her holy race.

To meet great Gangá here she hies With tributary wave:

Hence the loud roar ye hear arise, Of floods that swell and rave.

Here, pride of Raghu's line, do thou In humble adoration bow.”

He spoke. The princes both obeyed, And reverence to each river
paid.¹⁶⁰ They reached the southern shore at last, And gaily on
their journey passed.

A little space beyond there stood A gloomy awe-inspiring wood.

The monarch's noble son began To question thus the holy man:

“Whose gloomy forest meets mine eye Like some vast cloud
that fills the sky? Pathless and dark it seems to be, Where birds
in thousands wander free;

Where shrill cicadas' cries resound, [039]

And fowl of dismal note abound. Lion, rhinoceros, and bear,

Boar, tiger, elephant, are there, There shrubs and thorns run wild:

Dháo, Sál, Bignonia, Bel,161 are found,

And every tree that grows on ground.

How is the forest styled?”

160 The confluence of two or more rivers is often a venerated and holy place. The most famous is Prayág or Allahabad, where the Sarasvatí by an underground course is believed to join the Jumna and the Ganges.

161 The botanical names of the trees mentioned in the text are Grisea Tormen-

tosa, Shorea Robusta, Echites Antidysenterica, Bignonia Suaveolens, Ægle Marmelos, and Diospyrus Glutinosa. I have omitted the Kutaja (Echites) and the Tir:◊uka (Diospyrus).

The glorious saint this answer made: “Dear child of Raghu, hear Who dwells within the horrid shade That looks so dark and drear.

Where now is wood, long ere this day Two broad and fertile lands,

Malaja and Karúsha lay, Adorned by heavenly hands.

Here, mourning friendship's broken ties, Lord Indra of the
thousand eyes Hungered and sorrowed many a day, His
brightness soiled with mud and clay, When in a storm of passion
he

Had slain his dear friend Namuchi.

Then came the Gods and saints who bore Their golden pitchers
brimming o'er With holy streams that banish stain,

And bathed Lord Indra pure again. When in this land the God
was freed From spot and stain of impious deed For that his own
dear friend he slew,

High transport thrilled his bosom through. Then in his joy the
lands he blessed,

And gave a boon they long possessed: "Because these fertile
lands retain The washings of the blot and stain,"

'Twas thus Lord Indra sware, "Malaja and Karúsha's name

Shall celebrate with deathless fame My malady and care."162

162 Here we meet with a fresh myth to account for the name of
these regions. Malaja is probably a non-Aryan word signifying a
hilly country: taken as a Sanskrit compound it means sprung
from defilement. The word Karúsha appears to have a
somewhat similar meaning.

“So be it,” all the Immortals cried, When Indra’s speech they heard,

And with acclaim they ratified The names his lips conferred.

Long time, O victor of thy foes, These happy lands had sweet repose, And higher still in fortune rose.

At length a spirit, loving ill, Tá9aká, wearing shapes at will,

Whose mighty strength, exceeding vast, A thousand elephants, surpassed,

Was to fierce Sunda, lord and head Of all the demon armies, wed.

From her, Lord Indra’s peer in might Giant Mária sprang to light:

And she, a constant plague and pest, These two fair realms has long distressed. Now dwelling in her dark abode

A league away she bars the road: And we, O Ráma, hence must go Where lies the forest of the foe. Now on thine own right arm rely,

And my command obey:

Smite the foul monster that she die, And take the plague away.

To reach this country none may dare Fallen from its old estate,

Which she, whose fury naught can bear, Has left so desolate.

And now my truthful tale is told How with accursed sway
The spirit plagued this wood of old, And ceases not to-day.”

Canto XXVII. The Birth Of Tádaká.

When thus the sage without a peer Had closed that story
strange to hear, Ráma again the saint addressed
To set one lingering doubt at rest: “O holy man, ’tis said by all
That spirits’ strength is weak and small: How can she match, of
power so slight, A thousand elephants in might?”

And Visvámitra thus replied To Raghu’s son the glorified:

“Listen, and I will tell thee how

She gained the strength that arms her now. A mighty spirit lived
of yore;

Suketu was the name he bore. Childless was he, and free from
crime In rites austere he passed his time.

The mighty Sire was pleased to show His favour, and a child
bestow.

Tá9aká named, most fair to see, A pearl among the maids was
she,

And matched, for such was Brahmá's dower, A thousand
elephants in power.

Nor would the Eternal Sire, although The spirit longed, a son
bestow

That maid in beauty's youthful pride Was given to Sunda for a
bride.

Her son, Márícha was his name, A giant, through a curse,
became.

[40] She, widowed, dared with him molest

Canto XXVII. The Birth Of Tádaká. 129

Agastya,¹⁶³ of all saints the best. Inflamed with hunger's
wildest rage, Roaring she rushed upon the sage. When the great
hermit saw her near, On speeding in her fierce career,

He thus pronounced Márícha's doom:

"A giant's form and shape assume." And then, by mighty anger
swayed, On Tá9aká this curse he laid:

“Thy present form and semblance quit, And wear a shape thy mood to fit; Changed form and feature by my ban, A fearful thing that feeds on man.”

She, by his awful curse possessed, And mad with rage that fills her breast, Has on this land her fury dealt

Where once the saint Agastya dwelt. Go, Ráma, smite this monster dead, The wicked plague, of power so dread, And further by this deed of thine

The good of Bráhmans and of kine. Thy hand alone can overthrow,

In all the worlds, this impious foe. Nor let compassion lead thy mind

To shrink from blood of womankind; A monarch's son must ever count The people's welfare paramount, And whether pain or joy he deal

163 “This is one of those indefinable mythic personages who are found in the ancient traditions of many nations, and in whom cosmogonical or astronomical notions are generally figured. Thus it is related of Agastya that the Vindhyan mountains prostrated themselves before him; and yet the same Agastya is believed to be regent of the star Canopus.” GORRESIO FNS.

He will appear as the friend and helper of Ráma farther on in the poem.

Dare all things for his subjects' weal; Yea, if the deed bring
praise or guilt, If life be saved or blood be spilt:

Such, through all time, should be the care Of those a kingdom's
weight who bear.

Slay, Ráma, slay this impious fiend, For by no law her life is
screened. So Manthará, as bards have told, Virochan's child,
was slain of old By Indra, when in furious hate

She longed the earth to devastate. So Kávya's mother, Bhrigu's
wife, Who loved her husband as her life,

When Indra's throne she sought to gain, By Vishr,u's hand of
yore was slain.

By these and high-souled kings beside, Struck down, have
lawless women died.”

Canto XXVIII. The Death Of Tádaká.

Thus spoke the saint. Each vigorous word The noble monarch's
offspring heard, And, reverent hands together laid,

His answer to the hermit made: “My sire and mother bade me
aye Thy word, O mighty Saint, obey So will I, O most glorious,
kill This Tá9aká who joys in ill,

For such my sire’s, and such thy will. To aid with mine avenging
hand

The Bráhmans, kine, and all the land,

Obedient, heart and soul, I stand.”

Thus spoke the tamer of the foe, And by the middle grasped his
bow. Strongly he drew the sounding string That made the
distant welkin ring.

Scared by the mighty clang the deer That roamed the forest
shook with fear, And Tá9aká the echo heard,

And rose in haste from slumber stirred. In wild amaze, her soul
aflame

With fury toward the spot she came. When that foul shape of
evil mien And stature vast as e’er was seen The wrathful son of
Raghu eyed, He thus unto his brother cried:

“Her dreadful shape, O Lakshmar,, see, A form to shudder at
and flee.

The hideous monster's very view Would cleave a timid heart in two. Behold the demon hard to smite, Defended by her magic might.

My hand shall stay her course to-day, And shear her nose and ears away.

No heart have I her life to take: I spare it for her sex's sake.

My will is but, with minished force, To check her in her evil course." While thus he spoke, by rage impelled

Roaring as she came nigh,

The fiend her course at Ráma held With huge arms tossed on high.

Her, rushing on, the seer assailed With a loud cry of hate;

And thus the sons of Raghu hailed: "Fight, and be fortunate."

Then from the earth a horrid cloud Of dust the demon raised,

And for awhile in darkling shroud Wrapt Raghu's sons amazed.

Then calling on her magic power The fearful fight to wage,

She smote him with a stony shower, Till Ráma burned with rage.

Then pouring forth his arrowy rain

[41] That stony flood to stay,

With winged darts, as she charged amain, He shore her hands away.

As Tá9aká still thundered near Thus maimed by Ráma's blows, Lakshmar, in fury severed sheer The monster's ears and nose.

Assuming by her magic skill A fresh and fresh disguise,

She tried a thousand shapes at will, Then vanished from their eyes.

When Gádhi's son of high renown Still saw the stony rain pour down Upon each princely warrior's head, With words of wisdom thus he said: "Enough of mercy, Ráma, lest

This sinful evil-working pest, Disturber of each holy rite, Repair by magic arts her might.

Without delay the fiend should die, For, see, the twilight hour is nigh. And at the joints of night and day Such giant foes are hard to slay."

Then Ráma, skilful to direct His arrow to the sound,

With shafts the mighty demon checked Who rained her stones around.

She sore impeded and beset By Ráma and his arrowy net,

Though skilled in guile and magic lore, Rushed on the brothers with a roar.

Deformed, terrific, murderous, dread, Swift as the levin on she
sped,

Like cloudy pile in autumn's sky, Lifting her two vast arms on
high, When Ráma smote her with a dart, Shaped like a crescent,
to the heart. Sore wounded by the shaft that came With
lightning speed and surest aim,

Blood spouting from her mouth and side, She fell upon the earth
and died.

Soon as the Lord who rules the sky Saw the dread monster
lifeless lie,

He called aloud, Well done! well done! And the Gods honoured
Raghu's son. Standing in heaven the Thousand-eyed, With all
the Immortals, joying cried: "Lift up thine eyes, O Saint, and see
The Gods and Indra nigh to thee.

This deed of Ráma's boundless might Has filled our bosoms with
delight, Now, for our will would have it so, To Raghu's son some
favour show.

Invest him with the power which naught But penance gains and
holy thought, Those heavenly arms on him bestow

To thee entrusted long ago

By great Krisásva best of kings, Son of the Lord of living things.
More fit recipient none can be Than he who joys it following
thee;

And for our sakes the monarch's seed Has yet to do a mighty
deed.”

He spoke; and all the heavenly train Rejoicing sought their
homes again, While honour to the saint they paid.

Then came the evening's twilight shade, The best of hermits
overjoyed

To know the monstrous fiend destroyed, His lips on Ráma's
forehead pressed, And thus the conquering chief addressed: “O
Ráma gracious to the sight.

Here will we pass the present night, And with the morrow's
earliest ray Bend to my hermitage our way.” The son of
Dasaratha heard, Delighted, Visvámitra's word,

And as he bade, that night he spent In Tá9aká's wild wood,
content.

And the grove shone that happy day, Freed from the curse that
on it lay, Like Chaitraratha¹⁶⁴ fair and gay.

Canto XXIX. The Celestial Arms.

164 The famous pleasure-garden of Kuvera the God of Wealth.

That night they slept and took their rest; And then the mighty
saint addressed, With pleasant smile and accents mild These
words to Raghu's princely child:

“Well pleased am I. High fate be thine, Thou scion of a royal
line.

Now will I, for I love thee so,

All heavenly arms on thee bestow. Victor with these, whoe'er
oppose, Thy hand shall conquer all thy foes, Though Gods and
spirits of the air, Serpents and fiends, the conflict dare. I'll give
thee as a pledge of love

The mystic arms they use above, For worthy thou to have
revealed

The weapons I have learnt to wield.165 [042]

First, son of Raghu, shall be thine

The arm of Vengeance, strong, divine:

The arm of Fate, the arm of Right, And Vishr,u's arm of awful
might:

That, before which no foe can stand, The thunderbolt of Indra's
hand; And Siva's trident, sharp and dread,

And that dire weapon Brahmá's Head. And two fair clubs, O
royal child, One Charmer and one Pointed styled With flame of
lambent fire aglow,

165 "The whole of this Canto together with the following one,
regards the belief, formerly prevalent in India, that by virtue of
certain spells, to be learnt and muttered, secret knowledge and
superhuman powers might be acquired. To this the poet has
already alluded in Canto xxiii. These incorporeal weapons are
partly represented according to the fashion of those ascribed to
the Gods and the different orders of demi-gods, partly are the
mere creations of fancy; and it would not be easy to say what
idea the poet had of them in his own mind, or what powers he
meant to assign to each." SCHLEGEL{FNS.

On thee, O Chieftain, I bestow.

And Fate's dread net and Justice' noose That none may
conquer, for thy use: And the great cord, renowned of old,
Which Varur, ever loves to hold.

Take these two thunderbolts, which I Have got for thee, the
Moist and Dry. Here Siva's dart to thee I yield,

And that which Vishnu wot to wield. I give to thee the arm of
Fire,

Desired by all and named the Spire. To thee I grant the Wind-
God's dart, Named Crusher, O thou pure of heart, This arm, the
Horse's Head, accept, And this, the Curlew's Bill yclept,

And these two spears, the best e'er flew, Named the Invincible
and True.

And arms of fiends I make thine own, Skull-wreath and mace
that smashes bone. And Joyous, which the spirits bear,

Great weapon of the sons of air. Brave offspring of the best of
lords, I give thee now the Gem of swords, And offer next, thine
hand to arm, The heavenly bards' beloved charm. Now with two
arms I thee invest

Of never-ending Sleep and Rest, With weapons of the Sun and
Rain, And those that dry and burn amain;

And strong Desire with conquering touch, The dart that Káma
prizes much.

I give the arm of shadowy powers That bleeding flesh of men
devours. I give the arms the God of Gold

And giant fiends exult to hold. This smites the foe in battle-
strife,

And takes his fortune, strength, and life. I give the arms called
False and True, And great Illusion give I too;

The hero's arm called Strong and Bright That spoils the
foeman's strength in fight. I give thee as a priceless boon

The Dew, the weapon of the Moon, And add the weapon, deftly
planned, That strengthens Visvakarmá's hand. The Mortal dart
whose point is chill, And Slaughter, ever sure to kill;

All these and other arms, for thou Art very dear, I give thee now.
Receive these weapons from my hand, Son of the noblest in the
land.”

Facing the east, the glorious saint Pure from all spot of earthly
taint, To Ráma, with delighted mind, That noble host of spells
consigned.

He taught the arms, whose lore is won Hardly by Gods, to
Raghu's son.

He muttered low the spell whose call Summons those arms and
rules them all And, each in visible form and frame, Before the
monarch's son they came.

They stood and spoke in reverent guise To Ráma with exulting
cries:

“O noblest child of Raghu, see, Thy ministers and thralls are we.”

With joyful heart and eager hand Ráma received the wondrous
band,

And thus with words of welcome cried:

“Aye present to my will abide.” Then hasted to the saint to pay
Due reverence, and pursued his way.

Canto XXX. The Mysterious Powers.166

Pure, with glad cheer and joyful breast, Of those mysterious
arms possessed, Ráma, now passing on his way,

Thus to the saint began to say:

“Lord of these mighty weapons, I

Can scarce be harmed by Gods on high; Now, best of saints, I
long to gain

The powers that can these arms restrain.” Thus spoke the prince. The sage austere, True to his vows, from evil clear, Called forth the names of those great charms Whose powers restrain the deadly arms. “Receive thou True and Truly famed, [43] And Bold and Fleet: the weapons named

166 “In Sanskrit Sankára, a word which has various significations but the primary meaning of which is the act of seizing. A magical power seems to be implied of employing the weapons when and where required. The remarks I have made on the preceding Canto apply with still greater force to this. The MSS. greatly vary in the enumeration of these Sankáras, and it is not surprising that copyists have incorrectly written the names which they did not well understand. The commentators throw no light upon the subject.” SCHLEGEL FNS. I have taken the liberty of omitting four of these which Schlegel translates “Scleromphalum, Euomphalum, Centiventrem, and Chrysomphalum.”

Canto XXX. The Mysterious Powers. 139

Warder and Progress, swift of pace, Averted-head and Drooping-face; The Seen, and that which Secret flies; The weapon of the thousand eyes; Ten-headed, and the Hundred-faced, Star-gazer and the Layer-waste:

The Omen-bird, the Pure-from-spot, The pair that wake and slumber not: The Fiendish, that which shakes amain, The Strong-of-Hand, the Rich-in-Gain: The Guardian, and the Close-allied, The Gaper, Love, and Golden-side:

O Raghu's son receive all these,

Bright ones that wear what forms they please; Krisásva's mystic sons are they,

And worthy thou their might to sway." With joy the pride of Raghu's race Received the hermit's proffered grace, Mysterious arms, to check and stay, Or smite the foeman in the fray.

Then, all with heavenly forms endued, Nigh came the wondrous multitude.

Celestial in their bright attire

Some shone like coals of burning fire; Some were like clouds of dusky smoke; And suppliant thus they sweetly spoke: "Thy thralls, O Ráma, here we stand: Command, we pray, thy faithful band" "Depart," he cried, "where each may list, But when I call you to assist,

Be present to my mind with speed, And aid me in the hour of need."

To Ráma then they lowly bent,

And round him in due reverence went, To his command, they
answered, Yea, And as they came so went away.

When thus the arms had homeward flown, With pleasant words
and modest tone, E'en as he walked, the prince began

To question thus the holy man:

“What cloudlike wood is that which near The mountain's side I
see appear?

O tell me, for I long to know;

Its pleasant aspect charms me so. Its glades are full of deer at
play,

And sweet birds sing on every spray, Past is the hideous wild; I
feel

So sweet a tremor o'er me steal,

And hail with transport fresh and new A land that is so fair to
view.

Then tell me all, thou holy Sage, And whose this pleasant
hermitage In which those wicked ones delight To mar and kill
each holy rite.

And with foul heart and evil deed Thy sacrifice, great Saint,
impede. To whom, O Sage, belongs this land In which thine
altars ready stand! 'Tis mine to guard them, and to slay The
giants who the rites would stay. All this, O best of saints, I burn
From thine own lips, my lord, to learn.”

Canto XXXI. The Perfect Hermitage.

Thus spoke the prince of boundless might, And thus replied the anchorite:

“Chief of the mighty arm, of yore Lord Vishr,u whom the Gods adore, For holy thought and rites austere Of penance made his dwelling here. This ancient wood was called of old

Grove of the Dwarf, the mighty-souled, And when perfection he attained

The grove the name of Perfect gained. Bali of yore, Virochan’s son, Dominion over Indra won,

And when with power his proud heart swelled, O’er the three worlds his empire held.

When Bali then began a rite, The Gods and Indra in affright Sought Vishr,u in this place of rest,

And thus with prayers the God addressed: “Bali. Virochan’s mighty son,

His sacrifice has now begun:

Of boundless wealth, that demon king Is bounteous to each
living thing.

Though suppliants flock from every side The suit of none is e'er
denied.

Whate'er, where'er howe'er the call, He hears the suit and gives
to all.

Now with thine own illusive art Perform, O Lord, the helper's
part: Assume a dwarfish form, and thus From fear and danger
rescue us."167

167 I omit, after this line, eight slokes which, as Schlegel allows,
are quite out of place.

Thus in their dread the Immortals sued: The God a dwarflike
shape indued:168 Before Virochan's son he came,

Three steps of land his only claim. The boon obtained, in
wondrous wise Lord Vishr,u's form increased in size;

Through all the worlds, tremendous, vast, God of the Triple Step,
he passed.169

The whole broad earth from side to side He measured with one
mighty stride, Spanned with the next the firmament,

[44] And with the third through heaven he went. Thus was the
king of demons hurled

By Vishr,u to the nether world, And thus the universe restored To
Indra's rule, its ancient lord.

And now because the immortal God This spot in dwarflike
semblance trod, The grove has aye been loved by me For
reverence of the devotee.

But demons haunt it, prompt to stay Each holy offering I would
pay.

Be thine, O lion-lord, to kill These giants that delight in ill. This
day, beloved child, our feet Shall rest within the calm retreat:

And know, thou chief of Raghu's line, My hermitage is also
thine.”

168 This is the fifth of the avatárs, descents or incarnations of
Vishr,u.

169 This is a solar allegory. Vishr,u is the sun, the three steps
being his rising, culmination, and setting.

He spoke; and soon the anchorite, With joyous looks that
beamed delight, With Ráma and his brother stood Within the
consecrated wood.

Soon as they saw the holy man, With one accord together ran
The dwellers in the sacred shade,

And to the saint their reverence paid, And offered water for his
feet,

The gift of honour and a seat; And next with hospitable care
They entertained the princely pair. The royal tamers of their foes
Rested awhile in sweet repose: Then to the chief of hermits sued
Standing in suppliant attitude: “Begin, O best of saints, we pray,
Initiatory rites to-day.

This Perfect Grove shall be anew Made perfect, and thy words
be true.”

Then, thus addressed, the holy man, The very glorious sage,
began

The high preliminary rite. Restraining sense and appetite. Calmly
the youths that night reposed,

And rose when morn her light disclosed, Their morning worship
paid, and took Of lustral water from the brook.

Thus purified they breathed the prayer, Then greeted Visvámitra
where

As celebrant he sate beside

The flame with sacred oil supplied.

Canto XXXII. Visvámitra's Sacrifice.

That conquering pair, of royal race, Skilled to observe due time
and place, To Kusik's hermit son addressed,

In timely words, their meet request: "When must we, lord, we
pray thee tell, Those Rovers of the Night repel?

Speak, lest we let the moment fly, And pass the due occasion
by."

Thus longing for the strife, they prayed, And thus the hermits
answer made: "Till the fifth day be come and past,

O Raghu's sons, your watch must last. The saint his Dikshá¹⁷⁰
has begun, And all that time will speak to none." Soon as the
steadfast devotees

Had made reply in words like these, The youths began,
disdaining sleep,

Six days and nights their watch to keep. The warrior pair who
tamed the foe, Unrivalled benders of the bow,

Kept watch and ward unwearied still To guard the saint from
scathe and ill. 'Twas now the sixth returning day, The hour
foretold had past away.

Then Ráma cried: "O Lakshmar,, now Firm, watchful, resolute be
thou.

The fiends as yet have kept afar From the pure grove in which
we are: Yet waits us, ere the day shall close, Dire battle with the
demon foes."

170 Certain ceremonies preliminary to a sacrifice.

Canto XXXII. Visvámitra's Sacrifice. 145

While thus spoke Ráma borne away By longing for the deadly
fray,

See! bursting from the altar came The sudden glory of the
flame.

Round priest and deacon, and upon

Grass, ladles, flowers, the splendour shone, And the high rite, in
order due,

With sacred texts began anew. But then a loud and fearful roar
Re-echoed through the sky;

And like vast clouds that shadow o'er The heavens in dark July,

Involved in gloom of magic might Two fiends rushed on amain,
Márícha, Rover of the Night, Suváhu, and their train.

As on they came in wild career Thick blood in rain they shed;
And Ráma saw those things of fear Impending overhead.

Then soon as those accursed two

Who showered down blood be spied, Thus to his brother brave
and true

Spoke Ráma lotus-eyed:

“Now, Lakshmar,, thou these fiends shalt see, Man-eaters, foul
of mind,

Before my mortal weapon flee Like clouds before the wind.”

He spoke. An arrow, swift as thought, Upon his bow he pressed,
And smote, to utmost fury wrought, Márícha on the breast.

Deep in his flesh the weapon lay

Winged by the mystic spell, [045]

And, hurled a hundred leagues away, In ocean’s flood he fell.

Then Ráma, when he saw the foe Convulsed and mad with pain

Neath the chill-pointed weapon’s blow, To Lakshmar, spoke
again:

“See, Lakshmar,, see! this mortal dart That strikes a numbing
chill,
Hath struck him senseless with the smart, But left him breathing
still.
But these who love the evil way, And drink the blood they spill,
Rejoicing holy rites to stay,
Fierce plagues, my hand shall kill.” He seized another shaft, the
best,
Aglow with living flame; It struck Suváhu on the chest,
And dead to earth he came.
Again a dart, the Wind-God’s own, Upon his string he laid,
And all the demons were o’erthrown, The saints no more afraid.
When thus the fiends were slain in fight, Disturbers of each holy
rite,
Due honour by the saints was paid To Ráma for his wondrous
aid: So Indra is adored when he
Has won some glorious victory. Success at last the rite had
crowned, And Visvámitra gazed around,
And seeing every side at rest, The son of Raghu thus addressed:
“My joy, O Prince, is now complete: Thou hast obeyed my will:

Canto XXXIII. The Sone. 147

Perfect before, this calm retreat Is now more perfect still.”

Canto XXXIII. The Sone.

Their task achieved, the princes spent That night with joy and full content. Ere yet the dawn was well displayed Their morning rites they duly paid,

And sought, while yet the light was faint, The hermits and the mighty saint.

They greeted first that holy sire Resplendent like the burning fire, And then with noble words began

Their sweet speech to the sainted man: “Here stand, O Lord, thy servants true: Command what thou wouldst have us do.”

The saints, by Visvámitra led, To Ráma thus in answer said:

“Janak the king who rules the land Of fertile Mithilá has planned A noble sacrifice, and we Will thither go the rite to see.

Thou, Prince of men, with us shalt go, And there behold the
wondrous bow, Terrific, vast, of matchless might, Which,
splendid at the famous rite, The Gods assembled gave the king.

No giant, fiend, or God can string That gem of bows, no
heavenly bard:

Then, sure, for man the task were hard. When lords of earth
have longed to know The virtue of that wondrous bow,

The strongest sons of kings in vain Have tried the mighty cord
to strain. This famous bow thou there shalt view, And wondrous
rites shalt witness too. The high-souled king who lords it o'er The
realm of Míthilá of yore

Gained from the Gods this bow, the price Of his imperial
sacrifice.

Won by the rite the glorious prize Still in the royal palace lies,
Laid up in oil of precious scent With aloe-wood and incense
blent.”

Then Ráma answering, Be it so, Made ready with the rest to go.

The saint himself was now prepared, But ere beyond the grove
he fared, He turned him and in words like these Addressed the
sylvan deities: “Farewell! each holy rite complete,

I leave the hermits' perfect seat: To Gangá's northern shore I go
Beneath Himálaya's peaks of snow." With reverent steps he
paced around The limits of the holy ground,
And then the mighty saint set forth And took his journey to the
north. His pupils, deep in Scripture's page, Followed behind the
holy sage, And servants from the sacred grove A hundred wains
for convoy drove.

The very birds that winged that air, The very deer that
harboured there, Forsook the glade and leafy brake And
followed for the hermit's sake. They travelled far, till in the west
The sun was speeding to his rest,
And made, their portioned journey o'er, Their halt on Sona's¹⁷¹
distant shore.

The hermits bathed when sank the sun, And every rite was duly
done, Oblations paid to Fire, and then
Sate round their chief the holy men. Ráma and Lakshmar, lowly
bowed In reverence to the hermit crowd, And Ráma, having
sate him down

Before the saint of pure renown, [046]

With humble palms together laid His eager supplication made:

“What country, O my lord, is this, Fair-smiling in her wealth and bliss? Deign fully, O thou mighty Seer,

To tell me, for I long to hear.” Moved by the prayer of Ráma, he Told forth the country’s history.

Canto XXXIV. Brahmadata.

171 A river which rises in Budelcund and falls into the Ganges near Patna. It is called also Hira:ya:ráhu, Golden-armed, and Hira:ya:ráha, Auriferous.

“A king of Brahmá’s seed who bore The name of Kusa reigned of yore. Just, faithful to his vows, and true, He held the good in honour due.

His bride, a queen of noble name,

Of old Vidarbha’s¹⁷² monarchs came. Like their own father, children four, All valiant boys, the lady bore.

In glorious deeds each nerve they strained, And well their
Warrior part sustained.

To them most just, and true, and brave, Their father thus his
counsel gave:

“Beloved children, ne'er forget Protection is a prince's debt:

The noble work at once begin, High virtue and her fruits to win.”

The youths, to all the people dear,

Received his speech with willing ear; And each went forth his
several way, Foundations of a town to lay.

Kusámba, prince of high renown, Was builder of Kausámbi's
town, And Kusanábha, just and wise, Bade high Mahodaya's
towers arise. Amúrtarajas chose to dwell

In Dharmárar,ya's citadel, And Vasu bade his city fair The name
of Girivraja bear.¹⁷³

172 The modern Berar.

173 According to the Bengal recension the first (Kusámba) is
called Kusásva, and his city Kausásví. This name does not
occur elsewhere. The reading of the northern recension is
confirmed by Foê Kouê Ki; p. 385, where the city Kiaoshangmi
is mentioned. It lay 500 lis to the south-west of Prayága, on the
south bank of the Jumna. Mahodaya is another name of
Kanyakubja: Dharmárar:ya, the wood to which the God of
Justice is said to have fled

This fertile spot whereon we stand Was once the high-souled
Vasu's land. Behold! as round we turn our eyes, Five lofty
mountain peaks arise.

See! bursting from her parent hill, Sumágadhí, a lovely rill,
Bright gleaming as she flows between The mountains, like a
wreath is seen,

And then through Magadh's plains and groves With many a fair
mæander roves.

And this was Vasu's old domain,

The fertile Magadh's broad champaign, Which smiling fields of
tilth adorn And diadem with golden corn.

The queen Ghritáchí, nymph most fair, Married to Kusanábha,
bare

A hundred daughters, lovely-faced, With every charm and
beauty graced. It chanced the maidens, bright and gay As
lightning-flashes on a day

Of rain time, to the garden went With song and play and
merriment, And there in gay attire they strayed,

And danced, and laughed, and sang, and played. The God of
Wind who roves at will

All places, as he lists, to fill,

Saw the young maidens dancing there, Of faultless shape and mien most fair. "I love you all, sweet girls," he cried, "And each shall be my darling bride. Forsake, forsake your mortal lot, through fear of Soma the Moon-God was in Magadh. Girivraja was in the same neighbourhood. See Lasson's I, A. Vol. I. p. 604.

And gain a life that withers not.

A fickle thing is youth's brief span, And more than all in mortal man. Receive unending youth, and be Immortal, O my loves, with me."

The hundred girls, to wonder stirred, The wooing of the Wind-God heard, Laughed, as a jest, his suit aside,

And with one voice they thus replied: "O mighty Wind, free spirit who

All life pervadest, through and through, Thy wondrous power we maidens know; Then wherefore wilt thou mock us so?

Our sire is Kusanábha, King;

And we, forsooth, have charms to bring A God to woo us from the skies;

But honour first we maidens prize. Far may the hour, we pray, be hence, When we, O thou of little sense,

Our truthful father's choice refuse,
And for ourselves our husbands choose. Our honoured sire our
lord we deem, He is to us a God supreme,
And they to whom his high decree May give us shall our
husbands be.”

He heard the answer they returned, And mighty rage within him
burned. On each fair maid a blast he sent: Each stately form he
bowed and bent.

Bent double by the Wind-God's ire
[047]They sought the palace of their sire,

There fell upon the ground with sighs, While tears and shame
were in their eyes. The king himself, with troubled brow, Saw his
dear girls so fair but now,

A mournful sight all bent and bowed, And grieving thus he cried
aloud: “What fate is this, and what the cause?

What wretch has scorned all heavenly laws? Who thus your
forms could curve and break? You struggle, but no answer
make.”

They heard the speech of that wise king Of their misfortune
questioning.

Again the hundred maidens sighed, Touched with their heads
his feet, and cried: "The God of Wind, pervading space,
Would bring on us a foul disgrace, And choosing folly's evil way
From virtue's path in scorn would stray. But we in words like
these reproved

The God of Wind whom passion moved: "Farewell, O Lord! A sire
have we,

No women uncontrolled and free. Go, and our sire's consent
obtain

If thou our maiden hands wouldst gain. No self-dependent life
we live:

If we offend, our fault forgive." But led by folly as a slave,

He would not hear the rede we gave, And even as we gently
spoke

We felt the Wind-God's crushing stroke."

The pious king, with grief distressed, The noble hundred thus
addressed:

“With patience, daughters, bear your fate, Yours was a deed
supremely great

When with one mind you kept from shame The honour of your
father’s name.

Patience, when men their anger vent, Is woman’s praise and
ornament; Yet when the Gods inflict the blow Hard is it to
support the woe.

Patience, my girls, exceeds all price: ’Tis alms, and truth, and
sacrifice.

Patience is virtue, patience fame: Patience upholds this earthly
frame. And now, I think, is come the time To wed you in your
maiden prime.

Now, daughters, go where’er you will: Thoughts for your good
my mind shall fill.”

The maidens went, consoled, away: The best of kings, that very
day, Summoned his ministers of state About their marriage to
debate.

Since then, because the Wind-God bent The damsels’ forms for
punishment, That royal town is known to fame

By Kanyákubja's¹⁷⁴ borrowed name.

174 That is, the City of the Bent Virgins, the modern Kanauj or Canouge.

There lived a sage called Chúli then, Devoutest of the sons of men;

His days in penance rites he spent, A glorious saint, most continent. To him absorbed in tasks austere The child of Urmilá drew near, Sweet Somadá, the heavenly maid And lent the saint her pious aid.

Long time near him the maiden spent, And served him meek and reverent, Till the great hermit, pleased with her, Thus spoke unto his minister: "Grateful am I for all thy care:

Blest maiden, speak, thy wish declare." The sweet-voiced nymph rejoiced to see The favour of the devotee,

And to that eloquent old man, Most eloquent she thus began:

"Thou hast, by heavenly grace sustained, Close union with the Godhead gained.

I long, O Saint, to see a son By force of holy penance won.

Unwed, a maiden life I live:

A son to me, thy suppliant, give.”

The saint with favour heard her prayer, And gave a son
exceeding fair.

Him, Chúli’s spiritual child,

His mother Brahmadata¹⁷⁵ styled. King Brahmadata, rich and
great, In Kámpilí maintained his state, Ruling, like Indra in his
bliss,

His fortunate metropolis.

¹⁷⁵ Literally, Given by Brahma or devout contemplation.

King Kusanábha planned that he

His hundred daughters’ lord should be. To him, obedient to his
call,

The happy monarch gave them all. Like Indra then he took the
hand Of every maiden of the band.

Soon as the hand of each young maid In Brahmadata’s palm
was laid, Deformity and cares away,

She shone in beauty bright and gay.

Their freedom from the Wind-God's might Saw Kusanábha with
delight.

Each glance that on their forms he threw Filled him with
raptures ever new.

Then when the rites were all complete, With highest marks of
honour meet The bridegroom with his brides he sent To his
great seat of government.

The nymph received with pleasant speech Her daughters; and,
embracing each,

Upon their forms she fondly gazed, And royal Kusanábha
praised.

[048]

Canto XXXV. Visvámitra's Lineage.

Canto XXXV. Visvámitra's Lineage. 157

“The rites were o'er, the maids were wed, The bridegroom to his home was sped.

The sonless monarch bade prepare A sacrifice to gain an heir.

Then Kusa, Brahmá's son, appeared, And thus King Kusanábha cheered:

“Thou shalt, my child, obtain a son Like thine own self, O holy one.

Through him for ever, Gádhi named, Shalt thou in all the worlds be famed.” He spoke, and vanished from the sight To Brahmá's world of endless light.

Time fled, and, as the saint foretold, Gádhi was born, the holy-souled.

My sire was he; through him I trace My line from royal Kusa's race.

My sister—elder-born was she— The pure and good Satyavatí,¹⁷⁶ Was to the great Richíka wed.

Still faithful to her husband dead, She followed him, most noble dame,

And, raised to heaven in human frame, A pure celestial stream
became.

Down from Himálaya's snowy height, In floods for ever fair and
bright,

My sister's holy waves are hurled To purify and glad the world.

Now on Himálaya's side I dwell Because I love my sister well.

176 Now called Kosí (Cosy) corrupted from Kausikí, daughter of
Kus]a.

“This is one of those personifications of rivers so frequent in the
Grecian mythology, but in the similar myths is seen the impress
of the genius of each people, austere and profoundly religious
in India, graceful and devoted to the worship of external beauty
in Greece.” GORRESIO{FNS.

She, for her faith and truth renowned, Most loving to her
husband found, High-fated, firm in each pure vow,

Is queen of all the rivers now. Bound by a vow I left her side
And to the Perfect convent hied.

There, by the aid 'twas thine to lend, Made perfect, all my
labours end.

Thus, mighty Prince, I now have told My race and lineage, high
and old, And local tales of long ago

Which thou, O Ráma, fain wouldst know. As I have sate
rehearsing thus

The midnight hour is come on us. Now, Ráma, sleep, that
nothing may Our journey of to-morrow stay.

No leaf on any tree is stirred: Hushed in repose are beast and
bird: Where'er you turn, on every side,

Dense shades of night the landscape hide, The light of eve is
fled: the skies,

Thick-studded with their host of eyes, Seem a star-forest
overhead,

Where signs and constellations spread. Now rises, with his pure
cold ray,

The moon that drives the shades away, And with his gentle
influence brings Joy to the hearts of living things.

Now, stealing from their lairs, appear The beasts to whom the
night is dear. Now spirits walk, and every power That revels in
the midnight hour.”

The mighty hermit's tale was o'er, He closed his lips and spoke
no more. The holy men on every side,

“Well done! well done,” with reverence cried; “The mighty men of
Kusa's seed

Were ever famed for righteous deed. Like Brahmá's self in glory
shine The high-souled lords of Kusa's line, And thy great name is
sounded most, O Saint, amid the noble host.

And thy dear sister—fairest she

Of streams, the high-born Kausikí— Diffusing virtue where she
flows,

New splendour on thy lineage throws.” Thus by the chief of
saints addressed The son of Gádhi turned to rest;

So, when his daily course is done, Sinks to his rest the beaming
sun.

Ráma with Lakshmar,, somewhat stirred To marvel by the tales
they heard, Turned also to his couch, to close

His eyelids in desired repose.

Canto XXXVI. The Birth Of Gangá.

The hours of night now waning fast On Sona's pleasant shore
they passed. Then, when the dawn began to break, To Ráma
thus the hermit spake:

“The light of dawn is breaking clear, The hour of morning rites is
near.

Rise, Ráma, rise, dear son, I pray, And make thee ready for the way.”

Then Ráma rose, and finished all His duties at the hermit’s call,
Prepared with joy the road to take, And thus again in question
spake:

“Here fair and deep the Sona flows, And many an isle its bosom
shows:

What way, O Saint, will lead us o’er And land us on the farther
shore?”

The saint replied: “The way I choose

[049] Is that which pious hermits use.” For many a league
they journeyed on Till, when the sun of mid-day shone, The
hermit-haunted flood was seen Of Jáhnavi,¹⁷⁷ the Rivers’
Queen. Soon as the holy stream they viewed,

Thronged with a white-winged multitude Of sárases¹⁷⁸ and
swans,¹⁷⁹ delight Possessed them at the lovely sight;

And then prepared the hermit band To halt upon that holy
strand.

They bathed as Scripture bids, and paid Oblations due to God
and shade.

To Fire they burnt the offerings meet, And sipped the oil, like
Amrit sweet. Then pure and pleased they sate around Saint
Visvámitra on the ground.

The holy men of lesser note,

177 One of the names of the Ganges considered as the
daughter of Jahnu. See Canto XLIV.

178 The Indian Crane.

179 Or, rather, geese.

In due degree, sate more remote, While Raghu's sons took
nearer place By virtue of their rank and race.

Then Ráma said: "O Saint, I yearn

The three-pathed Gangá's tale to learn."

Thus urged, the sage recounted both The birth of Gangá and
her growth: "The mighty hill with metals stored, Himálaya, is the
mountains' lord,

The father of a lovely pair

Of daughters fairest of the fair: Their mother, offspring of the
will Of Meru, everlasting hill,

Mená, Himálaya's darling, graced With beauty of her dainty
waist. Gangá was elder-born: then came The fair one known by
Umá's name. Then all the Gods of heaven, in need Of Gangá's
help their vows to speed, To great Himálaya came and prayed
The mountain King to yield the maid. He, not regardless of the
weal

Of the three worlds, with holy zeal His daughter to the
Immortals gave, Gangá whose waters cleanse and save, Who
roams at pleasure, fair and free, Purging all sinners, to the sea.

The three-pathed Gangá thus obtained, The Gods their heavenly
homes regained. Long time the sister Umá passed

In vows austere and rigid fast, And the king gave the devotee

Immortal Rudra's¹⁸⁰ bride to be, Matching with that unequalled
Lord His Umá through the worlds adored. So now a glorious
station fills

Each daughter of the King of Hills:

One honoured as the noblest stream, One mid the Goddesses
supreme.

Thus Gangá, King Himálaya's child, The heavenly river,
undefiled,

Rose bearing with her to the sky Her waves that bless and purify.”

[I am compelled to omit Cantos XXXVII and XXXVIII, THE GLORY OF UMÁ, and THE BIRTH OF KÁRTIKEYA, as both in subject and language offensive to modern taste. They will be found in Schlegel's Latin translation.]

Canto XXXIX. The Sons Of Sagar.

The saint in accents sweet and clear Thus told his tale for Ráma's ear, And thus anew the holy man

A legend to the prince began: “There reigned a pious monarch o'er Ayodhyá in the days of yore:

Sagar his name: no child had he, And children much he longed to see. His honoured consort, fair of face, Sprang from Vidarbha's royal race, Kesini, famed from early youth

180 A name of the God Siva.

Canto XXXIX. The Sons Of Sagar. 163

For piety and love of truth. Arishtanemi's daughter fair,
With whom no maiden might compare In beauty, though the
earth is wide, Sumati, was his second bride.
With his two queens afar he went, And weary days in penance
spent, Fervent, upon Himálaya's hill
Where springs the stream called Bhrigu' rill. Nor did he fail that
saint to please
With his devout austerities.
And, when a hundred years had fled, Thus the most truthful
Bhrigu said:
"From thee, O Sagar, blameless King, A mighty host of sons
shall spring, And thou shalt win a glorious name
Which none, O Chief, but thou shall claim. One of thy queens a
son shall bear, Maintainer of thy race and heir;
And of the other there shall be Sons sixty thousand born to
thee."

Thus as he spake, with one accord, To win the grace of that high
lord, The queens, with palms together laid, In humble
supplication prayed:

"Which queen, O Bráhmaṇ, of the pair, The many, or the one
shall bear?

Most eager, Lord, are we to know,

And as thou sayest be it so.” [050]

With his sweet speech the saint replied: “Yourselves, O Queens,
the choice decide. Your own discretion freely use

Which shall the one or many choose:

One shall the race and name uphold, The host be famous,
strong, and bold. Which will have which?” Then Kesini The
mother of one heir would be.

Sumati, sister of the king¹⁸¹

Of all the birds that ply the wing, To that illustrious Bráhma
sued That she might bear the multitude

Whose fame throughout the world should sound For mighty
enterprise renowned.

Around the saint the monarch went, Bowing his head, most
reverent.

Then with his wives, with willing feet, Resought his own imperial
seat.

Time passed. The elder consort bare A son called Asamanj, the
heir.

Then Sumati, the younger, gave Birth to a gourd,¹⁸² O hero
brave,

Whose rind, when burst and cleft in two, Gave sixty thousand
babes to view.

All these with care the nurses laid In jars of oil; and there they
stayed,

Till, youthful age and strength complete, Forth speeding from
each dark retreat, All peers in valour, years, and might, The sixty
thousand came to light.

Prince Asamanj, brought up with care, Scourge of his foes, was
made the heir. But liegemen's boys he used to cast

To Sarjú's waves that hurried past, Laughing the while in cruel
glee

181 Garu9a.

182 Ikshváku, the name of a king of Ayodhyá who is regarded
as the founder of the Solar race, means also a gourd. Hence,
perhaps, the myth.

Their dying agonies to see.

This wicked prince who aye withstood The counsel of the wise
and good, Who plagued the people in his hate, His father
banished from the state.

His son, kind-spoken, brave, and tall, Was Ansumán, beloved of all.

Long years flew by. The king decreed To slay a sacrificial steed.

Consulting with his priestly band

He vowed the rite his soul had planned, And, Veda skilled, by their advice Made ready for the sacrifice.

Canto XL. The Cleaving Of The Earth.

The hermit ceased: the tale was done: Then in a transport Raghu's son Again addressed the ancient sire Resplendent as a burning fire:

“O holy man, I fain would hear The tale repeated full and clear How he from whom my sires descend Brought the great rite to happy end.” The hermit answered with a smile: “Then listen, son of Raghu, while

My legendary tale proceeds

To tell of high-souled Sagar's deeds. Within the spacious plain that lies From where Himálaya's heights arise

To where proud Vindhya's rival chain Looks down upon the
subject plain— A land the best for rites declared¹⁸³.

—

His sacrifice the king prepared. And Ansumán the prince—for so
Sagar advised—with ready bow Was borne upon a mighty car
To watch the steed who roamed afar. But Indra, monarch of the
skies, Veiling his form in demon guise, Came down upon the
appointed day And drove the victim horse away.

Reft of the steed the priests, distressed, The master of the rite
addressed: “Upon the sacred day by force

A robber takes the victim horse. Haste, King! now let the thief be
slain; Bring thou the charger back again: The sacred rite
prevented thus

Brings scathe and woe to all of us. Rise, monarch, and provide
with speed That naught its happy course impede.”

¹⁸³ “The region here spoken of is called in the Laws of Manu
Madhyadesa or the middle region. ‘The region situated between
the Himálaya and the Vindhya Mountains ... is called
Madhyadesa, or the middle region; the space comprised
between these two mountains from the eastern to the western

sea is called by sages Áryávarṭta, the seat of honourable men.’
(MANU{FNS, II, 21, 22.) The

Sanskrit Indians called themselves Áryans, which means
honourable, noble, to distinguish themselves from the
surrounding nations of different origin.” GORRESIO{FNS

King Sagar in his crowded court Gave ear unto the priests’
report.

He summoned straightway to his side His sixty thousand sons,
and cried:

“Brave sons of mine, I knew not how These demons are so
mighty now:

The priests began the rite so well All sanctified with prayer and
spell. If in the depths of earth he hide,

Or lurk beneath the ocean’s tide, [051]

Pursue, dear sons, the robber’s track; Slay him and bring the
charger back. The whole of this broad earth explore, Sea-
garlanded, from shore to shore: Yea, dig her up with might and
main Until you see the horse again.

Deep let your searching labour reach, A league in depth dug out
by each.

The robber of our horse pursue,

And please your sire who orders you. My grandson, I, this
priestly train,

Till the steed comes, will here remain.”

Their eager hearts with transport burned As to their task the
heroes turned.

Obedient to their father, they

Through earth’s recesses forced their way. With iron arms’
unflinching toil

Each dug a league beneath the soil. Earth, cleft asunder,
groaned in pain, As emulous they plied amain

Sharp-pointed coulter, pick, and bar, Hard as the bolts of Indra
are.

Then loud the horrid clamour rose

Of monsters dying neath their blows, Giant and demon, fiend
and snake,

That in earth’s core their dwelling make. They dug, in ire that
naught could stay, Through sixty thousand leagues their way,
Cleaving the earth with matchless strength Till hell itself they
reached at length.

Thus digging searched they Jambudvip184

With all its hills and mountains steep. Then a great fear began
to shake

The heart of God, bard, fiend, and snake, And all distressed in
spirit went

Before the Sire Omnipotent. With signs of woe in every face

They sought the mighty Father's grace, And trembling still and ill
at ease Addressed their Lord in words like these:

“The sons of Sagar, Sire benign,

Pierce the whole earth with mine on mine, And as their ruthless
work they ply Innumerable creatures die.

“This is the thief,” the princes say, “Who stole our victim steed
away. This marred the rite, and caused us ill, And so their
guiltless blood they spill.”

Canto XLI. Kapil.

184 Said to be so called from the Jambu, or Rose Apple,
abounding in it, and signifying according to the Puránas the
central division of the world, the known world.

The father lent a gracious ear And listened to their tale of fear,
And kindly to the Gods replied

Whom woe and death had terrified:

“The wisest Vāsudeva,¹⁸⁵ who

The Immortals’ foe, fierce Madhu, slew, Regards broad Earth
with love and pride And guards, in Kapil’s form, his bride.¹⁸⁶ His
kindled wrath will quickly fall

On the king’s sons and burn them all. This cleaving of the earth
his eye Foresaw in ages long gone by:

He knew with prescient soul the fate That Sagar’s children
should await.”

The Three-and-thirty,¹⁸⁷ freed from fear, Sought their bright
homes with hopeful cheer. Still rose the great tempestuous
sound

As Sagar’s children pierced the ground. When thus the whole
broad earth was cleft, And not a spot unsearched was left,

¹⁸⁵ Here used as a name of Vishr,u.

¹⁸⁶ Kings are called the husbands of their kingdoms or of the
earth; “She and his kingdom were his only brides.” Raghuvāṅsa.

“Doubly divorced! Bad men, you violate A double marriage,
’twixt my crown and me, And then between me and my married
wife.”

King Richard II. Act V. Sc. I.

187 The thirty-three Gods are said in the Aitareya Bráhmaṛa, Book I. ch. II. 10. to be the eight Vasus, the eleven Rudras, the twelve Ádityas, Prajápati, either Brahmá or Daksha, and Vashatkára or deified oblation. This must have been the actual number at the beginning of the Vedic religion gradually increased

by successive mythical and religious creations till the Indian Pantheon was crowded with abstractions of every kind. Through the reverence with which the words of the Veda were regarded, the immense host of multiplied divinities, in later times, still bore the name of the Thirty-three Gods.

Back to their home the princes sped, And thus unto their father said:

“We searched the earth from side to side, While countless hosts of creatures died. Our conquering feet in triumph trod

On snake and demon, fiend and God; But yet we failed, with all our toil, To find the robber and the spoil.

What can we more? If more we can, Devise, O King, and tell thy plan.”

His children's speech King Sagar heard, And answered thus, to
anger stirred:

“Dig on, and ne'er your labour stay

Till through earth's depths you force your way.

Then smite the robber dead, and bring

[052]The charger back with triumphing.” The sixty thousand
chiefs obeyed:

Deep through the earth their way they made. Deep as they dug
and deeper yet

The immortal elephant they met, Famed Vírúpáksha¹⁸⁸ vast of
size, Upon whose head the broad earth lies:

The mighty beast who earth sustains

188 “One of the elephants which, according to an ancient belief
popular in India, supported the earth with their enormous
backs; when one of these elephants shook his wearied head the
earth trembled with its woods and hills. An idea, or rather a
mythical fancy, similar to this, but reduced to proportions less
grand, is found in Virgil when he speaks of Enceladus buried
under Ætna:”

“adi semiustum fulmine corpus

Urgeri mole hac, ingentemque insuper Ætnam Impositam,
ruptis flammam expirare caminis;

Et fessum quoties mutat latus, intre mere omnem iam, et
cœlum subtexere fumo.”

Æneid. Lib. III. GORRESIO{FNS.

With shaggy hills and wooded plains. When, with the changing
moon, distressed, And longing for a moment's rest,

His mighty head the monster shakes, Earth to the bottom reels
and quakes. Around that warder strong and vast With
reverential steps they passed.

Nor, when the honour due was paid,

Their downward search through earth delayed. But turning from
the east aside

Southward again their task they plied. There Mahápadma held
his place, The best of all his mighty race,

Like some huge hill, of monstrous girth, Upholding on his head
the earth.

When the vast beast the princes saw, They marvelled and were
filled with awe. The sons of high-souled Sagar round That
elephant in reverence wound.

Then in the western region they

With might unwearied cleft their way. There saw they with
astonisht eyes Saumanas, beast of mountain size.

Round him with circling steps they went With greetings kind and reverent.

On, on—no thought of rest or stay— They reached the seat of Soma's sway. There saw they Bhadra, white as snow, With lucky marks that fortune show, Bearing the earth upon his head.

Round him they paced with solemn tread, And honoured him with greetings kind, Then downward yet their way they mined. They gained the tract 'twixt east and north Whose fame is ever blazoned forth,¹⁸⁹ And by a storm of rage impelled,

Digging through earth their course they held.

Then all the princes, lofty-souled, Of wondrous vigour, strong and bold, Saw Vāsudeva¹⁹⁰ standing there

In Kapil's form he loved to wear, And near the everlasting God

The victim charger cropped the sod. They saw with joy and eager eyes The fancied robber and the prize, And on him rushed the furious band Crying aloud, Stand, villain! stand! "Avaunt! avaunt!" great Kapil cried, His bosom flusht with passion's tide;

¹⁸⁹ "The Devas and Asuras (Gods and Titans) fought in the east, the south, the west, and the north, and the Devas were defeated by the Asuras in all these directions. They then fought in the

north-eastern direction; there the Devas did not sustain defeat. This direction is aparájítá, i.e. unconquerable. Thence one should do work in this direction, and have it done there; for such a one (alone) is able to clear off his debts.” HAUG’S FNS Aitareya Bráhmanam, Vol. II, p. 33.

The debts here spoken of are a man’s religious obligations to the Gods, the Pitaras or Manes, and men.

190 Vishr,u.

Then by his might that proud array All scorcht to heaps of ashes lay.191

Canto XLII. Sagar’s Sacrifice.

Then to the prince his grandson, bright With his own fame's
unborrowed light, King Sagar thus began to say, Marvelling at
his sons' delay:

“Thou art a warrior skilled and bold, Match for the mighty men
of old.

Now follow on thine uncles' course

And track the robber of the horse. [053]

To guard thee take thy sword and bow, for huge and strong are
beasts below. There to the reverend reverence pay, And kill the
foes who check thy way; Then turn successful home and see
My sacrifice complete through thee.”

191 “It appears to me that this mythical story has reference to
the volcanic phenomena of nature. Kapil may very possibly be
that hidden fiery force which suddenly unprisons itself and
bursts forth in volcanic effects. Kapil is, moreover, one of the
names of Agni the God of Fire.” GORRESIO{FNS.

Obedient to the high-souled lord Grasped Ansumán his bow and
sword, And hurried forth the way to trace With youth and
valour's eager pace.

On sped he by the path he found Dug by his uncles
underground. The warder elephant he saw

Whose size and strength pass Nature's law, Who bears the
world's tremendous weight, Whom God, fiend, giant venerate,
Bird, serpent, and each flitting shade, To him the honour meet
he paid With circling steps and greeting due, And further prayed
him, if he knew, To tell him of his uncles' weal,

And who had dared the horse to steal. To him in war and council
tried

The warder elephant replied: "Thou, son of Asamanj, shalt lead
In triumph back the rescued steed."

As to each warder beast he came And questioned all, his words
the same, The honoured youth with gentle speech Drew
eloquent reply from each,

That fortune should his steps attend,

And with the horse he home should wend. Cheered with the
grateful answer, he Passed on with step more light and free,
And reached with careless heart the place Where lay in ashes
Sagar's race.

Then sank the spirit of the chief Beneath that shock of sudden
grief, And with a bitter cry of woe

He mourned his kinsmen fallen so.

He saw, weighed down by woe and care, The victim charger
roaming there.

Yet would the pious chieftain fain Oblations offer to the slain:

But, needing water for the rite,

He looked and there was none in sight His quick eye searching
all around The uncle of his kinsmen found,

King Garu⁹, best beyond compare Of birds who wing the fields
of air. Then thus unto the weeping man The son of Vinatá¹⁹²
began: "Grieve not, O hero, for their fall Who died a death
approved of all.

Of mighty strength, they met their fate By Kapil's hand whom
none can mate. Pour forth for them no earthly wave, A holier
flood their spirits crave.

If, daughter of the Lord of Snow, Gangá would turn her stream
below, Her waves that cleanse all mortal stain Would wash their
ashes pure again.

Yea, when her flood whom all revere Rolls o'er the dust that
moulders here, The sixty thousand, freed from sin,

A home in Indra's heaven shall win. Go, and with ceaseless
labour try To draw the Goddess from the sky. Return, and with
thee take the steed;

So shall thy grandsire's rite succeed.”

192 Garuda was the son of Kasyapa and Vinatá.

Prince Ansumán the strong and brave Followed the rede
Suparna, a Garuda gave.

The glorious hero took the horse,

And homeward quickly bent his course. Straight to the anxious
king he hied, Whom lustral rites had purified,

The mournful story to unfold And all the king of birds had told.

The tale of woe the monarch heard, Nor longer was the rite
deferred: With care and just observance he Accomplished all, as
texts decree.

The rites performed, with brighter fame, Mighty in counsel,
home he came.

He longed to bring the river down, But found no plan his wish to
crown.

He pondered long with anxious thought But saw no way to what
he sought.

Thus thirty thousand years he spent, And then to heaven the monarch went.

Canto XLIII. Bhagíraph.

When Sagar thus had bowed to fate, The lords and commons of the state Approved with ready heart and will Prince Ansumán his throne to fill.

He ruled, a mighty king, unblamed, Sire of Dilípa justly famed.

193 Garu9.

Canto XLIII. Bhagíraph. 177

To him, his child and worthy heir,

The king resigned his kingdom's care,

And on Himálaya's pleasant side

His task austere of penance plied.

Bright as a God in clear renown

He planned to bring pure Gangá down.

There on his fruitless hope intent

Twice sixteen thousand years he spent,
And in the grove of hermits stayed
Till bliss in heaven his rites repaid.
Dilípa then, the good and great,
Soon as he learnt his kinsmen's fate,
Bowed down by woe, with troubled mind, [054]
Pondering long no cure could find.
“How can I bring,” the mourner sighed,
“To cleanse their dust, the heavenly tide?
How can I give them rest, and save
Their spirits with the offered wave?”
Long with this thought his bosom skilled
In holy discipline was filled.
A son was born, Bhagírath named,
Above all men for virtue famed.
Dilípa many a rite ordained,
And thirty thousand seasons reigned.
But when no hope the king could see
His kinsmen from their woe to free,
The lord of men, by sickness tried,

Obeded the law of fate, and died;
He left the kingdom to his son,
And gained the heaven his deeds had won.
The good Bhagíráth, royal sage,
Had no fair son to cheer his age.
He, great in glory, pure in will,
Longing for sons was childless still.

Then on one wish, one thought intent, Planning the heavenly
stream's descent, Leaving his ministers the care
And burden of his state to bear, Dwelling in far Gokarna¹⁹⁴ he
Engaged in long austerity.
With senses checked, with arms upraised, Five fires¹⁹⁵ around
and o'er him blazed. Each weary month the hermit passed
Breaking but once his awful fast.
In winter's chill the brook his bed,
In rain, the clouds to screen his head. Thousands of years he
thus endured Till Brahmá's favour was assured, And the high
Lord of living things Looked kindly on his sufferings.

With trooping Gods the Sire came near The king who plied his
task austere: “Blest Monarch, of a glorious race, Thy fervent
rites have won my grace.

Well hast thou wrought thine awful task: Some boon in turn, O
Hermit, ask.”

Bhagíráth, rich in glory’s light, The hero with the arm of might,
Thus to the Lord of earth and sky

Raised suppliant hands and made reply: “If the great God his
favour deigns, And my long toil its fruit obtains,

Let Sagar’s sons receive from me Libations that they long to
see.

Let Gangá with her holy wave

194 A famous and venerated region near the Malabar coast.

195 That is four fires and the sun.

The ashes of the heroes lave, That so my kinsmen may ascend
To heavenly bliss that ne’er shall end. And give, I pray, O God, a
son,

Nor let my house be all undone. Sire of the worlds! be this the
grace Bestowed upon Ikshváku’s race.”

The Sire, when thus the king had prayed, In sweet kind words
his answer made. “High, high thy thought and wishes are,
Bhagíra¹⁹⁶ of the mighty car!

Ikshváku’s line is blest in thee, And as thou prayest it shall be.

Gangá, whose waves in Swarga¹⁹⁶ flow,

Is daughter of the Lord of Snow. Win Siva that his aid be lent

To hold her in her mid descent, For earth alone will never bear

Those torrents hurled from upper air; And none may hold her
weight but He, The Trident wielding deity.”

Thus having said, the Lord supreme Addressed him to the
heavenly stream; And then with Gods and Maruts¹⁹⁷ went To
heaven above the firmament.

Canto XLIV. The Descent Of Gangá.

¹⁹⁶ Heaven.

¹⁹⁷ Wind-Gods.

The Lord of life the skies regained: The fervent king a year
remained With arms upraised, refusing rest

While with one toe the earth he pressed, Still as a post, with
sleepless eye,

The air his food, his roof the sky.

The year had past. Then Umá's lord,¹⁹⁸ King of creation, world
adored,

Thus spoke to great Bhagíraih: "I, Well pleased thy wish will
gratify, And on my head her waves shall fling The daughter of
the Mountains' King!"

He stood upon the lofty crest That crowns the Lord of Snow,

And bade the river of the Blest Descend on earth below.

Himálaya's child, adored of all, The haughty mandate heard,

And her proud bosom, at the call, With furious wrath was stirred.

Down from her channel in the skies With awful might she sped

With a giant's rush, in a giant's size, On Siva's holy head.

"He calls me," in her wrath she cried, "And all my flood shall
sweep

And whirl him in its whelming tide To hell's profoundest deep."

He held the river on his head,

And kept her wandering, where,

Dense as Himálaya's woods, were spread

[55] The tangles of his hair.

198 Siva.

No way to earth she found, ashamed, Though long and sore she strove,

Condemned, until her pride were tamed, Amid his locks to rove.

There, many lengthening seasons through, The wildered river ran:

Bhagíráth saw it, and anew His penance dire began.

Then Siva, for the hermit's sake, Bade her long wanderings end,

And sinking into Vindu's lake Her weary waves descend.

From Gangá, by the God set free, Seven noble rivers came;

Hládíní, Pávání, and she Called Nalíní by name:

These rolled their lucid waves along And sought the eastern side.

Suchakshu, Sítá fair and strong, And Sindhu's mighty tide—199

These to the region of the west With joyful waters sped:

The seventh, the brightest and the best, Flowed where Bhagíráth led.

On Siva's head descending first A rest the torrents found:

Then down in all their might they burst And roared along the ground.

On countless glittering scales the beam Of rosy morning flashed,

199 The lake Vindu does not exist. Of the seven rivers here mentioned two only, the Ganges and the Sindhu or Indus, are known to geographers. Hládiní means the Gladdener, Pávaní the Purifier, Naliní the Lotus-Clad, and Suchakshu the Fair-eyed.

Where fish and dolphins through the stream Fallen and falling dashed.

Then bards who chant celestial lays And nymphs of heavenly birth

Flocked round upon that flood to gaze That streamed from sky to earth.

The Gods themselves from every sphere, Incomparably bright, Borne in their golden cars drew near To see the wondrous sight.

The cloudless sky was all aflame With the light of a hundred suns

Where'er the shining chariots came That bore those holy ones.

So flashed the air with crested snakes And fish of every hue
As when the lightning's glory breaks Through fields of summer
blue.

And white foam-clouds and silver spray Were wildly tossed on
high,

Like swans that urge their homeward way Across the autumn
sky.

Now ran the river calm and clear With current strong and deep:

Now slowly broadened to a mere, Or scarcely seemed to creep.

Now o'er a length of sandy plain Her tranquil course she held;

Now rose her waves and sank again, By reflux waves repelled.

So falling first on Siva's head, Thence rushing to their earthly
bed, In ceaseless fall the waters streamed, And pure with holy
lustre gleamed.

Then every spirit, sage, and bard, Condemned to earth by
sentence hard, Pressed eagerly around the tide

That Siva's touch had sanctified.

Then they whom heavenly doom had hurled, Accursed, to this
lower world,

Touched the pure wave, and freed from sin Resought the skies
and entered in.

And all the world was glad, whereon The glorious water flowed
and shone, For sin and stain were banished thence By the sweet
river's influence.

First, in a car of heavenly frame, The royal saint of deathless
name, Bhagíráth, very glorious rode, And after him fair Gangá
flowed.

God, sage, and bard, the chief in place Of spirits and the Nága
race,

Nymph, giant, fiend, in long array Sped where Bhagíráth led the
way; And all the hosts the flood that swim Followed the stream
that followed him. Where'er the great Bhagíráth led, There ever
glorious Gangá fled,

The best of floods, the rivers' queen, Whose waters wash the
wicked clean.

It chanced that Jahnu, great and good, Engaged with holy
offerings stood;

The river spread her waves around Flooding his sacrificial
ground.

The saint in anger marked her pride, And at one draught her
stream he dried. Then God, and sage, and bard, afraid,

To noble high-souled Jahnu prayed, And begged that he would
kindly deem His own dear child that holy stream.

Moved by their suit, he soothed their fears And loosed her
waters from his ears.

Hence Gangá through the world is styled Both Jáhnavi and
Jahnu's child.

Then onward still she followed fast, And reached the great sea
bank at last. Thence deep below her way she made To end
those rites so long delayed.

The monarch reached the Ocean's side, And still behind him
Gangá hied.

He sought the depths which open lay Where Sagar's sons had
dug their way.

So leading through earth's nether caves

[56] The river's purifying waves, Over his kinsmen's dust the
lord His funeral libation poured.

Soon as the flood their dust bedewed, Their spirits gained
beatitude,

And all in heavenly bodies dressed Rose to the skies' eternal
rest.

Then thus to King Bhagíráth said Brahmá, when, coming at the
head Of all his bright celestial train,

He saw those spirits freed from stain:

“Well done! great Prince of men, well done! Thy kinsmen bliss
and heaven have won.

The sons of Sagar mighty-souled, Are with the Blest, as Gods,
enrolled, Long as the Ocean’s flood shall stand Upon the border
of the land,

So long shall Sagar’s sons remain, And, godlike, rank in heaven
retain. Gangá thine eldest child shall be, Called from thy name
Bhágirathí; Named also—for her waters fell

From heaven and flow through earth and hell— Tripathagá,
stream of the skies,

Because three paths she glorifies. And, mighty King, ’tis given
thee now To free thee and perform thy vow.

No longer, happy Prince, delay Drink-offerings to thy kin to pay.
For this the holiest Sagar sighed,

But mourned the boon he sought denied. Then Ansumán, dear
Prince! although No brighter name the world could show, Strove
long the heavenly flood to gain To visit earth, but strove in vain.

Nor was she by the sages' peer, Blest with all virtues, most
austere, Thy sire Dilípa, hither brought,
Though with fierce prayers the boon he sought. But thou, O
King, earned success,
And won high fame which God will bless. Through thee, O victor
of thy foes,
On earth this heavenly Gangá flows, And thou hast gained the
meed divine That waits on virtue such as thine.
Now in her ever holy wave Thyself, O best of heroes, lave:
So shalt thou, pure from every sin, The blessed fruit of merit win.
Now for thy kin who died of yore The meet libations duly pour.

Above the heavens I now ascend:
Depart, and bliss thy steps attend.”

Thus to the mighty king who broke His foemens' might, Lord
Brahmá spoke, And with his Gods around him rose
To his own heaven of blest repose. The royal sage no more
delayed, But, the libation duly paid,
Home to his regal city hied

With water cleansed and purified. There ruled he his ancestral
state, Best of all men, most fortunate. And all the people joyed
again

In good Bhagíráth's gentle reign. Rich, prosperous, and blest
were they, And grief and sickness fled away.

Thus, Ráma, I at length have told How Gangá came from
heaven of old. Now, for the evening passes swift,

I wish thee each auspicious gift. This story of the flood's
descent Will give—for 'tis most excellent— Wealth, purity, fame,
length of days, And to the skies its hearers raise”

Canto XLV. The Quest Of The Amrit.

High and more high their wonder rose As the strange story
reached its close, And thus, with Lakshmar,, Ráma, best Of
Raghu's sons, the saint addressed: “Most wondrous is the tale

which thou Hast told of heavenly Gangá, how From realms
above descending she

Flowed through the land and filled the sea. In thinking o'er what
thou hast said

The night has like a moment fled, Whose hours in musing have
been spent Upon thy words most excellent:

So much, O holy Sage, thy lore

Has charmed us with this tale of yore.”

Day dawned. The morning rites were done And the victorious
Raghu's son

Addressed the sage in words like these, Rich in his long
austerities:

“The night is past: the morn is clear; Told is the tale so good to
hear: Now o'er that river let us go,

Three-pathed, the best of all that flow. This boat stands ready
on the shore To bear the holy hermits o'er,

Who of thy coming warned, in haste, The barge upon the bank
have placed.”

And Kusik's son approved his speech, And moving to the sandy
beach,

Placed in the boat the hermit band, And reached the river's
further strand. On the north bank their feet they set, And
greeted all the saints they met.

On Gangá's shore they lighted down, And saw Visálá's lovely
town.

Thither, the princes by his side, The best of holy hermits hied.

[57] It was a town exceeding fair

That might with heaven itself compare. Then, suppliant palm to
palm applied, Famed Ráma asked his holy guide:

“O best of hermits, say what race Of monarchs rules this lovely
place. Dear master, let my prayer prevail, For much I long to
hear the tale.”

Moved by his words, the saintly man Visálá's ancient tale began:

“List, Ráma, list, with closest heed The tale of Indra's wondrous
deed, And mark me as I truly tell

What here in ancient days befell. Ere Krita's famous Age²⁰⁰ had
fled, Strong were the sons of Diti²⁰¹ bred; And Aditi's brave
children too

Were very mighty, good, and true. The rival brothers fierce and
bold Were sons of Kasyap lofty-souled. Of sister mothers born,
they vied, Brood against brood, in jealous pride.

Once, as they say, band met with band, And, joined in awful
council, planned To live, unharmed by age and time, Immortal
in their youthful prime.

Then this was, after due debate,

200 The First or Golden Age.

201 Diti and Aditi were wives of Kasyap, and mothers
respectively of Titans and Gods.

The counsel of the wise and great, To churn with might the milky
sea202 The life-bestowing drink to free.

This planned, they seized the Serpent King, Vāsuki, for their
churning-string,

And Mandar's mountain for their pole, And churned with all their
heart and soul. As thus, a thousand seasons through, This way
and that the snake they drew, Biting the rocks, each tortured
head,

A very deadly venom shed.

Thence, bursting like a mighty flame, A pestilential poison came,
Consuming, as it onward ran,

The home of God, and fiend, and man. Then all the suppliant
Gods in fear

To Sankar,²⁰³ mighty lord, drew near.

To Rudra, King of Herds, dismayed, “Save us, O save us, Lord!”
they prayed. Then Vishnu, bearing shell, and mace, And discus,
showed his radiant face, And thus addressed in smiling glee

The Trident wielding deity:

“What treasure first the Gods upturn From troubled Ocean, as
they churn, Should—for thou art the eldest—be Conferred, O
best of Gods, on thee. Then come, and for thy birthright’s sake,
This venom as thy first fruits take.”

He spoke, and vanished from their sight, When Siva saw their
wild affright,

And heard his speech by whom is borne

²⁰² One of the seven seas surrounding as many worlds in
concentric rings.

²⁰³ Sankar and Rudra are names of Siva.

The mighty bow of bending horn,²⁰⁴ The poisoned flood at
once he quaffed As 'twere the Amrit’s heavenly draught. Then
from the Gods departing went Siva, the Lord pre-eminent.

The host of Gods and Asurs still

Kept churning with one heart and will. But Mandar's mountain,
whirling round, Pierced to the depths below the ground. Then
Gods and bards in terror flew

To him who mighty Madhu slew. "Help of all beings! more than
all, The Gods on thee for aid may call. Ward off, O mighty-
armed! our fate,

And bear up Mandar's threatening weight." Then Vishr,u, as their
need was sore,

The semblance of a tortoise wore, And in the bed of Ocean lay
The mountain on his back to stay. Then he, the soul pervading
all, Whose locks in radiant tresses fall, One mighty arm
extended still, And grasped the summit of the hill. So ranged
among the Immortals, he Joined in the churning of the sea.

204 "Sárngin, literally carrying a bow of horn, is a constantly
recurring name of Vishr,u. The Indians also, therefore, knew the
art of making bows out of the horns of antelopes or wild goats,
which Homer ascribes to the Trojans of the heroic age."

SCHLEGEL{FNS.

A thousand years had reached their close, When calmly from
the ocean rose

The gentle sage²⁰⁵ with staff and can,

Lord of the art of healing man.

Then as the waters foamed and boiled, As churning still the
Immortals toiled, Of winning face and lovely frame, Forth sixty
million fair ones came.

Born of the foam and water, these

Were aptly named Apsarases.²⁰⁶ [058]

Each had her maids. The tongue would fail— So vast the
throng—to count the tale.

But when no God or Titan wooed A wife from all that multitude,
Refused by all, they gave their love In common to the Gods
above.

Then from the sea still vexed and wild Rose Surá,²⁰⁷ Varur,'s
maiden child.

A fitting match she sought to find: But Diti's sons her love
declined,

²⁰⁵ Dhanvantari, the physician of the Gods.

²⁰⁶ The poet plays upon the word and fancifully derives it from
apsu, the locative case plural of ap, water, and rasa, taste.... The
word is probably derived from ap, water, and sri, to go, and
seems to signify inhabitants of the water, nymphs of the
stream; or, as Goldstücker thinks (Dict. s.v.) these divinities were

originally personifications of the vapours which are attracted by the sun and form into mist or clouds.

207 “Surá, in the feminine comprehends all sorts of intoxicating liquors, many

kinds of which the Indians from the earliest times distilled and prepared from rice, sugar-cane, the palm tree, and various flowers and plants. Nothing is considered more disgraceful among orthodox Hindus than drunkenness, and the use of wine is forbidden not only to Bráhmans but the two other orders as well.... So it clearly appears derogatory to the dignity of the Gods to have received a nymph so pernicious, who ought rather to have been made over to the Titans. However the etymological fancy has prevailed. The word Sura, a God, is derived from the indeclinable Swar heaven.” SCHLEGEL{FNS.

Their kinsmen of the rival brood To the pure maid in honour
sued.

Hence those who loved that nymph so fair The hallowed name
of Suras bear.

And Asurs are the Titan crowd Her gentle claims who
disallowed.

Then from the foamy sea was freed Uchchaihsravas,²⁰⁸ the
generous steed, And Kaustubha, of gems the gem,²⁰⁹ And
Soma, Moon God, after them.

At length when many a year had fled, Up floated, on her lotus
bed,

A maiden fair and tender-eyed,

In the young flush of beauty's pride. She shone with pearl and
golden sheen, And seals of glory stamped her queen,

On each round arm glowed many a gem, On her smooth brows,
a diadem.

Rolling in waves beneath her crown The glory of her hair flowed
down, Pearls on her neck of price untold, The lady shone like
burnisht gold. Queen of the Gods, she leapt to land, A lotus in
her perfect hand,

And fondly, of the lotus-sprung, To lotus-bearing Vishnu clung.

²⁰⁸ Literally, high-eared, the horse of Indra. Compare the
production of the horse from the sea by Neptune.

²⁰⁹

“And Kaustubha the best

Of gems that burns with living light Upon Lord Vishnu's breast.”

Churning of the Ocean.

Her Gods above and men below

As Beauty's Queen and Fortune know.²¹⁰ Gods, Titans, and the
minstrel train

Still churned and wrought the troubled main. At length the prize
so madly sought,

The Amrit, to their sight was brought. For the rich spoil, 'twixt
these and those A fratricidal war arose,

And, host 'gainst host in battle, set, Aditi's sons and Diti's met.

United, with the giants' aid,

Their fierce attack the Titans made, And wildly raged for many
a day That universe-astounding fray.

When wearied arms were faint to strike, And ruin threatened all
alike,

Vishr,u, with art's illusive aid,

The Amrit from their sight conveyed. That Best of Beings smote
his foes Who dared his deathless arm oppose:

Yea, Vishr,u, all-pervading God, Beneath his feet the Titans trod
Aditi's race, the sons of light, slew Diti's brood in cruel fight.

210 "That this story of the birth of Lakshmi is of considerable
antiquity is evident from one of her names Kshirabdhi-tanaya,
daughter of the Milky Sea, which is found in Amarasinha the

most ancient of Indian lexicographers. The similarity to the Greek myth of Venus being born from the foam of the sea is remarkable.”

“In this description of Lakshmi one thing only offends me, that she is said to have four arms. Each of Vishnu’s arms, single, as far as the elbow, there branches into two; but Lakshmi in all the brass seals that I possess or remember to have seen has two arms only. Nor does this deformity of redundant limbs suit the pattern of perfect beauty.” SCHLEGEL FNS. I have omitted the offensive epithet.

Then town-destroying²¹¹ Indra gained His empire, and in glory
reigned

O’er the three worlds with bard and sage Rejoicing in his
heritage.

Canto XLVI. Diti's Hope.

But Diti, when her sons were slain, Wild with a childless mother's
pain, To Kasyap spake, Maricha's son,

[059]Her husband: "O thou glorious one! Dead are the children,
mine no more, The mighty sons to thee I bore.

Long fervour's meed, I crave a boy Whose arm may Indra's life
destroy. The toil and pain my care shall be: To bless my hope
depends on thee. Give me a mighty son to slay

Fierce Indra, gracious lord! I pray."

211 Purandhar, a common title of Indra.

Canto XLVI. Diti's Hope. 195

Then glorious Kasyap thus replied To Diti, as she wept and sighed:

“Thy prayer is heard, dear saint! Remain Pure from all spot, and thou shalt gain

A son whose arm shall take the life Of Indra in the battle strife.

For full a thousand years endure Free from all stain, supremely pure; Then shall thy son and mine appear,

Whom the three worlds shall serve with fear.” These words the glorious Kasyap said,

Then gently stroked his consort’s head, Blessed her, and bade a kind adieu, And turned him to his rites anew.

Soon as her lord had left her side,

Her bosom swelled with joy and pride. She sought the shade of holy boughs, And there began her awful vows.

While yet she wrought her rites austere, Indra, unbidden, hastened near,

With sweet observance tending her, A reverential minister.

Wood, water, fire, and grass he brought, Sweet roots and woodland fruit he sought, And all her wants, the Thousand-eyed, With never-failing care, supplied,

With tender love and soft caress Removing pain and weariness.

When, of the thousand years ordained, Ten only unfulfilled
remained,

Thus to her son, the Thousand-eyed, The Goddess in her triumph
cried: “Best of the mighty! there remain

But ten short years of toil and pain; These years of penance
soon will flee, And a new brother thou shalt see.

Him for thy sake I’ll nobly breed, And lust of war his soul shall
feed; Then free from care and sorrow thou

Shalt see the worlds before him bow.”²¹²

Canto XLVII. Sumati.

Thus to Lord Indra, Thousand-eyed, Softly beseeching Diti
sighed.

When but a blighted bud was left, Which Indra’s hand in seven
had cleft:²¹³ “No fault, O Lord of Gods, is thine;

The blame herein is only mine.

But for one grace I fain would pray, As thou hast reft this hope
away.

This bud, O Indra, which a blight Has withered ere it saw the
light— From this may seven fair spirits rise To rule the regions of
the skies.

Be theirs through heaven's unbounded space

212 A few verses are here left untranslated on account of the
subject and language being offensive to modern taste.

213 “In this myth of Indra destroying the unborn fruit of Diti
with his thun-

derbolt, from which afterwards came the Maruts or Gods of
Wind and Storm, geological phenomena are, it seems,
represented under mythical images. In the great Mother of the
Gods is, perhaps, figured the dry earth: Indra the God of
thunder rends it open, and there issue from its rent bosom the
Maruts or exhalations of the earth. But such ancient myths are
difficult to interpret with absolute certainty.” GORRESIO{FNS.

Canto XLVII. Sumati. 197

On shoulders of the winds to race, My children, drest in heavenly
forms, Far-famed as Maruts, Gods of storms. One God to
Brahmá's sphere assign, Let one, O Indra, watch o'er thine; And

ranging through the lower air, The third the name of Váyu²¹⁴
bear. Gods let the four remaining be,
And roam through space, obeying thee.”

The Town-destroyer, Thousand-eyed, Who smote fierce Bali till
he died, Joined suppliant hands, and thus replied:

“Thy children heavenly forms shall wear; The names devised by
thee shall bear, And, Maruts called by my decree,

Shall Amrit drink and wait on me. From fear and age and
sickness freed,

Through the three worlds their wings shall speed.”

Thus in the hermits’ holy shade Mother and son their compact
made, And then, as fame relates, content, Home to the happy
skies they went. This is the spot—so men have told— Where Lord
Mahendra²¹⁵ dwelt of old, This is the blessed region where

His votaress mother claimed his care. Here gentle Alambúshá
bare

To old Ikshváku, king and sage, Visála, glory of his age,

By whom, a monarch void of guilt,

Was this fair town Visálá built. [060]

214 Wind.

215 Indra, with mahá, great, prefixed.

His son was Hemachandra, still Renowned for might and warlike skill. From him the great Suchandra came; His son, Dhúmrásva, dear to fame.

Next followed royal Srinjay; then Famed Sahadeva, lord of men.

Next came Kusásva, good and mild, Whose son was Somadatta styled, And Sumati, his heir, the peer

Of Gods above, now governs here. And ever through Ikshváku's grace, Visálá's kings, his noble race,

Are lofty-souled, and blest with length Of days, with virtue, and with strength. This night, O prince, we here will sleep; And when the day begins to peep,

Our onward way will take with thee, The king of Míthilá to see.”

Then Sumati, the king, aware Of Visvámitra's advent there, Came quickly forth with honour meet The lofty-minded sage to greet.

Girt with his priest and lords the king Did low obeisance, worshipping,

With suppliant hands, with head inclined, Thus spoke he after question kind;

“Since thou hast deigned to bless my sight, And grace awhile
thy servant’s seat,

High fate is mine, great Anchorite,

And none may with my bliss compete.”

Canto XLVIII. Indra And Ahalyá

When mutual courtesies had past, Visálá’s ruler spoke at last:

“These princely youths, O Sage, who vie In might with children
of the sky, Heroic, born for happy fate,

With elephants’ or lions’ gait, Bold as the tiger or the bull, With
lotus eyes so large and full,

Armed with the quiver, sword, and bow, Whose figures like the
Asvins²¹⁶ show, Like children of the deathless Powers, Come
freely to these shades of ours,²¹⁷— How have they reached on
foot this place? What do they seek, and what their race?

As sun and moon adorn the sky, This spot the heroes glorify.

Alike in stature, port, and mien, The same fair form in each is
seen,”

He spoke; and at the monarch’s call The best of hermits told him
all,

How in the grove with him they dwelt, And slaughter to the
demons dealt.

Then wonder filled the monarch's breast, Who tended well each
royal guest.

Thus entertained, the princely pair Remained that night and
rested there, And with the morn's returning ray To Mithilá
pursued their way.

216 The Heavenly Twins.

217 Not banished from heaven as the inferior Gods and
demigods sometimes were.

When Janak's lovely city first Upon their sight, yet distant, burst,
The hermits all with joyful cries

Hailed the fair town that met their eyes. Then Ráma saw a holy
wood,

Close, in the city's neighbourhood, O'ergrown, deserted, marked
by age, And thus addressed the mighty sage: "O reverend lord. I
long to know What hermit dwelt here long ago." Then to the
prince his holy guide, Most eloquent of men, replied:

"O Ráma, listen while I tell

Whose was this grove, and what befell
When in the fury of his
rage

The high saint cursed the hermitage. This was the grove—most
lovely then— Of Gautam, O thou best of men,

Like heaven itself, most honoured by The Gods who dwell above
the sky. Here with Ahalyá at his side

His fervid task the ascetic plied. Years fled in thousands. On a
day It chanced the saint had gone away,

When Town-destroying Indra came, And saw the beauty of the
dame.

The sage's form the God endued, And thus the fair Ahalyá
wooed:

“Love, sweet! should brook no dull delay
But snatch the
moments when he may.” She knew him in the saint's disguise,
Lord Indra of the Thousand Eyes,

But touched by love's unholy fire, She yielded to the God's
desire.

“Now, Lord of Gods!” she whispered, “flee, From Gautam save
thyself and me.” Trembling with doubt and wild with dread Lord
Indra from the cottage fled;

But fleeing in the grove he met The home-returning anchoret,

Whose wrath the Gods and fiends would shun, Such power his
fervent rites had won.

Fresh from the lustral flood he came, In splendour like the
burning flame, With fuel for his sacred rites,

And grass, the best of eremites. The Lord of Gods was sad of
cheer To see the mighty saint so near, And when the holy hermit
spied

In hermit's garb the Thousand-eyed, [061]

He knew the whole, his fury broke Forth on the sinner as he
spoke:

“Because my form thou hast assumed, And wrought this folly,
thou art doomed, For this my curse to thee shall cling,
Henceforth a sad and sexless thing.”

No empty threat that sentence came, It chilled his soul and
marred his frame, His might and godlike vigour fled,

And every nerve was cold and dead.

Then on his wife his fury burst, And thus the guilty dame he
cursed: “For countless years, disloyal spouse, Devoted to
severest vows,

Thy bed the ashes, air thy food, Here shalt thou live in solitude.

This lonely grove thy home shall be, And not an eye thy form shall see.

When Ráma, Dasaratha's child,

Shall seek these shades then drear and wild, His coming shall remove thy stain,

And make the sinner pure again. Due honour paid to him, thy guest,

Shall cleanse thy fond and erring breast, Thee to my side in bliss restore,

And give thy proper shape once more.”²¹⁸

Thus to his guilty wife he said, Then far the holy Gautam fled,
And on Himálaya's lovely heights

Spent the long years in sternest rites.”

Canto XLIX. Ahalyá Freed.

Then Ráma, following still his guide, Within the grove, with Lakshmar,, hied, Her vows a wondrous light had lent

To that illustrious penitent.

He saw the glorious lady, screened From eye of man, and God,
and fiend, Like some bright portent which the care

218 Kumáрила says: “In the same manner, if it is said that Indra was the seducer of Ahalyá this does not imply that the God Indra committed such a crime, but Indra means the sun, and Ahalyá (from ahan and lí) the night; and as the night is seduced and ruined by the sun of the morning, therefore is Indra called the paramour of Ahalyá.” MAX MULLER FNS, History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature, p. 530.

Canto XLIX. Ahalyá Freed. 203

Of Brahmá launches through the air, Designed by his illusive art
To flash a moment and depart:

Or like the flame that leaps on high To sink involved in smoke
and die: Or like the full moon shining through The wintry mist,
then lost to view: Or like the sun’s reflection, cast Upon the
flood, too bright to last:

So was the glorious dame till then Removed from Gods’ and
mortals’ ken, Till—such was Gautam’s high decree— Prince
Ráma came to set her free.

Then, with great joy that dame to meet, The sons of Raghu
clapped her feet;

And she, remembering Gautam's oath, With gentle grace
received them both; Then water for their feet she gave, Guest-
gift, and all that strangers crave.

The prince, of courteous rule aware, Received, as meet, the
lady's care.

Then flowers came down in copious rain, And moving to the
heavenly strain

Of music in the skies that rang,

The nymphs and minstrels danced and sang: And all the Gods
with one glad voice Praised the great dame, and cried, "Rejoice!
Through fervid rites no more defiled,

But with thy husband reconciled." Gautam, the holy hermit
knew—

For naught escaped his godlike view— That Ráma lodged
beneath that shade,

And hasting there his homage paid. He took Ahalyá to his side,
From sin and folly purified,

And let his new-found consort bear In his austerities a share.

Then Ráma, pride of Raghu's race, Welcomed by Gautam, face
to face, Who every highest honour showed, To Mithilá pursued
his road.

Canto L. Janak.

The sons of Raghu journeyed forth, Bending their steps 'twixt
east and north. Soon, guided by the sage, they found, Enclosed,
a sacrificial ground.

Then to the best of saints, his guide, In admiration Ráma cried:
“The high-souled king no toil has spared, But nobly for his rite
prepared,

How many thousand Bráhmans here, From every region, far
and near, Well read in holy lore, appear!

How many tents, that sages screen, With wains in hundreds,
here are seen! Great Bráhman, let us find a place Where we may
stay and rest a space.” The hermit did as Ráma prayed,

[62] And in a spot his lodging made,

Far from the crowd, sequestered, clear, With copious water
flowing near.

Canto L. Janak. 205

Then Janak, best of kings, aware Of Visvámitra lodging there,
With Satánanda for his guide— The priest on whom he most
relied,

His chaplain void of guile and stain— And others of his priestly
train, Bearing the gift that greets the guest, To meet him with all
honour pressed. The saint received with gladsome mind Each
honour and observance kind: Then of his health he asked the
king, And how his rites were prospering, Janak, with chaplain
and with priest, Addressed the hermits, chief and least,
Accosting all, in due degree,

With proper words of courtesy. Then, with his palms together
laid, The king his supplication made:

“Deign, reverend lord, to sit thee down With these good saints
of high renown.” Then sate the chief of hermits there, Obedient
to the monarch’s prayer.

Chaplain and priest, and king and peer, Sate in their order, far
or near.

Then thus the king began to say: “The Gods have blest my rite
to-day, And with the sight of thee repaid The preparations I
have made.

Grateful am I, so highly blest, That thou, of saints the holiest,
Hast come, O Bráhmaṇ, here with all These hermits to the
festival.

Twelve days, O Bráhmaṇ Sage, remain— For so the learned
priests ordain—

And then, O heir of Kusik's name,
The Gods will come their dues to claim.”

With looks that testified delight Thus spake he to the anchorite,
Then with his suppliant hands upraised, He asked, as earnestly
he gazed:

“These princely youths, O Sage, who vie In might with children
of the sky, Heroic, born for happy fate,

With elephants' or lions' gait, Bold as the tiger and the bull, With
lotus eyes so large and full,

Armed with the quiver, sword and bow, Whose figures like the
Asvins show, Like children of the heavenly Powers, Come freely
to these shades of ours,—

How have they reached on foot this place? What do they seek,
and what their race?

As sun and moon adorn the sky, This spot the heroes glorify:

Alike in stature, port, and mien,

The same fair form in each is seen.”²¹⁹

Thus spoke the monarch, lofty-souled, The saint, of heart
unfathomed, told How, sons of Dasaratha, they Accompanied
his homeward way,

How in the hermitage they dwelt, And slaughter to the demons
dealt:

Their journey till the spot they neared

219 “The preceding sixteen lines have occurred before in Canto
XLVIII. This Homeric custom of repeating a passage of several
lines is strange to our poet. This is the only instance I remember.
The repetition of single lines is common enough.”

SCHLEGEL{FNS.

Whence fair Visálá's towers appeared: Ahalyá seen and freed
from taint; Their meeting with her lord the saint; And how they
thither came, to know The virtue of the famous bow.

Thus Visvámitra spoke the whole To royal Janak, great of soul,
And when this wondrous tale was o'er, The glorious hermit said
no more.

Canto LI. Visvámitra.

Wise Visvámitra's tale was done: Then sainted Gautam's eldest
son, Great Satánanda, far-renowned, Whom long austerities
had crowned With glory—as the news he heard The down upon
his body stirred,— Filled full of wonder at the sight

Of Ráma, felt supreme delight. When Satánanda saw the pair
Of youthful princes seated there, He turned him to the holy man
Who sate at ease, and thus began:

“And didst thou, mighty Sage, in truth Show clearly to this royal
youth

My mother, glorious far and wide, Whom penance-rites have
sanctified? And did my glorious mother—she, Heiress of noble
destiny—

Serve her great guest with woodland store, Whom all should
honour evermore?

Didst thou the tale to Ráma tell Of what in ancient days befell,
The sin, the misery, and the shame Of guilty God and faithless
dame? And, O thou best of hermits, say, Did Ráma's healing
presence stay Her trial? was the wife restored Again to him, my
sire and lord?

Say, Hermit, did that sire of mine Receive her with a soul
benign,

When long austerities in time

[63] Had cleansed her from the taint of crime? And, son of
Kusik, let me know,

Did my great-minded father show Honour to Ráma, and regard,
Before he journeyed hitherward?" The hermit with attentive ear
Marked all the questions of the seer: To him for eloquence far-
famed, His eloquent reply he framed:

"Yea, 'twas my care no task to shun, And all I had to do was
done;

As Rer,uká and Bhrigu's child,

The saint and dame were reconciled."

When the great sage had thus replied, To Ráma Satánanda
cried:

"A welcome visit, Prince, is thine, Thou scion of King Raghu's
line. With him to guide thy way aright, This sage invincible in
might,

This Bráhmaṇ sage, most glorious-bright,

By long austerities has wrought

A wondrous deed, exceeding thought: Thou knowest well, O
strong of arm, This sure defence from scathe and harm. None,
Ráma, none is living now

In all the earth more blest than thou, That thou hast won a saint
so tried In fervid rites thy life to guide.

Now listen, Prince, while I relate His lofty deeds and wondrous
fate. He was a monarch pious-souled.

His foemen in the dust he rolled; Most learned, prompt at duty's
claim, His people's good his joy and aim.

Of old the Lord of Life gave birth To mighty Kusa, king of earth.

His son was Kusanábha, strong, Friend of the right, the foe of
wrong. Gádhi, whose fame no time shall dim, Heir of his throne
was born to him, And Visvámitra, Gádhi's heir, Governed the
land with kingly care. While years unnumbered rolled away The
monarch reigned with equal sway. At length, assembling many
a band, He led his warriors round the land— Complete in tale, a
mighty force,

Cars, elephants, and foot, and horse. Through cities, groves, and
floods he passed, O'er lofty hills, through regions vast.

He reached Vasishtha's pure abode,

Where trees, and flowers, and creepers glowed, Where troops of
sylvan creatures fed;

Which saints and angels visited.

Gods, fauns, and bards of heavenly race, And spirits, glorified
the place;

The deer their timid ways forgot,

And holy Bráhmans thronged the spot. Bright in their souls, like
fire, were these, Made pure by long austerities,

Bound by the rule of vows severe, And each in glory Brahmá's
peer. Some fed on water, some on air,

Some on the leaves that withered there. Roots and wild fruit
were others' food;

All rage was checked, each sense subdued, There
Bálakhilyas²²⁰ went and came,

Now breathed the prayer, now fed the flame:

These, and ascetic bands beside, The sweet retirement
beautified. Such was Vasishtha's blest retreat, Like Brahmá's
own celestial seat, Which gladdened Visvámitra's eyes, Peerless
for warlike enterprise.

Canto LII. Vasishtha's Feast.

220 Divine personages of minute size produced from the hair of
Brahmá, and probably the origin of

“That small infantry Warred on by cranes.”

Canto LII. Vasishtha's Feast. 211

Right glad was Visvámitra when He saw the prince of saintly
men. Low at his feet the hero bent, And did obeisance, reverent.

The king was welcomed in, and shown A seat beside the
hermit's own,

Who offered him, when resting there, Fruit in due course, and
woodland fare. And Visvámitra, noblest king, Received
Vasishtha's welcoming, Turned to his host, and prayed him tell
That he and all with him were well.

Vasishtha to the king replied That all was well on every side,
That fire, and vows, and pupils thrive, And all the trees within
the grove.

And then the son of Brahmá, best

Of all who pray with voice suppressed, Questioned with
pleasant words like these The mighty king who sate at ease:

“And is it well with thee? I pray; And dost thou win by virtuous
sway Thy people’s love, discharging all The duties on a king that
fall?

Are all thy servants fostered well? Do all obey, and none rebel?

Hast thou, destroyer of the foe, No enemies to overthrow?

Does fortune, conqueror! still attend Thy treasure, host, and
every friend? Is it all well? Does happy fate

On sons and children’s children wait?”

He spoke. The modest king replied That all was prosperous far
and wide.

[64]

Thus for awhile the two conversed, As each to each his tale
rehearsed, And as the happy moments flew,

Their joy and friendship stronger grew. When such discourse
had reached an end, Thus spoke the saint most reverend

To royal Visvámitra, while

His features brightened with a smile: “O mighty lord of men. I
fain Would banquet thee and all thy train In mode that suits thy
station high: And do not thou my prayer deny.

Let my good lord with favour take The offering that I fain would
make, And let me honour, ere we part,

My royal guest with loving heart.”

Him Visvámitra thus addressed: “Why make, O Saint, this new
request? Thy welcome and each gracious word Sufficient
honour have conferred.

Thou gavest roots and fruit to eat, The treasures of this pure
retreat, And water for my mouth and feet; And—boon I prize
above the rest— Thy presence has mine eyesight blest.

Honoured by thee in every way,

To whom all honour all should pay, I now will go. My lord, Good-
bye! Regard me with a friendly eye.”

Him speaking thus Vasishtha stayed, And still to share his
banquet prayed. The will of Gádhi’s son he bent,

And won the monarch to consent, Who spoke in answer. “Let it
be, Great Hermit, as it pleases thee.”

When, best of those who breathe the prayer, He heard the king
his will declare,

He called the cow of spotted skin, All spot without, all pure
within.

“Come, Dapple-skin,” he cried, “with speed; Hear thou my words
and help at need.

My heart is set to entertain

This monarch and his mighty train With sumptuous meal and
worthy fare; Be thine the banquet to prepare.

Each dainty cate, each goodly dish,

Of six-fold taste²²¹ as each may wish— All these, O cow of
heavenly power, Rain down for me in copious shower: Viands
and drink for tooth and lip,

To eat, to suck, to quaff, to sip— Of these sufficient, and to
spare, O plenty-giving cow, prepare.”

Canto LIII. Visvámitra's Request.

221 Sweet, salt, pungent, bitter, acid, and astringent.

Thus charged, O slayer of thy foes, The cow from whom all
plenty flows, Obedient to her saintly lord,

Viands to suit each taste, outpoured. Honey she gave, and
roasted grain,

Mead sweet with flowers, and sugar-cane. Each beverage of
flavour rare,

An food of every sort, were there:

Hills of hot rice, and sweetened cakes, And curdled milk and
soup in lakes. Vast beakers foaming to the brim With sugared
drink prepared for him, And dainty sweetmeats, deftly made,
Before the hermit's guests were laid. So well regaled, so nobly
fed,

The mighty army banqueted,

And all the train, from chief to least, Delighted in Vasishtha's
feast.

Then Visvámitra, royal sage, Surrounded by his vassalage,
Prince, peer, and counsellor, and all From highest lord to lowest

thrall, Thus feasted, to Vasishtha cried With joy, supremely gratified:

“Rich honour I, thus entertained, Most honourable lord, have gained:

Now hear, before I journey hence, My words, O skilled in eloquence. Bought for a hundred thousand kine, Let Dapple-skin, O Saint, be mine. A wondrous jewel is thy cow,

And gems are for the monarch’s brow.²²²

²²² “Of old hoards and minerals in the earth, the king is entitled to half by reason of his general protection, and because he is the lord paramount of the

To me her rightful lord resign

This Dapple-skin thou callest thine.”

The great Vasishtha, thus addressed, Arch-hermit of the holy breast,

To Visvámitra answer made,

The king whom all the land obeyed:

“Not for a hundred thousand,—nay, Not if ten million thou wouldst pay, With silver heaps the price to swell,— Will I my cow, O Monarch, sell.

Unmeet for her is such a fate. That I my friend should alienate.
As glory with the virtuous, she

For ever makes her home with me. On her mine offerings which
ascend To Gods and spirits all depend:

My very life is due to her,

My guardian, friend, and minister. [065]

The feeding of the sacred flame,²²³

The dole which living creatures claim.²²⁴ The mighty sacrifice
by fire,

Each formula the rites require,²²⁵

And various saving lore beside, Are by her aid, in sooth,
supplied.

The banquet which thy host has shared,

soil.” MANU FNS, Book VIII. 39.

223 Ghí or clarified butter, “holy oil,” being one of the essentials
of sacrifice. 224 “A Bráhman had five principal duties to
discharge every day: study and teaching the Veda, oblations to
the manes or spirits of the departed, sacrifice to the Gods,
hospitable offerings to men, and a gift of food to all creatures.
The last consisted of rice or other grain which the Bráhman was
to offer every day outside his house in the open air. MANU FNS,
Book III. 70.” GORRESIO FNS 225 These were certain sacred

words of invocation such a sváhá, vashat, etc., pronounced at the time of sacrifice.

Believe it, was by her prepared, In her mine only treasures lie,
She cheers mine heart and charms mine eye. And reasons more
could I assign
Why Dapple-skin can ne'er be thine.”

The royal sage, his suit denied, With eloquence more earnest
cried: “Tusked elephants, a goodly train, Each with a golden
girth and chain,
Whose goads with gold well fashioned shine— Of these be twice
seven thousand thine.
And four-horse cars with gold made bright, With steeds most
beautifully white,
Whose bells make music as they go, Eight hundred, Saint, will I
bestow. Eleven thousand mettled steeds

From famous lands, of noble breeds— These will I gladly give, O
thou Devoted to each holy vow.

Ten million heifers, fair to view,

Whose sides are marked with every hue— These in exchange will
I assign;

But let thy Dapple-skin be mine. Ask what thou wilt, and piles
untold

Of priceless gems and gleaming gold, O best of Bráhmans, shall
be thine; But let thy Dapple-skin be mine.”

The great Vasishtha, thus addressed, Made answer to the king's
request: “Ne'er will I give my cow away,

My gem, my wealth, my life and stay. My worship at the moon's
first show, And at the full, to her I owe;

And sacrifices small and great, Which largess due and gifts
await. From her alone, their root, O King, My rites and holy
service spring. What boots it further words to say? I will not give
my cow away

Who yields me what I ask each day.”

Canto LIV. The Battle.

As Saint Vasishtha answered so, Nor let the cow of plenty go,
The monarch, as a last resource, Began to drag her off by force.

While the king's servants tore away Their moaning, miserable
prey,

Sad, sick at heart, and sore distressed, She pondered thus
within her breast: "Why am I thus forsaken? why Betrayed by
him of soul most high.

Vasishtha, ravished by the hands Of soldiers of the monarch's
bands? Ah me! what evil have I done Against the lofty-minded
one,

That he, so pious, can expose

The innocent whose love he knows?" In her sad breast as thus
she thought,

And heaved deep sighs with anguish fraught, With wondrous
speed away she fled,

And back to Saint Vasishtha sped. She hurled by hundreds to
the ground

The menial crew that hemmed her round, And flying swifter than
the blast

Before the saint herself she cast. There Dapple-skin before the
saint

Stood moaning forth her sad complaint, And wept and lowed:
such tones as come From wandering cloud or distant drum. “O
son of Brahmá,” thus cried she, “Why hast thou thus forsaken
me,

That the king’s men, before thy face, Bear off thy servant from
her place?”

Then thus the Bráhman saint replied To her whose heart with
woe was tried, And grieving for his favourite’s sake, As to a
suffering sister spake:

“I leave thee not: dismiss the thought; Nor, duteous, hast thou
failed in aught. This king, o’erweening in the pride

Of power, has reft thee from my side. Little, I ween, my strength
could do ’Gainst him, a mighty warrior too.

Strong, as a soldier born and bred,— Great, as a king whom
regions dread. See! what a host the conqueror leads, With
elephants, and cars, and steeds. O’er countless bands his
pennons fly;

[066]So is he mightier far than I.”

He spoke. Then she, in lowly mood, To that high saint her speech renewed:

“So judge not they who wisest are:

The Bráhmaṇ’s might is mightier far.

For Bráhmaṇs strength from Heaven derive, And warriors bow when Bráhmaṇs strive.

A boundless power ’tis thine to wield:

To such a king thou shouldst not yield, Who, very mighty though he be,—

So fierce thy strength,—must bow to thee. Command me, Saint. Thy power divine Has brought me here and made me thine; And I, howe’er the tyrant boast,

Will tame his pride and slay his host.” Then cried the glorious sage: “Create A mighty force the foe to mate.”

She lowed, and quickened into life, Pahlavas,²²⁶ burning for the strife, King Visvámitra’s army slew

Before the very leader’s view. The monarch in excessive ire, His eyes with fury darting fire, Rained every missile on the foe Till all the Pahlavas were low.

226 “It is well known that the Persians were called Pahlavas by the Indians. The Sakas are nomad tribes inhabiting Central Asia, the Scythes of the Greeks, whom the Persians also, as

Herodotus tells us, called Sakæ just as the Indians did. Lib. VII 64 ó yap ITÉpoa rrá:vrac rouc Eú8ac. KaAÉouo Eá:Kac. The name Yavans seems to be used rather indefinitely for nations situated beyond Persia to the west.... After the time of Alexander the Great the Indians as well as the Persians called the Greeks also Yavans.” SCHLEGEL FNS.

Lassen thinks that the Pahlavas were the same people as the ITá:KruEc of Herodotus, and that this non-Indian people dwelt on the north-west confines of India.

She, seeing all her champions slain, Lying by thousands on the plain.

Created, by her mere desire, Yavans and Sakas, fierce and dire.
And all the ground was overspread With Yavans and with Sakas
dread:

A host of warriors bright and strong, And numberless in closest
throng: The threads within the lotus stem,

So densely packed, might equal them. In gold-hued mail
'against war's attacks, Each bore a sword and battle-axe,

The royal host, where'er these came, Fell as if burnt with
ravaging flame.

The monarch, famous through the world Again his fearful
weapons hurled,
That made Kámbojas,²²⁷ Barbaras,²²⁸ all,
With Yavans, troubled, flee and fall.

Canto LV. The Hermitage Burnt.

So o'er the field that host lay strown, By Visvámitra's darts
o'erthrown.

Then thus Vasishta charged the cow: "Create with all thy
vigour now."

²²⁷ See page 13, note 6.

²²⁸ Barbarians, non-Sanskrit-speaking tribes.

Forth sprang Kámbojas, as she lowed; Bright as the sun their
faces glowed, Forth from her udder Barbaras poured,—

Soldiers who brandished spear and sword,— And Yavans with
their shafts and darts,
And Sakas from her hinder parts. And every pore upon her fell,
And every hair-producing cell,
With Mlechchhas²²⁹ and Kirátas²³⁰ teemed,
And forth with them Hárítas streamed. And Visvámitra's mighty
force,
Car, elephant, and foot, and horse, Fell in a moment's time,
subdued By that tremendous multitude.
The monarch's hundred sons, whose eyes Beheld the rout in wild
surprise,
Armed with all weapons, mad with rage, Rushed fiercely on the
holy sage.
One cry he raised, one glance he shot, And all fell scorched upon
the spot:
Burnt by the sage to ashes, they
With horse, and foot, and chariot, lay.
The monarch mourned, with shame and pain, His army lost, his
children slain,
Like Ocean when his roar is hushed,
Or some great snake whose fangs are crushed: [067]

229 A comprehensive term for foreign or outcast races of different faith and language from the Hindus.

230 The Kirátas and Hárítas are savage aborigines of India who occupy hills

and jungles and are altogether different in race and character from the Hindus. Dr. Muir remarks in his Sanskrit Texts, Vol. I. p. 488 (second edition) that it does not appear that it is the object of this legend to represent this miraculous creation as the origin of these tribes, and that nothing more may have been intended than that the cow called into existence large armies, of the same stock with particular tribes previously existing.

Or as in swift eclipse the Sun

Dark with the doom he cannot shun:

Or a poor bird with mangled wing— So, reft of sons and host,
the king No longer, by ambition fired,

The pride of war his breast inspired. He gave his empire to his
son—

Of all he had, the only one:

And bade him rule as kings are taught Then straight a hermit-
grove he sought. Far to Himálaya's side he fled,

Which bards and Nágas visited, And, Mahádeva's²³¹ grace to
earn, He gave his life to penance stern.

A lengthened season thus passed by, When Siva's self, the Lord
most High, Whose banner shows the pictured bull,²³² Appeared,
the God most bountiful:

“Why fervent thus in toil and pain?

What brings thee here? what boon to gain? Thy heart's desire, O
Monarch, speak:

I grant the boons which mortals seek.” The king, his adoration
paid,

To Mahádeva answer made:

“If thou hast deemed me fit to win Thy favour, O thou void of
sin, On me, O mighty God, bestow The wondrous science of the
bow, All mine, complete in every part, With secret spell and
mystic art. To me be all the arms revealed

²³¹ The Great God, Siva.

²³² Nandi, the snow-white bull, the attendant and favourite
vehicle of Siva.

That Gods, and saints, and Titans wield, And every dart that
arms the hands

Of spirits, fiends and minstrel bands, Be mine, O Lord supreme
in place, This token of thy boundless grace.”

The Lord of Gods then gave consent, And to his heavenly
mansion went.

Triumphant in the arms he held,

The monarch's breast with glory swelled. So swells the ocean,
when upon

His breast the full moon's beams have shone. Already in his
mind he viewed

Vasishtha at his feet subdued.

He sought that hermit's grove, and there Launched his dire
weapons through the air, Till scorched by might that none could
stay The hermitage in ashes lay.

Where'er the inmates saw, aghast, The dart that Visvámitra
cast,

To every side they turned and fled In hundreds forth disquieted.

Vasishtha's pupils caught the fear, And every bird and every
deer, And fled in wild confusion forth

Eastward and westward, south and north, And so Vasishtha's
holy shade

A solitary wild was made, Silent awhile, for not a sound
Disturbed the hush that was around.

Vasishtha then, with eager cry,

Called, "Fear not, friends, nor seek to fly. This son of Gádhi dies
to-day,

Like hoar-frost in the morning's ray." Thus having said, the
glorious sage Spoke to the king in words of rage: "Because thou
hast destroyed this grove Which long in holy quiet throve,

By folly urged to senseless crime, Now shalt thou die before thy
time."

Canto LVI. Visvámitra's Vow.

But Visvámitra, at the threat Of that illustrious anchoret,

Cried, as he launched with ready hand A fiery weapon, "Stand,
O Stand!" Vasishtha, wild with rage and hate, Raising, as 'twere
the Rod of Fate, His mighty Bráhma wand on high, To

Visvámitra made reply:

“Nay, stand, O Warrior thou, and show What soldier can, 'gainst
Bráhmaṇ foe. O Gádhi's son, thy days are told;

Thy pride is tamed, thy dart is cold. How shall a warrior's
puissance dare

With Bráhmaṇ's awful strength compare? To-day, base Warrior,
shall thou feel That God-sent might is more than steel.” He
raised his Bráhmaṇ staff, nor missed The fiery dart that near
him hissed:

Canto LVI. Visvámitra's Vow. 225

And quenched the fearful weapon fell, As flame beneath the
billow's swell.

Then Gádhi's son in fury threw Lord Varur,'s arm and Rudra's
too:

Indra's fierce bolt that all destroys; That which the Lord of
Herds employs:

The Human, that which minstrels keep, The deadly Lure, the
endless Sleep:

The Yawner, and the dart which charms; Lament and Torture,
fearful arms:

The Terrible, the dart which dries,

The Thunderbolt which quenchless flies, And Fate's dread net,
and Brahmá's noose, And that which waits for Varur,'s use:

The dart he loves who wields the bow Pináka, and twin bolts
that glow

With fury as they flash and fly,

The quenchless Liquid and the Dry:

The dart of Vengeance, swift to kill:

The Goblins' dart, the Curlew's Bill: [068]

The discus both of Fate and Right, And Vishr,u's, of unerring
flight:

The Wind-God's dart, the Troubler dread, The weapon named
the Horse's Head.

From his fierce hand two spears were thrown, And the great
mace that smashes bone;

The dart of spirits of the air,

And that which Fate exults to bear:

The Trident dart which slaughters foes, And that which hanging
skulls compose:233

233 "The names of many of these weapons which are mythical
and partly alle- gorical have occurred in Canto XXIX. The
general signification of the story is clear enough. It is a contest
for supremacy between the regal or military order

These fearful darts in fiery rain He hurled upon the saint amain,
An awful miracle to view.

But as the ceaseless tempest flew,

The sage with wand of God-sent power Still swallowed up that
fiery shower.

Then Gádhi's son, when these had failed, With Brahmá's dart his
foe assailed.

The Gods, with Indra at their head, And Nágas, quailed
disquieted,

And saints and minstrels, when they saw The king that awful
weapon draw;

And the three worlds were filled with dread, And trembled as the
missile sped.

The saint, with Bráhman wand, empowered By lore divine that
dart devoured.

Nor could the triple world withdraw Rapt gazes from that sight
of awe; For as he swallowed down the dart Of Brahmá, sparks
from every part, From finest pore and hair-cell, broke Enveloped
in a veil of smoke.

The staff he waved was all aglow Like Yáma's sceptre, King
below, Or like the lurid fire of Fate

Whose rage the worlds will desolate.

and Bráhmanical or priestly authority, like one of those
struggles which our own Europe saw in the middle ages when
without employing warlike weapons the priesthood frequently
gained the victory." SCHLEGEL FNS.

For a full account of the early contests between the Bráhmans
and the Kshattriyas, see Muir's Original Sanskrit Texts (Second
edition) Vol. I. Ch. IV.

The hermits, whom that sight had awed, Extolled the saint, with
hymn and laud: "Thy power, O Sage, is ne'er in vain:

Now with thy might thy might restrain. Be gracious, Master, and
allow

The worlds to rest from trouble now; For Visvámitra, strong and
dread, By thee has been discomfited."

Then, thus addressed, the saint, well pleased, The fury of his
wrath appeased.

The king, o'erpowered and ashamed, With many a deep-drawn
sigh exclaimed: "Ah! Warriors' strength is poor and slight; A
Bráhmaṇ's power is truly might.

This Bráhmaṇ staff the hermit held The fury of my darts has
quelled. This truth within my heart impressed, With senses ruled
and tranquil breast My task austere will I begin,

And Bráhmaṇhood will strive to win."

Canto LVII. Trisanku.

Then with his heart consumed with woe, Still brooding on his
overthrow

By the great saint he had defied,

At every breath the monarch sighed. Forth from his home his
queen he led, And to a land far southward fled.

There, fruit and roots his only food,

He practised penance, sense-subdued, And in that solitary spot

Four virtuous sons the king begot: Havishyand, from the
offering named, And Madhushyand, for sweetness famed,
Maháráth, chariot-borne in fight,
And Dri9hanetra strong of sight.

A thousand years had passed away, When Brahmá, Sire whom
all obey, Addressed in pleasant words like these Him rich in long
austerities:

“Thou by the penance, Kusik’s son, A place ’mid royal saints hast
won.

Pleased with thy constant penance, we This lofty rank assign to
thee.”

Thus spoke the glorious Lord most High Father of earth and air
and sky,

And with the Gods around him spread Home to his changeless
sphere he sped. But Visvámitra scorned the grace,

And bent in shame his angry face.

Burning with rage, o’erwhelmed with grief, Thus in his heart
exclaimed the chief:

“No fruit, I ween, have I secured By strictest penance long
endured, If Gods and all the saints decree To make but royal
saint of me.”

Thus pondering, he with sense subdued,
[069]With sternest zeal his vows renewed.

Then reigned a monarch, true of soul, Who kept each sense in
firm control; Of old Ikshváku's line he came,
That glories in Trisanku's²³⁴ name.

Within his breast, O Raghu's child, Arose a longing, strong and
wild, Great offerings to the Gods to pay, And win, alive, to
heaven his way. His priest Vasishtha's aid he sought, And told
him of his secret thought. But wise Vasishtha showed the hope
Was far beyond the monarch's scope. Trisanku then, his suit
denied,

Far to the southern region hied, To beg Vasishtha's sons to aid
The mighty plan his soul had made. There King Trisanku, far
renowned, Vasishtha's hundred children found, Each on his
fervent vows intent, For mind and fame preëminent.

To these the famous king applied, Wise children of his holy
guide. Saluting each in order due.

His eyes, for shame, he downward threw, And reverent hands
together pressed, The glorious company addressed:

“I as a humble suppliant seek Succour of you who aid the weak.
A mighty offering I would pay,

234 “Trisanku, king of Ayodhyá, was seventh in descent from
Ikshváku, and Dasaratha holds the thirty-fourth place in the
same genealogy. See Canto LXX. We are thrown back,
therefore, to very ancient times, and it occasions some surprise
to find Vasishtha and Visvámitra, actors in these occurrences,
still alive in Rama’s time.”

But sage Vasishtha answered, Nay. Be yours permission to
accord, And to my rites your help afford.

Sons of my guide, to each of you With lowly reverence here I
sue; To each, intent on penance-vow, O Bráhmans, low my head
I bow,

And pray you each with ready heart In my great rite to bear a
part,

That in the body I may rise

And dwell with Gods within the skies. Sons of my guide, none
else I see

Can give what he refuses me. Ikshváku's children still depend
Upon their guide most reverend; And you, as nearest in degree
To him, my deities shall be!"

Canto LVIII. Trisanku Cursed.

Trisanku's speech the hundred heard, And thus replied, to anger
stirred:

"Why foolish King, by him denied, Whose truthful lips have never
lied, Dost thou transgress his prudent rule, And seek, for aid,
another school?235

235 "It does not appear how Trisanku, in asking the aid of
Vasishtha's sons after applying in vain to their father, could be
charged with resorting to another sákhá (School) in the ordinary
sense of that word; as it is not conceivable that the sons should
have been of another Sákhá from the father, whose cause they
espouse with so much warmth. The commentator in the Bombay
edition

Ikshváku's sons have aye relied Most surely on their holy guide:

Then how dost thou, fond Monarch, dare Transgress the rule his
lips declare? “Thy wish is vain,” the saint replied, And bade thee
cast the plan aside.

Then how can we, his sons, pretend In such a rite our aid to
lend?

O Monarch, of the childish heart, Home to thy royal town
depart.

That mighty saint, thy priest and guide, At noblest rites may well
preside:

The worlds for sacrifice combined A worthier priest could never
find.”

Such speech of theirs the monarch heard, Though rage
distorted every word,

And to the hermits made reply:

“You, like your sire, my suit deny. For other aid I turn from you:

So, rich in penance, Saints, adieu!”

Vasishtha’s children heard, and guessed His evil purpose scarce
expressed,

And cried, while rage their bosoms burned,

“Be to a vile Char,9ála236 turned!” [070]

This said, with lofty thoughts inspired, Each to his own retreat
retired.

explains the word Sákhantaram as Yájanádiná rakshántaram, 'one who by sacrificing for thee, etc., will be another protector.' Gorresio's Gauṛa text, which may often be used as a commentary on the older one, has the following paraphrase of the words in question, ch. 60, 3. Múlam utsrija kasmát tvam sákhásv ichhasi lambitum. 'Why, forsaking the root, dost thou desire to hang upon the branches?' " MUIR FNS, Sanskrit Texts, Vol. I., p. 401.

236 A Char,ṛála was a man born of the illegal and impure union of a Súdra with a woman of one of the three higher castes.

That night Trisanku underwent Sad change in shape and lineament. Next morn, an outcast swart of hue, His dusky cloth he round him drew. His hair had fallen from his head, And roughness o'er his skin was spread. Such wreaths adorned him as are found To flourish on the funeral ground.

Each armlet was an iron ring:

Such was the figure of the king, That every counsellor and peer, And following townsman, fled in fear.

Alone, unyielding to dismay,

Though burnt by anguish night and day, Great Visvámitra's side
he sought,

Whose treasures were by penance bought.

The hermit with his tender eyes Looked on Trisanku's altered
guise, And grieving at his ruined state Addressed him thus,
compassionate:

“Great King,” the pious hermit said, “What cause thy steps has
hither led, Ayodhyá's mighty Sovereign, whom

A curse has plagued with outcast's doom?” In vile Char,²³⁷
shape, the king

Heard Visvámitra's questioning, And, suppliant palm to palm
applied, With answering eloquence he cried:

²³⁷ “The Char,⁹ála was regarded as the vilest and most abject
of the men sprung from wedlock forbidden by the law

(Mánavadharmasástra, Lib. X. 12.); a kind of social malediction
weighed upon his head and rejected him from human society.”

GORRESIO{FNS.

“My priest and all his sons refused To aid the plan on which I
mused. Failing to win the boon I sought, To this condition I was
brought.

I, in the body, Saint, would fain A mansion in the skies obtain.

I planned a hundred rites for this,

But still was doomed the fruit to miss. Pure are my lips from
falsehood's stain, And pure they ever shall remain,— Yea, by a
Warrior's faith I swear,— Though I be tried with grief and care.
Unnumbered rites to Heaven I paid, With righteous care the
sceptre swayed; And holy priest and high-souled guide My
modest conduct gratified.

But, O thou best of hermits, they Oppose my wish these rites to
pay; They one and all refuse consent, Nor aid me in my high
intent.

Fate is, I ween, the power supreme, Man's effort but an idle
dream, Fate whirls our plans, our all away; Fate is our only hope
and stay; Now deign, O blessed Saint, to aid Me, even me by
Fate betrayed,

Who come, a suppliant, sore distressed, One grace, O Hermit, to
request.

No other hope or way I see: No other refuge waits for me. Oh,
aid me in my fallen state,

And human will shall conquer Fate.”

Canto LIX. The Sons Of Vasishtha.

Then Kusik's son, by pity warmed, Spoke sweetly to the king
transformed: "Hail! glory of Ikshváku's line:

I know how bright thy virtues shine. Dismiss thy fear, O noblest
Chief, For I myself will bring relief.

The holiest saints will I invite To celebrate thy purposed rite:

So shall thy vow, O King, succeed, And from thy cares shalt thou
be freed. Thou in the form which now thou hast, Transfigured by
the curse they cast,— Yea, in the body, King, shalt flee,

Transported, where thou fain wouldst be. O Lord of men, I ween
that thou

Hast heaven within thy hand e'en now, For very wisely hast thou
done,

And refuge sought with Kusik's son."

Thus having said, the sage addressed His sons, of men the
holiest,

And bade the prudent saints whate'er Was needed for the rite
prepare.

The pupils he was wont to teach

He summoned next, and spoke this speech: "Go bid Vasishtha'a
sons appear,

And all the saints be gathered here. And what they one and all
reply

When summoned by this mandate high, To me with faithful care
report,

Omit no word and none distort.”

Canto LIX. The Sons Of Vasishtha. 235

The pupils heard, and prompt obeyed, To every side their way
they made.

Then swift from every quarter sped The sages in the Vedas
read.

Back to that saint the envoys came, Whose glory shone like
burning flame, And told him in their faithful speech The answer
that they bore from each:

“Submissive to thy word, O Seer, The holy men are gathering
here. By all was meet obedience shown:

Mahodaya²³⁸ refused alone. [071]

And now, O Chief of hermits, hear What answer, chilling us with
fear, Vasishtha’s hundred sons returned,

Thick-speaking as with rage they burned:

“How will the Gods and saints partake The offerings that the
prince would make, And he a vile and outcast thing,

His ministrant one born a king?

Can we, great Bráhmans, eat his food, And think to win
beatitude,

By Visvámitra purified?”

Thus sire and sons in scorn replied, And as these bitter words
they said, Wild fury made their eyeballs red.

Their answer when the arch-hermit heard, His tranquil eyes with
rage were blurred; Great fury in his bosom woke,

And thus unto the youths he spoke:

“Me, blameless me they dare to blame,

238 This appellation, occurring nowhere else in the poem except
as the name of a city, appears twice in this Canto as a name of
Vasishtha.

And disallow the righteous claim My fierce austerities have
earned: To ashes be the sinners turned.

Caught in the noose of Fate shall they To Yáma's kingdom sink
to-day.

Seven hundred times shall they be born To wear the clothes the
dead have worn. Dregs of the dregs, too vile to hate,

The flesh of dogs their maws shall sate. In hideous form, in
loathsome weed,

A sad existence each shall lead. Mahodaya too, the fool who
fain My stainless life would try to stain,

Stained in the world with long disgrace Shall sink into a fowler's
place.

Rejoicing guiltless blood to spill,

No pity through his breast shall thrill. Cursed by my wrath for
many a day, His wretched life for sin shall pay.”

Thus, girt with hermit, saint, and priest, Great Visvámitra
spoke—and ceased.

Canto LX. Trisanku's Ascension.

So with ascetic might, in ire,

He smote the children and the sire. Then Visvámitra, far-
renowned,

Addressed the saints who gathered round: "See by my side
Trisanku stand, Ikshváku's son, of liberal hand.

Most virtuous and gentle, he Seeks refuge in his woe with me.
Now, holy men, with me unite, And order so his purposed rite
That in the body he may rise And win a mansion in the skies."

They heard his speech with ready ear And, every bosom filled
with fear

Of Visvámitra, wise and great, Spoke each to each in brief
debate: "The breast of Kusik's son, we know, With furious wrath
is quick to glow. Whate'er the words he wills to say, We must, be
very sure, obey.

Fierce is our lord as fire, and straight May curse us all infuriate.

So let us in these rites engage, As ordered by the holy sage.
And with our best endeavour strive That King Ikshváku's son,
alive,
In body to the skies may go
By his great might who wills it so.”

Then was the rite begun with care: All requisites and means
were there: And glorious Visvámitra lent

His willing aid as president.

And all the sacred rites were done By rule and use, omitting
none.

By chaplain-priest, the hymns who knew, In decent form and
order due.

Some time in sacrifice had past, And Visvámitra made, at last,

The solemn offering with the prayer That all the Gods might
come and share. But the Immortals, one and all,

Refused to hear the hermit's call.

Then red with rage his eyeballs blazed: The sacred ladle high he
raised,

And cried to King Ikshváku's son: "Behold my power, by
penance won: Now by the might my merits lend, Ikshváku's
child, to heaven ascend. In living frame the skies attain,
Which mortals thus can scarcely gain. My vows austere, so long
endured, Have, as I ween, some fruit assured. Upon its virtue,
King, rely,
And in thy body reach the sky."

His speech had scarcely reached its close, When, as he stood,
the sovereign rose,
And mounted swiftly to the skies Before the wondering hermits'
eyes.

But Indra, when he saw the king His blissful regions entering,
With all the army of the Blest
Thus cried unto the unbidden guest:
"With thy best speed, Trisanku, flee:
Here is no home prepared for thee.
By thy great master's curse brought low, Go, falling headlong,
earthward go."

Thus by the Lord of Gods addressed, Trisanku fell from fancied rest,

And screaming in his swift descent, "O, save me, Hermit!" down he went. And Visvámitra heard his cry,

And marked him falling from the sky, And giving all his passion sway,

Cried out in fury, "Stay, O stay!" [072]

By penance-power and holy lore,

Like Him who framed the worlds of yore, Seven other saints he fixed on high

To star with light the southern sky. Girt with his sages forth he went, And southward in the firmament New wreathed stars prepared to set In many a sparkling coronet.

He threatened, blind with rage and hate, Another Indra to create,

Or, from his throne the ruler hurled, All Indraless to leave the world.

Yea, borne away by passion's storm, The sage began new Gods to form. But then each Titan, God, and saint, Confused with terror, sick and faint, To high souled Visvámitra hied,

And with soft words to soothe him tried: "Lord of high destiny,
this king,

To whom his master's curses cling, No heavenly home deserves
to gain, Unpurified from curse and stain."

The son of Kusik, undeterred,

The pleading of the Immortals heard, And thus in haughty
words expressed The changeless purpose of his breast: "Content
ye, Gods: I soothly swear Trisanku to the skies to bear

Clothed in his body, nor can I My promise cancel or deny.

Embodied let the king ascend

To life in heaven that ne'er shall end. And let these new-made
stars of mine Firm and secure for ever shine.

Let these, my work, remain secure Long as the earth and
heaven endure. This, all ye Gods, I crave: do you Allow the boon
for which I sue." Then all the Gods their answer made: "So be it,
Saint, as thou hast prayed. Beyond the sun's diurnal way

Thy countless stars in heaven shall stay: And 'mid them hung, as
one divine, Head downward shall Trisanku shine; And all thy
stars shall ever fling

Their rays attendant on the king."239

239 “The seven ancient rishis or saints, as has been said before, were the seven stars of Ursa Major. The seven other new saints which are here said to have been created by Visvámitra should be seven new southern stars, a sort of new Ursa. Von Schlegel thinks that this mythical fiction of new stars created by

The mighty saint, with glory crowned, With all the sages
compassed round, Praised by the Gods, gave full assent, And
Gods and sages homeward went.

Canto LXI. Sunahsepha.

Then Visvámitra, when the Blest
Had sought their homes of heavenly rest, Thus, mighty Prince,
his counsel laid Before the dwellers of the shade:
“The southern land where now we are Offers this check our rites
to bar:240 To other regions let us speed,
And ply our tasks from trouble freed. Now turn we to the distant
west.
To Pushkar’s241 wood where hermits rest,

Visvámitra may signify that these southern stars, unknown to the Indians as long as they remained in the neighbourhood of the Ganges, became known to them at a later date when they colonized the southern regions of India.” GORRESIO FNS.

240 “This cannot refer to the events just related: for Visvámitra was successful

in the sacrifice performed for Trisanku. And yet no other impediment is mentioned. Still his restless mind would not allow him to remain longer in the same spot. So the character of Visvámitra is ingeniously and skilfully shadowed forth: as he had been formerly a most warlike king, loving battle and glory, bold, active, sometimes unjust, and more frequently magnanimous, such also he always shows himself in his character of anchorite and ascetic.” SCHLEGEL FNS.

241 Near the modern city of Ajmere. The place is sacred still, and the name is

preserved in the Hindí. Lassen, however, says that this Pushkala or Pushkara, called by the Grecian writers ITEuKEAírc, the earliest place of pilgrimage mentioned by name, is not to be confounded with the modern Pushkara in Ajmere.

And there to rites austere apply, For not a grove with that can vie.”

The saint, in glory's light arrayed, In Pushkar's wood his dwelling made,
And living there on roots and fruit Did penance stern and resolute.

The king who filled Ayodhyá's throne, By Ambarísha's name far known,

At that same time, it chanced, began A sacrificial rite to plan.

But Indra took by force away

The charger that the king would slay. The victim lost, the Bráhmaṇ
sped To Ambarísha's side, and said: "Gone is the steed, O King, and this

[073] Is due to thee, in care remiss.

Such heedless faults will kings destroy Who fail to guard what they enjoy.

The flaw is desperate: we need The charger, or a man to bleed.

Quick! bring a man if not the horse, That so the rite may have its course.”

The glory of Ikshváku’s line Made offer of a thousand kine, And sought to buy at lordly price A victim for the sacrifice.

To many a distant land he drove, To many a people, town, and grove,

And holy shades where hermits rest, Pursuing still his eager quest.

At length on Bhrigu’s sacred height The saint Richíka met his sight Sitting beneath the holy boughs.

His children near him, and his spouse.

The mighty lord drew near, assayed To win his grace, and reverence paid; And then the sainted king addressed The Bráhmañ saint with this request: “Bought with a hundred thousand kine, Give me, O Sage, a son of thine

To be a victim in the rite,

And thanks the favour shall requite. For I have roamed all countries round, Nor sacrificial victim found.

Then, gentle Hermit, deign to spare One child amid the number
there.”

Then to the monarch’s speech replied The hermit, penance-
glorified:

“For countless kine, for hills of gold, Mine eldest son shall ne’er
be sold.” But, when she heard the saint’s reply, The children’s
mother, standing nigh, Words such as these in answer said To
Ambarísha, monarch dread:

“My lord, the saint, has spoken well:

His eldest child he will not sell.

And know, great Monarch, that above The rest my youngest
born I love. ’Tis ever thus: the father’s joy

Is centred in his eldest boy.

The mother loves her darling best Whom last she rocked upon
her breast:

My youngest I will ne’er forsake.”

As thus the sire and mother spake, Young Sunahsepha, of the
three

The midmost, cried unurged and free:

“My sire withholds his eldest son, My mother keeps her youngest one:

Then take me with thee, King: I ween The son is sold who comes between.” The king with joy his home resought, And took the prize his kine had bought. He bade the youth his car ascend,

And hastened back the rites to end.²⁴² So the ram caught in the thicket took the place of Isaac, or, as the Musalmáns say, of Ishmael.

242 “Ambarísha is the twenty-ninth in descent from Ikshváku, and is there-fore separated by an immense space of time from Trisanku in whose story Visvámitra had played so important a part. Yet Richíka, who is represented as having young sons while Ambarísha was yet reigning being himself the son of Bhrigu and to be numbered with the most ancient sages, is said to have married the younger sister of Visvámitra. But I need not again remark that there is a perpetual anachronism in Indian mythology.” SCHLEGEL. FNS.

“In the mythical story related in this and the following Canto we may discover, I think, some indication of the epoch at which the immolation of lower animals was substituted for human sacrifice.... So when Iphigenia was about to be sacrificed at Aulis, one legend tells us that a hind was substituted

for the virgin.” GORRESIO{FNS.

Canto LXII. Ambarísha's Sacrifice.

As thus the king that youth conveyed, His weary steeds at
length he stayed At height of noon their rest to take Upon the
bank of Pushkar's lake.

There while the king enjoyed repose The captive Sunahsepha
rose,

And hasting to the water's side His uncle Visvámitra spied,

With many a hermit 'neath the trees Engaged in stern
austerities.

Distracted with the toil and thirst, With woeful mien, away he
burst, Swift to the hermit's breast he flew, And weeping thus
began to sue: “No sire have I, no mother dear,

No kith or kin my heart to cheer: As justice bids, O Hermit, deign

To save me from the threatened pain. O thou to whom the
wretched flee, And find a saviour, Saint, in thee, Now let the
king obtain his will,

And me my length of days fulfil, That rites austere I too may
share, May rise to heaven and rest me there. With tender soul
and gentle brow

Be guardian of the orphan thou, And as a father pities, so
Preserve me from my fear and woe.”

When Visvámitra, glorious saint,

Had heard the boy's heart-rending plaint.

He soothed his grief, his tears he dried, [074]

Then called his sons to him, and cried: “The time is come for you
to show The duty and the aid bestow

For which, regarding future life, A man gives children to his wife.

This hermit's son, whom here you see A suppliant, refuge seeks
with me.

O sons, the friendless youth befriend, And, pleasing me, his life
defend.

For holy works you all have wrought, True to the virtuous life I
taught.

Go, and as victims doomed to bleed, Die, and Lord Agni's
hunger feed.

So shall the rite completed end, This orphan gain a saving
friend, Due offerings to the Gods be paid,
And your own father's voice obeyed.”

Then Madhushyand and all the rest Answered their sire with
scorn and jest: “What! aid to others' sons afford,
And leave thine own to die, my lord! To us it seems a horrid
deed,
As 'twere on one's own flesh to feed.”

The hermit heard his sons' reply, And burning rage inflamed his
eye. Then forth his words of fury burst: “Audacious speech, by
virtue cursed! It lifts on end each shuddering hair— My charge
to scorn! my wrath to dare!

You, like Vasishtha's evil brood,
Shall make the flesh of dogs your food A thousand years in
many a birth,
And punished thus shall dwell on earth.”

Thus on his sons his curse he laid.

Then calmed again that youth dismayed, And blessed him with
his saving aid: “When in the sacred fetters bound,

And with a purple garland crowned, At Vishr,u’s post thou
standest tied, With lauds be Agni glorified.

And these two hymns of holy praise Forget not, Hermit’s son, to
raise

In the king’s rite, and thou shalt be Lord of thy wish, preserved,
and free.”

He learnt the hymns with mind intent, And from the hermit’s
presence went.

To Ambarísha thus he spake:

“Let us our onward journey take. Haste to thy home, O King, nor
stay The lustral rites with slow delay.”

The boy’s address the monarch cheered, And soon the sacred
ground he neared.

The convocation’s high decree Declared the youth from blemish
free; Clothed in red raiment he was tied

A victim at the pillar’s side.

There bound, the Fire-God’s hymn he raised, And Indra and
Upendra praised.

Thousand-eyed Vishr,u, pleased to hear The mystic laud,
inclined his ear,

And won by worship, swift to save,

Long life to Sunahsepha gave.

The king in bounteous measure gained The fruit of sacrifice
ordained,

By grace of Him who rules the skies, Lord Indra of the thousand
eyes.

And Visvámitra evermore.

Pursued his task on Pushkar's shore Until a thousand years had
past

In fierce austerity and fast.

Canto LXIII. Menaká.

A thousand years had thus flown by When all the Gods within
the sky, Eager that he the fruit might gain Of fervent rite and
holy pain, Approached the great ascetic, now Bathed after toil
and ended vow.

Then Brahmá speaking for the rest

With sweetest words the sage addressed: “Hail, Saint! This high
and holy name Thy rites have won, thy merits claim.”

Thus spoke the Lord whom Gods revere, And sought again his
heavenly sphere.

But Visvámitra, more intent,

His mind to sterner penance bent. So many a season rolled
away,

When Menaká, fair nymph, one day Came down from Paradise
to lave Her perfect limbs in Pushkar’s wave, The glorious son of
Kusik saw

That peerless shape without a flaw

Flash through the flood’s translucent shroud Like lightning
gleaming through a cloud.

He saw her in that lone retreat, Most beautiful from head to
feet,

And by Kandarpa's²⁴³ might subdued

He thus addressed her as he viewed:

“Welcome, sweet nymph! O deign, I pray, In these calm shades
awhile to stay.

To me some gracious favour show, For love has set my breast
aglow.”

He spoke. The fairest of the fair Made for awhile her dwelling
there, While day by day the wild delight Stayed vow austere and
fervent rite There as the winsome charmer wove Her spells
around him in the grove, And bound him in a golden chain, Five
sweet years fled, and five again. Then Visvámitra woke to
shame,

And, fraught with anguish, memory came For quick he knew,
with anger fired,

That all the Immortals had conspired [075]

²⁴³ The Indian Cupid.

To lap his careless soul in ease, And mar his long austerities.

“Ten years have past, each day and night Unheeded in delusive
flight.

So long my fervent rites were stayed, While thus I lay by love betrayed.” As thus long sighs the hermit heaved,

And, touched with deep repentance, grieved, He saw the fair one standing nigh

With suppliant hands and trembling eye. With gentle words he bade her go,

Then sought the northern hills of snow. With firm resolve he vowed to beat The might of love beneath his feet.

Still northward to the distant side Of Kausikí²⁴⁴, the hermit hide, And gave his life to penance there

With rites austere most hard to bear. A thousand years went by, and still He laboured on the northern hill With pains so terrible and drear

That all the Gods were chilled with fear,

244 “The same as she whose praises Visvámitra has already sung in Canto XXXV, and whom the poet brings yet alive upon the scene in Canto LXI. Her proper name was Satyavatí (Truthful); the patronymic, Kausikí was preserved by the river into which she is said to have been changed, and is still recognized in the corrupted forms Kusa and Kusí. The river flows from the heights of the Himálaya towards the Ganges, bounding on the east the country of Videha (Behar). The name is no doubt half hidden in the Cosoagus of Pliny and the Kossounos of Arrian. But each author has fallen into the same

error in his enumeration of these rivers (Condochatem, Erannoboam, Cosoagum, Sonum). The Erannoboas, (Hirar,yaváha) and the Sone are not different streams, but well-known names of the same river. Moreover the order is disturbed, in which on the right and left they fall into the Ganges. To be consistent with geogra- phy it should be written: Erannoboam sive Sonum, Condochatem (Gandakí), Cosoagum.” SCHLEGEL{FNS.

And Gods and saints, for swift advice, Met in the halls of Paradise.

“Let Kusik’s son,” they counselled, “be A Mighty saint by just decree.”

His ear to hear their counsel lent The Sire of worlds, omnipotent. To him enriched by rites severe He spoke in accents sweet to hear:

“Hail, Mighty Saint! dear son, all hail! Thy fervour wins, thy toils prevail.

Won by thy vows and zeal intense I give this high preëminence.” He to the General Sire replied, Not sad, nor wholly satisfied:

“When thou, O Brahmá, shalt declare The title, great beyond compare,

Of Bráhmañ saint my worthy meed, Hard earned by many a
holy deed, Then may I deem in sooth I hold Each sense of body
well controlled.” Then Brahmá cried, “Not yet, not yet: Toil on
awhile O Anchoret!”

Thus having said to heaven he went, The saint, upon his task
intent,

Began his labours to renew,

Which sterner yet and fiercer grew. His arms upraised, without a
rest, With but one foot the earth he pressed; The air his food,
the hermit stood

Still as a pillar hewn from wood. Around him in the summer days
Five mighty fires combined to blaze. In floods of rain no veil
was spread Save clouds, to canopy his head.

In the dank dews both night and day Couched in the stream the
hermit lay. Thus, till a thousand years had fled, He plied his task
of penance dread.

Then Vishr,u and the Gods with awe The labours of the hermit
saw,

And Sakra, in his troubled breast, Lord of the skies, his fear
confessed. And brooded on a plan to spoil

The merits of the hermit's toil. Encompassed by his Gods of
Storm He summoned Rambhá, fair of form, And spoke a speech
for woe and weal, The saint to mar, the God to heal.

Canto LXIV. Rambhá.

Canto LXIV. Rambhá. 253

“A great emprise, O lovely maid,
To save the Gods, awaits thine aid:
To bind the son of Kusik sure,
And take his soul with love's sweet lure.”

Thus order'd by the Thousand-eyed
The suppliant nymph in fear replied:

“O Lord of Gods, this mighty sage
Is very fierce and swift to rage.

I doubt not, he so dread and stern
On me his scorching wrath will turn.
Of this, my lord, am I afraid:
Have mercy on a timid maid.”
Her suppliant hands began to shake,
When thus again Lord Indra spake:
“O Rambhá, drive thy fears away,
And as I bid do thou obey.
In Koil’s form, who takes the heart
When trees in spring to blossom start,
I, with Kandarpa for my friend,
Close to thy side mine aid will lend. [076]
Do thou thy beauteous splendour arm
With every grace and winsome charm,
And from his awful rites seduce
This Kusik’s son, the stern recluse.”

Lord Indra ceased. The nymph obeyed: In all her loveliest
charms arrayed,
With winning ways and witching smile She sought the hermit to
beguile.

The sweet note of that tuneful bird The saint with ravished
bosom heard, And on his heart a rapture passed
As on the nymph a look he cast. But when he heard the bird
prolong

His sweet incomparable song,

And saw the nymph with winning smile, The hermit's heart
perceived the wile.

And straight he knew the Thousand-eyed A plot against his
peace had tried.

Then Kusik's son indignant laid His curse upon the heavenly
maid:

“Because thou wouldst my soul engage Who fight to conquer
love and rage, Stand, till ten thousand years have flown, Ill-
fated maid, transformed to stone.

A Bráhmañ then, in glory strong, Mighty through penance stern
and long, Shall free thee from thine altered shape; Thou from
my curse shalt then escape.” But when the saint had cursed her
so, His breast was burnt with fires of woe, Grieved that long
effort to restrain

His mighty wrath was all in vain. Cursed by the angry sage's
power, She stood in stone that selfsame hour. Kandarpa heard

the words he said, And quickly from his presence fled. His fall
beneath his passion's sway Had reft the hermit's meed away.

Unconquered yet his secret foes, The humbled saint refused
repose: "No more shall rage my bosom till,

Sealed be my lips, my tongue be still. My very breath henceforth
I hold Until a thousand years are told: Victorious o'er each
erring sense,

I'll dry my frame with abstinence, Until by penance duly done

A Bráhmaṇ's rank be bought and won. For countless years, as
still as death,

I taste no food, I draw no breath, And as I toil my frame shall
stand

Unharméd by time's destroying hand."

Canto LXV. Visvámitra's Triumph

Then from Himálaya's heights of snow, The glorious saint
prepared to go,

And dwelling in the distant east His penance and his toil
increased. A thousand years his lips he held Closed by a vow
unparalleled,

And other marvels passing thought, Unrivalled in the world, he
wrought. In all the thousand years his frame Dry as a log of
wood became.

By many a cross and check beset, Rage had not stormed his
bosom yet. With iron will that naught could bend He plied his
labour till the end.

So when the weary years were o'er, Freed from his vow so stern
and sore, The hermit, all his penance sped, Sate down to eat his
meal of bread.

Then Indra, clad in Bráhmañ guise, Asked him for food with
hungry eyes. The mighty saint, with steadfast soul, To the false
Bráhmañ gave the whole, And when no scrap for him remained,

Fasting and faint, from speech refrained. His silent vow he
would not break:

No breath he heaved, no word he spake, Then as he checked his
breath, behold! Around his brow thick smoke-clouds rolled And
the three worlds, as if o'erspread

With ravening flames, were filled with dread. Then God and
saint and bard, convened,

And Nága lord, and snake, and fiend, Thus to the General
Father cried, Distracted, sad, and terrified: “Against the hermit,
sore assailed,

Lure, scathe, and scorn have naught availed, Proof against rage
and treacherous art

He keeps his vow with constant heart. Now if his toils assist him
naught

To gain the boon his soul has sought, He through the worlds will
ruin send That fixt and moving things shall end, The regions now
are dark with doom, No friendly ray relieves the gloom.

Each ocean foams with maddened tide, The shrinking hills in
fear subside.

Trembles the earth with feverous throe The wind in fitful
tempest blows.

No cure we see with troubled eyes: And atheist brood on earth
may rise. The triple world is wild with care, Or spiritless in dull
despair.

Before that saint the sun is dim, His blessed light eclipsed by
him. Now ere the saint resolve to bring Destruction on each
living thing, Let us appease, while yet we may,

Him bright as fire, like fire to slay. Yea, as the fiery flood of Fate
Lays all creation desolate,

He o'er the conquered Gods may reign:

O, grant him what he longs to gain.”

[077]

Then all the Blest, by Brahmá led, Approached the saint and
sweetly said: “Hail, Bráhmañ Saint! for such thy place: Thy vows
austere have won our grace.

A Bráhmañ's rank thy penance stern And ceaseless labour richly
earn.

I with the Gods of Storm decree Long life, O Bráhmañ Saint, to
thee. May peace and joy thy soul possess: Go where thou wilt in
happiness.”

Thus by the General Sire addressed, Joy and high triumph filled
his breast. His head in adoration bowed,

Thus spoke he to the Immortal crowd: “If I, ye Gods, have
gained at last

Both length of days and Bráhmañ caste, Grant that the high
mysterious name, And holy Vedas, own my claim,

And that the formula to bless The sacrifice, its lord confess. And
let Vasishtha, who excels
In Warriors' art and mystic spells, In love of God without a peer,
Confirm the boon you promise here.”

With Brahmá's son Vasishtha, best Of those who pray with voice
repressed, The Gods by earnest prayer prevailed, And thus his
new-made friend he hailed: “Thy title now is sure and good
To rights of saintly Bráhma hood.” Thus spake the sage. The
Gods, content, Back to their heavenly mansions went. And
Visvámitra, pious-souled,
Among the Bráhma n saints enrolled, On reverend Vasishtha
pressed
The honours due to holy guest. Successful in his high pursuit,
The sage, in penance resolute,
Walked in his pilgrim wanderings o'er The whole broad land
from shore to shore. 'Twas thus the saint, O Raghu's son,
His rank among the Bráhma ns won. Best of all hermits, Prince, is
he;
In him incarnate Penance see.
Friend of the right, who shrinks from ill, Heroic powers attend
him still.”

The Bráhmaṇ, versed in ancient lore, Thus closed his tale, and
said no more, To Satánanda Kusik's son

Cried in delight, Well done! well done! Then Janak, at the tale
amazed,

Spoke thus with suppliant hands upraised: "High fate is mine, O
Sage, I deem,

And thanks I owe for bliss supreme, That thou and Raghu's
children too Have come my sacrifice to view.

To look on thee with blessed eyes

Exalts my soul and purifies. Yea, thus to see thee face to face
Enriches me with store of grace. Thy holy labours wrought of
old, And mighty penance, fully told, Ráma and I with great
delight

Have heard, O glorious Anchorite. Unrivalled thine ascetic
deeds:

Thy might, O Saint, all might exceeds. No thought may scan, no
limit bound The virtues that in thee are found.

The story of thy wondrous fate My thirsty ears can never sate.
The hour of evening rites is near: The sun declines in swift

career. At early dawn, O Hermit, deign To let me see thy face
again.

Best of ascetics, part in bliss:

Do thou thy servant now dismiss.”

The saint approved, and glad and kind Dismissed the king with
joyful mind Around the sage King Janak went

With priests and kinsmen reverent. Then Visvámitra, honoured
so,

By those high-minded, rose to go, And with the princes took his
way To seek the lodging where they lay.

Canto LXVI. Janak’s Speech.

With cloudless lustre rose the sun; The king, his morning worship
done, Ordered his heralds to invite

The princes and the anchorite. With honour, as the laws decree,
The monarch entertained the three. Then to the youths and
saintly man Videha's lord this speech began:

“O blameless Saint, most welcome thou! If I may please thee
tell me how.

Speak, mighty lord, whom all revere, 'Tis thine to order, mine to
hear.”

Thus he on mighty thoughts intent; Then thus the sage most
eloquent:

“King Dasaratha's sons, this pair Of warriors famous
everywhere, Are come that best of bows to see That lies a
treasure stored by thee. This, mighty Janak, deign to show, That
they may look upon the bow,

And then, contented, homeward go.” Then royal Janak spoke in
turn:

“O best of Saints, the story learn Why this famed bow, a noble
prize, A treasure in my palace lies.

A monarch, Devarát by name,

Who sixth from ancient Nimi came, Held it as ruler of the land,

A pledge in his successive hand.

[78] This bow the mighty Rudra bore At Daksha's²⁴⁵ sacrifice
of yore,

245 “Daksha was one of the ancient Progenitors or Prajápatis created by Brah- má. The sacrifice which is here spoken of and in which Sankar or Siva (called

When carnage of the Immortals stained The rite that Daksha had ordained.

Then as the Gods sore wounded fled, Victorious Rudra, mocking, said:

“Because, O Gods, ye gave me naught When I my rightful portion sought, Your dearest parts I will not spare, But with my bow your frames will tear.”

The Sons of Heaven, in wild alarm, Soft flatteries tried his rage to charm. Then Bhava, Lord whom Gods adore, Grew kind and friendly as before, And every torn and mangled limb Was safe and sound restored by him.

Thenceforth this bow, the gem of bows, That freed the God of Gods from foes, Stored by our great forefathers lay

A treasure and a pride for aye.

Once, as it chanced, I ploughed the ground, When sudden, 'neath the share was found An infant springing from the earth,

Named Sitá from her secret birth.246

In strength and grace the maiden grew, My cherished daughter,
fair to view.

also here Rudra and Bhava) smote the Gods because he had not been invited to share the sacred oblations with them, seems to refer to the origin of the worship of Siva, to its increase and to the struggle it maintained with other older forms of worship.”

GORRESIO FNS.

246 Sítá means a furrow.

“Great Erectheus swayed,

That owed his nurture to the blue-eyed maid, But from the
teeming furrow took his birth, The mighty offspring of the
foodful earth.”

Iliad, Book II.

I vowed her, of no mortal birth, Meet prize for noblest hero's
worth.

In strength and grace the maiden grew, And many a monarch
came to woo.

To all the princely suitors I

Gave, mighty Saint, the same reply:

“I give not thus my daughter, she Prize of heroic worth shall
be.247 To Mithilá the suitors pressed Their power and might to

manifest. To all who came with hearts aglow I offered Siva's
wondrous bow.

Not one of all the royal band

Could raise or take the bow in hand. The suitors' puny might I
spurned, And back the feeble princes turned. Enraged thereat,
the warriors met, With force combined my town beset.

Stung to the heart with scorn and shame, With war and threats
they madly came, Besieged my peaceful walls, and long To
Míthilá did grievous wrong.

There, wasting all, a year they lay, And brought my treasures to
decay, Filling my soul, O Hermit chief, With bitter woe and
hopeless grief. At last by long-wrought penance I Won favour
with the Gods on high, Who with my labours well content A four-
fold host to aid me sent.

Then swift the baffled heroes fled To all the winds discomfited—

247 “The whole story of Sítá, as will be seen in the course of the
poem has a great analogy with the ancient myth of Proserpine.”

GORRESIO{FNS.

Wrong-doers, with their lords and host, And all their valour's idle
boast.

This heavenly bow, exceeding bright, These youths shall see, O
Anchorite. Then if young Ráma's hand can string The bow that
baffled lord and king, To him I give, as I have sworn,
My Sítá, not of woman born."

Canto LXVII. The Breaking Of The Bow.

Then spoke again the great recluse: "This mighty bow, O King,
produce." King Janak, at the saint's request, This order to his
train addressed:

"Let the great bow be hither borne,

Which flowery wreaths and scents adorn." Soon as the
monarch's words were said, His servants to the city sped,

Five thousand youths in number, all Of manly strength and
stature tall,

The ponderous eight-wheeled chest that held The heavenly bow,
with toil propelled.

At length they brought that iron chest, And thus the godlike king
addressed: "This best of bows, O lord, we bring, Respected by

each chief and king, And place it for these youths to see, If,
Sovereign, such thy pleasure be.”

With suppliant palm to palm applied King Janak to the
strangers cried: “This gem of bows, O Bráhmaṇ Sage, Our race
has prized from age to age,

Too strong for those who yet have reigned,

[79] Though great in might each nerve they strained. Titan and
fiend its strength defies,

God, spirit, minstrel of the skies. And bard above and snake
below Are baffled by this glorious bow. Then how may human
prowess hope With such a bow as this to cope?

What man with valour’s choicest gift This bow can draw, or
string, or lift? Yet let the princes, holy Seer, Behold it: it is
present here.”

Then spoke the hermit pious-souled: “Ráma, dear son, the bow
behold.” Then Ráma at his word unclosed

The chest wherein its might reposed, Thus crying, as he viewed
it: “Lo!

I lay mine hand upon the bow: May happy luck my hope attend

Its heavenly strength to lift or bend.” “Good luck be thine,” the hermit cried: “Assay the task!” the king replied.

Then Raghu’s son, as if in sport, Before the thousands of the court, The weapon by the middle raised That all the crowd in wonder gazed. With steady arm the string he drew Till burst the mighty bow in two.

As snapped the bow, an awful clang,

Loud as the shriek of tempests, rang. The earth, affrighted, shook amain As when a hill is rent in twain.

Then, senseless at the fearful sound, The people fell upon the ground: None save the king, the princely pair,

And the great saint, the shock could bear.

When woke to sense the stricken train, And Janak’s soul was calm again,

With suppliant hands and reverent head, These words, most eloquent, he said: “O Saint, Prince Ráma stands alone: His peerless might he well has shown. A marvel has the hero wrought

Beyond belief, surpassing thought. My child, to royal Ráma wed, New glory on our line will shed: And true my promise will remain

That hero's worth the bride should gain. Dearer to me than light
and life,

My Sítá shall be Ráma's wife.

If thou, O Bráhman, leave concede, My counsellors, with eager
speed, Borne in their flying cars, to fair Ayodhyá's town the
news shall bear, With courteous message to entreat The king to
grace my royal seat.

This to the monarch shall they tell, The bride is his who won her
well: And his two sons are resting here Protected by the holy
seer.

So, at his pleasure, let them lead

The sovereign to my town with speed.”

The hermit to his prayer inclined And Janak, lord of virtuous
mind, With charges, to Ayodhyá sent

His ministers: and forth they went.

Canto LXVIII. The Envoys' Speech.

Three nights upon the road they passed To rest the steeds that bore them fast, And reached Ayodhyá's town at last.

Then straight at Dasaratha's call They stood within the royal hall, Where, like a God, inspiring awe, The venerable king they saw.

With suppliant palm to palm applied, And all their terror laid aside,

They spoke to him upon the throne With modest words, in gentle tone: "Janak, Videha's king, O Sire,

Has sent us hither to inquire

The health of thee his friend most dear, Of all thy priests and every peer.

Next Kusik's son consenting, thus King Janak speaks, dread liege, by us: "I made a promise and decree

That valour's prize my child should be. Kings, worthless found in worth's assay, With mien dejected turned away.

Thy sons, by Visvámitra led, Unurged, my city visited,

And peerless in their might have gained

Canto LXVIII. The Envoys' Speech. 267

My daughter, as my vow ordained. Full in a vast assembly's view

Thy hero Ráma broke in two

The gem of bows, of monstrous size, That came a treasure from
the skies. Ordained the prize of hero's might, Sítá my child is his
by right.

Fain would I keep my promise made, If thou, O King, approve
and aid.

Come to my town thy son to see:

Bring holy guide and priest with thee. O lord of kings, my suit
allow,

And let me keep my promised vow. So joying for thy children's
sake Their triumph too shalt thou partake, With Visvámitra's
high consent." Such words with friendship eloquent Spoke
Janak, fair Videha's king,

By Satánanda's counselling."

The envoys thus the king addressed, And mighty joy his heart
possessed.

To Vámadeva quick he cried, Vasishtha, and his lords beside:

"Lakshmar,, and he, my princely boy Who fills Kausalyá's soul
with joy, By Visvámitra guarded well

Among the good Videhans dwell. [080]

Their ruler Janak, prompt to own

The peerless might my child has shown, To him would knit in
holy ties

His daughter, valour's lovely prize. If Janak's plan seem good to
you, Come, speed we to his city too,

Nor let occasion idly by.”

He ceased. There came a glad reply From priest and mighty
saint and all The councillors who thronged the hall. Then cried
the king with joyous heart: “To-morrow let us all depart.”

That night the envoys entertained With honour and all care
remained.

Canto LXIX. Dasaratha's Visit.

Soon as the shades of night had fled, Thus to the wise Sumantra
said

The happy king, while priest and peer, Each in his place, were
standing near: “Let all my treasurers to-day,

Set foremost in the long array,

With gold and precious gems supplied In bounteous store,
together ride.

And send you out a mighty force, Foot, chariot, elephant, and
horse. Besides, let many a car of state, And noblest steeds, my
will await. Vasishtha, Vámadeva sage,

And Márkar,deya's reverend age, Jáváli, Kasyap's godlike seed,
And wise Kátyáyana, shall lead. Thy care, Sumantra, let it be
To yoke a chariot now for me, That so we part without delay:
These envoys hasten me away.”

Canto LXIX. Dasaratha's Visit. 269

So fared he forth. That host, with speed, Quadruple, as the king
decreed,

With priests to head the bright array, Followed the monarch on
his way. Four days they travelled on the road, And eve Videha's
kingdom showed. Janak had left his royal seat

The venerable king to greet,

And, noblest, with these words addressed That noblest lord, his
happy guest:

“Hail, best of kings: a blessed fate Has led thee, Monarch, to my
state. Thy sons, supreme in high emprise, Will gladden now their
father's eyes. And high my fate, that hither leads Vasishtha,

bright with holy deeds, Girt with these sages far-renowned, Like
Indra with the Gods around.

Joy! joy! for vanquished are my foes: Joy! for my house in glory
grows, With Raghu's noblest sons allied, Supreme in strength
and valour's pride. To-morrow with its early light

Will shine on my completed rite.

Then, sanctioned by the saints and thee, The marriage of thy
Ráma see.”

Then Dasaratha, best of those Whose speech in graceful order
flows, With gathered saints on every side, Thus to the lord of
earth replied:

“A truth is this I long have known, A favour is the giver's own.

What thou shalt bid, O good and true,

We, as our power permits, will do.”

That answer of the truthful lord, With virtuous worth and honour
stored, Janak, Videha's noble king,

Heard gladly, greatly marvelling. With bosoms filled with
pleasure met Long-parted saint and anchoret,
And linked in friendship's tie they spent The peaceful night in
great content.

Ráma and Lakshmar, thither sped, By sainted Visvámitra led,
And bent in filial love to greet Their father, and embraced his
feet. The aged king, rejoiced to hear And see again his children
dear,

Honoured by Janak's thoughtful care, With great enjoyment
rested there.

King Janak, with attentive heed, Consulted first his daughters'
need, And ordered all to speed the rite; Then rested also for the
night.

Canto LXX. The Maidens Sought.

Then with the morn's returning sun. King Janak, when his rites were done, Skilled all the charms of speech to know, Spoke to wise Satánanda so:

“My brother, lord of glorious fame, My younger, Kusadhvaj by name, Whose virtuous life has won renown, Has settled in a lovely town, Sánkásyá, decked with grace divine,

Whose glories bright as Pushpak's shine, While Ikshumatí rolls her wave

Her lofty rampart's foot to lave. Him, holy priest, I long to see:

The guardian of my rite is he:

That my dear brother may not miss A share of mine expected bliss.”

Thus in the presence of the priest The royal Janak spoke, and ceased.

Then came his henchmen, prompt and brave, [081]

To whom his charge the monarch gave. Soon as they heard his will, in haste With fleetest steeds away they raced, To lead with them that lord of kings, As Indra's call Lord Vishr,u brings.

Sánkásyá's walls they duly gained, And audience of the king obtained.

To him they told the news they brought Of marvels past and
Janak's thought.

Soon as the king the story knew

From those good envoys swift and true, To Janak's wish he
gave assent,

And swift to Mithilá he went. He paid to Janak reverence due,

And holy Satánanda too,

Then sate him on a glorious seat For kings or Gods celestial
meet. Soon as the brothers, noble pair Peerless in might, were
seated there, They gave the wise Sudáman, best Of councillors,
their high behest: "Go, noble councillor," they cried, "And hither
to our presence guide Ikshváku's son, Ayodhyá's lord, Invincible
by foeman's sword,

With both his sons, each holy seer, And every minister and
peer." Sudáman to the palace flew,

And saw the mighty king who threw Splendour on Raghu's
splendid race, Then bowed his head with seemly grace: "O King,
whose hand Ayodhyá sways, My lord, whom Mithilá obeys,

Yearns with desire, if thou agree, Thee with thy guide and priest
to see." Soon as the councillor had ceased,

The king, with saint and peer and priest, Sought, speeding
through the palace gate, The hall where Janak held his state.

There, with his nobles round him spread, Thus to Videha's lord
be said:

“Thou knowest, King, whose aid divine Protects Ikshváku's royal
line.

In every need, whate'er befall, The saint Vasishtha speaks for
all. If Visvámitra so allow,

And all the saints around me now, The sage will speak, at my
desire,

As order and the truth require.”

Soon as the king his lips had stilled, Up rose Vasishtha, speaker
skilled.

And to Videha's lord began

In flowing words that holy man: “From viewless Nature Brahmá
rose,

No change, no end, no waste he knows. A son had he Maríchi
styled,

And Kasyap was Maríchi's child. From him Vivasvat sprang:
from him Manu whose fame shall ne'er be dim. Manu, who life to
mortals gave, Begot Ikshváku good and brave.

First of Ayodhyá's kings was he, Pride of her famous dynasty.

From him the glorious Kukshi sprang, Whose fame through all
the regions rang. Rival of Kukshi's ancient fame,

His heir, the great Vikukshi, came, His son was Vár,a, lord of
might; His Anarar,ya, strong to fight.

His son was Prithu, glorious name; From him the good Trisanku
came. He left a son renowned afar,

Known by the name of Dhundhumár. His son, who drove the
mighty car, Was Yuvanásva, feared in war.

He passed away. Him followed then His son Mándhátá, king of
men.

His son was blest in high emprise, Susandhi, fortunate and wise.

Two noble sons had he, to wit Dhruvasandhi and Prasenajit.

Bharat was Dhruvasandhi's son,

And glorious fame that monarch won. The warrior Asit he begot.

Asit had warfare, fierce and hot, With rival kings in many a spot,
Haihayas, Tálajanghas styled, And Sasivindus, strong and wild.

Long time he strove, but forced to yield Fled from his kingdom
and the field.

With his two wives away he fled Where high Himálaya lifts his
head, And, all his wealth and glory past, He paid the dues of
Fate at last.

The wives he left had both conceived— So is the ancient tale
believed—

One, of her rival's hopes afraid Fell poison in her viands laid.

It chanced that Chyavan, Bhrigu's child, Had wandered to that
pathless wild, And there Himálaya's lovely height Detained him
with a strange delight.

There came the other widowed queen, With lotus eyes and
beauteous mien, Longing a noble son to bear,

And wooed the saint with earnest prayer. When thus Kálindi,²⁴⁸
fairest dame, With reverent supplication came,

To her the holy sage replied:

“Born with the poison from thy side, O happy Queen, shall
spring ere long An infant fortunate and strong.

Then weep no more, and check thy sighs,

248 A different lady from the Goddess of the Jumna who bears
the same name.

Sweet lady of the lotus eyes.”

The queen, who loved her perished lord, For meet reply, the
saint adored,

And, of her husband long bereaved, She bore a son by him
conceived.

Because her rival mixed the bane [082]

To render her conception vain, And fruit unripened to destroy,
Sagar²⁴⁹ she called her darling boy. To Sagar Asamanj was
heir:

Bright Ansumán his consort bare. Ansumán's son, Dilípa famed,
Begot a son Bhagírath named.

From him the great Kakutstha rose: From him came Raghu,
feared by foes, Of him sprang Purushádak bold, Fierce hero of
gigantic mould: Kalmáshapáda's name he bore, Because his
feet were spotted o'er.²⁵⁰ From him came Sankar,, and from
him Sudarsan, fair in face and limb.

From beautiful Sudarsan came Prince Agnivarr,a, bright as
flame. His son was Síghraga, for speed Unmatched; and Maru
was his seed. Prasusruka was Maru's child;

His son was Ambarísha styled. Nahush was Ambarísha's heir,
The mighty lord of regions fair: Nahush begot Yayáti: he,

249 This is another fanciful derivation, Sa—with, and gara—
poison.

250 Purushádak means a cannibal. First called Kalmáshapáda
on account of his spotted feet he is said to have been turned
into a cannibal for killing the son of Vasishtha.

Nábhág of happy destiny. Son of Nábhág was Aja: his, The
glorious Dasaratha is,

Whose noble children boast to be Ráma and Lakshmar,, whom
we see. Thus do those kings of purest race Their lineage from
Ikshváku trace: Their hero lives the right maintained,

Their lips with falsehood ne'er were stained. In Ráma's and in
Lakshmar,'s name

Thy daughters as their wives I claim, So shall in equal bands be
tied

Each peerless youth with peerless bride.”

Canto LXXI. Janak's Pedigree.

Then to the saint supremely wise King Janak spoke in suppliant
guise: “Deign, Hermit, with attentive ear, My race’s origin to
hear.

When kings a daughter’s hand bestow, ’Tis right their line and
fame to show. There was a king whose deeds and worth

Spread wide his name through heaven and earth, Nimi, most
virtuous e’en from youth,

The best of all who love the truth. His son and heir was Mithi,
and His Janak, first who ruled this land. He left a son Udávasu,

Blest with all virtues, good and true. His son was Nandivardhan,
dear

Canto LXXI. Janak’s Pedigree. 277

For pious heart and worth sincere. His son Suketu, hero brave,
To Devarát, existence gave. King Devarát, a royal sage, For
virtue, glory of the age, Begot Vrihadratha; and he Begot, his
worthy heir to be, The splendid hero Mahábír

Who long in glory governed here. His son was Sudhriti, a youth
Firm in his purpose, brave in sooth, His son was Dhristaketu,
blest With pious will and holy breast.

The fame of royal saint he won: Haryasva was his princely son.
Haryasva’s son was Maru, who Begot Pratíndhak, wise and true.

Next Kírtiratha held the throne, His son, for gentle virtues
known. Then followed Devamidha, then
Vibudh, Mahándhrak, kings of men. Mahándhrak's son, of
boundless might, Was Kírtirát, who loved the right.
He passed away, a sainted king, And Maháromá following
To Swarr,aromá left the state. Then Hrasvaromá, good and
great, Succeeded, and to him a pair
Of sons his royal consort bare, Elder of these I boast to be:
Brave Kusadhwaj is next to me.²⁵¹

251 "In the setting forth of these royal genealogies the Bengal
recension varies but slightly from the Northern. The first six
names of the genealogy of the Kings of Ayodhyá are partly
theogonical and partly cosmogonical; the

Me then, the elder of the twain, My sire anointed here to reign.
He bade me tend my brother well, Then to the forest went to
dwell.

He sought the heavens, and I sustained The burden as by law
ordained,

And noble Kusadhwaj, the peer Of Gods, I ever held most dear.

Then came Sánkásyá's mighty lord, Sudhanvá, threatening
siege and sword,

And bade me swift on him bestow

[083]Siva's incomparable bow, And Sítá of the lotus eyes:

But I refused each peerless prize. Then, host to host, we met the
foes, And fierce the din of battle rose, Sudhanvá, foremost of
his band, Fell smitten by my single hand.

When thus Sánkásyá's lord was slain, I sanctified, as laws
ordain,

My brother in his stead to reign,

Thus are we brothers, Saint most high The younger he, the elder
I.

Now, mighty Sage, my spirit joys To give these maidens to the
boys. Let Sítá be to Ráma tied.

And Urmilá be Lakshmar,'s bride. First give, O King, the gift of
cows, As dowry of each royal spouse, Due offerings to the
spirits pay, And solemnize the wedding-day.

other names are no doubt in accordance with tradition and
deserve the same amount of credence as the ancient traditional
genealogies of other nations.” GORRESIO{FNS.

Canto LXXII. The Gift Of Kine. 279

The moon tonight, O royal Sage,

In Maghá's²⁵² House takes harbourage; On the third night his
rays benign

In second Phálguni²⁵³ will shine:

Be that the day, with prosperous fate, The nuptial rites to
celebrate.”

Canto LXXII. The Gift Of Kine.

When royal Janak's words were done, Joined with Vasishtha
Kusik's son, The mighty sage began his speech:

“No mind may soar, no thought can reach The glories of
Ikshváku's line,

Or, great Videha's King, of thine:

None in the whole wide world may vie With them in fame and
honours high. Well matched, I ween, in holy bands, These
peerless pairs will join their hands. But hear me as I speak once
more;

Thy brother, skilled in duty's lore, Has at his home a royal pair
Of daughters most divinely fair.

I for the hands of these sweet two For Bharat and Satrughna
sue, Both princes of heroic mould,

Wise, fair of form, and lofty-souled. All Dasaratha's sons, I
ween,

252 The tenth of the lunar asterisms, composed of five stars.

253 There are two lunar asterisms of this name, one following
the other immediately, forming the eleventh and twelfth of the
lunar mansions.

Own each young grace of form and mien: Brave as the Gods
are they, nor yield

To the great Lords the worlds who shield. By these, good Prince
of merits high, Ikshváku's house with thine ally.”

The suit the holy sage preferred, With willing ear the monarch
heard: Vasishtha's lips the counsel praised:

Then spake the king with hands upraised: “Now blest indeed my
race I deem, Which your high will, O Saints supreme, With
Dasaratha's house unites

In bonds of love and marriage rites. So be it done. My nieces
twain

Let Bharat and Satrughna gain,
And the four youths the selfsame day Four maiden hands in
theirs shall lay. No day so lucky may compare,
For marriage—so the wise declare— With the last day of
Phálguni
Ruled by the genial deity.”

Then with raised hands in reverence due To those arch-saints he
spoke anew:

“I am your pupil, ever true:
To me high favour have ye shown; Come, sit ye on my royal
throne, For Dasaratha rules these towers E'en as Ayodhyá now
is ours.
Do with your own whate'er ye choose: Your lordship here will
none refuse.”

He spoke, and to Videha's king Thus Dasaratha, answering:
“Boundless your virtues, lords, whose sway The realms of Mithilá
obey.
With honouring care you entertain. Both holy sage and royal
train.

Now to my house my steps I bend— May blessings still on you
at end— Due offerings to the shades to pay.” Thus spoke the
king, and turned away: To Janak first he bade adieu,

Then followed fast those holy two. The monarch reached his
palace where The rites were paid with solemn care. When the
next sun began to shine

He rose and made his gift of kine. A hundred thousand cows
prepared

For each young prince the Bráhmans shared. Each had her
horns adorned with gold;

And duly was the number told, Four hundred thousand perfect
tale:

Each brought a calf, each filled a pail. And when that glorious
task was o’er, The monarch with his children four, Showed like
the Lord of Life divine

When the worlds’ guardians round him shine.

[084]

Canto LXXIII. The Nuptials.

On that same day that saw the king His gift of kine distributing,
The lord of Kekaya's son, by name Yudhájit, Bharat's uncle,
came,

Asked of the monarch's health, and then Addressed the
reverend king of men: "The lord of Kekaya's realm by me Sends
greeting, noble King, to thee:

Asks if the friends thy prayers would bless Uninterrupted health
possess.

Right anxious, mighty King, is he My sister's princely boy to see.

For this I sought Ayodhyá fair The message of my sire to bear.

There learning, O my liege, that thou With sons and noble
kinsmen now Wast resting here, I sought the place Longing to
see my nephew's face." The king with kind observance cheered
His friend by tender ties endeared, And every choicest honour
pressed Upon his honourable guest.

That night with all his children spent, At morn King Dasaratha
went,

Behind Vasishtha and the rest,

To the fair ground for rites addressed. Then when the lucky hour
was nigh Called Victory, of omen high,

Came Ráma, after vow and prayer For nuptial bliss and fortune
fair, With the three youths in bright attire, And stood beside his
royal sire.

To Janak then Vasishtha sped,

And to Videha's monarch said:

“O King, Ayodhyá's ruler now

Has breathed the prayer and vowed the vow, And with his sons
expecting stands

The giver of the maidens' hands. The giver and the taker both
Must ratify a mutual oath.

Perform the part for which we wait, And rites of marriage
celebrate.”

Skilled in the laws which Scriptures teach, He answered thus
Vasishtha's speech:

“O Saint, what warder bars the gate? Whose bidding can the
king await?

In one's own house what doubt is shown? This kingdom, Sage, is
all thine own.

E'en now the maidens may be found Within the sacrificial
ground:

Each vow is vowed and prayed each prayer, And they, like fire,
are shining there.

Here by the shrine my place I took Expecting thee with eager
look,

No bar the nuptial rites should stay: What cause have we for
more delay?" When Janak's speech the monarch heard, To sons
and saints he gave the word, And set them in the holy ring,

Then to Vasishtha spoke the king Of Mithilá: "O mighty Sage,
Now let this task thy care engage,

And lend thine aid and counsel wise The nuptial rites to
solemnize."

The saint Vasishtha gave assent, And quickly to the task he
went, With Visvámitra, nothing loth, And Satánanda aiding
both.

Then, as the rules prescribe, they made An altar in the midst,
and laid

Fresh wreaths of fragrant flowers thereon. The golden ladles
round it shone;

And many a vase, which branches hid Fixed in the perforated
lid,

And sprays, and cups, and censers there Stood filled with
incense rich and rare;

Shell-bowls, and spoons, and salvers dressed With gifts that
greet the honoured guest; Piles of parched rice some dishes
bore, Others with corn prepared ran o'er;

And holy grass was duly spread

In equal lengths, while prayers were said. Next chief of saints,
Vasishtha came And laid the offering in the flame.

Then by the hand King Janak drew His Sítá, beautiful to view,
And placed her, bright in rich attire, Ráma to face, before the
fire,

Thus speaking to the royal boy

Who filled Kausalyá's heart with joy: "Here Sítá stands, my
daughter fair, The duties of thy life to share.

Take from her father, take thy bride; Join hand to hand, and
bliss betide! A faithful wife, most blest is she, And as thy shade
will follow thee."

Thus as he spoke the monarch threw O'er her young limbs the
holy dew,

While Gods and saints were heard to swell The joyous cry, 'Tis
well! 'Tis well!

His daughter Sítá thus bestowed,

O'er whom the sacred drops had flowed. King Janak's heart
with rapture glowed. Then to Prince Lakshmar, thus he cried:

“Take Urmilá thine offered bride, And clasp her hand within
thine own Ere yet the lucky hour be flown.” Then to Prince
Bharat thus cried he; “Come, take the hand of Mándavi.” Then
to Satrughna: “In thy grasp The hand of Srutakírti clasp.

Now, Raghu's sons, may all of you

Be gentle to your wives and true; [085]

Keep well the vows you make to-day, Nor let occasion slip
away.”

King Janak's word the youths obeyed; The maidens' hands in
theirs they laid. Then with their brides the princes went With
ordered steps and reverent

Round both the fire and Janak, round The sages and the sacred
ground.

A flowery flood of lucid dyes In rain descended from the skies,
While with celestial voices blent

Sweet strains from many an instrument, And the nymphs
danced in joyous throng Responsive to the minstrel's song.

Such signs of exultation they

Saw on the princes' wedding day. Still rang the heavenly music's
sound

When Raghu's sons thrice circled round The fire, each one with
reverent head, And homeward then their brides they led. They to
the sumptuous palace hied

That Janak's care had seen supplied. The monarch girt with
saint and peer Still fondly gazing followed near.

Canto LXXIV. Ráma With The Axe.254

Soon as the night had reached its close The hermit Visvámitra
rose;

To both the kings he bade adieu And to the northern hill
withdrew. Ayodhyá's lord of high renown

Received farewell, and sought his town. Then as each daughter
left her bower King Janak gave a splendid dower, Rugs,
precious silks, a warrior force, Cars, elephants, and foot, and
horse, Divine to see and well arrayed;

And many a skilful tiring-maid, And many a young and trusty
slave The father of the ladies gave.

254 This is another Ráma, son of Jamadagni, called
Parasuráma, or Ráma with the axe, from the weapon which he
carried. He was while he lived the terror of the Warrior caste,
and his name recalls long and fierce struggles between the
sacerdotal and military order in which the latter suffered
severely at the hands of their implacable enemy.

Canto LXXIV. Ráma With The Axe. 287

Silver and coral, gold and pearls He gave to his beloved girls.

These precious gifts the king bestowed And sped his guest upon
his road.

The lord of Mithilá's sweet town Rode to his court and lighted
down. Ayodhyá's monarch, glad and gay, Led by the seers
pursued his way With his dear sons of lofty mind: The royal
army marched behind.

As on he fared the voice he heard Around of many a dismal
bird, And every beast in wild affright Began to hurry to the right.

The monarch to Vasishtha cried: “What strange misfortune will
betide? Why do the beasts in terror fly,

And birds of evil omen cry?

What is it shakes my heart with dread? Why is my soul
disquieted?”

Soon as he heard, the mighty saint Thus answered Dasaratha’s
plaint

In sweetest tone: “Now, Monarch, mark, And learn from me the
meaning dark.

The voices of the birds of air Great peril to the host declare:

The moving beasts the dread allay, So drive thy whelming fear
away,”

As he and Dasaratha spoke

A tempest from the welkin broke, That shook the spacious earth
again And hurled high trees upon the plain. The sun grew dark
with murky cloud, And o'er the skies was cast a shroud, While
o'er the army, faint with dread, A veil of dust and ashes spread.

King, princes, saints their sense retained, Fear-stupefied the rest
remained.

At length, their wits returning, all Beneath the gloom and ashy
pall Saw Jamadagni's son with dread, His long hair twisted
round his head,

Who, sprung from Bhrigu, loved to beat The proudest kings
beneath his feet.

Firm as Kailása's hill he showed, Fierce as the fire of doom he
glowed. His axe upon his shoulder lay,

His bow was ready for the fray, With thirsty arrows wont to fly
Like Lightnings from the angry sky. A long keen arrow forth he
drew, Invincible like those which flew From Siva's ever-
conquering bow And Tripura in death laid low.

When his wild form, that struck with awe, Fearful as ravening
flame, they saw, Vasishtha and the saints whose care

Was sacrifice and muttered prayer, Drew close together, each
to each,

And questioned thus with bated speech: “Indignant at his
father’s fate

Will he on warriors vent his hate, The slayers of his father slay,
And sweep the loathed race away? But when of old his fury
raged

Seas of their blood his wrath assuaged: [086]

So doubtless now he has not planned To slay all warriors in the
land.”

Then with a gift the saints drew near To Bhrigu’s son whose look
was fear, And Ráma! Ráma! soft they cried.

The gift he took, no word replied. Then Bhrigu’s son his silence
broke And thus to Ráma Ráma spoke:

Canto LXXV. The Parle.

“Heroic Ráma, men proclaim

The marvels of thy matchless fame, And I from loud-voiced
rumour know The exploit of the broken bow,

Yea, bent and broken, mighty Chief, A feat most wondrous, past
belief. Stirred by thy fame thy face I sought: A peerless bow I
too have brought.

This mighty weapon, strong and dire, Great Jamadagni owned,
my sire.

Draw with its shaft my father's bow, And thus thy might, O
Ráma, show. This proof of prowess let me see— The weapon
bent and drawn by thee;

Then single fight our strength shall try, And this shall raise thy
glory high.”

King Dasaratha heard with dread The boastful speech, and thus
he said; Raising his hands in suppliant guise, With pallid cheek
and timid eyes: “Forgetful of the bloody feud

Ascetic toils hast thou pursued; Then, Bráhmaṇ, let thy children
be Untroubled and from danger free. Sprung of the race of
Bhrigu, who Read holy lore, to vows most true, Thou swarest to
the Thousand-eyed And thy fierce axe was cast aside. Thou

turnedst to thy rites away Leaving the earth to Kasyap's sway,
And wentest far a grove to seek

Beneath Mahendra's²⁵⁵ mountain peak.

Now, mighty Hermit, art thou here To slay us all with doom
severe? For if alone my Ráma fall,

We share his fate and perish all.”

255 “The author of the Raghuvāṅśa places the mountain Mahendra in the territory of the king of the Kalingans, whose palace commanded a view of the ocean. It is well known that the country along the coast to the south of the mouths of the Ganges was the seat of this people. Hence it may be suspected that this Mahendra is what Pliny calls ‘promontorium Calingon.’ The modern name, Cape Palmyras, from the palmyras *Borassus flabelliformis*, which abound there agrees remarkably with the description of the poet who speaks of the groves of these trees. Raghuvāṅśa, VI. 51.” SCHLEGEL{FNS.

As thus the aged sire complained The mighty chief no answer
deigned. To Ráma only thus he cried:

“Two bows, the Heavenly Artist’s pride, Celestial, peerless, vast,
and strong,

By all the worlds were honoured long. One to the Three-eyed
God²⁵⁶ was given, By glory to the conflict driven,

Thus armed fierce Tripura he slew: And then by thee ’twas burst
in two. The second bow, which few may brave, The highest Gods
to Vishr,u gave.

This bow I hold; before it fall

The foeman’s fenced tower and wall. Then prayed the Gods the
Sire Most High By some unerring proof to try

Were praise for might Lord Vishr,u’s due, Or his whose Neck is
stained with Blue.²⁵⁷ The mighty Sire their wishes knew,

And he whose lips are ever true Caused the two Gods to meet
as foes. Then fierce the rage of battle rose: Bristled in dread
each starting hair As Siva strove with Vishr,u there.

But Vishr,u raised his voice amain. And Siva’s bowstring
twanged in vain; Its master of the Three bright Eyes Stood fixt
in fury and surprise.

Then all the dwellers in the sky, Minstrel, and saint, and God
drew nigh,

And prayed them that the strife might cease, And the great
rivals met in peace.

²⁵⁶ Siva.

257 Siva. God of the Azure Neck.

'Twas seen how Siva's bow has failed Unnerved, when Vishr,u's
might assailed, And Gods and heavenly sages thence

To Vishnu gave preëminence. Then glorious Siva in his rage
Gave it to Devarát the sage Who ruled Videha's fertile land,
To pass it down from hand to hand.

But this my bow, whose shafts smite down The foeman's fenced
tower and town,

To great Richíka Vishr,u lent To be a pledge and ornament,

Then Jamadagni, Bráhman dread, My sire, the bow inherited.

But Arjun stooped to treachery vile And slew my noble sire by
guile,

Whose penance awful strength had gained,

[87] Whose hand the God-given bow retained. I heard
indignant how he fell

By mournful fate, too sad to tell. My vengeful fury since that
time Scourges all Warriors for the crime. As generations spring
to life

I war them down in endless strife. All earth I brought beneath
my sway, And gave it for his meed and pay

To holy Kasyap, when of yore

The rites performed by him were o'er. Then to Mahendra's hill I
turned

Strong in the strength that penance earned, And toiled upon his
lofty head

By Gods immortal visited.

The breaking of the bow I knew

From startled Gods conversing, through

The airy regions, of thy deed,

And hither came with swiftest speed. Now, for thy Warrior's
honour sake, This best of bows, O Ráma, take:

This, owned by Vishr,u's self of old, My sire and grandsire loved
to hold. Drawn to its head upon the string, One town-destroying
arrow bring; If this thou can, O hero, I

In single fight thy strength will try.”

Canto LXXVI. Debarred From Heaven.

The haughty challenge, undeterred The son of Dasaratha heard,
And cried, while reverence for his sire Checked the full torrent of
his ire: “Before this day have I been told

The deed that stained thy hands of old. But pity bids my soul
forget:

Thy father, murdered, claimed the debt. My strength, O Chief,
thou deemest slight, Too feeble for a Warrior’s might.

Now will I show thy wondering eyes The prowess which they
dare despise.”

He hastened then with graceful ease That mighty bow and shaft
to seize.

His hand the weapon strung and swayed: The arrow on the
string was laid.

Then Jamadagni’s son he eyed, And thus in words of fury cried:
“Thou art a Bráhmaṇ, still to be

Most highly honoured, Chief, by me. For Visvámitra's sake
beside

Shall reverence due be ne'er denied. Though mine the power, I
would not send A dart at thee thy life to end.

But thy great power to wander free, Which penance-rites have
won for thee, Or glorious worlds from thee to wrest, Is the firm
purpose of my breast,

And Vishr,u's dart which now I strain Can ne'er be shot to fall in
vain:

It strikes the mighty, and it stuns The madness of the haughty
ones.”

Then Gods, and saints and heavenly choir Preceded by the
General Sire,

Met in the air and gazed below

On Ráma with that wondrous bow. Nymph, minstrel, angel, all
were there, Snake-God, and spirit of the air,

Giant, and bard, and gryphon, met, Their eyes upon the marvel
set.

In senseless hush the world was chained While Ráma's hand the
bow retained, And Jamadagni's son amazed

And powerless on the hero gazed.

Then when his swelling heart had shrunk,

And his proud strength in torpor sunk, Scarce his voice
ventured, low and weak, To Ráma lotus-eyed, to speak:

“When long ago I gave away

The whole broad land to Kasyap’s sway He charged me never to
remain

Within the limits of his reign. Obedient to my guide’s behest On
earth by night I never rest.

My choice is made, I will not dim Mine honour and be false to
him. So, son of Raghu, leave me still The power to wander where
I will,

And swifter than the thought my flight Shall place me on
Mahendra’s height. My mansions of eternal joy,

By penance won, thou mayst destroy, My path to these thy
shaft may stay. Now to the work! No more delay!

I know thee Lord of Gods; I know

Thy changeless might laid Madhu low. All other hands would
surely fail

To bend this bow. All hail! all hail! See! all the Gods have left the
skies To bend on thee their eager eyes,

With whose achievements none compete, Whose arm in war no
God can meet.

No shame is mine, I ween, for thou,

Lord of the Worlds, hast dimmed my brow. Now, pious Ráma,
'tis thy part

To shoot afar that glorious dart: I, when the fatal shaft is shot,
Will seek that hill and tarry not.”

He ceased. The wondrous arrow flew, And Jamadagni's
offspring knew

Those glorious worlds to him were barred, Once gained by
penance long and hard.

Then straight the airy quarters cleared, And the mid regions
bright appeared,

While Gods and saints unnumbered praised Ráma, the mighty
bow who raised.

And Jamadagni's son, o'erawed.

[88] Extolled his name with highest laud, With reverent steps
around him strode, Then hastened on his airy road.

Far from the sight of all he fled, And rested on Mahendra's
head.

Canto LXXVII. Bharat's Departure.

Then Ráma with a cheerful mind The bow to Varur,'s hand
resigned. Due reverence to the saints he paid,

And thus addressed his sire dismayed: "As Bhrigu's son is far
from view, Now let the host its march pursue, And to Ayodhyá's
town proceed

In four-fold bands, with thee to lead."

King Dasaratha thus addressed His lips to Ráma's forehead
pressed, And held him to his aged breast.

Rejoiced in sooth was he to know That Bhrigu's son had parted
so, And hailed a second life begun For him and his victorious
son.

He urged the host to speed renewed, And soon Ayodhyá's gates
he viewed. High o'er the roofs gay pennons played; Tabour and
drum loud music made; Fresh water cooled the royal road,
And flowers in bright profusion glowed. Glad crowds with
garlands thronged the ways Rejoicing on their king to gaze
And all the town was bright and gay Exalting in the festive day.
People and Bráhmans flocked to meet Their monarch ere he
gained the street. The glorious king amid the throng Rode with
his glorious sons along, And passed within his dear abode
That like Himálaya's mountain showed. And there Kausalyá,
noble queen, Sumitrá with her lovely mien,
Kaikeyí of the dainty waist,
And other dames his bowers who graced, Stood in the palace
side by side
And welcomed home each youthful bride: Fair Sítá, lofty-fated
dame,
Urmilá of the glorious fame, And Kusadhvaj's children fair,
With joyous greeting and with prayer, As all in linen robes
arrayed

With offerings at the altars prayed. Due reverence paid to God
above, Each princess gave her soul to love, And hidden in her

inmost bower Passed with her lord each blissful hour. The royal youths, of spirit high,

With whom in valor none could vie, Lived each within his palace bounds Bright as Kuvera's pleasure-grounds, With riches, troops of faithful friends, And bliss that wedded life attends: Brave princes trained in warlike skill, And duteous to their father's will.

At length the monarch called one morn Prince Bharat, of Kaikeyí born,

And cried: "My son, within our gates Lord Yudhájit thine uncle waits.

The son of Kekaya's king is he,

And came, my child, to summon thee."

Then Bharat for the road prepared, And with Satrughna forth he fared.

First to his sire he bade adieu, Brave Ráma, and his mothers too. Lord Yudhájit with joyful pride Went forth, the brothers by his side,

And reached the city where he dwelt: And mighty joy his father felt.

Ráma and Lakshmar, honoured still Their godlike sire with
duteous will. Two constant guides for Ráma stood, His father's
wish, the people's good. Attentive to the general weal

He thought and wrought to please and heal. His mothers too he
strove to please

With love and sonly courtesies. At every time, in every spot, His
holy guides he ne'er forgot. So for his virtues kind and true

Dearer and dearer Ráma grew To Dasaratha, Bráhmans, all

In town and country, great and small. And Ráma by his darling's
side

Saw many a blissful season glide, Lodged in her soul, each
thought on her, Lover, and friend, and worshipper.

He loved her for his father's voice

Had given her and approved the choice: He loved her for each
charm she wore And her sweet virtues more and more. So he
her lord and second life

Dwelt in the bosom of his wife, In double form, that, e'en apart,

Each heart could commune free with heart.

Still grew that child of Janak's race, More goddess-fair in form
and face, The loveliest wife that e'er was seen,

In mortal mould sweet Beauty's Queen. Then shone the son
Kausalyá bore,
With this bright dame allied, Like Vishr,u whom the Gods adore,

With Lakshmi by his side.

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BOOK II

Canto I. The Heir Apparent.

So Bharat to his grandsire went Obedient to the message sent,
And for his fond companion chose Satrughna slayer of his
foes.²⁵⁸ There Bharat for a time remained With love and
honour entertained, King Asvapati's constant care, Beloved as a
son and heir.

Yet ever, as they lived at ease,

While all around combined to please, The aged sire they left
behind

Was present to each hero's mind.

Nor could the king's fond memory stray From his brave children
far away,

Dear Bharat and Satrughna dear, Each Varur,'s match or
Indra's peer.

²⁵⁸ Satrughna means slayer of foes, and the word is repeated
as an intensive epithet.

To all the princes, young and brave, His soul with fond affection
clave; Around his loving heart they clung

Like arms from his own body sprung.²⁵⁹

But best and noblest of the four, Good as the God whom all
adore, Lord of all virtues, undefiled,

His darling was his eldest child. For he was beautiful and strong,
From envy free, the foe of wrong, With all his father's virtues
blest,

And peerless in the world confessed. With placid soul he softly
spoke:

No harsh reply could taunts provoke. He ever loved the good
and sage Revered for virtue and for age,

And when his martial tasks were o'er Sate listening to their
peaceful lore. Wise, modest, pure, he honoured eld, His lips from
lying tales withheld; Due reverence to the Bráhmans gave, And
ruled each passion like a slave. Most tender, prompt at duty's
call, Loved by all men he loved them all. Proud of the duties of
his race,

With spirit meet for Warrior's place. He strove to win by glorious
deed,

Throned with the Gods, a priceless meed. With him in speech
and quick reply Vrihaspati might hardly vie,

But never would his accents flow For evil or for empty show.

259 Alluding to the images of Vishnu, which have four arms, the four princes being portions of the substance of that God.

Canto I. The Heir Apparent. 303

In art and science duly trained,

His student vow he well maintained; He learnt the lore for
princes fit, The Vedas and their Holy Writ,

And with his well-drawn bow at last His mighty father's fame
surpassed. Of birth exalted, truthful, just,

With vigorous hand, with noble trust, Well taught by aged twice-
born men Who gain and right could clearly ken, Full well the
claims and bounds he knew Of duty, gain, and pleasure too:

Of memory keen, of ready tact, In civil business prompt to act.

Reserved, his features ne'er disclosed What counsel in his heart
reposed.

All idle rage and mirth controlled, He knew the times to give and
hold, Firm in his faith, of steadfast will, He sought no wrong, he
spoke no ill: Not rashly swift, not idly slow,

His faults and others' keen to know. Each merit, by his subtle
sense;

He matched with proper recompense. He knew the means that
wealth provide, And with keen eye expense could guide. Wild
elephants could he reclaim,

And mettled steeds could mount and tame. No arm like his the
bow could wield,

Or drive the chariot to the field. Skilled to attack, to deal the
blow, Or lead a host against the foe:

Yea, e'en infuriate Gods would fear To meet his arm in full
career.

As the great sun in noontide blaze Is glorious with his world of
rays, So Ráma with these virtues shone Which all men loved to
gaze upon.

The aged monarch fain would rest, And said within his weary
breast, "Oh that I might, while living yet, My Ráma o'er the
kingdom set.

And see, before my course be run, The hallowed drops anoint
my son; See all this spacious land obey,

From side to side, my first-born's sway, And then, my life and
joy complete, Obtain in heaven a blissful seat!"

In him the monarch saw combined The fairest form, the noblest mind,

And counselled how his son might share, The throne with him as Regent Heir.

For fearful signs in earth and sky,

And weakness warned him death was nigh:

But Râma to the world endeared

[90] By every grace his bosom cheered, The moon of every eye, whose ray Drove all his grief and fear away. So duty urged that hour to seize,

Himself, his realm, to bless and please.

From town and country, far and near, He summoned people, prince, and peer. To each he gave a meet abode,

And honoured all and gifts bestowed. Then, splendid in his king's attire,

He viewed them, as the general Sire,

In glory of a God arrayed,

Looks on the creatures he has made. But Kekaya's king he
called not then For haste, nor Janak, lord of men; For after to
each royal friend

The joyful tidings he would send.

Mid crowds from distant countries met The king upon his throne
was set; Then honoured by the people, all

The rulers thronged into the hall.

On thrones assigned, each king in place Looked silent on the
monarch's face.

Then girt by lords of high renown

And throngs from hamlet and from town He showed in regal
pride,

As, honoured by the radiant band

Of blessed Gods that round him stand, Lord Indra, Thousand-
eyed.

Canto II. The People's Speech.

Then to the full assembly bowed

The monarch, and addressed the crowd With gracious speech,
in accents loud As heavenly drum or thunder-cloud:

“Needs not to you who know declare How ever with paternal
care

My fathers of Ikshváku’s line

Have ruled the realm which now is mine. I too have taught my
feet to tread

The pathway of the mighty dead, And with fond care that never
slept Have, as I could, my people kept. So toiling still, and ne’er
remiss For all my people’s weal and bliss,

Beneath the white umbrella’s²⁶⁰ shade.

Old age is come and strength decayed. Thousands of years
have o’er me flown, And generations round me grown

And passed away. I crave at length Repose and ease for broken
strength. Feeble and worn I scarce can bear The ruler’s toil, the
judge’s care, With royal dignity, a weight

That tries the young and temperate. I long to rest, my labour
done,

And in my place to set my son,

If to the twice-born gathered here My counsel wise and good
appear. For greater gifts than mine adorn Ráma my son, my
eldest-born.

Like Indra brave, before him fall The foeman's cities, tower and
wall.

Him prince of men for power and might, The best maintainer of
the right,

Fair as the moon when nothing bars His glory close to Pushya's
stars,

260 Chief of the insignia of imperial dignity.

Him with to-morrow's light I fain Would throne the consort of
my reign. A worthy lord for you, I ween,

Marked as her own by Fortune's Queen. The triple world itself
would be

Well ruled by such a king as he. To such high bliss and happy
fate Will I the country dedicate,

And my sad heart will cease to grieve If he the precious charge
receive.

Thus is my careful plan matured, Thus for myself is rest secured;
Liegés, approve the words I say, Or point ye out some wiser
way.

Devise your prudent plan. My mind Is fondly to this thought
inclined, But men by keen debating move
Some middle course which all approve.”

The monarch ceased. In answer came The joyous princes' glad
acclaim.

So peacocks in the rain rejoice

And hail the cloud with lifted voice. Murmurs of joy from
thousands round Shook the high palace with the sound. Then
when the gathered throng had learned His will who right and
gain discerned, Peasant and townsman, priest and chief, All met
in consultation brief,

And soon agreed with one accord Gave answer to their
sovereign lord: “King of the land, we know thee old:

Thousands of years have o'er thee rolled, Ráma thy son, we
pray, anoint,

And at thy side his place appoint

Our gallant prince, so brave and strong, Riding in royal state
along,

Our eyes with joyful pride will see Screened by the shade that
shelters thee.” Then spake the king again, as though Their
hearts’ true wish he sought to know: “These prayers for Ráma’s
rule suggest One question to my doubting breast.

This thing, I pray, with truth explain: Why would ye, while I justly
reign, That he, mine eldest son, should bear His part with me as
ruling heir?” Then all the people made reply, Peasant and
townsman, low and high:

[91] “Each noblest gift of form and mind, O Monarch, in thy son
we find.

Do thou the godlike virtues hear Which Ráma to our hearts
endear. So richly blest with graces, none In all the earth excels
thy son:

Nay, who to match with him may claim In truth, in justice, and
in fame?

True to his promise, gentle, kind, Unenvious, of grateful mind,
Versed in the law and firm of soul,

He keeps each sense with strict control. With duteous care he
loves to sit

By Bráhmans skilled in Holy Writ. Hence brightest glory, ne’er to
end, And matchless fame his youth attend. Skilled in the use of
spear and shield,

And arms which heavenly warriors wield, Supreme in war,
unconquered yet

By man, fiend, God in battle met, Whene'er in pomp of war he
goes 'Gainst town or city of the foes,

He ever comes with Lakshmar, back Victorious from the fierce
attack.

Returning homeward from afar Borne on his elephant or car, He
ever to the townsmen bends

And greets them as beloved friends, Asks how each son, each
servant thrives, How fare our pupils, offerings, wives; And like a
father bids us tell,

Each for himself, that all is well. If pain or grief the city tries

His heart is swift to sympathize.

When festive scenes our thoughts employ He like a father
shares the joy.

High is the fate, O King, that gave Thy Ráma born to bless and
save, With filial virtues fair and mild Like Kasyap old Maríchi's
child. Hence to the kingdom's distant ends One general prayer
for him ascends.

Each man in town and country prays

For Ráma's strength, health, length of days. With hearts sincere,
their wish the same, The tender girl, the aged dame,

Subject and stranger, peasant, hind, One thought impressed on
every mind, At evening and at dawning day

To all the Gods for Ráma pray.

Do thou, O King, of grace comply, And hear the people's longing
cry, And let us on the throne by thee

The lotus-tinted Ráma see.

O thou who givest boons, attend; A gracious ear, O Monarch,
lend

And for our weal install, Consenting to our earnest prayer, Thy
godlike Ráma Regent Heir,

Who seeks the good of all.”

Canto III. Dasaratha's Precepts.

The monarch with the prayer complied Of suppliant hands, on
every side Uplifted like a lotus-bed:

And then these gracious words he said: “Great joy and mighty
fame are mine Because your loving hearts incline,

In full assembly clearly shown

To place my Ráma on the throne.” Then to Vasishtha, standing
near, And Vámadeva loud and clear

The monarch spoke that all might hear: “’Tis pure and lovely
Chaitra now

When flowers are sweet on every bough; All needful things with
haste prepare That Ráma be appointed heir.”

Then burst the people’s rapture out In loud acclaim and joyful
shout; And when the tumult slowly ceased The king addressed
the holy priest:

“Give order, Saint, with watchful heed For what the coming rite
will need.

This day let all things ready wait Mine eldest son to consecrate.”

Best of all men of second birth Vasishtha heard the lord of
earth,

And gave commandment to the bands Of servitors with lifted hands

Who waited on their master's eye: "Now by to-morrow's dawn supply Rich gold and herbs and gems of price And offerings for the sacrifice,

Wreaths of white flowers and roasted rice, And oil and honey, separate;

New garments and a car of state, An elephant with lucky signs, A fourfold host in ordered lines, The white umbrella, and a pair Of chowries,²⁶¹ and a banner fair;

A hundred vases, row on row,

To shine like fire in splendid glow, A tiger's mighty skin, a bull With gilded horns most beautiful. All these, at dawn of coming day, Around the royal shrine array, Where burns the fire's undying ray. Each palace door, each city gate With wreaths of sandal decorate.

²⁶¹ Whisks, usually made of the long tails of the Yak.

And with the garlands' fragrant scent Let clouds of incense-smoke be blent. Let food of noble kind and taste

Be for a hundred thousand placed;

Fresh curds with streams of milk bedewed

[92] To feed the Bráhmaṇ multitude. With care be all their
wants supplied. And mid the twice-born chiefs divide Rich
largess, with the early morn, And oil and curds and roasted corn.
Soon as the sun has shown his light

Pronounce the prayer to bless the rite, And then be all the
Bráhmaṇs called And in their ordered seats installed. Let all
musicians skilled to play,

And dancing-girls in bright array Stand ready in the second ring
Within the palace of the king.

Each honoured tree, each holy shrine With leaves and flowery
wreaths entwine, And here and there beneath the shade

Be food prepared and presents laid. Then brightly clad, in
warlike guise, With long swords girt upon their thighs, Let
soldiers of the nobler sort

March to the monarch's splendid court.”

Thus gave command the twice-born pair To active servants
stationed there.

Then hastened to the king and said That all their task was duly
sped, The king to wise Sumantra spake:

“Now quick, my lord, thy chariot take, And hither with thy
swiftest speed

My son, my noble Ráma lead.”

Sumantra, ere the word was given, His chariot from the court
had driven, And Ráma, best of all who ride

In cars, came sitting by his side. The lords of men had hastened
forth

From east and west and south and north, Áryan and stranger,
those who dwell

In the wild wood and on the fell, And as the Gods to Indra, they
Showed honour to the king that day.

Like Vásav, when his glorious form Is circled by the Gods of
storm,

Girt in his hall by kings he saw

His car-borne Ráma near him draw, Like him who rules the
minstrel band

Of heaven;262 whose valour filled the land,

Of mighty arm and stately pride Like a wild elephant in stride,
As fair in face as that fair stone

Dear to the moon, of moonbeams grown,²⁶³

With noble gifts and grace that took The hearts of all, and
chained each look, World-cheering as the Lord of Rain When
floods relieve the parching plain. The father, as the son came
nigh,

Gazed with an ever-thirstier eye. Sumantra helped the prince
alight From the good chariot passing bright,

262 Chitraratha, King of the Gandharvas.

263 The Chandrakánta or Moonstone, a sort of crystal supposed
to be composed of congealed moonbeams.

And as to meet his sire he went Followed behind him reverent.
Then Ráma clomb, the king to seek That terrace like Kailása's
peak,

And reached the presence of the king, Sumantra closely
following.

Before his father's face he came,

Raised suppliant hands and named his name,²⁶⁴ And bowing
lowly as is meet

Paid reverence to the monarch's feet. But soon as Dasaratha viewed

The prince in humble attitude,

He raised him by the hand in haste And his beloved son embraced,

Then signed him to a glorious throne, Gem-decked and golden, near his own. Then Ráma, best of Raghu's line, Made the fair seat with lustre shine

As when the orient sun upsprings And his pure beam on Meru flings. The glory flashed on roof and wall,

And with strange sheen suffused the hall, As when the moon's pure rays are sent Through autumn's star-lit firmament.

Then swelled his breast with joy and pride As his dear son the father eyed,

E'en as himself more fair arrayed

In some clear mirror's face displayed. The aged monarch gazed awhile, Then thus addressed him with a smile, As Kasyap, whom the worlds revere, Speaks for the Lord of Gods to hear:

264 A customary mark of respect to a superior.

“O thou of all my sons most dear, In virtue best, thy father’s
peer, Child of my consort first in place, Mine equal in her pride
of race,

Because the people’s hearts are bound To thee by graces in
thee found,

Be thou in Pushya’s favouring hour Made partner of my royal
power.

I know that thou by nature’s bent Both modest art and
excellent,

But though thy gifts no counsel need My love suggests the
friendly rede. Mine own dear son, be modest still, And rule each
sense with earnest will. Keep thou the evils far away

That spring from love and anger’s sway. Thy noble course alike
pursue

In secret as in open view,

And every nerve, the love to gain Of ministers and subjects,
strain.

The happy prince who sees with pride His thriving people
satisfied;

Whose arsenals with arms are stored,

And treasury with golden hoard,— [093]

His friends rejoice as joyed the Blest When Amrit crowned their
eager quest. So well, my child, thy course maintain, And from all
ill thy soul refrain.”

The friends of Ráma, gathered nigh, Longing their lord to
gratify,

Ran to Kausalyá's bower to tell

The tidings that would please her well. She, host of dames, with
many a gem,

And gold, and kine rewarded them.

Then Ráma paid the reverence due, Mounted the chariot, and
withdrew, And to his splendid dwelling drove

While crowds to show him honour strove. The people, when the
monarch's speech

Their willing ears had heard,

Were wild with joy as though on each Great gifts had been
conferred.

With meek and low salute each man Turned to his home away,

And there with happy heart began To all the Gods to pray.

Canto IV. Ráma Summoned.

The crowd dismissed, to high debate The monarch called his
peers of state, And, counsel from their lips obtained, Firm in his
will his will explained: “To-morrow with auspicious ray

The moon in Pushya’s sign will stay; Be that the time with happy
fate Mine eldest son to consecrate,

And let my Ráma, lotus-eyed, As Regent o’er the state preside.”

He sought, within, his charioteer, And cried “Again bring Ráma
here.” To Ráma’s home Sumantra hied Again to be the prince’s
guide.

His coming, told to Ráma’s ear, Suggested anxious doubt and
fear. He bade the messenger be led That instant in, and thus he
said:

“Tell me the cause, omitting naught, Why thou again my house
hast sought.”

The envoy answered: "Prince, thy sire Has sent thy presence to require.

My sender known, 'tis thine to say If thou wilt go or answer nay."

Then Ráma, when he heard his speech, Made haste the royal court to reach.

Soon as the monarch was aware His dearest son was waiting there, Eager the parley to begin

He bade them lead the prince within, Soon as he passed the chamber door The hero bent him to the floor,

And at a distance from his seat

Raised his joined hands his sire to greet. The monarch raised him from the ground, And loving arms about him wound,

Then pointed to a seat that shone With gold for him to rest upon. "Aged am I," he said, "and worn;

In life's best joys my share have borne; Rites to the Gods, in hundreds, paid, With gifts of corn and largess made.

I yearned for sons: my life is blest

With them and thee of sons the best. No debt to saints or Bráhmans, no, Nor spirits, Gods, or self I owe.

One duty now remains alone,

To set thee on thy father's throne. Now therefore, Ráma, hear
my rede,

And mark my words with duteous heed:

This day the peoples' general voice, Elects thee king of love and
choice, And I, consenting to the prayer,

Will make thee, darling, Regent Heir. Dread visions, each
returning night, With evil omens scare my sight.

Red meteors with a fearful sound Shoot wildly downward to the
ground, While tempests lash the troubled air; And they who read
the stars declare That, leagued against my natal sign,

Ráhu,²⁶⁵ the Sun,²⁶⁶ and Mars combine.

When portents dire as these appear, A monarch's death or woe
is near. Then while my senses yet are spared, And thought and
will are unimpaired, Be thou, my son, anointed king:

Men's fancy is a fickle thing. To-day the moon, in order due,
Entered the sign Punarvasu,²⁶⁷ To-morrow, as the wise foretell,

²⁶⁵ Ráhu, the ascending node, is in mythology a demon with
the tail of a dragon whose head was severed from his body by
Vishr,u, but being immortal, the head and tail retained their
separate existence and being transferred to the stellar sphere
became the authors of eclipses; the first especially by
endeavouring to swallow the sun and moon.

266 In eclipse.

267 The seventh of the lunar asterisms.

In Pushya's favouring stars will dwell:

Then on the throne shalt thou be placed. My soul, prophetic,
counsels haste:

Thee, O my son, to-morrow I As Regent Heir will sanctify.

So till the coming night be passed Do thou and Sítá strictly fast:

From worldly thoughts thy soul refrain,

And couched on holy grass remain. [094]

And let thy trusted lords attend

In careful watch upon their friend, For, unexpected, check and
bar Our weightiest counsels often mar. While Bharat too is far
away Making with royal kin his stay,

I deem the fittest time of all Thee, chosen Regent, to install. It
may be Bharat still has stood True to the counsels of the good,
Faithful to thee with tender trust,

With governed senses, pure and just. But human minds, too well
I know, Will sudden changes undergo,

And by their constant deeds alone The virtue of the good is shown. Now, Ráma, go. My son, good night! Fixt is to-morrow for the rite.”

Then Ráma paid the reverence due, And quickly to his home withdrew.

He passed within, nor lingered there, But sought his mother’s mansion, where The dame in linen robes arrayed Devoutly in the chapel prayed

To Fortune’s Queen, with utterance checked, That she her Ráma would protect.

There was Sumitrá too, and there Was Lakshmar, led by loving care: And when the royal choice they knew Sítá in haste was summoned too.

Absorbed, with half-shut eyes, the queen Attended by the three was seen.

She knew that Pushya’s lucky hour Would raise her son to royal power,

So fixed with bated breath each thought On God supreme, by all men sought.

To her, as thus she knelt and prayed, Ráma drew near, due
reverence paid, And then to swell his mother's joy, Thus spoke
her own beloved boy; "O mother dear, my sire's decree Entrusts
the people's weal to me.

To-morrow I, for so his will, Anointed king, the throne shall fill.
The few last hours till night shall end Sítá with me must fasting
spend,

For so my father has decreed, And holy priests with him agreed.

What vows soever thou mayst deem My consecration's eve
beseem,

Do thou, sweet mother, for my sake And for beloved Sítá's
make."

When the glad news Kausalyá heard, So long desired, so long
deferred, While tears of joy her utterance broke, In answer to
her son she spoke:

"Long be thy life, my darling: now

Thy prostrate foes before thee bow. Live long and with thy
bright success My friends and dear Sumitrá's bless. Surely the
stars were wondrous fair When thee, sweet son, thy mother

bare, That thy good gifts such love inspire And win the favour of
thy sire.

With thee I travailed not in vain; Those lotus eyes reward my
pain, And all the glory of the line
Of old Ikshváku will be thine.”

He smiled, and on his brother gazed Who sate with reverent
hands upraised, And said: “My brother, thou must be Joint-ruler
of this land with me.

My second self thou, Lakshmar,, art, And in my fortune bearest
part.

Be thine, Sumitrá’s son, to know The joys from regal power that
flow. My life itself, the monarch’s seat, For thy dear sake to me
are sweet.”

Thus Ráma to his brother said,

To both his mothers²⁶⁸ bowed his head, And then with Sítá by
his side

To his own house the hero hied.

268 Kausalyá and Sumitrá.

Canto V. Ráma's Fast.

Then Saint Vasishtha to the king Came ready at his summoning.

“Now go,” exclaimed the monarch, “thou Enriched by fervent
rite and vow,

For Ráma and his wife ordain

The fast, that joy may bless his reign.”

The best of those who Scripture know Said to the king, “My lord,
I go.”

To Ráma's house Vasishtha hied, The hero's fast by rule to
guide, And skilled in sacred texts to tell Each step to him
instructed well.

Straight to Prince Ráma's high abode, That like a cloud pale-
tinted showed, Borne in his priestly car he rode.

Two courts he passed, and in the third He stayed his car. Then
Ráma heard The holy sage was come, and flew
To honour him with honour due. He hastened to the car and lent
His hand to aid the priest's descent. Then spoke Vasishtha
words like these, Pleased with his reverent courtesies, With
pleasant things his heart to cheer Who best deserved glad news
to hear:

“Prince, thou hast won thy father's grace, And thine will be the
Regent's place: Now with thy Sítá, as is right,

[95] In strictest fasting spend the night,

Canto V. Ráma's Fast. 323

For when the morrow's dawn is fair The king will consecrate his
heir: So Nahush,²⁶⁹ as the wise relate, Yayáti joyed to
consecrate.”

Thus having said, Vasishtha next Ordained the fast by rule and
text, For Ráma faithful to his vows

And the Videhan dame his spouse. Then from the prince's house
he hied With courteous honours gratified.

Round Ráma gathered every friend In pleasant talk a while to
spend. He bade good night to all at last, And to his inner
chamber passed.

Then Ráma's house shone bright and gay With men and maids
in glad array,

As in the morning some fair lake When all her lotuses awake,
And every bird that loves the flood Flits joyous round each
opening bud.

Forth from the house Vasishtha drove, That with the king's in
splendour strove, And all the royal street he viewed

Filled with a mighty multitude

The eager concourse blocked each square, Each road and lane
and thoroughfare, And joyous shouts on every side

Rose like the roar of Ocean's tide, As streams of men together
came With loud huzza and glad acclaim.

The ways were watered, swept and clean,

269 A king of the Lunar race, and father of Yayáti.

And decked with flowers and garlands green And all Ayodhyá
shone arrayed

With banners on the roofs that played. Men, women, boys with
eager eyes, Expecting when the sun should rise, Stood longing
for the herald ray

Of Ráma's consecration day, To see, a source of joy to all, The
people-honoured festival.

The priest advancing slowly through The mighty crowd he cleft
in two, Near to the monarch's palace drew.

He sought the terrace, by the stair, Like a white cloud-peak high
in air, The reverend king of men to meet Who sate upon his
splendid seat: Thus will Vrihaspati arise

To meet the monarch of the skies. But when the king his coming
knew, He left his throne and near him drew Questioned by him
Vasishtha said That all his task was duly sped.

Then all who sate there, honouring Vasishtha, rose as rose the
king.

Vasishtha bade his lord adieu,

And all the peers, dismissed, withdrew. Then as a royal lion
seeks

His cave beneath the rocky peaks, So to the chambers where
abode His consorts Dasaratha strode.

Full-thronged were those delightful bowers With women richly
dressed,

And splendid as the radiant towers

Where Indra loves to rest.

Then brighter flashed a thousand eyes With the light his
presence lent,

As, when the moon begins to rise The star thronged firmament.

Canto VI. The City Decorated.

Then Ráma bathed in order due,

His mind from worldly thoughts withdrew, And with his large-
eyed wife besought Náráyar,, as a votary ought.

Upon his head the brimming cup Of holy oil he lifted up,

Then placed within the kindled fire The offering to that heavenly
Sire, And as he sipped the remnant prayed To Him for blessing
and for aid.

Then with still lips and tranquil mind With his Videhan he
reclined,

In Vishr,u's chapel, on a bed Where holy grass was duly spread,

While still the prince's every thought The God supreme,
Náráyar,, sought. One watch remained the night to close When
Ráma from his couch arose, And bade the men and maids
adorn His palace for the solemn morn.

He heard the bards and heralds raise Auspicious strains of joy
and praise;

And breathed devout, with voice restrained,

The hymn for morning rites ordained; Then, with his head in
reverence bowed, Praised Madhu's conquering foe aloud, And,
in pure linen robes arrayed,

The priests to raise their voices prayed. Obedient to the
summons they Proclaimed to all the festal day.

The Bráhmans' voices, deep and sweet, Resounded through the
crowded street, And echoed through Ayodhyá went

By many a loud-toned instrument. Then all the people joyed to
hear That Ráma with his consort dear Had fasted till the
morning light In preparation for the rite.

Swiftly the joyful tidings through Ayodhyá's crowded city flew,
And soon as dawn appeared, each man

[96] To decorate the town began.

In all the temples bright and fair

As white clouds towering in the air,
In streets, and where the cross-ways met, Where holy fig-trees
had been set,
In open square, in sacred shade,
Where merchants' shops their wealth displayed, On all the
mansions of the great,
And householders of wealth and state, Where'er the people
loved to meet, Where'er a tree adorned the street, Gay banners
floated to the wind,
And ribands round the staves were twined. Then clear the
singers' voices rang,
As, charming mind and ear, they sang. Here players shone in
bright attire,

There dancing women swelled the quire. Each with his friend
had much to say

Of Ráma's consecration-day:

Yea, even children, as they played At cottage doors beneath the
shade.

The royal street with flowers was strown Which loving hands in
heaps had thrown, And here and there rich incense lent

Its fragrance to the garland's scent; And all was fresh and fair
and bright In honour of the coming rite.

With careful foresight to illumine

With borrowed blaze the midnight gloom, The crowds erected
here and there

Trees in each street gay lamps to bear. The city thus from side
to side

In festal guise was beautified.

The people of the town who longed To view the rite together
thronged, And filling every court and square

Praised the good king in converse there: "Our high-souled king!
He throws a grace On old Ikshváku's royal race.

He feels his years' increasing weight, And makes his son
associate.

Great joy to us the choice will bring Of Ráma for our lord and
king.

The good and bad to him are known, And long will he protect his
own.

No pride his prudent breast may swell, Most just, he loves his
brothers well, And to us all that love extends, Cherished as
brothers and as friends. Long may our lord in life remain,

Good Dasaratha, free from stain, By whose most gracious
favour we Ráma anointed king shall see.”

Such were the words the townsmen spoke Heard by the
gathering countryfolk,

Who from the south, north, east, and west, Stirred by the joyful
tidings, pressed.

For by their eager longing led To Ráma's consecration sped The
villagers from every side, And filled Ayodhyá's city wide.

This way and that way strayed the crowd, While rose a murmur
long and loud,

As when the full moon floods the skies And Ocean's waves with
thunder rise.

That town, like Indra's city fair, While peasants thronged her
ways,

Tumultuous roared like Ocean, where Each flood-born monster
plays.

Canto VII. Manthará's Lament.

It chanced a slave-born handmaid, bred With Queen Kaikeyí,
fancy-led, Mounted the stair and stood upon

The terrace like the moon that shone. Thence Manthará at ease
surveyed Ayodhyá to her eyes displayed, Where water cooled
the royal street,

Where heaps of flowers were fresh and sweet,

And costly flags and pennons hung On roof and tower their
shadow flung; With covered ways prepared in haste, And many
an awning newly placed; With sandal-scented streams
bedewed, Thronged by a new bathed multitude:

Whose streets were full of Bráhmaṇ bands With wreaths and
sweetmeats in their hands. Loud instruments their music raised,

And through the town, where'er she gazed, The doors of temples
glittered white,

And the maid marvelled at the sight.

Of Ráma's nurse who, standing by, Gazed with a joy-expanded
eye,

In robes of purest white attired,
The wondering damsel thus inquired:

“Does Ráma’s mother give away Rich largess to the crowds to-
day, On some dear object fondly bent, Or blest with
measureless content?

What mean these signs of rare delight On every side that meet
my sight?

Say, will the king with joy elate Some happy triumph celebrate?”

The nurse, with transport uncontrolled, Her glad tale to the
hump-back told: “Our lord the king to-morrow morn

Will consecrate his eldest-born,

And raise, in Pushya’s favouring hour, Prince Ráma to the royal
power.”

As thus the nurse her tidings spoke, Rage in the hump-back’s
breast awoke. Down from the terrace, like the head Of high
Kailása’s hill, she sped.

Sin in her thoughts, her soul aflame,

[97] Where Queen Kaikeyí slept, she came: “Why sleepest thou?” she cried, “arise, Peril is near, unclose thine eyes.

Ah, heedless Queen, too blind to know What floods of sin above thee flow!

Thy boasts of love and grace are o’er: Thine is the show and nothing more. His favour is an empty cheat,

A torrent dried by summer’s heat.”

Thus by the artful maid addressed In cruel words from raging breast,

The queen, sore troubled, spoke in turn; “What evil news have I to learn?

That mournful eye, that altered cheek Of sudden woe or danger speak.”

Such were the words Kaikeyí said: Then Manthará, her eyeballs red

With fury, skilled with treacherous art To grieve yet more her lady’s heart, From Ráma, in her wicked hate, Kaikeyí’s love to alienate,

Upon her evil purpose bent Began again most eloquent:

“Peril awaits thee swift and sure, And utter woe defying cure;
King Dasaratha will create Prince Ráma Heir Associate.

Plunged in the depths of wild despair, My soul a prey to pain
and care,

As though the flames consumed me, zeal Has brought me for
my lady’s weal,

Thy grief, my Queen, is grief to me: Thy gain my greatest gain
would be. Proud daughter of a princely line, The rights of
consort queen are thine. How art thou, born of royal race, Blind
to the crimes that kings debase? Thy lord is gracious, to
deceive,

And flatters, but thy soul to grieve, While thy pure heart that
thinks no sin Knows not the snares that hem thee in. Thy
husband’s lips on thee bestow Soft soothing word, an empty
show:

The wealth, the substance, and the power This day will be
Kausalyá’s dower.

With crafty soul thy child he sends To dwell among thy distant
friends, And, every rival far from sight,

To Ráma gives the power and might. Ah me! for thou, unhappy
dame, Deluded by a husband’s name,

With more than mother’s love hast pressed A serpent to thy
heedless breast,

And cherished him who works thee woe, No husband but a
deadly foe.

For like a snake, unconscious Queen, Or enemy who stabs
unseen,

King Dasaratha all untrue

Has dealt with thee and Bharat too. Ah, simple lady, long
beguiled

By his soft words who falsely smiled! Poor victim of the guileless
breast,

A happier fate thou meritest.

For thee and thine destruction waits When he Prince Ráma
consecrates. Up, lady, while there yet is time; Preserve thyself,
prevent the crime. Up, from thy careless ease, and free Thyself,
O Queen, thy son, and me!”

Delighted at the words she said, Kaikeyí lifted from the bed,
Like autumn’s moon, her radiant head, And joyous at the tidings
gave

A jewel to the hump-back slave; And as she gave the precious
toy She cried in her exceeding joy:

“Take this, dear maiden, for thy news Most grateful to mine ear,
and choose What grace beside most fitly may The welcome
messenger repay.

I joy that Ráma gains the throne: Kausalyá’s son is as mine
own.”

Canto VIII. Manthará’s Speech.

The damsel’s breast with fury burned:

She answered, as the gift she spurned:

“What time, O simple Queen, is this For idle dreams of fancied
bliss?

Hast thou not sense thy state to know, Engulfed in seas of
whelming woe; Sick as I am with grief and pain

My lips can scarce a laugh restrain To see thee hail with ill-timed
joy A peril mighty to destroy.

I mourn for one so fondly blind:

What woman of a prudent mind

Would welcome, e'en as thou hast done, The lordship of a rival's
son,

Rejoiced to find her secret foe

Empowered, like death, to launch the blow; I see that Ráma still
must fear

Thy Bharat, to his throne too near. Hence is my heart
disquieted,

For those who fear are those we dread. Lakshmar,, the mighty
bow who draws, With all his soul serves Ráma's cause; And
chains as strong to Bharat bind Satrughna, with his heart and
mind, Now next to Ráma, lady fair,

Thy Bharat is the lawful heir:

And far remote, I ween, the chance That might the younger two
advance. Yes, Queen, 'tis Ráma that I dread, Wise, prompt, in
warlike science bred; And oh, I tremble when I think

Of thy dear child on ruin's brink. [098]

Blest with a lofty fate is she, Kausalyá; for her son will be

Placed, when the moon and Pushya meet, By Bráhmans on the
royal seat,

Thou as a slave in suppliant guise Must wait upon Kausalyá's
eyes, With all her wealth and bliss secured And glorious from her
foes assured.

Her slave with us who serve thee, thou Wilt see thy son to Ráma
bow,

And Sítá's friends exult o'er all,

While Bharat's wife shares Bharat's fall.”

As thus the maid in wrath complained, Kaikeyí saw her heart
was pained,

And answered eager in defence Of Ráma's worth and
excellence:

“Nay, Ráma, born the monarch's heir, By holy fathers trained
with care, Virtuous, grateful, pure, and true, Claims royal sway
as rightly due.

He, like a sire, will long defend Each brother, minister, and
friend.

Then why, O hump-back, art thou pained To hear that he the
throne has gained?

Be sure when Ráma's empire ends, The kingdom to my son
descends, Who, when a hundred years are flown, Shall sit upon
his fathers' throne.

Why is thine heart thus sad to see The joy that is and long shall
be, This fortune by possession sure

And hopes which we may count secure? Dear as the darling son
I bore

Is Ráma, yea, or even more. Most duteous to Kausalyá, he

Is yet more dutiful to me.

What though he rule, we need not fear: His brethren to his soul
are dear.

And if the throne Prince Ráma fill Bharat will share the empire
still.”

She ceased. The troubled damsel sighed Sighs long and hot, and
thus replied: “What madness has possessed thy mind, To
warnings deaf, to dangers blind?

Canst thou not see the floods of woe That threaten o’er thine
head to flow: First Ráma will the throne acquire, Then Ráma’s
son succeed his sire, While Bharat will neglected pine Excluded
from the royal line.

Not all his sons, O lady fair,

The kingdom of a monarch share: All ruling when a sovereign
dies Wild tumult in the state would rise. The eldest, be he good
or ill,

Is ruler by the father's will. Know, tender mother, that thy son
Without a friend and all undone, Far from the joyous ease of
home An alien from his race will roam. I sped to thee for whom
I feel,

But thy fond heart mistakes my zeal, Thy hand a present would
bestow Because thy rival triumphs so.

When Ráma once begins his sway Without a foe his will to stay,
Thy darling Bharat he will drive To distant lands if left alive.

By thee the child was sent away Beneath his grandsire's roof to
stay. Even in stocks and stones perforce

Will friendship spring from intercourse. The young Satrughna
too would go With Bharat, for he loved him so.

As Lakshmar, still to Ráma cleaves, He his dear Bharat never
leaves.

There is an ancient tale they tell: A tree the foresters would fell
Was saved by reeds that round it stood, For love that sprang of
neighbourhood. So Lakshmar, Ráma will defend,

And each on each for aid depend.

Such fame on earth their friendship wins As that which binds the
Heavenly Twins. And Ráma ne'er will purpose wrong

To Lakshmar,, for their love is strong. But Bharat, Oh, of this be
sure,

Must evil at his hands endure. Come, Ráma from his home expel
An exile in the woods to dwell.

The plan, O Queen, which I advise Secures thy weal if thou be
wise. So we and all thy kith and kin Advantage from thy gain
shall win. Shall Bharat, meet for happier fate, Born to endure his
rival's hate, With all his fortune ruined cower

And dread his brother's mightier power! Up, Queen, to save thy
son, arise; Prostrate at Ráma's feet he lies.

So the proud elephant who leads

His trooping consorts through the reeds

Falls in the forest shade beneath

The lion's spring and murderous teeth. Scorned by thee in thy
bliss and pride Kausalyá was of old defied,

And will she now forbear to show The vengeful rancour of a foe?

O Queen, thy darling is undone When Ráma's hand has once
begun

Ayodhyá's realm to sway,

Come, win the kingdom for thy child And drive the alien to the
wild

In banishment to-day.”

Canto IX. The Plot.

As fury lit Kaikeyí's eyes

She spoke with long and burning sighs: [099]

“This day my son enthroned shall see, And Ráma to the woods
shall flee.

But tell me, damsel, if thou can, A certain way, a skilful plan

That Bharat may the empire gain, And Ráma's hopes be nursed
in vain.”

The lady ceased. The wicked maid The mandate of her queen
obeyed, And darkly plotting Ráma's fall Responded to Kaikeyí's
call.

“I will declare, do thou attend, How Bharat may his throne
ascend. Dost thou forget what things befell?

Or dost thou feign, remembering well? Or wouldst thou hear my
tongue repeat A story for thy need so meet?

Gay lady, if thy will be so, Now hear the tale of long ago,

And when my tongue has done its part Ponder the story in thine
heart.

When Gods and demons fought of old, Thy lord, with royal
saints enrolled, Sped to the war with thee to bring

His might to aid the Immortals' King. Far to the southern land
he sped

Where Dar,9ak's mighty wilds are spread, To Vaijayanta's city
swayed

By Sambara, whose flag displayd The hugest monster of the
sea.

Lord of a hundred wiles was he;

With might which Gods could never blame Against the King of
Heaven he came.

Then raged the battle wild and dread, And mortal warriors
fought and bled;

The fiends by night with strength renewed Charged, slew the
sleeping multitude.

Thy lord, King Dasaratha, long

Stood fighting with the demon throng, But long of arm,
unmatched in strength, Fell wounded by their darts at length.

Thy husband, senseless, by thine aid Was from the battle field
conveyed, And wounded nigh to death thy lord Was by thy care
to health restored.

Well pleased the grateful monarch sware To grant thy first and
second prayer.

Thou for no favour then wouldst sue, The gifts reserved for
season due; And he, thy high-souled lord, agreed

To give the boons when thou shouldst need. Myself I knew not
what befell,

But oft the tale have heard thee tell, And close to thee in
friendship knit Deep in my heart have treasured it. Remind thy
husband of his oath, Recall the boons and claim them both,
That Bharat on the throne be placed With rites of consecration
graced, And Ráma to the woods be sent

For twice seven years of banishment.

Go, Queen, the mourner's chamber²⁷⁰ seek, With angry eye and
burning cheek;

And with disordered robes and hair On the cold earth lie
prostrate there.

When the king comes still mournful lie, Speak not a word nor
meet his eye,

But let thy tears in torrent flow, And lie enamoured of thy woe.
Well do I know thou long hast been, And ever art, his darling
queen.

For thy dear sake, O well-loved dame, The mighty king would
brave the flame, But ne'er would anger thee, or brook
To meet his favourite's wrathful look. Thy loving lord would even
die

270 Literally the chamber of wrath, a "growlery," a small, dark,
unfurnished room to which it seems, the wives and ladies of the
king betook themselves when offended and sulky.

Thy fancy, Queen, to gratify,

And never could he arm his breast To answer nay to thy request.

Listen and learn, O dull of sense, Thine all-resistless influence.

Gems he will offer, pearls and gold: Refuse his gifts, be stern
and cold. Those proffered boons at length recall, And claim
them till he grants thee all. And O my lady, high in bliss,

With heedful thought forget not this. When from the ground his
queen he lifts And grants again the promised gifts, Bind him
with oaths he cannot break And thy demands unflinching, make.

That Ráma travel to the wild

Five years and nine from home exiled, And Bharat, best of all
who reign, The empire of the land obtain.

For when this term of years has fled Over the banished Ráma's
head, Thy royal son to vigour grown

And rooted firm will stand alone. The king, I know, is well
inclined, And this the hour to move his mind. Be bold: the
threatened rite prevent, And force the king from his intent.”

She ceased. So counselled to her bane Disguised beneath a
show of gain, Kaikeyí in her joy and pride

To Manthará again replied:

“Thy sense I envy, prudent maid; With sagest lore thy lids
persuade.

No hump-back maid in all the earth, For wise resolve, can
match thy worth. Thou art alone with constant zeal Devoted to
thy lady's weal.

Dear girl, without thy faithful aid

I had not marked the plot he laid. [100]

Full of all guile and sin and spite Misshapen hump-backs shock
the sight:

But thou art fair and formed to please, Bent like a lily by the
breeze.

I look thee o'er with watchful eye, And in thy frame no fault can
spy; The chest so deep, the waist so trim,

So round the lines of breast and limb.271

Thy cheeks with moonlike beauty shine, And the warm wealth of
youth is thine. Thy legs, my girl, are long and neat, And
somewhat long thy dainty feet, While stepping out before my
face Thou seemest like a crane to pace.

The thousand wiles are in thy breast Which Sambara the fiend
possessed, And countless others all thine own, O damsel sage,
to thee are known. Thy very hump becomes thee too, O thou
whose face is fair to view, For there reside in endless store

Plots, wizard wiles, and warrior lore. A golden chain I'll round it
fling

When Ráma's flight makes Bharat king:

Yea, polished links of finest gold, When once the wished for
prize I hold

271 In these four lines I do not translate faithfully, and I do not venture to follow Kaikeyí farther in her eulogy of the hump-back's charms.

With naught to fear and none to hate, Thy hump, dear maid,
shall decorate. A golden frontlet wrought with care, And
precious jewels shalt thou wear: Two lovely robes around thee
fold, And walk a Goddess to behold, Bidding the moon himself
compare His beauty with a face so fair.

With scent of precious sandal sweet Down to the nails upon thy
feet, First of the household thou shalt go
And pay with scorn each battled foe.”

Kaikeyí's praise the damsel heard, And thus again her lady
stirred, Who lay upon her beauteous bed Like fire upon the altar
fed:

“Dear Queen, they build the bridge in vain When swollen
streams are dry again.

Arise, thy glorious task complete, And draw the king to thy
retreat.”

The large-eyed lady left her bower Exulting in her pride of
power,

And with the hump-back sought the gloom And silence of the
mourner's room.

The string of priceless pearls that hung Around her neck to earth
she flung, With all the wealth and lustre lent

By precious gem and ornament. Then, listening to her slave's
advice, Lay, like a nymph from Paradise.

As on the ground her limbs she laid Once more she cried unto
the maid:

“Soon must thou to the monarch say Kaikeyí's soul has past
away,

Or, Ráma banished as we planned, My son made king shall rule
the land. No more for gold and gems I care, For brave attire or
dainty fare.

If Ráma should the throne ascend, That very hour my life will
end.”

The royal lady wounded through The bosom with the darts that
flew

Launched from the hump-back's tongue Pressed both her hands
upon her side, And o'er and o'er again she cried

With wildering fury stung: "Yes, it shall be thy task to tell That I
have hurried hence to dwell

In Yáma's realms of woe, Or happy Bharat shall be king,

And doomed to years of wandering Kausalyá's son shall go.

I heed not dainty viands now

Fair wreaths of flowers to twine my brow, Soft balm or precious
scent:

My very life I count as naught, Nothing on earth can claim my
thought

But Ráma's banishment."

She spoke these words of cruel ire; Then stripping off her gay
attire,

The cold bare floor she pressed. So, falling from her home on
high, Some lovely daughter of the sky

Upon the ground might rest.

With darkened brow and furious mien,

Stripped of her gems and wreath, the queen In spotless beauty
lay,

Like heaven obscured with gathering cloud, When shades of
midnight darkness shroud

Each star's expiring ray.

Canto X. Dasaratha's Speech.

As Queen Kaikeyí thus obeyed The sinful counsel of her maid
She sank upon the chamber floor,

As sinks in anguish, wounded sore, An elephant beneath the
smart

Of the wild hunter's venom'd dart. The lovely lady in her mind
Revolved the plot her maid designed, And prompt the gain and
risk to scan She step by step approved the plan. Misguided by
the hump-back's guile She pondered her resolve awhile,

As the fair path that bliss secured

[101] The miserable lady lured, Devoted to her queen, and
swayed

By hopes of gain and bliss, the maid Rejoiced, her lady's
purpose known,

And deemed the prize she sought her own. Then bent upon her
purpose dire,

Kaikeyí with her soul on fire, Upon the floor lay, languid, down,
Her brows contracted in a frown.

The bright-hued wreath that bound her hair,

Chains, necklets, jewels rich and rare, Stripped off by her own
fingers lay Spread on the ground in disarray, And to the floor a
lustre lent

As stars light up the firmament. Thus prostrate in the mourner's
cell, In garb of woe the lady fell,

Her long hair in a single braid,

Like some fair nymph of heaven dismayed.²⁷²

The monarch, Ráma to install, With thoughtful care had ordered
all, And now within his home withdrew, Dismissing first his
retinue.

Now all the town has heard, thought he, What joyful rite the
morn will see.

So turned he to her bower to cheer With the glad news his
darling's ear. Majestic, as the Lord of Night,

When threatened by the Dragon's might, Bursts radiant on the
evening sky

Pale with the clouds that wander by, So Dasaratha, great in fame,

To Queen Kaikeyí's palace came. There parrots flew from tree to tree, And gorgeous peacocks wandered free, While ever and anon was heard

The note of some glad water-bird.

Here loitered dwarf and hump-backed maid, There lute and lyre sweet music played.

272 These verses are evidently an interpolation. They contain nothing that has not been already related: the words only are altered. As the whole poem could not be recited at once, the rhapsodists at the beginning of a fresh recitation would naturally remind their hearers of the events immediately preceding.

Here, rich in blossom, creepers twined O'er grots with wondrous art designed, There Champac and Asoka flowers Hung glorious o'er the summer bowers, And mid the waving verdure rose Gold, silver, ivory porticoes.

Through all the months in ceaseless store The trees both fruit and blossom bore.

With many a lake the grounds were graced; Seats gold and silver, here were placed; Here every viand wooed the taste,

It was a garden meet to vie

E'en with the home of Gods on high. Within the mansion rich
and vast The mighty Dasaratha passed:

Not there was his beloved queen On her fair couch reclining
seen. With love his eager pulses beat For the dear wife he came
to meet, And in his blissful hopes deceived,

He sought his absent love and grieved. For never had she
missed the hour

Of meeting in her sumptuous bower, And never had the king of
men Entered the empty room till then.

Still urged by love and anxious thought News of his favourite
queen he sought, For never had his loving eyes

Found her or selfish or unwise.

Then spoke at length the warder maid, With hands upraised and
sore afraid:

“My Lord and King, the queen has sought The mourner's cell
with rage distraught.”

The words the warder maiden said He heard with soul
disquieted,

And thus as fiercer grief assailed, His troubled senses wellnigh
failed. Consumed by torturing fires of grief The king, the world's
imperial chief, His lady lying on the ground

In most unqueenly posture, found. The aged king, all pure
within,

Saw the young queen resolved on sin, Low on the ground, his
own sweet wife, To him far dearer than his life,

Like some fair creeping plant uptorn, Or like a maid of heaven
forlorn,

A nymph of air or Goddess sent From Swarga down in
banishment.

As some wild elephant who tries To soothe his consort as she
lies Struck by the hunter's venom'd dart, So the great king
disturbed in heart, Strove with soft hand and fond caress To
soothe his darling queen's distress, And in his love addressed
with sighs The lady of the lotus eyes:

"I know not, Queen, why thou shouldst be Thus angered to the
heart with me.

Say, who has slighted thee, or whence Has come the cause of
such offence That in the dust thou liest low,

And rendest my fond heart with woe, As if some goblin of the
night

Had struck thee with a deadly blight, And cast foul influence on
her

Whose spells my loving bosom stir? I have Physicians famed for
skill, Each trained to cure some special ill: My sweetest lady, tell
thy pain,

And they shall make thee well again. Whom, darling, wouldst
thou punished see?

[102] Or whom enriched with lordly fee? Weep not, my lovely
Queen, and stay This grief that wears thy frame away; Speak,
and the guilty shall be freed. The guiltless be condemned to
bleed, The poor enriched, the rich abased, The low set high, the
proud disgraced. My lords and I thy will obey,

All slaves who own thy sovereign sway; And I can ne'er my heart
incline

To check in aught one wish of thine. Now by my life I pray thee
tell

The thoughts that in thy bosom dwell. The power and might
thou knowest well, Should from thy breast all doubt expel.

I swear by all my merit won,

Speak, and thy pleasure shall be done. Far as the world's wide
bounds extend My glorious empire knows no end.

Mine are the tribes in eastern lands, And those who dwell on
Sindhu's sands: Mine is Suráshtra, far away,

Suvíra's realm admits my sway. My best the southern nations
fear, The Angas and the Vangas hear. And as lord paramount I
reign

O'er Magadh and the Matsyas' plain,

Kosal, and Kási's wide domain:273 All rich in treasures of the
mine,

In golden corn, sheep, goats, and kine. Choose what thou wilt.
Kaikeyí, thence: But tell me, O my darling, whence Arose thy
grief, and it shall fly

Like hoar-frost when the sun is high.”

She, by his loving words consoled, Longed her dire purpose to
unfold,

And sought with sharper pangs to wring The bosom of her lord
the king.

Canto XI. The Queen's Demand.

To him enthralled by love, and blind, Pierced by his darts who
shakes the mind,²⁷⁴ Kaikeyí with remorseless breast

Her grand purpose thus expressed: "O King, no insult or neglect
Have I endured, or disrespect.

One wish I have, and faith would see That longing granted, lord,
by thee. Now pledge thy word if thou incline To listen to this
prayer of mine, Then I with confidence will speak, And thou
shalt hear the boon I seek."

273 The sloka or distich which I have been forced to expand into
these nine lines is evidently spurious, but is found in all the
commented MSS. which Schlegel consulted.

274 Manmatha, Mind-disturber, a name of Káma or Love.

Ere she had ceased, the monarch fell, A victim to the lady's spell,

And to the deadly snare she set Sprang, like a roebuck to the
net. Her lover raised her drooping head,

Smiled, playing with her hair, and said: "Hast thou not learnt,
wild dame, till now That there is none so dear as thou

To me thy loving husband, save My Ráma bravest of the brave?

By him my race's high-souled heir,

By him whom none can match, I swear, Now speak the wish
that on thee weighs: By him whose right is length of days,
Whom if my fond paternal eye

Saw not one hour I needs must die,— I swear by Ráma my dear
son, Speak, and thy bidding shall be done.

Speak, darling; if thou choose, request To have the heart from
out my breast; Regard my words, sweet love, and name The
wish thy mind thinks fit to frame.

Nor let thy soul give way to doubt: My power should drive
suspicion out. Yea, by my merits won I swear,

Speak, darling, I will grant thy prayer.”

The queen, ambitious, overjoyed To see him by her plot
decoyed, More eager still her aims to reach, Spoke her
abominable speech:

“A boon thou grantest, nothing loth, And swearest with
repeated oath.

Now let the thirty Gods and three

My witnesses, with Indra, be.

Let sun and moon and planets hear, Heaven, quarters, day and
night, give ear. The mighty world, the earth outspread, With
bards of heaven and demons dread; The ghosts that walk in
midnight shade, And household Gods, our present aid,
A every being great and small
To hear and mark the oath I call.”

When thus the archer king was bound, With treacherous arts
and oaths enwound, She to her bounteous lord subdued
By blinding love, her speech renewed:

“Remember, King, that long-past day Of Gods’ and demons’
battle fray.

And how thy foe in doubtful strife Had nigh bereft thee of thy
life.

Remember, it was only I Preserved thee when about to die,
And thou for watchful love and care Wouldst grant my first and
second prayer. Those offered boons, pledged with thee then,
I now demand, O King of men, [103]

Of thee, O Monarch, good and just, Whose righteous soul
observes each trust. If thou refuse thy promise sworn,
I die, despised, before the morn. These rites in Ráma’s name
begun— Transfer them, and enthrone my son. The time is come
to claim at last The double boon of days long-past,

When Gods and demons met in fight, And thou wouldst fain my
care requite.

Now forth to Dar,9ak's forest drive Thy Ráma for nine years and
five, And let him dwell a hermit there With deerskin coat and
matted hair. Without a rival let my boy

The empire of the land enjoy,

And let mine eyes ere morning see Thy Ráma to the forest flee.”

Canto XII. Dasaratha's Lament.

The monarch, as Kaikeyí pressed With cruel words her dire
request, Stood for a time absorbed in thought While anguish in
his bosom wrought.

“Does some wild dream my heart assail? Or do my troubled
senses fail?

Does some dire portent scare my view? Or frenzy's stroke my
soul subdue?” Thus as he thought, his troubled mind In doubt
and dread no rest could find, Distressed and trembling like a
deer Who sees the dreaded tigress near.

On the bare ground his limbs he threw, And many a long deep
sigh he drew, Like a wild snake, with fury blind,

By charms within a ring confined. Once as the monarch's fury
woke,

“Shame on thee!” from his bosom broke, And then in sense-
bewildering pain

He fainted on the ground again.

At length, when slowly strength returned, He answered as his
eyeballs burned

With the wild fury of his ire Consuming her, as 'twere, with fire:

“Fell traitress, thou whose thoughts design The utter ruin of my
line,

What wrong have I or Ráma done?

Speak murderess, speak thou wicked one, Seeks he not
evermore to please

Thee with all sonlike courtesies? By what persuasion art thou led
To bring this ruin on his head? Ah me, that fondly unaware

I brought thee home my life to share, Called daughter of a king,
in truth

A serpent with a venomous tooth! What fault can I pretend to
find In Ráma praised by all mankind, That I my darling should

forsake? No, take my life, my glory take: Let either queen be
from me torn,

But not my well-loved eldest-born. Him but to see is highest
bliss, And death itself his face to miss.

The world may sunless stand, the grain May thrive without the
genial rain,

But if my Ráma be not nigh

My spirit from its frame will fly. Enough, thine impious plan
forgo, O thou who plottest sin and woe. My head before thy
feet, I kneel,

And pray thee some compassion feel. O wicked dame, what can
have led Thy heart to dare a plot so dread?

Perchance thy purpose is to sound The grace thy son with me
has found;

Perchance the words that, all these days, Thou still hast said in
Ráma's praise, Were only feigned, designed to cheer With
flatteries a father's ear.

Soon as thy grief, my Queen, I knew, My bosom felt the anguish
too.

In empty halls art thou possessed, And subject to anothers'
hest?

Now on Ikshváku's ancient race Falls foul disorder and
disgrace,

If thou, O Queen, whose heart so long

Has loved the good should choose the wrong. Not once, O
large-eyed dame, hast thou

Been guilty of offence till now, Nor said a word to make me
grieve, Now will I now thy sin believe.

With thee my Ráma used to hold Like place with Bharat lofty-
souled. As thou so often, when the pair

Were children yet, wouldst fain declare. And can thy righteous
soul endure

That Ráma glorious, pious, pure, Should to the distant wilds be
sent For fourteen years of banishment? Yea, Ráma Bharat's self
exceeds In love to thee and sonlike deeds, And, for deserving
love of thee, As Bharat, even so is he.

Who better than that chieftain may Obedience, love, and
honour pay, Thy dignity with care protect,

Thy slightest word and wish respect?

Of all his countless followers none Can breathe a word against
my son; Of many thousands not a dame

Can hint reproach or whisper blame. All creatures feel the sweet
control Of Ráma's pure and gentle soul.

The pride of Manu's race he binds To him the people's grateful
minds.

He wins the subjects with his truth, [104]

The poor with gifts and gentle ruth, His teachers with his docile
will, The foemen with his archer skill.

Truth, purity, religious zeal,

The hand to give, the heart to feel, The love that ne'er betrays a
friend, The rectitude that naught can bend,

Knowledge, and meek obedience grace My Ráma pride of
Raghu's race.

Canst thou thine impious plot design 'Gainst him in whom these
virtues shine, Whose glory with the sages vies,

Peer of the Gods who rule the skies! From him no harsh or bitter
word To pain one creature have I heard, And how can I my son
address,

For thee, with words of bitterness? Have mercy, Queen: some
pity show To see my tears of anguish flow, And listen to my
mournful cry,

A poor old man who soon must die. Whate'er this sea-girt land
can boast Of rich and rare from coast to coast, To thee, my
Queen, I give it all: But O, thy deadly words recall:

O see, my suppliant hands entreat, Again my lips are on thy feet:

Save Ráma, save my darling child, Nor kill me with this sin defiled.” He grovelled on the ground, and lay To burning grief a senseless prey, And ever and anon, assailed

By floods of woe he wept and wailed, Striving with eager speed to gain

The margent of his sea of pain.

With fiercer words she fiercer yet The hapless father’s pleading met:

“O Monarch, if thy soul repent The promise and thy free consent,

How wilt thou in the world maintain

Thy fame for truth unsmirched with stain? When gathered kings with thee converse, And bid thee all the tale rehearse,

What wilt thou say, O truthful King, In answer to their questioning? “She to whose love my life I owe, Who saved me smitten by the foe, Kaikeyí, for her tender care,

Was cheated of the oath I sware.” Thus wilt thou answer, and forsworn Wilt draw on thee the princes’ scorn.

Learn from that tale, the Hawk and Dove,²⁷⁵

How strong for truth was Saivya's love. Pledged by his word the monarch gave His flesh the suppliant bird to save.

So King Alarka gave his eyes,

²⁷⁵ This story is told in the Mahábhárat. A free version of it may be found in

Scenes from the Rámáyan, etc.

And gained a mansion in the skies. The Sea himself his promise keeps, And ne'er beyond his limit sweeps. My deeds of old again recall,

Nor let thy bond dishonoured fall.

The rights of truth thou wouldst forget, Thy Ráma on the throne to set,

And let thy days in pleasure glide, Fond King, Kausalyá by thy side. Now call it by what name thou wilt, Justice, injustice, virtue, guilt,

Thy word and oath remain the same, And thou must yield what thus I claim. If Ráma be anointed, I

This very day will surely die, Before thy face will poison drink, And lifeless at thy feet will sink. Yea, better far to die than stay Alive to see one single day

The crowds before Kausalyá stand And hail her queen with
reverent hand. Now by my son, myself, I swear,
No gift, no promise whatsoe'er
My steadfast soul shall now content, But only Ráma's
banishment."

So far she spake by rage impelled, And then the queen deep
silence held. He heard her speech full fraught with ill, But spoke
no word bewildered still, Gazed on his love once held so dear
Who spoke unlovely rede to hear;
Then as he slowly pondered o'er
The queen's resolve and oath she swore.

Once sighing forth, Ah Ráma! he Fell prone as falls a smitten
tree. His senses lost like one insane, Faint as a sick man weak
with pain, Or like a wounded snake dismayed, So lay the king
whom earth obeyed.

Long burning sighs he slowly heaved, As, conquered by his woe,
he grieved, And thus with tears and sobs between His sad faint
words addressed the queen:

“By whom, Kaikeyí, wast thou taught This flattering hope with
ruin fraught? Have goblins seized thy soul, O dame, Who thus
canst speak and feel no shame? Thy mind with sin is sicklied
o’er,

From thy first youth ne’er seen before. A good and loving wife
wast thou, But all, alas! is altered now.

What terror can have seized thy breast To make thee frame this
dire request, That Bharat o’er the land may reign, And Ráma in
the woods remain?

Turn from thine evil ways, O turn, And thy perfidious counsel
spurn, If thou would fain a favour do

To people, lord, and Bharat too. O wicked traitress, fierce and
vile,

[105] Who lovest deeds of sin and guile, What crime or
grievance dost thou see, What fault in Ráma or in me?

Thy son will ne’er the throne accept If Ráma from his rights be
kept, For Bharat’s heart more firmly yet

Than Ráma’s is on justice set.

How shall I say, Go forth, and brook Upon my Ráma’s face to
look,

See his pale cheek and ashy lips Dimmed like the moon in sad
eclipse? How see the plan so well prepared

When prudent friends my counsels shared, All ruined, like a host
laid low

Beneath some foeman's murderous blow. What will these
gathered princes say, From regions near and far away?

"O'erlong endures the monarch's reign, or now he is a child
again."

When many a good and holy sage In Scripture versed, revered
for age, Shall ask for Ráma, what shall I Unhappy, what shall I
reply?

"By Queen Kaikeyí long distressed I drove him forth and
dispossessed." Although herein the truth I speak,

They all will hold me false and weak. What will Kausalyá say
when she Demands her son exiled by me?

Alas! what answer shall I frame, Or how console the injured
dame? She like a slave on me attends, And with a sister's care
she blends

A mother's love, a wife's, a friend's. In spite of all her tender
care,

Her noble son, her face most fair, Another queen I could prefer
And for thy sake neglected her,

But now, O Queen, my heart is grieved For love and care by
thee received,

E'en as the sickening wretch repents His dainty meal and
condiments.

And how will Queen Sumitrá trust The husband whom she finds
unjust, Seeing my Ráma driven hence Dishonoured, and for no
offence?

Ah! the Videhan bride will hear A double woe, a double fear,
Two whelming sorrows at one breath, Her lord's disgrace, his
father's death. Mine aged bosom she will wring

And kill me with her sorrowing, Sad as a fair nymph left to weep
Deserted on Himálaya's steep. For short will be my days, I
ween,

When I with mournful eyes have seen My Ráma wandering forth
alone

And heard dear Sítá sob and moan. Ah me! my fond belief I rue.

Vile traitress, loved as good and true, As one who in his thirst
has quaffed, Deceived by looks, a deadly draught.

Ah! thou hast slain me, murderess, while Soothing my soul with
words of guile, As the wild hunter kills the deer

Lured from the brake his song to hear. Soon every honest
tongue will fling Reproach on the dishonest king;

The people's scorn in every street
The seller of his child will meet,
And such dishonour will be mine

As whelms a Bráhmaṇ drunk with wine. Ah me, for my unhappy
fate, Compelled thy words to tolerate!

Such woe is sent to scourge a crime
Committed in some distant
time.

For many a day with sinful care

I cherished thee, thou sin and snare, Kept thee, unwitting, like a
cord
Destined to bind its hapless lord.

Mine hours of ease I spent with thee, Nor deemed my love my
death would be, While like a heedless child I played,

On a black snake my hand I laid. A cry from every mouth will
burst

And all the world will hold me curst, Because I saw my high-
souled son Unkinged, unfathered, and undone; "The king by
power of love beguiled Is weaker than a foolish child,

His own beloved son to make An exile for a woman's sake.

By chaste and holy vows restrained, By reverend teachers duly
trained. When he his virtue's fruit should taste He falls by sin
and woe disgraced." Two words will all his answer be When I

pronounce the stern decree, "Hence, Ráma, to the woods
away," All he will say is, I obey.

O, if he would my will withstand

When banished from his home and land, This were a comfort in
my woe;

But he will ne'er do this, I know. My Ráma to the forest fled,

And curses thick upon my head, Grim Death will bear me hence
away, His world-abominated prey.

When I am gone and Ráma too. How wilt thou those I love
pursue? What vengeful sin will be designed Against the queens I
leave behind? When thou hast slain her son and me Kausalyá
soon will follow: she

Will sink beneath her sorrows' weight, And die like me
disconsolate.

Exist, Kaikeyí, in thy pride, And let thy heart be gratified,

When thou my queens and me hast hurled, And children, to the
under world.

Soon wilt thou rule as empress o'er My noble house unvext
before.

[106] But then to wild confusion left, Of Ráma and of me bereft.

If Bharat to thy plan consent

And long for Ráma's banishment, Ne'er let his hands presume to
pay The funeral honours to my clay. Vile foe, thou cause of all
mine ill, Obtain at last thy cursed will.

A widow soon shalt thou enjoy The sweets of empire with thy
boy. O Princess, sure some evil fate

First brought thee here to devastate, In whom the night of ruin
lies Veiled in a consort's fair disguise. The scorn of all and
deepest shame Will long pursue my hated name, And dire
disgrace on me will press, Misled by thee to wickedness.

How shall my Ráma, whom, before, His elephant or chariot bore,

Now with his feet, a wanderer, tread The forest wilds around
him spread?

How shall my son, to please whose taste, The deftest cooks,
with earrings graced, With rivalry and jealous care

The dainty meal and cates prepare— How shall he now his life
sustain With acid fruit and woodland grain? He spends his time
unvext by cares, And robes of precious texture wears: How shall
he, with one garment round His limbs recline upon the ground?

Whose was this plan, this cruel thought Unheard till now, with
ruin fraught,

To make thy son Ayodhyá's king, And send my Ráma
wandering?

Shame, shame on women! Vile, untrue, Their selfish ends they
still pursue.

Not all of womankind I mean.

But more than all this wicked queen. O worthless, cruel, selfish
dame,

I brought thee home, my plague and woe.

What fault in me hast thou to blame, Or in my son who loves
thee so?

Fond wives may from their husbands flee, And fathers may their
sons desert,

But all the world would rave to see My Ráma touched with
deadly hurt.

I joy his very step to hear,

As though his godlike form I viewed; And when I see my Ráma
near

I feel my youth again renewed.

There might be life without the sun, Yea, e'en if Indra sent no
rain,

But, were my Ráma banished, none Would, so I think, alive
remain.

A foe that longs my life to take,

I brought thee here my death to be, Caressed thee long, a
venomed snake,

And through my folly die. Ah me!

Ráma and me and Lakshmar, slay, And then with Bharat rule
the state;

So bring the kingdom to decay,

And fawn on those thy lord who hate, Plotter of woe, for evil
bred,

For such a speech why do not all Thy teeth from out thy wicked
head

Split in a thousand pieces fall? My Ráma's words are ever kind,

He knows not how to speak in ire: Then how canst thou presume
to find

A fault in him whom all admire?

Yield to despair, go mad, or die, Or sink within the rifted earth;

Thy fell request will I deny,

Thou shamer of thy royal birth. Thy longer life I scarce can bear,

Thou ruin of my home and race,

Who wouldst my heart and heartstrings tear, Keen as a razor,
false and base.

My life is gone, why speak of joy?

For what, without my son, were sweet?

Spare, lady, him thou canst destroy; I pray thee as I touch thy
feet.”

He fell and wept with wild complaint,

Heart-struck by her presumptuous speech, But could not touch,
so weak and faint,

The cruel feet he strove to reach.

Canto XIII. Dasaratha's Distress. 365

Canto XIII. Dasaratha's Distress.

Unworthy of his mournful fate, The mighty king, unfortunate,
Lay prostrate in unseemly guise,

As, banished from the blissful skies, Yayāti, in his evil day.

His merit all exhausted, lay.²⁷⁶

The queen, triumphant in the power Won by her beauty's fatal
dower, Still terrible and unsubdued,

Her dire demand again renewed:

“Great Monarch, 'twas thy boast till now To love the truth and keep the vow; Then wherefore would thy lips refuse The promised boon 'tis mine to choose?”

King Dasaratha, thus addressed, With anger raging in his breast, Sank for a while beneath the pain,

Then to Kaikeyí spoke again: [107]

“Childless so long, at length I won, With mighty toil, from Heaven a son, Ráma, the mighty-armed; and how Shall I desert my darling now?

A scholar wise, a hero bold,

Of patient mood, with wrath controlled, How can I bid my Ráma fly,

My darling of the lotus eye?

276 Only the highest merit obtains a home in heaven for ever. Minor degrees of merit procure only leases of heavenly mansions terminable after periods proportioned to the fund which buys them. King Yayáti went to heaven and when his term expired was unceremoniously ejected, and thrown down to earth.

In heaven itself I scarce could bear, When asking of my Ráma
there, To hear the Gods his griefs declare,

And O, that death would take me hence Before I wrong his
innocence!”

As thus the monarch wept and wailed, And maddening grief his
heart assailed, The sun had sought his resting-place, And night
was closing round apace.

But yet the moon-crowned night could bring No comfort to the
wretched king.

As still he mourned with burning sighs And fixed his gaze upon
the skies:

“O Night whom starry fires adorn, I long not for the coming
morn.

Be kind and show some mercy: see, My suppliant hands are
raised to thee. Nay, rather fly with swifter pace;

No longer would I see the face Of Queen Kaikeyí, cruel, dread,
Who brings this woe upon mine head.” Again with suppliant
hands he tried

To move the queen, and wept and sighed: “To me, unhappy me,
inclined

To good, sweet dame, thou shouldst be kind; Whose life is well-
nigh fled, who cling

To thee for succour, me thy king. This, only this, is all my claim:
Have mercy, O my lovely dame. None else have I to take my
part, Have mercy: thou art good at heart. Hear, lady of the soft
black eye, And win a name that ne'er shall die:

Let Ráma rule this glorious land, The gift of thine imperial hand.
O lady of the dainty waist,

With eyes and lips of beauty graced, Please Ráma, me, each
saintly priest, Bharat, and all from chief to least.”

She heard his wild and mournful cry,

She saw the tears his speech that broke, Saw her good
husband's reddened eye,

But, cruel still, no word she spoke.

His eyes upon her face he bent,

And sought for mercy, but in vain: She claimed his darling's
banishment,

He swooned upon the ground again.

Canto XIV. Ráma Summoned.

The wicked queen her speech renewed, When rolling on the
earth she viewed Ikshváku's son, Ayodhyá's king,

For his dear Ráma sorrowing: "Why, by a simple promise bound,
Liest thou prostrate on the ground, As though a grievous sin
dismayed Thy spirit! Why so sore afraid?

Keep still thy word. The righteous deem That truth, mid duties, is
supreme:

And now in truth and honour's name I bid thee own the binding
claim.

Saivya, a king whom earth obeyed, Once to a hawk a promise
made,

Gave to the bird his flesh and bone,

And by his truth made heaven his own.²⁷⁷ Alarka, when a
Bráhmaṇ famed

For Scripture lore his promise claimed, Tore from his head his
bleeding eyes And unreluctant gave the prize.

His narrow bounds prescribed restrain The Rivers' Lord, the
mighty main, Who, though his waters boil and rave, Keeps
faithful to the word he gave.

Truth all religion comprehends, Through all the world its might
extends: In truth alone is justice placed,

On truth the words of God are based: A life in truth unchanging
past

Will bring the highest bliss at last. If thou the right would still
pursue, Be constant to thy word and true: Let me thy promise
fruitful see,

For boons, O King, proceed from thee. Now to preserve thy
righteous fame, And yielding to my earnest claim— Thrice I
repeat it—send thy child,

Thy Ráma, to the forest wild. But if the boon thou still deny,
Before thy face, forlorn, I die.”

277 See Additional Notes, THE SUPPLIANT DOVE{FNS.

Thus was the helpless monarch stung By Queen Kaikeyí's
fearless tongue,

As Bali strove in vain to loose

His limbs from Indra's fatal noose. Dismayed in soul and pale
with fear, The monarch, like a trembling steer Between the
chariot's wheel and yoke, Again to Queen Kaikeyí spoke,

With sad eyes fixt in vacant stare, Gathering courage from
despair:

“That hand I took, thou sinful dame, With texts, before the
sacred flame, Thee and thy son, I scorn and hate,

And all at once repudiate. [108]

The night is fled: the dawn is near: Soon will the holy priests be
here To bid me for the rite prepare

That with my son the throne will share, The preparation made to
grace

My Ráma in his royal place— With this, e'en this, my darling for
My death the funeral flood shall pour. Thou and thy son at least
forbear

In offerings to my shade to share, For by the plot thy guile has
laid His consecration will be stayed. This very day how shall I
brook

To meet each subject's altered look? To mark each gloomy
joyless brow That was so bright and glad but now?”

While thus the high-souled monarch spoke To the stern queen,
the Morning broke,

And holy night had slowly fled,

With moon and stars engarlanded. Yet once again the cruel
queen

Spoke words in answer fierce and keen, Still on her evil purpose
bent,

Wild with her rage and eloquent:

“What speech is this? Such words as these Seem sprung from
poison-sown disease. Quick to thy noble Ráma send

And bid him on his sire attend. When to my son the rule is given;
When Ráma to the woods is driven; When not a rival copes with
me, From chains of duty thou art free.”

Thus goaded, like a generous steed Urged by sharp spurs to
double speed, “My senses are astray,” he cried,

“And duty’s bonds my hands have tied. I long to see mine eldest
son,

My virtuous, my beloved one.”

And now the night had past away; Out shone the Maker of the
Day, Bringing the planetary hour

And moment of auspicious power. Vasishtha, virtuous, far
renowned, Whose young disciples girt him round, With sacred
things without delay Through the fair city took his way.

He traversed, where the people thronged, And all for Ráma's
coming longed,

The town as fair in festive show

As his who lays proud cities low.278

278 Indra, called also Purandara, Town-destroyer.

He reached the palace where he heard The mingled notes of
many a bird,

Where crowded thick high-honoured bands Of guards with
truncheons in their hands. Begirt by many a sage, elate,

Vasishtha reached the royal gate, And standing by the door he
found Sumantra, for his form renowned, The king's illustrious
charioteer And noble counsellor and peer.

To him well skilled in every part Of his hereditary art

Vasishtha said: "O charioteer, Inform the king that I am here,
Here ready by my side behold These sacred vessels made of
gold, Which water for the rite contain From Gangá and each
distant main. Here for installing I have brought

The seat prescribed of fig-wood wrought, All kinds of seed and
precious scent

And many a gem and ornament; Grain, sacred grass, the
garden's spoil, Honey and curds and milk and oil; Eight radiant
maids, the best of all War elephants that feed in stall;

A four-horse car, a bow and sword. A litter, men to bear their
lord;

A white umbrella bright and fair

That with the moon may well compare; Two chouries of the
whitest hair;

A golden beaker rich and rare;

A bull high-humped and fair to view, Girt with gold bands and
white of hue;

A four-toothed steed with flowing mane, A throne which lions
carved sustain;

A tiger's skin, the sacred fire,

Fresh kindled, which the rites require; The best musicians skilled
to play, And dancing-girls in raiment gay; Kine, Bráhmans,
teachers fill the court, And bird and beast of purest sort.

From town and village, far and near, The noblest men are
gathered here;

Here merchants with their followers crowd, And men in joyful
converse loud,

And kings from many a distant land To view the consecration
stand.

The dawn is come, the lucky day; Go bid the monarch haste
away, That now Prince Ráma may obtain The empire, and begin
his reign.”

Soon as he heard the high behest The driver of the chariot
pressed Within the chambers of the king, His lord with praises
honouring.

And none of all the warders checked His entrance for their great
respect Of him well known, in place so high, Still fain their king
to gratify.

He stood beside the royal chief, Unwitting of his deadly grief,
And with sweet words began to sing The praises of his lord and
king: “As, when the sun begins to rise, The sparkling sea delights
our eyes,

[109] Wake, calm with gentle soul, and thus

Give rapture, mighty King, to us. As Mátali²⁷⁹ this selfsame
hour Sang lauds of old to Indra’s power, When he the Titan
hosts o’erthrew, So hymn I thee with praises due. The Vedas,

with their kindred lore, Brahmá their soul-born Lord adore, With
all the doctrines of the wise, And bid him, as I bid thee, rise.

As, with the moon, the Lord of Day Wakes with the splendour of
his ray Prolific Earth, who neath him lies, So, mighty King, I bid
thee rise.

With blissful words, O Lord of men, Rise, radiant in thy form, as
when The sun ascending darts his light From Meru's everlasting
height.

May Siva, Agni, Sun, and Moon Bestow on thee each choicest
boon, Kuvera, Varur,a, Indra bless Kakutstha's son with all
success.

Awake, the holy night is fled, The happy light abroad is spread;
Awake, O best of kings, and share The glorious task that claims
thy care. The holy sage Vasishtha waits,

With all his Bráhmans, at the gate. Give thy decree, without
delay, To consecrate thy son today.

As armies, by no captain led,

As flocks that feed unshepherded, Such is the fortune of a state

279 Indra's charioteer.

Without a king and desolate.”

Such were the words the bard addressed, With weight of sage
advice impressed; And, as he heard, the hapless king
Felt deeper yet his sorrow's sting. At length, all joy and comfort
fled,

He raised his eyes with weeping red, And, mournful for his
Ráma's sake, The good and glorious monarch spake: "Why seek
with idle praise to greet

The wretch for whom no praise is meet? Thy words mine aching
bosom tear, And plunge me deeper in despair."

Sumantra heard the sad reply, And saw his master's tearful eye.
With reverent palm to palm applied He drew a little space aside.
Then, as the king, with misery weak, With vain endeavour strove
to speak, Kaikeyí, skilled in plot and plan,

To sage Sumantra thus began:

"The king, absorbed in joyful thought For his dear son, no rest
has sought: Sleepless to him the night has past, And now
o'erwatched he sinks at last. Then go, Sumantra, and with speed
The glorious Ráma hither lead:

Go, as I pray, nor longer wait; No time is this to hesitate."

"How can I go, O Lady fair, Unless my lord his will declare?"

"Fain would I see him," cried the king,

“Quick, quick, my beauteous Ráma bring.” Then rose the happy
thought to cheer

The bosom of the charioteer, “The king, I ween, of pious mind,
The consecration has designed.” Sumantra for his wisdom
famed,

Delighted with the thought he framed, From the calm chamber,
like a bay

Of crowded ocean, took his way.

He turned his face to neither side, But forth he hurried straight;

Only a little while he eyed The guards who kept the gate.

He saw in front a gathered crowd Of men of every class,

Who, parting as he came, allowed The charioteer to pass.

Canto XV. The Preparations.

There slept the Bráhmans, deeply read In Scripture, till the night
had fled; Then, with the royal chaplains, they Took each his
place in long array.

There gathered fast the chiefs of trade, Nor peer nor captain
long delayed, Assembling all in order due

The consecrating rite to view.

The morning dawned with cloudless ray On Pushya's high
auspicious day,

And Cancer with benignant power Looked down on Ráma's
natal hour.

The twice-born chiefs, with zealous heed, Made ready what the
rite would need.

The well-wrought throne of holy wood And golden urns in order
stood.

There was the royal car whereon A tiger's skin resplendent
shone;

There water, brought for sprinkling thence Where, in their sacred
confluence,

Blend Jumná's waves with Gangá's tide, From many a holy
flood beside,

From brook and fountain far and near, From pool and river, sea
and mere.

And there were honey, curd, and oil, Parched rice and grass, the
garden's spoil, Fresh milk, eight girls in bright attire,

An elephant with eyes of fire; And urns of gold and silver made,
With milky branches overlaid,

All brimming from each sacred flood,

[110] And decked with many a lotus bud. And dancing-women
fair and free, Gay with their gems, were there to see, Who stood
in bright apparel by

With lovely brow and witching eye. White flashed the jewelled
chouri there,

And shone like moonbeams through the air; The white umbrella
overhead

A pale and moonlike lustre shed, Wont in pure splendour to
precede, And in such rites the pomp to lead.

There stood the charger by the side Of the great bull of snow-
white hide; There was all music soft and loud,

And bards and minstrels swelled the crowd. For now the
monarch bade combine

Each custom of his ancient line With every rite Ayodhyá's state
Observed, her kings to consecrate.

Then, summoned by the king's behest, The multitudes together
pressed,

And, missing still the royal sire, Began, impatient, to inquire:

“Who to our lord will tidings bear

That all his people throng the square? Where is the king? the sun
is bright, And all is ready for the rite.”

As thus they spoke, Sumantra, tried In counsel, to the chiefs
replied, Gathered from lands on every side: “To Ráma's house I
swiftly drave, For so the king his mandate gave.

Our aged lord and Ráma too In honour high hold all of you:

I in your words (be long your days!) Will ask him why he thus
delays.”

Thus spoke the peer in Scripture read, And to the ladies' bower
he sped.

Quick through the gates Sumantra hied, Which access ne'er to
him denied.

Behind the curtained screen he drew, Which veiled the chamber
from the view. In benediction loud he raised

His voice, and thus the monarch praised: "Sun, Moon, Kuvera,
Siva bless Kakutstha's son with high success!

The Lords of air, flood, fire decree The victory, my King, to thee!

The holy night has past away, Auspicious shines the morning's
ray. Rise, Lord of men, thy part to take In the great rite. Awake!
awake!

Bráhmans and captains, chiefs of trade, All wait in festive garb
arrayed;

For thee they look with eager eyes: O Raghu's son, awake!
arise."

To him in holy Scripture read,

Who hailed him thus, the monarch said, Upraising from his sleep
his head:

“Go, Ráma, hither lead as thou wast ordered by the queen but now. Come, tell me why my mandate laid upon thee thus is disobeyed.

Away! and Ráma hither bring; I sleep not: make no tarrying.”

Thus gave the king command anew: Sumantra from his lord withdrew; With head in lowly reverence bent,

And filled with thoughts of joy, he went. The royal street he traversed, where waved flag and pennon to the air,

And, as with joy the car he drove, He let his eyes delighted rove.

On every side, where'er he came,

He heard glad words, their theme the same, As in their joy the gathered folk

Of Ráma and the throning spoke. Then saw he Ráma's palace bright And vast as Mount Kailása's height, That glorious in its beauty showed As Indra's own supreme abode:

With folding doors both high and wide; With hundred porches beautified: Where golden statues towering rose O'er gemmed and coralled porticoes.

Bright like a cave in Meru's side,

Or clouds through Autumn's sky that ride: Festooned with length
of bloomy twine, Flashing with pearls and jewels' shine, While
sandal-wood and aloe lent

The mingled riches of their scent; With all the odorous sweets
that fill The breezy heights of Dardar's hill. There by the gate the
Sáras screamed,

And shrill-toned peacocks' plumage gleamed. Its floors with
deftest art inlaid,

Its sculptured wolves in gold arrayed, With its bright sheen the
palace took The mind of man and chained the look,

For like the sun and moon it glowed, And mocked Kuvera's
loved abode. Circling the walls a crowd he viewed Who stood in
reverent attitude,

With throngs of countrymen who sought Acceptance of the gifts
they brought.

The elephant was stationed there, Appointed Ráma's self to
bear;

Adorned with pearls, his brow and cheek Were sandal-dyed in
many a streak, While he, in stature, bulk, and pride, With Indra's
own Airávat²⁸⁰ vied.

Sumantra, borne by coursers fleet, Flashing a radiance o'er the street,

To Ráma's palace flew,

And all who lined the royal road, Or thronged the prince's rich abode,

Rejoiced as near he drew.

And with delight his bosom swelled

[111] As onward still his course he held Through many a sumptuous court Like Indra's palace nobly made, Where peacocks revelled in the shade,

And beasts of silvan sort.

Through many a hall and chamber wide, That with Kailása's splendour vied.

Or mansions of the Blest,

While Ráma's friends, beloved and tried, Before his coming stepped aside,

Still on Sumantra pressed.

He reached the chamber door, where stood Around his followers young and good,

280 The elephant of Indra.

Bard, minstrel, charioteer,

Well skilled the tuneful chords to sweep, With soothing strain to
lull to sleep,

Or laud their master dear.

Then, like a dolphin darting through Unfathomed depths of
ocean's blue

With store of jewels decked,

Through crowded halls that rock-like rose, Or as proud hills
where clouds repose,

Sumantra sped unchecked—

Halls like the glittering domes on high Reared for the dwellers of
the sky

By heavenly architect.

Canto XVI. Rāma Summoned.

So through the crowded inner door Sumantra, skilled in ancient
lore, On to the private chambers pressed Which stood apart
from all the rest.

There youthful warriors, true and bold, Whose ears were ringed
with polished gold, All armed with trusty bows and darts,
Watched with devoted eyes and hearts.

And hoary men, a faithful train, Whose aged hands held staves
of cane, The ladies' guard, apparelled fair

In red attire, were stationed there. Soon as they saw Sumantra
nigh, Each longed his lord to gratify, And from his seat beside
the door

Up sprang each ancient servitor. Then to the warders quickly
cried The skilled Sumantra, void of pride: "Tell Ráma that the
charioteer Sumantra waits for audience here." The ancient men
with one accord Seeking the pleasure of their lord, Passing with
speed the chamber door To Ráma's ear the message bore.

Forthwith the prince with duteous heed Called in the messenger
with speed, For 'twas his sire's command, he knew, That sent
him for the interview.

Like Lord Kuvera, well arrayed, He pressed a couch of gold,
Wherefrom a covering of brocade Hung down in many a fold.

Oil and the sandal's fragrant dust Had tinged his body o'er
Dark as the stream the spearman's thrust Drains from the
wounded boar.

Him Sítá watched with tender care, A chouri in her hand,

As Chitrá,²⁸¹ ever fond in fair,

Beside the Moon will stand.

Him glorious with unborrowed light, A liberal lord, of sunlike
might, Sumantra hailed in words like these, Well skilled in gentle
courtesies,

As, with joined hands in reverence raised, Upon the beauteous
prince he gazed: “Happy Kausalyá! Blest is she,

281 A star in the spike of Virgo: hence the name of the month
Chaitra or Chait.

The Mother of a son like thee. Now rise, O Ráma, speed away.
Go to thy sire without delay: For he and Queen Kaikeyí seek
An interview with thee to speak.”

The lion-lord of men, the best Of splendid heroes, thus
addressed, To Sítá spake with joyful cheer:

“The king and queen, my lady dear, Touching the throning, for
my sake Some salutary counsel take.

The lady of the full black eye Would fain her husband gratify,
And, all his purpose understood, Counsels the monarch to my
good. A happy fate is mine, I ween,

When he, consulting with his queen, Sumantra on this charge,
intent Upon my gain and good, has sent.

An envoy of so noble sort

Well suits the splendour of the court. The consecration rite this
day

Will join me in imperial sway. To meet the lord of earth, for so
His order bids me, I will go.

Thou, lady, here in comfort stay, And with thy maidens rest or
play.”

Thus Ráma spake. For meet reply The lady of the large black
eye Attended to the door her lord,

And blessings on his head implored: “The majesty and royal
state

Which holy Bráhmans venerate, The consecration and the rite
Which sanctifies the ruler’s might, And all imperial powers
should be Thine by thy father’s high decree,

As He, the worlds who formed and planned,

[112] The kingship gave to Indra's hand. Then shall mine eyes
my king adore When lustral rites and fast are o'er,

And black deer's skin and roebuck's horn Thy lordly limbs and
hand adorn.

May He whose hands the thunder wield Be in the east thy guard
and shield; May Yáma's care the south befriend, And Varur,'s
arm the west defend;

And let Kuvera, Lord of Gold,

The north with firm protection hold.”

Then Ráma spoke a kind farewell, And hailed the blessings as
they fell From Sítá's gentle lips; and then,

As a young lion from his den Descends the mountain's stony
side, So from the hall the hero hied.

First Lakshmar, at the door he viewed Who stood in reverent
attitude,

Then to the central court he pressed

Where watched the friends who loved him best. To all his dear
companions there

He gave kind looks and greeting fair. On to the lofty car that
glowed

Like fire the royal tiger strode. Bright as himself its silver shone:
A tiger's skin was laid thereon.

With cloudlike thunder, as it rolled,

It flashed with gems and burnished gold, And, like the sun's
meridian blaze, Blinded the eye that none could gaze.

Like youthful elephants, tall and strong, Fleet coursers whirled
the car along:

In such a car the Thousand-eyed Borne by swift horses loves to
ride. So like Parjanya,²⁸² when he flies Thundering through the
autumn skies, The hero from the palace sped,

As leaves the moon some cloud o'erhead. Still close to Ráma
Lakshmar, kept, Behind him to the car he leapt,

And, watching with fraternal care, Waved the long chouri's silver
hair, As from the palace gate he came Up rose the tumult of
acclaim.

While loud huzza and jubilant shout Pealed from the gathered
myriads out. Then elephants, like mountains vast, And steeds
who all their kind surpassed, Followed their lord by hundreds,
nay By thousands, led in long array.

First marched a band of warriors trained, With sandal dust and
aloe stained;

Well armed was each with sword and bow,

282 The Rain-God.

And every breast with hope aglow, And ever, as they onward
went,

Shouts from the warrior train, And every sweet-toned
instrument Prolonged the minstrel strain.

On passed the tamer of his foes,

While well clad dames, in crowded rows, Each chamber lattice
thronged to view, And chaplets on the hero threw.

Then all, of peerless face and limb, Sang Ráma's praise for love
of him, And blent their voices, soft and sweet, From palace high
and crowded street: "Now, sure, Kausalyá's heart must swell To
see the son she loves so well,

Thee Ráma, thee, her joy and pride, Triumphant o'er the realm
preside." Then—for they knew his bride most fair Of all who part
the soft dark hair,

His love, his life, possessed the whole Of her young hero's heart
and soul:— "Be sure the lady's fate repays

Some mighty vow of ancient days,283

For blest with Ráma's love is she

As, with the Moon's, sweet Rohiní.”²⁸⁴

Such were the witching words that came From lips of many a
peerless dame Crowding the palace roofs to greet
The hero as he gained the street.

283 In a former life.

284 One of the lunar asterisms, represented as the favourite
wife of the Moon. See p. 4, note.

Canto XVII. Ráma's Approach.

Canto XVII. Ráma's Approach. 387

As Ráma, rendering blithe and gay His loving friends, pursued
his way, He saw on either hand a press
Of mingled people numberless. The royal street he traversed,
where Incense of aloe filled the air, Where rose high palaces,
that vied With paly clouds, on either side;
With flowers of myriad colours graced. And food for every
varied taste,

Bright as the glowing path o'erhead Which feet of Gods celestial
tread, Loud benedictions, sweet to hear, From countless voices
soothed his ear. While he to each gave due salute

His place and dignity to suit:

“Be thou,” the joyful people cried, “Be thou our guardian, lord
and guide. Throned and anointed king to-day, Thy feet set forth
upon the way Wherein, each honoured as a God, Thy fathers
and forefathers trod.

Thy sire and his have graced the throne, And loving care to us
have shown: Thus blest shall we and ours remain,

Yea still more blest in Ráma's reign.

[113]

No more of dainty fare we need, And but one cherished object
heed, That we may see our prince today

Invested with imperial sway.”

Such were the words and pleasant speech That Ráma heard,
unmoved, from each

Of the dear friends around him spread, As onward through the
street he sped, For none could turn his eye or thought From the
dear form his glances sought, With fruitless ardour forward cast
Even when Raghu's son had past.

And he who saw not Ráma nigh, Nor caught a look from Ráma's
eye, A mark for scorn and general blame, Reproached himself in
bitter shame. For to each class his equal mind With sympathy
and love inclined Most fully of the princely four,

So greatest love to him they bore.

His circling course the hero bent Round shrine and altar,
reverent,

Round homes of Gods, where cross-roads met, Where many a
sacred tree was set.

Near to his father's house he drew Like Indra's beautiful to view,
And with the light his glory gave Within the royal palace drove.

Through three broad courts, where bowmen kept Their watch
and ward, his coursers swept,

Then through the two remaining went On foot the prince
preëminent.

Through all the courts the hero passed, And gained the ladies'
bower at last; Then through the door alone withdrew, And left
without his retinue.

When thus the monarch's noble boy

Had gone his sire to meet, The multitude, elate with joy,

Stood watching in the street, And his return with eager eyes

Expected at the gates,

As for his darling moon to rise The King of Rivers²⁸⁵ waits.

Canto XVIII. The Sentence.

With hopeless eye and pallid mien There sat the monarch with
the queen. His father's feet with reverence due He clasped, and
touched Kaikeyí's too.

The king, with eyes still brimming o'er, Cried Ráma! and could
do no more.

His voice was choked, his eye was dim, He could not speak or
look on him.

Then sudden fear made Ráma shake As though his foot had
roused a snake, Soon as his eyes had seen the change So
mournful, terrible, and strange.

For there his reason well-nigh fled, Sighing, with soul disquieted,
To torturing pangs a prey, Dismayed, despairing, and
distraught, In a fierce whirl of wildering thought

The hapless monarch lay, Like Ocean wave-engarlanded

285 The Sea.

Storm-driven from his tranquil bed, The Sun-God in eclipse,
Or like a holy seer, heart-stirred With anguish, when a lying
word Has passed his heedless lips.

The sight of his dear father, pained With woe and misery
unexplained

Filled Ráma with unrest,

As Ocean's pulses rise and swell When the great moon he loves
so well

Shines full upon his breast.

So grieving for his father's sake, To his own heart the hero
spake: "Why will the king my sire to-day No kindly word of
greeting say?"

At other times, though wroth he be, His eyes grow calm that
look on me. Then why does anguish wring his brow To see his
well-beloved now?"

Sick and perplexed, distraught with woe, To Queen Kaikeyí
bowing low,

While pallor o'er his bright cheek spread, With humble reverence
he said:

"What have I done, unknown, amiss To make my father wroth
like this? Declare it, O dear Queen, and win His pardon for my
heedless sin.

Why is the sire I ever find

Filled with all love to-day unkind? With eyes cast down and
pallid cheek This day alone he will not speak.

Or lies he prostrate neath the blow Of fierce disease or sudden
woe? For all our bliss is dashed with pain,

And joy unmixt is hard to gain. Does stroke of evil fortune smite
Dear Bharat, charming to the sight, Or on the brave Satrughna
fall,

Or consorts, for he loves them all? Against his words when I
rebel, Or fail to please the monarch well,

When deeds of mine his soul offend, That hour I pray my life
may end.

How should a man to him who gave His being and his life
behave?

The sire to whom he owes his birth Should be his deity on earth.

Hast thou, by pride and folly moved, [114]

With bitter taunt the king reproved? Has scorn of thine or cruel
jest

To passion stirred his gentle breast? Speak truly, Queen, that I
may know What cause has changed the monarch so.”

Thus by the high-souled prince addressed, Of Raghu's sons the
chief and best,

She cast all ruth and shame aside, And bold with greedy words
replied: “Not wrath, O Ráma, stirs the king, Nor misery stabs
with sudden sting; One thought that fills his soul has he, But

dares not speak for fear of thee. Thou art so dear, his lips
refrain

From words that might his darling pain. But thou, as duty bids,
must still

The promise of thy sire fulfil. He who to me in days gone by
Vouchsafed a boon with honours high,

Dares now, a king, his word regret, And caitiff-like disowns the
debt. The lord of men his promise gave To grant the boon that I
might crave, And now a bridge would idly throw

When the dried stream has ceased to flow. His faith the
monarch must not break

In wrath, or e'en for thy dear sake. From faith, as well the
righteous know, Our virtue and our merits flow.

Now, be they good or be they ill, Do thou thy father's words
fulfil: Swear that his promise shall not fail, And I will tell thee all
the tale.

Yes, Ráma, when I hear that thou Hast bound thee by thy
father's vow,

Then, not till then, my lips shall speak, Nor will he tell what boon
I seek.”

He heard, and with a troubled breast This answer to the queen
addressed: “Ah me, dear lady, canst thou deem That words like
these thy lips beseem? I, at the bidding of my sire,

Would cast my body to the fire, A deadly draught of poison
drink, Or in the waves of ocean sink:

If he command, it shall be done,— My father and my king in
one.

Then speak and let me know the thing So longed for by my lord
the king.

It shall be done: let this suffice; Ráma ne'er makes a promise
twice.”

He ended. To the princely youth

Who loved the right and spoke the truth, Cruel, abominable
came

The answer of the ruthless dame: “When Gods and Titans fought
of yore, Transfixed with darts and bathed in gore Two boons to
me thy father gave

For the dear life 'twas mine to save. Of him I claim the ancient
debt, That Bharat on the throne be set, And thou, O Ráma, go
this day

To Dar,9ak forest far away. Now, Ráma, if thou wilt maintain
Thy father's faith without a stain,
And thine own truth and honour clear, Then, best of men, my
bidding hear. Do thou thy father's word obey,
Nor from the pledge he gave me stray. Thy life in Dar,9ak forest
spend
Till nine long years and five shall end. Upon my Bharat's princely
head
Let consecrating drops be shed, With all the royal pomp for thee
Made ready by the king's decree. Seek Dar,9ak forest and
resign
Rites that would make the empire thine, For twice seven years
of exile wear
The coat of bark and matted hair. Then in thy stead let Bharat
reign Lord of his royal sire's domain, Rich in the fairest gems
that shine,
Cars, elephants, and steeds, and kine. The monarch mourns thy
altered fate And vails his brow compassionate:

Bowed down by bitter grief he lies And dares not lift to thine his
eyes. Obey his word: be firm and brave,

And with great truth the monarch save.” While thus with cruel
words she spoke,

No grief the noble youth betrayed; But forth the father’s
anguish broke,

At his dear Ráma’s lot dismayed.

Canto XIX. Ráma’s Promise.

Calm and unmoved by threatened woe The noble conqueror of
the foe Answered the cruel words she spoke,

Nor quailed beneath the murderous stroke:

“Yea, for my father’s promise sake I to the wood my way will
take,

And dwell a lonely exile there In hermit dress with matted hair.

One thing alone I fain would learn, Why is the king this day so
stern? Why is the scourge of foes so cold, Nor gives me greeting
as of old?

Now let not anger flush thy cheek: Before thy face the truth I
speak, In hermit's coat with matted hair To the wild wood will I
repair.

How can I fail his will to do,

Friend, master, grateful sovereign too? One only pang
consumes my breast:

That his own lips have not expressed His will, nor made his
longing known

That Bharat should ascend the throne. [115]

To Bharat I would yield my wife,

My realm and wealth, mine own dear life, Unasked I fain would
yield them all: More gladly at my father's call,

More gladly when the gift may free His honour and bring joy to
thee.

Thus, lady, his sad heart release

From the sore shame, and give him peace. But tell me, O, I pray
thee, why

The lord of men, with downcast eye, Lies prostrate thus, and
one by one Down his pale cheek the tear-drops run. Let couriers
to thy father speed

On horses of the swiftest breed, And, by the mandate of the
king, Thy Bharat to his presence bring. My father's words I will
not stay To question, but this very day
To Dar,9ak's pathless wild will fare, For twice seven years an
exile there."

When Ráma thus had made reply Kaikeyí's heart with joy beat
high. She, trusting to the pledge she held, The youth's departure
thus impelled: "Tis well. Be messengers despatched

On coursers ne'er for fleetness matched, To seek my father's
home and lead

My Bharat back with all their speed. And, Ráma, as I ween that
thou Wilt scarce endure to linger now,

So surely it were wise and good This hour to journey to the
wood.

And if, with shame cast down and weak, No word to thee the
king can speak, Forgive, and from thy mind dismiss

A trifle in an hour like this. But till thy feet in rapid haste Have
left the city for the waste, And to the distant forest fled,

He will not bathe nor call for bread."

“Woe! woe!” from the sad monarch burst, In surging floods of
grief immersed;

Then swooning, with his wits astray, Upon the gold-wrought
couch he lay, And Ráma raised the aged king:

But the stern queen, unpitying,

Checked not her needless words, nor spared The hero for all
speed prepared,

But urged him with her bitter tongue, Like a good horse with
lashes stung, She spoke her shameful speech. Serene He heard
the fury of the queen,

And to her words so vile and dread Gently, unmoved in mind, he
said: “I would not in this world remain A grovelling thrall to
paltry gain, But duty’s path would fain pursue,

True as the saints themselves are true. From death itself I would
not fly

My father’s wish to gratify, What deed soe’er his loving son

May do to please him, think it done. Amid all duties, Queen, I
count

This duty first and paramount, That sons, obedient, aye fulfil

Their honoured fathers’ word and will. Without his word, if thou
decree, Forth to the forest will I flee,

And there shall fourteen years be spent Mid lonely wilds in
banishment.

Methinks thou couldst not hope to find One spark of virtue in
my mind,

If thou, whose wish is still my lord, Hast for this grace the king
implored. This day I go, but, ere we part,

Must cheer my Sítá's tender heart, To my dear mother bid
farewell; Then to the woods, a while to dwell.

With thee, O Queen, the care must rest That Bharat hear his
sire's behest,

And guard the land with righteous sway, For such the law that
lives for aye.”

In speechless woe the father heard, Wept with loud cries, but
spoke no word. Then Ráma touched his senseless feet, And hers,
for honour most unmeet; Round both his circling steps he bent,
Then from the bower the hero went.

Soon as he reached the gate he found His dear companions
gathered round. Behind him came Sumitrá's child With weeping
eyes so sad and wild. Then saw he all that rich array

Of vases for the glorious day.

Round them with reverent stops he paced, Nor veiled his eye,
nor moved in haste.

The loss of empire could not dim The glory that encompassed
him. So will the Lord of Cooling Rays²⁸⁶

On whom the world delights to gaze, Through the great love of
all retain Sweet splendour in the time of wane. Now to the
exile's lot resigned

He left the rule of earth behind:

As though all worldly cares he spurned No trouble was in him
discerned.

The chouries that for kings are used, And white umbrella, he
refused, Dismissed his chariot and his men, And every friend
and citizen.

He ruled his senses, nor betrayed The grief that on his bosom
weighed,

And thus his mother's mansion sought To tell the mournful news
he brought. Nor could the gay-clad people there Who flocked
round Ráma true and fair, One sign of altered fortune trace
Upon the splendid hero's face.

Nor had the chieftain, mighty-armed,

[116] Lost the bright look all hearts that charmed, As e'en from
autumn moons is thrown

A splendour which is all their own. With his sweet voice the hero
spoke Saluting all the gathered folk,

Then righteous-souled and great in fame Close to his mother's
house he came.

Lakshmar, the brave, his brother's peer In princely virtues,
followed near,

286 The Moon.

Sore troubled, but resolved to show No token of his secret woe.

Thus to the palace Ráma went

Where all were gay with hope and joy; But well he knew the dire
event

That hope would mar, that bliss destroy.

So to his grief he would not yield

Lest the sad change their hearts might rend, And, the dread
tiding unrevealed,

Spared from the blow each faithful friend.

Canto XX. Kausalyá's Lament.

But in the monarch's palace, when Sped from the bower that
lord of men, Up from the weeping women went

A mighty wail and wild lament: "Ah, he who ever freely did His
duty ere his sire could bid,

Our refuge and our sure defence, This day will go an exile hence,
He on Kausalyá loves to wait Most tender and affectionate, And
as he treats his mother, thus From childhood has he treated us.

On themes that sting he will not speak, And when reviled is calm
and meek.

He soothes the angry, heals offence: He goes to-day an exile
hence.

Our lord the king is most unwise, And looks on life with doting
eyes,

Who in his folly casts away

The world's protection, hope, and stay."

Thus in their woe, like kine bereaved

Of their young calves,²⁸⁷ the ladies grieved, And ever as they wept and wailed

With keen reproach the king assailed. Their lamentation, mixed with tears, Smote with new grief the monarch's ears, Who, burnt with woe too great to bear, Fell on his couch and fainted there.

Then Ráma, smitten with the pain His heaving heart could scarce restrain, Groaned like an elephant and strode With Lakshmar, to the queen's abode. A warder there, whose hoary eld

In honour high by all was held, Guarding the mansion, sat before The portal, girt with many more. Swift to their feet the warders sprang, And loud the acclamation rang,

Hail, Ráma! as to him they bent, Of victor chiefs preëminent.

One court he passed, and in the next Saw, masters of each Veda text,

A crowd of Bráhmans, good and sage,

²⁸⁷ The comparison may to a European reader seem a homely one. But Spenser likens an infuriate woman to a cow "That is berobbed of her youngling dere." Shakspeare also makes King Henry VI compare himself to the calf's mother that "Runs lowing up and down, Looking the way her harmless young one went." "Cows," says De Quincey, "are amongst the gentlest of breathing crea- tures; none show more passionate tenderness

to their young, when deprived of them, and, in short, I am not ashamed to profess a deep love for these gentle creatures.”

Dear to the king for lore and age.

To these he bowed his reverent head, Thence to the court
beyond he sped. Old dames and tender girls, their care To keep
the doors, were stationed there. And all, when Ráma came in
view, Delighted to the chamber flew,

To bear to Queen Kausalyá's ear The tidings that she loved to
hear.

The queen, on rites and prayer intent, In careful watch the night
had spent, And at the dawn, her son to aid,

To Vishnu holy offerings made. Firm in her vows, serenely glad,
In robes of spotless linen clad,

As texts prescribe, with grace implored, Her offerings in the fire
she poured.

Within her splendid bower he came, And saw her feed the
sacred flame. There oil, and grain, and vases stood,

With wreaths, and curds, and cates, and wood, And milk, and
sesamum, and rice,

The elements of sacrifice.

She, worn and pale with many a fast And midnight hours in vigil
past,

In robes of purest white arrayed,

To Lakshmi Queen drink-offerings paid. So long away, she flew
to meet

The darling of her soul:

So runs a mare with eager feet To welcome back her foal.

He with his firm support upheld The queen, as near she drew,
And, by maternal love impelled,

Her arms around him threw. Her hero son, her matchless boy
She kissed upon the head:

She blessed him in her pride and joy

[117] With tender words, and said: "Be like thy royal sires
of old, The nobly good, the lofty-souled!

Their lengthened days and fame be thine, And virtue, as
beseems thy line!

The pious king, thy father, see True to his promise made to thee:

That truth thy sire this day will show, And regent's power on thee
bestow."

She spoke. He took the proffered seat, And as she pressed her
son to eat,

Raised reverent bands, and, touched with shame, Made answer
to the royal dame:

“Dear lady, thou hast yet to know That danger threatens, and
heavy woe: A grief that will with sore distress On Sítá, thee, and
Lakshmar, press. What need of seats have such as I? This day
to Dar,9ak wood I fly.

The hour is come, a time, unmeet For silken couch and gilded
seat. I must to lonely wilds repair,

Abstain from flesh, and living there On roots, fruit, honey,
hermit’s food, Pass twice seven years in solitude. To Bharat’s
hand the king will yield The regent power I thought to wield, And
me, a hermit, will he send

My days in Dar,9ak wood to spend.”

As when the woodman’s axe has lopped A Sal branch in the
grove, she dropped: So from the skies a Goddess falls

Ejected from her radiant halls.

When Ráma saw her lying low, Prostrate by too severe a blow,
Around her form his arms he wound

And raised her fainting from the ground. His hand upheld her
like a mare

Who feels her load too sore to bear, And sinks upon the way
o'ertoiled, And all her limbs with dust are soiled. He soothed her
in her wild distress With loving touch and soft caress.

She, meet for highest fortune, eyed The hero watching by her
side,

And thus, while Lakshmar, bent to hear, Addressed her son with
many a tear! "If, Ráma, thou had ne'er been born

My child to make thy mother mourn, Though reft of joy, a
childless queen, Such woe as this I ne'er had seen.

Though to the childless wife there clings One sorrow armed with
keenest stings, "No child have I: no child have I,"

No second misery prompts the sigh. When long I sought, alas, in
vain, My husband's love and bliss to gain, In Ráma all my hopes
I set

And dreamed I might be happy yet. I, of the consorts first and
best, Must bear my rivals' taunt and jest,

And brook, though better far than they,

The soul distressing words they say. What woman can be
doomed to pine In misery more sore than mine,

Whose hopeless days must still be spent In grief that ends not
and lament?

They scorned me when my son was nigh; When he is banished I
must die.

Me, whom my husband never prized, Kaikeyí's retinue despised
With boundless insolence, though she Tops not in rank nor
equals me.

And they who do me service yet, Nor old allegiance quite forget,
Whene'er they see Kaikeyí's son, With silent lips my glances
shun. How, O my darling, shall I brook Each menace of Kaikeyí's
look, And listen, in my low estate,

To taunts of one so passionate?

For seventeen years since thou wast born I sat and watched, ah
me, forlorn!

Hoping some blessed day to see Deliverance from my woes by
thee.

Now comes this endless grief and wrong, So dire I cannot bear
it long,

Sinking, with age and sorrow worn, Beneath my rivals' taunts
and scorn. How shall I pass in dark distress My long lone days
of wretchedness Without my Ráma's face, as bright As the full
moon to cheer my sight? Alas, my cares thy steps to train,

And fasts, and vows, and prayers are vain. Hard, hard, I ween,
must be this heart

To hear this blow nor burst apart, As some great river bank,
when first The floods of Rain-time on it burst.

No, Fate that speeds not will not slay,

Nor Yama's halls vouchsafe me room, Or, like a lion's weeping
prey,

Death now had borne me to my doom.

Hard is my heart and wrought of steel That breaks not with the
crushing blow,

Or in the pangs this day I feel

My lifeless frame had sunk below.

Death waits his hour, nor takes me now: But this sad thought
augments my pain,

That prayer and largess, fast and vow, And Heavenward service
are in vain.

Ah me, ah me! with fruitless toil Of rites austere a child I sought:

Thus seed cast forth on barren soil

Still lifeless lies and comes to naught.

If ever wretch by anguish grieved Before his hour to death had
fled,

I mourning, like a cow bereaved,
Had been this day among the dead.”

[118]

Canto XXI. Kausalyá Calmed.

While thus Kausalyá wept and sighed, With timely words sad
Lakshmar, cried: “O honoured Queen I like it ill

That, subject to a woman's will, Ráma his royal state should quit
And to an exile's doom submit.

The aged king, fond, changed, and weak, Will as the queen
compels him speak.

But why should Ráma thus be sent To the wild woods in
banishment? No least offence I find in him,

I see no fault his fame to dim. Not one in all the world I know,
Not outcast wretch, not secret foe,

Whose whispering lips would dare assail His spotless life with
slanderous tale.

Godlike and bounteous, just, sincere, E'en to his very foemen
dear:

Who would without a cause neglect The right, and such a son
reject?

And if a king such order gave,

In second childhood, passion's slave, What son within his heart
would lay The senseless order, and obey?

Come, Ráma, ere this plot be known Stand by me and secure
the throne. Stand like the King who rules below, Stand aided by
thy brother's bow: How can the might of meaner men Resist thy
royal purpose then?

My shafts, if rebels court their fate, Shall lay Ayodhyá desolate.

Then shall her streets with blood be dyed Of those who stand on
Bharat's side:

None shall my slaughtering hand exempt, For gentle patience
earns contempt.

If, by Kaikeyí's counsel changed, Our father's heart be thus
estranged, No mercy must our arm restrain, But let the foe be
slain, be slain.

For should the guide, respected long, No more discerning right
and wrong, Turn in forbidden paths to stray,

'Tis meet that force his steps should stay. What power sufficient
can he see,

What motive for the wish has he, That to Kaikeyí would resign
The empire which is justly thine? Can he, O conqueror of thy
foes,

Thy strength and mine in war oppose? Can he entrust, in our
despite,

To Bharat's hand thy royal right? I love this brother with the
whole Affection of my faithful soul.

Yea Queen, by bow and truth I swear, By sacrifice, and gift, and
prayer,

If Ráma to the forest goes,

Or where the burning furnace glows, First shall my feet the
forest tread,
The flames shall first surround my head. My might shall chase
thy grief and tears, As darkness flies when morn appears.
Do thou, dear Queen, and Ráma too Behold what power like
mine can do. My aged father I will kill,
The vassal of Kaikeyí's will,
Old, yet a child, the woman's thrall, Infirm, and base, the scorn
of all."

Thus Lakshmar, cried, the mighty-souled: Down her sad cheeks
the torrents rolled,

As to her son Kausalyá spake:

"Now thou hast heard thy brother, take His counsel if thou hold
it wise,

And do the thing his words advise, Do not, my son, with tears I
pray, My rival's wicked word obey,

Leave me not here consumed with woe, Nor to the wood, an
exile, go.

If thou, to virtue ever true,

Thy duty's path would still pursue, The highest duty bids thee
stay And thus thy mother's voice obey. Thus Kasyap's great
ascetic son

A seat among the Immortals won:

In his own home, subdued, he stayed, And honour to his mother
paid.

If reverence to thy sire be due,

Thy mother claims like honour too, And thus I charge thee, O my
child, Thou must not seek the forest wild. Ah, what to me were
life and bliss, Condemned my darling son to miss? But with my
Ráma near, to eat

The very grass itself were sweet. But if thou still wilt go and
leave Thy hapless mother here to grieve, I from that hour will
food abjure, Nor life without my son endure.

Then it will be thy fate to dwell In depth of world-detested hell.
As Ocean in the olden time

Was guilty of an impious crime

That marked the lord of each fair flood As one who spills a
Bráhma's blood."288

Thus spake the queen, and wept, and sighed: Then righteous
Ráma thus replied:

“I have no power to slight or break Commandments which my
father spake. I bend my head, dear lady, low,

Forgive me, for I needs must go. Once Kar,du, mighty saint,
who made

His dwelling in the forest shade, [119]

A cow—and duty’s claims he knew— Obedient to his father,
slew.

And in the line from which we spring, When ordered by their sire
the king, Through earth the sons of Sagar cleft, And countless
things of life bereft.²⁸⁹ So Jamadagní’s son²⁹⁰ obeyed

His sire, when in the wood he laid His hand upon his axe, and
smote Through Renuká his mother’s throat. The deeds of these
and more beside.

Peers of the Gods, my steps shall guide, And resolute will I fulfil
My father’s word, my father’s will. Nor I, O Queen, unsanctioned
tread This righteous path, by duty led:

The road my footsteps journey o’er Was traversed by the great
of yore.

²⁸⁸ The commentators say that, in a former creation, Ocean
grieved his mother and suffered in consequence the pains of
hell.

289 As described in Book I Canto XL.

290 Parasúrama.

This high command which all accept Shall faithfully by me be kept,

For duty ne'er will him forsake

Who fears his sire's command to break.”

Thus to his mother wild with grief: Then thus to Lakshmar, spake the chief Of those by whom the bow is bent, Mid all who speak, most eloquent:

“I know what love for me thou hast, What firm devotion unsurpassed: Thy valour and thy worth I know, And glory that appals the foe.

Blest youth, my mother's woe is great, It bends her 'neath its matchless weight: No claims will she, with blinded eyes, Of truth and patience recognize.

For duty is supreme in place, And truth is duty's noblest base.

Obedient to my sire's behest

I serve the cause of duty best. For man should truly do whate'er

To mother, Bráhmaṇ, sire, he sware: He must in duty's path remain,

Nor let his word be pledged in vain. And, O my brother, how can
I Obedience to this charge deny?

Kaikeyí's tongue my purpose spurred, But 'twas my sire who
gave the word. Cast these unholy thoughts aside

Which smack of war and Warriors' pride; To duty's call, not
wrath attend,

And tread the path which I commend.”

Ráma by fond affection moved His brother Lakshmar, thus
reproved;

Then with joined hands and reverent head Again to Queen
Kausalyá said:

“I needs must go—do thou consent— To the wild wood in
banishment.

O give me, by my life I pray, Thy blessing ere I go away.

I, when the promised years are o'er, Shall see Ayodhyá's town
once more. Then, mother dear, thy tears restrain, Nor let thy
heart be wrung by pain: In time, my father's will obeyed, Shall I
return from greenwood shade. My dear Videhan, thou, and I,
Lakshmar,, Sumitrá, feel this tie, And must my father's word
obey,

As duty bids that rules for aye. Thy preparations now forgo,
And lock within thy breast thy woe, Nor be my pious wish
withstood To go an exile to the wood.”

Calm and unmoved the prince explained His duty's claim and
purpose high,

The mother life and sense regained, Looked on her son and
made reply:

“If reverence be thy father's due,

The same by right and love is mine: Go not, my charge I thus
renew,

Nor leave me here in woe to pine, What were such lonely life to
me,

Rites to the shades, or deathless lot?

More dear, my son, one hour with thee Than all the world where
thou art not.”

As bursts to view, when brands blaze high, Some elephant
concealed by night,

So, when he heard his mother's cry, Burnt Ráma's grief with
fiercer might.

Thus to the queen, half senseless still,

And Lakshmar,, burnt with heart-felt pain, True to the right, with
steadfast will,

His duteous speech he spoke again: “Brother, I know thy loving
mind,

Thy valour and thy truth I know, But now to claims of duty blind
Thou and my mother swell my woe.

The fruits of deeds in human life Make love, gain, duty,
manifest,

Dear when they meet as some fond wife With her sweet babes
upon her breast.

But man to duty first should turn Whene'er the three are not
combined:

For those who heed but gain we spurn, And those to pleasure all
resigned.

Shall then the virtuous disobey Hosts of an aged king and sire,
Though feverous joy that father sway, Or senseless love or
causeless ire?

I have no power, commanded thus, To slight his promise and
decree:

The honoured sire of both of us, My mother's lord and life is he.

Shall she, while yet the holy king Is living, on the right intent,—

Shall she, like some poor widowed thing, Go forth with me to
banishment?

Now, mother, speed thy parting son,

And let thy blessing soothe my pain, [120]

That I may turn, mine exile done, Like King Yayāti, home again.
Fair glory and the fruit she gives,

For lust of sway I ne'er will slight: What, for the span a mortal
lives.

Were rule of faith without the right?" He soothed her thus, firm
to the last

His counsel to his brother told:

Then round the queen in reverence passed, And held her in his
loving hold.

Canto XXII. Lakshman Calmed.

So Rāma kept unshaken still His noble heart with iron will.

To his dear brother next he turned, Whose glaring eyes with fury
burned, Indignant, panting like a snake,

And thus again his counsel spake: “Thine anger and thy grief
restrain, And firm in duty’s path remain.

Dear brother, lay thy scorn aside, And be the right thy joy and
pride. Thy ready zeal and thoughtful care

To aid what rites should grace the heir,— These ’tis another’s
now to ask;

Come, gird thee for thy noble task, That Bharat’s throning rites
may be Graced with the things prepared for me.

And with thy gentle care provide That her fond heart, now sorely
tried With fear and longing for my sake,

With doubt and dread may never ache. To know that thoughts
of coming ill One hour that tender bosom fill

With agony and dark despair

Is grief too great for me to bear. I cannot, brother, call to mind
One wilful fault or undesigned, When I have pained in anything
My mothers or my sire the king.

The right my father keeps in view, In promise, word, and action
true; Let him then all his fear dismiss, Nor dread the loss of
future bliss. He fears his truth herein will fail:

Hence bitter thoughts his heart assail. He trembles lest the rites
proceed,

And at his pangs my heart should bleed. So now this earnest
wish is mine,

The consecration to resign, And from this city turn away

To the wild wood with no delay. My banishment to-day will free
Kaikeyí from her cares, that she, At last contented and elate,

May Bharat's throning celebrate. Then will the lady's trouble
cease,

Then will her heart have joy and peace, When wandering in the
wood I wear Deerskin, and bark, and matted hair.

Nor shall by me his heart be grieved

Whose choice approved, whose mind conceived

This counsel which I follow. No, Forth to the forest will I go.

'Tis Fate, Sumitrás son, confess, That sends me to the
wilderness. 'Tis Fate alone that gives away To other hands the
royal sway.

How could Kaikeyí's purpose bring On me this pain and
suffering,

Were not her change of heart decreed By Fate whose will
commands the deed? I know my filial love has been

The same throughout for every queen, And with the same
affection she

Has treated both her son and me. Her shameful words of cruel
spite To stay the consecrating rite,

And drive me banished from the throne,— These I ascribe to
Fate alone,

How could she, born of royal race, Whom nature decks with
fairest grace, Speak like a dame of low degree Before the king
to torture me?

But Fate, which none may comprehend, To which all life must
bow and bend, In her and me its power has shown, And all my
hopes are overthrown.

What man, Sumitrá's darling, may Contend with Fate's resistless
sway, Whose all-commanding power we find Our former deeds
alone can bind?

Our life and death, our joy and pain, Anger and fear, and loss
and gain, Each thing that is, in every state, All is the work of
none but Fate.

E'en saints, inspired with rigid zeal, When once the stroke of
Fate they feel, In sternest vows no more engage,

And fall enslaved by love and rage.

So now the sudden stroke whose weight Descends unlooked for,
comes of Fate, And with unpitied might destroys

The promise of commencing joys. Weigh this true counsel in thy
soul: With thy firm heart thy heart control; Then, brother, thou
wilt cease to grieve For hindered rites which now I leave. So
cast thy needless grief away,

And strictly my commands obey. Those preparations check with
speed, Nor let my throning rites proceed.

Those urns that stand prepared to shed King-making drops
upon my head,

Shall, with their pure lustrations now

[121] Inaugurate my hermit's vow.

Yet what have I to do with things

That touch the state and pomp of kings? These hands of mine
shall water take To sanctify the vow I make.

Now Lakshmar,, let thy heart no more My fortune changed and
lost deplore. A forest life more joys may bring Than those that
wait upon a king, Now though her arts successful mar

My consecrating rite,

Let not the youngest queen too far Thy jealous fear excite.

Nor let one thought suggesting ill Upon our father fall,

But let thy heart remember still That Fate is lord of all.”

Canto XXIII. Lakshman's Anger.

Thus Ráma to his brother said;

And Lakshmar, bent his drooping head. In turns by grief and
pride impelled,

A middle course of thought he held, Then in a frown of anger,
bent

His brows that chief most excellent, And like a serpent in his
hole,

Breathed fierce and fast in wrath of soul. His threatening brows
so darkly frowned, His eyes so fiercely glanced around,

They made his glare, which none might brook, Like some
infuriate lion's look.

Like some wild elephant, full oft

He raised and shook his hand²⁹¹ aloft. Now turned his neck to
left and right Now bent, now raised its stately height. Now in his
rage that sword he felt

Which mangling wounds to foemen dealt, With sidelong glance
his brother eyed, And thus in burning words replied:

“Thy rash resolve, thy eager haste, Thy mighty fear, are all
misplaced:

No room is here for duty’s claim,

291 The Sanskrit word hasta signifies both hand, and the trunk
of “The beast that bears between his eyes a serpent for a head.”

No cause to dread the people’s blame. Can one as brave as
thou consent

To use a coward’s argument? The glory of the Warrior race
With craven speech his lips debase? Can one like thee so falsely
speak, Exalting Fate, confessed so weak? Canst thou,
undoubting still restrain? Suspicions of those sinful twain?

Canst thou, most duteous, fail to know Their hearts are set on
duty’s show?

They with deceit have set their trains, And now the fruit rewards
their pains. Had they not long ago agreed,

O Ráma, on this treacherous deed, That promised boon, so long
retained, He erst had given and she had gained. I cannot, O my
brother, bear

To see another throned as heir

With rites which all our people hate: Then, O, this passion
tolerate.

This vaunted duty which can guide Thy steps from wisdom's
path aside, And change the counsel of thy breast, O lofty-
hearted, I detest.

Wilt thou, when power and might are thine, Submit to this
abhorred design?

Thy father's impious hest fulfil, That vassal of Kaikeyí's will?

But if thou still wilt shut thine eyes, Nor see the guile herein that
lies, My soul is sad, I deeply mourn, And duty seems a thing to
scorn.

Canst thou one moment think to please

This pair who live for love and ease, And 'gainst thy peace, as
foes, allied, With tenderest names their hatred hide? Now if thy
judgment still refers

To Fate this plot of his and hers, My mind herein can ne'er
agree:

And O, in this be ruled by me. Weak, void of manly pride are
they Who bend to Fate's imputed sway:

The choicest souls, the nobly great Disdain to bow their heads
to Fate. And he who dares his Fate control With vigorous act
and manly soul,

Though threatening Fate his hopes assail, Unmoved through all
need never quail. This day mankind shall learn aright

The power of Fate and human might, So shall the gulf that lies
between

A man and Fate be clearly seen. The might of Fate subdued by
me This hour the citizens shall see, Who saw its intervention stay
Thy consecrating rites to-day.

My power shall turn this Fate aside, That threatens, as, with
furious stride, An elephant who scorns to feel,

In rage unchecked, the driver's steel.

Not the great Lords whose sleepless might Protects the worlds,
shall stay the rite

Though earth, hell, heaven combine their powers: And shall we
fear this sire of ours?

Then if their minds are idly bent

To doom thee, King, to banishment,

Through twice seven years of exile they [122]

Shall in the lonely forest stay.

I will consume the hopes that fire The queen Kaikeyí and our
sire, That to her son this check will bring Advantage, making
Bharat king.

The power of Fate will ne'er withstand The might that arms my
vigorous hand; If danger and distress assail,

My fearless strength will still prevail. A thousand circling years
shall flee: The forest then thy home shall be, And thy good sons,
succeeding, hold The empire which their sire controlled. The
royal saints, of old who reigned, For aged kings this rest
ordained: These to their sons their realm commit That they, like
sires, may cherish it.

O pious soul, if thou decline

The empire which is justly thine, Lest, while the king distracted
lies, Disorder in the state should rise, I,—or no mansion may I
find

In worlds to hero souls assigned,— The guardian of thy realm
will be, As the sea-bank protects the sea.

Then cast thine idle fears aside: With prosperous rites be
sanctified. The lords of earth may strive in vain:

My power shall all their force restrain. My pair of arms, my
warrior's bow Are not for pride or empty show:

For no support these shafts were made; And binding up ill suits
my blade:

To pierce the foe with deadly breach—

This is the work of all and each. But small, methinks the love I
show For him I count my mortal foe.

Soon as my trenchant steel is bare, Flashing its lightning
through the air, I heed no foe, nor stand aghast Though Indra's
self the levin cast.

Then shall the ways be hard to pass, Where chariots lie in
ruinous mass; When elephant and man and steed

Crushed in the murderous onslaught bleed, And legs and heads
fall, heap on heap, Beneath my sword's tremendous sweep.

Struck by my keen brand's trenchant blade, Thine enemies shall
fall dismayed,

Like towering mountains rent in twain, Or lightning clouds that
burst in rain.

When armed with brace and glove I stand, And take my trusty
bow in hand,

Who then shall vaunt his might? who dare Count him a man to
meet me there?

Then will I loose my shafts, and strike Man, elephant, and steed
alike:

At one shall many an arrow fly, And many a foe with one shall
die.

This day the world my power shall see, That none in arms can
rival me:

My strength the monarch shall abase, And set thee, lord, in
lordliest place.

These arms which breathe the sandal's scent, Which golden
bracelets ornament,

These hands which precious gifts bestow, Which guard the
friend and smite the foe, A nobler service shall assay,

And fight in Rāma's cause to-day, The robbers of thy rights to
stay.

Speak, brother, tell thy foeman's name Whom I, in conquering
strife,

May strip of followers and fame, Of fortune, or of life.

Say, how may all this sea-girt land Be brought to own thy sway:

Thy faithful servant here I stand To listen and obey.”

Then strove the bride of Raghu's race Sad Lakshmar,'s heart to
cheer,

While slowly down the hero's face, Unchecked, there rolled a
tear.

“The orders of my sire,” he cried, “My will shall ne'er oppose:

I follow still, whate'er betide, The path which duty shows.”

Canto XXIV. Kausalyá Calmed.

But when Kausalyá saw that he Resolved to keep his sire's
decree,

While tears and sobs her utterance broke, Her very righteous
speech she spoke: “Can he, a stranger yet to pain,

Whose pleasant words all hearts enchain, Son of the king and
me the queen,

Live on the grain his hands may glean; Can he, whose slaves
and menials eat The finest cakes of sifted wheat—

Can Ráma in the forest live

On roots and fruit which woodlands give; Who will believe, who
will not fear When the sad story smites his ear,

That one so dear, so noble held, Is by the king his sire expelled?
Now surely none may Fate resist, Which orders all as it may list,

If, Ráma, in thy strength and grace, The woods become thy dwelling-place. A childless mother long I grieved,
And many a sigh for offspring heaved, With wistful longing weak and worn Till thou at last, my son, wast born.
Fanned by the storm of that desire Deep in my soul I felt the fire,
Whose offerings flowed from weeping eyes,
With fuel fed of groans and sighs, [123]
While round the flame the smoke grew hot Of tears because thou camest not.
Now reft of thee, too fiery fierce
The flame of woe my heart will pierce, As, when the days of spring return, The sun's hot beams the forest burn.
The mother cow still follows near
The wanderings of her youngling dear. So close to thine my feet shall be, Where'er thou goest following thee.”

Ráma, the noblest lord of men,
Heard his fond mother's speech, and then In soothing words like these replied
To the sad queen who wept and sighed: “Nay, by Kaikeyí's art beguiled,

When I am banished to the wild, If thou, my mother, also fly,
The aged king will surely die.

When wedded dames their lords forsake, Long for the crime
their souls shall ache. Thou must not e'en in thought within Thy
bosom frame so dire a sin.

Long as Kakutstha's son, who reigns Lord of the earth, in life
remains, Thou must with love his will obey: This duty claims,
supreme for aye. Yes, mother, thou and I must be Submissive to
my sire's decree, King, husband, sire is he confessed, The lord of
all, the worthiest.

I in the wilds my days will spend

Till twice seven years have reached an end, Then with great joy
will come again,

And faithful to thy hests remain.”

Kausalyá by her son addressed, With love and passion sore
distressed, Afflicted, with her eyes bedewed,

To Ráma thus her speech renewed: “Nay, Ráma, but my heart
will break

If with these queens my home I make. Lead me too with thee;
let me go

And wander like a woodland roe.” Then, while no tear the hero
shed,

Thus to the weeping queen he said: “Mother, while lives the
husband, he Is woman’s lord and deity.

O dearest lady, thou and I

Our lord and king must ne’er deny;

The lord of earth himself have we Our guardian wise and friend
to be. And Bharat, true to duty’s call,

Whose sweet words take the hearts of all, Will serve thee well,
and ne’er forget

The virtuous path before him set. Be this, I pray, thine earnest
care, That the old king my father ne’er,

When I have parted hence, may know, Grieved for his son, a
pang of woe.

Let not this grief his soul distress, To kill him with the bitterness.

With duteous care, in every thing, Love, comfort, cheer the aged
king. Though, best of womankind, a spouse Keeps firmly all her
fasts and vows, Nor yet her husband’s will obeys,

She treads in sin’s forbidden ways. She to her husband’s will who
bends, Goes to high bliss that never ends,

Yea, though the Gods have found in her No reverential
worshipper.

Bent on his weal, a woman still Must seek to do her husband's
will: For Scripture, custom, law uphold This duty Heaven
revealed of old. Honour true Bráhmans for my sake, And
constant offerings duly make, With fire-oblations and with
flowers, To all the host of heavenly powers. Look to the coming
time, and yearn For the glad hour of my return.

And still thy duteous course pursue, Abstemious, humble, kind,
and true.

The highest bliss shalt thou obtain When I from exile come
again,

If, best of those who keep the right, The king my sire still see the
light.”

The queen, by Ráma thus addressed, Still with a mother's grief
oppressed, While her long eyes with tears were dim, Began once
more and answered him: “Not by my pleading may be stayed
The firm resolve thy soul has made. My hero, thou wilt go; and
none

The stern commands of Fate may shun.

Go forth, dear child whom naught can bend, And may all bliss
thy steps attend.

Thou wilt return, and that dear day Will chase mine every grief
away. Thou wilt return, thy duty done,

Thy vows discharged, high glory won; From filial debt wilt thou
be free,

And sweetest joy will come on me. My son, the will of mighty
Fate

At every time must dominate,

If now it drives thee hence to stray Heedless of me who bid thee
stay. Go, strong of arm, go forth, my boy, Go forth, again to
come with joy, And thine expectant mother cheer

With those sweet tones she loves to hear. O that the blessed
hour were nigh

When thou shalt glad this anxious eye, With matted hair and
hermit dress returning from the wilderness.”

Kausalyá's conscious soul approved,

As her proud glance she bent On Ráma constant and unmoved,
Resolved on banishment.

Such words, with happy omens fraught To her dear son she
said,

Invoking with each eager thought A blessing on his head.

[124]

Canto XXV. Kausalyá's Blessing.

Her grief and woe she cast aside, Her lips with water purified,
And thus her benison began That mother of the noblest man:

“If thou wilt hear no words of mine, Go forth, thou pride of
Raghu's line. Go, darling, and return with speed, Walking where
noble spirits lead.

May virtue on thy steps attend, And be her faithful lover's friend.

May Those to whom thy vows are paid In temple and in holy
shade,

With all the mighty saints combine To keep that precious life of
thine. The arms wise Visvámitra²⁹² gave Thy virtuous soul from
danger save. Long be thy life: thy sure defence Shall be thy
truthful innocence,

²⁹² See P. 41.

And that obedience, naught can tire, To me thy mother and thy
sire.

May fanes where holy fires are fed, Altars with grass and fuel
spread, Each sacrificial ground, each tree,

Rock, lake, and mountain, prosper thee. Let old Viráj,²⁹³ and
Him who made The universe, combine to aid;

Let Indra and each guardian Lord

Who keeps the worlds, their help afford, And be thy constant
friend the Sun, Lord Púshá, Bhaga, Aryuman.²⁹⁴ Fortnights and
seasons, nights and days,

Years, months, and hours, protect thy ways, Vrihaspati shall still
be nigh,

The War-God, and the Moon on high, And Nárada²⁹⁵ and the
sainted seven²⁹⁶ Shall watch thee from their starry heaven. The
mountains, and the seas which ring The world, and Varur, a the
King,

Sky, ether, and the wind, whate'er Moves not or moves, for thee
shall care. Each lunar mansion be benign,

With happier light the planets shine;

All gods, each light in heaven that glows, Protect my child
where'er he goes.

The twilight hours, the day and night, Keep in the wood thy
steps aright.

Watch, minute, instant, as they flee, Shall all bring happiness to
thee.

293 The first progeny of Brahmá or Brahmá himself.

294 These are three names of the Sun.

295 See P. 1.

296 The saints who form the constellation of Ursa Major.

Celestials and the Titan brood Protect thee in thy solitude,
And haunt the mighty wood to bless The wanderer in his hermit
dress.

Fear not, by mightier guardians screened, The giant or night-
roving fiend;

Nor let the cruel race who tear

Man's flesh for food thy bosom scare. Far be the ape, the
scorpion's sting,

Fly, gnat, and worm, and creeping thing. Thee shall the hungry
lion spare,

The tiger, elephant, and bear:

Safe, from their furious might repose, Safe from the horned buffaloes.

Each savage thing the forests breed, That love on human flesh to feed, Shall for my child its rage abate, When thus its wrath I deprecate.

Blest be thy ways: may sweet success The valour of my darling bless.

To all that Fortune can bestow, Go forth, my child, my Ráma, go. Go forth, O happy in the love

Of all the Gods below, above;

And in those guardian powers confide Thy paths who keep, thy steps who guide. May Sukra,²⁹⁷ Yáma, Sun, and Moon, And He who gives each golden boon,²⁹⁸ Won by mine earnest prayers, be good

To thee, my son, in Dar,⁹ak wood.

Fire, wind, and smoke, each text and spell From mouths of holy seers that fell,

²⁹⁷ The regent of the planet Venus.

²⁹⁸ Kuvera.

Guard Ráma when his limbs he dips, Or with the stream makes pure his lips! May the great saints and He, the Lord

Who made the worlds, by worlds adored, And every God in
heaven beside

My banished Ráma keep and guide.”

Thus with due praise the long-eyed dame, Ennobled by her
spotless fame,

With wreaths of flowers and precious scent Worshipped the
Gods, most reverent.

A high-souled Bráhmaṇ lit the fire, And offered, at the queen’s
desire, The holy oil ordained to burn

For Ráma’s weal and safe return. Kausalyá best of dames, with
care Set oil, wreaths, fuel, mustard, there.

Then when the rites of fire had ceased, For Ráma’s bliss and
health, the priest,

Standing without gave what remained

[125] In general offering,²⁹⁹ as ordained. Dealing among the
twice-horn train Honey, and curds, and oil, and grain, He bade
each heart and voice unite To bless the youthful anchorite. Then
Ráma’s mother, glorious dame

Bestowed, to meet the Bráhmaṇ’s claim, A lordly fee for duty
done:

And thus again addressed her son:

299 Bali, or the presentation of food to all created beings, is one of the five great sacraments of the Hindu religion: it consists in throwing a small parcel of the offering, Ghee, or rice, or the like, into the open air at the back of the house.

“Such blessings as the Gods o’erjoyed Poured forth, when
Vritra³⁰⁰ was destroyed, On Indra of the thousand eyes,
Attend, my child, thine enterprise! Yea, such as Vinatá once
gave

To King Suparr,^{a301} swift and brave,

Who sought the drink that cheers the skies, Attend, my child,
thine enterprise!

Yea, such as, when the Amrit rose,³⁰²

And Indra slew his Daitya foes, The royal Aditi bestowed

On Him whose hand with slaughter glowed Of that dire brood of
monstrous size, Attend, my child, thine enterprise!

E’en such as peerless Vishr,u graced, When with his triple step
he paced, Outbursting from the dwarf’s disguise,³⁰³ Attend, my
child, thine enterprise!

Floods, isles, and seasons as they fly, Worlds, Vedas, quarters of the sky, Combine, O mighty-armed, to bless Thee destined heir of happiness!”

The long-eyed lady ceased: she shed Pure scent and grain upon his head.

And that prized herb whose sovereign power Preserves from dark misfortune’s hour, Upon the hero’s arm she set,

To be his faithful amulet.

While holy texts she murmured low,

300 In mythology, a demon slain by Indra.

301 Called also Garuḡ, the King of the birds, offspring of Vinatá. See p. 53.

302 See P. 56.

303 See P. 43.

And spoke glad words though crushed by woe, Concealing with obedient tongue

The pangs with which her heart was wrung. She bent, she kissed his brow, she pressed Her darling to her troubled breast:

“Firm in thy purpose, go,” she cried, “Go Ráma, and may bliss betide.

Attain returning safe and well, Triumphant in Ayodhyá, dwell.
Then shall my happy eyes behold The empire by thy will controlled.

Then grief and care shall leave no trace, Joy shall light up thy mother’s face, And I shall see my darling reign,

In moonlike glory come again. These eyes shall fondly gaze on thee
So faithful to thy sire’s decree, When thou the forest wild shalt quit
On thine ancestral throne to sit.

Yea, thou shalt turn from exile back, Nor choicest blessings ever lack,
Then fill with rapture ever new

My bosom and thy consort’s too. To Siva and the heavenly host
My worship has been paid,

To mighty saint, to godlike ghost, To every wandering shade.

Forth to the forest thou wilt hie, Therein to dwell so long:

Let all the quarters of the sky Protect my child from wrong.”

Her blessings thus the queen bestowed; Then round him fondly paced,

And often, while her eyes o’erflowed,

Her dearest son embraced.

Kausalyá's honoured feet he pressed, As round her steps she bent,

And radiant with her prayers that blessed, To Sítá's home he went.

Canto XXVI. Alone With Sítá.

So Ráma, to his purpose true, To Queen Kausalyá bade adieu,
Received the benison she gave, And to the path of duty clave.

As through the crowded street he passed, A radiance on the way he cast,

And each fair grace, by all approved, The bosoms of the people moved.

Now of the woeful change no word The fair Videhan bride had heard;
The thought of that imperial rite

Still filled her bosom with delight. With grateful heart and joyful thought
The Gods in worship she had sought, And, well in royal duties learned,

Sat longing till her lord returned, Not all unmarked by grief and shame

Within his sumptuous home he came, And hurried through the
happy crowd With eye dejected, gloomy-browed. Up Sítá
sprang, and every limb Trembled with fear at sight of him.

She marked that cheek where anguish fed, Those senses care-
disquieted.

For, when he looked on her, no more Could his heart hide the
load it bore, Nor could the pious chief control The paleness o'er
his cheek that stole. His altered cheer, his brow bedewed

With clammy drops, his grief she viewed, And cried, consumed
with fires of woe,

[126] “What, O my lord, has changed thee so? Vrihaspati looks
down benign,

And the moon rests in Pushya's sign, As Bráhmans sage this day
declare:

Then whence, my lord, this grief and care? Why does no canopy,
like foam

For its white beauty, shade thee home, Its hundred ribs spread
wide to throw Splendour on thy fair head below?

Where are the royal fans, to grace The lotus beauty of thy face,

Fair as the moon or wild-swan's wing, And waving round the
new-made king? Why do no sweet-toned bards rejoice To hail
thee with triumphant voice?

No tuneful heralds love to raise

Loud music in their monarch's praise? Why do no Bráhmans,
Scripture-read, Pour curds and honey on thy head, Anointed, as
the laws ordain,

With holy rites, supreme to reign? Where are the chiefs of every
guild? Where are the myriads should have filled

The streets, and followed home their king With merry noise and
triumphing?

Why does no gold-wrought chariot lead With four brave horses,
best for speed? No elephant precede the crowd

Like a huge hill or thunder cloud, Marked from his birth for
happy fate, Whom signs auspicious decorate?

Why does no henchman, young and fair, Precede thee, and
delight to bear Entrusted to his reverent hold

The burthen of thy throne of gold? Why, if the consecrating rite
Be ready, why this mournful plight? Why do I see this sudden
change, This altered mien so sad and strange?"

To her, as thus she weeping cried, Raghu's illustrious son replied:

"Sítá, my honoured sire's decree Commands me to the woods to flee. O high-born lady, nobly bred

In the good paths thy footsteps tread, Hear, Janak's daughter, while I tell The story as it all befell.

Of old my father true and brave Two boons to Queen Kaikeyí gave.

Through these the preparations made For me to-day by her are stayed,

For he is bound to disallow

This promise by that earlier vow. In Dar,9ak forest wild and vast Must fourteen years by me be passed. My father's will makes Bharat heir, The kingdom and the throne to share. Now, ere the lonely wild I seek,

I come once more with thee to speak. In Bharat's presence, O my dame,

Ne'er speak with pride of Ráma's name: Another's eulogy to hear

Is hateful to a monarch's ear. Thou must with love his rule obey

To whom my father yields the sway. With love and sweet observance learn His grace, and more the king's, to earn. Now,

that my father may not break The words of promise that he
spake, To the drear wood my steps are bent: Be firm, good Sítá,
and content.

Through all that time, my blameless spouse, Keep well thy fasts
and holy vows.

Rise from thy bed at break of day, And to the Gods due worship
pay. With meek and lowly love revere The lord of men, my father
dear, And reverence to Kausalyá show, My mother, worn with
eld and woe: By duty's law, O best of dames,

High worship from thy love she claims, Nor to the other queens
refuse Observance, rendering each her dues: By love and fond
attention shown

They are my mothers like mine own. Let Bharat and Satrughna
bear

In thy sweet love a special share: Dear as my life, O let them be
Like brother and like son to thee. In every word and deed
refrain

From aught that Bharat's soul may pain: He is Ayodhyá's king
and mine,

The head and lord of all our line.

For those who serve and love them much With weariless
endeavour, touch

And win the gracious hearts of kings. While wrath from
disobedience springs. Great monarchs from their presence send
Their lawful sons who still offend,

And welcome to the vacant place Good children of an alien
race. Then, best of women, rest thou here, And Bharat's will with
love revere. Obedient to thy king remain,

And still thy vows of truth maintain. To the wide wood my steps
I bend:

Make thou thy dwelling here; See that thy conduct ne'er offend,
And keep my words, my dear."

Canto XXVII. Sítá's Speech.

His sweetly-speaking bride, who best Deserved her lord, he thus addressed. Then tender love bade passion wake, And thus the fair Videhan spake:

“What words are these that thou hast said? Contempt of me the thought has bred.

O best of heroes, I dismiss

With bitter scorn a speech like this: [127]

Unworthy of a warrior's fame

It taints a monarch's son with shame, Ne'er to be heard from those who know The science of the sword and bow.

My lord, the mother, sire, and son Receive their lots by merit won; The brother and the daughter find

The portions to their deeds assigned. The wife alone, whate'er await,

Must share on earth her husband's fate. So now the king's command which sends Thee to the wild, to me extends.

The wife can find no refuge, none, In father, mother, self, or son:

Both here, and when they vanish hence, Her husband is her sole defence.

If, Raghu's son, thy steps are led

Where Dar,9ak's pathless wilds are spread, My foot before thine
own shall pass Through tangled thorn and matted grass.

Dismiss thine anger and thy doubt:

Like refuse water cast them out, And lead me, O my hero,
hence— I know not sin—with confidence. Whate'er his lot, 'tis far
more sweet To follow still a husband's feet Than in rich palaces
to lie,

Or roam at pleasure through the sky. My mother and my sire
have taught

What duty bids, and trained each thought, Nor have I now mine
ear to turn

The duties of a wife to learn.

I'll seek with thee the woodland dell And pathless wild where no
men dwell,

Where tribes of silvan creatures roam, And many a tiger makes
his home.

My life shall pass as pleasant there As in my father's palace fair.

The worlds shall wake no care in me; My only care be truth to
thee.

There while thy wish I still obey, True to my vows with thee I'll
stray, And there shall blissful hours be spent In woods with
honey redolent.

In forest shades thy mighty arm

Would keep a stranger's life from harm, And how shall Sítá think
of fear

When thou, O glorious lord, art near? Heir of high bliss, my
choice is made, Nor can I from my will be stayed.

Doubt not; the earth will yield me roots, These will I eat, and
woodland fruits; And as with thee I wander there

I will not bring thee grief or care.

I long, when thou, wise lord, art nigh, All fearless, with delighted
eye

To gaze upon the rocky hill,

The lake, the fountain, and the rill; To sport with thee, my limbs
to cool, In some pure lily-covered pool,

While the white swan's and mallard's wings Are plashing in the
water-springs.

So would a thousand seasons flee Like one sweet day, if spent
with thee. Without my lord I would not prize

A home with Gods above the skies: Without my lord, my life to
bless, Where could be heaven or happiness?

Forbid me not: with thee I go The tangled wood to tread.
There will I live with thee, as though This roof were o'er my
head.
My will for thine shall be resigned; Thy feet my steps shall guide.
Thou, only thou, art in my mind: I heed not all beside.
Thy heart shall ne'er by me be grieved; Do not my prayer deny:
Take me, dear lord; of thee bereaved Thy Sítá swears to die.”
These words the duteous lady spake, Nor would he yet consent
His faithful wife with him to take To share his banishment.
He soothed her with his gentle speech; To change her will he
strove;
And much he said the woes to teach Of those in wilds who rove.

Canto XXVIII. The Dangers Of The Wood.

Thus Sítá spake, and he who knew His duty, to its orders true,
Was still reluctant as the woes Of forest life before him rose.

He sought to soothe her grief, to dry The torrent from each
brimming eye, And then, her firm resolve to shake, These words
the pious hero spake:

Canto XXVIII. The Dangers Of The Wood. 441

“O daughter of a noble line,

Whose steps from virtue ne'er decline, Remain, thy duties here
pursue,

As my fond heart would have thee do. Now hear me, Sítá, fair
and weak, And do the words that I shall speak. Attend and hear
while I explain

Each danger in the wood, each pain. Thy lips have spoken: I
condemn

The foolish words that fell from them. This senseless plan, this
wish of thine To live a forest life, resign.

The names of trouble and distress Suit well the tangled
wilderness. In the wild wood no joy I know, A forest life is
nought but woe.

The lion in his mountain cave Answers the torrents as they rave,
And forth his voice of terror throws:

The wood, my love, is full of woes. [128]

There mighty monsters fearless play, And in their maddened
onset slay

The hapless wretch who near them goes: The wood, my love, is
full of woes.

'Tis hard to ford each treacherous flood, So thick with crocodiles
and mud, Where the wild elephants repose:

The wood, my love, is full of woes.

Or far from streams the wanderer strays Through thorns and
creeper-tangled ways, While round him many a wild-cock crows:
The wood, my love, is full of woes.

On the cold ground upon a heap

Of gathered leaves condemned to sleep,

Toil-wearied, will his eyelids close: The wood, my love, is full of
woes. Long days and nights must he content His soul with
scanty aliment,

What fruit the wind from branches blows: The wood, my love, is
full of woes.

O Sítá, while his strength may last, The ascetic in the wood must
fast, Coil on his head his matted hair, And bark must be his only
wear.

To Gods and spirits day by day The ordered worship he must
pay, And honour with respectful care

Each wandering guest who meets him there. The bathing rites
he ne'er must shun

At dawn, at noon, at set of sun, Obedient to the law he knows:

The wood, my love, is full of woes. To grace the altar must be
brought

The gift of flowers his hands have sought— The debt each pious
hermit owes:

The wood, my love, is full of woes. The devotee must be content
To live, severely abstinent,

On what the chance of fortune shows: The wood, my love, is full
of woes.

Hunger afflicts him evermore:

The nights are black, the wild winds roar; And there are dangers
worse than those: The wood, my love, is full of woes.

There creeping things in every form Infest the earth, the
serpents swarm, And each proud eye with fury glows: The wood,
my love, is full of woes.

The snakes that by the rives hide In sinuous course like rivers
glide, And line the path with deadly foes:

The wood, my love, is full of woes. Scorpions, and grasshoppers,
and flies Disturb the wanderer as he lies,

And wake him from his troubled doze: The wood, my love, is full
of woes.

Trees, thorny bushes, intertwined, Their branched ends together
bind,

And dense with grass the thicket grows: The wood, my dear, is
full of woes, With many ills the flesh is tried,

When these and countless fears beside Vex those who in the
wood remain: The wilds are naught but grief and pain. Hope,
anger must be cast aside,

To penance every thought applied: No fear must be of things to
fear: Hence is the wood for ever drear. Enough, my love: thy
purpose quit: For forest life thou art not fit.

As thus I think on all, I see

The wild wood is no place for thee.”

Canto XXIX. Sítá's Appeal.

Thus Ráma spake. Her lord's address The lady heard with deep
distress, And, as the tear bedimmed her eye, In soft low accents
made reply:

“The perils of the wood, and all The woes thou countest to
appal, Led by my love I deem not pain; Each woe a charm, each
loss a gain. Tiger, and elephant, and deer,

Bull, lion, buffalo, in fear,

Soon as thy matchless form they see, With every silvan beast
will flee.

With thee, O Ráma, I must go: My sire's command ordains it so.
Bereft of thee, my lonely heart

Must break, and life and I must part. While thou, O mighty lord,
art nigh, Not even He who rules the sky, Though He is strongest
of the strong, With all his might can do me wrong. Nor can a
lonely woman left

By her dear husband live bereft. In my great love, my lord, I
ween,

The truth of this thou mayst have seen. In my sire's palace long
ago

I heard the chief of those who know, The truth-declaring
Bráhmans, tell My fortune, in the wood to dwell.

I heard their promise who divine The future by each mark and
sign,

And from that hour have longed to lead The forest life their lips
decreed.

Now, mighty Ráma, I must share

Thy father's doom which sends thee there; In this I will not be
denied,

But follow, love, where thou shalt guide. O husband, I will go
with thee,

Obedient to that high decree.

Now let the Bráhmans' words be true, For this the time they had
in view.

I know full well the wood has woes; But they disturb the lives of
those Who in the forest dwell, nor hold

Their rebel senses well controlled. [129]

In my sire's halls, ere I was wed,

I heard a dame who begged her bread Before my mother's face
relate

What griefs a forest life await. And many a time in sport I
prayed

To seek with thee the greenwood shade, For O, my heart on this
is set,

To follow thee, dear anchoret. May blessings on thy life attend: I
long with thee my steps to bend, For with such hero as thou art
This pilgrimage enchants my heart. Still close, my lord, to thy
dear side My spirit will be purified:

Love from all sin my soul will free: My husband is a God to me.

So, love, with thee shall I have bliss And share the life that
follows this. I heard a Bráhmán, dear to fame, This ancient
Scripture text proclaim: “The woman whom on earth below Her
parents on a man bestow,

And lawfully their hands unite With water and each holy rite, She
in this world shall be his wife, His also in the after life.”

Then tell me, O beloved, why Thou wilt this earnest prayer deny,

Nor take me with thee to the wood, Thine own dear wife so true
and good. But if thou wilt not take me there Thus grieving in my
wild despair,

To fire or water I will fly,

Or to the poisoned draught, and die.”

So thus to share his exile, she Besought him with each earnest
plea, Nor could she yet her lord persuade To take her to the
lonely shade.

The answer of the strong-armed chief Smote the Videhan's soul
with grief, And from her eyes the torrents came bathing the
bosom of the dame.

Canto XXX. The Triumph Of Love.

The daughter of Videha's king,

While Ráma strove to soothe the sting Of her deep anguish,
thus began

Once more in furtherance of her plan: And with her spirit sorely
tried

By fear and anger, love and pride, With keenly taunting words
addressed Her hero of the stately breast:

“Why did the king my sire, who reigns O'er fair Videha's wide
domains,

Hail Ráma son with joy unwise, A woman in a man's disguise?

Now falsely would the people say,

By idle fancies led astray,

That Ráma's own are power and might, As glorious as the Lord
of Light.

Why sinkest thou in such dismay? What fears upon thy spirit
weigh, That thou, O Ráma, fain wouldst flee

From her who thinks of naught but thee? To thy dear will am I
resigned

In heart and body, soul and mind, As Sávitrí gave all to one,
Satyaván, Dyumatsena's son.³⁰⁴ Not e'en in fancy can I brook

To any guard save thee to look:

Let meaner wives their houses shame, To go with thee is all my
claim.

Like some low actor, deemst thou fit Thy wife to others to
commit— Thine own, espoused in maiden youth, Thy wife so
long, unblamed for truth? Do thou, my lord, his will obey

For whom thou lovest royal sway,

To whom thou wouldst thy wife confide— Not me, but thee, his
wish may guide.

Thou must not here thy wife forsake, And to the wood thy
journey make, Whether stern penance, grief, and care, Or rule or
heaven await thee there.

Nor shall fatigue my limbs distress When wandering in the
wilderness: Each path which near to thee I tread Shall seem a
soft luxurious bed.

304 The story of Sāvitrī, told in the Mahābhārat, has been
admirably translated by Rückert, and elegantly epitomized by
Mrs. Manning in India, Ancient and Mediæval. There is a free
rendering of the story in Idylls from the Sanskrit.

The reeds, the bushes where I pass, The thorny trees, the
tangled grass Shall feel, if only thou be near, Soft to my touch
as skins of deer. When the rude wind in fury blows,

And scattered dust upon me throws, That dust, beloved lord, to
me

Shall as the precious sandal be.

And what shall be more blest than I, When gazing on the wood I
lie

In some green glade upon a bed With sacred grass beneath us
spread?

The root, the leaf, the fruit which thou Shalt give me from the
earth or bough, Scanty or plentiful, to eat,

Shall taste to me as Amrit sweet. As there I live on flowers and
roots And every season's kindly fruits,

I will not for my mother grieve, My sire, my home, or all I leave.

My presence, love, shall never add

[130] One pain to make the heart more sad; I will not cause thee
grief or care, Nor be a burden hard to bear.

With thee is heaven, where'er the spot; Each place is hell where
thou art not. Then go with me, O Ráma; this

Is all my hope and all my bliss.

If thou wilt leave thy wife who still Entreats thee with undaunted
will, This very day shall poison close The life that spurns the rule
of foes. How, after, can my soul sustain The bitter life of endless
pain,

When thy dear face, my lord, I miss? No, death is better far
than this.

Not for an hour could I endure

The deadly grief that knows not cure, Far less a woe I could not
shun

For ten long years, and three, and one.”

While fires of woe consumed her, such Her sad appeal,
lamenting much;

Then with a wild cry, anguish-wrung, About her husband's neck
she clung. Like some she-elephant who bleeds Struck by the
hunter's venomous reeds, So in her quivering heart she felt

The many wounds his speeches dealt. Then, as the spark from
wood is gained,³⁰⁵ Down rolled the tear so long restrained:

The crystal moisture, sprung from woe, From her sweet eyes
began to flow,

As runs the water from a pair Of lotuses divinely fair.

And Sítá's face with long dark eyes, Pure as the moon of
autumn skies, Faded with weeping, as the buds

Of lotuses when sink the floods. Around his wife his arms he
strained, Who senseless from her woe remained,

And with sweet words, that bade her wake To life again, the
hero spake:

"I would not with thy woe, my Queen, Buy heaven and all its
blissful sheen. Void of all fear am I as He,

³⁰⁵ Fire for sacrificial purposes is produced by the attrition of
two pieces of wood.

The self-existent God, can be.

I knew not all thy heart till now, Dear lady of the lovely brow,
So wished not thee in woods to dwell; Yet there mine arm can
guard thee well. Now surely thou, dear love, wast made To dwell
with me in green wood shade. And, as a high saint's tender mind
Clings to its love for all mankind,

So I to thee will ever cling, Sweet daughter of Videha's king.

The good, of old, O soft of frame, Honoured this duty's
sovereign claim, And I its guidance will not shun, True as light's
Queen is to the Sun.

I cannot, pride of Janak's line, This journey to the wood decline:

My sire's behest, the oath he sware, The claims of truth, all lead
me there. One duty, dear the same for aye,

Is sire and mother to obey:

Should I their orders once transgress My very life were
weariness.

If glad obedience be denied To father, mother, holy guide,

What rites, what service can be done That stern Fate's favour
may be won? These three the triple world comprise, O darling of
the lovely eyes.

Earth has no holy thing like these Whom with all love men seek
to please. Not truth, or gift, or bended knee,

Not honour, worship, lordly fee,

Storms heaven and wins a blessing thence

Like sonly love and reverence. Heaven, riches, grain, and varied
lore, With sons and many a blessing more, All these are made
their own with ease By those their elders' souls who please. The
mighty-souled, who ne'er forget, Devoted sons, their filial debt,
Win worlds where Gods and minstrels are, And Brahmá's sphere
more glorious far.

Now as the orders of my sire,

Who keeps the way of truth, require, So will I do, for such the
way

Of duty that endures for aye:

To take thee, love, to Dar,9ak's wild My heart at length is
reconciled,

For thee such earnest thoughts impel To follow, and with me to
dwell.

O faultless form from feet to brows, Come with me, as my will
allows, And duty there with me pursue,

Trembler, whose bright eyes thrill me through. In all thy days,
come good come ill,

Preserve unchanged such noble will, And thou, dear love, wilt
ever be The glory of thy house and me.

Now, beauteous-armed, begin the tasks
The woodland life of
hermits asks.

For me the joys of heaven above

Have charms no more without thee, love. And now, dear Sítá, be
not slow:

Food on good mendicants bestow, And for the holy Bráhmans
bring

Thy treasures and each precious thing. Thy best attire and gems
collect,

The jewels which thy beauty decked, And every ornament and
toy Prepared for hours of sport and joy: The beds, the cars
wherein I ride, Among our followers, next, divide.”

She conscious that her lord approved

[131] Her going, with great rapture moved, Hastened within,
without delay, Prepared to give their wealth away.

Canto XXXI. Lakshman's Prayer.

When Lakshmar,, who had joined them there, Had heard the
converse of the pair,

His mien was changed, his eyes o'erflowed, His breast no more
could bear its load.

The son of Raghu, sore distressed,

His brother's feet with fervour pressed, While thus to Sítá he
complained,

And him by lofty vows enchained:

“If thou wilt make the woods thy home, Where elephant and
roe buck roam,

I too this day will take my bow And in the path before thee go.

Our way will lie through forest ground Where countless birds
and beasts are found, I heed not homes of Gods on high,

I heed not life that cannot die,

Nor would I wish, with thee away,

O'er the three worlds to stretch my sway.”

Thus Lakshmar, spake, with earnest prayer His brother's
woodland life to share.

As Ráma still his prayer denied With soothing words, again he
cried:

“When leave at first thou didst accord, Why dost thou stay me
now, my lord? Thou art my refuge: O, be kind, Leave me not,
dear my lord, behind.

Thou canst not, brother, if thou choose That I still live, my wish
refuse.”

The glorious chief his speech renewed To faithful Lakshmar, as
he sued,

And on the eyes of Ráma gazed Longing to lead, with hands
upraised: “Thou art a hero just and dear, Whose steps to virtue’s
path adhere, Loved as my life till life shall end, My faithful
brother and my friend.

If to the woods thou take thy way With Sitá and with me to-day,
Who for Kausalyá will provide,

And guard the good Sumitrá’s side? The lord of earth, of mighty
power,

Who sends good things in plenteous shower, As Indra pours the
grateful rain,

A captive lies in passion’s chain. The power imperial for her son
Has Asvapati’s daughter³⁰⁶ won,

And she, proud queen, will little heed Her miserable rivals’ need.

So Bharat, ruler of the land,

By Queen Kaikeyí’s side will stand,

306 Kaikeyí.

Nor of those two will ever think, While grieving in despair they
sink. Now, Lakshmar,, as thy love decrees, Or else the monarch's
heart to please, Follow this counsel and protect

My honoured mother from neglect. So thou, while not to me
alone Thy great affection will be shown, To highest duty wilt
adhere

By serving those thou shouldst revere. Now, son of Raghu, for
my sake Obey this one request I make,

Or, of her darling son bereft, Kausalyá has no comfort left.”

The faithful Lakshmar,, thus addressed In gentle words which
love expressed, To him in lore of language learned,

His answer, eloquent, returned:

“Nay, through thy might each queen will share Attentive
Bharat's love and care,

Should Bharat, raised as king to sway This noblest realm, his
trust betray, Nor for their safety well provide, Seduced by ill-
suggesting pride, Doubt not my vengeful hand shall kill The
cruel wretch who counsels ill— Kill him and all who lend him aid,

And the three worlds in league arrayed. And good Kausalyá well
can fee

A thousand champions like to me. A thousand hamlets rich in
grain The station of that queen maintain.

She may, and my dear mother too, Live on the ample revenue.

Then let me follow thee: herein:

Is naught that may resemble sin. So shall I in my wish succeed,

And aid, perhaps, my brother's need. My bow and quiver well
supplied With arrows hanging at my side,

My hands shall spade and basket bear, And for thy feet the way
prepare.

I'll bring thee roots and berries sweet. And woodland fare which
hermits eat. Thou shall with thy Videhan spouse Recline upon
the mountain's brows; Be mine the toil, be mine to keep Watch
o'er thee waking or asleep."

Filled by his speech with joy and pride, Ráma to Lakshmar, thus
replied:

"Go then, my brother, bid adieu To all thy friends and retinue.

And those two bows of fearful might, Celestial, which, at that
famed rite, Lord Varur, gave to Janak, king

Of fair Vedeha with thee bring,
With heavenly coats of sword-proof mail,
Quivers, whose arrows never fail, [132]
And golden-hilted swords so keen, The rivals of the sun in sheen.
Tended with care these arms are all Preserved in my preceptor's
hall.
With speed, O Lakshmar,, go, produce, And bring them hither
for our use.” So on a woodland life intent,

To see his faithful friends he went,
And brought the heavenly arms which lay By Ráma's teacher
stored away.
And Raghu's son to Ráma showed
Those wondrous arms which gleamed and glowed, Well kept,
adorned with many a wreath
Of flowers on case, and hilt, and sheath. The prudent Ráma at
the sight Addressed his brother with delight:
“Well art thou come, my brother dear, For much I longed to see
thee here.
For with thine aid, before I go,

I would my gold and wealth bestow Upon the Bráhmans sage,
who school Their lives by stern devotion's rule.

And for all those who ever dwell Within my house and serve me
well, Devoted servants, true and good, Will I provide a
livelihood.

Quick, go and summon to this place The good Vasishtha's son,
Suyajna, of the Bráhman race The first and holiest one.

To all the Bráhmans wise and good Will I due reverence pay,

Then to the solitary wood

With thee will take my way.”

Canto XXXII. The Gift Of The Treasures.

That speech so noble which conveyed His friendly wish, the chief
obeyed,

With steps made swift by anxious thought The wise Suyajna's
home he sought.

Him in the hall of Fire³⁰⁷ he found,

And bent before him to the ground: "O friend, to Ráma's house
return, Who now performs a task most stern." He, when his
noonday rites were done, Went forth with fair Sumitrá's son,
And came to Ráma's bright abode

Rich in the love which Lakshmí showed. The son of Raghu, with
his dame,

With joined hands met him as he came, Showing to him who
Scripture knew The worship that is Agni's due.

With armlets, bracelets, collars, rings, With costly pearls on
golden strings, With many a gem for neck and limb The son of
Raghu honoured him.

Then Ráma, at his wife's request, The wise Suyajna thus
addressed: "Accept a necklace too to deck

With golden strings thy spouse's neck. And Sítá here, my friend,
were glad

A girdle to her gift to add.

And many a bracelet wrought with care, And many an armlet
rich and rare,

My wife to thine is fain to give, Departing in the wood to live.

A bed by skilful workmen made, With gold and various gems
inlaid—

307 The chapel where the sacred fire used in worship is kept.

This too, before she goes, would she Present, O saintly friend, to
thee.

Thine be my elephant, so famed, My uncle's present, Victor
named; And let a thousand coins of gold,

Great Bráhma, with the gift be told." Thus Ráma spoke: nor he
declined The noble gifts for him designed.

On Ráma, Lakshmar,, Sítá he Invoked all high felicity.

In pleasant words then Ráma gave His best to Lakshmar,
prompt and brave, As Brahmá speaks for Him to hear

Who rules the Gods' celestial sphere:

"To the two best of Bráhmans run; Agastya bring, and Kusik's
son, And precious gifts upon them rain,

Like fostering floods upon the grain. O long-armed Prince of
Raghu's line, Delight them with a thousand kine, And many a
fair and costly gem, With gold and silver, give to them.

To him, so deep in Scripture, who, To Queen Kausalyá, ever true,
Serves her with blessing and respect, Chief of the Taittiríya
sect308—

To him, with women-slaves, present A chariot rich with
ornament,

And costly robes of silk beside, Until the sage be satisfied.

On Chitraratha, true and dear, My tuneful bard and charioteer,

308 The students and teachers of the Taittiríya portion of the
Yajur Veda.

Gems, robes, and plenteous wealth confer— Mine ancient friend
and minister.

And these who go with staff in hand, Grammarians trained, a
numerous band, Who their deep study only prize,

Nor think of other exercise, Who toil not, loving dainty fare,

Whose praises e'en the good declare— On these be eighty cars
bestowed,

And each with precious treasures load. [133]

A thousand bulls for them suffice, Two hundred elephants of
price, And let a thousand kine beside The dainties of each meal
provide.

The throng who sacred girdles wear, And on Kausalyá wait with care— A thousand golden coins shall please, Son of Sumitrá, each of these.

Let all, dear Lakshmar, of the train These special gifts of honour gain: My mother will rejoice to know Her Bráhmans have been cherished so.”

Then Raghu’s son addressed the crowd Who round him stood and wept aloud, When he to all who thronged the court Had dealt his wealth for their support: “In Lakshmar,’s house and mine remain, And guard them till I come again.”

To all his people sad with grief,

In loving words thus spoke their chief, Then bade his treasure-keeper bring Gold, silver, and each precious thing. Then straight the servants went and bore

Back to their chief the wealth in store. Before the people’s eyes it shone,

A glorious pile to look upon.

The prince of men with Lakshmar,’s aid Parted the treasures there displayed, Gave to the poor, the young, the old, And twice-born men, the gems and gold.

A Bráhmaṇ, long in evil case, Named Trijat, born of Garga's race, Earned ever toiling in a wood

With spade and plough his livelihood. The youthful wife, his babes who bore, Their indigence felt more and more.

Thus to the aged man she spake:

“Hear this my word: my counsel take. Come, throw thy spade and plough away; To virtuous Ráma go to-day,

And somewhat of his kindness pray.”

He heard the words she spoke: around His limbs his ragged cloth he wound, And took his journey by the road

That led to Ráma's fair abode.

To the fifth court he made his way; Nor met the Bráhmaṇ check or stay. Brighu, Angiras³⁰⁹ could not be Brighter with saintly light than he. To Ráma's presence on he pressed, And thus the noble chief addressed:

“O Ráma, poor and weak am I, And many children round me cry.

³⁰⁹ Two of the divine personages called Prajápatis and Brahmádikas who were first created by Brahmá.

Scant living in the woods I earn: On me thine eye of pity turn.”

And Ráma, bent on sport and jest,

The suppliant Bráhman thus addressed: “O aged man, one thousand kine,

Yet undistributed, are mine. The cows on thee will I bestow

As far as thou thy staff canst throw.”

The Bráhman heard. In eager haste He bound his cloth around his waist. Then round his head his staff he whirled, And forth with mightiest effort hurled.

Cast from his hand it flew, and sank To earth on Sarjú's farther bank, Where herds of kine in thousands fed Near to the well-stocked bullock shed. And all the cows that wandered o'er The meadow, far as Sarjú's shore,

At Ráma's word the herdsmen drove To Trijat's cottage in the grove.

He drew the Bráhman to his breast,

And thus with calming words addressed: “Now be not angry, Sire. I pray:

This jest of mine was meant in play. These thousand kine, but not alone. Their herdsmen too, are all thine own. And wealth beside I give thee: speak, Thine shall be all thy heart can seek.”

Thus Ráma spake. And Trijat prayed For means his sacrifice to aid.

And Ráma gave much wealth, required To speed his offering as desired.

Canto XXXIII. The People's Lament.

Thus Sítá and the princes brave

Much wealth to all the Bráhmans gave. Then to the monarch's house the three Went forth the aged king to see.

The princes from two servants took Those heavenly arms of glorious look, Adorned with garland and with band By Sítá's beautifying hand.

On each high house a mournful throng Had gathered ere they passed along, Who gazed in pure unselfish woe From turret, roof, and portico.

So dense the crowd that blocked the ways, The rest, unable there to gaze,

Were fain each terrace to ascend, And thence their eyes on Ráma bend. Then as the gathered multitude

On foot their well-loved Ráma viewed, No royal shade to screen his head,

Such words, disturbed in grief, they said: “O look, our hero, went
to ride

Leading a host in perfect pride— Now Lakshmar,, sole of all his
friends, With Sítá on his steps attends.

Though he has known the sweets of power, And poured his gifts
in liberal shower,

[134] From duty’s path he will not swerve, But, still his father’s
truth preserve. And she whose form so soft and fair Was veiled
from spirits of the air, Now walks unsheltered from the day,
Seen by the crowds who throng the way.

Canto XXXIII. The People’s Lament. 463

Ah, for that gently-nurtured form! How will it fade with sun and
storm! How will the rain, the cold, the heat Mar fragrant breast
and tinted feet! Surely some demon has possessed His sire, and
speaks within his breast, Or how could one that is a king

Thus send his dear son wandering? It were a deed unkindly
done

To banish e’en a worthless son:

But what, when his pure life has gained The hearts of all, by love
enchained?

Six sovereign virtues join to grace Ráma the foremost of his race: Tender and kind and pure is he, Docile, religious, passion-free.

Hence misery strikes not him alone: In bitterest grief the people moan, Like creatures of the stream, when dry In the great heat the channels lie.

The world is mournful with the grief That falls on its beloved chief,

As, when the root is hewn away, Tree, fruit, and flower, and bud decay. The soul of duty, bright to see,

He is the root of you and me; And all of us, who share his grief,

His branches, blossom, fruit, and leaf. Now like the faithful Lakshmar,, we Will follow and be true as he;

Our wives and kinsmen call with speed, And hasten where our lord shall lead.

Yes, we will leave each well-loved spot, The field, the garden, and the cot,

And, sharers of his weal and woe, Behind the pious Ráma go.

Our houses, empty of their stores, With ruined courts and broken doors, With all their treasures borne away.

And gear that made them bright and gay: O'errun by rats, with
dust o'erspread, Shrines, whence the deities have fled, Where
not a hand the water pours,

Or sweeps the long-neglected floors, No incense loads the
evening air,

No Bráhmans chant the text and prayer, No fire of sacrifice is
bright,

No gift is known, no sacred rite;

With floors which broken vessels strew, As if our woes had
crushed them too— Of these be stern Kaikeyí queen,

And rule o'er homes where we have been. The wood where
Ráma's feet may roam Shall be our city and our home,

And this fair city we forsake,

Our flight a wilderness shall make. Each serpent from his hole
shall hie, The birds and beasts from mountain fly, Lions and
elephants in fear

Shall quit the woods when we come near, Yield the broad wilds
for us to range, And take our city in exchange.

With Ráma will we hence, content If, where he is, our days be
spent.”

Such were the varied words the crowd Of all conditions spoke
aloud.

And Ráma heard their speeches, yet

Changed not his purpose firmly set. His father's palace soon he
neared, That like Kailása's hill appeared.

Like a wild elephant he strode Right onward to the bright
abode. Within the palace court he stepped,

Where ordered bands their station kept, And saw Sumantra
standing near

With down-cast eye and gloomy cheer.

Canto XXXIV. Ráma In The Palace.

The dark incomparable chief Whose eye was like a lotus leaf,
Cried to the mournful charioteer, "Go tell my sire that I am
here."

Sumantra, sad and all dismayed, The chieftain's order swift
obeyed. Within the palace doors he hied

And saw the king, who wept and sighed. Like the great sun
when wrapped in shade Like fire by ashes overlaid,

Or like a pool with waters dried,

So lay the world's great lord and pride, A while the wise
Sumantra gazed

On him whose senses woe has dazed, Grieving for Ráma. Near
he drew With hands upraised in reverence due. With blessing
first his king he hailed;

Then with a voice that well-nigh failed,

In trembling accents soft and low Addressed the monarch in his
woe: "The prince of men, thy Ráma, waits Before thee at the
palace gates.

His wealth to Bráhmans he has dealt, And all who in his home
have dwelt. Admit thy son. His friends have heard His kind
farewell and parting word, He longs to see thee first, and then
Will seek the wilds, O King of men. He, with each princely virtue's
blaze, Shines as the sun engirt by rays."

The truthful King who loved to keep The law profound as
Ocean's deep, And stainless as the dark blue sky,

[135] Thus to Sumantra made reply: "Go then, Sumantra, go and
call My wives and ladies one and all.

Drawn round me shall they fill the place When I behold my
Ráma's face."

Quick to the inner rooms he sped, And thus to all the women
said, "Come, at the summons of the king: Come all, and make
no tarrying."

Their husband's word, by him conveyed, Soon as they heard, the
dames obeyed, And following his guidance all
Came thronging to the regal hall.

In number half seven hundred, they, All lovely dames, in long
array,

With their bright eyes for weeping red, To stand round Queen
Kausalyá, sped. They gathered, and the monarch viewed One
moment all the multitude,

Then to Sumantra spoke and said: “Now let my son be hither led.”

Sumantra went. Then Ráma came, And Lakshmar,, and the Maithil dame, And, as he led them on, their guide Straight to the monarch’s presence hied. When yet far off the father saw

His son with raised palms toward him draw, Girt by his ladies, sick with woes,

Swift from his royal seat he rose. With all his strength the aged man To meet his darling Ráma ran,

But trembling, wild with dark despair, Fell on the ground and fainted there. And Lakshmar,, wont in cars to ride, And Ráma, threw them by the side

Of the poor miserable king,

Half lifeless with his sorrow’s sting. Throughout the spacious hall up went A thousand women’s wild lament:

“Ah Ráma!” thus they wailed and wept, And anklets tinkled as they stepped Around his body, weeping, threw

Their loving arms the brothers two, And then, with Sítá’s gentle aid, The king upon a couch was laid.

At length to earth’s imperial lord,

When life and knowledge were restored, Though seas of woe
went o'er his head, With suppliant hand, thus Ráma said: "Lord
of us all, great King, thou art:

Bid me farewell before we part, To Dar,9ak wood this day I go:
One blessing and one look bestow. Let Lakshmar, my
companion be, And Sítá also follow me.

With truthful pleas I sought to bend Their purpose; but no ear
they lend. Now cast this sorrow from thy heart, And let us all,
great King, depart.

As Brahmá sends his children, so Let Lakshmar,, me, and Sítá
go."

He stood unmoved, and watched intent Until the king should
grant consent.

Upon his son his eyes he cast,

And thus the monarch spake at last: "O Ráma, by her arts
enslaved,

I gave the boons Kaikeyí craved, Unfit to reign, by her misled:

Be ruler in thy father's stead."

Thus by the lord of men addressed, Ráma, of virtue's friends the best,

In lore of language duly learned, His answer, reverent, thus returned: "A thousand years, O King, remain O'er this our city still to reign.

I in the woods my life will lead: The lust of rule no more I heed.

Nine years and five I there will spend, And when the portioned days shall end, Will come, my vows and exile o'er,

And clasp thy feet, my King, once more."

A captive in the snare of truth, Weeping, distressed with woe and ruth, Thus spake the monarch, while the queen Kaikeyí urged him on unseen:

"Go then, O Ráma, and begin

Thy course unvext by fear and sin: Go, my beloved son, and earn Success, and joy, and safe return. So fast the bonds of duty bind.

O Raghu's son, thy truthful mind,

That naught can turn thee back, or guide Thy will so strongly fortified.

But O, a little longer stay,

Nor turn thy steps this night away, That I one little day—alas!

One only—with my son may pass. Me and thy mother do not
slight, But stay, my son, with me to-night; With every dainty
please thy taste,

And seek to-morrow morn the waste. Hard is thy task, O
Raghu's son,

Dire is the toil thou wilt not shun, Far to the lonely wood to flee,
And leave thy friends for love of me. I swear it by my truth,
believe,

For thee, my son, I deeply grieve, Misguided by the traitress
dame

With hidden guile like smouldering flame. Now, by her wicked
counsel stirred,

Thou fain wouldst keep my plighted word. No marvel that my
eldest born

Would hold me true when I have sworn.”

Then Ráma having calmly heard His wretched father speak
each word, With Lakshmar, standing by his side Thus, humbly,
to the King replied: “If dainties now my taste regale,

To-morrow must those dainties fail. This day departure I prefer

To all that wealth can minister. O'er this fair land, no longer
mine,

[136] Which I, with all her realms, resign, Her multitudes of men,
her grain, Her stores of wealth, let Bharat reign.

And let the promised boon which thou wast pleased to grant
the queen ere now, Be hers in full. Be true, O King,

Kind giver of each precious thing. Thy spoken word I still will
heed, Obeying all thy lips decreed:

And fourteen years in woods will dwell With those who live in
glade and dell. No hopes of power my heart can touch, No
selfish joys attract so much

As son of Raghu, to fulfil

With heart and soul my father's will. Dismiss, dismiss thy
needless woe, Nor let those drowning torrents flow: The Lord of
Rivers in his pride Keeps to the banks that bar his tide. Here in
thy presence I declare;

By thy good deeds, thy truth, I swear; Nor lordship, joy, nor
lands I prize; Life, heaven, all blessings I despise.

I wish to see thee still remain

Most true, O King, and free from stain. It must not, Sire, it must
not be:

I cannot rest one hour with thee. Then bring this sorrow to an end,
For naught my settled will can bend. I gave a pledge that binds me too,
And to that pledge I still am true.

Kaikeyí bade me speed away:

She prayed me, and I answered yea. Pine not for me, and weep no more;
The wood for us has joy in store,

Filled with the wild deer's peaceful herds And voices of a thousand birds.

A father is the God of each,

Yea, e'en of Gods, so Scriptures teach: And I will keep my sire's decree,

For as a God I honour thee.

O best of men, the time is nigh,

The fourteen years will soon pass by And to thine eyes thy son restore:
Be comforted, and weep no more.

Thou with thy firmness shouldst support These weeping crowds who throng the court;

Then why, O chief of high renown, So troubled, and thy soul cast down?"

Canto XXXV. Kaikeyí Reproached.

Wild with the rage he could not calm, Sumantra, grinding palm
on palm, His head in quick impatience shook,

And sighed with woe he could not brook. He gnashed his teeth,
his eyes were red, From his changed face the colour fled.

In rage and grief that knew no law, The temper of the king he
saw.

With his word-arrows swift and keen He shook the bosom of the
queen.

With scorn, as though its lightning stroke Would blast her body,
thus he spoke: "Thou, who, of no dread sin afraid,

Hast Dasaratha's self betrayed,

Lord of the world, whose might sustains Each thing that moves
or fixed remains, What direr crime is left thee now?

Death to thy lord and house art thou, Whose cruel deeds the
king distress, Mahendra's peer in mightiness,

Firm as the mountain's rooted steep, Enduring as the Ocean's
deep.

Despise not Dasaratha, he

Is a kind lord and friend to thee. A loving wife in worth outruns
The mother of ten million sons.

Kings, when their sires have passed away, Succeed by birthright
to the sway.

Ikshváku's son still rules the state, Yet thou this rule wouldst
violate. Yea, let thy son, Kaikeyí, reign, Let Bharat rule his sire's
domain.

Thy will, O Queen, shall none oppose: We all will go where Ráma
goes.

No Bráhmaṇ, scorning thee, will rest Within the realm thou
governest, But all will fly indignant hence:

So great thy trespass and offence. I marvel, when thy crime I
see,

Earth yawns not quick to swallow thee; And that the Bráhmaṇ
saints prepare No burning scourge thy soul to scare, With cries
of shame to smite thee, bent Upon our Ráma's banishment.

The Mango tree with axes fell,

And tend instead the Neem tree well, Still watered with all care
the tree Will never sweet and pleasant be.

Thy mother's faults to thee descend, And with thy borrowed
nature blend. True is the ancient saw: the Neem Can ne'er distil
a honeyed stream.

Taught by the tale of long ago Thy mother's hateful sin we
know.

A bounteous saint, as all have heard, A boon upon thy sire
conferred, And all the eloquence revealed

That fills the wood, the flood, the field. No creature walked, or
swam, or flew, But he its varied language knew.

One morn upon his couch he heard The chattering of a
gorgeous bird. And as he marked its close intent He laughed
aloud in merriment.

Thy mother furious with her lord, And fain to perish by the cord,
Said to her husband: "I would know,

[137] O Monarch, why thou laughest so." The king in answer
spake again: "If I this laughter should explain, This very hour
would be my last,

For death, be sure would follow fast." Again thy mother, flushed
with ire, To Kekaya spake, thy royal sire: "Tell me the cause;
then live or die:

I will not brook thy laugh, not I.” Thus by his darling wife
addressed,

The king whose might all earth confessed, To that kind saint his
story told

Who gave the wondrous gift of old. He listened to the king’s
complaint, And thus in answer spoke the saint: “King, let her quit
thy home or die, But never with her prayer comply.” The saint’s
reply his trouble stilled, And all his heart with pleasure filled. Thy
mother from his home he sent, And days like Lord Kuvera’s
spent.

So thou wouldst force the king, misled By thee, in evil paths to
tread,

And bent on evil wouldst begin, Through folly, this career of sin.
Most true, methinks, in thee is shown The ancient saw so widely
known:

The sons their fathers’ worth declare And girls their mothers’
nature share. So be not thou. For pity’s sake Accept the word
the monarch spake. Thy husband’s will, O Queen, obey, And be
the people’s hope and stay, O, do not, urged by folly, draw

The king to tread on duty’s law. The lord who all the world
sustains,

Bright as the God o'er Gods who reigns. Our glorious king, by sin unstained, Will never grant what fraud obtained; No shade of fault in him is seen:

Let Ráma be anointed, Queen. Remember, Queen, undying shame

Will through the world pursue thy name, If Ráma leave the king his sire,

And, banished, to the wood retire. Come, from thy breast this fever fling: Of his own realm be Ráma king.

None in this city e'er can dwell

To tend and love thee half so well. When Ráma sits in royal place, True to the custom of his race

Our monarch of the mighty bow A hermit to the woods will go.”³¹⁰

³¹⁰ It was the custom of the kings of the solar dynasty to resign in their extreme old age the kingdom to the heir, and spend the remainder of their days in holy meditation in the forest:

“For such through ages in their life's decline Is the good custom of Ikshváku's line.”

Raghurañsa.

Sumantra thus, palm joined to palm, Poured forth his words of
bane and balm, With keen reproach, with pleading kind, Striving
to move Kaikeyí's mind.

In vain he prayed, in vain reproved, She heard unsoftened and
unmoved.

Nor could the eyes that watched her view One yielding look, one
change of hue.

Canto XXXVI. Siddhárth's Speech.

Ikshváku's son with anguish torn

For the great oath his lips had sworn, With tears and sighs of
sharpest pain Thus to Sumantra spake again: "Prepare thou
quick a perfect force, Cars, elephants, and foot, and horse, To
follow Raghu's scion hence Equipped with all magnificence.

Let traders with the wealth they sell, And those who charming
stories tell, And dancing-women fair of face, The prince's ample
chariots grace.

On all the train who throng his courts, And those who share his
manly sports, Great gifts of precious wealth bestow, And bid
them with their master go.

Let noble arms, and many a wain,

And townsmen swell the prince's train; And hunters best for
woodland skill Their places in the concourse fill.

While elephants and deer he slays, Drinking wood honey as he
strays, And looks on streams each fairer yet, His kingdom he
may chance forget. Let all my gold and wealth of corn With
Ráma to the wilds be borne; For it will soothe the exile's lot
To sacrifice in each pure spot, Deal ample largess forth, and
meet Each hermit in his calm retreat.

The wealth shall Ráma with him bear, Ayodhyá shall be Bharat's
share.”

As thus Kakutstha's offspring spoke, Fear in Kaikeyí's breast
awoke.

The freshness of her face was dried, Her trembling tongue was
terror-tied. Alarmed and sad, with bloodless cheek,

She turned to him and scarce could speak:

“Nay, Sire, but Bharat shall not gain An empty realm where
none remain. My Bharat shall not rule a waste

Reft of all sweets to charm the taste— The wine-cup’s dregs, all
dull and dead, Whence the light foam and life are fled.”

Thus in her rage the long-eyed dame

Spoke her dire speech untouched by shame. [138]

Then, answering, Dasaratha spoke: “Why, having bowed me to
the yoke, Dost thou, most cruel, spur and goad Me who am
struggling with the load? Why didst thou not oppose at first
This hope, vile Queen, so fondly nursed?”

Scarce could the monarch’s angry speech The ears of the fair
lady reach,

When thus, with double wrath inflamed, Kaikeyí to the king
exclaimed:

“Sagar, from whom thy line is traced, Drove forth his eldest son
disgraced, Called Asamanj, whose fate we know:

Thus should thy son to exile go.”

“Fie on thee, dame!” the monarch said; Each of her people bent
his head,

And stood in shame and sorrow mute:

She marked not, bold and resolute.

Then great Siddhárth, inflamed with rage, The good old
councillor and sage

On whose wise rede the king relied, To Queen Kaikeyí thus
replied:

“But Asamanj the cruel laid

His hands on infants as they played, Cast them to Sarjú’s flood,
and smiled

For pleasure when he drowned a child.”³¹¹

The people saw, and, furious, sped Straight the the king his sire
and said:

“Choose us, O glory of the throne, Choose us, or Asamanj
alone.”

³¹¹ See Book I, Canto XXXIX. An Indian prince in more modern
times appears to have diverted himself in a similar way.

It is still reported in Belgaum that Appay Deasy was wont to
amuse himself “by making several young and beautiful women
stand side by side on a narrow balcony, without a parapet,
overhanging the deep reservoir at the new palace in Nipani. He
used then to pass along the line of trembling creatures, and

suddenly thrusting one of them headlong into the water below, he used to watch her drowning, and derive pleasure from her dying agonies.”—History of the Belgaum District. By H. J. Stokes, M. S. C.

“Whence comes this dread?” the monarch cried; And all the people thus replied:

“In folly, King, he loves to lay Fierce hands upon our babes at play, Casts them to Sarjú’s flood and joys To murder our bewildered boys.” With heedful ear the king of men Heard each complaining citizen.

To please their troubled minds he strove, And from the state his son he drove.

With wife and gear upon a car

He placed him quick, and sent him far. And thus he gave commandment, “He Shall all his days an exile be.”

With basket and with plough he strayed

O’er mountain heights, through pathless shade, Roaming all lands a weary time,

An outcast wretch defiled with crime. Sagar, the righteous path who held, His wicked offspring thus expelled. But what has Ráma done to blame?

Why should his sentence be the same? No sin his stainless name
can dim; We see no fault at all in him.

Pure as the moon, no darkening blot On his sweet life has left a
spot.

If thou canst see one fault, e'en one, To dim the fame of
Raghu's son, That fault this hour, O lady, show, And Ráma to the
wood shall go.

To drive the guiltless to the wild, Truth's constant lover,
undefiled, Would, by defiance of the right, The glory e'en of
Indra blight.

Then cease, O lady, and dismiss Thy hope to ruin Ráma's bliss,
Or all thy gain, O fair of face,
Will be men's hatred, and disgrace."

Canto XXXVII. The Coats Of Bark.

Thus spake the virtuous sage: and then Ráma addressed the king of men.

In laws of meek behaviour bred, Thus to his sire he meekly said:

“King, I renounce all earthly care, And live in woods on woodland fare. What, dead to joys, have I to do With lordly train and retinue!

Who gives his elephant and yet Upon the girths his heart will set? How can a cord attract his eyes Who gives away the nobler prize? Best of the good, with me be led

No host, my King with banners spread. All wealth, all lordship I resign:

The hermit’s dress alone be mine. Before I go, have here conveyed A little basket and a spade.

With these alone I go, content,

For fourteen years of banishment.”

With her own hands Kaikeyí took The hermit coats of bark, and, “Look,” She cried with bold unblushing brow Before the concourse, “Dress thee now.” That lion leader of the brave

Took from her hand the dress she gave,

Cast his fine raiment on the ground, [139]

And round his waist the vesture bound. Then quick the hero
Lakshmar, too

His garment from his shoulders threw, And, in the presence of
his sire, Indued the ascetic's rough attire.

But Sítá, in her silks arrayed,

Threw glances, trembling and afraid, On the bark coat she had
to wear, Like a shy doe that eyes the snare.

Ashamed and weeping for distress

From the queen's hand she took the dress. The fair one, by her
husband's side

Who matched heaven's minstrel monarch,³¹² cried:

"How bind they on their woodland dress, Those hermits of the
wilderness?"

There stood the pride of Janak's race Perplexed, with sad
appealing face.

One coat the lady's fingers grasped, One round her neck she
feebly clasped, But failed again, again, confused

By the wild garb she ne'er had used. Then quickly hastening
Ráma, pride Of all who cherish virtue, tied

The rough bark mantle on her, o'er The silken raiment that she
wore.

³¹² Chitraratha, King of the celestial choristers.

Then the sad women when they saw Ráma the choice bark
round her draw, Rained water from each tender eye, And cried
aloud with bitter cry:

“O, not on her, beloved, not On Sítá falls thy mournful lot. If,
faithful to thy father’s will,

Thou must go forth, leave Sítá still. Let Sítá still remaining here
Our hearts with her loved presence cheer. With Lakshmar, by
thy side to aid

Seek thou, dear son, the lonely shade. Unmeet, one good and
fair as she Should dwell in woods a devotee.

Let not our prayers be prayed in vain: Let beauteous Sítá yet
remain;

For by thy love of duty tied

Thou wilt not here thyself abide.”

Then the king’s venerable guide Vasishta, when he saw each
coat Enclose the lady’s waist and throat, Her zeal with gentle
words repressed, And Queen Kaikeyí thus addressed: “O evil-
hearted sinner, shame

Of royal Kekaya’s race and name; Who matchless in thy sin
couldst cheat Thy lord the king with vile deceit; Lost to all sense
of duty, know

Sítá to exile shall not go.

Sítá shall guard, as 'twere her own, The precious trust of Ráma's throne.

Those joined by wedlock's sweet control Have but one self and common soul.

Thus Sítá shall our empress be, For Ráma's self and soul is she.
Or if she still to Ráma cleave

And for the woods the kingdom leave: If naught her loving heart deter,

We and this town will follow her. The warders of the queen shall take Their wives and go for Ráma's sake, The nation with its stores of grain, The city's wealth shall swell his train. Bharat, Satrughna both will wear Bark mantles, and his lodging share, Still with their elder brother dwell

In the wild wood, and serve him well. Rest here alone, and rule thy state Unpeopled, barren, desolate;

Be empress of the land and trees, Thou sinner whom our sorrows please. The land which Ráma reigns not o'er

Shall bear the kingdom's name no more: The woods which Ráma wanders through Shall be our home and kingdom too.

Bharat, be sure, will never deign

O'er realms his father yields, to reign. Nay, if the king's true son
he be,

He will not, sonlike, dwell with thee. Nay, shouldst thou from the
earth arise, And send thy message from the skies, To his
forefathers' custom true

No erring course would he pursue. So hast thou, by thy grievous
fault, Offended him thou wouldst exalt.

In all the world none draws his breath Who loves not Ráma, true
to death.

This day, O Queen, shalt thou behold Birds, deer, and beasts
from lea and fold Turn to the woods in Ráma's train.

And naught save longing trees remain.”

Canto XXXVIII. Care For Kausalyá

Then when the people wroth and sad Saw Sítá in bark vesture
clad,

Though wedded, like some widowed thing, They cried out,
“Shame upon thee, King!” Grieved by their cry and angry look
The lord of earth at once forsook All hope in life that still
remained, In duty, self, and fame unstained. Ikshváku’s son with
burning sighs On Queen Kaikeyí bent his eyes, And said: “But
Sítá must not flee In garments of a devotee.

My holy guide has spoken truth:

[140]Unfit is she in tender youth,

So gently nurtured, soft and fair, The hardships of the wood to
share.

How has she sinned, devout and true, The noblest monarch’s
child,

That she should garb of bark indue And journey to the wild?

That she should spend her youthful days Amid a hermit band,

Like some poor mendicant who strays Sore troubled, through
the land?

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Ah, let the child of Janak throw Her dress of bark aside,

And let the royal lady go With royal wealth supplied.

Not such the pledge I gave before, Unfit to linger here:

The oath, which I the sinner swore Is kept, and leaves her clear.

Won from her childlike love this too My instant death would be,

As blossoms on the old bamboo Destroy the parent tree.³¹³

If aught amiss by Ráma done Offend thee, O thou wicked one,

What least transgression canst thou find In her, thou worst of womankind?

What shade of fault in her appears, Whose full soft eye is like the deer's? What canst thou blame in Janak's child, So gentle, modest, true, and mild?

Is not one crime complete, that sent My Ráma forth to banishment?

And wilt thou other sins commit, Thou wicked one, to double it? This is the pledge and oath I swore,

What thou besoughtest, and no more, Of Ráma—for I heard thee, dame— When he for consecration came.

Now with this limit not content, In hell should be thy punishment,

Who fain the Maithil bride wouldst press To clothe her limbs with hermit dress.”

³¹³ It is said that the bamboo dies after flowering.

Thus spake the father in his woe; And Ráma, still prepared to
go,

To him who sat with drooping head Spake in return these words
and said:

“Just King, here stands my mother dear, Kausalyá, one whom
all revere.

Submissive, gentle, old is she,

And keeps her lips from blame of thee, For her, kind lord, of me
bereft

A sea of whelming woe is left. O, show her in her new distress
Still fonder love and tenderness.

Well honoured by thine honoured hand Her grief for me let her
withstand, Who wrapt in constant thought of me In me would
live a devotee.

Peer of Mahendra, O, to her be kind, And treat I pray, my gentle
mother so, That, when I dwell afar, her life resigned,

She may not pass to Yáma’s realm for woe.”

Canto XXXIX. Counsel To Sítá.

Scarce had the sire, with each dear queen, Heard Ráma's
pleading voice, and seen His darling in his hermit dress
Ere failed his senses for distress. Convulsed with woe, his soul
that shook, On Raghu's son he could not look;
Or if he looked with failing eye

He could not to the chief reply. By pangs of bitter grief assailed,
The long-armed monarch wept and wailed, Half dead a while
and sore distraught, While Ráma filled his every thought. "This
hand of mine in days ere now
Has reft her young from many a cow, Or living things has idly
slain:

Hence comes, I ween, this hour of pain. Not till the hour is come
to die

Can from its shell the spirit fly. Death comes not, and Kaikeyí
still Torments the wretch she cannot kill, Who sees his son
before him quit The fine soft robes his rank that fit, And,
glorious as the burning fire,
In hermit garb his limbs attire.

Now all the people grieve and groan Through Queen Kaikeyí's
deed alone, Who, having dared this deed of sin, Strives for
herself the gain to win.”

He spoke. With tears his eyes grew dim, His senses all deserted
him.

He cried, O Ráma, once, then weak And fainting could no
further speak. Unconscious there he lay: at length Regathering
his sense and strength, While his full eyes their torrents shed, To
wise Sumantra thus he said: “Yoke the light car, and hither lead
Fleet coursers of the noblest breed, And drive this heir of lofty
fate Beyond the limit of the state.

This seems the fruit that virtues bear, The meed of worth which
texts declare— The sending of the brave and good

By sire and mother to the wood.”

He heard the monarch, and obeyed, With ready feet that ne'er
delayed, And brought before the palace gate The horses and
the car of state.

Then to the monarch's son he sped,

[141] And raising hands of reverence said That the light car
which gold made fair, With best of steeds, was standing there.
King Dasaratha called in haste

The lord o'er all his treasures placed.

And spoke, well skilled in place and time, His will to him devoid
of crime:

“Count all the years she has to live Afar in forest wilds, and give
To Sítá robes and gems of price As for the time may well
suffice.”

Quick to the treasure-room he went, Charged by that king most
excellent, Brought the rich stores, and gave them all To Sítá in
the monarch's hall.

The Maithil dame of high descent Received each robe and
ornament,

And tricked those limbs, whose lines foretold High destiny, with
gems and gold.

So well adorned, so fair to view,

A glory through the hall she threw: So, when the Lord of Light
upsprings, His radiance o'er the sky he flings.

Then Queen Kausalyá spake at last,

With loving arms about her cast, Pressed lingering kisses on her
head, And to the high-souled lady said: “Ah, in this faithless
world below

When dark misfortune comes and woe, Wives, loved and
cherished every day, Neglect their lords and disobey.

Yes, woman’s nature still is this:— After long days of calm and
bliss When some light grief her spirit tries, She changes all her
love, or flies.

Young wives are thankless, false in soul, With roving hearts that
spurn control.

Brooding on sin and quickly changed, In one short hour their
love estranged. Not glorious deed or lineage fair,

Not knowledge, gift, or tender care In chains of lasting love can
bind A woman’s light inconstant mind.

But those good dames who still maintain What right, truth,
Scripture, rule ordain— No holy thing in their pure eyes

With one beloved husband vies. Nor let thy lord my son,
condemned To exile, be by thee contemned,

For be he poor or wealthy, he

Is as a God, dear child, to thee.”

When Sítá heard Kausalyá’s speech Her duty and her gain to
teach,

She joined her palms with reverent grace And gave her answer
face to face:

“All will I do, forgetting naught,
Which thou, O honoured Queen, hast taught.

I know, have heard, and deep have stored The rules of duty to
my lord.

Not me, good Queen, shouldst thou include Among the faithless
multitude.

Its own sweet light the moon shall leave Ere I to duty cease to
cleave.

The stringless lute gives forth no strain, The wheelless car is
urged in vain;

No joy a lordless dame, although Blest with a hundred sons, can
know. From father, brother, and from son

A measured share of joy is won:

Who would not honour, love, and bless Her lord, whose gifts are
measureless? Thus trained to think, I hold in awe Scripture’s
command and duty’s law.

Him can I hold in slight esteem? Her lord is woman’s God, I
deem.” Kausalyá heard the lady’s speech,

Nor failed those words her heart to reach. Then, pure in mind,
she gave to flow

The tear that sprang of joy and woe. Then duteous Ráma
forward came And stood before the honoured dame, And
joining reverent hands addressed The queen in rank above the
rest:

“O mother, from these tears refrain; Look on my sire and still thy
pain. To thee my days afar shall fly

As if sweet slumber closed thine eye, And fourteen years of exile
seem

To thee, dear mother, like a dream. On me returning safe and
well,

Girt by my friends, thine eyes shall dwell.”

Thus for their deep affection’s sake The hero to his mother
spake,

Then to the half seven hundred too, Wives of his sire, paid
reverence due. Thus Dasaratha’s son addressed

That crowd of matrons sore distressed:

“If from these lips, while here I dwelt, One heedless taunt you
e’er have felt, Forgive me, pray. And now adieu,

I bid good-bye to all of you.”

Then straight, like curlews' cries, upwent The voices of their wild
lament,

While, as he bade farewell, the crowd Of royal women wept
aloud,

And through the ample hall's extent. Where erst the sound of
tabour, blent With drum and shrill-toned instrument,

In joyous concert rose,

Now rang the sound of wailing high, The lamentation and the
cry,

The shriek, the choking sob, the sigh That told the ladies' woes.

Canto XL. Ráma's Departure.

Then Ráma, Sítá, Lakshmar, bent

At the king's feet, and sadly went [142]

Round him with slow steps reverent. When Ráma of the duteous
heart Had gained his sire's consent to part, With Sítá by his side
he paid

Due reverence to the queen dismayed. And Lakshmar,, with
affection meet,

Bowed down and clasped his mother's feet. Sumitrá viewed him
as he pressed

Her feet, and thus her son addressed: "Neglect not Ráma
wandering there, But tend him with thy faithful care. In hours of
wealth, in time of woe, Him, sinless son, thy refuge know.

From this good law the just ne'er swerve, That younger sons the
eldest serve,

And to this righteous rule incline All children of thine ancient
line— Freely to give, reward each rite, Nor spare their bodies in
the fight. Let Ráma Dasaratha be,

Look upon Sítá as on me,

And let the cot wherein you dwell Be thine Ayodhyá. Fare thee
well." Her blessing thus Sumitrá gave

To him whose soul to Ráma clave, Exclaiming, when her speech
was done, "Go forth, O Lakshmar,, go, my son.

Go forth, my son to win success, High victory and happiness.

Go forth thy foemen to destroy, And turn again at last with joy.”

As Mátali his charioteer

Speaks for the Lord of Gods to hear,

Sumantra, palm to palm applied,

In reverence trained, to Ráma cried: “O famous Prince, my car
ascend,— May blessings on thy course attend,— And swiftly
shall my horses flee

And place thee where thou biddest me. The fourteen years thou
hast to stay Far in the wilds, begin to-day;

For Queen Kaikeyí cries, Away.”

Then Sítá, best of womankind, Ascended, with a tranquil mind,
Soon as her toilet task was done, That chariot brilliant as the
sun. Ráma and Lakshmar, true and bold Sprang on the car
adorned with gold.

The king those years had counted o’er, And given Sítá robes and
store

Of precious ornaments to wear When following her husband
there. The brothers in the car found place For nets and weapons
of the chase,

There warlike arms and mail they laid, A leathern basket and a spade.

Soon as Sumantra saw the three Were seated in the chariot, he Urged on each horse of noble breed,

Who matched the rushing wind in speed. As thus the son of Raghu went

Forth for his dreary banishment,

Chill numbing grief the town assailed, All strength grew weak, all spirit failed, Ayodhyá through her wide extent

Was filled with tumult and lament:

Steeds neighed and shook the bells they bore, Each elephant returned a roar.

Then all the city, young and old, Wild with their sorrow uncontrolled, Rushed to the car, as, from the sun The panting herds to water run.

Before the car, behind, they clung, And there as eagerly they hung,

With torrents streaming from their eyes, Called loudly with repeated cries: "Listen, Sumantra: draw thy rein;

Drive gently, and thy steeds restrain. Once more on Ráma will we gaze, Now to be lost for many days.

The queen his mother has, be sure, A heart of iron, to endure
To see her godlike Ráma go, Nor feel it shattered by the blow.
Sítá, well done! Videha's pride, Still like his shadow by his side;
Rejoicing in thy duty still

As sunlight cleaves to Meru's hill.

Thou, Lakshmar,, too, hast well deserved, Who from thy duty
hast not swerved, Tending the peer of Gods above,

Whose lips speak naught but words of love. Thy firm resolve is
nobly great,

And high success on thee shall wait. Yea, thou shalt win a
priceless meed— Thy path with him to heaven shall lead.” As
thus they spake, they could not hold The tears that down their
faces rolled, While still they followed for a space Their darling of
Ikshváku's race.

There stood surrounded by a ring Of mournful wives the
mournful king; For, “I will see once more,” he cried,

“Mine own dear son,” and forth he hied. As he came near, there
rose the sound Of weeping, as the dames stood round. So the
she-elephants complain

When their great lord and guide is slain. Kakutstha's son, the
king of men,

The glorious sire, looked troubled then, As the full moon is when
dismayed

By dark eclipse's threatening shade. Then Dasaratha's son,
designed

For highest fate of lofty mind, Urged to more speed the
charioteer, "Away, away! why linger here?

Urge on thy horses," Rama cried,

And "Stay, O stay," the people sighed. Sumantra, urged to
speed away,

The townsmen's call must disobey,

Forth as the long-armed hero went, [143]

The dust his chariot wheels up sent Was laid by streams that
ever flowed From their sad eyes who filled the road. Then,
sprung of woe, from eyes of all The women drops began to fall,

As from each lotus on the lake The darting fish the water shake.

When he, the king of high renown,

Saw that one thought held all the town, Like some tall tree he
fell and lay, Whose root the axe has hewn away.

Then straight a mighty cry from those Who followed Ráma's car
arose,

Who saw their monarch fainting there Beneath that grief too
great to bear.

Then “Ráma, Ráma!” with the cry Of “Ah, his mother!” sounded
high, As all the people wept aloud Around the ladies’ sorrowing
crowd.

When Ráma backward turned his eye, And saw the king his
father lie

With troubled sense and failing limb, And the sad queen, who
followed him, Like some young creature in the net, That will not,
in its misery, let

Its wild eyes on its mother rest, So, by the bonds of duty
pressed,

His mother’s look he could not meet. He saw them with their
weary feet, Who, used to bliss, in cars should ride, Who ne’er by
sorrow should be tried, And, as one mournful look he cast,
“Drive on,” he cried, “Sumantra, fast.” As when the driver’s
torturing hook Goads on an elephant, the look

Of sire and mother in despair

Was more than Ráma’s heart could bear. As mother kine to
stalls return

Which hold the calves for whom they yearn, So to the car she
tried to run

As a cow seeks her little one. Once and again the hero’s eyes

Looked on his mother, as with cries Of woe she called and gestures wild, “O Sítá, Lakshmar,, O my child!”

“Stay,” cried the king, “thy chariot stay:” “On, on,” cried Ráma, “speed away.”

As one between two hosts, inclined To neither was Sumantra’s mind.

But Ráma spake these words again:

“A lengthened woe is bitterest pain. On, on; and if his wrath grow hot, Thine answer be, ‘I heard thee not.’ ” Sumantra, at the chief’s behest,

Dismissed the crowd that toward him pressed, And, as he bade, to swiftest speed

Urged on his way each willing steed. The king’s attendants parted thence, And paid him heart-felt reverence:

In mind, and with the tears he wept, Each still his place near Ráma kept. As swift away the horses sped,

His lords to Dasaratha said:

“To follow him whom thou again Wouldst see returning home is vain.”

With failing limb and drooping mien He heard their counsel wise:

Still on their son the king and queen Kept fast their lingering
eyes.³¹⁴

Canto XLI. The Citizens' Lament.

314 "Thirty centuries have passed since he began this memorable journey. Every step of it is known and is annually traversed by thousands: hero worship is not extinct. What can Faith do! How strong are the ties of religion when entwined with the legends of a country! How many a cart creeps creaking and weary along the road from Ayodhyá to Chitrakút. It is this that gives the Rámáyan a strange interest, the story still lives."

Calcutta Review: Vol. XXIII.

The lion chief with hands upraised Was born from eyes that fondly gazed. But then the ladies' bower was rent With cries of weeping and lament: "Where goes he now, our lord, the sure Protector of the friendless poor,

In whom the wretched and the weak Defence and aid were
wont to seek? All words of wrath he turned aside, And ne'er,
when cursed, in ire replied. He shared his people's woe, and
stilled

The troubled breast which rage had filled. Our chief, on lofty
thoughts intent,

In glorious fame preëminent:

As on his own dear mother, thus He ever looked on each of us.

Where goes he now? His sire's behest, By Queen Kaikeyí's guile
distressed, Has banished to the forest hence

Him who was all the world's defence. Ah, senseless King, to drive
away

The hope of men, their guard and stay, To banish to the distant
wood

Ráma the duteous, true, and good!" The royal dames, like cows
bereaved

Of their young calves, thus sadly grieved. The monarch heard
them as they wailed, And by the fire of grief assailed

For his dear son, he bowed his head, And all his sense and
memory fled.

Then were no fires of worship fed, Thick darkness o'er the sun
was spread. The cows their thirsty calves denied,

And elephants flung their food aside. [144]

Trisanku,³¹⁵ Jupiter looked dread, And Mercury and Mars the
red, In direful opposition met,

The glory of the moon beset.

The lunar stars withheld their light, The planets were no longer
bright, But meteors with their horrid glare, And dire Visákhás³¹⁶
lit the air.

As troubled Ocean heaves and raves

When Doom's wild tempest sweeps the waves, Thus all Ayodhyá
reeled and bent

When Ráma to the forest went. And chilling grief and dark
despair Fell suddenly on all men there.

Their wonted pastime all forgot,

Nor thought of food, or touched it not. Crowds in the royal
street were seen With weeping eye and troubled mien: No more
a people gay and glad,

Each head and heart was sick and sad. No more the cool wind
softly blew, The moon no more was fair to view, No more the
sun with genial glow

Cherished the world now plunged in woe. Sons, brothers,
husbands, wedded wives Forgot the ties that joined their lives;

No thought for kith and kin was spared, But all for only Ráma
cared.

And Ráma's friends who loved him best, Their minds disordered
and distressed. By the great burthen of their woes

315 See p. 72.

316 Four stars of the sixteenth lunar asterism.

Turned not to slumber or repose. Like Earth with all her hills
bereft Of Indra's guiding care.

Ayodhyá in her sorrow left

By him, the high souled heir,

Was bowed by fear and sorrow's force, And shook with many a
throes,

While warrior, elephant, and horse Sent up the cry of woe.

Canto XLII. Dasaratha's Lament.

While yet the dust was seen afar

That marked the course of Ráma's car, The glory of Ikshváku's
race

Turned not away his eager face. While yet his duteous son he
saw

He could not once his gaze withdraw, But rooted to the spot
remained

With eyes that after Ráma strained. But when that dust no more
he viewed, Fainting he fell by grief subdued.

To his right hand Kausalyá went, And ready aid the lady lent,
While Bharat's loving mother tried To raise him on the other
side.

The king, within whose ordered soul Justice and virtue held
control,

To Queen Kaikeyí turned and said, With every sense disquieted:

“Touch me not, thou whose soul can plot

All sin. Kaikeyí, touch me not. No loving wife, no friend to me, I
ne'er again would look on thee;

Ne'er from this day have aught to do With thee and all thy
retinue;

Thee whom no virtuous thoughts restrain, Whose selfish heart
seeks only gain.

The hand I laid in mine, O dame,

The steps we took around the flame,³¹⁷ And all that links thy life
to mine

Here and hereafter I resign. If Bharat too, thy darling son,

Joy in the rule thy art has won, Ne'er may the funeral offerings
paid

By his false hand approach my shade.”

Then while the dust upon him hung, The monarch to Kausalyá
clung,

And she with mournful steps and slow Turned to the palace,
worn with woe. As one whose hand has touched the fire, Or slain
a Bráhmaṇ in his ire,

He felt his heart with sorrow torn Still thinking of his son forlorn.
Each step was torture, as the road The traces of the chariot
showed, And as the shadowed sun grows dim So care and
anguish darkened him. He raised a cry, by woe distraught, As of
his son again he thought.

And judging that the car had sped Beyond the city, thus he said:

“I still behold the foot-prints made

³¹⁷ In the marriage service.

By the good horses that conveyed My son afar: these marks I
see,

But high-souled Ráma, where is he? Ah me, my son! my first and
best, On pleasant couches wont to rest,

With limbs perfumed with sandal, fanned By many a beauty's
tender hand:

Where will he lie with log or stone Beneath him for a pillow
thrown, To leave at morn his earthy bed, Neglected, and with
dust o'erspread,

As from the flood with sigh and pant Comes forth the husband
elephant?

The men who make the woods their home Shall see the long-
armed hero roam Roused from his bed, though lord of all, In
semblance of a friendless thrall.

[145] Janak's dear child who ne'er has met With aught save joy
and comfort yet, Will reach to-day the forest, worn And wearied
with the brakes of thorn. Ah, gentle girl, of woods unskilled,

How will her heart with dread be filled At the wild beasts' deep
roaring there, Whose voices lift the shuddering hair! Kaikeyí,
glory in thy gain,

And, widow queen, begin to reign: No will, no power to live have
I When my brave son no more is nigh."

Thus pouring forth laments, the king Girt by the people's
crowded ring, Entered the noble bower like one
New-bathed when funeral rites are done.

Where'er he looked naught met his gaze But empty houses,
courts, and ways.

Closed were the temples: countless feet No longer trod the royal
street,

And thinking of his son he viewed Men weak and worn and woe-
subdued. As sinks the sun into a cloud,

So passed he on, and wept aloud, Within that house no more to
be The dwelling of the banished three, Brave Ráma, his Vedehan
bride,

And Lakshmar, by his brother's side: Like broad still waters,
when the king Of all the birds that ply the wing

Has swooped from heaven and borne away The glittering
snakes that made them gay. With choking sobs and voice half
spent The king renewed his sad lament:

With broken utterance faint and low Scarce could he speak
these words of woe: "My steps to Ráma's mother guide,

And place me by Kausalyá's side: There, only there my heart
may know Some little respite from my woe."

The warders of the palace led

The monarch, when his words were said, To Queen Kausalyá's
bower, and there Laid him with reverential care.

But while he rested on the bed Still was his soul disquieted.

In grief he tossed his arms on high Lamenting with a piteous
cry:

“O Ráma, Ráma,” thus said he,

“My son, thou hast forsaken me. High bliss awaits those
favoured men Left living in Ayodhyá then,

Whose eyes shall see my son once more Returning when the
time is o'er.”

Then came the night, whose hated gloom Fell on him like the
night of doom.

At midnight Dasaratha cried

To Queen Kausalyá by his side:

“I see thee not, Kausalyá; lay Thy gentle hand in mine, I pray.

When Ráma left his home my sight Went with him, nor returns
to-night.”

Canto XLIII. Kausalyá's Lament.

Kausalyá saw the monarch lie

With drooping frame and failing eye, And for her banished son
distressed With these sad words her lord addressed: "Kaikeyí,
cruel, false, and vile

Has cast the venom of her guile On Ráma lord of men, and she
Will ravage like a snake set free;

And more and more my soul alarm, Like a dire serpent bent on
harm, For triumph crowns each dark intent, And Ráma to the
wild is sent.

Ah, were he doomed but here to stray Begging his food from
day to day, Or do, enslaved, Kaikeyí's will,

Canto XLIII. Kausalyá's Lament. 505

This were a boon, a comfort still. But she, as chose her cruel
hate, Has hurled him from his high estate,

As Bráhmans when the moon is new Cast to the ground the
demons' due.³¹⁸ The long-armed hero, like the lord

Of Nágas, with his bow and sword Begins, I ween, his forest life
With Lakshmar, and his faithful wife. Ah, how will fare the exiles
now, Whom, moved by Queen Kaikeyí, thou Hast sent in forests
to abide,

Bred in delights, by woe untried?

Far banished when their lives are young, With the fair fruit
before them hung, Deprived of all their rank that suits, How will
they live on grain and roots? O, that my years of woe were
passed, And the glad hour were come at last When I shall see
my children dear, Ráma, his wife, and Lakshmar, here!

When shall Ayodhyá, wild with glee, Again those mighty heroes
see,

And decked with wreaths her banners wave To welcome home
the true and brave?

When will the beautiful city view With happy eyes the lordly two
Returning, joyful as the main When the dear moon is full again?

When, like some mighty bull who leads The cow exulting through
the meads, Will Ráma through the city ride,

318 The husks and chaff of the rice offered to the Gods.

Strong-armed, with Sítá at his side? When will ten thousand
thousand meet And crowd Ayodhyá's royal street, And grain in
joyous welcome throw Upon my sons who tame the foe?

When with delight shall youthful bands

[146] Of Bráhman maidens in their hands Bear fruit and flowers
in goodly show, And circling round Ayodhyá go?

With ripened judgment of a sage, And godlike in his blooming
age, When shall my virtuous son appear, Like kindly rain, our
hearts to cheer? Ah, in a former life, I ween,

This hand of mine, most base and mean, Has dried the udders
of the kine

And left the thirsty calves to pine. Hence, as the lion robs the
cow, Kaikeyí makes me childless now, Exulting from her feeble
foe

To rend the son she cherished so. I had but him, in Scripture
skilled,

With every grace his soul was filled. Now not a joy has life to
give,

And robbed of him I would not live: Yea, all my days are dark
and drear If he, my darling, be not near,

And Lakshmar, brave, my heart to cheer. As for my son I mourn
and yearn,

The quenchless flames of anguish burn And kill me with the
pain,
As in the summer's noontide blaze The glorious Day-God with
his rays
Consumes the parching plain.”

Canto XLIV. Sumitrá's Speech.

Kausalyá ceased her sad lament,
Of beauteous dames most excellent. Sumitrá who to duty clave,
In righteous words this answer gave: “Dear Queen, all noble
virtues grace Thy son, of men the first in place.
Why dost thou shed these tears of woe With bitter grief
lamenting so?
If Ráma, leaving royal sway
Has hastened to the woods away, 'Tis for his high-souled
father's sake That he his promise may not break. He to the path
of duty clings
Which lordly fruit hereafter brings— The path to which the
righteous cleave—

For him, dear Queen, thou shouldst not grieve. And Lakshmar,
too, the blameless-souled,

The same high course with him will hold, And mighty bliss on
him shall wait,

So tenderly compassionate. And Sítá, bred with tender care,

Well knows what toils await her there, But in her love she will not
part

From Ráma of the virtuous heart. Now has thy son through all
the world The banner of his fame unfurled; True, modest, careful
of his vow, What has he left to aim at now?

The sun will mark his mighty soul, His wisdom, sweetness, self-
control,

Will spare from pain his face and limb, And with soft radiance
shine for him.

For him through forest glades shall spring A soft auspicious
breeze, and bring

Its tempered heat and cold to play Around him ever night and
day.

The pure cold moonbeams shall delight The hero as he sleeps at
night,

And soothe him with the soft caress Of a fond parent's
tenderness.

To him, the bravest of the brave,

His heavenly arms the Bráhmaṇ gave, When fierce Suváhu dyed
the plain With his life-blood by Ráma slain.

Still trusting to his own right arm Thy hero son will fear no harm:
As in his father's palace, he

In the wild woods will dauntless be. Whene'er he lets his arrows
fly

His stricken foemen fall and die: And is that prince of peerless
worth

Too weak to keep and sway the earth? His sweet pure soul, his
beauty's charm, His hero heart, his warlike arm,

Will soon redeem his rightful reign When from the woods he
comes again. The Bráhmaṇs on the prince's head King-making
drops shall quickly shed, And Sítá, Earth, and Fortune share The
glories which await the heir.

For him, when forth his chariot swept, The crowd that thronged
Ayodhyá wept, With agonizing woe distressed.

With him in hermít's mantle dressed In guise of Sítá Lakshmi
went,

And none his glory may prevent.

Yea, naught to him is high or hard, Before whose steps, to be
his guard, Lakshmar,, the best who draws the bow, With spear,
shaft, sword rejoiced to go. His wanderings in the forest o'er,
Thine eyes shall see thy son once more, Quit thy faint heart, thy
grief dispel, For this, O Queen, is truth I tell.

Thy son returning, moonlike, thence, Shall at thy feet do
reverence,

And, blest and blameless lady, thou Shalt see his head to touch
them bow, Yea, thou shalt see thy son made king When he
returns with triumphing, And how thy happy eyes will brim With
tears of joy to look on him!

Thou, blameless lady, shouldst the whole Of the sad people here
console:

Why in thy tender heart allow This bitter grief to harbour now?
As the long banks of cloud distil

Their water when they see the hill, [147]

So shall the drops of rapture run From thy glad eyes to see thy
son Returning, as he lowly bends

To greet thee, girt by all his friends.”

Thus soothing, kindly eloquent, With every hopeful argument
Kausalyá's heart by sorrow rent,

Fair Queen Sumitrá ceased.

Kausalyá heard each pleasant plea, And grief began to leave
her free, As the light clouds of autumn flee,

Their watery stores decreased.

Canto XLV. The Tamasá.

Their tender love the people drew To follow Ráma brave and
true, The high-souled hero, as he went Forth from his home to
banishment.

The king himself his friends obeyed,

And turned him homeward as they prayed. But yet the people
turned not back,

Still close on Ráma's chariot track. For they who in Ayodhyá
dwelt For him such fond affection felt,

Decked with all grace and glories high, The dear full moon of
every eye.

Though much his people prayed and wept, Kakutstha's son his
purpose kept,

And still his journey would pursue To keep the king his father
true.

Deep in the hero's bosom sank

Their love, whose signs his glad eye drank. He spoke to cheer
them, as his own

Dear children, in a loving tone:

“If ye would grant my fond desire, Give Bharat now that love
entire And reverence shown to me by all Who dwell within
Ayodhyá's wall. For he, Kaikeyí's darling son,

His virtuous career will run, And ever bound by duty's chain

Consult your weal and bliss and gain. In judgment old, in years
a child, With hero virtues meek and mild,

A fitting lord is he to cheer

His people and remove their fear. In him all kingly gifts abound,
More noble than in me are found:

Imperial prince, well proved and tried— Obey him as your lord
and guide.

And grant, I pray, the boon I ask: To please the king be still your task,
That his fond heart, while I remain Far in the wood, may feel no pain.”

The more he showed his will to tread The path where filial duty led,

The more the people, round him thronged, For their dear Ráma’s empire longed.

Still more attached his followers grew, As Ráma, with his brother, drew

The people with his virtues’ ties, Lamenting all with tear-dimmed eyes.
The saintly twice-born, triply old

In glory, knowledge, seasons told,

With hoary heads that shook and bowed, Their voices raised and spake aloud:

“O steeds, who best and noblest are, Who whirl so swiftly Ráma’s car,
Go not, return: we call on you:

Be to your master kind and true.

For speechless things are swift to hear, And naught can match a horse’s ear,

O generous steeds, return, when thus You hear the cry of all of us.

Each vow he keeps most firm and sure, And duty makes his
spirit pure.

Back with our chief! not wood-ward hence; Back to his royal
residence!”

Soon as he saw the aged band. Exclaiming in their misery,
stand, And their sad cries around him rang, Swift from his
chariot Ráma sprang. Then, still upon his journey bent, With Sítá
and with Lakshmar, went The hero by the old men’s side Suiting
to theirs his shortened stride.

He could not pass the twice-born throng As weariedly they
walked along:

With pitying heart, with tender eye, He could not in his chariot
fly.

When the steps of Ráma viewed That still his onward course
pursued,

Woe shook the troubled heart of each,

And burnt with grief they spoke this speech—

“With thee, O Ráma, to the wood All Bráhmans go and
Bráhmanhood:

Borne on our aged shoulders, see, Our fires of worship go with thee. Bright canopies that lend their shade In Vájapeya³¹⁹ rites displayed,

In plenteous store are borne behind Like cloudlets in the autumn wind. No shelter from the sun hast thou, And, lest his fury burn thy brow, These sacrificial shades we bear

³¹⁹ An important sacrifice at which seventeen victims were immolated.

Shall aid thee in the noontide glare. Our hearts, who ever loved to pore On sacred text and Vedic lore, Now all to thee, beloved, turn,

And for a life in forests yearn. Deep in our aged bosoms lies The Vedas' lore, the wealth we prize, There still, like wives at home, shall dwell,

Whose love and truth protect them well. [148]

To follow thee our hearts are bent; We need not plan or argument.

All else in duty's law we slight,

For following thee is following right. O noble Prince, retrace thy way:

O, hear us, Ráma, as we lay,

With many tears and many prayers, Our aged heads and swan-
white hairs Low in the dust before thy feet;

O, hear us, Ráma, we entreat.

Full many of these who with thee run, Their sacred rites had just
begun.

Unfinished yet those rites remain; But finished if thou turn
again.

All rooted life and things that move To thee their deep affection
prove.

To them, when warmed by love, they glow And sue to thee,
some favour show,

Each lowly bush, each towering tree Would follow too for love of
thee. Bound by its root it must remain; But—all it can—its
boughs complain, As when the wild wind rushes by

It tells its woe in groan and sigh.

No more through air the gay birds flit,

But, foodless, melancholy sit Together on the branch and call

To thee whose kind heart feels for all.”

As wailed the aged Bráhmans, bent To turn him back, with wild
lament, Seemed Tamasá herself to aid, Checking his progress,
as they prayed. Sumantra from the chariot freed

With ready hand each weary steed;

He groomed them with the utmost heed,

Their limbs he bathed and dried, Then led them forth to drink
and feed At pleasure in the grassy mead

That fringed the river side.

Canto XLVI. The Halt.

When Ráma, chief of Raghu's race, Arrived at that delightful
place,

He looked on Sítá first, and then

To Lakshmar, spake the lord of men: "Now first the shades of
night descend Since to the wilds our steps we bend. Joy to thee,
brother! do not grieve

For our dear home and all we leave. The woods unpeopled seem
to weep Around us, as their tenants creep

Or fly to lair and den and nest,
Both bird and beast, to seek their rest.

Methinks Ayodhyá's royal town Where dwells my sire of high
renown, With all her men and dames to-night
Will mourn us vanished from their sight. For, by his virtues won,
they cling
In fond affection to their king,
And thee and me, O brave and true, And Bharat and Satrughna
too.

I for my sire and mother feel Deep sorrow o'er my bosom steal,
Lest mourning us, oppressed with fears, They blind their eyes
with endless tears. Yet Bharat's duteous love will show Sweet
comfort in their hours of woe, And with kind words their hearts
sustain, Suggesting duty, bliss, and gain.

I mourn my parents now no more: I count dear Bharat's virtues
o'er, And his kind love and care dispel The doubts I had, and all
is well.

And thou thy duty wouldst not shun, And, following me, hast
nobly done; Else, bravest, I should need a band Around my wife
as guard to stand. On this first night, my thirst to slake, Some
water only will I take:

Thus, brother, thus my will decides, Though varied store the
wood provides.”

Thus having said to Lakshmar,, he Addressed in turn Sumantra:
“Be Most diligent to-night, my friend, And with due care thy
horses tend.” The sun had set: Sumantra tied

His noble horses side by side,

Gave store of grass with liberal hand, And rested near them on
the strand. Each paid the holy evening rite,

And when around them fell the night, The charioteer, with
Lakshmar,'s aid, A lowly bed for Ráma laid.

To Lakshmar, Ráma bade adieu, And then by Sítá's side he
threw His limbs upon the leafy bed

Their care upon the bank had spread. When Lakshmar, saw the
couple slept, Still on the strand his watch he kept, Still with
Sumantra there conversed, And Ráma's varied gifts rehearsed.

All night he watched, nor sought repose, Till on the earth the sun
arose:

With him Sumantra stayed awake, And still of Ráma's virtues
spake. Thus, near the river's grassy shore

Which herds unnumbered wandered o'er, Repose, untroubled,
Ráma found,

And all the people lay around. The glorious hero left his bed,
Looked on the sleeping crowd, and said To Lakshmar,, whom
each lucky line Marked out for bliss with surest sign:

“O brother Lakshmar,, look on these Reclining at the roots of
trees;

All care of house and home resigned, Caring for us with heart
and mind,

[149] These people of the city yearn

To see us to our home return:

To quit their lives will they consent, But never leave their firm
intent.

Come, while they all unconscious sleep, Let us upon the chariot
leap,

And swiftly on our journey speed Where naught our progress
may impede, That these fond citizens who roam

Far from Ikshváku's ancient home,

No more may sleep 'neath bush and tree, Following still for love of me.

A prince with tender care should heal The self-brought woes his people feel, And never let his subjects share

The burthen he is forced to bear.”

Then Lakshmar, to the chief replied, Who stood like Justice by his side: “Thy rede, O sage, I well commend: Without delay the car ascend.”

Then Ráma to Sumantra spoke: “Thy rapid steeds, I pray thee, yoke. Hence to the forest will I go:

Away, my lord, and be not slow.”

Sumantra, urged to utmost speed, Yoked to the car each generous steed, And then, with hand to hand applied, He came before the chief and cried:

“Hail, Prince, whom mighty arms adorn, Hail, bravest of the chariot-borne!

With Sítá and thy brother thou Mayst mount: the car is ready now.”

The hero clomb the car with haste: His bow and gear within
were placed, And quick the eddying flood he passed Of Tamasă
whose waves run fast.

Soon as he touched the farther side, That strong-armed hero,
glorified, He found a road both wide and clear,

Where e'en the timid naught could fear. Then, that the crowd
might be misled, Thus Ráma to Sumantra said:

“Speed north a while, then hasten back, Returning in thy former
track,

That so the people may not learn The course I follow: drive and
turn.”

Sumantra, at the chief's behest, Quick to the task himself
addressed; Then near to Ráma came, and showed The chariot
ready for the road.

With Sítá, then, the princely two, Who o'er the line of Raghu
threw A glory ever bright and new,

Upon the chariot stood.

Sumantra fast and faster drove

His horses, who in fleetness strove Still onward to the distant
grove,

The hermit-haunted wood.

Canto XLVII. The Citizens' Return.

Canto XLVII. The Citizens' Return. 519

The people, when the morn shone fair, Arose to find no Ráma
there.

Then fear and numbing grief subdued The senses of the
multitude.

The woe-born tears were running fast As all around their eyes
they cast, And sadly looked, but found no trace Of Ráma,
searching every place.

Bereft of Ráma good and wise,

With drooping cheer and weeping eyes, Each woe-distracted
sage gave vent

To sorrow in his wild lament:

“Woe worth the sleep that stole our sense With its beguiling
influence,

That now we look in vain for him

Of the broad chest and stalwart limb! How could the strong-
armed hero, thus Deceiving all, abandon us?

His people so devoted see,

Yet to the woods, a hermit, flee? How can he, wont our hearts to
cheer, As a fond sire his children dear,— How can the pride of
Raghu's race Fly from us to some desert place!

Here let us all for death prepare, Or on the last great journey
fare;³²⁰ Of Ráma our dear lord bereft, What profit in our lives is
left?

Huge trunks of trees around us lie, With roots and branches sere
and dry, Come let us set these logs on fire And throw our bodies
on the pyre.

³²⁰ The great pilgrimage to the Himálayas, in order to die there.

What shall we speak? How can we say We followed Ráma on his
way,

The mighty chief whose arm is strong, Who sweetly speaks, who
thinks no wrong? Ayodhyá's town with sorrow dumb, Without
our lord will see us come,

And hopeless misery will strike Elder, and child, and dame alike.

Forth with that peerless chief we came, Whose mighty heart is
aye the same: How, reft of him we love, shall we Returning dare
that town to see?”

Complaining thus with varied cry They tossed their aged arms
on high,

And their sad hearts with grief were wrung, Like cows who
sorrow for their young.

A while they followed on the road Which traces of his chariot
showed, But when at length those traces failed,

[150] A deep despair their hearts assailed. The chariot marks no
more discerned, The hopeless sages backward turned: “Ah, what
is this? What can we more? Fate stops the way, and all is o’er.”
With wearied hearts, in grief and shame They took the road by
which they came, And reached Ayodhyá’s city, where From side
to side was naught but care. With troubled spirits quite cast
down They looked upon the royal town,

And from their eyes, oppressed with woe, Their tears again
began to flow.

Of Ráma reft, the city wore

No look of beauty as before, Like a dull river or a lake

By Garu9 robbed of every snake. Dark, dismal as the moonless
sky, Or as a sea whose bed is dry,
So sad, to every pleasure dead, They saw the town, disquieted.
On to their houses, high and vast,
Where stores of precious wealth were massed, The melancholy
Bráhmans passed,
Their hearts with anguish cleft: Aloof from all, they came not
near To stranger or to kinsman dear, Showing in faces blank
and drear
That not one joy was left.

Canto XLVIII. The Women's Lament.

When those who forth with Ráma went Back to the town their
steps had bent,
It seemed that death had touched and chilled Those hearts
which piercing sorrow filled. Each to his several mansion came,
And girt by children and his dame, From his sad eyes the water
shed That o'er his cheek in torrents spread. All joy was fled:
oppressed with cares No bustling trader showed his wares. Each

shop had lost its brilliant look, Each householder forbore to
cook.

No hand with joy its earnings told,

None cared to win a wealth of gold, And scarce the youthful
mother smiled To see her first, her new-born child.

In every house a woman wailed, And her returning lord assailed

With keen taunt piercing like the steel That bids the tusked
monster kneel: "What now to them is wedded dame, What
house and home and dearest aim, Or son, or bliss, or gathered
store, Whose eyes on Ráma look no more!

There is but one in all the earth, One man alone of real worth,

Lakshmar,, who follows, true and good, Ráma, with Sítá,
through the wood.

Made holy for all time we deem

Each pool and fountain, lake and stream, If great Kakutstha's
son shall choose Their water for his bath to use.

Each forest, dark with lovely trees, Shall yearn Kakutstha's son
to please; Each mountain peak and woody hill, Each mighty
flood and mazy rill, Each rocky height, each shady grove Where
the blest feet of Ráma rove, Shall gladly welcome with the best
Of all they have their honoured guest.

The trees that clustering blossoms bear, And bright-hued buds
to gem their hair, The heart of Ráma shall delight,
And cheer him on the breezy height. For him the upland slopes
will show The fairest roots and fruit that grow, And all their
wealth before him fling

Ere the due hour of ripening.

For him each earth-upholding hill Its crystal water shall distil,
And all its floods shall be displayed In many a thousand-hued
cascade. Where Ráma stands is naught to fear, No danger
comes if he be near;

For all who live on him depend,

The world's support, and lord, and friend. Ere in too distant wilds
he stray,

Let us to Ráma speed away,

For rich reward on those will wait Who serve a prince of soul so
great. We will attend on Sítá there;

Be Raghu's son your special care.”

The city dames, with grief distressed, Thus once again their
lords addressed: “Ráma shall be your guard and guide, And Sítá
will for us provide.

For who would care to linger here, Where all is sad and dark and drear?
Who, mid the mourners, hope for bliss In a poor soulless town like this?

If Queen Kaikeyí's treacherous sin, Our lord expelled, the kingdom win,
We heed not sons or golden store, Our life itself we prize no more.

If she, seduced by lust of sway, Her lord and son could cast away,

Whom would she leave unharmed, the base Defiler of her royal race?

We swear it by our children dear, We will not dwell as servants here;

If Queen Kaikeyí live to reign, We will not in her realm remain.

Bowed down by her oppressive hand, The helpless, lordless, godless land,
Cursed for Kaikeyí's guilt will fall,

[151] And swift destruction seize it all. For, Ráma forced from home to fly,
The king his sire will surely die,

And when the king has breathed his last Ruin will doubtless follow fast.

Sad, robbed of merits, drug the cup And drink the poisoned mixture up,
Or share the exiled Ráma's lot,

Or seek some land that knows her not. No reason, but a false
pretence

Drove Ráma, Sítá, Lakshmar, hence, And we to Bharat have
been given Like cattle to the shambles driven.”

While in each house the women, pained At loss of Ráma, still
complained,

Sank to his rest the Lord of Day,

And night through all the sky held sway. The fires of worship all
were cold,

No text was hummed, no tale was told, And shades of midnight
gloom came down Enveloping the mournful town.

Still, sick at heart, the women shed, As for a son or husband
fled,

For Ráma tears, disquieted: No child was loved as he.

And all Ayodhyá, where the feast, Music, and song, and dance
had ceased,

And merriment and glee,

Canto XLIX. The Crossing Of The Rivers. 525

Where every merchant's store was closed That erst its glittering
wares exposed,
Was like a dried up sea.

Canto XLIX. The Crossing Of The Rivers.

Now Ráma, ere the night was fled, O'er many a league of road
had sped, Till, as his course he onward held,

The morn the shades of night dispelled. The rites of holy dawn
he paid,

And all the country round surveyed. He saw, as still he hurried
through

With steeds which swift as arrows flew, Hamlets and groves
with blossoms fair, And fields which showed the tillers' care,
While from the clustered dwellings near The words of peasants
reached his ear: "Fie on our lord the king, whose soul

Is yielded up to love's control! Fie on the vile Kaikeyí! Shame On
that malicious sinful dame, Who, keenly bent on cruel deeds,

No bounds of right and virtue heeds, But with her wicked art
has sent

So good a prince to banishment, Wise, tender-hearted, ruling
well His senses, in the woods to dwell. Ah cruel king! his heart of
steel For his own son no love could feel, Who with the sinless
Ráma parts,

The darling of the people's hearts.”

These words he heard the peasants say, Who dwelt in hamlets
by the way,

And, lord of all the realm by right, Through Kosala pursued his
flight. Through the auspicious flood, at last, Of Vedasrutí's
stream he passed, And onward to the place he sped

By Saint Agastya tenanted.

Still on for many an hour he hied,

And crossed the stream whose cooling tide Rolls onward till she
meets the sea,

The herd-frequented Gomatí.³²¹

Borne by his rapid horses o'er,

He reached that river's further shore.

And Syandiká's, whose swan-loved stream Resounded with the
peacock's scream.

Then as he journeyed on his road To his Videhan bride he
showed The populous land which Manu old To King Ikshváku
gave to hold.

The glorious prince, the lord of men Looked on the charioteer,
and then Voiced like a wild swan, loud and clear, He spake
these words and bade him hear: “When shall I, with returning
feet

My father and my mother meet? When shall I lead the hunt
once more In bloomy woods on Sarjú’s shore?

Most eagerly I long to ride Urging the chase on Sarjú’s side.

For royal saints have seen no blame

321 Known to Europeans as the Goomtee.

In this, the monarch’s matchless game.”

Thus speeding on,—no rest or stay,— Ikshváku’s son pursued his
way.

Off his sweet voice the silence broke, And thus on varied themes
he spoke.

Canto L. The Halt Under The Ingudí.322

So through the wide and fair extent Of Kosala the hero went.

Then toward Ayodhyá back he gazed, And cried, with suppliant hands upraised: “Farewell, dear city, first in place, Protected by Kakutstha’s race!

And Gods, who in thy temples dwell, And keep thine ancient citadel!

I from his debt my sire will free,

Thy well-loved towers again will see, And, coming from my wild retreat, My mother and my father meet.”

Then burning grief inflamed his eye, As his right arm he raised on high,

And, while hot tears his cheek bedewed, Addressed the mournful multitude:

“By love and tender pity moved,

Your love for me you well have proved; Now turn again with joy, and win Success in all your hands begin.”

[152]

322 A tree, commonly called Ingua.

Before the high souled chief they bent, With circling steps
around him went, And then with bitter wailing, they Departed
each his several way.

Like the great sun engulfed by night, The hero sped beyond
their sight, While still the people mourned his fate And wept
aloud disconsolate.

The car-borne chieftain passed the bound Of Kosala's delightful
ground,

Where grain and riches bless the land, And people give with
liberal hand:

A lovely realm unvexed by fear,

Where countless shrines and stakes³²³ appear: Where mango-
groves and gardens grow,

And streams of pleasant water flow: Where dwells content a
well-fed race, And countless kine the meadows grace: Filled with
the voice of praise and prayer: Each hamlet worth a monarch's
care.

Before him three-pathed Gangá rolled Her heavenly waters
bright and cold;

O'er her pure breast no weeds were spread, Her banks were
hermit-visited.

The car-borne hero saw the tide That ran with eddies multiplied,
And thus the charioteer addressed: "Here on the bank to-day
we rest. Not distant from the river, see!

There grows a lofty Ingudí

With blossoms thick on every spray: There rest we, charioteer,
to-day.

323 Sacrificial posts to which the victims were tied.

I on the queen of floods will gaze, Whose holy stream has
highest praise,

Where deer, and bird, and glittering snake, God, Daitya, bard
their pastime take."

Sumantra, Lakshmar, gave assent, And with the steeds they
thither went. When Ráma reached the lovely tree, With Sítá and
with Lakshmar,, he Alighted from the car: with speed Sumantra
loosed each weary steed.

And, hand to hand in reverence laid, Stood near to Ráma in the
shade.

Ráma's dear friend, renowned by fame, Who of Nisháda lineage came,

Guha, the mighty chief, adored Through all the land as sovereign lord, Soon as he heard that prince renowned Was resting on Nisháda ground, Begirt by counsellor and peer

And many an honoured friend drew near. Soon as the monarch came in view, Ráma and Lakshmar, toward him flew.

Then Guha, at the sight distressed, His arms around the hero pressed, Laid both his hands upon his head Bowed to those lotus feet, and said: "O Ráma, make thy wishes known, And be this kingdom as thine own. Who, mighty-armed, will ever see A guest so dear as thou to me?"

He placed before him dainty fare Of every flavour, rich and rare,

Brought forth the gift for honoured guest, And thus again the chief addressed:

"Welcome, dear Prince, whose arms are strong; These lands and all to thee belong.

Thy servants we, our lord art thou; Begin, good king, thine empire now. See, various food before thee placed, And cups to drink and sweets to taste For thee soft beds are hither borne, And for thy horses grass and corn."

To Guha as he pressed and prayed, Thus Raghu's son his
answer made: "Twas aye thy care my heart to please With
honour, love, and courtesies,
And friendship brings thee now to greet Thy guest thus humbly
on thy feet."

Again the hero spake, as round The king his shapely arms he
wound: "Guha, I see that all is well
With thee and those who with thee dwell; That health and bliss
and wealth attend Thy realm, thyself, and every friend.
But all these friendly gifts of thine, Bound to refuse, I must
decline.
Grass, bark, and hide my only wear, And woodland roots and
fruit my fare, On duty all my heart is set;
I seek the woods, an anchoret. A little grass and corn to feed
The horses—this is all I need.

So by this favour, King, alone Shall honour due to me be shown.
For these good steeds who brought me here Are to my sire
supremely dear;

And kind attention paid to these Will honour me and highly
please.”

Then Guha quickly bade his train Give water to the steeds, and
grain. And Ráma, ere the night grew dark, Paid evening rites in
dress of bark, And tasted water, on the strand,

Drawn from the stream by Lakshmar,'s hand. And Lakshmar,
with observance meet

Bathed his beloved brother's feet, [153]

Who rested with his Maithil spouse: Then sat him down 'neath
distant boughs. And Guha with his bow sat near

To Lakshmar, and the charioteer, And with the prince
conversing kept His faithful watch while Ráma slept. As
Dasaratha's glorious heir,

Of lofty soul and wisdom rare, Reclining with his Sítá there

Beside the river lay—

He who no troubles e'er had seen, Whose life a life of bliss had
been— That night beneath the branches green

Passed pleasantly away.

Canto LI. Lakshman's Lament.

As Lakshmar, still his vigil held By unaffected love impelled,
Guha, whose heart the sight distressed, With words like these
the prince addressed: "Beloved youth, this pleasant bed
Was brought for thee, for thee is spread; On this, my Prince,
thine eyelids close, And heal fatigue with sweet repose.

My men are all to labour trained,

But hardship thou hast ne'er sustained. All we this night our
watch will keep And guard Kakutstha's son asleep.

In all the world there breathes not one More dear to me than
Raghu's son.

The words I speak, heroic youth, Are true: I swear it by my truth.

Through his dear grace supreme renown Will, so I trust, my
wishes crown.

So shall my life rich store obtain Of merit, blest with joy and
gain. While Raghu's son and Sítá lie Entranced in happy
slumber, I Will, with my trusty bow in hand,

Guard my dear friend with all my band. To me, who oft these
forests range,
Is naught therein or new or strange. We could with equal might
oppose A four-fold army led by foes.”

Canto LI. Lakshman's Lament. 533

Then royal Lakshmar, made reply: “With thee to stand as
guardian nigh, Whose faithful soul regards the right, Fearless
we well might rest to-night. But how, when Ráma lays his head
With Sítá on his lowly bed,—

How can I sleep? how can I care

For life, or aught that's bright and fair? Behold the conquering
chief, whose might Is match for Gods and fiends in fight; With
Sítá now he rests his head

Asleep on grass beneath him spread. Won by devotion, text,
and prayer, And many a rite performed with care, Chief of our
father's sons he shines

Well marked, like him, with favouring signs. Brief, brief the
monarch's life will be

Now his dear son is forced to flee; And quickly will the widowed
state Mourn for her lord disconsolate.

Each mourner there has wept her fill; The cries of anguish now
are still:

In the king's hall each dame, o'ercome With weariness of woe is
dumb.

This first sad night of grief, I ween, Will do to death each
sorrowing queen: Scarce is Kausalyá left alive;

My mother, too, can scarce survive. If when her heart is fain to
break, She lingers for Satrugna's sake, Kausalyá, mother of the
chief,

Must sink beneath the chilling grief.

That town which countless thousands fill, Whose hearts with
love of Ráma thrill,—

The world's delight, so rich and fair,— Grieved for the king, his
death will share. The hopes he fondly cherished, crossed
Ayodhyá's throne to Ráma lost,—

With mournful cries, Too late, too late! The king my sire will meet
his fate.

And when my sire has passed away, Most happy in their lot are
they, Allowed, with every pious care, Part in his funeral rites to
bear.

And O, may we with joy at last,— These years of forest exile
past,— Turn to Ayodhyá's town to dwell
With him who keeps his promise well!”

While thus the hero mighty-souled, In wild lament his sorrow
told,

Faint with the load that on him lay, The hours of darkness
passed away. As thus the prince, impelled by zeal For his loved
brother, prompt to feel Strong yearnings for the people's weal,
His words of truth outspake, King Guha grieved to see his woe,
Heart-stricken, gave his tears to flow, Tormented by the
common blow,
Sad, as a wounded snake.

Canto LII. The Crossing Of Gangá.

Soon as the shades of night had fled, Uprising from his lowly bed,

Ráma the famous, broad of chest,

His brother Lakshmar, thus addressed:

“Now swift upsprings the Lord of Light,

And fled is venerable night. [154]

That dark-winged bird the Koil now Is calling from the topmost bough, And sounding from the thicket nigh Is heard the peacock's early cry.

Come, cross the flood that seeks the sea, The swiftly flowing Jáhnaví.”³²⁴

King Guha heard his speech, agreed, And called his minister with speed:

“A boat,” he cried, “swift, strong, and fair, With rudder, oars, and men, prepare,

And place it ready by the shore To bear the pilgrims quickly o'er.”

Thus Guha spake: his followers all Bestirred them at their master's call; Then told the king that ready manned A gay boat waited near the strand.

Then Guha, hand to hand applied, With reverence thus to Ráma
cried: “The boat is ready by the shore: How, tell me, can I aid
thee more? O lord of men, it waits for thee

To cross the flood that seeks the sea. O godlike keeper of thy
vow, Embark: the boat is ready now.”

324 Daughter of Jahnu, a name of the Ganges. See p. 55.

Then Ráma, lord of glory high, Thus to King Guha made reply:
“Thanks for thy gracious care, my lord: Now let the gear be
placed on board.” Each bow-armed chief, in mail encased,
Bound sword and quiver to his waist, And then with Sítá near
them hied Down the broad river’s shelving side.

Then with raised palms the charioteer, In lowly reverence
drawing near, Cried thus to Ráma good and true: “Now what
remains for me to do?”

With his right hand, while answering The hero touched his friend:

“Go back,” he said, “and on the king With watchful care attend.

Thus far, Sumantra, thou wast guide; Now to Ayodhyá turn,” he
cried: “Hence seek we leaving steeds and car, On foot the wood
that stretches far.”

Sumantra, when, with grieving heart, He heard the hero bid him part,

Thus to the bravest of the brave, Ikshváku's son, his answer gave: "In all the world men tell of naught,

To match thy deed, by heroes wrought— Thus with thy brother and thy wife Thrall-like to lead a forest life.

No meet reward of fruit repays Thy holy lore, thy saintlike days, Thy tender soul, thy love of truth, If woe like this afflicts thy youth. Thou, roaming under forest boughs

With thy dear brother and thy spouse Shalt richer meed of glory gain

Than if three worlds confessed thy reign. Sad is our fate, O Ráma: we,

Abandoned and repelled by thee, Must serve as thralls Kaikeyí's will, Imperious, wicked, born to ill."

Thus cried the faithful charioteer, As Raghu's son, in rede his peer, Was fast departing on his road,— And long his tears of anguish flowed.

But Ráma, when those tears were dried His lips with water
purified,

And in soft accents, sweet and clear, Again addressed the
charioteer:

“I find no heart, my friend, like thine, So faithful to Ikshváku’s
line.

Still first in view this object keep, That ne’er for me my sire may
weep. For he, the world’s far-ruling king, Is old, and wild with
sorrow’s sting;

With love’s great burthen worn and weak: Deem this the cause
that thus I speak Whate’er the high-souled king decrees His
loved Kaikeyí’s heart to please,

Yea, be his order what it may, Without demur thou must obey,

For this alone great monarchs reign, That ne’er a wish be
formed in vain. Then, O Sumantra, well provide That by no check
the king be tried: Nor let his heart in sorrow pine:

This care, my faithful friend, be thine.

The honoured king my father greet, And thus for me my words
repeat To him whose senses are controlled, Untired till now by
grief, and old; “I, Sítá, Lakshmar, sorrow not,

O Monarch, for our altered lot: The same to us, if here we roam,
Or if Ayodhyá be our home,

The fourteen years will quickly fly, The happy hour will soon be
nigh When thou, my lord, again shalt see Lakshmar,, the Maithil
dame, and me.” Thus having soothed, O charioteer, My father
and my mother dear,

Let all the queens my message learn, But to Kaikeyí chiefly turn.

With loving blessings from the three, From Lakshmar,, Sítá, and
from me, My mother, Queen Kausalyá, greet With reverence to
her sacred feet.

And add this prayer of mine: “O King; Send quickly forth and
Bharat bring, And set him on the royal throne Which thy decree
has made his own. When he upon the throne is placed,

When thy fond arms are round him laced,

Thine aged heart will cease to ache

[155] With bitter pangs for Râma’s sake.” And say to Bharat:

“See thou treat The queens with all observance meet: What care
the king receives, the same Show thou alike to every dame.

Obedience to thy father’s will

Who chooses thee the throne to fill,

Will earn for thee a store of bliss Both in the world to come and this.’ ”

Thus Ráma bade Sumantra go With thoughtful care instructed so. Sumantra all his message heard, And spake again, by passion stirred: “O, should deep feeling mar in aught The speech by fond devotion taught, Forgive whate’er I wildly speak:

My love is strong, my tongue is weak. How shall I, if deprived of thee, Return that mournful town to see: Where sick at heart the people are Because their Ráma roams afar.

Woe will be theirs too deep to brook When on the empty car they look,

As when from hosts, whose chiefs are slain, One charioteer comes home again.

This very day, I ween, is food Forsworn by all the multitude, Thinking that thou, with hosts to aid, Art dwelling in the wild wood’s shade. The great despair, the shriek of woe They uttered when they saw thee go, Will, when I come with none beside, A hundred-fold be multiplied.

How to Kausalyá can I say:

“O Queen, I took thy son away, And with thy brother left him well: Weep not for him; thy woe dispel?” So false a tale I cannot frame,

Yet how speak truth and grieve the dame? How shall these
horses, fleet and bold,

Whom not a hand but mine can hold, Bear others, wont to whirl
the car Wherein Ikshváku's children are!

Without thee, Prince, I cannot, no, I cannot to Ayodhyá go.

Then deign, O Ráma, to relent, And let me share thy banishment.

But if no prayers can move thy heart, If thou wilt quit me and
depart,

The flames shall end my car and me, Deserted thus and reft of
thee.

In the wild wood when foes are near, When dangers check thy
vows austere, Borne in my car will I attend,

All danger and all care to end. For thy dear sake I love the skill

That guides the steed and curbs his will: And soon a forest life
will be

As pleasant, for my love of thee. And if these horses near thee
dwell, And serve thee in the forest well, They, for their service,
will not miss The due reward of highest bliss.

Thine orders, as with thee I stray, Will I with heart and head
obey, Prepared, for thee, without a sigh, To lose Ayodhyá or the
sky.

As one defiled with hideous sin, I never more can pass within
Ayodhyá, city of our king, Unless beside me thee I bring. One
wish is mine, I ask no more,

That, when thy banishment is o'er I in my car may bear my lord,

Triumphant, to his home restored. The fourteen years, if spent
with thee,

Will swift as light-winged moments flee; But the same years,
without thee told, Were magnified a hundred-fold.

Do not, kind lord, thy servant leave, Who to his master's son
would cleave, And the same path with him pursue, Devoted,
tender, just and true.”

Again, again Sumantra made

His varied plaint, and wept and prayed. Him Raghu's son, whose
tender breast Felt for his servants, thus addressed: “O faithful
servant, well my heart Knows how attached and true thou art.
Hear thou the words I speak, and know Why to the town I bid
thee go.

Soon as Kaikeyí, youngest queen, Thy coming to the town has
seen, No doubt will then her mind oppress That Ráma roams the
wilderness.

And so the dame, her heart content With proof of Ráma's
banishment, Will doubt the virtuous king no more As faithless to
the oath he swore.

Chief of my cares is this, that she, Youngest amid the queens,
may see Bharat her son securely reign

O'er rich Ayodhyá's wide domain. For mine and for the
monarch's sake Do thou thy journey homeward take, And, as I
bade, repeat each word

That from my lips thou here hast heard.”

Thus spake the prince, and strove to cheer The sad heart of the
charioteer,

And then to royal Guha said

These words most wise and spirited: “Guha, dear friend, it is not
meet That people throng my calm retreat: For I must live a strict
recluse,

And mould my life by hermits' use. I now the ancient rule accept

By good ascetics gladly kept. I go: bring fig-tree juice that I

In matted coils my hair may tie.”

Quick Guha hastened to produce, For the king's son, that sacred
juice. Then Ráma of his long locks made,

[156] And Lakshmar,'s too, the hermit braid. And the two royal
brothers there

With coats of bark and matted hair, Transformed in lovely
likeness stood To hermit saints who love the wood. So Ráma,
with his brother bold,

A pious anchorite enrolled,

Obeded the vow which hermits take, And to his friend, King
Guha, spake: "May people, treasure, army share, And fenced
forts, thy constant care: Attend to all: supremely hard

The sovereign's task, to watch and guard."

Ikshváku's son, the good and brave, This last farewell to Guha
gave,

And then, with Lakshmar, and his bride, Determined, on his way
he hied.

Soon as he viewed, upon the shore, The bark prepared to waft
them o'er Impetuous Gangá's rolling tide,

To Lakshmar, thus the chieftain cried: “Brother, embark; thy hand extend, Thy gentle aid to Sítá lend:

With care her trembling footsteps guide, And place the lady by thy side.”

When Lakshmar, heard, prepared to aid, His brother’s words he swift obeyed.

Within the bark he placed the dame, Then to her side the hero came.

Next Lakshmar, ’s elder brother, lord Of brightest glory, when on board, Breathing a prayer for blessings, meet For priest or warrior to repeat,

Then he and car-borne Lakshmar, bent, Well-pleased, their heads, most reverent, Their hands, with Sítá, having dipped, As Scripture bids, and water sipped, Farewell to wise Sumantra said,

And Guha, with the train he led. So Ráma took, on board, his stand,

And urged the vessel from the land. Then swift by vigorous arms impelled Her onward course the vessel held, And guided by the helmsman through The dashing waves of Gangá flew.

Half way across the flood they came, When Sítá, free from spot and blame,

Her reverent hands together pressed, The Goddess of the stream addressed:

“May the great chieftain here who springs From Dasaratha, best of kings,

Protected by thy care, fulfil His prudent father’s royal will. When in the forest he has spent

His fourteen years of banishment, With his dear brother and with me His home again my lord shall see. Returning on that blissful day,

I will to thee mine offerings pay,

Dear Queen, whose waters gently flow, Who canst all blessed gifts bestow.

For, three-pathed Queen, though wandering here, Thy waves descend from Brahmá’s sphere, Spouse of the God o’er floods supreme,

Though rolling here thy glorious stream. To thee, fair Queen, my head shall bend, To thee shall hymns of praise ascend, When my brave lord shall turn again, And, joyful, o’er his kingdom reign.

To win thy grace, O Queen divine, A hundred thousand fairest kine, And precious robes and finest meal Among the Bráhmans will I deal. A hundred jars of wine shall flow, When to my home, O Queen, I go;

With these, and flesh, and corn, and rice, Will I, delighted,
sacrifice.

Each hallowed spot, each holy shrine That stands on these fair
shores of thine, Each fane and altar on thy banks

Shall share my offerings and thanks.

With me and Lakshmar,, free from harm, May he the blameless,
strong of arm, Reseek Ayodhyá from the wild,

O blameless Lady undefiled!”

As, praying for her husband’s sake, The faultless dame to
Gangá spake, To the right bank the vessel flew

With her whose heart was right and true. Soon as the bark had
crossed the wave, The lion leader of the brave,

Leaving the vessel on the strand, With wife and brother leapt to
land. Then Ráma thus the prince addressed Who filled with joy
Sumitrá’s breast: “Be thine alike to guard and aid

In peopled spot, in lonely shade. Do thou, Sumitrá's son,
precede: Let Sítá walk where thou shalt lead. Behind you both
my place shall be,

To guard the Maithil dame and thee. For she, to woe a stranger
yet,

No toil or grief till now has met; The fair Videhan will assay
The pains of forest life to-day. To-day her tender feet must
tread

Rough rocky wilds around her spread: No tilth is there, no
gardens grow,

No crowding people come and go.”

The hero ceased: and Lakshmar, led Obedient to the words he
said:

And Sítá followed him, and then Came Raghu's pride, the lord of
men. With Sítá walking o'er the sand

They sought the forest, bow in hand, But still their lingering
glances threw Where yet Sumantra stood in view. Sumantra,
when his watchful eye The royal youths no more could spy,
Turned from the spot whereon he stood

[157] Homeward with Guha from the wood. Still on the brothers
forced their way Where sweet birds sang on every spray,
Though scarce the eye a path could find

Mid flowering trees where creepers twined. Far on the princely
brothers pressed,

And stayed their feet at length to rest Beneath a fig tree's
mighty shade

With countless pendent shoots displayed. Reclining there a while
at ease,

They saw, not far, beneath fair trees A lake with many a lotus
bright That bore the name of Lovely Sight. Ráma his wife's
attention drew,

And Lakshmar,'s, to the charming view: "Look, brother, look how
fair the flood Glows with the lotus, flower and bud!"

They drank the water fresh and clear, And with their shafts they
slew a deer. A fire of boughs they made in haste, And in the
flame the meat they placed. So Raghu's sons with Sítá shared

The hunter's meal their hands prepared, Then counselled that
the spreading tree Their shelter and their home should be.

Canto LIII. Ráma's Lament.

When evening rites were duly paid, Reclined beneath the leafy
shade, To Lakshmar, thus spake Ráma, best Of those who glad
a people's breast:

“Now the first night has closed the day That saw us from our
country stray, And parted from the charioteer;

Yet grieve not thou, my brother dear. Henceforth by night, when
others sleep, Must we our careful vigil keep, Watching for Sítá's
welfare thus,

For her dear life depends on us. Bring me the leaves that lie
around,

And spread them here upon the ground, That we on lowly beds
may lie,

And let in talk the night go by.”

So on the ground with leaves o’erspread, He who should press a royal bed,

Ráma with Lakshmar, thus conversed, And many a pleasant tale rehearsed: “This night the king,” he cried, “alas! In broken sleep will sadly pass.

Kaikeyí now content should be, For mistress of her wish is she. So fiercely she for empire yearns,

That when her Bharat home returns, She in her greed, may even bring Destruction on our lord the king.

What can he do, in feeble eld, Reft of all aid and me expelled, His soul enslaved by love, a thrall Obedient to Kaikeyí’s call?

As thus I muse upon his woe And all his wisdoms overthrow,

Love is, methinks, of greater might To stir the heart than gain and right. For who, in wisdom’s lore untaught, Could by a beauty’s prayer be bought To quit his own obedient son,

Who loves him, as my sire has done! Bharat, Kaikeyí’s child, alone

Will, with his wife, enjoy the throne, And blissfully his rule maintain

O’er happy Kosala’s domain. To Bharat’s single lot will fall

The kingdom and the power and all, When fails the king from
length of days, And Ráma in the forest strays.

Whoe'er, neglecting right and gain, Lets conquering love his soul
enchain,

To him, like Dasaratha's lot, Comes woe with feet that tarry not.
Methinks at last the royal dame,

Dear Lakshmar,, has secured her aim, To see at once her
husband dead,

Her son enthroned, and Ráma fled. Ah me! I fear, lest borne
away

By frenzy of success, she slay Kausalyá, through her wicked
hate Of me, bereft, disconsolate;

Or her who aye for me has striven Sumitrá, to devotion given.

Hence, Lakshmar,, to Ayodhyá speed, Returning in the hour of
need.

With Sítá I my steps will bend

Where Dar,9ak's mighty woods extend. No guardian has
Kausalyá now:

O, be her friend and guardian thou. Strong hate may vile
Kaikeyí lead To many a base unrighteous deed, Treading my

mother 'neath her feet When Bharat holds the royal seat. Sure in
some antenatal time

Were children, by Kausalyá's crime, Torn from their mothers'
arms away, And hence she mourns this evil day. She for her
child no toil would spare Tending me long with pain and care;
Now in the hour of fruitage she

Has lost that son, ah, woe is me. O Lakshmar,, may no matron
e'er A son so doomed to sorrow bear As I, my mother's heart
who rend With anguish that can never end.

The Sárικά,325 methinks, possessed More love than glows in
Ráma's breast. Who, as the tale is told to us,

[158] Addressed the stricken parrot thus: "Parrot, the capturer's
talons tear, While yet alone thou flutterest there, Before his
mouth has closed on me:" So cried the bird, herself to free. Reft
of her son, in childless woe, My mother's tears for ever flow:

Ill-fated, doomed with grief to strive, What aid can she from me
derive?

Pressed down by care, she cannot rise From sorrow's flood
wherein she lies. In righteous wrath my single arm Could, with
my bow, protect from harm Ayodhyá's town and all the earth:
But what is hero prowess worth? Lest breaking duty's law I sin,

And lose the heaven I strive to win, The forest life today I
choose,

And kingly state and power refuse.”

Thus mourning in that lonely spot The troubled chief bewailed
his lot, And filled with tears, his eyes ran o'er; Then silent sat,
and spake no more.

To him, when ceased his loud lament, Like fire whose brilliant
might is spent, Or the great sea when sleeps the wave, Thus
Lakshmar, consolation gave:

“Chief of the brave who bear the bow, E'en now Ayodhyá, sunk
in woe,

325 The Mainá or *Gracula religiosa*, a favourite cage-bird, easily
taught to talk.

By thy departure reft of light

Is gloomy as the moonless night. Unfit it seems that thou, O
chief, Shouldst so afflict thy soul with grief, So with thou Sítá's
heart consign

To deep despair as well as mine. Not I, O Raghu's son, nor she
Could live one hour deprived of thee: We were, without thine
arm to save, Like fish deserted by the wave.

Although my mother dear to meet, Satrughna, and the king,
were sweet, On them, or heaven, to feed mine eye Were
nothing, if thou wert not by.”

Sitting at ease, their glances fell Upon the beds, constructed
well, And there the sons of virtue laid

Their limbs beneath the fig tree’s shade.

Canto LIV. Bharadvája’s Hermitage.

So there that night the heroes spent Under the boughs that o’er
them bent, And when the sun his glory spread, Upstarting, from
the place they sped. On to that spot they made their way,

Through the dense wood that round them lay, Where
Yamuná’s³²⁶ swift waters glide

To blend with Gangá’s holy tide.

³²⁶ The Jumna.

Charmed with the prospect ever new The glorious heroes
wandered through Full many a spot of pleasant ground,
Rejoicing as they gazed around,

With eager eye and heart at ease, On countless sorts of flowery
trees. And now the day was half-way sped When thus to
Lakshmar, Ráma said:

“There, there, dear brother, turn thine eyes; See near Prayág³²⁷
that smoke arise:

The banner of our Lord of Flames The dwelling of some saint
proclaims. Near to the place our steps we bend Where Yamuná
and Gangá blend.

I hear and mark the deafening roar When chafing floods
together pour. See, near us on the ground are left

Dry logs, by labouring woodmen cleft, And the tall trees, that
blossom near Saint Bharadvája’s home, appear.”

The bow-armed princes onward passed, And as the sun was
sinking fast

They reached the hermit’s dwelling, set Near where the rushing
waters met.

The presence of the warrior scared The deer and birds as on he
fared, And struck them with unwonted awe: Then Bharadvája’s
cot they saw.

The high-souled hermit soon they found Girt by his dear
disciples round:

Calm saint, whose vows had well been wrought, Whose fervent
rites keen sight had bought.

327 The Hindu name of Allahabad.

Duly had flames of worship blazed When Ráma on the hermit
gazed:

His suppliant hands the hero raised, Drew nearer to the holy
man

With his companions, and began, Declaring both his name and
race

And why they sought that distant place:

“Saint, Dasaratha’s children we, Ráma and Lakshmar,, come to
thee.

This my good wife from Janak springs, The best of fair Videha’s
kings; Through lonely wilds, a faultless dame, To this pure grove
with me she came. My younger brother follows still

Me banished by my father’s will:

Sumitrá’s son, bound by a vow,— He roams the wood beside me
now. Sent by my father forth to rove,

We seek, O Saint, some holy grove, Where lives of hermits we
may lead, And upon fruits and berries feed.”

When Bharadvāja, prudent-souled, Had heard the prince his tale
unfold, Water he bade them bring, a bull,

And honour-gifts in dishes full, [159]

And drink and food of varied taste, Berries and roots, before
him placed, And then the great ascetic showed

A cottage for the guests’ abode. The saint these honours gladly
paid To Rāma who had thither strayed,

Then compassed sat by birds and deer And many a hermit
resting near.

The prince received the service kind, And sat him down rejoiced
in mind. Then Bharadvāja silence broke,

And thus the words of duty spoke: “Kakutstha’s royal son, that
thou

Hadst sought this grove I knew ere now. Mine ears have heard
thy story, sent Without a sin to banishment.

Behold, O Prince, this ample space

Near where the mingling floods embrace, Holy, and beautiful,
and clear:

Dwell with us, and be happy here.”

By Bharadvája thus addressed, Ráma whose kind and tender
breast All living things would bless and save, In gracious words
his answer gave:

“My honoured lord, this tranquil spot, Fair home of hermits, suits
me not:

For all the neighbouring people here Will seek us when they
know me near: With eager wish to look on me,

And the Videhan dame to see, A crowd of rustics will intrude
Upon the holy solitude.

Provide, O gracious lord, I pray, Some quiet home that lies
away, Where my Videhan spouse may dwell Tasting the bliss
deserved so well.”

The hermit heard the prayer he made: A while in earnest
thought he stayed, And then in words like these expressed His
answer to the chief's request:

“Ten leagues away there stands a hill Where thou mayst live, if
such thy will: A holy mount, exceeding fair;

Great saints have made their dwelling there: There great
Langúrs³²⁸ in thousands play, And bears amid the thickets
stray;

Wide-known by Chitrakúta’s name, It rivals Gandhamádan’s³²⁹
fame.

Long as the man that hill who seeks Gazes upon its sacred
peaks,

To holy things his soul he gives And pure from thought of evil
lives.

There, while a hundred autumns fled, Has many a saint with
hoary head Spent his pure life, and won the prize, By deep
devotion, in the skies:

Best home, I ween, if such retreat, Far from the ways of men, be
sweet: Or let thy years of exile flee

Here in this hermitage with me.”

Thus Bharadvája spake, and trained In lore of duty, entertained
The princes and the dame, and pressed His friendly gifts on
every guest.

328 The Langúr is a large monkey.

329 A mountain said to lie to the east of Meru.

Thus to Prayág the hero went, Thus saw the saint preëminent,
And varied speeches heard and said: Then holy night o'er
heaven was spread. And Ráma took, by toil oppressed, With
Sítá and his brother, rest;

And so the night, with sweet content, In Bharadvája's grove was
spent.

But when the dawn dispelled the night, Ráma approached the
anchorite,

And thus addressed the holy sire Whose glory shone like kindled
fire: "Well have we spent, O truthful Sage, The night within thy
hermitage:

Now let my lord his guests permit

For their new home his grove to quit."

Then, as he saw the morning break, In answer Bharadvája
spake:

"Go forth to Chitrakúta's hill,

Where berries grow, and sweets distil: Full well, I deem, that
home will suit Thee, Ráma, strong and resolute.

Go forth, and Chitrakúta seek, Famed mountain of the Varied
Peak.

In the wild woods that gird him round All creatures of the chase
are found: Thou in the glades shalt see appear Vast herds of
elephants and deer.

With Sítá there shalt thou delight To gaze upon the woody
height; There with expanding heart to look On river, table-land,
and brook, And see the foaming torrent rave

Impetuous from the mountain cave. Auspicious hill! where all
day long The lapwing's cry, the Koil's song

Make all who listen gay: Where all is fresh and fair to see,

Where elephants and deer roam free, There, as a hermit, stay.”

Canto LV. The Passage Of Yamuná.

The princely tamers of their foes Thus passed the night in calm
repose, Then to the hermit having bent

With reverence, on their way they went. High favour Bharadvāja
showed,

And blessed them ready for the road. [160]

With such fond looks as fathers throw On their own sons, before
they go.

Then spake the saint with glory bright To Rāma peerless in his
might: “First, lords of men, direct your feet Where Yamuná and
Gangá meet; Then to the swift Kálindí³³⁰ go,

Whose westward waves to Gangá flow. When thou shalt see her
lovely shore Worn by their feet who hasten o’er, Then, Raghu’s
son, a raft prepare,

And cross the Sun born river there. Upon her farther bank a tree,

³³⁰ Another name of the Jumna, daughter of the Sun.

Near to the landing wilt thou see. The blessed source of varied
gifts,

There her green boughs that Fig-tree lifts: A tree where
countless birds abide,

By Syāma’s name known far and wide. Sítá, revere that holy
shade:

There be thy prayers for blessing prayed. Thence for a league
your way pursue, And a dark wood shall meet your view, Where
tall bamboos their foliage show, The Gum-tree and the Jujube
grow.

To Chitrakúta have I oft

Trodden that path so smooth and soft, Where burning woods no
traveller scare, But all is pleasant, green, and fair.”

When thus the guests their road had learned, Back to his cot the
hermit turned,

And Ráma, Lakshmar,, Sítá paid

Their reverent thanks for courteous aid. Thus Ráma spake to
Lakshmar,, when The saint had left the lords of men: “Great
store of bliss in sooth is ours

On whom his love the hermit showers.” As each to other wisely
talked,

The lion lords together walked On to Kálindí’s woody shore; And
gentle Sítá went before.

They reached that flood, whose waters flee With rapid current
to the sea;

Their minds a while to thought they gave And counselled how to
cross the wave. At length, with logs together laid,

A mighty raft the brothers made.

Then dry bamboos across were tied, And grass was spread from
side to side. And the great hero Lakshmar, brought

Cane and Rose-Apple boughs and wrought, Trimming the
branches smooth and neat, For Sítá's use a pleasant seat.

And Ráma placed thereon his dame Touched with a momentary
shame, Resembling in her glorious mien

All-thought-surpassing Fortune's Queen. Then Ráma hastened
to dispose,

Each in its place, the skins and bows, And by the fair Videhan
laid

The coats, the ornaments, and spade. When Sítá thus was set on
board, And all their gear was duly stored, The heroes each with
vigorous hand, Pushed off the raft and left the land. When half
its way the raft had made, Thus Sítá to Kálindí prayed:

“Goddess, whose flood I traverse now, Grant that my lord may
keep his vow. For thee shall bleed a thousand kine, A hundred
jars shall pour their wine, When Ráma sees that town again
Where old Ikshváku's children reign.”

Thus to Kálindí's stream she sued And prayed in suppliant
attitude.

Then to the river's bank the dame, Fervent in supplication,
came.

They left the raft that brought them o'er, And the thick wood
that clothed the shore, And to the Fig-tree Syáma made

Their way, so cool with verdant shade. Then Sítá viewed that
best of trees, And reverent spake in words like these: "Hail, hail,
O mighty tree! Allow

My husband to complete his vow; Let us returning, I entreat,
Kausalyá and Sumitrá meet."

Then with her hands together placed Around the tree she duly
paced.

When Ráma saw his blameless spouse A suppliant under holy
boughs,

The gentle darling of his heart, He thus to Lakshmar, spake
apart: "Brother, by thee our way be led; Let Sítá close behind
thee tread:

I, best of men, will grasp my bow, And hindmost of the three will
go. What fruits soe'er her fancy take, Or flowers half hidden in
the brake, For Janak's child forget not thou

To gather from the brake or bough."

Thus on they fared. The tender dame Asked Ráma, as they
walked, the name Of every shrub that blossoms bore, Creeper,
and tree unseen before:

And Lakshmar, fetched, at Sítá's prayer, Boughs of each tree
with clusters fair. Then Janak's daughter joyed to see

The sand-discoloured river flee, Where the glad cry of many a
bird, The sáras and the swan, was heard.

A league the brothers travelled through The forest noble game
they slew:

Beneath the trees their meal they dressed And sat them down
to eat and rest.

A while in that delightful shade Where elephants unnumbered
strayed,

Where peacocks screamed and monkeys played, [161]

They wandered with delight.

Then by the river's side they found A pleasant spot of level
ground,

Where all was smooth and fair around, Their lodging for the
night.

Canto LVI. Chitrakúta

Then Ráma, when the morning rose, Called Lakshmar, gently
from repose: "Awake, the pleasant voices hear
Of forest birds that warble near. Scourge of thy foes, no longer
stay; The hour is come to speed away."

The slumbering prince unclosed his eyes When thus his brother
bade him rise, Compelling, at the timely cry,
Fatigue, and sleep, and rest to fly. The brothers rose and Sítá
too;

Pure water from the stream they drew, Paid morning rites, then
followed still The road to Chitrakúta's hill.

Then Ráma as he took the road

With Lakshmar,, while the morning, glowed, To the Videhan lady
cried,

Sítá the fair, the lotus-eyed:

“Look round thee, dear; each flowery tree Touched with the fire
of morning see: The Kinsuk, now the Frosts are fled,— How
glorious with his wreaths of red!

The Bel-trees see, so loved of men, Hanging their boughs in
every glen. O'erburthened with their fruit and flowers: A
plenteous store of food is ours.

See, Lakshmar,, in the leafy trees, Where'er they make their
home.

Down hangs, the work of labouring bees The ponderous
honeycomb.

In the fair wood before us spread The startled wild-cock cries:
Hark, where the flowers are soft to tread, The peacock's voice
replies.

Where elephants are roaming free, And sweet birds' songs are
loud,

The glorious Chitrakúta see: His peaks are in the cloud.

On fair smooth ground he stands displayed, Begirt by many a tree:

O brother, in that holy shade How happy shall we be!”³³¹

Then Ráma, Lakshmar,, Sítá, each

Spoke raising suppliant hands this speech To him, in woodland dwelling met, Válmíki, ancient anchoret:

“O Saint, this mountain takes the mind, With creepers, trees of every kind, With fruit and roots abounding thus,

A pleasant life it offers us:

Here for a while we fain would stay, And pass a season blithe and gay.”

Then the great saint, in duty trained, With honour gladly entertained:

He gave his guests a welcome fair, And bade them sit and rest them there, Ráma of mighty arm and chest

His faithful Lakshmar, then addressed: “Brother, bring hither from the wood Selected timber strong and good,

And build therewith a little cot; My heart rejoices in the spot

That lies beneath the mountain's side, Remote, with water well supplied.”

331 “We have often looked on that green hill: it is the holiest spot of that sect of the Hindu faith who devote themselves to this incarnation of Vishnu. The whole neighbourhood is Ráma's country. Every headland has some legend, every cavern is connected with his name; some of the wild fruits are still called Sítáphal, being the reputed food of the exile. Thousands and thousands annually visit the spot, and round the hill is a raised foot-path, on which the devotee, with naked feet, treads full of pious awe.” Calcutta Review, Vol. XXIII.

Sumitrá's son his words obeyed, Brought many a tree, and
deftly made, With branches in the forest cut,

As Ráma bade, a leafy hut.

Then Ráma, when the cottage stood Fair, firmly built, and
walled with wood, To Lakshmar, spake, whose eager mind To do
his brother's will inclined:

“Now, Lakshmar, as our cot is made, Must sacrifice be duly paid

By us, for lengthened life who hope, With venison of the antelope.

Away, O bright-eyed Lakshmar,, speed: Struck by thy bow a deer must bleed: As Scripture bids, we must not slight The duty that commands the rite.”

Lakshmar,, the chief whose arrows laid His foemen low, his word obeyed;

And Ráma thus again addressed The swift performer of his hest: “Prepare the venison thou hast shot, To sacrifice for this our cot.

Haste, brother dear, for this the hour, And this the day of certain power.” Then glorious Lakshmar, took the buck His arrow in the wood had struck; Bearing his mighty load he came,

[162] And laid it in the kindled flame. Soon as he saw the meat was done, And that the juices ceased to run

From the broiled carcass, Lakshmar, then Spoke thus to Ráma best of men:

“The carcass of the buck, entire,

Is ready dressed upon the fire. Now be the sacred rites begun To please the God, thou godlike one.”

Ráma the good, in ritual trained,

Pure from the bath, with thoughts restrained, Hasted those
verses to repeat

Which make the sacrifice complete. The hosts celestial came in
view, And Ráma to the cot withdrew, While a sweet sense of
rapture stole Through the unequalled hero's soul. He paid the
Visvedevas³³² due.

And Rudra's right, and Vishr,u's too, Nor wanted blessings, to
protect Their new-built home, did he neglect.

With voice repressed he breathed the prayer, Bathed duly in the
river fair,

And gave good offerings that remove The stain of sin, as texts
approve.

And many an altar there he made, And shrines, to suit the holy
shade,

All decked with woodland chaplets sweet, And fruit and roots
and roasted meat, With muttered prayer, as texts require,
Water, and grass and wood and fire.

So Ráma, Lakshmar,, Sítá paid

Their offerings to each God and shade, And entered then their
pleasant cot That bore fair signs of happy lot.

They entered, the illustrious three,

332 Deities of a particular class in which five or ten are enumerated. They are worshipped particularly at the funeral obsequies in honour of deceased progenitors.

The well-set cottage, fair to see, Roofed with the leaves of many a tree,

And fenced from wind and rain: So, at their Father Brahmá's call, The Gods of heaven, assembling all, To their own glorious council hall

Advance in shining train. So, resting on that lovely hill, Near the fair lily-covered rill, The happy prince forgot,

Surrounded by the birds and deer, The woe, the longing, and the fear

That gloom the exile's lot.

Canto LVII. Sumantra's Return.

When Ráma reached the southern bank, King Guha's heart with sorrow sank: He with Sumantra talked, and spent With his deep sorrow, homeward went. Sumantra, as the king decreed,

Yoked to the car each noble steed, And to Ayodhyá's city sped
With his sad heart disquieted.

On lake and brook and scented grove His glances fell, as on he
drove:

City and village came in view

As o'er the road his coursers flew. On the third day the
charioteer,

When now the hour of night was near, Came to Ayodhyá's gate,
and found

The city all in sorrow drowned. To him, in spirit quite cast down,
Forsaken seemed the silent town, And by the rush of grief
oppressed

He pondered in his mournful breast: "Is all Ayodhyá burnt with
grief, Steed, elephant, and man, and chief? Does her loved
Ráma's exile so Afflict her with the fires of woe?"

Thus as he mused, his steeds flew fast, And swiftly through the
gate he passed. On drove the charioteer, and then

In hundreds, yea in thousands, men Ran to the car from every
side,

And, "Ráma, where is Ráma?" cried. Sumantra said: "My chariot bore The duteous prince to Gangá's shore; I left him there at his behest,

And homeward to Ayodhyá pressed." Soon as the anxious people knew That he was o'er the flood they drew Deep sighs, and crying, Ráma! all Wailed, and big tears began to fall.

He heard the mournful words prolonged, As here and there the people thronged: "Woe, woe for us, forlorn, undone,

No more to look on Raghu's son! His like again we ne'er shall see, Of heart so true, of hand so free, In gifts, in gatherings for debate,

When marriage pomps we celebrate, What should we do? What earthly thing Can rest, or hope, or pleasure bring?"

Thus the sad town, which Ráma kept As a kind father, wailed and wept.

Each mansion, as the car went by, Sent forth a loud and bitter cry, As to the window every dame,

Mourning for banished Ráma, came. As his sad eyes with tears o'erflowed, He sped along the royal road

To Dasaratha's high abode.

There leaping down his car he stayed; Within the gates his way
he made;

Through seven broad courts he onward hied Where people
thronged on every side.

From each high terrace, wild with woe,

[163] The royal ladies flocked below: He heard them talk in
gentle tone, As each for Ráma made her moan: “What will the
charioteer reply

To Queen Kausalyá’s eager cry? With Ráma from the gates he
went; Homeward alone, his steps are bent. Hard is a life with
woe distressed, But difficult to win is rest,

If, when her son is banished, still She lives beneath her load of
ill.”

Such was the speech Sumantra heard

From them whom grief unfeigned had stirred. As fires of
anguish burnt him through,

Swift to the monarch’s hall he drew, Past the eighth court; there
met his sight, The sovereign in his palace bright,

Still weeping for his son, forlorn, Pale, faint, and all with sorrow
worn.

As there he sat, Sumantra bent And did obeisance reverent, And
to the king repeated o'er

The message he from Ráma bore.

The monarch heard, and well-nigh brake His heart, but yet no
word he spake: Fainting to earth he fell, and dumb,

By grief for Ráma overcome.

Rang through the hall a startling cry, And women's arms were
tossed on high, When, with his senses all astray,

Upon the ground the monarch lay. Kausalyá, with Sumitrá's aid,

Raised from the ground her lord dismayed: "Sire, of high fate,"
she cried, "O, why Dost thou no single word reply

To Ráma's messenger who brings News of his painful
wanderings? The great injustice done, art thou

Shame-stricken for thy conduct now? Rise up, and do thy part:
bestow Comfort and help in this our woe.

Speak freely, King; dismiss thy fear, For Queen Kaikeyí stands
not near, Afraid of whom thou wouldst not seek Tidings of
Ráma: freely speak."

When the sad queen had ended so, She sank, insatiate in her
woe,

And prostrate lay upon the ground,

While her faint voice by sobs was drowned. When all the ladies
in despair

Saw Queen Kausalyá wailing there, And the poor king
oppressed with pain,

They flocked around and wept again.

Canto LVIII. Ráma's Message.

The king a while had senseless lain, When care brought memory
back again. Then straight he called, the news to hear Of Ráma,
for the charioteer,

With reverent hand to hand applied He waited by the old man's
side,

Whose mind with anguish was distraught Like a great elephant
newly caught.

The king with bitter pain distressed The faithful charioteer
addressed, Who, sad of mien, with flooded eye, And dust upon
his limbs, stood by: "Where will be Ráma's dwelling now At some
tree's foot, beneath the bough; Ah, what will be the exile's food,

Bred up with kind solicitude?

Can he, long lapped in pleasant rest, Unmeet for pain, by pain
oppressed, Son of earth's king, his sad night spend

Earth-couched, as one that has no friend? Behind him, when
abroad he sped,

Cars, elephant, and foot were led: Then how shall Ráma dwell
afar

In the wild woods where no men are? How, tell me, did the
princes there, With Sítá good and soft and fair, Alighting from
the chariot, tread

The forest wilds around them spread? A happy lot is thine, I
ween,

Whose eyes my two dear sons have seen Seeking on foot the
forest shade,

Like the bright Twins to view displayed, The heavenly Asvins,
when they seek

The woods that hang 'neath Mandar's peak. What words,
Sumantra, quickly tell,

From Ráma, Lakshmar,, Sítá fell? How in the wood did Ráma
eat? What was his bed, and what his seat? Full answer to my
questions give, For I on thy replies shall live,

As with the saints Yayāti held

Sweet converse, from the skies expelled.”

Urged by the lord of men to speak, Whose sobbing voice came
faint and weak, Thus he, while tears his utterance broke,

In answer to the monarch spoke: “Hear then the words that
Rāma said, Resolved in duty’s path to tread.

Joining his hands, his head he bent, And gave this message,
reverent: “Sumantra, to my father go, Whose lofty mind all
people know: Bow down before him, as is meet, And in my stead
salute his feet.

Then to the queen my mother bend, And give the greeting that I
send: Ne’er may her steps from duty err, And may it still be well
with her.

And add this word: “O Queen, pursue Thy vows with faithful
heart and true;

And ever at due season turn Where holy fires of worship burn.

[164] And, lady, on our lord bestow Such honour as to Gods we
owe. Be kind to every queen: let pride And thought of self be
cast aside. In the king’s fond opinion raise Kaikeyí, by respect
and praise. Let the young Bharat ever be

Loved, honoured as the king by thee: Thy king-ward duty ne'er forget: High over all are monarchs set.”

And Bharat, too, for me address: Pray that all health his life may bless. Let every royal lady share,

As justice bids, his love and care.

Say to the strong-armed chief who brings Joy to Ikshvāku's line of kings:

“As ruling prince thy care be shown Of him, our sire, who holds the throne. Stricken in years he feels their weight; But leave him in his royal state.

As regent heir content thee still, Submissive to thy father's will.’ ”
Rāma again his charge renewed,

As the hot flood his cheek bedewed: “Hold as thine own my mother dear Who drops for me the longing tear.” Then Lakshmar,, with his soul on fire, Spake breathing fast these words of ire: “Say, for what sin, for what offence Was royal Rāma banished thence?

He is the cause, the king: poor slave

To the light charge Kaikeyí gave. Let right or wrong the motive be, The author of our woe is he.

Whether the exile were decreed Through foolish faith or guilty
greed, For promises or empire, still

The king has wrought a grievous ill. Grant that the Lord of all
saw fit

To prompt the deed and sanction it, In Ráma's life no cause I
see

For which the king should bid him flee. His blinded eyes refused
to scan

The guilt and folly of the plan, And from the weakness of the
king

Here and hereafter woe shall spring. No more my sire: the ties
that used To bind me to the king are loosed. My brother Ráma,
Raghu's son,

To me is lord, friend, sire in one. The love of men how can he
win, Deserting, by the cruel sin,

Their joy, whose heart is swift to feel A pleasure in the people's
weal?

Shall he whose mandate could expel The virtuous Ráma, loved
so well,

To whom his subjects' fond hearts cling— Shall he in spite of
them be king?"

But Janak's child, my lord, stood by, And oft the votaress
heaved a sigh.

She seemed with dull and wandering sense, Beneath a spirit's
influence.

The noble princess, pained with woe Which till that hour she
ne'er could know,

Tears in her heavy trouble shed, But not a word to me she said.

She raised her face which grief had dried And tenderly her
husband eyed,

Gazed on him as he turned to go While tear chased tear in rapid
flow.”

Canto LIX. Dasaratha's Lament.

As thus Sumantra, best of peers, Told his sad tale with many tears,
The monarch cried, "I pray thee, tell At length again what there befell."
Sumantra, at the king's behest,

Striving with sobs he scarce repressed, His trembling voice at last controlled,
And thus his further tidings told:

"Their locks in votive coils they wound, Their coats of bark upon them bound,
To Gangá's farther shore they went, Thence to Prayág their steps were bent.
I saw that Lakshmar, walked ahead

To guard the path the two should tread. So far I saw, no more could learn,
Forced by the hero to return.

Retracing slow my homeward course, Scarce could I move each stubborn horse:
Shedding hot tears of grief he stood

When Ráma turned him to the wood.³³³ As the two princes parted thence

I raised my hands in reverence, Mounted my ready car, and bore
The grief that stung me to the core. With Guha all that day I stayed,
Still by the earnest hope delayed That Ráma, ere the time should end,

Some message from the wood might send. Thy realms, great Monarch, mourn the blow,

And sympathize with Ráma's woe. [165]

Each withering tree hangs low his head, And shoot, and bud,
and flower are dead. Dried are the floods that wont to fill

The lake, the river, and the rill. Drear is each grove and garden
now, Dry every blossom on the bough.

Each beast is still, no serpents crawl:

A lethargy of woe on all.

The very wood is silent: crushed With grief for Ráma, all is
hushed. Fair blossoms from the water born, Gay garlands that
the earth adorn, And every fruit that gleams like gold,

Have lost the scent that charmed of old. Empty is every grove I
see,

333 “So in Homer the horses of Achilles lamented with many
bitter tears the death of Patroclus slain by Hector:”

“Ἴρρο 8' Αἰακί8αο, μά:χric άrrά:vEu8Ev ΕΌrEc,

KAf ov, ΈrrE 8 rrpwra rru8Éo8riv v Óxo o

Ev Kovίvo rrEoÓvroc Ú<p' EKropoc άv8po<pÓvo o”

ILIAD. FNS XVII. 426.

“Ancient poesy frequently associated nature with the joys and
sorrows of man.” GORRESIO.{FNS

Or birds sit pensive on the tree. Where'er I look, its beauty o'er,
The pleasance charms not as before. I drove through fair
Ayodhyá's street: None flew with joy the car to meet. They saw
that Ráma was not there, And turned them sighing in despair.
The people in the royal way

Wept tears of bitter grief, when they Beheld me coming, from
afar,

No Ráma with me in the car. From palace roof and turret high
Each woman bent her eager eye; She looked for Ráma, but in
vain;

Gazed on the car and shrieked for pain. Their long clear eyes
with sorrow drowned They, when this common grief was found,
Looked each on other, friend and foe,

In sympathy of levelling woe: No shade of difference between
Foe, friend, or neutral, there was seen. Without a joy, her bosom
rent

With grief for Ráma's banishment, Ayodhyá like the queen
appears

Who mourns her son with many tears.”

He ended: and the king, distressed.

With sobbing voice that lord addressed: "Ah me, by false
Kaikeyí led,
Of evil race, to evil bred,
I took no counsel of the sage,
Nor sought advice from skill and age, I asked no lord his aid to
lend,
I called no citizen or friend.
Rash was my deed, bereft of sense Slave to a woman's
influence.
Surely, my lord, a woe so great Falls on us by the will of Fate; It
lays the house of Raghu low, For Destiny will have it so.
I pray thee, if I e'er have done
An act to please thee, yea, but one, Fly, fly, and Ráma
homeward lead: My life, departing, counsels speed. Fly, ere the
power to bid I lack, Fly to the wood: bring Ráma back. I cannot
live for even one
Short hour bereaved of my son.
But ah, the prince, whose arms are strong, Has journeyed far:
the way is long:
Me, me upon the chariot place, And let me look on Ráma's face.
Ah me, my son, mine eldest-born,

Where roams he in the wood forlorn, The wielder of the mighty
bow, Whose shoulders like the lion's show? O, ere the light of life
be dim,

Take me to Sítá and to him.

O Ráma, Lakshmar,, and O thou Dear Sítá, constant to thy vow,

Beloved ones, you cannot know That I am dying of my woe.”

The king to bitter grief a prey,

That drove each wandering sense away, Sunk in affliction's sea,
too wide

To traverse, in his anguish cried: “Hard, hard to pass, my Queen,
this sea Of sorrow raging over me:

No Ráma near to soothe mine eye, Plunged in its lowest deeps I
lie. Sorrow for Ráma swells the tide, And Sítá's absence makes it
wide: My tears its foamy flood distain, Made billowy by my sighs
of pain: My cries its roar, the arms I throw About me are the fish
below, Kaikeyí is the fire that feeds Beneath: my hair the
tangled weeds: Its source the tears for Ráma shed:

The hump-back's words its monsters dread: The boon I gave the
wretch its shore,

Till Ráma's banishment be o'er.³³⁴

Ah me, that I should long to set My eager eyes to-day
On Raghu's son, and he be yet With Lakshmar, far away!" Thus
he of lofty glory wailed,
And sank upon the bed.
Beneath the woe his spirit failed, And all his senses fled.

334 The lines containing this heap of forced metaphors are
marked as spurious by Schlegel.

Canto LX. Kausalyá Consoled.

As Queen Kausalyá, trembling much, As blighted by a goblin's
touch,

Still lying prostrate, half awoke

To consciousness, 'twas thus she spoke:

"Bear me away, Sumantra, far, Where Ráma, Sítá, Lakshmar,
are. Bereft of them I have no power

To linger on a single hour. [166]

Again, I pray, thy steps retrace, And me in Dar,9ak forest place,
For after them I needs must go, Or sink to Yama's realms
below."

His utterance choked by tears that rolled Down from their
fountains uncontrolled, With suppliant hands the charioteer

Thus spake, the lady's heart to cheer: "Dismiss thy grief, despair,
and dread That fills thy soul, of sorrow bred, For pain and
anguish thrown aside, Will Ráma in the wood abide.

And Lakshmar,, with unfailing care Will guard the feet of Ráma
there, Earning, with governed sense, the prize That waits on
duty in the skies.

And Sítá in the wild as well

As in her own dear home will dwell; To Ráma all her heart she
gives, And free from doubt and terror lives. No faintest sign of
care or woe

The features of the lady show: Methinks Videha's pride was
made

For exile in the forest shade. E'en as of old she used to rove
Delighted in the city's grove, Thus, even thus she joys to tread
The woodlands uninhabited.

Like a young child, her face as fair

As the young moon, she wanders there. What though in lonely
woods she stray Still Ráma is her joy and stay:

All his the heart no sorrow bends, Her very life on him depends.

For, if her lord she might not see, Ayodhyá like the wood would
be. She bids him, as she roams, declare

The names of towns and hamlets there, Marks various trees that
meet her eye, And many a brook that hurries by, And Janak's
daughter seems to roam One little league away from home
When Ráma or his brother speaks

And gives the answer that she seeks. This, Lady, I remember
well,

Nor angry words have I to tell: Reproaches at Kaikeyí shot,
Such, Queen, my mind remembers not." The speech when Sítá's
wrath was high, Sumantra passed in silence by,

That so his pleasant words might cheer With sweet report
Kausalyá's ear. "Her moonlike beauty suffers not

Though winds be rude and suns be hot: The way, the danger,
and the toil

Her gentle lustre may not soil. Like the red lily's leafy crown

Or as the fair full moon looks down, So the Videhan lady's face

Still shines with undiminished grace. What if the borrowed
colours throw O'er her fine feet no rosy glow,

Still with their natural tints they spread A lotus glory where they tread.

In sportive grace she walks the ground And sweet her chiming anklets sound. No jewels clasp the faultless limb: She leaves them all for love of him.

If in the woods her gentle eye A lion sees, or tiger nigh,

Or elephant, she fears no ill

For Ráma's arm supports her still. No longer be their fate deplored, Nor thine, nor that of Kosal's lord, For conduct such as theirs shall buy Wide glory that can never die.

For casting grief and care away, Delighting in the forest, they With joyful spirits, blithe and gay, Set forward on the ancient way

Where mighty saints have led: Their highest aim, their dearest care To keep their father's honour fair, Observing still the oath he sware,

They roam, on wild fruit fed." Thus with persuasive art he tried To turn her from her grief aside,

By soothing fancies won.

But still she gave her sorrow vent: "Ah Ráma," was her shrill lament, "My love, my son, my son!"

Canto LXI. Kausalyá's Lament.

When, best of all who give delight, Her Ráma wandered far from
sight, Kausalyá weeping, sore distressed, The king her husband
thus addressed: "Thy name, O Monarch, far and wide Through
the three worlds is glorified: Yet Ráma's is the pitying mind,
His speed is true, his heart is kind. How will thy sons, good lord,
sustain With Sítá, all their care and pain?

How in the wild endure distress, Nursed in the lap of
tenderness? How will the dear Videhan bear

The heat and cold when wandering there Bred in the bliss of
princely state,

So young and fair and delicate? The large-eyed lady, wont to
eat The best of finely seasoned meat— How will she now her life
sustain

With woodland fare of self-sown grain? Will she, with joys
encompassed long, Who loved the music and the song,

In the wild wood endure to hear The ravening lion's voice of
fear?

[167] Where sleeps my strong-armed hero, where, Like Lord
Mahendra's standard, fair? Where is, by Lakshmar,'s side, his
bed,

His club-like arm beneath his head? When shall I see his flower-like eyes, And face that with the lotus vies, Feel his sweet lily breath, and view His glorious hair and lotus hue?

Canto LXI. Kausalyá's Lament. 583

The heart within my breast, I feel, Is adamant or hardest steel,
Or, in a thousand fragments split, The loss of him had shattered it,

When those I love, who should be blest, Are wandering in the wood distressed, Condemned their wretched lives to lead In exile, by thy ruthless deed.

If, when the fourteen years are past, Ráma reseeks his home at last,

I think not Bharat will consent

To yield the wealth and government. At funeral feasts some mourners deal To kith and kin the solemn meal, And having duly fed them all

Some Bráhmans to the banquet call. The best of Bráhmans, good and wise, The tardy summoning despise,

And, equal to the Gods, disdain Cups, e'en of Amrit, thus to drain.

Nay e'en when Bráhmans first have fed, They loathe the meal
for others spread, And from the leavings turn with scorn, As
bulls avoid a fractured horn.

So Ráma, sovereign lord of men, Will spurn the sullied kingship
then: He born the eldest and the best,

His younger's leavings will detest, Turning from tasted food
away, As tigers scorn another's prey.

The sacred post is used not twice, Nor elements, in sacrifice.

But once the sacred grass is spread, But once with oil the flame
is fed:

So Ráma's pride will ne'er receive The royal power which others
leave,

Like wine when tasteless dregs are left, Or rites of Soma juice
bereft.

Be sure the pride of Raghu's race Will never stoop to such
disgrace: The lordly lion will not bear

That man should beard him in his lair. Were all the worlds
against him ranged His dauntless soul were still unchanged: He,
dutiful, in duty strong,

Would purge the impious world from wrong. Could not the hero,
brave and bold,

The archer, with his shafts of gold, Burn up the very seas, as
doom Will in the end all life consume? Of lion's might, eyed like
a bull,

A prince so brave and beautiful, Thou hast with wicked hate
pursued,

Like sea-born tribes who eat their brood. If thou, O Monarch,
hadst but known The duty all the Twice-born own,

If the good laws had touched thy mind, Which sages in the
Scriptures find, Thou ne'er hadst driven forth to pine This brave,
this duteous son of thine. First on her lord the wife depends,
Next on her son and last on friends: These three supports in life
has she, And not a fourth for her may be.

Thy heart, O King, I have not won;

In wild woods roams my banished son; Far are my friends: ah,
hapless me, Quite ruined and destroyed by thee.”

Canto LXII. Dasaratha Consoled. 585

Canto LXII. Dasaratha Consoled.

The queen's stern speech the monarch heard, As rage and grief
her bosom stirred,

And by his anguish sore oppressed Reflected in his secret
breast.

Fainting and sad, with woe distraught, He wandered in a maze
of thought;

At length the queller of the foe

Grew conscious, rallying from his woe. When consciousness
returned anew Long burning sighs the monarch drew, Again
immersed in thought he eyed Kausalyá standing by his side.

Back to his pondering soul was brought The direful deed his
hand had wrought, When, guiltless of the wrong intent, His
arrow at a sound was sent.

Distracted by his memory's sting, And mourning for his son, the
king To two consuming griefs a prey,

A miserable victim lay.

The double woe devoured him fast, As on the ground his eyes he
cast,

Joined suppliant hands, her heart to touch, And spake in the
answer, trembling much: "Kausalyá, for thy grace I sue,

Joining these hands as suppliants do. Thou e'en to foes hast
ever been

A gentle, good, and loving queen. Her lord, with noble virtues
graced, Her lord, by lack of all debased,

Is still a God in woman's eyes, If duty's law she hold and prize.

Thou, who the right hast aye pursued, Life's changes and its
chances viewed,
Shouldst never launch, though sorrow-stirred, At me distressed,
one bitter word."

She listened, as with sorrow faint He murmured forth his sad
complaint: Her brimming eyes with tears ran o'er,

[168] As spouts the new fallen water pour; His suppliant hands,
with fear dismayed She gently clasped in hers, and laid, Like a
fair lotus, on her head,

And faltering in her trouble said: "Forgive me; at thy feet I lie,
With low bent head to thee I cry. By thee besought, thy guilty
dame

Pardon from thee can scarcely claim. She merits not the name
of wife Who cherishes perpetual strife

With her own husband good and wise, Her lord both here and in
the skies.

I know the claims of duty well,

I know thy lips the truth must tell. All the wild words I rashly
spoke,

Forth from my heart, through anguish, broke; For sorrow bends
the stoutest soul,

And cancels Scripture's high control. Yea, sorrow's might all else
o'erthrows The strongest and the worst of foes. 'Tis thus with all:
we keenly feel,

Yet bear the blows our foemen deal, But when a slender woe
assails

The manliest spirit bends and quails. The fifth long night has
now begun

Since the wild woods have lodged my son: To me whose joy is
drowned in tears, Each day a dreary year appears.

While all my thoughts on him are set Grief at my heart swells
wilder yet: With doubled might thus Ocean raves

When rushing floods increase his waves.”

As from Kausalyá reasoning well The gentle words of wisdom
fell,

The sun went down with dying flame, And darkness o'er the
landscape came. His lady's soothing words in part Relieved the
monarch's aching heart, Who, wearied out by all his woes,
Yielded to sleep and took repose.

Canto LXIII. The Hermit's Son.

But soon by rankling grief oppressed The king awoke from
troubled rest, And his sad heart was tried again

With anxious thought where all was pain. Ráma and
Lakshmar,'s mournful fate

On Dasaratha, good and great

As Indra, pressed with crushing weight, As when the demon's
might assails

The Sun-God, and his glory pales. Ere yet the sixth long night
was spent, Since Ráma to the woods was sent, The king at
midnight sadly thought

Of the old crime his hand had wrought, And thus to Queen
Kausalyá cried

Who still for Ráma moaned and sighed: "If thou art waking,
give, I pray, Attention to the words I say.

Whate'er the conduct men pursue, Be good or ill the acts they do,

Be sure, dear Queen, they find the meed Of wicked or of virtuous deed.

A heedless child we call the man Whose feeble judgment fails to scan
The weight of what his hands may do, Its lightness, fault, and merit too.

One lays the Mango garden low, And bids the gay Palásas grow:

Longing for fruit their bloom he sees,

But grieves when fruit should bend the trees. Cut by my hand, my fruit-trees fell,

Palása trees I watered well.

My hopes this foolish heart deceive, And for my banished son I grieve. Kausalyá, in my youthful prime

Armed with my bow I wrought the crime, Proud of my skill, my name renowned, An archer prince who shoots by sound.

The deed this hand unwitting wrought This misery on my soul has brought, As children seize the deadly cup

And blindly drink the poison up. As the unreasoning man may be Charmed with the gay Palása tree, I unaware have reaped the fruit Of joying at a sound to shoot.

As regent prince I shared the throne,

Thou wast a maid to me unknown, The early Rain-time duly
came,

And strengthened love's delicious flame. The sun had drained
the earth that lay All glowing 'neath the summer day, And to the
gloomy clime had fled Where dwell the spirits of the dead.³³⁵
The fervent heat that moment ceased,

The darkening clouds each hour increased And frogs and deer
and peacocks all Rejoiced to see the torrents fall.

Their bright wings heavy from the shower, The birds, new-
bathed, had scarce the power To reach the branches of the
trees

Whose high tops swayed beneath the breeze. The fallen rain,
and falling still,

Hung like a sheet on every hill,

Till, with glad deer, each flooded steep Showed glorious as the
mighty deep. The torrents down its wooded side

Poured, some unstained, while others dyed^[169]

Gold, ashy, silver, ochre, bore The tints of every mountain ore.

In that sweet time, when all are pleased, My arrows and my bow
I seized;

Keen for the chase, in field or grove, Down Sarjú's bank my car I
drove.

I longed with all my lawless will Some elephant by night to kill,
Some buffalo that came to drink, Or tiger, at the river's brink.

When all around was dark and still,

335 The southern region is the abode of Yama the Indian Pluto,
and of departed spirits.

I heard a pitcher slowly fill,

And thought, obscured in deepest shade, An elephant the sound
had made.

I drew a shaft that glittered bright, Fell as a serpent's venomed
bite;

I longed to lay the monster dead, And to the mark my arrow
sped. Then in the calm of morning, clear A hermit's wailing
smote my ear: "Ah me, ah me," he cried, and sank, Pierced by
my arrow, on the bank. E'en as the weapon smote his side,

I heard a human voice that cried: "Why lights this shaft on one
like me, A poor and harmless devotee?"

I came by night to fill my jar

From this lone stream where no men are. Ah, who this deadly
shaft has shot?

Whom have I wronged, and knew it not? Why should a boy so
harmless feel

The vengeance of the winged steel? Or who should slay the
guiltless son Of hermit sire who injures none,

Who dwells retired in woods, and there Supports his life on
woodland fare?

Ah me, ah me, why am I slain, What booty will the murderer
gain? In hermit coils I bind my hair, Coats made of skin and
bark I wear. Ah, who the cruel deed can praise Whose idle toil
no fruit repays,

As impious as the wretch's crime Who dares his master's bed to
climb? Nor does my parting spirit grieve

But for the life which thus I leave:

Alas, my mother and my sire,— I mourn for them when I expire.

Ah me, that aged, helpless pair,

Long cherished by my watchful care, How will it be with them
this day When to the Five³³⁶ I pass away?

Pierced by the self-same dart we die, Mine aged mother, sire,
and I.

Whose mighty hand, whose lawless mind Has all the three to
death consigned?"

When I, by love of duty stirred, That touching lamentation
heard, Pierced to the heart by sudden woe, I threw to earth my
shafts and bow. My heart was full of grief and dread As swiftly
to the place I sped, Where, by my arrow wounded sore, A hermit
lay on Sarjú's shore.

His matted hair was all unbound, His pitcher empty on the
ground, And by the fatal arrow pained,

He lay with dust and gore distained. I stood confounded and
amazed:

His dying eyes to mine he raised,

And spoke this speech in accents stern, As though his light my
soul would burn:

“How have I wronged thee, King, that I Struck by thy mortal
arrow die?

The wood my home, this jar I brought, And water for my parents
sought.

This one keen shaft that strikes me through

336 The five elements of which the body consists, and to which
it returns.

Slays sire and aged mother too. Feeble and blind, in helpless
pain, They wait for me and thirst in vain.

They with parched lips their pangs must bear, And hope will end
in blank despair.

Ah me, there seems no fruit in store For holy zeal or Scripture
lore,

Or else ere now my sire would know That his dear son is lying
low.

Yet, if my mournful fate he knew, What could his arm so feeble
do? The tree, firm-rooted, ne'er may be The guardian of a
stricken tree.

Haste to my father, and relate While time allows, my sudden
fate, Lest he consume thee as the fire Burns up the forest, in his
ire.

This little path, O King, pursue:

My father's cot thou soon wilt view. There sue for pardon to the
sage, Lest he should curse thee in his rage. First from the wound
extract the dart That kills me with its deadly smart, E'en as the
flushed impetuous tide

Eats through the river's yielding side.”

I feared to draw the arrow out, And pondered thus in painful
doubt: “Now tortured by the shaft he lies, But if I draw it forth
he dies.”

Helpless I stood, faint, sorely grieved: The hermit's son my
thought perceived; As one o'ercome by direst pain
He scarce had strength to speak again.

With writhing limb and struggling breath,
Nearer and ever nearer death "My senses undisturbed remain,
And fortitude has conquered pain:

Now from one tear thy soul be freed. Thy hand has made a
Bráhmañ bleed. Let not this pang thy bosom wring:

No twice-born youth am I, O King, [170]

For of a Vaisya sire I came,
Who wedded with a Súdra dame."

These words the boy could scarcely say, As tortured by the shaft
he lay,

Twisting his helpless body round,

Then trembling senseless on the ground. Then from his bleeding
side I drew

The rankling shaft that pierced him through. With death's last
fear my face he eyed,

And, rich in store of penance, died."

Canto LXIV. Dasaratha's Death.

The son of Raghu to his queen

Thus far described the unequalled scene, And, as the hermit's
death he rued,

The mournful story thus renewed:

“The deed my heedless hand had wrought Perplexed me with
remorseful thought, And all alone I pondered still

How kindly deed might salve the ill. The pitcher from the ground
I took,

And filled it from that fairest brook, Then, by the path the hermit
showed, I reached his sainted sire's abode.

I came, I saw: the aged pair,

Feeble and blind, were sitting there,

Like birds with clipped wings, side by side, With none their
helpless steps to guide.

Their idle hours the twain beguiled With talk of their returning
child, And still the cheering hope enjoyed, The hope, alas, by me
destroyed.

Then spoke the sage, as drawing near The sound of footsteps
reached his ear: "Dear son, the water quickly bring; Why hast
thou made this tarrying?

Thy mother thirsts, and thou hast played, And bathing in the
brook delayed.

She weeps because thou camest not; Haste, O my son, within
the cot.

If she or I have ever done

A thing to pain thee, dearest son, Dismiss the memory from thy
mind: A hermit thou, be good and kind.

On thee our lives, our all, depend: Thou art thy friendless
parents' friend. The eyeless couple's eye art thou: Then why so
cold and silent now?"

With sobbing voice and bosom wrung I scarce could move my
faltering tongue, And with my spirit filled with dread

I looked upon the sage, and said,

While mind, and sense, and nerve I strung To fortify my
trembling tongue,

And let the aged hermit know

His son's sad fate, my fear and woe: "High-minded Saint, not I
thy child, A warrior, Dasaratha styled.

I bear a grievous sorrow's weight Born of a deed which good
men hate. My lord, I came to Sarjú's shore, And in my hand my
bow I bore

For elephant or beast of chase

That seeks by night his drinking place. There from the stream a
sound I heard As if a jar the water stirred.

An elephant, I thought, was nigh: I aimed, and let an arrow fly.

Swift to the place I made my way, And there a wounded hermit
lay Gaspng for breath: the deadly dart Stood quivering in his
youthful heart. I hastened near with pain oppressed; He faltered
out his last behest.

And quickly, as he bade me do,

From his pierced side the shaft I drew. I drew the arrow from
the rent,

And up to heaven the hermit went, Lamenting, as from earth he
passed, His aged parents to the last.

Thus, unaware, the deed was done: My hand, unwitting, killed
thy son. For what remains, O, let me win Thy pardon for my
heedless sin."

As the sad tale of sin I told

The hermit's grief was uncontrolled. With flooded eyes, and
sorrow-faint,

Thus spake the venerable saint:

I stood with hand to hand applied, And listened as he spoke
and sighed: "If thou, O King, hadst left unsaid

By thine own tongue this tale of dread, Thy head for hideous
guilt accursed Had in a thousand pieces burst.

A hermit's blood by warrior spilt, In such a case, with purposed
guilt,

Down from his high estate would bring Even the thunder's
mighty King.

And he a dart who conscious sends Against the devotee who
spends

His pure life by the law of Heaven— That sinner's head will split
in seven. Thou livest, for thy heedless hand

Has wrought a deed thou hast not planned, Else thou and all of
Raghu's line

Had perished by this act of thine. Now guide us," thus the
hermit said, "Forth to the spot where he lies dead. Guide us, this

day, O Monarch, we For the last time our son would see: The
hermit dress of skin he wore

Rent from his limbs distained with gore; His senseless body lying
slain,

His soul in Yama's dark domain.”

Alone the mourning pair I led, Their souls with woe disquieted,

[171] And let the dame and hermit lay Their hands upon the
breathless clay.

The father touched his son, and pressed The body to his aged
breast;

Then falling by the dead boy's side, He lifted up his voice, and
cried:

“Hast thou no word, my child, to say?

No greeting for thy sire to-day? Why art thou angry, darling?
why Wilt thou upon the cold earth lie? If thou, my son, art wroth
with me,

Here, duteous child, thy mother see. What! no embrace for me,
my son? No word of tender love—not one? Whose gentle voice,
so soft and clear, Soothing my spirit, shall I hear

When evening comes, with accents sweet Scripture or ancient
lore repeat?

Who, having fed the sacred fire, And duly bathed, as texts
require,

Will cheer, when evening rites are done, The father mourning for
his son?

Who will the daily meal provide

For the poor wretch who lacks a guide, Feeding the helpless
with the best Berries and roots, like some dear guest? How can
these hands subsistence find For thy poor mother, old and
blind?

The wretched votaress how sustain, Who mourns her child in
ceaseless pain? Stay yet a while, my darling, stay,

Nor fly to Yama's realm to-day. To-morrow I thy sire and she

Who bare thee, child, will go with, thee.³³⁷

³³⁷ So dying York cries over the body of Suffolk: "Tarry, dear
cousin Suffolk!

My soul shall thine keep company to heaven:

Then when I look on Yama, I To great Vivasvat's son will cry:

"Hear, King of justice, and restore Our child to feed us, I
implore.

Lord of the world, of mighty fame, Faithful and just, admit my claim,
And grant this single boon to free My soul from fear, to one like me.”
Because, my son, untouched by stain, By sinful hands thou fallest slain,

Win, through thy truth, the sphere where those Who die by hostile darts repose.

Seek the blest home prepared for all The valiant who in battle fall,

Who face the foe and scorn to yield, In glory dying on the field.

Rise to the heaven where Dhundhumár And Nahush, mighty heroes, are,
Where Janamejay and the blest

Dilípa, Sagar, Saivya, rest:

Home of all virtuous spirits, earned By fervent rites and Scripture learned:

By those whose sacred fires have glowed, Whose liberal hands have fields bestowed:
By givers of a thousand cows,

By lovers of one faithful spouse:

By those who serve their masters well, And cast away this earthly shell.

None of my race can ever know The bitter pain of lasting woe.
But doomed to that dire fate is he

Tarry, sweet soul, for mine, then fly abreast.”

King Henry V, Act IV, 6.

Whose guilty hand has slaughtered thee.”

Thus with wild tears the aged saint Made many a time his
piteous plaint, Then with his wife began to shed The funeral
water for the dead.

But in a shape celestial clad, Won by the merits of the lad, The
spirit from the body brake

And to the mourning parents spake: “A glorious home in realms
above Rewards my care and filial love.

You, honoured parents, soon shall be Partakers of that home
with me.”

He spake, and swiftly mounting high, With Indra near him, to
the sky

On a bright car, with flame that glowed, Sublime the duteous
hermit rode.

The father, with his consort’s aid, The funeral rites with water
paid, And thus his speech to me renewed Who stood in
suppliant attitude: “Slay me this day, O, slay me, King, For
death no longer has a sting.

Childless am I: thy dart has done To death my dear, my only
son. Because the boy I loved so well Slain by thy heedless arrow
fell, My curse upon thy soul shall press With bitter woe and
heaviness.

I mourn a slaughtered child, and thou Shalt feel the pangs that
kill me now. Bereft and suffering e'en as I,

So shalt thou mourn thy son, and die. Thy hand unwitting dealt
the blow That laid a holy hermit low,

And distant, therefore, is the time When thou shalt suffer for the
crime.

The hour shall come when, crushed by woes Like these I feel, thy
life shall close:

A debt to pay in after days

Like his the priestly fee who pays.”

This curse on me the hermit laid,

Nor yet his tears and groans were stayed. Then on the pyre their
bodies cast

The pair; and straight to heaven they passed. As in sad thought
I pondered long

Back to my memory came the wrong Done in wild youth, O lady dear,

[172] When 'twas my boast to shoot by ear. The deed has borne the fruit, which now Hangs ripe upon the bending bough: Thus dainty meats the palate please, And lure the weak to swift disease. Now on my soul return with dread

The words that noble hermit said, That I for a dear son should grieve, And of the woe my life should leave.”

Thus spake the king with many a tear; Then to his wife he cried in fear:

“I cannot see thee, love; but lay Thy gentle hand in mine, I pray. Ah me, if Ráma touched me thus, If once, returning home to us, He bade me wealth and lordship give,

Then, so I think, my soul would live. Unlike myself, unjust and mean

Have been my ways with him, my Queen, But like himself is all that he,

My noble son, has done to me.

His son, though far from right he stray, What prudent sire would cast away?

What banished son would check his ire, Nor speak reproaches
of his sire?

I see thee not: these eyes grow blind, And memory quits my
troubled mind. Angels of Death are round me: they Summon my
soul with speed away.

What woe more grievous can there be, That, when from light
and life I flee,

I may not, ere I part, behold

My virtuous Ráma, true and bold? Grief for my son, the brave
and true, Whose joy it was my will to do, Dries up my breath, as
summer dries The last drop in the pool that lies.

Not men, but blessed Gods, are they Whose eyes shall see his
face that day; See him, when fourteen years are past, With
earrings decked return at last.

My fainting mind forgets to think: Low and more low my spirits
sink. Each from its seat, my senses steal: I cannot hear, or taste,
or feel.

This lethargy of soul o'ercomes Each organ, and its function
numbs: So when the oil begins to fail,

The torch's rays grow faint and pale. This flood of woe caused
by this hand

Destroys me helpless and unmanned, Resistless as the floods
that bore

A passage through the river shore. Ah Raghu's son, ah mighty-
armed,

By whom my cares were soothed and charmed, My son in whom
I took delight,

Now vanished from thy father's sight! Kausalyá, ah, I cannot
see;

Sumitrá, gentle devotee! Alas, Kaikeyí, cruel dame,

My bitter foe, thy father's shame!"

Kausalyá and Sumitrá kept Their watch beside him as he wept.
And Dasaratha moaned and sighed, And grieving for his darling
died.

Canto LXV. The Women's Lament.

And now the night had past away, And brightly dawned another
day;

The minstrels, trained to play and sing, Flocked to the chamber of the king: Bards, who their gayest raiment wore, And heralds famed for ancient lore: And singers, with their songs of praise, Made music in their several ways.

There as they poured their blessings choice And hailed their king with hand and voice, Their praises with a swelling roar

Echoed through court and corridor.

Then as the bards his glory sang, From beaten palms loud answer rang,

As glad applauders clapped their hands, And told his deeds in distant lands.

The swelling concert woke a throng Of sleeping birds to life and song: Some in the branches of the trees, Some caged in halls and galleries. Nor was the soft string music mute; The gentle whisper of the lute,

And blessings sung by singers skilled The palace of the monarch filled.

Eunuchs and dames of life unstained, Each in the arts of waiting trained, Drew near attentive as before,

And crowded to the chamber door: These skilful when and how
to shed The lustral stream o'er limb and head, Others with
golden ewers stood

Of water stained with sandal wood.

And many a maid, pure, young, and fair, Her load of early
offerings bare,

Cups of the flood which all revere, And sacred things, and toilet
gear. Each several thing was duly brought As rule of old
observance taught, And lucky signs on each impressed
Stamped it the fairest and the best. There anxious, in their long
array, All waited till the shine of day:

But when the king nor rose nor spoke, Doubt and alarm within
them woke. Forthwith the dames, by duty led, Attendants on the
monarch's bed,

Within the royal chamber pressed To wake their master from his
rest. Skilled in the lore of dreaming, they

First touched the bed on which he lay.

[173] But none replied; no sound was heard, Nor hand, nor head,
nor body stirred. They trembled, and their dread increased,
Fearing his breath of life had ceased, And bending low their
heads, they shook Like the tall reeds that fringe the brook. In

doubt and terror down they knelt, Looked on his face, his cold
hand felt, And then the gloomy truth appeared

Of all their hearts had darkly feared. Kausalyá and Sumitrá,
worn

With weeping for their sons, forlorn, Woke not, but lay in
slumber deep And still as death's unending sleep. Bowed down
by grief, her colour fled, Her wonted lustre dull and dead,
Kausalyá shone not, like a star Obscured behind a cloudy bar.

Beside the king's her couch was spread, And next was Queen
Sumitrá's bed, Who shone no more with beauty's glow, Her face
bedewed with tears of woe.

There lapped in sleep each wearied queen, There as in sleep, the
king was seen;

And swift the troubling thought came o'er Their spirits that he
breathed no more.

At once with wailing loud and high The matrons shrieked a bitter
cry, As widowed elephants bewail Their dead lord in the woody
vale.

At the loud shriek that round them rang, Kausalyá and Sumitrá
sprang Awakened from their beds, with eyes Wide open in their
first surprise.

Quick to the monarch's side they came, And saw and touched
his lifeless frame; One cry, O husband! forth they sent, And
prostrate to the ground they went. The king of Kosal's
daughter³³⁸ there Writhed, with the dust on limb and hair
Lustreless, as a star might lie

Hurled downward from the glorious sky. When the king's voice
in death was stilled, The women who the chamber filled
Saw, like a widow elephant slain, Kausalyá prostrate in her pain.

Then all the monarch's ladies led By Queen Kaikeyí at their
head,

Poured forth their tears, and weeping so, Sank on the ground,
consumed by woe. The cry of grief so long and loud

Went up from all the royal crowd, That, doubled by the matron
train, It made the palace ring again.

Filled with dark fear and eager eyes, Anxiety and wild surmise;
Echoing with the cries of grief

Of sorrowing friends who mourned their chief, Dejected, pale
with deep distress,

Hurled from their height of happiness: Such was the look the
palace wore

Where lay the king who breathed no more.

³³⁸ Kausalyá, daughter of the king of another Kosal.

Canto LXVI. The Embalming.

Kausalyá's eyes with tears o'erflowed, Weighed down by varied sorrows' load; On her dead lord her gaze she bent, Who lay like fire whose might is spent, Like the great deep with waters dry, Or like the clouded sun on high. Then on her lap she laid his head. And on Kaikeyí looked and said: "Triumphant now enjoy thy reign Without a thorn thy side to pain. Thou hast pursued thy single aim, And killed the king, O wicked dame. Far from my sight my Ráma flies,

My perished lord has sought the skies. No friend, no hope my life to cheer,

I cannot tread the dark path here. Who would forsake her husband, who That God to whom her love is due, And wish to live one hour, but she Whose heart no duty owns, like thee? The ravenous sees no fault: his greed Will e'en on poison blindly feed.

Kaikeyí, through a hump-back maid, This royal house in death has laid.

King Janak, with his queen, will hear Heart rent like me the tidings drear Of Ráma banished by the king, Urged by her impious counselling.

No son has he, his age is great,
And sinking with the double weight, He for his darling child will
pine, And pierced with woe his life resign.

Canto LXVI. The Embalming. 607

Sprung from Videha's monarch, she A sad and lovely devotee,
Roaming the wood, unmeet for woe, Will toil and trouble
undergo.

She in the gloomy night with fear The cries of beast and bird will
hear, And trembling in her wild alarm Will cling to Ráma's
sheltering arm. Ah, little knows my duteous son That I am
widowed and undone— My Ráma of the lotus eye,

Gone hence, gone hence, alas, to die. Now, as a living wife and
true,

I, e'en this day, will perish too:

Around his form these arms will throw And to the fire with him
will go.”

Clasping her husband's lifeless clay A while the weeping
votaress lay,

Till chamberlains removed her thence [174]

O'ercome by sorrow's violence. Then in a cask of oil they laid
Him who in life the world had swayed, And finished, as the lords
desired,

All rites for parted souls required. The lords, all-wise, refused to
burn The monarch ere his son's return; So for a while the corpse
they set Embalmed in oil, and waited yet.

The women heard: no doubt remained, And wildly for the king
they plained. With gushing tears that drowned each eye Wildly
they waved their arms on high, And each her mangling nails
impressed

Deep in her head and knee and breast: "Of Ráma reft,—who
ever spake

The sweetest words the heart to take, Who firmly to the truth
would cling,— Why dost thou leave us, mighty King? How can
the consorts thou hast left Widowed, of Raghu's son bereft,

Live with our foe Kaikeyí near,

The wicked queen we hate and fear? She threw away the king,
her spite

Drove Ráma forth and Lakshmar,'s might, And gentle Sítá: how
will she

Spare any, whosoe'er it be?"

Oppressed with sorrow, tear-distained, The royal women thus
complained.

Like night when not a star appears, Like a sad widow drowned
in tears, Ayodhyá's city, dark and dim,

Reft of her lord was sad for him.

When thus for woe the king to heaven had fled, And still on
earth his lovely wives remained.

With dying light the sun to rest had sped,

And night triumphant o'er the landscape reigned.

Canto LXVII. The Praise Of Kings.

That night of sorrow passed away, And rose again the God of Day.

Then all the twice-born peers of state Together met for high debate.

Jáváli, lord of mighty fame.

And Gautam, and Kátyáyan came, And Márkandeya's reverend age, And Vámadeva, glorious sage:

Sprung from Mudgalya's seed the one, The other ancient Kasyap's son.

With lesser lords these Bráhmans each Spoke in his turn his several speech, And turning to Vasishtha, best

Of household priests him thus addressed: "The night of bitter woe has past,

Which seemed a hundred years to last, Our king, in sorrow for his son, Reunion with the Five has won.

His soul is where the blessed are, While Ráma roams in woods afar,

And Lakshmar,, bright in glorious deeds, Goes where his well-loved brother leads. And Bharat and Satrughna, they

Who smite their foes in battle fray, Far in the realm of Kekaya stay, Where their maternal grandsire's care Keeps Rájagriha's city fair.

Let one of old Ikshváku's race Obtain this day the sovereign's
place, Or havoc and destruction straight Our kingless land will
devastate.

In kingless lands no thunder's voice, No lightning wreaths the
heart rejoice, Nor does Parjanya's heavenly rain

Descend upon the burning plain. Where none is king, the sower's
hand Casts not the seed upon the land; The son against the
father strives.

And husbands fail to rule their wives. In kingless realms no
princes call Their friends to meet in crowded hall; No joyful
citizens resort

To garden trim or sacred court.

In kingless realms no Twice-born care To sacrifice with text and
prayer,

Nor Bráhmans, who their vows maintain, The great solemnities
ordain.

The joys of happier days have ceased: No gathering, festival, or
feast Together calls the merry throng Delighted with the play
and song.

In kingless lands it ne'er is well With sons of trade who buy and
sell: No men who pleasant tales repeat

Delight the crowd with stories sweet. In kingless realms we ne'er
behold

Young maidens decked with gems and gold, Flock to the
gardens blithe and gay

To spend their evening hours in play. No lover in the flying car
Rides with his love to woods afar. In kingless lands no wealthy
swain

Who keeps the herd and reaps the grain, Lies sleeping, blest
with ample store, Securely near his open door.

Upon the royal roads we see

No tusked elephant roaming free,

Of three-score years, whose head and neck

Sweet tinkling bells of silver deck. We hear no more the glad
applause

When his strong bow each rival draws, No clap of hands, no
eager cries

That cheer each martial exercise.

In kingless realms no merchant bands Who travel forth to
distant lands,

With precious wares their wagons load, [175]

And fear no danger on the road. No sage secure in self-control,
Brooding on God with mind and soul, In lonely wanderings finds
his home Where'er at eve his feet may roam.

In kingless realms no man is sure He holds his life and wealth
secure. In kingless lands no warriors smite The foeman's host in
glorious fight. In kingless lands the wise no more, Well trained in
Scripture's holy lore, In shady groves and gardens meet To
argue in their calm retreat.

No longer, in religious fear,

Do they who pious vows revere,

Bring dainty cates and wreaths of flowers As offerings to the
heavenly powers.

No longer, bright as trees in spring, Shine forth the children of
the king Resplendent in the people's eyes With aloe wood and
sandal dyes.

A brook where water once has been, A grove where grass no
more is green,

Kine with no herdsman's guiding hand— So wretched is a
kingless land.

The car its waving banner rears,

Banner of fire the smoke appears: Our king, the banner of our
pride, A God with Gods is glorified.

In kingless lands no law is known, And none may call his wealth
his own, Each preys on each from hour to hour, As fish the
weaker fish devour.

Then fearless, atheists overleap The bounds of right the godly
keep, And when no royal powers restrain, Preëminence and
lordship gain.

As in the frame of man the eye Keeps watch and ward, a
careful spy, The monarch in his wide domains Protects the truth,
the right maintains. He is the right, the truth is he,

Their hopes in him the well-born see. On him his people's lives
depend, Mother is he, and sire, and friend.

The world were veiled in blinding night, And none could see or
know aright, Ruled there no king in any state

The good and ill to separate. We will obey thy word and will As if
our king were living still:

As keeps his bounds the faithful sea, So we observe thy high
decree.

O best of Bráhmans, first in place, Our kingless land lies
desolate:

Some scion of Ikshváku's race

Do thou as monarch consecrate.”

Canto LXVIII. The Envoys.

Vasishtha heard their speech and prayer, And thus addressed
the concourse there, Friends, Bráhmans, counsellors, and all
Assembled in the palace hall:

“Ye know that Bharat, free from care, Still lives in Rájagriha³³⁹
where

The father of his mother reigns:

Satrughna by his side remains. Let active envoys, good at need,
Thither on fleetest horses speed, To bring the hero youths away:
Why waste the time in dull delay?”

Quick came from all the glad reply: “Vasishtha, let the envoys
fly!”

He heard their speech, and thus renewed His charge before the
multitude:

“Nandan, Asok, Siddhárth, attend, Your ears, Jayanta, Vijay,
lend:

Be yours, what need requires, to do:

I speak these words to all of you. With coursers of the fleetest
breed To Rájagriha's city speed.

Then rid your bosoms of distress, And Bharat thus from me
address:

“The household priest and peers by us Send health to thee and
greet thee thus:

Come to thy father's home with haste:

Thine absent time no longer waste.”

339 Rájagriha, or Girivraja was the capital of Asvapati, Bharat's
maternal grandfather.

But speak no word of Ráma fled, Tell not the prince his sire is
dead, Nor to the royal youth the fate That ruins Raghu's race
relate.

Go quickly hence, and with you bear Fine silken vestures rich
and rare, And gems and many a precious thing As gifts to
Bharat and the king.”

With ample stores of food supplied, Each to his home the
envoys hied, Prepared, with steeds of swiftest race, To Kekaya's
land³⁴⁰ their way to trace. They made all due provision there,
And every need arranged with care, Then ordered by Vasishtha,
they

Went forth with speed upon their way. Then northward of
Pralamba, west

Of Apartála, on they pressed, Crossing the Máliní that flowed
With gentle stream athwart the road.

[176] They traversed Gangá's holy waves Where she
Hástinapura³⁴¹ laves, Thence to Panchála³⁴² westward fast
Through Kurujánga's land³⁴³ Note.

340 The Kekayas or Kaikayas in the Punjab appear amongst
the chief nations in the war of the Mahábhárata; their king
being a kinsman of Krishn,a.

341 Hástinapura was the capital of the kingdom of Kuru, near
the modern Delhi.

342 The Panchálas occupied the upper part of the Doab.

343 "Kurujánga and its inhabitants are frequently mentioned
in the Mahábhárata, as in the Ádi-parv. 3789, 4337, et al."

WILSON'S Vishnu Purana, Vol. II. p. 176. DR. HALL'S

they passed.

On, on their course the envoys held By urgency of task impelled.

Quick glancing at each lucid flood

And sweet lake gay with flower and bud. Beyond, they passed
unwearied o'er, Where glad birds fill the flood and shore Of
Saradar,^{9á} racing fleet

With heavenly water clear and sweet, Thereby a tree celestial
grows

Which every boon on prayer bestows:

To its blest shade they humbly bent, Then to Kulingá's town they
went.

Then, having passed the Warrior's Wood, In Abhikála next they
stood,

O'er sacred Ikshumatí³⁴⁴ Edition. The Ikshumatí was a river in
Kurukshetra.

came,

Their ancient kings' ancestral claim. They saw the learned
Bráhmans stand, Each drinking from his hollowed hand, And
through Báhíka³⁴⁵ journeying still They reached at length
Sudáman's hill:

There Vishr,u's footstep turned to see, Vipásá³⁴⁶ viewed, and
Sálmalí,

And many a lake and river met, Tank, pool, and pond, and rivulet.

344 “The Oḍḍumar c of Arrian. See As. Res. Vol. XV. p. 420, 421, also Indische Alterthumskunde, Vol. I. p. 602, first footnote.”

WILSON’S FNS Vishr:u Purár:a, Vol. I. p. 421. DR. HALL’S FNS

345 “The Báhikas are described in the Mahábhárata, Karr,a Parvan, with some

detail, and comprehend the different nations of the Punjab from the Sutlej to the Indus.” WILSON’S FNS Vishr:u Purár:a, Vol. I. p. 167.

346 The Beas, Hyphasis, or Bibasis.

And lions saw, and tigers near, And elephants and herds of deer,
And still, by prompt obedience led, Along the ample road they sped.

Then when their course so swift and long, Had worn their steeds
though fleet and strong, To Girivraja’s splendid town

They came by night, and lighted down. To please their master,
and to guard

The royal race, the lineal right, The envoys, spent with riding
hard,

To that fair city came by night.347

347 It would be lost labour to attempt to verify all the towns and streams mentioned in Cantos LXVIII and LXXII. Professor Wilson observes (Vishr:u Purár:a, p. 139. Dr. Hall's Edition)

“States, and tribes, and cities have disappeared, even from recollection; and some of the natural features of the country, especially the rivers, have undergone a total alteration....

Notwithstanding these impediments, however, we should be able to identify at least mountains and rivers, to a much greater extent than is now practicable, if our maps were not so miserably defective in their nomenclature. None of our surveyors or geographers have been oriental scholars. It may be doubted if any of them have been conversant with the spoken language of the country. They have, consequently, put down names at random, according to their own inaccurate appreciation of sounds carelessly, vulgarly, and corruptly uttered; and their maps of India are crowded with appellations which bear no similitude whatever either to past or present denominations. We need not wonder that we cannot discover Sanskrit names in English maps, when, in the immediate vicinity of Calcutta, Barnagore represents Baráhanagar, Dakshineswar is metamorphosed into Duckinsore, Ulubaría into Willoughbury.... There is scarcely a name in our Indian maps that does not afford proof of extreme indifference to accuracy

in nomenclature, and of an incorrectness in estimating sounds, which is, in some degree, perhaps, a national defect.”

For further information regarding the road from Ayodhyá to Rájagriha, see

Canto LXIX. Bharat’s Dream.

Canto LXIX. Bharat’s Dream. 617

The night those messengers of state Had past within the city’s gate,

In dreams the slumbering Bharat saw A sight that chilled his soul with awe. The dream that dire events foretold

Left Bharat’s heart with horror cold,

[177]

And with consuming woes distraught, Upon his aged sire he
thought.

His dear companions, swift to trace The signs of anguish on his
face, Drew near, his sorrow to expel, And pleasant tales began
to tell.

Some woke sweet music's cheering sound, And others danced in
lively round.

With joke and jest they strove to raise His spirits, quoting
ancient plays;

But Bharat still, the lofty-souled, Deaf to sweet tales his fellows
told, Unmoved by music, dance, and jest, Sat silent, by his woe
oppressed.

To him, begirt by comrades near,

Thus spoke the friend he held most dear: "Why ringed around by
friends, art thou So silent and so mournful now?"

"Hear thou," thus Bharat made reply, "What chills my heart and
dims mine eye. I dreamt I saw the king my sire

Sink headlong in a lake of mire Down from a mountain high in
air, His body soiled, and loose his hair.

Additional Notes.

Upon the miry lake he seemed To lie and welter, as I dreamed;
With hollowed hands full many a draught Of oil he took, and
loudly laughed.

With head cast down I saw him make A meal on sesamum and
cake;

The oil from every member dripped, And in its clammy flood he
dipped. The ocean's bed was bare and dry, The moon had fallen
from the sky, And all the world lay still and dead, With whelming
darkness overspread. The earth was rent and opened wide,

The leafy trees were scorched, and died; I saw the seated
mountains split,

And wreaths of rising smoke emit. The stately beast the
monarch rode

His long tusks rent and splintered showed; And flames that
quenched and cold had lain Blazed forth with kindled light
again.

I looked, and many a handsome dame, Arrayed in brown and
sable came And bore about the monarch, dressed, On iron stool,
in sable vest.

And then the king, of virtuous mind,

A blood-red wreath around him twined, Forth on an ass-drawn
chariot sped,

As southward still he bent his head. Then, crimson-clad, a dame
appeared Who at the monarch laughed and jeered; And a she-
monster, dire to view,

Her hand upon his body threw. Such is the dream I dreamt by
night,

Which chills me yet with wild affright:

Either the king or Rāma, I

Or Lakshmar, now must surely die. For when an ass-drawn
chariot seems To bear away a man in dreams,

Be sure above his funeral pyre

The smoke soon rears its cloudy spire. This makes my spirit low
and weak, My tongue is slow and loth to speak: My lips and
throat are dry for dread, And all my soul disquieted.

My lips, relaxed, can hardly speak,

And chilling dread has changed my cheek I blame myself in
aimless fears,

And still no cause of blame appears. I dwell upon this dream of
ill

Whose changing scenes I viewed, And on the startling horror
still

My troubled thoughts will brood. Still to my soul these terrors
cling,
Reluctant to depart,
And the strange vision of the king Still weighs upon my heart.”

Canto LXX. Bharat's Departure.

While thus he spoke, the envoys borne On horses faint and
travel-worn

Had gained the city fenced around With a deep moat's
protecting bound. An audience of the king they gained, And
honours from the prince obtained;

The monarch's feet they humbly pressed, To Bharat next these
words addressed: “The household priest and peers by us Send
health to thee and greet thee thus: “Come to thy father's house
with haste: Thine absent time no longer waste.” Receive these
vestures rich and rare, These costly gems and jewels fair,
And to thy uncle here present Each precious robe and ornament.

These for the king and him suffice— Two hundred millions is
their price— These, worth a hundred millions, be Reserved, O
large-eyed Prince, for thee.”

Loving his friends with heart and soul, The joyful prince received
the whole, Due honour to the envoys paid,

And thus in turn his answer made: “Of Dasaratha tidings tell:

Is the old king my father well? Is Ráma, and is Lakshmar,, he

Of the high-soul, from sickness free? And she who walks where
duty leads, Kausalyá, known for gracious deeds, Mother of
Ráma, loving spouse, Bound to her lord by well kept vows? And
Lakshmar,'s mother too, the dame Sumitrá skilled in duty's
claim,

Who brave Satrughna also bare,

[178] Second in age,—her health declare. And she, in self-conceit
most sage, With selfish heart most prone to rage, My mother,
fares she well? has she

Sent message or command to me?”

Thus Bharat spake, the mighty-souled, And they in brief their
tidings told:

“All they of whom thou askest dwell, O lion lord, secure and well:
Thine all the smiles of fortune are: Make ready; let them yoke
the car.”

Thus by the royal envoys pressed, Bharat again the band
addressed:

“I go with you: no long delay, A single hour I bid you stay.”

Thus Bharat, son of him who swayed Ayodhyás realm, his
answer made, And then bespoke, his heart to please, His
mother’s sire in words like these: “I go to see my father, King,
Urged by the envoys’ summoning; And when thy soul desires to
see Thy grandson, will return to thee.”

The king his grandsire kissed his head, And in reply to Bharat
said:

“Go forth, dear child: how blest is she, The mother of a son like
thee!

Greet well thy sire, thy mother greet, O thou whose arms the foe
defeat; The household priest, and all the rest Amid the Twice-
born chief and best; And Ráma and brave Lakshmar,, who
Shoot the long shaft with aim so true.”

To him the king high honour showed, And store of wealth and
gifts bestowed, The choicest elephants to ride,

And skins and blankets deftly dyed, A thousand strings of
golden beads, And sixteen hundred mettled steeds:

And boundless wealth before him piled Gave Kekaya to
Kaikeyí's child.

And men of counsel, good and tried, On whose firm truth he aye
relied, King Asvapati gave with speed Prince Bharat on his way
to lead.

And noble elephants, strong and young, From sires of Indrasira
sprung,

And others tall and fair to view Of great Airávat's lineage true:

And well yoked asses fleet of limb The prince his uncle gave to
him. And dogs within the palace bred, Of body vast and
massive head, With mighty fangs for battle, brave,

The tiger's match in strength, he gave. Yet Bharat's bosom
hardly glowed

To see the wealth the king bestowed; For he would speed that
hour away, Such care upon his bosom lay:

Those eager envoys urged him thence, And that sad vision's
influence.

He left his court-yard, crowded then With elephants and steeds
and men, And, peerless in immortal fame,

To the great royal street he came. He saw, as farther still he
went, The inner rooms most excellent,

And passed the doors, to him unclosed, Where check nor bar his
way opposd. There Bharat stayed to bid adieu

To grandsire and to uncle too, Then, with Satrughna by his side,
Mounting his car, away he hied.

The strong-wheeled cars were yoked, and they More than a
hundred, rolled away:

Servants, with horses, asses, kine, Followed their lord in endless
line. So, guarded by his own right hand, Forth high-souled
Bharat hied,

Surrounded by a lordly band On whom the king relied.

Beside him sat Satrughna dear, The scourge of trembling foes:

Thus from the light of Indra's sphere A saint made perfect goes.

Canto LXXI. Bharat's Return.

Then Bharat's face was eastward bent As from the royal town
he went.

He reached Sudámá's farther side, And glorious, gazed upon
the tide; Passed Hládiní, and saw her toss Her westering billows
hard to cross. Then old Ikshváku's famous son O'er Satadrú³⁴⁸
his passage won,

348 "The Satadrú, 'the hundred-channeled'—the Zaradrus of
Ptolemy, Hesydrus of Pliny—is the Sutlej." WILSON'S {FNS
Vishr:u Purár:a, Vol. II. p. 130.

Near Ailadhána on the strand, And came to Aparparyat's land.
O'er Silá's flood he hurried fast, Akurvati's fair stream he
passed, Crossed o'er Ágneya's rapid rill, And Salyakartan
onward still.

Silávahá's swift stream he eyed, True to his vows and purified,
Then crossed the lofty hills, and stood In Chaitraratha's mighty
wood.

He reached the confluence where meet Sarasvatí³⁴⁹ and
Gangá fleet,

And through Bhárur,^{9a} forest, spread Northward of Viramatsya,
sped.

[179] He sought Kálinda's child, who fills The soul with joy, begirt
by hills, Reached Yamuná, and passing o'er, Rested his army on
the shore:

He gave his horses food and rest, Bathed reeking limb and
drooping crest.

They drank their fill and bathed them there, And water for their
journey bare.

Thence through a mighty wood he sped All wild and
uninhabited,

As in fair chariot through the skies, Most fair in shape a Storm-
God flies. At Ansudhána Gangá, hard

To cross, his onward journey barred, So turning quickly thence
he came To Prágvat's city dear to fame.

There having gained the farther side To Kutikoshtiká he hied:

349 The Sarasvatí or Sursooty is a tributary of the Caggar or
Guggur in Sirhind.

The stream he crossed, and onward then To Dharmavardhan
brought his men.

Thence, leaving Torar, on the north, To Jambuprastha journeyed
forth. Then onward to a pleasant grove By fair Varútha's town
he drove,

And when a while he there had stayed, Went eastward from the
friendly shade. Eastward of Ujjiháná where

The Priyak trees are tall and fair,

He passed, and rested there each steed Exhausted with the
journey's speed.

There orders to his men addressed,

With quickened pace he onward pressed, A while at Sarvatírtha
spent,

Then o'er Uttániká he went.

O'er many a stream beside he sped With coursers on the
mountains bred, And passing Hastiprishthak, took The road o'er
Kutiká's fair brook.

Then, at Lohitya's village, he Crossed o'er the swift Kapívatí,
Then passed, where Ekasála stands, The Sthár,umatí's flood and
sands, And Gomatí of fair renown

By Vinata's delightful town. When to Kalinga near he drew,

A wood of Sal trees charmed the view; That passed, the sun
began to rise, And Bharat saw with happy eyes, Ayodhyá's city,
built and planned

By ancient Manu's royal hand.

Seven nights upon the road had passed, And when he saw the
town at last

Before him in her beauty spread, Thus Bharat to the driver said:

“This glorious city from afar, Wherein pure groves and gardens
are, Seems to my eager eyes to-day

A lifeless pile of yellow clay.

Through all her streets where erst a throng Of men and women
streamed along, Uprose the multitudinous roar:

To-day I hear that sound no more. No longer do mine eyes
behold The leading people, as of old,

On elephants, cars, horses, go Abroad and homeward, to and
fro. The brilliant gardens, where we heard The wild note of each
rapturous bird,

Where men and women loved to meet, In pleasant shades, for
pastime sweet,— These to my eyes this day appear Joyless, and
desolate, and drear:

Each tree that graced the garden grieves, And every path is
spread with leaves.

The merry cry of bird and beast,

That spake aloud their joy, has ceased: Still is the long
melodious note

That charmed us from each warbling throat. Why blows the
blessed air no more,

The incense-breathing air that bore Its sweet incomparable
scent

Of sandal and of aloe blent?

Why are the drum and tabour mute? Why is the music of the
lute

That woke responsive to the quill, Loved by the happy, hushed
and still?

My boding spirit gathers hence Dire sins of awful consequence,
And omens, crowding on my sight,

Weigh down my soul with wild affright. Scarce shall I find my
friends who dwell Here in Ayodhyá safe and well:

For surely not without a cause

This crushing dread my soul o'erawes.”

Heart sick, dejected, every sense Confused by terror's influence,
On to the town he quickly swept Which King Ikshváku's children
kept. He passed through Vaijayanta's gate, With weary steeds,
disconsolate,

And all who near their station held, His escort, crying Victory,
swelled, With heart distracted still he bowed Farewell to all the
following crowd, Turned to the driver and began

To question thus the weary man:

“Why was I brought, O free from blame, So fast, unknown for
what I came?

Yet fear of ill my heart appals, And all my wonted courage falls.
For I have heard in days gone by

The changes seen when monarchs die; And all those signs, O
charioteer,

I see to-day surround me here:

Each kinsman’s house looks dark and grim, No hand delights to
keep it trim:

The beauty vanished, and the pride, The doors, unkept, stand
open wide. No morning rites are offered there,

No grateful incense loads the air, And all therein, with brows
o’ercast, Sit joyless on the ground and fast.

[180] Their lovely chaplets dry and dead,

Their courts unswept, with dust o’erspread, The temples of the
Gods to-day

No more look beautiful and gay. Neglected stands each holy
shrine, Each image of a Lord divine.

No shop where flowery wreaths are sold Is bright and busy as
of old.

The women and the men I mark Absorbed in fancies dull and dark,
Their gloomy eyes with tears bedewed, A poor afflicted multitude.”

His mind oppressed with woe and dread, Thus Bharat to his driver said,

Viewed the dire signs Ayodhyá showed, And onward to the palace rode.

Canto LXXII. Bharat's Inquiry.

He entered in, he looked around, Nor in the house his father found;
Then to his mother's dwelling, bent To see her face, he quickly went.
She saw her son, so long away, Returning after many a day,

And from her golden seat in joy Sprung forward to her darling boy.

Within the bower, no longer bright, Came Bharat lover of the right,

And bending with observance sweet Clasped his dear mother's
lovely feet. Long kisses on his brow she pressed, And held her
hero to her breast,

Then fondly drew him to her knees, And questioned him in words
like these: "How many nights have fled, since thou Leftest thy
grandsire's home, till now? By flying steeds so swiftly borne,
Art thou not weak and travel-worn? How fares the king my
father, tell: Is Yudhájit thine uncle well?

And now, my son, at length declare The pleasure of the visit
there."

Thus to the offspring of the king She spake with tender
questioning, And to his mother made reply Young Bharat of the
lotus eye:

"The seventh night has come and fled Since from my grandsire's
home I sped: My mother's sire is well, and he, Yudhájit, from all
trouble free.

The gold and every precious thing Presented by the conqueror
king, The slower guards behind convey: I left them weary on the
way.

Urged by the men my father sent, My hasty course I hither bent:
Now, I implore, an answer deign, And all I wish to know, explain.
Unoccupied I now behold

This couch of thine adorned with gold, And each of King
Ikshváku's race Appears with dark and gloomy face.

The king is aye, my mother dear, Most constant in his visits here.
To meet my sire I sought this spot: How is it that I find him not?

I long to clasp my father's feet:

Say where he lingers, I entreat. Perchance the monarch may be
seen Where dwells Kausalyá, eldest queen."

His father's fate, from him concealed, Kaikeyí to her son
revealed:

Told as glad news the story sad, For lust of sway had made her
mad: "Thy father, O my darling, know, Has gone the way all life
must go: Devout and famed, of lofty thought,

In whom the good their refuge sought."

When Bharat pious, pure, and true,

Heard the sad words which pierced him through, Grieved for the
sire he loved so well

Prostrate upon the ground he fell: Down fell the strong-armed
hero, high Tossing his arms, and a sad cry,

"Ah, woe is me, unhappy, slain!" Burst from his lips again, again,
Afflicted for his father's fate

By grief's intolerable weight,

With every sense amazed and cowed The splendid hero wailed
aloud: "Ah me, my royal father's bed

Of old a gentle radiance shed,

Like the pure sky when clouds are past, And the moon's light is
o'er it cast:

Ah, of its wisest lord bereft,

It shows to-day faint radiance left, As when the moon has left
the sky. Or mighty Ocean's depths are dry."

With choking sobs, with many a tear, Pierced to the heart with
grief sincere, The best of conquerors poured his sighs, And with
his robe veiled face and eyes. Kaikeyí saw him fallen there,

Godlike, afflicted, in despair,

Used every art to move him thence, And tried him thus with
eloquence:

"Arise, arise, my dearest; why

Wilt thou, famed Prince, so lowly lie? Not by such grief as this
are moved Good men like thee, by all approved. The earth thy
father nobly swayed, And rites to Heaven he duly paid.

At length his race of life was run:

Thou shouldst not mourn for him, my son.”

Long on the ground he wept, and rolled From side to side, still
unconsoled,

And then, with bitter grief oppressed,

His mother with these words addressed: [181]

“This joyful hope my bosom fed

When from my grandsire’s halls I sped— “The king will throne his
eldest son, And sacrifice, as should be done.”

But all is changed, my hope was vain, And this sad heart is rent
in twain, For my dear father’s face I miss,

Who ever sought his loved ones’ bliss. But in my absence,
mother, say,

What sickness took my sire away? Ah, happy Ráma, happy they
Allowed his funeral rites to pay!

The glorious monarch has not learned That I his darling have
returned,

Or quickly had he hither sped,

And pressed his kisses on my head. Where is that hand whose
gentle touch, Most soft and kind I loved so much, The hand that
loved to brush away

The dust that on his darling lay? Quick, bear the news to Ráma's
ear; Tell the great chief that I am here: Brother, and sire, and
friend, and all Is he, and I his trusty thrall.

For noble hearts, to virtue true, Their sires in elder brothers view.
To clasp his feet I fain would bow: He is my hope and refuge
now.

What said my glorious sire, who knew Virtue and vice, so brave
and true?

Firm in his vows, dear lady, say, What said he ere he passed
away? What was his rede to me? I crave To hear the last advice
he gave.”

Thus closely questioned by the youth, Kaikeyí spoke the
mournful truth:

“The high-souled monarch wept and sighed, For Ráma, Sítá,
Lakshmar,, cried,

Then, best of all who go to bliss, Passed to the world which
follows this. “Ah, blessed are the people who
Shall Ráma and his Sítá view, And Lakshmar, of the mighty arm,
Returning free from scathe and harm.” Such were the words, the
last of all, Thy father, ere he died, let fall,
By Fate and Death’s dread coils enwound, As some great
elephant is bound.”

He heard, yet deeper in despair, Her lips this double woe
declare,

And with sad brow that showed his pain Questioned his mother
thus again:

“But where is he, of virtue tried, Who fills Kausalyá’s heart with
pride, Where is the noble Ráma? where
Is Lakshmar, brave, and Sítá fair?”

Thus pressed, the queen began to tell The story as each thing
befell,

And gave her son in words like these, The mournful news she
meant to please: “The prince is gone in hermit dress

To Dar,9ak's mighty wilderness, And Lakshmar, brave and Sítá
share The wanderings of the exile there.”

Then Bharat's soul with fear was stirred Lest Ráma from the
right had erred,

And jealous for ancestral fame, He put this question to the
dame:

“Has Ráma grasped with lawless hold A Bráhma's house, or
land, or gold? Has Ráma harmed with ill intent Some poor or
wealthy innocent?

Was Ráma, faithless to his vows, Enamoured of anothers
spouse? Why was he sent to Dar,9ak's wild, Like one who kills an
unborn child?”

He questioned thus: and she began To tell her deeds and crafty
plan.

Deceitful-hearted, fond, and blind As is the way of womankind:

“No Bráhma's wealth has Ráma seized, No dame his
wandering fancy pleased; His very eyes he ne'er allows

To gaze upon a neighbour's spouse. But when I heard the
monarch planned To give the realm to Ráma's hand,

I prayed that Ráma hence might flee, And claimed the throne,
my son, for thee. The king maintained the name he bare, And
did according to my prayer,

And Ráma, with his brother, sent, And Sítá, forth to banishment.

When his dear son was seen no more, The lord of earth was
troubled sore: Too feeble with his grief to strive,

He joined the elemental Five. Up then, most dutiful! maintain

The royal state, arise, and reign. For thee, my darling son, for
thee

All this was planned and wrought by me. Come, cast thy grief
and pain aside, With manly courage fortified.

This town and realm are all thine own, And fear and grief are
here unknown. Come, with Vasishtha's guiding aid,

And priests in ritual skilled

Let the king's funeral dues be paid, And every claim fulfilled.

Perform his obsequies with all That suits his rank and worth,

Then give the mandate to install Thyself as lord of earth.”

Canto LXXIII. Kaikeyí Reproached.

But when he heard the queen relate His brothers' doom, his
father's fate, Thus Bharat to his mother said

With burning grief disquieted: [182]

“Alas, what boots it now to reign,

Struck down by grief and well-nigh slain? Ah, both are gone, my
sire, and he

Who was a second sire to me.

Grief upon grief thy hand has made, And salt upon gashes laid:

For my dear sire has died through thee, And Ráma roams a
devotee.

Thou camest like the night of Fate

This royal house to devastate. Unwitting ill, my hapless sire
Placed in his bosom coals of fire,

And through thy crimes his death he met, O thou whose heart
on sin is set.

Shame of thy house! thy senseless deed Has reft all joy from
Raghu's seed.

The truthful monarch, dear to fame, Received thee as his
wedded dame, And by thy act to misery doomed
Has died by flames of grief consumed. Kausalyá and Sumitrá
too
The coming of my mother rue, And if they live oppressed by
woe,
For their dear sons their sad tears flow. Was he not ever good
and kind,— That hero of the duteous mind?
Skilled in all filial duties, he As a dear mother treated thee.
Kausalyá too, the eldest queen,
Who far foresees with insight keen, Did she not ever show thee
all
A sister's love at duty's call?
And hast thou from the kingdom chased Her son, with bark
around his waist,
To the wild wood, to dwell therein, And dost not sorrow for thy
sin?
The love I bare to Raghu's son Thou knewest not, ambitious one,
If thou hast wrought this impious deed For royal sway, in
lawless greed.
With him and Lakshmar, far away, What power have I the realm
to sway? What hope will fire my bosom when

I see no more these lords of men? The holy king, who loved the
right Relied on Ráma's power and might, His guardian and his
glory, so

Joys Meru in his woods below. How can I bear, a steer
untrained,

The load his mightier strength sustained? What power have I to
brook alone

This weight on feeble shoulders thrown? But if the needful
power were bought

By strength of mind and brooding thought, No triumph shall
attend the dame

Who dooms her son to lasting shame. Now should no doubt that
son prevent From quitting thee on evil bent.

But Ráma's love o'erpowers my will, Who holds thee as his
mother still.

Whence did the thought, O thou whose eyes Are turned to sinful
deeds, arise—

A plan our ancient sires would hate, O fallen from thy virtuous
state?

For in the line from which we spring The eldest is anointed king:
No monarchs from the rule decline, And, least of all, Ikshváku's
line.

Our holy sires, to virtue true, Upon our race a lustre threw, But
with subversive frenzy thou

Hast marred our lineal honour now, Of lofty birth, a noble line
Of previous kings is also thine:

Then whence this hated folly? whence This sudden change that
steals thy sense? Thou shalt not gain thine impious will,

O thou whose thoughts are bent on ill, Thou from whose guilty
hand descend These sinful blows my life to end.

Now to the forest will I go,

Thy cherished plans to overthrow, And bring my brother, free
from stain, His people's darling, home again.

And Ráma, when again he turns, Whose glory like a beacon
burns, In me a faithful slave shall find

To serve him with contented mind.”

Canto LXXIV. Bharat's Lament.

When Bharat's anger-sharpened tongue Reproaches on the
queen had flung, Again, with mighty rage possessed, The guilty
dame he thus addressed: "Flee, cruel, wicked sinner, flee,
Let not this kingdom harbour thee. Thou who hast thrown all
right aside, Weep thou for me when I have died. Canst thou one
charge against the king, Or the most duteous Ráma bring?
The one thy sin to death has sent, The other chased to
banishment. Our line's destroyer, sin defiled Like one who kills
an unborn child,
Ne'er with thy lord in heaven to dwell, Thy portion shall be down
in hell Because thy hand, that stayed for naught,

This awful wickedness has wrought, And ruined him whom all
held dear, My bosom too is stirred with fear.

My father by thy sin is dead, And Ráma to the wood is fled; And
of thy deed I bear the stain,

And fameless in the world remain. Ambitious, evil-souled, in
show My mother, yet my direst foe.

My throning ne'er thine eyes shall bless,

Thy husband's wicked murderess. [183]

Thou art not Asvapati's child,

That righteous king most sage and mild, But thou wast born a
fiend, a foe

My father's house to overthrow. Thou who hast made Kausalyá,
pure, Gentle, affectionate, endure

The loss of him who was her bliss,— What worlds await thee,
Queen, for this? Was it not patent to thy sense

That Ráma was his friends' defence, Kausalyá's own true child
most dear, The eldest and his father's peer?

Men in the son not only trace

The father's figure, form, and face, But in his heart they also
find

The offspring of the father's mind;

And hence, though dear their kinsmen are, To mothers sons are
dearer far.

There goes an ancient legend how Good Surabhí, the God-loved
cow, Saw two of her dear children strain, Drawing a plough and
faint with pain. She saw them on the earth outworn,

Toiling till noon from early morn, And as she viewed her
children's woe, A flood of tears began to flow.

As through the air beneath her swept The Lord of Gods, the
drops she wept, Fine, laden with delicious smell, Upon his
heavenly body fell.

And Indra lifted up his eyes

And saw her standing in the skies, Afflicted with her sorrow's
weight, Sad, weeping, all disconsolate.

The Lord of Gods in anxious mood Thus spoke in suppliant
attitude: "No fear disturbs our rest, and how

Come this great dread upon thee now? Whence can this woe
upon thee fall, Say, gentle one who lovest all?"

Thus spake the God who rules the skies, Indra, the Lord
supremely wise;

And gentle Surabhí, well learned In eloquence, this speech
returned:

"Not thine the fault, great God, not thine And guiltless are the
Lords divine:

I mourn two children faint with toil, Labouring hard in stubborn
soil.

Wasted and sad I see them now, While the sun beats on neck
and brow, Still goaded by the cruel hind,—

No pity in his savage mind.

O Indra, from this body sprang

These children, worn with many a pang. For this sad sight I
mourn, for none
Is to the mother like her son.”

He saw her weep whose offspring feed In thousands over hill
and mead,

And knew that in a mother’s eye Naught with a son, for love,
can vie.

He deemed her, when the tears that came From her sad eyes
bedewed his frame, Laden with their celestial scent,

Of living things most excellent. If she these tears of sorrow shed
Who many a thousand children bred, Think what a life of woe is
left Kausalyá, of her Ráma left.

An only son was hers and she

Is rendered childless now by thee. Here and hereafter, for thy
crime, Woe is thy lot through endless time. And now, O Queen,
without delay, With all due honour will I pay

Both to my brother and my sire The rites their several fates
require. Back to Ayodhyá will I bring

The long-armed chief, her lord and king, And to the wood myself
betake

Where hermit saints their dwelling make. For, sinner both in
deed and thought!

This hideous crime which thou hast wrought I cannot bear, or
live to see

The people's sad eyes bent on me. Begone, to Dar,9ak wood
retire, Or cast thy body to the fire,

Or bind around thy neck the rope: No other refuge mayst thou
hope. When Ráma, lord of valour true,

Has gained the earth, his right and due,

Then, free from duty's binding debt, My vanished sin shall I
forget.”

Thus like an elephant forced to brook The goading of the
driver's hook,

Quick panting like a serpent maimed, He fell to earth with rage
inflamed.

Canto LXXV. The Abjuration.

A while he lay: he rose at length,

And slowly gathering sense and strength, With angry eyes which
tears bedewed, The miserable queen he viewed,

And spake with keen reproach to her Before each lord and
minister:

“No lust have I for kingly sway, My mother I no more obey:
Naught of this consecration knew Which Dasaratha kept in
view.

I with Satrughna all the time Was dwelling in a distant clime: I
knew of Ráma’s exile naught, That hero of the noble thought: I
knew not how fair Sítá went,

And Lakshmar,, forth to banishment.”

Thus high-souled Bharat, mid the crowd, Lifted his voice and
cried aloud.

Kausalyá heard, she raised her head, And quickly to Sumitrá
said: “Bharat, Kaikeyí’s son is here,—

Hers whose fell deeds I loathe and fear: That youth of foresight
keen I fain Would meet and see his face again.” Thus to Sumitrá
spake the dame,

And straight to Bharat’s presence came With altered mien,
neglected dress, Trembling and faint with sore distress. Bharat,
Satrughna by his side,

To meet her, toward her palace hied. And when the royal dame
they viewed Distressed with dire solicitude,

Sad, fallen senseless on the ground, About her neck their arms
they wound. The noble matron prostrate there, Embraced, with
tears, the weeping pair, And with her load of grief oppressed, To
Bharat then these words addressed: “Now all is thine, without a
foe,

This realm for which thou longest so. Ah, soon Kaikeyí’s ruthless
hand

Has won the empire of the land, And made my guiltless Ráma
flee Dressed like some lonely devotee. Herein what profit has
the queen, Whose eye delights in havoc, seen? Me also, me
’twere surely good

To banish to the distant wood,

To dwell amid the shades that hold My famous son with limbs
like gold.

Nay, with the sacred fire to guide, Will I, Sumitrá by my side,
Myself to the drear wood repair And seek the son of Raghu
there.

This land which rice and golden corn And wealth of every kind
adorn, Car, elephant, and steed, and gem,— She makes thee
lord of it and them.”

With taunts like these her bitter tongue The heart of blameless
Bharat wrung And direr pangs his bosom tore

Than when the lancet probes a sore. With troubled senses all
astray Prone at her feet he fell and lay.

With loud lament a while he plained, And slowly strength and
sense regained. With suppliant hand to hand applied

He turned to her who wept and sighed, And thus bespake the
queen, whose breast With sundry woes was sore distressed:

“Why these reproaches, noble dame?

I, knowing naught, am free from blame. Thou knowest well what
love was mine For Ráma, chief of Raghu’s line.

O, never be his darkened mind

To Scripture’s guiding lore inclined, By whose consent the prince
who led The good, the truthful hero, fled.

May he obey the vilest lord,

Offend the sun with act abhorred,³⁵⁰ And strike a sleeping cow,
who lent

350 *Súryamcha pratimehatu, adversus solem mingat.* An
offence expressly forbidden by the Laws of Manu.

His voice to Ráma's banishment. May the good king who all
befriends, And, like his sons, the people tends,

Be wronged by him who gave consent To noble Ráma's
banishment.

On him that king's injustice fall, Who takes, as lord, a sixth of all,
Nor guards, neglectful of his trust, His people, as a ruler must.

The crime of those who swear to fee, At holy rites, some
devotee,

And then the promised gift deny,

Be his who willed the prince should fly. When weapons clash and
heroes bleed, With elephant and harnessed steed, Ne'er, like the
good, be his to fight Whose heart allowed the prince's flight.

Though taught with care by one expert May he the Veda's text
pervert,

With impious mind on evil bent, Whose voice approved the
banishment. May he with traitor lips reveal Whate'er he
promised to conceal,

And bruit abroad his friend's offence, Betrayed by generous
confidence.

No wife of equal lineage born The wretch's joyless home adorn:

Ne'er may he do one virtuous deed, And dying see no child
succeed.

When in the battle's awful day Fierce warriors stand in dread
array, Let the base coward turn and fly, And smitten by the
foeman, die.

Long may he wander, rags his wear,

Doomed in his hand a skull to bear, And like an idiot beg his
bread, Who gave consent when Ráma fled. His sin who holy
rites forgets, Asleep when shows the sun and sets, A load upon
his soul shall lie

Whose will allowed the prince to fly. His sin who loves his
Master's dame, His, kindler of destructive flame, His who
betrays his trusting friend Shall, mingled all, on him descend. By
him no reverence due be paid

To blessed God or parted shade:

May sire and mother's sacred name In vain from him obedience
claim.

Ne'er may he go where dwell the good, Nor win their fame and
neighbourhood, But lose all hopes of bliss to-day,

Who willed the prince should flee away.

May he deceive the poor and weak

[185] Who look to him and comfort seek, Betray the suppliants
who complain, And make the hopeful hope in vain. Long may
his wife his kiss expect, And pine away in cold neglect.

May he his lawful love despise, And turn on other dames his
eyes, Fool, on forbidden joys intent, Whose will allowed the
banishment. His sin who deadly poison throws To spoil the
water as it flows,

Lay on the wretch its burden dread Who gave consent when
Ráma fled.”³⁵¹

³⁵¹ Bharat does not intend these curses for any particular
person: he merely

Thus with his words he undeceived Kausalyá's troubled heart,
who grieved For son and husband reft away;

Then prostrate on the ground he lay. Him as he lay half-
senseless there, Freed by the mighty oaths he sware, Kausalyá,

by her woe distressed, With melancholy words addressed:

“Anew, my son, this sorrow springs To rend my heart with
keener stings:

These awful oaths which thou hast sworn My breast with double
grief have torn.

Thy soul, and faithful Lakshmar,'s too, Are still, thank Heaven! to
virtue true. True to thy promise, thou shalt gain The mansions
which the good obtain.”

Then to her breast that youth she drew, Whose sweet fraternal
love she knew, And there in strict embraces held

The hero, as her tears outwelled.

And Bharat's heart grew sick and faint With grief and oft-
renewed complaint, And all his senses were distraught

By the great woe that in him wrought. Thus he lay and still
bewailed

With sighs and loud lament

Till all his strength and reason failed, The hours of night were
spent.

wishes to prove his own innocence by invoking them on his own head if he had any share in banishing Ráma.

Canto LXXVI. The Funeral.

The saint Vasishtha, best of all

Whose words with moving wisdom fall, Bharat, Kaikeyí's son,
addressed, Whom burning fires of grief distressed:

“O Prince, whose fame is widely spread, Enough of grief: be
comforted.

The time is come: arise, and lay Upon the pyre the monarch's
clay.”

He heard the words Vasishtha spoke, And slumbering resolution
woke.

Then skilled in all the laws declare, He bade his friends the rites
prepare. They raised the body from the oil, And placed it,
dripping, on the soil; Then laid it on a bed, whereon

Wrought gold and precious jewels shone. There, pallor o'er his
features spread, The monarch, as in sleep, lay dead.

Then Bharat sought his father's side, And lifted up his voice and
cried: "O King, and has thy heart designed To part and leave thy
son behind?

Make Ráma flee, who loves the right, And Lakshmar, of the arm
of might? Whither, great Monarch, wilt thou go And leave this
people in their woe, Mourning their hero, wild with grief, Of
Ráma reft, their lion chief?

Ah, who will guard the people well Who in Ayodhyá's city dwell,
When thou, my sire, hast sought the sky,

Canto LXXVI. The Funeral. 649

And Ráma has been forced to fly? In widowed woe, bereft of
thee, The land no more is fair to see: The city, to my aching
sight,

Is gloomy as a moonless night."

Thus, with o'erwhelming sorrow pained, Sad Bharat by the bed
complained:

And thus Vasishtha, holy sage, Spoke his deep anguish to
assuage: "O Lord of men, no longer stay; The last remaining
duties pay:

Haste, mighty-armed, as I advise, The funeral rites to solemnize.”

And Bharat heard Vasishta's rede With due attention and agreed.

He summoned straight from every side Chaplain, and priest, and holy guide. The sacred fires he bade them bring Forth from the chapel of the king, Wherein the priests in order due,

And ministers, the offerings threw. Distraught in mind, with sob and tear, They laid the body on a bier,

And servants, while their eyes brimmed o'er The monarch from the palace bore.

Another band of mourners led The long procession of the dead:

Rich garments in the way they cast, And gold and silver, as they passed. Then other hands the corpse bedewed With fragrant juices that exude From sandal, cedar, aloe, pine,

And every perfume rare and fine. Then priestly hands the mighty dead Upon the pyre deposited.

The sacred fires they tended next, And muttered low each funeral text;

[186] And priestly singers who rehearse The Saman³⁵² sang
their holy verse. Forth from the town in litters came, Or chariots,
many a royal dame, And honoured so the funeral ground, With
aged followers ringed around. With steps in inverse order
bent,³⁵³ The priests in sad procession went Around the
monarch's burning pyre

Who well had nursed each sacred fire: With Queen Kausalyá
and the rest, Their tender hearts with woe distressed. The voice
of women, shrill and clear As screaming curlews, smote the ear,
As from a thousand voices rose

The shriek that tells of woman's woes. Then weeping, faint, with
loud lament, Down Sarjú's shelving bank they went.

There standing on the river side With Bharat, priest, and peer,
Their lips the women purified With water fresh and clear.

Returning to the royal town,

Their eyes with tear-drops filled, Ten days on earth they laid
them down,

And wept till grief was stilled.

352 The Sáma-veda, the hymns of which are chanted aloud.

353 Walking from right to left.

Canto LXXVII. The Gathering Of The Ashes.

The tenth day passed: the prince again Was free from every legal stain.

He bade them on the twelfth the great Remaining honour celebrate.

Much gold he gave, and gems, and food, To all the Bráhmaṇa multitude,

And goats whose hair was white and fine, And many a thousand head of kine: Slaves, men and damsels, he bestowed, And many a car and fair abode:

Such gifts he gave the Bráhmaṇa race His father's obsequies to grace.

Then when the morning's earliest ray Appeared upon the thirteenth day, Again the hero wept and sighed Distraught and sorrow-stupefied; Drew, sobbing in his anguish, near, The last remaining debt to clear, And at the bottom of the pyre,

He thus bespoke his royal sire: "O father, hast thou left me so, Deserted in my friendless woe,

When he to whom the charge was given To keep me, to the wood is driven?

Her only son is forced away

Who was his helpless mother's stay: Ah, whither, father, art thou fled; Leaving the queen uncomforted?"

He looked upon the pile where lay The bones half-burnt and ashes grey, And uttering a piteous moan,

Gave way, by anguish overthrown. Then as his tears began to well, Prostrate to earth the hero fell;

So from its seat the staff they drag, And cast to earth some glorious flag. The ministers approached again

The prince whom rites had freed from stain; So when Yayāti fell, each seer,

In pity for his fate, drew near. Satrughna saw him lying low O'erwhelmed beneath the crush of woe, And as upon the king he thought,

He fell upon the earth distraught. When to his loving memory came Those noble gifts, that kingly frame, He sorrowed, by his woe distressed, As one by frenzied rage possessed: "Ah me, this surging sea of woe Has drowned us with its overflow:

The source is Manthará, dire and dark, Kaikeyí is the ravening shark:

And the great boons the monarch gave Lend conquering might
to every wave. Ah, whither wilt thou go, and leave Thy Bharat in
his woe to grieve, Whom ever 'twas thy greatest joy

To fondle as a tender boy?

Didst thou not give with thoughtful care Our food, our drink, our
robes to wear? Whose love will now for us provide, When thou,
our king and sire, hast died?

At such a time bereft, forlorn, Why is not earth in sunder torn,
Missing her monarch's firm control, His love of right, his lofty
soul?

Ah me, for Ráma roams afar, My sire is where the Blessed are;
How can I live deserted? I

Will pass into the fire and die. Abandoned thus, I will not brook
Upon Ayodhyá's town to look, Once guarded by Ikshváku's
race:

The wood shall be my dwelling place.”

Then when the princes' mournful train Heard the sad brothers
thus complain, And saw their misery, at the view

Their grief burst wilder out anew. Faint with lamenting, sad and
worn, Each like a bull with broken horn, The brothers in their wild

despair Lay rolling, mad with misery, there. Then old Vasishtha
good and true,

Their father's priest, all lore who knew, Raised weeping Bharat
on his feet, And thus bespake with counsel meet:

“Twelve days, my lord, have past away [187]

Since flames consumed thy father's clay: Delay no more: as
rules ordain,

Gather what bones may yet remain. Three constant pairs are
ever found To hem all mortal creatures round:354

Then mourn not thus, O Prince, for none Their close
companionship may shun.”

354 Birth and death, pleasure and pain, loss and gain.

Sumantra bade Satrughna rise,

And soothed his soul with counsel wise, And skilled in truth, his
hearer taught How all things are and come to naught. When
rose each hero from the ground, A lion lord of men, renowned,

He showed like Indra's flag,355 whereon

Fierce rains have dashed and suns have shone. They wiped their
red and weeping eyes,

And gently made their sad replies:

Then, urged to haste, the royal pair Performed the rites that
claimed their care.

Canto LXXVIII. Manthará Punished.

Satrughna thus to Bharat spake Who longed the forest road to
take: “He who in woe was wont to give

Strength to himself and all that live— Dear Ráma, true and pure
in heart,

Is banished by a woman’s art.

Yet here was Lakshmar,, brave and strong, Could not his might
prevent the wrong?

Could not his arm the king restrain, Or make the banished free
again? One loving right and fearing crime

Had checked the monarch’s sin in time, When, vassal of a
woman’s will,

His feet approached the path of ill.”

355 Erected upon a tree or high staff in honour of Indra.

Canto LXXVIII. Manthará Punished. 655

While Lakshmar,'s younger brother, dread

Satrughna, thus to Bharat said, Came to the fronting door,
arrayed

In glittering robes, the hump-back maid. There she, with sandal-
oil besmeared, In garments meet for queens appeared: And
lustre to her form was lent

By many a gem and ornament.

She girdled with her broidered zone, And many a chain about
her thrown, Showed like a female monkey round Whose body
many a string is bound. When on that cause of evil fell

The quick eye of the sentinel,

He grasped her in his ruthless hold, And hastening in, Satrughna
told: "Here is the wicked pest," he cried,

"Through whom the king thy father died, And Ráma wanders in
the wood:

Do with her as thou deemest good." The warder spoke: and
every word Satrughna's breast to fury stirred: He called the
servants, all and each.

And spake in wrath his hasty speech: "This is the wretch my sire
who slew, And misery on my brothers drew:

Let her this day obtain the meed, Vile sinner, of her cruel deed.”
He spake; and moved by fury laid His mighty hand upon the
maid,

Who as her fellows ringed her round, Made with her cries the
hall resound. Soon as the gathered women viewed Satrughna in
his angry mood,

Their hearts disturbed by sudden dread, They turned and from
his presence fled. “His rage,” they cried, “on us will fall, And
ruthless, he will slay us all.

Come, to Kausalyá let us flee:

Our hope, our sure defence is she, Approved by all, of virtuous
mind, Compassionate, and good, and kind.”

His eyes with burning wrath aglow,

Satrughna, shatterer of the foe,

Dragged on the ground the hump-back maid Who shrieked
aloud and screamed for aid. This way and that with no remorse

He dragged her with resistless force, And chains and glittering
trinkets burst Lay here and there with gems dispersed, Till like
the sky of Autumn shone

The palace floor they sparkled on. The lord of men, supremely strong, Haled in his rage the wretch along: Where Queen Kaikeyí dwelt he came, And sternly then addressed the dame. Deep in her heart Kaikeyí felt

The stabs his keen reproaches dealt, And of Satrughna's ire afraid,

To Bharat flew and cried for aid.

He looked and saw the prince inflamed With burning rage, and thus exclaimed: "Forgive! thine angry arm restrain:

A woman never may be slain.

My hand Kaikeyí's blood would spill, The sinner ever bent on ill, But Ráma, long in duty tried,

Canto LXXIX. Bharat's Commands. 657

Would hate the impious matricide:

And if he knew thy vengeful blade

Had slaughtered e'en this hump-back maid,

Never again, be sure, would he

Speak friendly word to thee or me."

When Bharat's speech Satrughna heard He calmed the rage his breast that stirred,

[188]

Releasing from her dire constraint

The trembling wretch with terror faint.

Then to Kaikeyí's feet she crept,

And prostrate in her misery wept.

Kaikeyí on the hump-back gazed,

And saw her weep and gasp.

Still quivering, with her senses dazed, From fierce Satrugna's
grasp.

With gentle words of pity she Assuaged her wild despair,

E'en as a tender hand might free A curlew from the snare.

Canto LXXIX. Bharat's Commands.

Now when the sun's returning ray Had ushered in the fourteenth
day, The gathered peers of state addressed To Bharat's ear
their new request: "Our lord to heaven has parted hence, Long
served with deepest reverence; Ráma, the eldest, far from
home, And Lakshmar,, in the forest roam.

O Prince, of mighty fame, be thou Our guardian and our monarch now, Lest secret plot or foeman's hate Assail our unprotected state.

With longing eyes, O Lord of men, To thee look friend and citizen, And ready is each sacred thing

To consecrate our chosen king. Come, Bharat, and accept thine own Ancient hereditary throne.

Thee let the priests this day install As monarch to preserve us all.”

Around the sacred gear he bent His circling footsteps reverent, And, firm to vows he would not break, Thus to the gathered people spake: “The eldest son is ever king:

So rules the house from which we spring: Nor should ye, Lords, like men unwise, With words like these to wrong advise.

Ráma is eldest born, and he The ruler of the land shall be. Now to the woods will I repair,

Five years and nine to lodge me there. Assemble straight a mighty force, Cars, elephants, and foot and horse, For I will follow on his track

And bring my eldest brother back. Whate'er the rites of throning
need Placed on a car the way shall lead: The sacred vessels I
will take

To the wild wood for Ráma's sake. I o'er the lion prince's head

The sanctifying balm will shed,

And bring him, as the fire they bring Forth from the shrine, with
triumphing. Nor will I let my mother's greed

In this her cherished aim succeed:

In pathless wilds will I remain, And Ráma here as king shall
reign.

To make the rough ways smooth and clear Send workman out
and pioneer:

Let skilful men attend beside

Our way through pathless spots to guide." As thus the royal
Bharat spake,

Ordaining all for Ráma's sake,

The audience gave with one accord Auspicious answer to their
lord:

"Be royal Fortune aye benign

To thee for this good speech of thine, Who wishest still thine
elder's hand To rule with kingly sway the land.”

Their glorious speech, their favouring cries Made his proud
bosom swell:

And from the prince's noble eyes The tears of rapture fell.³⁵⁶

Canto LXXX. The Way Prepared.

³⁵⁶ I follow in this stanza the Bombay edition in preference to
Schlegel's which gives the tears of joy to the courtiers.

All they who knew the joiner's art, Or distant ground in every
part; Each busied in his several trade,
To work machines or ply the spade;

Deft workmen skilled to frame the wheel, Or with the ponderous engine deal; Guides of the way, and craftsmen skilled, To sink the well, make bricks, and build;

And those whose hands the tree could hew, And work with slips of cut bamboo,

Went forward, and to guide them, they Whose eyes before had seen the way. Then onward in triumphant mood Went all the mighty multitude.

Like the great sea whose waves leap high When the full moon is in the sky.

Then, in his proper duty skilled, Each joined him to his several guild, And onward in advance they went With every tool and implement.

Where bush and tangled creeper lay With trenchant steel they made the way;

They felled each stump, removed each stone, And many a tree was overthrown.

In other spots, on desert lands,

Tall trees were reared by busy hands. Where'er the line of road they took,

[189] They plied the hatchet, axe, and hook. Others, with all their strength applied, Cast vigorous plants and shrubs aside, In shelving valleys rooted deep,

And levelled every dale and steep. Each pit and hole that
stopped the way

They filled with stones, and mud, and clay,

And all the ground that rose and fell With busy care was levelled
well.

They bridged ravines with ceaseless toil, And pounded fine the
flinty soil.

Now here, now there, to right and left, A passage through the
ground they cleft, And soon the rushing flood was led Abundant
through the new-cut bed, Which by the running stream supplied
With ocean's boundless waters vied.

In dry and thirsty spots they sank Full many a well and ample
tank, And altars round about them placed To deck the station in
the waste.

With well-wrought plaster smoothly spread, With bloomy trees
that rose o'erhead,

With banners waving in the air,

And wild birds singing here and there, With fragrant sandal-
water wet,

With many a flower beside it set,

Like the Gods' heavenly pathway showed That mighty host's
imperial road.

Deft workmen, chosen for their skill To do the high-souled
Bharat's will, In every pleasant spot where grew Trees of sweet
fruit and fair to view, As he commanded, toiled to grace With all
delights his camping-place. And they who read the stars, and
well Each lucky sign and hour could tell, Raised carefully the
tented shade Wherein high-minded Bharat stayed. With ample
space of level ground,

With broad deep moat encompassed round;

Like Mandar in his towering pride, With streets that ran from
side to side; Enwreathed with many a palace tall Surrounded by
its noble wall;

With roads by skilful workmen made, Where many a glorious
banner played; With stately mansions, where the dove Sat
nestling in her cote above.

Rising aloft supremely fair

Like heavenly cars that float in air, Each camp in beauty and in
bliss Matched Indra's own metropolis.

As shines the heaven on some fair night, With moon and
constellations filled,

The prince's royal road was bright, Adorned by art of workmen skilled.

Canto LXXXI. The Assembly.

Ere yet the dawn had ushered in

The day should see the march begin, Herald and bard who rightly knew
Each nice degree of honour due, Their loud auspicious voices raised,
And royal Bharat blessed and praised.

With sticks of gold the drum they smote, Which thundered out its deafening note,
Blew loud the sounding shell, and blent Each high and low-toned instrument.

The mingled sound of drum and horn Through all the air was quickly borne,

Canto LXXXI. The Assembly. 663

And as in Bharat's ear it rang, Gave the sad prince another pang.

Then Bharat, starting from repose, Stilled the glad sounds that
round him rose, "I am not king; no more mistake:"

Then to Satrughna thus he spake:

"O see what general wrongs succeed Sprung from Kaikeyi's evil
deed!

The king my sire has died and thrown Fresh miseries on me
alone.

The royal bliss, on duty based,

Which our just high-souled father graced, Wanders in doubt and
sore distress

Like a tossed vessel rudderless. And he who was our lordly stay
Roams in the forest far away, Expelled by this my mother, who
To duty's law is most untrue."

As royal Bharat thus gave vent To bitter grief in wild lament,
Gazing upon his face the crowd Of pitying women wept aloud.

His lamentation scarce was o'er, When Saint Vasishtha, skilled
in lore Of royal duty, dear to fame,

To join the great assembly came. Girt by disciples ever true

Still nearer to that hall he drew, Resplendent, heavenly to
behold, Adorned with wealth of gems and gold: E'en so a man in
duty tried

Draws near to meet his virtuous bride.

He reached his golden seat o'erlaid With coverlet of rich
brocade, There sat, in all the Vedas read,

And called the messengers, and said: "Go forth, let Bráhmaṇ,
Warrior, peer, And every captain gather here:

Let all attentive hither throng: Go, hasten: we delay too long.
Satrughna, glorious Bharat bring,

[190] The noble children of the king,³⁵⁷

Yudhájit³⁵⁸ and Sumantra, all

The truthful and the virtuous call."

He ended: soon a mighty sound Of thickening tumult rose
around, As to the hall they bent their course With car, and
elephant, and horse, The people all with glad acclaim

Welcomed Prince Bharat as he came: E'en as they loved their
king to greet, Or as the Gods Lord Indra³⁵⁹ meet.

The vast assembly shone as fair With Bharat's kingly face

As Dasaratha's self were there To glorify the place.

It gleamed like some unruffled lake Where monsters huge of
mould

With many a snake their pastime take O'er shells, sand, gems,
and gold.

357 The commentator says “Satrughna accompanied by the other sons of the king.”

358 Not Bharat’s uncle, but some councillor.

359 Satakratu, Lord of a hundred sacrifices, the performance of a hundred Asvamedhas or sacrifices of a horse entitling the sacrificer to this exalted dignity.

Canto LXXXII. The Departure.

The prudent prince the assembly viewed
Thronged with its noble multitude,
Resplendent as a cloudless night

When the full moon is in his height;
While robes of every varied hue

A glory o’er the synod threw. The priest in lore of duty skilled

Looked on the crowd the hall that filled,
And then in accents soft and grave

To Bharat thus his counsel gave:

“The king, dear son, so good and wise,
Has gone from earth and gained the skies,
Leaving to thee, her rightful lord,

This rich wide land with foison stored. And still has faithful Ráma
stood

Firm to the duty of the good, And kept his father's hest aright,

As the moon keeps its own dear light. Thus sire and brother
yield to thee This realm from all annoyance free: Rejoice thy
lords: enjoy thine own: Anointed king, ascend the throne.

Let vassal Princes hasten forth

From distant lands, west, south, and north, From Kerala,³⁶⁰
from every sea,

And bring ten million gems to thee." As thus the sage Vasishtha
spoke,

A storm of grief o'er Bharat broke. And longing to be just and
true,

His thoughts to duteous Ráma flew.

³⁶⁰ The modern Malabar.

With sobs and sighs and broken tones, E'en as a wounded
mallard moans,

He mourned with deepest sorrow moved, And thus the holy
priest reproved:

"O, how can such as Bharat dare

The power and sway from him to tear, Wise, and devout, and true, and chaste, With Scripture lore and virtue graced? Can one of Dasaratha's seed

Be guilty of so vile a deed?

The realm and I are Ráma's: thou, Shouldst speak the words of justice now. For he, to claims of virtue true,

Is eldest born and noblest too: Nahush, Dilípa could not be

More famous in their lives than he. As Dasaratha ruled of right,

So Ráma's is the power and right. If I should do this sinful deed

And forfeit hope of heavenly meed, My guilty act would dim the shine Of old Ikshváku's glorious line.

Nay, as the sin my mother wrought Is grievous to my inmost thought, I here, my hands together laid,

Will greet him in the pathless shade. To Ráma shall my steps be bent, My King, of men most excellent, Raghu's illustrious son, whose sway

Might hell, and earth, and heaven obey."

That righteous speech, whose every word Bore virtue's stamp, the audience heard;

On Ráma every thought was set,

And with glad tears each eye was wet. “Then, if the power I still
should lack To bring my noble brother back,
I in the wood will dwell, and share His banishment with
Lakshmar, there. By every art persuasive I
To bring him from the wood will try, And show him to your
loving eyes, O Bráhmans noble, good, and wise. E’en now, the
road to make and clear, Each labourer pressed, and pioneer
Have I sent forward to precede
The army I resolve to lead.”

Thus, by fraternal love possessed, His firm resolve the prince
expressed, Then to Sumantra, deeply read

In holy texts, he turned and said:

“Sumantra, rise without delay, And as I bid my words obey.

Give orders for the march with speed, And all the army hither
lead.”

The wise Sumantra, thus addressed, Obeyed the high-souled
chief's behest. He hurried forth with joy inspired And gave the
orders he desired.

Delight each soldier's bosom filled,

And through each chief and captain thrilled, [191]

To hear that march proclaimed, to bring Dear Ráma back from
wandering.

From house to house the tidings flew: Each soldier's wife the
order knew, And as she listened blithe and gay Her husband
urged to speed away.

Captain and soldier soon declared The host equipped and all
prepared

With chariots matching thought for speed, And wagons drawn
by ox and steed.

When Bharat by Vasishtha's side, His ready host of warriors
eyed, Thus in Sumantra's ear he spoke: "My car and horses
quickly yoke." Sumantra hastened to fulfil

With ready joy his master's will, And quickly with the chariot
sped Drawn by fleet horses nobly bred. Then glorious Bharat,
true, devout,

Whose genuine valour none could doubt, Gave in fit words his
order out;

For he would seek the shade

Of the great distant wood, and there Win his dear brother with
his prayer: "Sumantra, haste! my will declare

The host be all arrayed.

I to the wood my way will take, To Ráma supplication make,

And for the world's advantage sake, Will lead him home again."

Then, ordered thus, the charioteer Who listened with delighted
ear, Went forth and gave his orders clear

To captains of the train.

He gave the popular chiefs the word, And with the news his
friends he stirred, And not a single man deferred

Preparing for the road.

Then Bráhmaṇ, Warrior, Merchant, thrall, Obedient to
Sumantra's call,

Each in his house arose, and all Yoked elephant or camel tall, Or
ass or noble steed in stall,

And full appointed showed.

Canto LXXXIII. The Journey Begun.

Then Bharat rose at early morn, And in his noble chariot borne
Drove forward at a rapid pace Eager to look on Ráma's face.
The priests and lords, a fair array, In sun-bright chariots led the
way. Behind, a well appointed throng,

Nine thousand elephants streamed along. Then sixty thousand
cars, and then,

With various arms, came fighting men. A hundred thousand
archers showed

In lengthened line the steeds they rode— A mighty host, the
march to grace

Of Bharat, pride of Raghu's race. Kaikeyí and Sumitrá came,
And good Kausalyá, dear to fame: By hopes of Ráma's coming
cheered They in a radiant car appeared.

On fared the noble host to see

Ráma and Lakshmar,, wild with glee, And still each other's ear
to please, Of Ráma spoke in words like these: "When shall our
happy eyes behold Our hero true, and pure, and bold,

So lustrous dark, so strong of arm,
Who keeps the world from woe and harm? The tears that now
our eyeballs dim
Will vanish at the sight of him,
As the whole world's black shadows fly When the bright sun
ascends the sky.”

Conversing thus their way pursued The city's joyous multitude,
And each in mutual rapture pressed A friend or neighbour to his
breast. Thus every man of high renown, And every merchant of
the town, And leading subjects, joyous went Toward Ráma in his
banishment.

And those who worked the potter's wheel, And artists skilled in
gems to deal;

And masters of the weaver's art,

And those who shaped the sword and dart; And they who
golden trinkets made,

And those who plied the fuller's trade; And servants trained the
bath to heat, And they who dealt in incense sweet; Physicians in
their business skilled, And those who wine and mead distilled;

And workmen deft in glass who wrought, And those whose
snares the peacock caught; With them who bored the ear for
rings,

Or sawed, or fashioned ivory things; And those who knew to mix
cement, Or lived by sale of precious scent;

And men who washed, and men who sewed, And thralls who
mid the herds abode;

And fishers of the flood, and they

Who played and sang, and women gay; And virtuous Bráhmans,
Scripture-wise, Of life approved in all men's eyes;

These swelled the prince's lengthened train, Borne each in car or
bullock wain.

Fair were the robes they wore upon

Their limbs where red-hued unguents shone. These all in various
modes conveyed

Their journey after Bharat made;

The soldiers' hearts with rapture glowed, Following Bharat on his
road,

Their chief whose tender love would fain Bring his dear brother
home again.

With elephant, and horse, and car,

The vast procession travelled far, [192]

And came where Gangá's waves below The town of
Sringavera³⁶¹ flow.

There, with his friends and kinsmen nigh, Dwelt Guha, Ráma's
dear ally,

Heroic guardian of the land

With dauntless heart and ready hand. There for a while the
mighty force That followed Bharat stayed its course, Gazing on
Gangá's bosom stirred

By many a graceful water-bird.

When Bharat viewed his followers there,

³⁶¹ Now Sungroor, in the Allahabad district.

And Gangá's water, blest and fair,

The prince, who lore of words possessed, His councillors and
lords addressed: "The captains of the army call:

Proclaim this day a halt for all, That so to-morrow, rested, we

May cross this flood that seeks the sea. Meanwhile, descending
to the shore, The funeral stream I fain would pour From Gangá's
fair auspicious tide

To him, my father glorified."

Thus Bharat spoke: each peer and lord Approved his words with
one accord, And bade the weary troops repose

In separate spots where'er they chose. There by the mighty
stream that day, Most glorious in its vast array

The prince's wearied army lay In various groups reclined.

There Bharat's hours of night were spent, While every eager
thought he bent

On bringing home from banishment His brother, great of mind.

Canto LXXXIV. Guha's Anger.

Canto LXXXIV. Guha's Anger. 673

King Guha saw the host spread o'er The wide expanse of
Gangá's shore, With waving flag and pennon graced, And to his
followers spoke in haste: "A mighty army meets my eyes,
That rivals Ocean's self in size: Where'er I look my very mind No
limit to the host can find.

Sure Bharat with some evil thought His army to our land has
brought. See, huge of form, his flag he rears, That like an
Ebony-tree appears.

He comes with bonds to take and chain, Or triumph o'er our
people slain:

And after, Ráma will he slay,— Him whom his father drove
away:

The power complete he longs to gain, And—task too hard—
usurp the reign. So Bharat comes with wicked will His brother
Ráma's blood to spill.

But Ráma's slave and friend am I; He is my lord and dear ally.

Keep here your watch in arms arrayed Near Gangá's flood to
lend him aid, And let my gathered servants stand And line with
troops the river strand. Here let the river keepers meet,

Who flesh and roots and berries eat; A hundred fishers man
each boat Of the five hundred here afloat, And let the youthful
and the strong Assemble in defensive throng.

But yet, if, free from guilty thought 'Gainst Ráma, he this land
have sought,

The prince's happy host to-day Across the flood shall make its
way.”

He spoke: then bearing in a dish A gift of honey, meat, and fish,
The king of the Nishádas drew Toward Bharat for an interview.

When Bharat's noble charioteer Observed the monarch
hastening near, He duly, skilled in courteous lore, The tidings to
his master bore:

“This aged prince who hither bends His footsteps with a
thousand friends, Knows, firm ally of Ráma, all

That may in Dar,9ak wood befall: Therefore, Kakutstha's son,
admit The monarch, as is right and fit: For doubtless he can
clearly tell

Where Ráma now and Lakshmar, dwell.”

When Bharat heard Sumantra's rede, To his fair words the
prince agreed: “Go quickly forth,” he cried, “and bring Before
my face the aged king.”

King Guha, with his kinsmen near, Rejoiced the summoning to hear:

He nearer drew, bowed low his head, And thus to royal Bharat said:

“No mansions can our country boast, And unexpected comes thy host:

But what we have I give thee all: Rest in the lodging of thy thrall. See, the Nishádas here have brought

The fruit and roots their hands have sought:

And we have woodland fare beside, And store of meat both fresh and dried. To rest their weary limbs, I pray

This night at least thy host may stay:

Then cheered with all we can bestow To-morrow thou with it mayst go.”

Canto LXXXV. Guha And Bharat.

Thus the Nishádas' king besought:

The prince with spirit wisdom-fraught[193]

Replied in seemly words that blent Deep matter with the
argument: "Thou, friend of him whom I revere, With honours
high hast met me here, For thou alone wouldst entertain And
feed to-day so vast a train."

In such fair words the prince replied, Then, pointing to the path
he cried: "Which way aright will lead my feet To Bharadvája's
calm retreat;

For all this land near Gangá's streams Pathless and hard to
traverse seems?"

Thus spoke the prince: King Guha heard Delighted every
prudent word,

And gazing on that forest wide,

Raised suppliant hands, and thus replied: “My servants, all the ground who know, O glorious Prince, with thee shall go With constant care thy way to guide, And I will journey by thy side.

But this thy host so wide dispread Wakes in my heart one doubt and dread, Lest, threatening Ráma good and great, Ill thoughts thy journey stimulate.”

But when King Guha, ill at ease, Declared his fear in words like these, As pure as is the cloudless sky

With soft voice Bharat made reply: “Suspect me not: ne'er come the time For me to plot so foul a crime!

He is my eldest brother, he Is like a father dear to me.

I go to lead my brother thence

Who makes the wood his residence.

No thought but this thy heart should frame: This simple truth my lips proclaim.”

Then with glad cheer King Guha cried, With Bharat's answer gratified:

“Blessed art thou: on earth I see

None who may vie, O Prince, with thee, Who canst of thy free will resign

The kingdom which unsought is thine. For this, a name that ne'er
shall die, Thy glory through the worlds shall fly,

Who fain wouldst balm thy brother's pain And lead the exile
home again.”

As Guha thus, and Bharat, each To other spoke in friendly
speech, The Day-God sank with glory dead,

And night o'er all the sky was spread. Soon as King Guha's
thoughtful care Had quartered all the army there, Well
honoured, Bharat laid his head Beside Satrughna on a bed.

But grief for Ráma yet oppressed

High-minded Bharat's faithful breast— Such torment little was
deserved

By him who ne'er from duty swerved. The fever raged through
every vein And burnt him with its inward pain: So when in woods
the flames leap free The fire within consumes the tree.

From heat of burning anguish sprung The sweat upon his body
hung,

As when the sun with fervid glow On high Himálaya melts the
snow. As, banished from the herd, a bull Wanders alone and
sorrowful.

Thus sighing and distressed, In misery and bitter grief,
With fevered heart that mocked relief, Distracted in his mind,
the chief
Still mourned and found no rest.

Canto LXXXVI. Guha's Speech.

Guha the king, acquainted well With all that in the wood befell,
To Bharat the unequalled told

The tale of Lakshmar, mighty-souled: "With many an earnest
word I spake To Lakshmar, as he stayed awake, And with his
bow and shaft in hand To guard his brother kept his stand:

"Now sleep a little, Lakshmar,, see This pleasant bed is strewn
for thee: Hereon thy weary body lay,

And strengthen thee with rest, I pray, Inured to toil are men like
these,

But thou hast aye been nursed in ease. Rest, duteous-minded! I
will keep

My watch while Ráma lies asleep: For in the whole wide world is
none Dearer to me than Raghu's son.

Harbour no doubt or jealous fear:

I speak the truth with heart sincere:

For from the grace which he has shown Will glory on my name
be thrown: Great store of merit shall I gain,

And duteous, form no wish in vain. Let me enforced by many a
row

Of followers, armed with shaft and bow For well-loved Ráma's
weal provide Who lies asleep by Sítá's side.

For through this wood I often go, And all its shades conceal I
know:

And we with conquering arms can meet A four-fold host
arrayed complete.”

Canto LXXXVI. Guha's Speech. 679

“With words like these I spoke, designed

To move the high-souled Bharat's mind,

But he upon his duty bent,

Plied his persuasive argument:

“O, how can slumber close mine eyes

When lowly couched with Sítá lies

The royal Ráma? can I give
My heart to joy, or even live?
He whom no mighty demon, no,
Nor heavenly God can overthrow,
See, Guha, how he lies, alas, [194]
With Sítá couched on gathered grass.
By varied labours, long, severe,
By many a prayer and rite austere,
He, Dasaratha's cherished son,
By Fortune stamped, from Heaven was won.
Now as his son is forced to fly,
The king ere long will surely die:
Reft of his guardian hand, forlorn
In widowed grief this land will mourn.
E'en now perhaps, with toil o'erspent,
The women cease their loud lament,
And cries of woe no longer ring
Throughout the palace of the king.
But ah for sad Kausalyá! how
Fare she and mine own mother now?

How fares the king? this night, I think,
Some of the three in death will sink.
With hopes upon Satrughna set
My mother may survive as yet,
But the sad queen will die who bore
The hero, for her grief is sore.
His cherished wish that would have made
Dear Ráma king, so long delayed,

“Too late! too late!” the king will cry, And conquered by his
misery die.

When Fate has brought the mournful day Which sees my father
pass away,

How happy in their lives are they Allowed his funeral rites to
pay. Our exile o'er, with him who ne'er

Turns from the oath his lips may swear,

May we returning safe and well gain in fair Ayodhyá dwell.”

Thus Bharat stood with many a sigh Lamenting, and the night
went by. Soon as the morning light shone fair In votive coils
both bound their hair. And then I sent them safely o'er And left

them on the farther shore. With Sítá then they onward passed,
Their coats of bark about them cast,
Their locks like hermits' bound, The mighty tamers of the foe,
Each with his arrows and his bow,
Went over the rugged ground, Proud in their strength and
undeterred Like elephants that lead the herd,
And gazing oft around.”

Canto LXXXVII. Guha's Story.

Canto LXXXVII. Guha's Story. 681

That speech of Guha Bharat heard With grief and tender pity
stirred, And as his ears the story drank, Deep in his thoughtful
heart it sank. His large full eyes in anguish rolled,

His trembling limbs grew stiff and cold; Then fell he, like a tree
uptorn,

In woe too grievous to be borne. When Guha saw the long-
armed chief Whose eye was like a lotus leaf,

With lion shoulders strong and fair, High-mettled, prostrate in
despair,— Pale, bitterly afflicted, he

Reeled as in earthquake reels a tree. But when Satrughna
standing nigh Saw his dear brother helpless lie,

Distraught with woe his head he bowed, Embraced him oft and
wept aloud.

Then Bharat's mothers came, forlorn Of their dear king, with
fasting worn, And stood with weeping eyes around The hero
prostrate on the ground.

Kausalyá, by her woe oppressed,

The senseless Bharat's limbs caressed, As a fond cow in love
and fear Caresses oft her youngling dear:

Then yielding to her woe she said, Weeping and sore disquieted:

“What torments, O my son, are these Of sudden pain or swift
disease?

The lives of us and all the line Depend, dear child, on only thine.
Ráma and Lakshmar, forced to flee, I live by naught but seeing
thee:

For as the king has past away Thou art my only help to-day.

Hast thou, perchance, heard evil news Of Lakshmar,, which thy
soul subdues, Or Ráma dwelling with his spouse— My all is he—
neath forest boughs?”

Then slowly gathering sense and strength The weeping hero
rose at length,

And words like these to Guha spake, That bade Kausalyá
comfort take:

“Where lodged the prince that night? and where Lakshmar, the
brave, and Sítá fair?

Show me the couch whereon he lay, Tell me the food he ate, I
pray.”

Then Guha the Nishádas’ king Replied to Bharat’s questioning:

“Of all I had I brought the best

To serve my good and honoured guest Food of each varied kind
I chose,

And every fairest fruit that grows. Ráma the hero truly brave
Declined the gift I humbly gave: His Warrior part he ne’er
forgot, And what I brought accepted not:

“No gifts, my friend, may we accept: Our law is, Give, and must
be kept.” The high-souled chief, O Monarch, thus With gracious
words persuaded us.

Then calm and still, absorbed in thought, He drank the water
Lakshmar, brought, And then, obedient to his vows,
He fasted with his gentle spouse.

[195] So Lakshmar, too from food abstained,

And sipped the water that remained:

Then with ruled lips, devoutly staid, The three³⁶² their evening
worship paid. Then Lakshmar, with unwearied care Brought
heaps of sacred grass, and there With his own hands he quickly
spread, For Ráma's rest, a pleasant bed,

And faithful Sítá's too, where they Reclining each by other lay.

Then Lakshmar, bathed their feet, and drew A little distance
from the two.

Here stands the tree which lent them shade, Here is the grass
beneath it laid,

Where Ráma and his consort spent The night together ere they
went.

Lakshmar,, whose arms the foeman quell, Watched all the night
as sentinel,

And kept his great bow strung:

His hand was gloved, his arm was braced, Two well-filled
quivers at his waist,

With deadly arrows, hung.

I took my shafts and trusty bow, And with that tamer of the foe

Stood ever wakeful near,

And with my followers, bow in hand, Behind me ranged, a ready
band,

Kept watch o'er Indra's peer.”

Canto LXXXVIII. The Ingudí Tree.

362 Ráma, Lakshmar,, and Sumantra.

When Bharat with each friend and peer Had heard that tale so
full and clear, They went together to the tree

The bed which Ráma pressed to see. Then Bharat to his mothers
said: “Behold the high-souled hero's bed: These tumbled heaps
of grass betray Where he that night with Sítá lay: Unmeet, the
heir of fortune high

Thus on the cold bare earth should lie, The monarch's son, in
counsel sage, Of old imperial lineage.

That lion-lord whose noble bed

With finest skins of deer was spread,— How can he now endure
to press

The bare earth, cold and comfortless! This sudden fall from bliss
to grief Appears untrue, beyond belief:

My senses are distraught: I seem To view the fancies of a
dream. There is no deity so great,

No power in heaven can master Fate, If Ráma, Dasaratha's
heir,

Lay on the ground and slumbered there; And lovely Sítá, she
who springs

From fair Videha's ancient kings, Ráma's dear wife, by all
adored, Lay on the earth beside her lord. Here was his couch,
upon this heap

He tossed and turned in restless sleep: On the hard soil each
manly limb

Has stamped the grass with signs of him. That night, it seems,
fair Sítá spent Arrayed in every ornament,

For here and there my eyes behold Small particles of glistening
gold. She laid her outer garment here, For still some silken
threads appear, How dear in her devoted eyes

Must be the bed where Ráma lies, Where she so tender could
repose And by his side forget her woes. Alas, unhappy, guilty
me!

For whom the prince was forced to flee, And chief of Raghu's
sons and best,

A bed like this with Sítá pressed. Son of a royal sire whose hand
Ruled paramount o'er every land, Could he who every joy
bestows, Whose body like the lotus shows,

The friend of all, who charms the sight, Whose flashing eyes are
darkly bright, Leave the dear kingdom, his by right, Unmeet for
woe, the heir of bliss,

And lie upon a bed like this? Great joy and happy fate are thine,
O Lakshmar,, marked with each fair sign, Whose faithful
footsteps follow still

Thy brother in his hour of ill. And blest is Sítá, nobly good,
Who dwells with Ráma in the wood. Ours is, alas, a doubtful fate
Of Ráma reft and desolate.

My royal sire has gained the skies, In woods the high-souled
hero lies;

The state is wrecked and tempest-tossed, A vessel with her
rudder lost.

Yet none in secret thought has planned

With hostile might to seize the land: Though forced in distant
wilds to dwell, The hero's arm protects it well.

Unguarded, with deserted wall, No elephant or steed in stall, My
father's royal city shows Her portals open to her foes,

Of bold protectors reft and bare, Defenceless in her dark
despair: But still her foes she wish restrain,

As men from poisoned cates refrain. I from this hour my nights
will pass

Couched on the earth or gathered grass, Eat only fruit and
roots, and wear

A coat of bark, and matted hair. I in the woods will pass,
content, For him the term of banishment;

So shall I still unbroken save

[196] The promise which the hero gave. While I remain for Ráma
there, Satrugna will my exile share, And Ráma in his home
again,

With Lakshmar,, o'er Ayodhyá reign, for him, to rule and guard
the state, The twice-born men shall consecrate. O, may the
Gods I serve incline

To grant this earnest wish of mine! If when I bow before his feet
And with all moving arts entreat, He still deny my prayer,

Then with my brother will I live: He must, he must permission
give,

Roaming in forests there.”

Canto LXXXIX. The Passage Of Gangá. 687

Canto LXXXIX. The Passage Of Gangá.

That night the son of Raghu lay On Gangá's bank till break of
day:

Then with the earliest light he woke And thus to brave
Satrughna spoke. “Rise up, Satrughna, from thy bed: Why
sleepest thou the night is fled. See how the sun who chases
night Wakes every lotus with his light.

Arise, arise, and first of all The lord of Sringavera call,

For he his friendly aid will lend Our army o'er the flood to send.”

Thus urged, Satrughna answered: “I, Remembering Ráma,
sleepless lie.” As thus the brothers, each to each,

The lion-mettled, ended speech, Came Guha, the Nishádas' king,
And spoke with kindly questioning:

“Hast thou in comfort passed,” he cried, “The night upon the river side?

With thee how fares it? and are these, Thy soldiers, healthy and at ease?” Thus the Nishádas’ lord inquired

In gentle words which love inspired, And Bharat, Ráma’s faithful slave, Thus to the king his answer gave: “The night has sweetly passed, and we Are highly honoured, King, by thee.

Now let thy servants boats prepare, Our army o’er the stream to bear.”

The speech of Bharat Guha heard, And swift to do his bidding stirred. Within the town the monarch sped And to his ready kinsmen said:

“Awake, each kinsman, rise, each friend! May every joy your lives attend.

Gather each boat upon the shore And ferry all the army o’er.”

Thus Guha spoke: nor they delayed, But, rising quick, their lord obeyed, And soon, from every side secured, Five hundred boats were ready moored. Some reared aloft the mystic sign,³⁶³ And mighty bells were hung in line:

Of firmest build, gay flags they bore, And sailors for the helm and oar.

One such King Guha chose, whereon, Of fair white cloth, an awning shone, And sweet musicians charmed the ear,— And bade his servants urge it near.

Then Bharat swiftly sprang on board, And then Satrughna, famous lord,

To whom, with many a royal dame, Kausalyá and Sumitrá came.

The household priest went first in place, The elders, and the Bráhmaṇ race,

And after them the monarch's train Of women borne in many a wain.

Then high to heaven the shouts of those Who fired the army's huts,³⁶⁴ arose, With theirs who bathed along the shore,

³⁶³ The svastika, a little cross with a transverse line at each extremity.

³⁶⁴ When an army marched it was customary to burn the huts in which it had spent the night.

Or to the boats the baggage bore. Full freighted with that mighty force

The boats sped swiftly on their course, By royal Guha's servants
manned, And gentle gales the banners fanned.

Some boats a crowd of dames conveyed, In others noble
coursers neighed;

Some chariots and their cattle bore, Some precious wealth and
golden store. Across the stream each boat was rowed, There
duly disembarked its load,

And then returning on its way, Sped here and there in merry
play. Then swimming elephants appeared With flying pennons
high upreared. And as the drivers urged them o'er,

The look of winged mountains wore. Some men in barges
reached the strand, Others on rafts came safe to land:

Some buoyed with pitchers crossed the tide, And others on their
arms relied.

Thus with the help the monarch gave The army crossed pure
Gangá's wave: Then in auspicious hour it stood Within
Prayága's famous wood.

The prince with cheering words addressed His weary men, and
bade them rest

Where'er they chose and he, With priest and deacon by his side,
To Bharadvája's dwelling hied

That best of saints to see.

[197]

Canto XC. The Hermitage.

The prince of men a league away Saw where the hermit's dwelling lay, Then with his lords his path pursued, And left his warrior multitude.

On foot, as duty taught his mind, He left his warlike gear behind; Two robes of linen cloth he wore, And bade Vasishtha walk before.

Then Bharat from his lords withdrew When Bharadvája came in view, And toward the holy hermit went Behind Vasishtha, reverent.

When Bharadvája, saint austere, Saw good Vasishtha drawing near, He cried, upspringing from his seat,

“The grace-gift bring, my friend to greet.” When Saint Vasishtha near him drew, And Bharat paid the reverence due,

The glorious hermit was aware That Dasaratha's son was there. The grace-gift, water for their feet He gave, and offered fruit to eat;

Then, duty-skilled, with friendly speech In seemly order questioned each:

“How fares it in Ayodhyá now With treasury and army? how
With kith and kin and friends most dear, With councillor, and
prince, and peer?” But, for he knew the king was dead,
Of Dasaratha naught he said. Vasishtha and the prince in turn
Would of the hermit’s welfare learn:

Of holy fires they fain would hear, Of pupils, trees, and birds,
and deer. The glorious saint his answer made That all was well in
holy shade: Then love of Ráma moved his breast, And thus he
questioned of his guest:

“Why art thou here, O Prince, whose band With kingly sway
protects the land?

Declare the cause, explain the whole, For yet some doubt
disturbs my soul. He whom Kausalyá bare, whose might The
foemen slays, his line’s delight, He who with wife and brother
sent Afar now roam in banishment,

Famed prince, to whom his father spake This order for a
woman’s sake:

“Away! and in the forest spend

Thy life till fourteen years shall end”— Has thou the wish to harm
him, bent On sin against the innocent?

Wouldst thou thine elder's realm enjoy Without a thorn that can annoy?"

With sobbing voice and tearful eye Thus Bharat sadly made reply:

"Ah lost am I, if thou, O Saint,

Canst thus in thought my heart attain: No warning charge from thee I need; Ne'er could such crime from me proceed. The words my guilty mother spake When fondly jealous for my sake— Think not that I, to triumph moved, Those words approve or e'er approved.

O Hermit, I have sought this place

To win the lordly hero's grace, To throw me at my brother's feet And lead him to his royal seat.

To this, my journey's aim and end, Thou shouldst, O Saint, thy favour lend: Where is the lord of earth? do thou, Most holy, say, where roams he now?"

Then, by the saint Vasishtha pressed, And all the gathered priests beside,

To Bharat's dutiful request

The hermit graciously replied: “Worthy of thee, O Prince, this deed, True son of Raghu’s ancient seed.

I know thee reverent, well-controlled, The glory of the good of old.

I grant thy prayer: in this pursuit I know thy heart is resolute.

’Tis for thy sake those words I said That wider still thy fame may spread. I know where Ráma, duty-tried,

His brother, and his wife abide. Where Chitrakúta’s heights arise Thy brother Ráma’s dwelling lies. Go thither with the morning’s light, And stay with all thy lords tonight: For I would show thee honour high, And do not thou my wish deny.”

Canto XCI. Bharadvája’s Feast.

Soon as he saw the prince’s mind To rest that day was well inclined, He sought Kaikeyí’s son to please With hospitable courtesies.

Then Bharat to the saint replied:

“Our wants are more than satisfied.

The gifts which honoured strangers greet, And water for our
weary feet

Hast thou bestowed with friendly care, And every choice of
woodland fare.”

Then Bharadvāja spoke, a smile Playing upon his lips the while:

“I know, dear Prince, thy friendly mind Will any fare sufficient
find,

But gladly would I entertain

And banquet all thine armed train:

Such is my earnest wish: do thou This longing of my heart allow,
Why hast thou hither bent thy way,

And made thy troops behind thee stay? [198]

Why unattended? couldst thou not With friends and army seek
this spot?”

Bharat, with reverent hands raised high, To that great hermit
made reply:

“My troops, for awe of thee, O Sage, I brought not to thy
hermitage: Troops of a king or monarch’s son

A hermit's home should ever shun. Behind me comes a mighty
train Wide spreading o'er the ample plain, Where every chief
and captain leads Men, elephants, and mettled steeds.

I feared, O reverend Sage, lest these Might harm the holy
ground and trees,

Springs might be marred and cots o'erthrown, So with the
priests I came alone.”

“Bring all thy host,” the hermit cried, And Bharat, to his joy,
complied.

Then to the chapel went the sire, Where ever burnt the sacred
fire, And first, in order due, with sips Of water purified his lips:

To Visvakarmá, then he prayed, His hospitable feast to aid:

“Let Visvakarmá hear my call,

The God who forms and fashions all: A mighty banquet I
provide,

Be all my wants this day supplied. Lord Indra at their head, the
three³⁶⁵ Who guard the worlds I call to me: A mighty host this
day I feed,

Be now supplied my every need. Let all the streams that
eastward go,

And those whose waters westering flow, Both on the earth and
in the sky,

Flow hither and my wants supply. Be some with ardent liquor
filled,

And some with wine from flowers distilled, While some their
fresh cool streams retain Sweet as the juice of sugar-cane.

I call the Gods, I call the band

Of minstrels that around them stand: I call the Háhá and Huhú,

I call the sweet Visvávasu,

365 Yáma, Varur,a, and Kuvera.

I call the heavenly wives of these With all the bright Apsarases,
Alambúshá of beauty rare,

The charmer of the tangled hair, Ghritáchí and Visváchi fair,
Hemá and Bhímá sweet to view, And lovely Nágadantá too,

And all the sweetest nymphs who stand By Indra or by
Brahmá's hand—

I summon these with all their train And Tumburu to lead the
strain.

Here let Kuvera's garden rise Which far in Northern Kuru³⁶⁶ lies:

For leaves let cloth and gems entwine, And let its fruit be
nymphs divine.

Let Soma³⁶⁷ give the noblest food

To feed the mighty multitude, Of every kind, for tooth and lip,

To chew, to lick, to suck, and sip.

Let wreaths, where fairest flowers abound, Spring from the trees
that bloom around. Each sort of wine to woo the taste,

And meats of every kind be placed.”

366 “A happy land in the remote north where the inhabitants
enjoy a natural perfection attended with complete happiness
obtained without exertion. There is there no vicissitude, nor
decrepitude, nor death, nor fear: no distinction of virtue and
vice, none of the inequalities denoted by the words best, worst,
and intermediate, nor any change resulting from the succession
of the four Yugas.” See MUIR’S FNS Sanskrit Texts, Vol. I. p.
492.

367 The Moon.

Thus spake the hermit self-restrained, With proper tone by rules
ordained,

On deepest meditation bent, In holy might preëminent.

Then as with hands in reverence raised Absorbed in thought he
eastward gazed, The deities he thus addressed

Came each in semblance manifest. Delicious gales that cooled
the frame From Malaya and Dardar came,

That kissed those scented hills and threw Auspicious fragrance
where they blew. Then falling fast in sweetest showers Came
from the sky immortal flowers, And all the airy region round

With heavenly drums was made to sound. Then breathed a soft
celestial breeze, Then danced the bright Apsarases,

The minstrels and the Gods advanced, And warbling lutes the
soul entranced. The earth and sky that music filled, And through
each ear it softly thrilled, As from the heavenly quills it fell With
time and tune attempered well. Soon as the minstrels ceased to
play And airs celestial died away,

The troops of Bharat saw amazed What Visvakarmá's art had
raised. On every side, five leagues around, All smooth and level
lay the ground,

With fresh green grass that charmed the sight Like sapphires
blent with lazulite.

There the Wood-apple hung its load, The Mango and the Citron
glowed,

The Bel and scented Jak were there, And Apelá with fruitage
fair.

There, brought from Northern Kuru, stood Rich in delights, the
glorious wood,

And many a stream was seen to glide [199]

With flowering trees along its side.

There mansions rose with four wide halls, And elephants and
chargers' stalls,

And many a house of royal state, Triumphal arc and bannered
gate. With noble doorways, sought the sky, Like a pale cloud, a
palace high,

Which far and wide rare fragrance shed, With wreaths of white
engarlanded.

Square was its shape, its halls were wide, With many a seat and
couch supplied, Drink of all kinds, and every meat

Such as celestial Gods might eat. Then at the bidding of the
seer Kaikeyí's strong-armed son drew near, And passed within
that fair abode

Which with the noblest jewels glowed. Then, as Vasishtha led the
way,

The councillors, in due array, Followed delighted and amazed
And on the glorious structure gazed.

Then Bharat, Raghu's son, drew near The kingly throne, with
prince and peer, Whereby the chouri in the shade
Of the white canopy was laid. Before the throne he humbly bent
And honoured Ráma, reverent, Then in his hand the chouri bore,
And sat where sits a councillor.

His ministers and household priest Sat by degrees from chief to
least, Then sat the captain of the host And all the men he
honoured most. Then when the saint his order gave, Each river
with enchanted wave

Rolled milk and curds divinely sweet Before the princely Bharat's
feet; And dwellings fair on either side, With gay white plaster
beautified,

Their heavenly roofs were seen to lift, The Bráhmaṇ
Bharadvája's gift.

Then straight by Lord Kuvera sent, Gay with celestial ornament
Of bright attire and jewels' shine, Came twenty thousand
nymphs divine:

The man on whom those beauties glanced That moment felt his
soul entranced.

With them from Nandan's blissful shades Came twenty
thousand heavenly maids. Tumburu, Nárad, Gopa came,
And Sutanu, like radiant flame, The kings of the Gandharva
throng,
And ravished Bharat with their song. Then spoke the saint, and
swift obeyed Alambúshá, the fairest maid,
And Misrakesí bright to view, Ramar,á, Pur,9ríká too,
And danced to him with graceful ease The dances of Apsarases.
All chaplets that by Gods are worn, Or Chaitraratha's graves
adorn,
Bloomed by the saint's command arrayed On branches in
Prayága's shade.

When at the saint's command the breeze Made music with the
Vilva trees,
To wave in rhythmic beat began The boughs of each Myrobolan,
And holy fig-trees wore the look Of dancers, as their leaflets
shook. The fair Tamála, palm, and pine,
With trees that tower and plants that twine, The sweetly varying
forms displayed
Of stately dame or bending maid.

Here men the foaming winecup quaffed, Here drank of milk full
many a draught, And tasted meats of every kind,

Well dressed, whatever pleased their mind. Then beauteous
women, seven or eight, Stood ready by each man to wait:

Beside the stream his limbs they stripped And in the cooling
water dipped.

And then the fair ones, sparkling eyed, With soft hands rubbed
his limbs and dried, And sitting on the lovely bank

Held up the winecup as he drank. Nor did the grooms forget to
feed Camel and mule and ox and steed,

For there were stores of roasted grain, Of honey and of sugar-
cane.

So fast the wild excitement spread Among the warriors Bharat
led, That all the mighty army through

The groom no more his charger knew, And he who drove might
seek in vain To tell his elephant again.

With every joy and rapture fired, Entranced with all the heart
desired,

The myriads of the host that night Revelled delirious with
delight.

Urged by the damsels at their side In wild delight the warriors
cried: “Ne’er will we seek Ayodhyá, no, Nor yet to Dar,9ak forest
go: Here will we stay: may happy fate On Bharat and on Ráma
wait.” Thus cried the army gay and free Exulting in their lawless
glee, Both infantry and those who rode On elephants, or steeds
bestrode,

Ten thousand voices shouting, “This Is heaven indeed for
perfect bliss.”

With garlands decked they idly strayed,

And danced and laughed and sang and played. At length as
every soldier eyed,

With food like Amrit satisfied, Each dainty cate and tempting
meat, No longer had he care to eat.

Thus soldier, servant, dame, and slave Received whate’er the
wish might crave.

As each in new-wrought clothes arrayed

[200]Enjoyed the feast before him laid. Each man was seen in
white attire Unstained by spot or speck of mire: None was
athirst or hungry there, And none had dust upon his hair. On
every side in woody dells

Was milky food in bubbling wells, And there were all-supplying
cows And honey dropping from the boughs. Nor wanted lakes
of flower-made drink With piles of meat upon the brink,

Boiled, stewed, and roasted, varied cheer, Peachick and jungle-
fowl and deer, There was the flesh of kid and boar,

And dainty sauce in endless store, With juice of flowers
concocted well,

And soup that charmed the taste and smell, And pounded fruits
of bitter taste,

And many a bath was ready placed Down by each river's
shelving side There stood great basins well supplied, And laid
therein, of dazzling sheen, White brushes for the teeth were
seen, And many a covered box wherein

Was sandal powdered for the skin. And mirrors bright with
constant care, And piles of new attire were there, And store of
sandals and of shoes, Thousands of pairs, for all to choose:

Eye-unguents, combs for hair and beard, Umbrellas fair and
bows appeared.

Lakes gleamed, that lent digestive aid,³⁶⁸

And some for pleasant bathing made, With waters fair, and
smooth incline For camels, horses, mules, and kine. There saw
they barley heaped on high The countless cattle to supply:

The golden grain shone fair and bright As sapphires or the
lazulite.

To all the gathered host it seemed As if that magic scene they
dreamed,

And wonder, as they gazed, increased At Bharadvāja's glorious
feast.

368 The poet does not tell us what these lakes contained.

Thus in the hermit's grove they spent That night in joy and
merriment,

Blest as the Gods who take their ease Under the shade of
Nandan's trees.

Each minstrel bade the saint adieu, And to his blissful mansion
flew, And every stream and heavenly dame Returned as swiftly
as she came.

Canto XCII. Bharat's Farewell.

So Bharat with his army spent The watches of the night content,
And gladly, with the morning's light Drew near his host the
anchorite.

When Bharadvāja saw him stand

With hand in reverence joined to hand, When fires of worship
had been fed, He looked upon the prince and said: "O blameless
son, I pray thee tell,

Did the past night content thee well? Say if the feast my care
supplied Thy host of followers gratified."

His hands he joined, his head he bent And spoke in answer
reverent

To the most high and radiant sage Who issued from his
hermitage:

"Well have I passed the night: thy feast Gave joy to every man
and beast;

And I, great lord, and every peer Were satisfied with sumptuous
cheer, Thy banquet has delighted all

From highest chief to meanest thrall, And rich attire and drink
and meat Banished the thought of toil and heat. And now, O
Hermit good and great, A boon of thee I supplicate.

To Ráma's side my steps I bend:

Do thou with friendly eye commend. O tell me how to guide my
feet

To virtuous Ráma's lone retreat: Great Hermit, I entreat thee,
say

How far from here and which the way.”

Thus by fraternal love inspired The chieftain of the saint
inquired: Then thus replied the glorious seer Of matchless might,
of vows austere:

“Ere the fourth league from here be passed, Amid a forest wild
and vast,

Stands Chitrakúta's mountain tall, Lovely with wood and
waterfall. North of the mountain thou wilt see The beauteous
stream Mandákiní, Where swarm the waterfowl below, And gay
trees on the margin grow. Then will a leafy cot between

The river and the hill be seen: 'Tis Ráma's, and the princely pair
Of brothers live for certain there.

Hence to the south thine army lead, And then more southward
still proceed, So shalt thou find his lone retreat,
And there the son of Raghu meet.”

Soon as the ordered march they knew, The widows of the
monarch flew, Leaving their cars, most meet to ride, And
flocked to Bharadvája's side.

There with the good Sumitrá Queen Kausalyá, sad and worn,
was seen, Caressing, still with sorrow faint, The feet of that
illustrious saint, Kaikeyí too, her longings crossed, Reproached
of all, her object lost,

[201] Before the famous hermit came,

And clasped his feet, o'erwhelmed with shame. With circling
steps she humbly went

Around the saint preëminent,

And stood not far from Bharat's side With heart oppressed, and
heavy-eyed. Then the great seer, who never broke One holy
vow, to Bharat spoke: “Speak, Raghu's son: I fain would learn
The story of each queen in turn.”

Obedient to the high request By Bharadvája thus addressed, His
reverent hands together laid,

He, skilled in speech, his answer made: “She whom, O Saint,
thou seest here

A Goddess in her form appear, Was the chief consort of the
king, Now worn with fast and sorrowing. As Aditi in days of yore
The all-preserving Vishr,u bore, Kausalyá bore with happy fate
Lord Ráma of the lion’s gait.

She who, transfixed with torturing pangs, On her left arm so
fondly hangs,

As when her withering leaves decay Droops by the wood the
Cassia spray, Sumitrá, pained with woe, is she,

The consort second of the three: Two princely sons the lady
bare, Fair as the Gods in heaven are fair.

And she, the wicked dame through whom My brothers’ lives are
wrapped in gloom, And mourning for his offspring dear,

The king has sought his heavenly sphere,— Proud, foolish-
hearted, swift to ire,

Self-fancied darling of my sire, Kaikeyí, most ambitious queen,
Unlovely with her lovely mien,

My mother she, whose impious will Is ever bent on deeds of ill,

In whom the root and spring I see Of all this woe which crushes me.”

Quick breathing like a furious snake, With tears and sobs the hero spake, With reddened eyes aglow with rage. And Bharadvája, mighty sage, Supreme in wisdom, calm and grave, In words like these good counsel gave: “O Bharat, hear the words I say;

On her the fault thou must not lay: For many a blessing yet will spring From banished Ráma’s wandering.”

And Bharat, with that promise cheered, Went circling round that saint revered, He humbly bade farewell, and then Gave orders to collect his men.

Prompt at the summons thousands flew To cars which noble coursers drew, Bright-gleaming, glorious to behold, Adorned with wealth of burnished gold. Then female elephants and male, Gold-girthed, with flags that wooed the gale, Marched with their bright bells’ tinkling chime Like clouds when ends the summer time: Some cars were huge and some were light, For heavy draught or rapid flight,

Of costly price, of every kind, With clouds of infantry behind. The dames, Kausalyá at their head, Were in the noblest chariots led, And every gentle bosom beat

With hope the banished prince to meet. The royal Bharat, glory-crowned,

With all his retinue around, Borne in a beauteous litter rode,

Like the young moon and sun that glowed.

The army as it streamed along, Cars, elephants, in endless throng,

Showed, marching on its southward way, Like autumn clouds in long array.

Canto XCIII. Chitrakúta In Sight.

As through the woods its way pursued That mighty bannered multitude, Wild elephants in terror fled

With all the startled herds they led, And bears and deer were seen on hill, In forest glade, by every rill.

Wide as the sea from coast to coast, The high-souled Bharat's mighty host Covered the earth as cloudy trains Obscure the sky when fall the rains. The stately elephants he led,

And countless steeds the land o'erspread, So closely crowded
that between

Their serried ranks no ground was seen. Then when the host had
travelled far, And steeds were worn who drew the car, The
glorious Bharat thus addressed Vasishta, of his lords the best:

“The spot, methinks, we now behold Of which the holy hermit
told,

For, as his words described, I trace Each several feature of the
place: Before us Chitrakúta shows, Mandákiní beside us flows:

Afar umbrageous woods arise

Like darksome clouds that veil the skies. Now tread these
mountain-beasts of mine On Chitrakúta's fair incline.

The trees their rain of blossoms shed On table-lands beneath
them spread,

As from black clouds the floods descend When the hot days of
summer end.

Satrughna, look, the mountain see

[202]Where heavenly minstrels wander free, And horses browse
beneath the steep, Countless as monsters in the deep. Scared
by my host the mountain deer Starting with tempest speed
appear Like the long lines of cloud that fly

In autumn through the windy sky. See, every warrior shows his
head With fragrant blooms engarlanded; All look like southern
soldiers who Lift up their shields of azure hue. This lonely wood
beneath the hill, That was so dark and drear and still, Covered
with men in endless streams Now like Ayodhyá's city seems.

The dust which countless hoofs excite Obscures the sky and
veils the light; But see, swift winds those clouds dispel As if they
strove to please me well.

See, guided in their swift career By many a skilful charioteer,
Those cars by fleetest coursers drawn Race onward over glade
and lawn.

Look, startled as the host comes near The lovely peacocks fly in
fear,

Gorgeous as if the fairest blooms Of earth had glorified their
plumes.

Look where the sheltering covert shows The trooping deer, both
bucks and does, That occupy in countless herds

This mountain populous with birds. Most lovely to my mind
appears

This place which every charm endears: Fair as the road where
tread the Blest; Here holy hermits take their rest.

Then let the army onward press And duly search each green
recess For the two lion-lords, till we
Ráma once more and Lakshmar, see.”

Thus Bharat spoke: and hero bands Of men with weapons in
their hands Entered the tangled forest: then

A spire of smoke appeared in ken. Soon as they saw the rising
smoke To Bharat they returned and spoke: “No fire where men
are not: ’tis clear That Raghu’s sons are dwelling here. Or if not
here those heroes dwell

Whose mighty arms their foeman quell, Still other hermits here
must be

Like Ráma, true and good as he.”

His ears attentive Bharat lent To their resistless argument,
Then to his troops the chief who broke His foe’s embattled
armies spoke: “Here let the troops in silence stay; One step
beyond they must not stray.

Come Dhrishti and Sumantra, you With me alone the path
pursue.”

Their leader's speech the warriors heard, And from his place no
soldier stirred, And Bharat bent his eager eyes

Where curling smoke was seen to rise.

The host his order well obeyed, And halting there in silence
stayed

Watching where from the thicket's shade They saw the smoke
appear.

And joy through all the army ran,

“Soon shall we meet,” thought every man, “The prince we hold
so dear.”

Canto XCIV. Chitrakúta.

There long the son of Raghu dwelt And love for hill and wood he
felt. Then his Videhan spouse to please And his own heart of
woe to ease, Like some Immortal—Indra so

Might Swarga's charms to Sachí show— Drew her sweet eyes to
each delight

Of Chitrakúta's lovely height:

“Though reft of power and kingly sway, Though friends and
home are far away, I cannot mourn my altered lot, Enamoured
of this charming spot.

Look, darling, on this noble hill

Which sweet birds with their music fill,

Bright with a thousand metal dyes His lofty summits cleave the
skies. See, there a silvery sheen is spread,

And there like blood the rocks are red. There shows a streak of
emerald green, And pink and yellow glow between.

There where the higher peaks ascend, Crystal and flowers and
topaz blend, And others flash their light afar

Like mercury or some fair star:

With such a store of metals dyed The king of hills is glorified.

There through the wild birds' populous home The harmless bear
and tiger roam:

Hyænas range the woody slopes With herds of deer and
antelopes.

See, love, the trees that clothe his side All lovely in their summer
pride,

In richest wealth of leaves arrayed,

With flower and fruit and light and shade, Look where the young
Rose-apple glows; What loaded boughs the Mango shows; See,
waving in the western wind

The light leaves of the Tamarind, And mark that giant Peepul
through

The feathery clump of tall bamboo.³⁶⁹ [203]

Look, on the level lands above, Delighting in successful love

369 These ten lines are a substitution for, and not a translation of the text which Carey and Marshman thus render: “This mountain adorned with mango, jumboo, usuna, lodhra, piala, punusa, dhava, unkotha, bhuvya, tinisha, vilwa, tindooka, bamboo, kashmaree, urista, uruna, madhooka, tilaka, vuduree, am- luka, nipa, vetra, dhunwuna, veejaka, and other trees affording flowers, and fruits, and the most delightful shade, how charming does it appear!”

In sweet enjoyment many a pair Of heavenly minstrels revels
there, While overhanging boughs support

Their swords and mantles as they sport: Then see that pleasant
shelter where Play the bright Daughters of the Air.³⁷⁰ The
mountain seems with bright cascade And sweet rill bursting
from the shade, Like some majestic elephant o'er

Whose burning head the torrents pour. Where breathes the man
who would not feel Delicious languor o'er him steal,

As the young morning breeze that springs From the cool cave
with balmy wings, Breathes round him laden with the scent Of
bud and blossom dew-besprent?

If many autumns here I spent With thee, my darling innocent,
And Lakshmar,, I should never know The torture of the fires of
woe,

This varied scene so charms my sight, This mount so fills me
with delight, Where flowers in wild profusion spring, And ripe
fruits glow and sweet birds sing. My beauteous one, a double
good Springs from my dwelling in the wood: Loosed is the bond
my sire that tied,

And Bharat too is gratified.

My darling, dost thou feel with me Delight from every charm we
see, Of which the mind and every sense Feel the enchanting
influence?

370 Vidyadharis, Spirits of Air, sylphs.

My fathers who have passed away, The royal saints, were wont
to say, That life in woodland shades like this Secures a king
immortal bliss.

See, round the hill at random thrown, Huge masses lie of rugged
stone

Of every shape and many a hue, Yellow and white and red and
blue. But all is fairer still by night:

Each rock reflects a softer light,

When the whole mount from foot to crest In robes of lambent
flame is dressed; When from a million herbs a blaze

Of their own luminous glory plays, And clothed in fire each deep
ravine, Each pinnacle and crag is seen.

Some parts the look of mansions wear, And others are as
gardens fair,

While others seem a massive block Of solid undivided rock.

Behold those pleasant beds o'erlaid With lotus leaves, for lovers
made, Where mountain birch and costus throw Cool shadows
on the pair below.

See where the lovers in their play Have cast their flowery
wreaths away, And fruit and lotus buds that crowned Their
brows lie trodden on the ground. North Kuru's realm is fair to
see, Vasvaukasára,³⁷¹ Naliní,³⁷²

But rich in fruit and blossom still

371 A lake attached either to Amarávati the residence of Indra,
or Alaká that of Kuvera.

372 The Ganges of heaven.

More fair is Chitrakúta's hill.

Here shall the years appointed glide With thee, my beauty, by
my side,

And Lakshmar, ever near; Here shall I live in all delight,

Make my ancestral fame more bright, Tread in their path who
walk aright,

And to my oath adhere.”

Canto XCV. Mandákiní.

Then Ráma, like the lotus eyed, Descended from the mountain
side, And to the Maithil lady showed

The lovely stream that softly flowed. And thus Ayodhyá's lord
addressed His bride, of dames the loveliest, Child of Videha's
king, her face

Bright with the fair moon's tender grace: "How sweetly glides, O
darling, look, Mandákiní's delightful brook,

Adorned with islets, blossoms gay,

[204]And sárases and swans at play!

The trees with which her banks are lined Show flowers and fruit
of every kind:

The match in radiant sheen is she Of King Kuvera's Naliní.³⁷³

My heart exults with pleasure new The shelving band and ford
to view,

³⁷³ Naliní, as here, may be the name of any lake covered with
lotuses.

Canto XCV. Mandákiní. 715

Where gathering herds of thirsty deer Disturb the wave that ran
so clear.

Now look, those holy hermits mark In skins of deer and coats of
bark; With twisted coils of matted hair, The reverend men are
bathing there, And as they lift their arms on high The Lord of
Day they glorify:

These best of saints, my large-eyed spouse, Are constant to their sacred vows.

The mountain dances while the trees Bend their proud summits to the breeze, And scatter many a flower and bud From branches that o'erhang the flood. There flows the stream like lucid pearl, Round islets here the currents whirl, And perfect saints from middle air

Are flocking to the waters there. See, there lie flowers in many a heap

From boughs the whistling breezes sweep, And others wafted by the gale

Down the swift current dance and sail. Now see that pair of wild-fowl rise, Exulting with their joyful cries:

Hark, darling, wafted from afar How soft their pleasant voices are. To gaze on Chitrakúta's hill,

To look upon this lovely rill,

To bend mine eyes on thee, dear wife, Is sweeter than my city life.

Come, bathe we in the pleasant rill Whose dancing waves are never still, Stirred by those beings pure from sin, The sanctities who bathe therein:

Come, dearest, to the stream descend, Approach her as a
darling friend, And dip thee in the silver flood Which lotuses and
lilies stud.

Let this fair hill Ayodhyá seem, Its silvan things her people
deem, And let these waters as they flow Our own beloved Sarjú
show.

How blest, mine own dear love, am I; Thou, fond and true, art
ever nigh, And duteous, faithful Lakshmar, stays Beside me, and
my word obeys.

Here every day I bathe me thrice, Fruit, honey, roots for food
suffice,

And ne'er my thoughts with longing stray To distant home or
royal sway.

For who this charming brook can see Where herds of roedeer
wander free, And on the flowery-wooded brink Apes, elephants,
and lions drink,

Nor feel all sorrow fly?" Thus eloquently spoke the pride Of
Raghu's children to his bride, And wandered happy by her side
Where Chitrakúta azure-dyed

Uprears his peaks on high.

Canto XCVI. The Magic Shaft.374

374 This canto is allowed, by Indian commentators, to be an interpolation. It cannot be the work of Válmíki.

Thus Ráma showed to Janak's child The varied beauties of the wild,

The hill, the brook and each fair spot, Then turned to seek their leafy cot.

North of the mountain Ráma found A cavern in the sloping ground,

Charming to view, its floor was strown With many a mass of ore and stone,

In secret shadow far retired

Where gay birds sang with joy inspired, And trees their graceful branches swayed With loads of blossom downward weighed.

Soon as he saw the cave which took

Each living heart and chained the look, Thus Ráma spoke to Sitá who

Gazed wondering on the silvan view: "Does this fair cave beneath the height, Videhan lady, charm thy sight?

Then let us resting here a while The languor of the way beguile.

That block of stone so smooth and square
Was set for thee to
rest on there,

And like a thriving Kesar tree

This flowery shrub o'ershadows thee." Thus Ráma spoke, and
Janak's child, By nature ever soft and mild,

In tender words which love betrayed
Her answer to the hero
made:

"O pride of Raghu's children, still
My pleasure is to do thy will.

Enough for me thy wish to know: Far hast thou wandered to and
fro."

Thus Sítá spake in gentle tone, And went obedient to the stone,
Of perfect face and faultless limb Prepared to rest a while with
him. And Ráma, as she thus replied,

Turned to his spouse again and cried: "Thou seest, love, this
flowery shade For silvan creatures' pleasure made,

How the gum streams from trees and plants

[205]Torn by the tusks of elephants! Through all the forest clear
and high Resounds the shrill cicada's cry. Hark how the kite
above us moans,

And calls her young in piteous tones; So may my hapless mother
be

Still mourning in her home for me. There mounted on that lofty
Sál

The loud Bhringráj³⁷⁵ repeats his call:

How sweetly now he tunes his throat Responsive to the Koil's
note.

Or else the bird that now has sung May be himself the Koil's
young,

Linked with such winning sweetness are The notes he pours
irregular.

See, round the blooming Mango clings That creeper with her
tender rings,

So in thy love, when none is near,

Thine arms are thrown round me, my dear.”

Thus in his joy he cried; and she, Sweet speaker, on her lover's
knee, Of faultless limb and perfect face, Grew closer to her
lord's embrace.

375 A fine bird with a strong, sweet note, and great imitative
powers.

Reclining in her husband's arms,

A goddess in her wealth of charms, She filled his loving breast
anew

With mighty joy that thrilled him through. His finger on the rock
he laid,

Which veins of sanguine ore displayed, And painted o'er his
darling's eyes

The holy sign in mineral dyes. Bright on her brow the metal lay
Like the young sun's first gleaming ray, And showed her in her
beauty fair

As the soft light of morning's air. Then from the Kesar's laden
tree He picked fair blossoms in his glee, And as he decked each
lovely tress,

His heart o'erflowed with happiness. So resting on that rocky
seat

A while they spent in pastime sweet, Then onward neath the
shady boughs Went Ráma with his Maithil spouse. She roaming
in the forest shade Where every kind of creature strayed
Observed a monkey wandering near, And clung to Ráma's arm
in fear.

The hero Ráma fondly laced

His mighty arms around her waist, Consoled his beauty in her
dread, And scared the Monkey till he fled. That holy mark of
sanguine ore That gleamed on Sítá's brow before,

Shone by that close embrace impressed Upon the hero's ample chest.

Then Sítá, when the beast who led The monkey troop, afar had fled,

Laughed loudly in light-hearted glee That mark on Ráma's chest to see.

A clump of bright Asokas fired The forest in their bloom attired:

The restless blossoms as they gleamed A host of threatening monkeys seemed. Then Sítá thus to Ráma cried,

As longingly the flowers she eyed: "Pride of thy race, now let us go Where those Asoka blossoms grow." He on his darling's pleasure bent With his fair goddess thither went

And roamed delighted through the wood Where blossoming Asokas stood,

As Siva with Queen Umá roves Through Himaván's majestic groves. Bright with purpureal glow the pair Of happy lovers sported there,

And each upon the other set A flower-inwoven coronet.

There many a crown and chain they wove Of blooms from that Asoka grove,

And in their graceful sport the two Fresh beauty o'er the
mountain threw. The lover let his love survey

Each pleasant spot that round them lay, Then turned they to
their green retreat Where all was garnished, gay, and neat. By
brotherly affection led,

Sumitrá's son to meet them sped, And showed the labours of
the day Done while his brother was away. There lay ten black-
deer duly slain With arrows pure of poison stain,

Piled in a mighty heap to dry, With many another carcass nigh.

And Lakshmar,'s brother saw, o'erjoyed, The work that had his
hands employed, Then to his consort thus he cried:

"Now be the general gifts supplied." Then Sítá, fairest beauty,
placed The food for living things to taste, And set before the
brothers meat And honey that the pair might eat.

They ate the meal her hands supplied, Their lips with water
purified:

Then Janak's daughter sat at last And duly made her own
repast. The other venison, to be dried, Piled up in heaps was set
aside, And Ráma told his wife to stay And drive the flocking
crows away.

Her husband saw her much distressed By one more bold than all
the rest,

Whose wings where'er he chose could fly, Now pierce the earth,
now roam the sky. Then Ráma laughed to see her stirred

To anger by the plaguing bird:

Proud of his love the beauteous dame With burning rage was all
aflame.

Now here, now there, again, again She chased the crow, but all
in vain,

Enraging her, so quick to strike [206]

With beak and wing and claw alike: Then how the proud lip
quivered, how The dark frown marked her angry brow! When
Ráma saw her cheek aglow

With passion, he rebuked the crow.

But bold in impudence the bird, With no respect for Ráma's
word, Fearless again at Sítá flew:

Then Ráma's wrath to fury grew. The hero of the mighty arm
Spoke o'er a shaft the mystic charm, Laid the dire weapon on
his bow

And launched it at the shameless crow. The bird, empowered by
Gods to spring Through earth itself on rapid wing, Through the
three worlds in terror fled Still followed by that arrow dread.

Where'er he flew, now here now there, A cloud of weapons filled
the air.

Back to the high-souled prince he fled And bent at Ráma's feet
his head, And then, as Sítá looked, began

His speech in accents of a man: "O pardon, and for pity's sake
Spare, Ráma, spare my life to take! Where'er I turn, where'er I
flee,

No shelter from this shaft I see."

The chieftain heard the crow entreat Helpless and prostrate at
his feet,

And while soft pity moved his breast, With wisest speech the
bird addressed: "I took the troubled Sítá's part,

And furious anger filled my heart. Then on the string my arrow
lay Charmed with a spell thy life to slay. Thou seekest now my
feet, to crave Forgiveness and thy life to save.

So shall thy prayer have due respect:

The suppliant I must still protect. But ne'er in vain this dart may
flee; Yield for thy life a part of thee, What portion of thy body,
say, Shall this mine arrow rend away? Thus far, O bird, thus far
alone

On thee my pity may be shown. Forfeit a part thy life to buy:

'Tis better so to live than die." Thus Ráma spoke: the bird of air

Pondered his speech with anxious care, And wisely deemed it
good to give One of his eyes that he might live.

To Raghu's son he made reply:

"O Ráma, I will yield an eye. So let me in thy grace confide And
live hereafter single-eyed."

Then Ráma charged the shaft, and lo, Full in the eye it smote
the crow.

And the Videhan lady gazed Upon the ruined eye amazed. The
crow to Ráma humbly bent,

Then where his fancy led he went. Ráma with Lakshmar, by his
side With needful work was occupied.

Canto XCVII. Lakshman's Anger.

Thus Ráma showed his love the rill Whose waters ran beneath
the hill, Then resting on his mountain seat Refreshed her with
the choicest meat. So there reposed the happy two: Then
Bharat's army nearer drew: Rose to the skies a dusty cloud,
The sound of trampling feet was loud. The swelling roar of
marching men Drove the roused tiger from his den, And scared
amain the serpent race Flying to hole and hiding-place.

The herds of deer in terror fled,

The air was filled with birds o'erhead, The bear began to leave
his tree,

The monkey to the cave to flee. Wild elephants were all amazed
As though the wood around them blazed. The lion oped his
ponderous jaw,

The buffalo looked round in awe.

The prince, who heard the deafening sound, And saw the silvan
creatures round

Fly wildly startled from their rest,

The glorious Lakshmar, thus addressed: "Sumitrá's noble son
most dear,

Hark, Lakshmar,, what a roar I hear, The tumult of a coming
crowd, Appalling, deafening, deep, and loud! The din that yet
more fearful grows Scares elephants and buffaloes,

Or frightened by the lions, deer

Are flying through the wood in fear.

I fain would know who seeks this place Comes prince or
monarch for the chase?

Or does some mighty beast of prey Frighten the silvan herds
away?

'Tis hard to reach this mountain height, Yea, e'en for birds in
airy flight.

Then fain, O Lakshmar,, would I know What cause disturbs the
forest so."

Lakshmar, in haste, the wood to view, Climbed a high Sál that
near him grew, The forest all around he eyed,

First gazing on the eastern side.

Then northward when his eyes he bent He saw a mighty
armament

Of elephants, and cars, and horse, And men on foot, a mingled
force, And banners waving in the breeze, And spoke to Ráma
words like these:

“Quick, quick, my lord, put out the fire,

Let Sítá to the cave retire. [207]

Thy coat of mail around thee throw, Prepare thine arrows and
thy bow.”

In eager haste thus Lakshmar, cried, And Ráma, lion lord,
replied:

“Still closer be the army scanned, And say who leads the warlike
band.” Lakshmar, his answer thus returned, As furious rage
within him burned, Exciting him like kindled fire

To scorch the army in his ire:

“Tis Bharat: he has made the throne By consecrating rites his
own:

To gain the whole dominion thus He comes in arms to slaughter
us.

I mark tree-high upon his car His flagstaff of the Kovidár,³⁷⁶

I see his glittering banner glance, I see his chivalry advance:

I see his eager warriors shine On elephants in lengthened line.

Now grasp we each the shafts and bow, And higher up the
mountain go.

Or in this place, O hero, stand With weapons in each ready
hand. Perhaps beneath our might may fall This leader of the
standard tall, And Bharat I this day may see

Who brought this mighty woe on thee, Sítá, and me, who drove
away

My brother from the royal sway. Bharat our foe at length is nigh,
And by this hand shall surely die: Brother, I see no sin at all

If Bharat by my weapon fall. No fault is his who slays the foe

Whose hand was first to strike the blow: With Bharat now the
crime begins

Who against thee and duty sins. The queen athirst for royal
sway Will see her darling son to-day

Fall by this hand, like some fair tree Struck by an elephant, slain
by me. Kaikeyí's self shall perish too

With kith and kin and retinue, And earth by my avenging deed

Shall from this mass of sin be freed.

376 *Bauhinea variegata*, a species of ebony.

This day my wrath, too long restrained, Shall fall upon the foe,
unchained, Mad as the kindled flame that speeds

Destroying through the grass and reeds. This day mine arrows
keen and fierce The bodies of the foe shall pierce:

The woods on Chitrakúta's side

Shall run with torrents crimson-dyed. The wandering beasts of
prey shall feed On heart-cleft elephant and steed,

And drag to mountain caves away The bodies that my arrows
slay. Doubt not that Bharat and his train Shall in this mighty
wood be slain:

So shall I pay the debt my bow And these my deadly arrows
owe.”

Canto XCVIII. Lakshman Calmed.

Then Ráma nobly calm allayed

The wrath that Lakshmar,'s bosom swayed: “What need have
we the sword to wield, To bend the bow or lift the shield,

If Bharat brave, and wise, and good, Himself has sought this
sheltering wood? I swear my father's will to do,

And if I now my brother slew

What gain in kingship should I find, Despised and scorned by all
mankind? Believe me, e'en as I would shrink From poisoned
meat or deadly drink,

No power or treasure would I win By fall of friend or kith or kin.

Brother, believe the words I speak: For your dear sakes alone I
seek Duty and pleasure, wealth and gain: A holy life, a happy
reign.

If royal sway my heart desires,

My brothers' weal the wish inspires: Their bliss and safety is my
care, By this uplifted bow I swear. 'Twere not so hard for me to
gain This broad land girdled by the main, But even Indra's royal
might

Should ne'er be mine in duty's spite. If any bliss my soul can see
Deprived of dear Satrughna, thee, And Bharat, may the flame
destroy With ashy gloom the selfish joy.

Far dearer than this life of mine, Knowing the custom of our line,
His heart with fond affection fraught, Bharat Ayodhyá's town
resought And hearing when he came that I, With thee and Sitá,

forced to fly With matted hair and hermit dress Am wandering
in the wilderness.

While grief his troubled senses storms, And tender love his
bosom warms, From every thought of evil clear,

Is come to meet his brother here.

Some grievous words perchance he spoke Kaikeyí's anger to
provoke,

Then won the king, and comes to lay Before my feet the royal
sway.

Hither, methinks, in season due Comes Bharat for an interview,
Nor in his secret heart has he

One evil thought 'gainst thee or me. What has he done ere now,
reflect!

How failed in love or due respect [208]

To make thee doubt his faith and lay This evil to his charge to-
day?

Thou shouldst not join with Bharat's name So harsh a speech
and idle blame.

The blows thy tongue at Bharat deals, My sympathizing bosom
feels.

How, urged by stress of any ill,

Should sons their father's life-blood spill, Or brother slay in
impious strife

A brother dearer than his life?

If thou these cruel words hast said By strong desire of empire
led, My brother Bharat will I pray

To give to thee the kingly sway.

“Give him the realm,” my speech shall be, And Bharat will,
methinks, agree.”

Thus spoke the prince whose chief delight Was duty, and to aid
the right:

And Lakshmar, keenly felt the blame, And shrank within himself
for shame: And then his answer thus returned,

With downcast eye and cheek that burned: “Brother, I ween, to
see thy face

Our sire himself has sought this place.” Thus Lakshmar, spoke
and stood ashamed, And Rāma saw and thus exclaimed:

“It is the strong-armed monarch: he

Is come, methinks, his sons to see, To bid us both the forest quit

For joys for which he deems us fit: He thinks on all our care and
pain, And now would lead us home again. My glorious father
hence will bear Sítá who claims all tender care.

I see two coursers fleet as storms, Of noble breed and lovely
forms. I see the beast of mountain size

Who bears the king our father wise, The aged Victor, march this
way

In front of all the armed array. But doubt and fear within me
rise, For when I look with eager eyes

I see no white umbrella spread, World-famous, o'er the royal
head.

Now, Lakshmar,, from the tree descend, And to my words
attention lend.”

Thus spoke the pious prince: and he Descended from the lofty
tree,

And reverent hand to hand applied, Stood humbly by his
brother's side.

The host, compelled by Bharat's care, The wood from trampling
feet to spare, Dense crowding half a league each way
Encamped around the mountain lay.

Below the tall hill's shelving side Gleamed the bright army far
and wide

Spread o'er the ample space, By Bharat led who firmly true In
duty from his bosom threw

Canto XCIX. Bharat's Approach. 731

All pride, and near his brother drew To win the hero's grace.

Canto XCIX. Bharat's Approach.

Soon as the warriors took their rest Obeying Bharat's high
behest, Thus Bharat to Satrughna spake: "A band of soldiers
with thee take,

And with these hunters o'er and o'er The thickets of the wood
explore.

With bow, sword, arrows in their hands Let Guha with his
kindred bands Within this grove remaining trace

The children of Kakutstha's race.

And I meanwhile on foot will through This neighbouring wood
my way pursue, With elders and the twice-born men, And every
lord and citizen.

There is, I feel, no rest for me Till Ráma's face again I see,
Lakshmar,, in arms and glory great, And Sítá born to happy
fate:

No rest, until his cheek as bright As the fair moon rejoice my
sight, No rest until I see the eye

With which the lotus petals vie; Till on my head those dear feet
rest With signs of royal rank impressed; None, till my kingly
brother gain His old hereditary reign,

Till o'er his limbs and noble head The consecrating drops be
shed. How blest is Janak's daughter, true To every wifely duty,
who

Cleaves faithful to her husband's side Whose realm is girt by
Ocean's tide! This mountain too above the rest E'en as the King
of Hills is blest,— Whose shades Kakutstha's scion hold As
Nandan charms the Lord of Gold. Yea, happy is this tangled
grove

Where savage beasts unnumbered rove, Where, glory of the
Warrior race,

King Ráma finds a dwelling-place.”

Thus Bharat, strong-armed hero spake, And walked within the
pathless brake.

O'er plains where gay trees bloomed he went, Through boughs
in tangled net-work bent, And then from Ráma's cot appeared
The banner which the flame upreared. And Bharat joyed with
every friend To mark those smoky wreaths ascend:

“Here Ráma dwells,” he thought; “at last The ocean of our toil is
passed.”

Then sure that Ráma's hermit cot Was on the mountain's side
He stayed his army on the spot, And on with Guha hied.

[209]

Canto C. The Meeting.

Then Bharat to Satrughna showed The spot, and eager onward
strode, First bidding Saint Vasishtha bring The widowed
consorts of the king. As by fraternal love impelled

His onward course the hero held, Sumantra followed close
behind Satrughna with an anxious mind: Not Bharat's self more
fain could be To look on Ráma's face than he.

As, speeding on, the spot he neared, Amid the hermits' homes
appeared

His brother's cot with leaves o'erspread, And by its side a lowly
shed.

Before the shed great heaps were left Of gathered flowers and
billets cleft, And on the trees hung grass and bark Ráma and
Lakshmar,'s path to mark: And heaps of fuel to provide

Against the cold stood ready dried. The long-armed chief, as on
he went In glory's light preëminent,

With joyous words like these addressed The brave Satrughna
and the rest: "This is the place, I little doubt,

Which Bharadvája pointed out,

Not far from where we stand must be The woodland stream,
Mandákiní.

Here on the mountain's woody side Roam elephants in tusked
pride, And ever with a roar and cry

Each other, as they meet, defy.

And see those smoke-wreaths thick and dark: The presence of
the flame they mark,

Which hermits in the forest strive By every art to keep alive.

O happy me! my task is done, And I shall look on Raghu's son,
Like some great saint, who loves to treat His elders with all
reverence meet."

Thus Bharat reached that forest rill, Thus roamed on
Chitrakúta's hill; Then pity in his breast awoke,

And to his friends the hero spoke: "Woe, woe upon my life and
birth! The prince of men, the lord of earth Has sought the lonely
wood to dwell Sequestered in a hermit's cell.

Through me, through me these sorrows fall On him the splendid
lord of all:

Through me resigning earthly bliss He hides him in a home like
this. Now will I, by the world abhorred, Fall at the dear feet of
my lord, And at fair Sítá's too, to win

His pardon for my heinous sin."

As thus he sadly mourned and sighed, The son of Dasaratha
spied

A bower of leafy branches made, Sacred and lovely in the
shade, Of fair proportions large and tall,

Well roofed with boughs of palm, and Sál, Arranged in order due
o'erhead

Like grass upon an altar spread.

Two glorious bows were gleaming there, Like Indra's³⁷⁷ in the
rainy air,

Terror of foemen, backed with gold, Meet for the mightiest hand
to hold: And quivered arrows cast a blaze

Bright gleaming like the Day-God's rays: Thus serpents with
their eyes aglow Adorn their capital below.³⁷⁸

Great swords adorned the cottage, laid Each in a case of gold
brocade;

There hung the trusty shields, whereon With purest gold the
bosses shone.

The brace to bind the Bowman's arm, The glove to shield his
hand from harm, A lustre to the cottage lent

From many a golden ornament: Safe was the cot from fear of
men As from wild beasts the lion's den. The fire upon the altar
burned,

That to the north and east was turned. Bharat his eager glances
bent

And gazed within the cot intent;

In deerskin dress, with matted hair, Ráma his chief was sitting
there: With lion-shoulders broad and strong, With lotus eyes,
arms thick and long.

The righteous sovereign, who should be Lord paramount from
sea to sea,

High-minded, born to lofty fate, Like Brahmá's self supremely
great; With Lakshmar, by his side, and her, Fair Sítá, for his
minister.

377 The rainbow is called the bow of Indra.

378 Bhogavatí, the abode of the Nágas or Serpent race.

And Bharat gazing, overcome By sorrow for a while was dumb,
Then, yielding to his woe, he ran To Ráma and with sobs began:
“He who a royal seat should fill

With subjects round to do his will, My elder brother,—see him
here, With silvan creatures waiting near. The high-souled hero,
wont to wear The costliest robes exceeding fair, Now banished,
in a deerskin dress, Here keeps the path of righteousness. How
brooks the son of Raghu now

The matted locks which load his brow, Around whose princely
head were twined Sweet blossoms of the rarest kind?

[210] The prince whose merits grew, acquired By rites performed
as he desired, Would now a store of merit gain Bought by his
body's toil and pain. Those limbs to which pure sandal lent The
freshness of its fragrant scent, Exposed to sun, and dust, and
rain,

Are now defiled with many a stain. And I the wretched cause
why this Falls on the prince whose right is bliss! Ah me, that ever
I was born

To be the people's hate and scorn!"

Thus Bharat cried: of anguish sprung, Great drops upon his
forehead hung.

He fell o'erpowered—his grief was such— Ere he his brother's
feet could touch.

As on the glorious prince he gazed

In vain his broken voice he raised:

"Dear lord"—through tears and sobbing came, The only words
his lips could frame.

And brave Satrughna wept aloud, As low at Ráma's feet he
bowed. Then Ráma, while his tears ran fast, His arms around his
brothers cast. Guha, Sumantra came to meet

The princes in their wild retreat. Vrihaspati and Sukra bright
Their greeting thus rejoice to pay To the dear Lord who brings
the night,

And the great God who rules the day.

Then wept the dwellers of the shade, Whose eyes the princes,
meet to ride

On mighty elephants, surveyed; And cast all thought of joy
aside.

Canto CI. Bharata Questioned.

Then Ráma gazed, and scarcely knew Bharat so worn and
changed in hue. He raised him, kissed him on the head,
Embraced him, and thus kindly said: "Where was thy father,
brother dear, That thou art come to seek me here?

Unmeet, if he be living yet, Thy feet within the wood to set.

I pray thee now the cause declare Why thou hast left the
kingdom there, With matted locks and deerskin dress To roam
the distant wilderness."

Thus questioned by the prince, at length Kaikeyí's son regained
his strength,

And hand to hand in reverence laid, To Ráma thus his answer
made:

“The great-armed monarch, O my lord, Has dared to do a thing
abhorred,

Left us, and grieving for his son, A home among the Gods has
won. My mother Queen Kaikeyí gave The order to the king her
slave, And at the bidding of the dame

He wrought the sin which mars his fame. Athirst for sway, her
hopes are crossed, She mourns her son, her husband lost, And
through her impious crime will go For punishment to hell below.

Now O my lord, forgive me all; Be gracious to thy lowly thrall:
Anointed king, accept to-day Like Indra’s self, the royal sway.

Be gracious, Prince, to lord and peer, And widowed queens who
seek thee here Accept the kingdom thine by right,

And so thy faithful friends delight. Let the broad land no longer
be All widowed and forlorn of thee: Let the full moon of autumn
reign Triumphant o’er the night again.

These lords and I before thee bend: O Ráma, to our prayer
attend.

O do not thou this grace deny: Thy brother, pupil, slave am I.
Look on this venerable ring, Advisers of our sire the king,

From age to age so honoured: thou Shouldst grant their
supplication now.”

As weeping thus the hero prayed, His head at Ráma's feet he
laid.

Like a mad elephant he sighed: And Ráma gazed and thus
replied: “How, brother, can a man of worth, True to his vows, of
noble birth— A man like me, commit a sin

The lordship of the land to win? No slightest shade of fault I see,
O tamer of thy foes, in thee.

But ne'er shouldst thou in childish thought The queen thy mother
blame in aught.

O brother wise and sinless, know The sacred laws would have it
so, That from good wife and son require Obedience to their lord
and sire.

And we are all the king's, for thus The virtuous ever reckon us:

Yea brother, be it known to thee, His wives, and sons, and pupils
we. His is the right, if he deem fit,

To bid me, throned as monarch, sit, Or in a coat of bark expel,

And deerskin, in the wood to dwell. And O remember, best of all

Who act as claims of duty call, As to a virtuous sire is due,

Such honour claims a mother too. So they whose lives have ever
been By duty led, the king and queen, Said, “Ráma, seek the
forest shade:”

And I (what could I else?) obeyed.

[211] Thou must the royal power retain, And o'er the famed
Ayodhyá reign: I dressed in bark my days will spend

Where Dar,9ak's forest wilds extend. So Dasaratha spoke, our
king,

His share to each apportioning Before his honoured servants'
eyes:

Then, heir of bliss, he sought the skies. The righteous monarch's
honoured will, Whom all revered, must guide thee still, And thou
must still enjoy the share Assigned thee by our father's care.

So I till twice seven years are spent Will roam this wood in
banishment, Contented with the lot which he, My high-souled
sire, has given me.

The charge the monarch gave, endeared To all mankind, by all
revered,

Peer of the Lord Supreme, Far better, richer far in gain

Of every blessing than to reign O'er all the worlds I deem.”

Canto CII. Bharat's Tidings.

He spoke: and Bharat thus replied: "If, false to every claim
beside,

I ne'er in kingly duties fail, What will my royal life avail?

Still should the custom be observed,

From which our line has never swerved, Which to the younger
son ne'er gives The kingdom while the elder lives.

Now to Ayodhyá rich and fair With me, O Raghu's son, repair,
And to protect and gladden all Our house, thyself as king install.

A king the world's opinion deems A man: to me a God he seems,

Whose life in virtuous thoughts and deeds The lives of other
men exceeds.

When I in distant Kekaya stayed,

And thou hadst sought the forest shade, Our father died, the
saints' delight,

So constant in each holy rite.

Scarce with thy wife and Lakshmar, thou Hadst journeyed forth
to keep the vow, When mourning for his son, forspent,
To heavenly rest the monarch went. Then up, O lord of men,
away!

His funeral rites of water pay: I and Satrughna, ere we came,
Neglected not the sacred claim. But in the spirit-world, they say,
That gift alone is fresh for aye

Which best beloved hands have poured; And thou his dearest
art, my lord.

For thee he longed, for thee he grieved, His every thought on
thee was bent,

And crushed by woe, of thee bereaved, He thought of thee as
hence he went.”

Canto CIII. The Funeral Libation.

When Ráma heard from Bharat each Dark sorrow of his
mournful speech, And tidings of his father dead,

His spirits fell, his senses fled.

For the sad words his brother spoke Struck on him like a
thunder stroke, Fierce as the bolt which Indra throws, The victor
of his Daitya foes.

Raising his arms in anguish, he, As when the woodman hews a
tree

With its fair flowery branches crowned, Fainted and fell upon
the ground.

Lord of the earth to earth he sank, Helpless, as when a towering
bank With sudden ruin buries deep

An elephant who lay asleep.

Then swift his wife and brothers flew, And water, weeping, o'er
him threw. As slowly sense and strength he gained, Fast from
his eyes the tears he rained, And then in accents sad and weak
Kakutstha's son began to speak,

And mourning for the monarch dead, With righteous words to
Bharat said: "What calls me home, when he, alas, Has gone the
way which all must pass? Of him, the best of kings bereft

What guardian has Ayodhyá left? How may I please his spirit?
how Delight the high-souled monarch now, Who wept for me
and went above

By me ungraced with mourning love?

Ah, happy brothers! you have paid Due offerings to his parting
shade. E'en when my banishment is o'er, Back to my home I go

no more, To look upon the widowed state Reft of her king,
disconsolate.

E'en then, O tamer of the foe, If to Ayodhyá's town I go, Who
will direct me as of old,

Now other worlds our father hold? From whom, my brother,
shall I hear

Those words which ever charmed mine ear And filled my bosom
with delight Whene'er he saw me act aright?"

Thus Ráma spoke: then nearer came And looking on his
moonbright dame, "Sítá, the king is gone," he said:

"And Lakshmar,, know thy sire is dead, [212]

And with the Gods on high enrolled: This mournful news has
Bharat told." He spoke: the noble youths with sighs Rained
down the torrents from their eyes. And then the brothers of the
chief

With words of comfort soothed his grief: "Now to the king our
sire who swayed The earth be due libations paid."

Soon as the monarch's fate she knew, Sharp pangs of grief
smote Sítá through: Nor could she look upon her lord

With eyes from which the torrents poured. And Ráma strove
with tender care

To soothe the weeping dame's despair, And then, with piercing
woe distressed,

The mournful Lakshmar, thus addressed:

“Brother, I pray thee bring for me The pressed fruit of the
Ingudí, And a bark mantle fresh and new, That I may pay this
offering due. First of the three shall Sítá go, Next thou, and I the
last: for so

Moves the funereal pomp of woe.”³⁷⁹

Sumantra of the noble mind, Gentle and modest, meek and
kind, Who, follower of each princely youth, To Ráma clung with
constant truth, Now with the royal brothers' aid

The grief of Ráma soothed and stayed, And lent his arm his lord
to guide Down to the river's holy side.

That lovely stream the heroes found,

With woods that ever blossomed crowned, And there in bitter
sorrow bent

Their footsteps down the fair descent. Then where the stream
that swiftly flowed A pure pellucid shallow showed,

The funeral drops they duly shed, And “Father, this be thine,”
they said. But he, the lord who ruled the land,

Filled from the stream his hollowed hand, And turning to the
southern side Stretched out his arm and weeping cried:

“This sacred water clear and pure,

379 “The order of the procession on these occasions is that the
children pre- cede according to age, then the women and after
that the men according to age, the youngest first and the
eldest last: when they descend into the water this is reversed
and resumed when they come out of it.” CAREY AND
MARSHMAN.{FNS

An offering which shall aye endure To thee, O lord of kings, I
give: Accept it where the spirits live!”

Then, when the solemn rite was o’er, Came Ráma to the river
shore,

And offered, with his brothers’ aid, Fresh tribute to his father’s
shade. With jujube fruit he mixed the seed Of Ingudís from
moisture freed, And placed it on a spot o’erspread

With sacred grass, and weeping said: “Enjoy, great King, the
cake which we Thy children eat and offer thee!

For ne’er do blessed Gods refuse

To share the food which mortals use.”

Then Ráma turned him to retrace The path that brought him to
the place, And up the mountain's pleasant side Where lovely
lawns lay fair, he hied. Soon as his cottage door he gained
His brothers to his breast he strained. From them and Sítá in
their woes

So loud the cry of weeping rose, That like the roar of lions round
The mountain rolled the echoing sound. And Bharat's army
shook with fear

The weeping of the chiefs to hear. "Bharat," the soldiers cried,
"tis plain, His brother Ráma meets again,

And with these cries that round us ring They sorrow for their sire
the king." Then leaving car and wain behind,

One eager thought in every mind, Swift toward the weeping,
every man, As each could find a passage, ran.

Some thither bent their eager course With car, and elephant,
and horse, And youthful captains on their feet With longing
sped their lord to meet,

As though the new-come prince had been An exile for long
years unseen.

Earth beaten in their frantic zeal

By clattering hoof and rumbling wheel, Sent forth a deafening
noise as loud

As heaven when black with many a cloud. Then, with their
consorts gathered near, Wild elephants in sudden fear

Rushed to a distant wood, and shed An odour round them as
they fled. And every silvan thing that dwelt Within those shades
the terror felt, Deer, lion, tiger, boar and roe, Bison, wild-cow,
and buffalo.

And when the tumult wild they heard, With trembling pinions
flew each bird, From tree, from thicket, and from lake, Swan,
koil, curlew, crane, and drake. With men the ground was
overspread, With startled birds the sky o'erhead.

Then on his sacrificial ground

The sinless, glorious chief was found. Loading with curses deep
and loud

The hump-back and the queen, the crowd Whose cheeks were
wet, whose eyes were dim, In fond affection ran to him.

While the big tears their eyes bedewed,

He looked upon the multitude, [213]

And then as sire and mother do,

His arms about his loved ones threw.

Some to his feet with reverence pressed, Some in his arms he
strained:

Each friend, with kindly words addressed, Due share of honour
gained.

Then, by their mighty woe o'ercome, The weeping heroes' cry
Filled, like the roar of many a drum, Hill, cavern, earth, and sky.

Canto CIV. The Meeting With The Queens.

Vasishtha with his soul athirst To look again on Ráma, first
In line the royal widows placed,

And then the way behind them traced. The ladies moving, faint
and slow, Saw the fair stream before them flow, And by the
bank their steps were led Which the two brothers visited.

Kausalyá with her faded cheek And weeping eyes began to
speak,

And thus in mournful tones addressed The queen Sumitrá and
the rest:

“See in the wood the bank's descent, Which the two orphan
youths frequent, Whose noble spirits never fall,

Though woes surround them, reft of all. Thy son with love that
never tires

Draws water hence which mine requires. This day, for lowly toil
unfit,

His pious task thy son should quit.”

As on the long-eyed lady strayed, On holy grass, whose points
were laid Directed to the southern sky,

The funeral offering met her eye. When Ráma’s humble gift she
spied Thus to the queens Kausalyá cried: “The gift of Ráma’s
hand behold, His tribute to the king high-souled, Offered to him,
as texts require, Lord of Ikshváku’s line, his sire!

Not such I deem the funeral food

Of kings with godlike might endued. Can he who knew all
pleasures, he Who ruled the earth from sea to sea, The mighty
lord of monarchs, feed On Ingudí’s extracted seed?

In all the world there cannot be A woe, I ween, more sad to see,
Than that my glorious son should make His funeral gift of such
a cake.

The ancient text I oft have heard This day is true in every word:
“Ne'er do the blessed Gods refuse To eat the food their children
use.’ ”

The ladies soothed the weeping dame: To Ráma's hermitage
they came,

And there the hero met their eyes Like a God fallen from the
skies. Him joyless, reft of all, they viewed,

And tears their mournful eyes bedewed. The truthful hero left his
seat,

And clasped the ladies' lotus feet,

And they with soft hands brushed away The dust that on his
shoulders lay.

Then Lakshmar,, when he saw each queen With weeping eyes
and troubled mien, Near to the royal ladies drew

And paid them gentle reverence too. He, Dasaratha's offspring,
signed The heir of bliss by Fortune kind, Received from every
dame no less Each mark of love and tenderness. And Sítá came
and bent before

The widows, while her eyes ran o'er, And pressed their feet with
many a tear. They when they saw the lady dear

Pale, worn with dwelling in the wild, Embraced her as a darling child: “Daughter of royal Janak, bride

Of Dasaratha’s son,” they cried,

“How couldst thou, offspring of a king, Endure this woe and suffering

In the wild forest? When I trace Each sign of trouble on thy face— That lotus which the sun has dried, That lily by the tempest tried,

That gold whereon the dust is spread, That moon whence all the light is fled— Sorrow assails my heart, alas!

As fire consumes the wood and grass.”

Then Ráma, as she spoke distressed, The feet of Saint Vasishtha pressed,

Touched them with reverential love, Then near him took his seat:

Thus Indra clasps in realms above The Heavenly Teacher’s 380 feet.

Then with each counsellor and peer, Bharat of duteous mind,

With citizens and captains near, Sat humbly down behind.

When with his hands to him upraised, In devotee’s attire,

Bharat upon his brother gazed Whose glory shone like fire,
As when the pure Mahendra bends To the great Lord of Life,
Among his noble crowd of friends This anxious thought was rife:
“What words to Raghu’s son to-day
Will royal Bharat speak,
Whose heart has been so prompt to pay Obeisance fond and
meek?”
Then steadfast Ráma, Lakshmar, wise,
[214] Bharat for truth renowned,
Shone like three fires that heavenward rise With holy priests
around.

Canto CV. Ráma’s Speech.

380 Vrihaspati, the preceptor of the Gods.

A while they sat, each lip compressed, Then Bharat thus his chief addressed: "My mother here was made content; To me was given the government.

This now, my lord, I yield to thee: Enjoy it, from all trouble free.

Like a great bridge the floods have rent, Impetuous in their wild descent,

All other hands but thine in vain Would strive the burthen to maintain. In vain the ass with steeds would vie,

With Tárkshya, 381 birds that wing the sky;

So, lord of men, my power is slight To rival thine imperial might.

Great joys his happy days attend On whom the hopes of men depend, But wretched is the life he leads Who still the aid of others needs.

And if the seed a man has sown, With care and kindly nurture grown, Rear its huge trunk and spring in time Too bulky for a dwarf to climb,

Yet, with perpetual blossom gay, No fruit upon its boughs display,

Ne'er can that tree, thus nursed in vain, Approval of the virtuous gain.

The simile is meant to be Applied, O mighty-armed, to thee,
Because, our lord and leader, thou Protectest not thy people
now.

O, be the longing wish fulfilled Of every chief of house and guild,

381 Garuda, the king of birds.

To see again their sun-bright lord Victorious to his realm
restored!

As thou returnest through the crowd Let roars of elephants be
loud.

And each fair woman lift her voice And in her new-found king
rejoice.”

The people all with longing moved, The words that Bharat spoke
approved, And crowding near to Ráma pressed The hero with
the same request.

The steadfast Ráma, when he viewed His glorious brother's
mournful mood, With each ambitious thought controlled, Thus
the lamenting prince consoled:

“I cannot do the things I will, For Ráma is but mortal still. Fate
with supreme, resistless law

This way and that its slave will draw, All gathered heaps must
waste away, All lofty lore and powers decay.

Death is the end of life, and all, Now firmly joined, apart must
fall.

One fear the ripened fruit must know, To fall upon the earth
below;

So every man who draws his breath Must fear inevitable death.

The pillared mansion, high, compact, Must fall by Time's strong
hand attacked; So mortal men, the gradual prey

Of old and ruthless death, decay. The night that flies no more
returns: Yamuná for the Ocean yearns: Swift her impetuous
waters flee,

But roll not backward from the sea. The days and nights pass
swiftly by And steal our moments as they fly, E'en as the sun's
unpitying rays Drink up the floods in summer blaze. Then for
thysself lament and leave For death of other men to grieve,

For if thou go or if thou stay, Thy life is shorter day by day.

Death travels with us; death attends Our steps until our journey
ends, Death, when the traveller wins the goal, Returns with the
returning soul.

The flowing hair grows white and thin, And wrinkles mark the altered skin.

The ills of age man's strength assail: Ah, what can mortal power avail?

Men joy to see the sun arise,

They watch him set with joyful eyes: But ne'er reflect, too blind to see,

How fast their own brief moments flee. With lovely change for ever new

The seasons' sweet return they view, Nor think with heedless hearts the while That lives decay as seasons smile.

As haply on the boundless main Meet drifting logs and part again,

So wives and children, friends and gold, Ours for a little time we hold:

Soon by resistless laws of fate To meet no more we separate.

In all this changing world not one The common lot of all can shun: Then why with useless tears deplore

The dead whom tears can bring no more? As one might stand upon the way

And to a troop of travellers say: "If ye allow it, sirs, I too

Will travel on the road with you:” So why should mortal man
lament When on that path his feet are bent

Which all men living needs must tread, Where sire and ancestors
have led?

Life flies as torrents downward fall Speeding away without
recall,

So virtue should our thoughts engage,

[215] For bliss³⁸² is mortals’ heritage. By ceaseless care and
earnest zeal For servants and for people’s weal, By gifts, by
duty nobly done,

Our glorious sire the skies has won.

Our lord the king, o’er earth who reigned, A blissful home in
heaven has gained

By wealth in ample largess spent, And many a rite magnificent:
With constant joy from first to last A long and noble life he
passed,

Praised by the good, no tears should dim Our eyes, O brother
dear, for him.

His human body, worn and tried By length of days, he cast
aside,

And gained the godlike bliss to stray In Brahmá’s heavenly
home for aye. For such the wise as we are, deep

In Veda lore, should never weep. Those who are firm and ever
wise

382 To be won by virtue.

Spurn vain lament and idle sighs. Be self-possessed: thy grief
restrain: Go, in that city dwell again.

Return, O best of men, and be Obedient to our sire's decree,
While I with every care fulfil Our holy father's righteous will,
Observing in the lonely wood

His charge approved by all the good." Thus Ráma of the lofty
mind

To Bharat spoke his righteous speech, By every argument
designed

Obedience to his sire to teach.

Canto CVI. Bharat's Speech.

Good Bharat, by the river side,

To virtuous Ráma's speech replied, And thus with varied lore
addressed

The prince, while nobles round him pressed: "In all this world
whom e'er can we

Find equal, scourge of foes, to thee? No ill upon thy bosom
weighs,

No thoughts of joy thy spirit raise. Approved art thou of sages
old, To whom thy doubts are ever told. Alike in death and life, to
thee The same to be and not to be.

The man who such a soul can gain Can ne'er be crushed by woe
or pain. Pure as the Gods, high-minded, wise,

Concealed from thee no secret lies. Such glorious gifts are all
thine own, And birth and death to thee are known, That ill can
ne'er thy soul depress With all-subduing bitterness.

O let my prayer, dear brother, win Thy pardon for my mother's
sin.

Wrought for my sake who willed it not When absent in a distant
spot.

Duty alone with binding chains

The vengeance due to crime restrains, Or on the sinner I should
lift

My hand in retribution swift.

Can I who know the right, and spring From Dasaratha, purest king—

Can I commit a heinous crime, Abhorred by all through endless time? The aged king I dare not blame,

Who died so rich in holy fame, My honoured sire, my parted lord, E'en as a present God adored.

Yet who in lore of duty skilled So foul a crime has ever willed, And dared defy both gain and right To gratify a woman's spite?

When death draws near, so people say, The sense of creatures dies away;

And he has proved the ancient saw By acting thus in spite of law.

But O my honoured lord, be kind, Dismiss the trespass from thy mind, The sin the king committed, led

By haste, his consort's wrath, and dread. For he who veils his sire's offence

With tender care and reverence— His sons approved by all shall live:

Not so their fate who ne'er forgive. Be thou, my lord, the noble son, And the vile deed my sire has done, Abhorred by all the

virtuous, ne'er Resent, lest thou the guilt too share. Preserve us,
for on thee we call, Our sire, Kaikeyí, me and all

Thy citizens, thy kith and kin; Preserve us and reverse the sin. To
live in woods a devotee

Can scarce with royal tasks agree, Nor can the hermit's matted
hair Suit fitly with a ruler's care.

Do not, my brother, do not still Pursue this life that suits thee ill.
Mid duties of a king we count His consecration paramount,

That he with ready heart and hand May keep his people and his
land. What Warrior born to royal sway From certain good would
turn away, A doubtful duty to pursue,

That mocks him with the distant view? Thou wouldst to duty
cleave, and gain The meed that follows toil and pain.

In thy great task no labour spare:

Rule the four castes with justest care. Mid all the four, the wise
prefer

The order of the householder:383 [216]

Canst thou, whose thoughts to duty cleave,

383 The four religious orders, referable to different times of life
are, that of the student, that of the householder, that of the
anchorite, and that of the mendicant.

The best of all the orders leave? My better thou in lore divine,
My birth, my sense must yield to thine: While thou, my lord, art
here to reign, How shall my hands the rule maintain? O faithful
lover of the right,

Take with thy friends the royal might, Let thy sires' realm, from
trouble free, Obey her rightful king in thee.

Here let the priests and lords of state Our monarch duly
consecrate,

With prayer and holy verses blessed By saint Vasishtha and the
rest.

Anointed king by us, again

Seek fair Ayodhyá, there to reign, And like imperial Indra girt
By Gods of Storm, thy might assert. From the three debts³⁸⁴
acquittance earn, And with thy wrath the wicked burn, O'er all of
us thy rule extend,

And cheer with boons each faithful friend. Let thine
enthronement, lord, this day Make all thy lovers glad and gay,
And let all those who hate thee flee To the ten winds for fear of
thee.

Dear lord, my mother's words of hate With thy sweet virtues
expiate,

And from the stain of folly clear The father whom we both
revere. Brother, to me compassion show, I pray thee with my
head bent low,

And to these friends who on thee call,—

384 To Gods, men, and Manes.

As the Great Father pities all.

But if my tears and prayers be vain, And thou in woods wilt still
remain, I will with thee my path pursue

And make my home in forests too.”

Thus Bharat strove to bend his will With suppliant head, but he,
Earth’s lord, inexorable still Would keep his sire’s decree.

The firmness of the noble chief The wondering people moved,
And rapture mingling with their grief, All wept and all approved.

“How firm his steadfast will,” they cried, “Who Keeps his
promise thus!

Ah, to Ayodhyá's town," they sighed, "He comes not back with us."

The holy priest, the swains who tilled The earth, the sons of trade,

And e'en the mournful queens were filled With joy as Bharat prayed,

And bent their heads, then weeping stilled A while, his prayer to aid.

Canto CVII. Ráma's Speech.

Thus, by his friends encompassed round, He spoke, and Ráma, far renowned,

To his dear brother thus replied, Whom holy rites had purified:

“O thou whom Queen Kaikeyí bare The best of kings, thy words
are fair, Our royal father, when of yore

He wed her, to her father swore The best of kingdoms to confer,
A noble dowry meet for her; Then, grateful, on the deadly day
Of heavenly Gods’ and demons’ fray, A future boon on her
bestowed

To whose sweet care his life he owed. She to his mind that
promise brought, And then the best of kings besought To bid
me to the forest flee,

And give the rule, O Prince, to thee. Thus bound by oath, the
king our lord Gave her those boons of free accord, And bade
me, O thou chief of men, Live in the woods four years and ten. I
to this lonely wood have hied

With faithful Lakshmar, by my side, And Sítá by no tears
deferred, Resolved to keep my father’s word. And thou, my
noble brother, too

Shouldst keep our father’s promise true: Anointed ruler of the
state

Maintain his word inviolate.

From his great debt, dear brother, free Our lord the king for love
of me,

Thy mother’s breast with joy inspire, And from all woe preserve
thy sire.

'Tis said, near Gayá's holy town³⁸⁵ Gayá, great saint of high
renown, This text recited when he paid Due rites to each
ancestral shade:

“A son is born his sire to free From Put's infernal pains:

Hence, saviour of his father, he The name of Putra gains.”³⁸⁶

Thus numerous sons are sought by prayer,

In Scripture trained with graces fair, [217]

That of the number one some day May funeral rites at Gayá
pay.

The mighty saints who lived of old This holy doctrine ever hold.

Then, best of men, our sire release From pains of hell, and give
him peace. Now Bharat, to Ayodhyá speed,

The brave Satrughna with thee lead, Take with thee all the
twice-born men, And please each lord and citizen.

I now, O King, without delay

To Dar, ⁹ak wood will bend my way, And Lakshmar, and the
Maithil dame Will follow still, our path the same.

Now, Bharat, lord of men be thou, And o'er Ayodhyá reign:

The silvan world to me shall bow, King of the wild domain.

385 Gayá is a very holy city in Behar. Every good Hindu ought once in his life to make funeral offerings in Gayá in honour of his ancestors.

386 Put is the name of that region of hell to which men are doomed who leave

no son to perform the funeral rites which are necessary to assure the happiness of the departed. Putra, the common word for a son is said by the highest authority to be derived from Put and tra deliverer.

Yea, let thy joyful steps be bent To that fair town to-day,
And I as happy and content, To Dar,9ak wood will stray.
The white umbrella o'er thy brow Its cooling shade shall throw:
I to the shadow of the bough And leafy trees will go.
Satrughna, for wise plans renowned, Shall still on thee attend;
And Lakshmar,, ever faithful found, Be my familiar friend.
Let us his sons, O brother dear, The path of right pursue,
And keep the king we all revere Still to his promise true.”

Canto CVIII. Jáváli's Speech.

Thus Ráma soothed his brother's grief: Then virtuous Jáváli,
chief

Of twice-born sages, thus replied In words that virtue's law
defied:

“Hail, Raghu's princely son, dismiss A thought so weak and vain
as this. Canst thou, with lofty heart endowed, Think with the dull
ignoble crowd?

For what are ties of kindred? can One profit by a brother man?

Alone the babe first opes his eyes, And all alone at last he dies.

Canto CVIII. Jáváli's Speech. 763

The man, I ween, has little sense Who looks with foolish
reverence On father's or on mother's name: In others, none a
right may claim. E'en as a man may leave his home And to a
distant village roam, Then from his lodging turn away And
journey on the following day, Such brief possession mortals hold
In sire and mother, house and gold, And never will the good and
wise The brief uncertain lodging prize.

Nor, best of men, shouldst thou disown Thy sire's hereditary
throne,

And tread the rough and stony ground Where hardship, danger,
woes abound. Come, let Ayodhyá rich and bright See thee
enthroned with every rite: Her tresses bound in single braid³⁸⁷
She waits thy coming long delayed.

O come, thou royal Prince, and share The kingly joys that wait
thee there, And live in bliss transcending price As Indra lives in
Paradise.

The parted king is naught to thee, Nor right in living man has he:
The king is one, thou, Prince of men, Another art: be counselled
then.

Thy royal sire, O chief, has sped On the long path we all must
tread. The common lot of all is this,

³⁸⁷ It was the custom of Indian women when mourning for
their absent husbands to bind their hair in a long single braid.
Carey and Marshman translate, “the one-tailed city.”

And thou in vain art robbed of bliss. For those—and only those—
I weep Who to the path of duty keep;
For here they suffer ceaseless woe, And dying to destruction go.

With pious care, each solemn day, Will men their funeral
offerings pay: See, how the useful food they waste: He who is
dead no more can taste.

If one is fed, his strength renewed Whene'er his brother takes
his food, Then offerings to the parted pay:

Scarce will they serve him on his way. By crafty knaves these
rules were framed, And to enforce men's gifts proclaimed: "Give,
worship, lead a life austere,

Keep lustral rites, quit pleasures here." There is no future life: be
wise,

And do, O Prince, as I advise. Enjoy, my lord, the present bliss,
And things unseen from thought dismiss. Let this advice thy
bosom move,

The counsel sage which all approve; To Bharat's earnest prayer
incline, And take the rule so justly thine."

Canto CIX. The Praises Of Truth.

By sage Jáváli thus addressed,

[218] Ráma of truthful hearts the best,

With perfect skill and wisdom high Thus to his speech made fit
reply: “Thy words that tempt to bliss are fair, But virtue’s garb
they falsely wear.

For he from duty’s path who strays To wander in forbidden
ways, Allured by doctrine false and vain, Praise from the good
can never gain. Their lives the true and boaster show, Pure and
impure, and high and low, Else were no mark to judge between
Stainless and stained and high and mean; They to whose lot fair
signs may fall Were but as they who lack them all,

And those to virtuous thoughts inclined Were but as men of evil
mind.

If in the sacred name of right I do this wrong in duty’s spite;

The path of virtue meanly quit, And this polluting sin commit,

What man who marks the bounds between Virtue and vice with
insight keen,

Would rank me high in after time Stained with this soul
destroying crime? Whither could I, the sinner, turn,

How hope a seat in heaven to earn, If I my plighted promise
break,

And thus the righteous path forsake? This world of ours is ever
led

To walk the ways which others tread, And as their princes they
behold,

The subjects too their lives will mould. That truth and mercy still
must be Beloved of kings, is Heaven's decree.

Upheld by truth the monarch reigns, And truth the very world
sustains. Truth evermore has been the love Of holy saints and
Gods above, And he whose lips are truthful here Wins after
death the highest sphere. As from a serpent's deadly tooth,

We shrink from him who scorns the truth. For holy truth is root
and spring

Of justice and each holy thing,

A might that every power transcends, Linked to high bliss that
never ends. Truth is all virtue's surest base, Supreme in worth
and first in place. Oblations, gifts men offer here, Vows,
sacrifice, and rites austere, And Holy Writ, on truth depend:

So men must still that truth defend. Truth, only truth protects the
land, By truth unharmed our houses stand;

Neglect of truth makes men distressed, And truth in highest
heaven is blessed. Then how can I, rebellious, break

Commandments which my father spake— I ever true and
faithful found,

And by my word of honour bound? My father's bridge of truth
shall stand Unharm'd by my destructive hand: Not folly,
ignorance, or greed

My darkened soul shall thus mislead. Have we not heard that
God and shade Turn from the hated offerings paid

By him whose false and fickle mind No pledge can hold, no
promise bind?

Truth is all duty: as the soul,

It quickens and supports the whole. The good respect this duty:
hence Its sacred claims I reverence.

The Warrior's duty I despise

That seeks the wrong in virtue's guise: Those claims I shrink
from, which the base, Cruel, and covetous embrace.

The heart conceives the guilty thought, Then by the hand the sin
is wrought, And with the pair is leagu'd a third, The tongue that
speaks the lying word. Fortune and land and name and fame To
man's best care have right and claim; The good will aye to truth
adhere,

And its high laws must men revere. Base were the deed thy lips
would teach, Approved as best by subtle speech.

Shall I my plighted promise break,

That I these woods my home would make? Shall I, as Bharat's
words advise,

My father's solemn charge despise? Firm stands the oath which
then before My father's face I soothly swore, Which Queen
Kaikeyi's anxious ear Rejoiced with highest joy to hear.

Still in the wood will I remain,

With food prescribed my life sustain,

And please with fruit and roots and flowers Ancestral shades
and heavenly powers.

Here every sense contented, still Heeding the bounds of good
and ill, My settled course will I pursue, Firm in my faith and ever
true.

Here in this wild and far retreat Will I my noble task complete;

And Fire and Wind and Moon shall be Partakers of its fruit with
me.

A hundred offerings duly wrought His rank o'er Gods for Indra
bought,

And mighty saints their heaven secured By torturing years on
earth endured.” That scoffing plea the hero spurned,

And thus he spake once more, Chiding, the while his bosom
burned,

Jáváli’s impious lore:

“Justice, and courage ne’er dismayed, Pity for all distressed,
Truth, loving honour duly paid To Bráhman, God, and guest—
In these, the true and virtuous say, Should lives of men be
passed:

They form the right and happy way

[219] That leads to heaven at last.

My father’s thoughtless act I chide That gave thee honoured
place,

Whose soul, from virtue turned aside, Is faithless, dark, and
base.

We rank the Buddhist with the thief,³⁸⁸

And all the impious crew Who share his sinful disbelief,

And hate the right and true.

Hence never should wise kings who seek To rule their people
well,

Admit, before their face to speak,

388 The verses in a different metre with which some cantos end are all to be regarded with suspicion. Schlegel regrets that he did not exclude them all from his edition. These lines are manifestly spurious. See Additional Notes.

The cursed infidel.

But twice-born men in days gone by, Of other sort than thou,
Have wrought good deeds, whose glories high Are fresh among
us now:

This world they conquered, nor in vain They strove to win the
skies:

The twice-born hence pure lives maintain, And fires of worship
rise.

Those who in virtue's path delight, And with the virtuous live,—
Whose flames of holy zeal are bright, Whose hands are swift to
give,

Who injure none, and good and mild In every grace excel,

Whose lives by sin are undefiled, We love and honour well.”

Thus Ráma spoke in righteous rage Jáváli's speech to chide,

When thus again the virtuous sage In truthful words replied:

“The atheist's lore I use no more, Not mine his impious creed:

His words and doctrine I abhor, Assumed at time of need.
E'en as I rose to speak with thee, The fit occasion came
That bade me use the atheist's plea To turn thee from thine aim.
The atheist creed I disavow, Unsay the words of sin,
And use the faithful's language now Thy favour, Prince, to win.”

Canto CX. The Sons Of Ikshváku.389

Then spake Vasishtha who perceived That Ráma's soul was
wroth and grieved:

“Well knows the sage Jáváli all The changes that the world
befall; And but to lead thee to revoke

Thy purpose were the words he spoke. Lord of the world, now
hear from me How first this world began to be.

First water was, and naught beside;

There earth was formed that stretches wide. Then with the Gods
from out the same

The Self-existent Brahmá came. Then Brahmá³⁹⁰ in a boar's
disguise Bade from the deep this earth arise; Then, with his sons
of tranquil soul,

He made the world and framed the whole. From subtlest ether
Brahmá rose:

No end, no loss, no change he knows. A son had he, Maríchi
styled,

And Kasyap was Maríchi's child. From him Vivasvat sprang:
from him Manu, whose fame shall ne'er be dim. Manu, who life
to mortals gave, Begot Ikshváku good and brave:

First of Ayodhyá's kings was he, Pride of her famous dynasty.

From him the glorious Kukshi sprang,

389 This genealogy is a repetition with slight variation of that
given in Book I, Canto LXX.

390 In Gorresio's recension identified with Vishr,u. See Muir's
Sanskrit Texts,

Vol. IV. pp 29, 30.

Whose fame through all the regions rang. Rival of Kukshi's
ancient fame,

His heir the great Vikukshi came. His son was Vár,a, lord of
might, His Anarar,ya, strong in fight.

No famine marred his blissful reign, No drought destroyed the
kindly grain; Amid the sons of virtue chief,

His happy realm ne'er held a thief, His son was Prithu, glorious
name, From him the wise Trisanku came:

Embodied to the skies he went For love of truth preëminent. He
left a son renowned afar,

Known by the name of Dhundhumár. His son succeeding bore
the name

Of Yuvanásva dear to fame.

He passed away. Him followed then His son Mándhátá, king of
men.

His son was blest in high emprise, Susandhi, fortunate and wise.

Two noble sons had he, to wit Dhruvasandhi and Prasenajit.

Bharat was Dhruvasandhi's son:

His glorious arm the conquest won, Against his son King Asit,
rose

In fierce array his royal foes, Haihayas, Tálajanghas styled,

And Sasivindhus fierce and wild.[220]

Long time he strove, but forced to yield Fled from his kingdom
and the field.

The wives he left had both conceived— So is the ancient tale
believed:—

One, of her rival's hopes afraid,

Fell poison in the viands laid.

It chanced that Chyavan, Bhrigu's child, Had wandered to the pathless wild Where proud Himálaya's lovely height Detained him with a strange delight.

Then came the other widowed queen With lotus eyes and beauteous mien, Longing a noble son to bear,

And wooed the saint with earnest prayer. When thus Káлиндí, fairest dame

With reverent supplication came, To her the holy sage replied:

“O royal lady, from thy side

A glorious son shall spring ere long, Righteous and true and brave and strong; He, scourge of foes and lofty-souled,

His ancient race shall still uphold.”

Then round the sage the lady went, And bade farewell, most reverent.

Back to her home she turned once more, And there her promised son she bore.

Because her rival mixed the bane To render her conception vain, And her unripened fruit destroy,

Sagar she called her rescued boy.³⁹¹

He, when he paid that solemn rite,³⁹² Filled living creatures with
affright: Obedient to his high decree

His countless sons dug out the sea. Prince Asamanj was Sagar's
child: But him with cruel sin defiled

³⁹¹ From sa with, and gara poison.

³⁹² See Book I. Canto XL.

And loaded with the people's hate His father banished from the
state. To Asamanj his consort bare Bright Ansumán his valiant
heir. Ansumán's son, Dilípa famed, Begot a son Bhagíraph
named.

From him renowned Kakutstha came: Thou bearest still the
lineal name.

Kakutstha's son was Raghu: thou Art styled the son of Raghu
now. From him came Purushádak bold, Fierce hero of gigantic
mould: Kalmáshapáda's name he bore, Because his feet were
spotted o'er. Sankhan his son, to manhood grown, Died sadly
with his host o'erthrown, But ere he perished sprang from him
Sudarsan fair in face and limb.

From beautiful Sudarsan came Prince Agnivarr,a, bright as
flame. His son was Síhraga, for speed Unmatched; and Maru
was his seed. Prasusruka was Maru's child:

His son was Ambarísha styled. Nahush was Ambarísha's heir

With hand to strike and heart to dare. His son was good

Nábhág, from youth Renowned for piety and truth.

From great Nábhág sprang children two Aja and Suvrat pure
and true.

From Aja Dasaratha came,

Whose virtuous life was free from blame. His eldest son art thou:
his throne,

O famous Ráma, is thine own.

Accept the sway so justly thine,

And view the world with eyes benign. For ever in Ikshváku's race

The eldest takes his father's place, And while he lives no son
beside As lord and king is sanctified.

The rule by Raghu's children kept Thou must not spurn to-day.

This realm of peerless wealth accept, And like thy father sway.”

Canto CXI. Counsel To Bharat.

Thus said Vasishtha, and again To Ráma spake in duteous
strain: “All men the light of life who see

With high respect should look on three: High honour ne'er must
be denied

To father, mother, holy guide.

First to their sires their birth they owe, Nursed with maternal
love they grow: Their holy guides fair knowledge teach: So men
should love and honour each.

Thy sire and thou have learned of me, The sacred guide of him
and thee, And if my word thou wilt obey

Thou still wilt keep the virtuous way. See, with the chiefs of
every guild And all thy friends, this place is filled: All these, as
duty bids, protect;

So still the righteous path respect.

O, for thine aged mother feel,

Nor spurn the virtuous dame's appeal:

Obey, O Prince, thy mother dear, And still to virtue's path
adhere. Yield thou to Bharat's fond request, With earnest
supplication pressed, So wilt thou to thyself be true,

And faith and duty still pursue.”

Thus by his saintly guide addressed With pleas in sweetest
tones expressed, The lord of men in turn replied

To wise Vasishtha by his side:

“The fondest son’s observance ne’er

Repays the sire and mother’s care: [221]

The constant love that food provides, And dress, and every need
besides: Their pleasant words still soft and mild, Their nurture of
the helpless child:

The words which Dasaratha spake, My king and sire, I ne’er will
break.”

Then Bharat of the ample chest The wise Sumantra thus
addressed; “Bring sacred grass, O charioteer, And strew it on
the level here.

For I will sit and watch his face Until I win my brother’s grace.

Like a robbed Bráhmaṇ will I lie,³⁹³

Nor taste of food nor turn my eye, In front of Ráma’s leafy cot,
And till he yield will leave him not.”

³⁹³ A practice which has frequently been described, under the
name of dherna, by European travellers in India.

When Bharat saw Sumantra's eye Looked up to Ráma for reply,
The Prince himself in eager haste The sacred grass in order
placed. Him great and mighty Ráma, best Of royal saints, in
turn addressed:

“What, Bharat, have I done, that thou Besiegest me,³⁹⁴ a
suppliant now?

Thus stretched, to force redress for wrongs To men of Bráhma
n birth belongs,

Not those upon whose kingly head The consecrating drops are
shed. Up, lord of men! arise, and quit This fearful vow for thee
unfit.

Go, brother, seek Ayodhyá's town, Fair city of supreme renown.”

But Bharat, as his seat he took, Cast all around an eager look:

“O people, join your prayers with mine, And so his stubborn
heart incline.”

And all the people answered thus: "Full well is Ráma known to us.

Right is the word he speaks and he Is faithful to his sire's decree:

Nor can we rashly venture now

To turn him from his purposed vow."

394 Compare Milton's "beseeching or beseiging."

Then Ráma spoke: "O Bharat, heed Thy virtuous friends, and mark their rede. Mark well what I and these advise,

And duty view with clearer eyes. Thy hand on mine, O hero, place, Touch water, and thy sin efface."

Then Bharat rose: his hand he dipped, And purifying water sipped:

"Each citizen," he cried, "give ear, Attend, each counsellor and peer. My mother planned, by me untaught, To win the sway I never sought: Ne'er Raghu's son could I despise,

In duty's lore supremely wise. Now if obedience to our sire

This dwelling in the woods require, I, till the destined years be spent, Will dwell alone in banishment.”

The virtuous Ráma, wonder-stirred, The faithful speech of Bharat heard, And thus the hero’s feelings found Due utterance, as he gazed around:

“Still to my father’s word I hold, Whate’er he bought, or pledged, or sold: Ne’er shall his living promise be Annulled by Bharat or by me.

Not thus my task will I evade, My exile on another laid:

Most wise was Queen Kaikeyí’s rede, And just and good my father’s deed. Dear Bharat’s patient soul I know, How reverence due he loves to show;

In him, high-souled and faithful found, Must each auspicious grace abound.

When from the woods I turn again I with his aid shall nobly reign,

With one so good, of peerless worth, A glorious lord of happy earth.

Her boon Kaikeyí sought and won. I, as my father swore, have done:

And O, do thou, my brother dear,

The monarch's name from falsehood clear.

Canto CXII. The Sandals.

High wonder mingled with delight Took the great sages at the
sight,

Thrilling their breasts who came to view The meeting of the
peerless two.

The saints and sages' holy train Departed to their home again.

And high each holy voice was raised, And thus the glorious
brothers praised.

“High fate is his, the sire of two Most virtuous souls, so brave
and true:

With wonder and with joy intense

Our ears have heard their conference.” Then the great sages,
longing all

To see the ten-necked tyrant³⁹⁵ fall,

To Bharat, bravest of the brave, Their salutary counsel gave:

³⁹⁵ Ten-headed, ten-necked, ten faced, are common epithets of
Rávar, the giant king of Lanká.

“O thou of lofty lineage born, Whom wisdom, conduct, fame
adorn, Thou for thy honoured father’s sake

Shouldst Ráma’s righteous counsel take. [222]

All debts to Queen Kaikeyí paid,

Thy sire his home in heaven has made, So virtuous Ráma we
would see

From filial obligation free.”

Thus gave each royal sage advice, High saint, and bard of
Paradise; Then quickly vanishing from view Each to his proper
home withdrew. Then Ráma’s face his rapture showed, And his
full heart with joy o’erflowed, While, as the sages parted thence,
He paid his humble reverence.

Then Bharat shook in every limb As suppliant thus he spake to
him: “The duty of a king respect,

Held by our race in high respect: And O, thy gracious ear incline
To heed my mother’s prayer and mine. The mighty realm to rule
and guard For me alone is task too hard.

No power have I the love to gain Of noble, citizen, and swain.

All those who know thee, warrior, friend, On thee their eager
glances bend,

As labouring hinds who till the plain Look fondly for the Lord of
Rain.

O wisest Prince, thy realm secure, And make its firm
foundations sure. Kakutstha's son, thy mighty arm

Can keep the nation free from harm." He spoke, and fell in
sorrow drowned At Ráma's feet upon the ground,

And there the hero sued and sighed, And "Hear me, Raghu's
son," he cried.

Then Ráma raised him up, and pressed His brother to his loving
breast,

And sweetly as a wild swan cried To Bharat dark and lotus-
eyed:

"So just and true thy generous soul, Thy hand may well this
earth control: But many a sage his aid will lend, With counsellor,
and peer, and friend: With these advise: their counsel ask, And
so perform thy arduous task.

The moon his beauty may forgo, The cold forsake the Hills of
Snow,

And Ocean o'er his banks may sweep, But I my father's word
will keep.

Now whether love of thee or greed Thy mother led to plan the
deed,

Forth from thy breast the memory throw, And filial love and
reverence show.”

Thus spake Kausalyá's son: again Bharat replied in humble
strain

To him who matched the sun in might And lovely as the young
moon's light: “Put, noble brother, I entreat,

These sandals on thy blessed feet: These, lord of men, with gold
bedecked, The realm and people will protect.”

Then Ráma, as his brother prayed Beneath his feet the sandals
laid, And these with fond affection gave

To Bharat's hand, the good and brave. Then Bharat bowed his
reverent head And thus again to Ráma said: “Through fourteen
seasons will I wear The hermit's dress and matted hair: With
fruit and roots my life sustain, And still beyond the realm
remain, Longing for thee to come again.

The rule and all affairs of state I to these shoes will delegate.
And if, O tamer of thy foes,
When fourteen years have reached their close, I see thee not
that day return,
The kindled fire my frame shall burn.”

Then Ráma to his bosom drew Dear Bharat and Satrughna too:
“Be never wroth,” he cried, “with her, Kaikeyí’s guardian
minister:

This, glory of Ikshváku’s line,
Is Sítá’s earnest prayer and mine.” He spoke, and as the big
tears fell, To his dear brother bade farewell.

Round Ráma, Bharat strong and bold In humble reverence
paced,

When the bright sandals wrought with gold Above his brows
were placed.

The royal elephant who led The glorious pomp he found,
And on the monster’s mighty head Those sandals duly bound.

Then noble Ráma, born to swell The glories of his race,
To all in order bade farewell With love and tender grace—

To brothers, counsellors, and peers,— Still firm, in duty proved,
Firm, as the Lord of Snow uprears His mountains unremoved.
No queen, for choking sobs and sighs, Could say her last adieu:
Then Ráma bowed, with flooded eyes, And to his cot withdrew.

Canto CXIII. Bharat's Return.

Bearing the sandals on his head Away triumphant Bharat sped,
And clomb, Satrughna by his side, The car wherein he went to
ride. Before the mighty army went

The lords for counsel eminent, Vasishtha, Vámadeva next,

[223] Jáváli, pure with prayer and text. Then from that lovely
river they

Turned eastward on their homeward way: With reverent steps
from left to right They circled Chitrakúta's height,

And viewed his peaks on every side With stains of thousand
metals dyed. Then Bharat saw, not far away, Where
Bharadvája's dwelling lay,

Canto CXIII. Bharat's Return. 783

And when the chieftain bold and sage Had reached that holy
hermitage, Down from the car he sprang to greet The saint, and
bowed before his feet. High rapture filled the hermit's breast,
Who thus the royal prince addressed: "Say, Bharat, is thy duty
done?

Hast thou with Ráma met, my son?"

The chief whose soul to virtue clave This answer to the hermit
gave:

"I prayed him with our holy guide: But Raghu's son our prayer
denied, And long besought by both of us He answered Saint
Vasishtha thus: "True to my vow, I still will be Observant of my
sire's decree:

Till fourteen years complete their course That promise shall
remain in force." The saint in highest wisdom taught,

These solemn words with wisdom fraught, To him in lore of
language learned

Most eloquent himself returned: "Obey my rede: let Bharat hold

This pair of sandals decked with gold: They in Ayodhyá shall
ensure

Our welfare, and our bliss secure.” When Ráma heard the royal
priest He rose, and looking to the east Consigned the sandals to
my hand

That they for him might guard the land. Then from the high-
souled chief’s abode I turned upon my homeward road,
Dismissed by him, and now this pair

Of sandals to Ayodhyá bear.”

To him the hermit thus replied, By Bharat’s tidings gratified:

“No marvel thoughts so just and true, Thou best of all who right
pursue, Should dwell in thee, O Prince of men, As waters gather
in the glen.

He is not dead, we mourn in vain: Thy blessed father lives again,
Whose noble son we thus behold Like Virtue’s self in human
mould.”

He ceased: before him Bharat fell To clasp his feet, and said
farewell: His reverent steps around him bent, And onward to
Ayodhyá went.

His host of followers stretching far With many an elephant and
car, Waggon and steed, and mighty train, Traversed their
homeward way again. O'er holy Yamuná they sped,

Fair stream, with waves engarlanded, And then once more the
rivers' queen, The blessed Gangá's self was seen.

Then making o'er that flood his way, Where crocodiles and
monsters lay, The king to Sríngavera drew

His host and royal retinue.

His onward way he thence pursued, And soon renowned
Ayodhyá viewed. Then burnt by woe and sad of cheer Bharat
addressed the charioteer:

“Ah, see, Ayodhyá dark and sad,

Canto CXIV. Bharat's Departure. 785

Her glory gone, once bright and glad:

Of joy and beauty reft, forlorn,

In silent grief she seems to mourn.”

Canto CXIV. Bharat's Departure.

Deep, pleasant was the chariot's sound As royal Bharat, far
renowned, Whirled by his mettled coursers fast Within
Ayodhyá's city passed.

There dark and drear was every home Where cats and owls had
space to roam, As when the shades of midnight fall With
blackest gloom, and cover all:

As Rohir,í, dear spouse of him

Whom Ráhu hates,³⁹⁶ grows faint and dim, When, as she shines
on high alone

The demon's shade is o'er her thrown:

As burnt by summer's heat a rill Scarce trickling from her parent
hill, With dying fish in pools half dried, And fainting birds upon
her side:

As sacrificial flames arise

When holy oil their food supplies, But when no more the fire is
fed Sink lustreless and cold and dead:

Like some brave host that filled the plain, With harness rent and
captains slain, When warrior, elephant, and steed

³⁹⁶ The spouse of Rohir,í is the Moon: Ráhu is the demon who
causes eclipses.

Mingled in wild confusion bleed:

As when, all spent her store of worth, Rocks from her base the loosened earth: Like a sad fallen star no more

Wearing the lovely light it wore: So mournful in her lost estate Was that sad town disconsolate.

Then car-borne Bharat, good and brave, Thus spake to him the steeds who drave: “Why are Ayodhyá’s streets so mute?

Where is the voice of lyre and lute?

Why sounds not, as of old, to-day

[224]The music of the minstrel’s lay?

Where are the wreaths they used to twine? Where are the blossoms and the wine?

Where is the cool refreshing scent Of sandal dust with aloe blent?

The elephant’s impatient roar, The din of cars, I hear no more:

No more the horse’s pleasant neigh Rings out to meet me on my way. Ayodhyá’s youths, since Ráma’s flight, Have lost their relish for delight:

Her men roam forth no more, nor care Bright garlands round their necks to wear. All grieve for banished Ráma: feast,

And revelry and song have ceased:

Like a black night when floods pour down, So dark and gloomy is the town.

When will he come to make them gay Like some auspicious
holiday?

When will my brother, like a cloud

At summer's close, make glad the crowd?"

Then through the streets the hero rode, And passed within his
sire's abode,

Like some deserted lion's den, Forsaken by the lord of men.

Then to the inner bowers he came,

Once happy home of many a dame, Now gloomy, sad, and
drear,

Dark as of old that sunless day

When wept the Gods in wild dismay;³⁹⁷ There poured he many
a tear.

Canto CXV. Nandigrám.³⁹⁸

Then when the pious chief had seen Lodged in her home each
widowed queen, Still with his burning grief oppressed

His holy guides he thus addressed: "I go to Nandigrám: adieu,
This day, my lords to all of you: I go, my load of grief to bear,
Reft of the son of Raghu, there. The king my sire, alas, is dead,
And Ráma to the forest fled; There will I wait till he, restored,
Shall rule the realm, its rightful lord."

397 "Once," says the Commentator Tírtha, "in the battle
between the Gods and demons the Gods were vanquished, and
the sun was overthrown by Ráhu. At the request of the Gods Atri
undertook the management of the sun for a week." 398 Now
Nundgaon, in Oudh.

They heard the high-souled prince's speech, And thus with ready
answer each

Of those great lords their chief addressed, With saint Vasishtha
and the rest:

"Good are the words which thou hast said, By brotherly
affection led,

Like thine own self, a faithful friend, True to thy brother to the
end:

A heart like thine must all approve,
Which naught from virtue's path can move."

Soon as the words he loved to hear Fell upon Bharat's joyful ear,
Thus to the charioteer he spoke:

"My car with speed, Sumantra, yoke." Then Bharat with
delighted mien Obeisance paid to every queen,

And with Satrughna by his side Mounting the car away he hied.
With lords, and priests in long array The brothers hastened on
their way.

And the great pomp the Bráhmans led With Saint Vasishtha at
their head.

Then every face was eastward bent As on to Nandigrám they
went.

Behind the army followed, all Unsummoned by their leader's
call, And steeds and elephants and men Streamed forth with
every citizen. As Bharat in his chariot rode

His heart with love fraternal glowed, And with the sandals on his
head

To Nandigrám he quickly sped. Within the town he swiftly
pressed,

Alighted, and his guides addressed:

“To me in trust my brother’s hand
Consigned the lordship of the
land,

When he these gold-wrought sandals gave
As emblems to
protect and save.”

Then Bharat bowed, and from his head
The sacred pledge
deposited,

And thus to all the people cried

Who ringed him round on every side:

“Haste, for these sandals quickly bring
The canopy that shades
the king.

Pay ye to them all reverence meet
As to my elder brother’s feet,
For they will right and law maintain
Until King Ráma come
again.

My brother with a loving mind

These sandals to my charge consigned:

I till he come will guard with care
The sacred trust for Raghu’s
heir. My watchful task will soon be done,
The pledge restored to
Raghu’s son; Then shall I see, his wanderings o’er,
These sandals
on his feet once more. My brother I shall meet at last,

The burthen from my shoulders cast,
To Ráma’s hand the realm
restore
And serve my elder as before.

When Ráma takes again this pair Of sandals kept with pious
care, And here his glorious reign begins,

I shall be cleansed from all my sins, [225]

When the glad people's voices ring With welcome to the new-
made king, Joy will be mine four-fold as great

As if supreme I ruled the state.”

Thus humbly spoke in sad lament The chief in fame preëminent:

Thus, by his reverent lords obeyed, At Nandigrám the kingdom
swayed. With hermit's dress and matted hair He dwelt with all
his army there.

The sandals of his brother's feet Installed upon the royal seat,
He, all his powers to them referred, Affairs of state
administered.

In every care, in every task,

When golden store was brought, He first, as though their rede to
ask,

Those royal sandals sought.

Canto CXVI. The Hermit's Speech.

When Bharat took his homeward road Still Ráma in the wood
abode:

But soon he marked the fear and care That darkened all the
hermits there. For all who dwelt before the hill Were sad with
dread of coming ill: Each holy brow was lined by thought, And
Ráma's side they often sought.

With gathering frowns the prince they eyed, And then withdrew
and talked aside.

Canto CXVI. The Hermit's Speech. 791

Then Raghu's son with anxious breast The leader of the saints
addressed:

“Can aught that I have done displease, O reverend Sage, the
devotees?

Why are their loving looks, O say, Thus sadly changed or turned
away?

Has Lakshmar, through his want of heed Offended with
unseemly deed?

Or is the gentle Sítá, she

Who loved to honour you and me— Is she the cause of this
offence, Failing in lowly reverence?”

One sage, o'er whom, exceeding old, Had many a year of
penance rolled, Trembling in every aged limb

Thus for the rest replied to him: “How could we, O beloved,
blame Thy lofty-souled Videhan dame, Who in the good of all
delights, And more than all of anchorites?

But yet through thee a numbing dread Of fiends among our
band has spread; Obstructed by the demons' art

The trembling hermits talk apart. For Rávar,'s brother, overbold,
Named Khara, of gigantic mould, Vexes with fury fierce and fell
All those in Janasthán³⁹⁹ who dwell.

Resistless in his cruel deeds,

On flesh of men the monster feeds: Sinful and arrogant is he,
And looks with special hate on thee.

³⁹⁹ A part of the great Dar,9ak forest.

Since thou, beloved son, hast made Thy home within this holy
shade,

The fiends have vexed with wilder rage The dwellers of the hermitage.

In many a wild and dreadful form Around the trembling saints they swarm, With hideous shape and foul disguise They terrify our holy eyes.

They make our loathing souls endure Insult and scorn and sights impure, And flocking round the altars stay The holy rites we love to pay.

In every spot throughout the grove With evil thoughts the monsters rove, Assailing with their secret might Each unsuspecting anchorite.

Ladle and dish away they fling, Our fires with floods extinguishing,

And when the sacred flame should burn They trample on each water-urn.

Now when they see their sacred wood Plagued by this impious brotherhood, The troubled saints away would roam And seek in other shades a home: Hence will we fly, O Ráma, ere

The cruel fiends our bodies tear. Not far away a forest lies

Rich in the roots and fruit we prize, To this will I and all repair

And join the holy hermits there; Be wise, and with us thither flee Before this Khara injure thee.

Mighty art thou, O Ráma, yet Each day with peril is beset.

If with thy consort by thy side Thou in this wood wilt still abide.”

He ceased: the words the hero spake
The hermit's purpose failed to break:
To Raghu's son farewell he said,
And blessed the chief and comforted;
Then with the rest the holy sage
Departed from the hermitage.

So from the wood the saints withdrew,
And Ráma bidding all adieu

In lowly reverence bent: Instructed by their friendly speech,
Blest with the gracious love of each,

To his pure home he went.

Nor would the son of Raghu stray
A moment from that grove away

From which the saints had fled. And many a hermit thither came
Attracted by his saintly fame

And the pure life he led.

[226]

Canto CXVII. Anasúyá.

But dwelling in that lonely spot Left by the hermits pleased him
not. "I met the faithful Bharat here,

The townsmen, and my mother dear: The painful memory lingers
yet, And stings me with a vain regret.

And here the host of Bharat camped, And many a courser here
has stamped, And elephants with ponderous feet

Have trampled through the calm retreat." So forth to seek a
home he hied,

His spouse and Lakshmar, by his side. He came to Atri's pure
retreat,

Paid reverence to his holy feet,

And from the saint such welcome won As a fond father gives his son.

The noble prince with joy unfeigned As a dear guest he entertained,

And cheered the glorious Lakshmar, too And Sítá with observance due.

Then Anasúyá at the call

Of him who sought the good of all, His blameless venerable spouse, Delighting in her holy vows,

Came from her chamber to his side: To her the virtuous hermit cried: "Receive, I pray, with friendly grace This dame of Maithil monarchs' race:" To Ráma next made known his wife, The devotee of saintliest life:

"Ten thousand years this votaress bent On sternest rites of penance spent;

She when the clouds withheld their rain, And drought ten years consumed the plain,

Caused grateful roots and fruit to grow And ordered Gangá here to flow:

So from their cares the saints she freed, Nor let these checks
their rites impede, She wrought in Heaven's behalf, and made
Ten nights of one, the Gods to aid:400

Let holy Anasúyá be

An honoured mother, Prince, to thee. Let thy Videhan spouse
draw near To her whom all that live revere, Stricken in years,
whose loving mind Is slow to wrath and ever kind.”

He ceased: and Ráma gave assent, And said, with eyes on Sítá
bent:

“O Princess, thou hast heard with me This counsel of the
devotee:

Now that her touch thy soul may bless, Approach the saintly
votress:

Come to the venerable dame, Far known by Anasúyá's name:

The mighty things that she has done High glory in the world
have won.”

Thus spoke the son of Raghu: she Approached the saintly
devotee,

Who with her white locks, old and frail, Shook like a plantain in
the gale.

To that true spouse she bowed her head, And “Lady, I am Sítá,”
said:

Raised suppliant hands and prayed her tell That all was
prosperous and well.

400 When the saint Már,⁹avya had doomed some saint’s wife,
who was Anasúyá’s friend, to become a widow on the morrow.

The aged matron, when she saw Fair Sítá true to duty’s law,
Addressed her thus: “High fate is thine Whose thoughts to virtue
still incline. Thou, lady of the noble mind,

Hast kin and state and wealth resigned To follow Ráma forced
to tread Where solitary woods are spread.

Those women gain high spheres above Who still unchanged
their husbands love, Whether they dwell in town or wood,
Whether their hearts be ill or good.

Though wicked, poor, or led away In love’s forbidden paths to
stray, The noble matron still will deem Her lord a deity supreme.

Regarding kin and friendship, I Can see no better, holier tie, And
every penance-rite is dim Beside the joy of serving him.

But dark is this to her whose mind Promptings of idle fancy
blind, Who led by evil thoughts away

Makes him who should command obey. Such women, O dear
Maithil dame, Their virtue lose and honest fame, Enslaved by sin
and folly, led

In these unholy paths to tread.

But they who good and true like thee The present and the future
see,

Like men by holy deeds will rise To mansions in the blissful skies.

So keep thee pure from taint of sin, Still to thy lord be true,

And fame and merit shalt thou win, To thy devotion due.”

Canto CXVIII. Anasúyá's Gifts.

Thus by the holy dame addressed Who banished envy from her
breast, Her lowly reverence Sítá paid,

And softly thus her answer made:

“No marvel, best of dames, thy speech

The duties of a wife should teach; [227]

Yet I, O lady, also know

Due reverence to my lord to show. Were he the meanest of the
base, Unhonoured with a single grace,

My husband still I ne'er would leave,

But firm through all to him would cleave: Still rather to a lord like
mine

Whose virtues high-exalted shine, Compassionate, of lofty soul,
With every sense in due control,

True in his love, of righteous mind, Like a dear sire and mother
kind.

E'en as he ever loves to treat Kausalyá with observance meet,
Has his behaviour ever been

To every other honoured queen.

Nay, more, a sonlike reverence shows The noble Ráma e'en to
those

On whom the king his father set His eyes one moment, to
forget.

Deep in my heart the words are stored, Said by the mother of
my lord,

When from my home I turned away In the lone fearful woods to
stray. The counsel of my mother deep Impressed upon my soul

I keep, When by the fire I took my stand, And Ráma clasped in
his my hand. And in my bosom cherished yet, My friends' advice
I ne'er forget: Woman her holiest offering pays When she her
husband's will obeys. Good Sávitrí her lord obeyed,

And a high saint in heaven was made, And for the self-same
virtue thou Hast heaven in thy possession now.

And she with whom no dame could vie, Now a bright Goddess in
the sky, Sweet Rohir,í the Moon's dear Queen, Without her lord is
never seen:

And many a faithful wife beside For her pure love is glorified.”

Thus Sítá spake: soft rapture stole Through Anasúyá's saintly
soul: Kisses on Sítá's head she pressed, And thus the Maithil
dame addressed: “I by long rites and toils endured Rich store of
merit have secured: From this my wealth will I bestow

A blessing ere I let thee go.

So right and wise and true each word That from thy lips mine
ears have heard, I love thee: be my pleasing task

To grant the boon that thou shalt ask.”

Then Sítá marvelled much, and while Played o'er her lips a
gentle smile,

“All has been done, O Saint,” she cried, “And naught remains to
wish beside.”

She spake; the lady's meek reply Swelled Anasúyá's rapture
high. “Sítá,” she said, “my gift to-day Thy sweet contentment
shall repay. Accept this precious robe to wear, Of heavenly
fabric, rich and rare, These gems thy limbs to ornament, This
precious balsam sweet of scent. O Maithil dame, this gift of
mine

Shall make thy limbs with beauty shine, And breathing o'er thy
frame dispense Its pure and lasting influence.

This balsam on thy fair limbs spread New radiance on thy lord
shall shed, As Lakshmi's beauty lends a grace To Vishr,u's own
celestial face.”

Then Sítá took the gift the dame Bestowed on her in friendship's
name, The balsam, gems, and robe divine,

And garlands wreathed of bloomy twine; Then sat her down,
with reverence meet, At saintly Anasúyá's feet.

The matron rich in rites and vows Turned her to Ráma's Maithil
spouse, And questioned thus in turn to hear A pleasant tale to
charm her ear: “Sítá, 'tis said that Raghu's son

Thy hand, mid gathered suitors, won. I fain would hear thee,
lady, tell

The story as it all befell:

Do thou repeat each thing that passed, Reviewing all from first
to last.”

Thus spake the dame to Sítá: she Replying to the devotee,

“Then, lady, thy attention lend,” Rehearsed the story to the end:

“King Janak, just and brave and strong, Who loves the right and
hates the wrong, Well skilled in what the law ordains

For Warriors, o’er Videha reigns. Guiding one morn the plough,
his hand Marked out, for rites the sacred land, When, as the
ploughshare cleft the earth, Child of the king I leapt to birth.

Then as the ground he smoothed and cleared, He saw me all
with dust besmeared,

And on the new-found babe, amazed The ruler of Videha gazed.

In childless love the monarch pressed The welcome infant to his
breast:

“My daughter,” thus he cried, “is she:” And as his child he cared
for me.

Forth from the sky was heard o’erhead As ’twere a human voice
that said: “Yea, even so: great King, this child Henceforth thine

own be justly styled.” Videha’s monarch, virtuous souled,
Rejoiced o’er me with joy untold, Delighting in his new-won
prize,

The darling of his heart and eyes. To his chief queen of saintly
mind The precious treasure he consigned, And by her side she
saw me grow,

Nursed with the love which mothers know. [228]

Then as he saw the seasons fly,

And knew my marriage-time was nigh, My sire was vexed with
care, as sad As one who mourns the wealth he had: “Scorn on
the maiden’s sire must wait From men of high and low estate:

The virgin’s father all despise,

Though Indra’s peer, who rules the skies.” More near he saw,
and still more near, The scorn that filled his soul with fear, On
trouble’s billowy ocean tossed,

Like one whose shattered bark is lost. My father knowing how I
came,

No daughter of a mortal dame, In all the regions failed to see
A bridegroom meet to match with me. Each way with anxious
thought he scanned, And thus at length the monarch planned:
“The Bride’s Election will I hold,

With every rite prescribed of old.” It pleased King Varur, to
bestow Quiver and shafts and heavenly bow Upon my father’s
sire who reigned, When Daksha his great rite ordained.

Where was the man might bend or lift With utmost toil that
wondrous gift? Not e’en in dreams could mortal king Strain the
great bow or draw the string. Of this tremendous bow
possessed,

My truthful father thus addressed The lords of many a region, all
Assembled at the monarch’s call: “Whoe’er this bow can
manage, he The husband of my child shall be.”

The suitors viewed with hopeless eyes That wondrous bow of
mountain size, Then to my sire they bade adieu,

And all with humbled hearts withdrew. At length with Visvámitra
came

This son of Raghu, dear to fame, The royal sacrifice to view.

Near to my father’s home he drew, His brother Lakshmar, by his
side, Ráma, in deeds heroic tried.

My sire with honour entertained The saint in lore of duty trained,

Who thus in turn addressed the king: “Ráma and Lakshmar,
here who spring From royal Dasaratha, long

To see thy bow so passing strong.”

Before the prince's eyes was laid That marvel, as the Bráhmaṇ
prayed. One moment on the bow he gazed, Quick to the notch
the string he raised, Then, in the wandering people's view, The
cord with mighty force he drew. Then with an awful crash as
loud

As thunderbolts that cleave the cloud, The bow beneath the
matchless strain Of arms heroic snapped in twain.

Thus, giving purest water, he, My sire, to Ráma offered me.

The prince the offered gift declined Till he should learn his
father's mind; So horsemen swift Ayodhyá sought And back her
aged monarch brought. Me then my sire to Ráma gave,

Self-ruled, the bravest of the brave. And Urmilá, the next to me,

Graced with all gifts, most fair to see, My sire with Raghu's
house allied, And gave her to be Lakshmar,'s bride. Thus from
the princes of the land Lord Ráma won my maiden hand, And
him exalted high above

Heroic chiefs I truly love.”

Canto CXIX. The Forest.

When Anasúyá, virtuous-souled, Had heard the tale by Sítá told,
She kissed the lady's brow and laced Her loving arms around
her waist.

“With sweet-toned words distinct and clear Thy pleasant tale
has charmed mine ear, How the great king thy father held
That Maiden's Choice unparalleled. But now the sun has sunk
from sight, And left the world to holy Night.

Hark! how the leafy thickets sound With gathering birds that
twitter round: They sought their food by day, and all Flock
homeward when the shadows fall.

See, hither comes the hermit band, Each with his pitcher in his
hand:

Fresh from the bath, their locks are wet, Their coats of bark are
dripping yet.

Here saints their fires of worship tend, And curling wreaths of
smoke ascend: Borne on the flames they mount above, Dark as
the brown wings of the dove. The distant trees, though well-nigh
bare, Gloom thickened by the evening air, And in the faint
uncertain light

Shut the horizon from our sight.

The beasts that prowl in darkness rove On every side about the grove,

And the tame deer, at ease reclined Their shelter near the altars find.

The night o'er all the sky is spread, With lunar stars engarlanded,

And risen in his robes of light The moon is beautifully bright.

Now to thy lord I bid thee go:

Thy pleasant tale has charmed me so: One thing alone I needs must pray, Before me first thyself array:

Here in thy heavenly raiment shine,

[229] And glad, dear love, these eyes of mine." Then like a heavenly Goddess shone

Fair Sítá with that raiment on.

She bowed her to the matron's feet, Then turned away her lord to meet. The hero prince with joy surveyed His Sítá in her robes arrayed,

As glorious to his arms she came With love-gifts of the saintly dame.

She told him how the saint to show Her fond affection would
bestow That garland of celestial twine, Those ornaments and
robes divine.

Then Ráma's heart, nor Lakshmar,'s less, Was filled with pride
and happiness,

For honours high had Sítá gained,

Which mortal dames have scarce obtained. There honoured by
each pious sage

Who dwelt within the hermitage, Beside his darling well content
That sacred night the hero spent.

The princes, when the night had fled, Farewell to all the hermits
said,

Who gazed upon the distant shade, Their lustral rites and
offerings paid.

The saints who made their dwelling there In words like these
addressed the pair: "O Princes, monsters fierce and fell Around
that distant forest dwell:

On blood from human veins they feed, And various forms
assume at need, With savage beasts of fearful power That
human flesh and blood devour.

Our holy saints they rend and tear When met alone or unaware,

And eat them in their cruel joy: These chase, O Ráma, or
destroy. By this one path our hermits go

To fetch the fruits that yonder grow: By this, O Prince, thy feet
should stray Through pathless forests far away.”

Thus by the reverent saints addressed, And by their prayers
auspicious blessed,

He left the holy crowd:

His wife and brother by his side, Within the mighty wood he
hied. So sinks the Day-God in his pride

Beneath a bank of cloud.

BOOK III

Canto I. The Hermitage.

When Ráma, valiant hero, stood In the vast shade of Dar,9ak
wood, His eyes on every side he bent And saw a hermit
settlement,

Where coats of bark were hung around, And holy grass
bestrewed the ground. Bright with Bráhmanic lustre glowed
That circle where the saints abode: Like the hot sun in heaven it
shone, Too dazzling to be looked upon.

Wild creatures found a refuge where

The court, well-swept, was bright and fair, And countless birds
and roedeer made Their dwelling in the friendly shade.

Beneath the boughs of well-loved trees Oft danced the gay
Apsarases.401 Around was many an ample shed Wherein the
holy fire was fed;

With sacred grass and skins of deer, Ladles and sacrificial gear,
And roots and fruit, and wood to burn,

401 Heavenly nymphs.

And many a brimming water-urn.

Tall trees their hallowed branches spread, Laden with pleasant fruit, o'erhead;

And gifts which holy laws require,⁴⁰²

And solemn offerings burnt with fire,⁴⁰³ And Veda chants on every side

That home of hermits sanctified. There many a flower its odour shed, And lotus blooms the lake o'erspred.

There, clad in coats of bark and hide,— Their food by roots and fruit supplied,— Dwelt many an old and reverend sire Bright as the sun or Lord of Fire,

All with each worldly sense subdued, A pure and saintly multitude.

The Veda chants, the saints who trod The sacred ground and mused on God, Made that delightful grove appear

Like Brahmá's own most glorious sphere. As Raghu's splendid son surveyed

That hermit home and tranquil shade,

He loosed his mighty bow-string, then

[230] Drew nearer to the holy men. With keen celestial sight endued

Those mighty saints the chieftain viewed, With joy to meet the prince they came, And gentle Sitá dear to fame.

They looked on virtuous Ráma, fair As Soma⁴⁰⁴ in the evening
air,

And Lakshmar, by his brother's side,

402 The ball or present of food to all created beings.

403 The clarified butter &c. cast into the sacred fire.

404 The Moon-God: "he is," says the commentator, "the special
deity of Bráhmans."

Canto I. The Hermitage. 809

And Sítá long in duty tried,

And with glad blessings every sage Received them in the
hermitage.

Then Ráma's form and stature tall Entranced the wondering
eyes of all,— His youthful grace, his strength of limb, And garb
that nobly sat on him.

To Lakshmar, too their looks they raised, And upon Sítá's beauty
gazed

With eyes that closed not lest their sight Should miss the vision
of delight.

Then the pure hermits of the wood, Rejoicing in all creatures'
good, Their guest, the glorious Ráma, led Within a cot with
leaves o'erhead. With highest honour all the best

Of radiant saints received their guest, With kind observance, as
is meet, And gave him water for his feet.

To highest pitch of rapture wrought

Their stores of roots and fruit they brought. They poured their
blessings on his head, And "All we have is thine," they said.

Then, reverent hand to hand applied,⁴⁰⁵

Each duty-loving hermit cried: "The king is our protector, bright
In fame, maintainer of the right.

He bears the awful sword, and hence Deserves an elder's
reverence.

One fourth of Indra's essence, he Preserves his realm from
danger free,

⁴⁰⁵ "Because he was an incarnation of the deity," says the
commentator, "otherwise such honour paid by men of the
sacerdotal caste to one of the military would be improper."

Hence honoured by the world of right The king enjoys each
choice delight. Thou shouldst to us protection give, For in thy

realm, dear lord, we live: Whether in town or wood thou be, Thou art our king, thy people we.

Our wordly aims are laid aside, Our hearts are tamed and purified. To thee our guardian, we who earn Our only wealth by penance turn.”

Then the pure dwellers in the shade To Raghu’s son due honour paid,

And Lakshmar,, bringing store of roots, And many a flower, and woodland fruits. And others strove the prince to please With all attentive courtesies.

Canto II. Virádha.

Thus entertained he passed the night, Then, with the morning’s early light, To all the hermits bade adieu

And sought his onward way anew. He pierced the mighty forest where

Roamed many a deer and pard and bear: Its ruined pools he scarce could see.

For creeper rent and prostrate tree, Where shrill cicada's cries
were heard, And plaintive notes of many a bird.

Deep in the thickets of the wood

Canto II. Virádha. 811

With Lakshmar, and his spouse he stood, There in the horrid
shade he saw

A giant passing nature's law:

Vast as some mountain-peak in size, With mighty voice and
sunken eyes, Huge, hideous, tall, with monstrous face, Most
ghastly of his giant race.

A tiger's hide the Rákshas wore Still reeking with the fat and
gore:

Huge-faced, like Him who rules the dead, All living things he
struck with dread.

Three lions, tigers four, ten deer He carried on his iron spear,

Two wolves, an elephant's head beside With mighty tusks which
blood-drops dyed. When on the three his fierce eye fell,

He charged them with a roar and yell As furious as the grisly
King

When stricken worlds are perishing. Then with a mighty roar
that shook The earth beneath their feet, he took The trembling
Sítá to his side.

Withdrew a little space, and cried: “Ha, short lived wretches, ye
who dare, In hermit dress with matted hair,

Armed each with arrows, sword, and bow, Through Dar,9ak’s
pathless wood to go: How with one dame, I bid you tell,

Can you among ascetics dwell? Who are ye, sinners, who
despise The right, in holy men’s disguise? The great Virádha,
day by day

Through this deep-tangled wood I stray, And ever, armed with
trusty steel,

I seize a saint to make my meal. This woman young and fair of
frame

Shall be the conquering giant’s dame: Your blood, ye things of
evil life, My lips shall quaff in battle strife.”

He spoke: and Janak’s hapless child,

[231] Scared by his speech so fierce and wild, Trembled for
terror, as a frail

Young plantain shivers in the gale. When Ráma saw Virádha
clasp Fair Sítá in his mighty grasp,
Thus with pale lips that terror dried The hero to his brother cried:
“O see Virádha’s arm enfold My darling in its cursed hold,—
The child of Janak best of kings,
My spouse whose soul to virtue clings, Sweet princess, with pure
glory bright, Nursed in the lap of soft delight.
Now falls the blow Kaikeyí meant, Successful in her dark intent:
This day her cruel soul will be Triumphant over thee and me.
Though Bharat on the throne is set, Her greedy eyes look farther
yet: Me from my home she dared expel,
Me whom all creatures loved so well. This fatal day at length, I
ween, Brings triumph to the younger queen. I see with bitterest
grief and shame Another touch the Maithil dame.
Not loss of sire and royal power
So grieves me as this mournful hour.”

Thus in his anguish cried the chief:
Then drowned in tears, o’erwhelmed by grief, Thus Lakshmar, in
his anger spake,
Quick panting like a spell-bound snake:

“Canst thou, my brother, Indra’s peer, When I thy minister am
near,

Thus grieve like some forsaken thing, Thou, every creature’s lord
and king? My vengeful shaft the fiend shall slay, And earth shall
drink his blood to-day. The fury which my soul at first

Upon usurping Bharat nursed, On this Virádha will I wreak

As Indra splits the mountain peak. Winged by this arm’s
impetuous might

My shaft with deadly force

The monster in the chest shall smite, And fell his shattered
corse.”

Canto III. Virádha Attacked.

Virádha with a fearful shout

That echoed through the wood, cried out:

“What men are ye, I bid you say, And whither would ye bend
your way?”

To him whose mouth shot fiery flame The hero told his race and
name:

“Two Warriors, nobly bred, are we, And through this wood we
wander free. But who art thou, how born and styled, Who
roamest here in Dar,9ak’s wild?”

To Ráma, bravest of the brave, His answer thus Virádha gave:

“Hear, Raghu’s son, and mark me well, And I my name and race
will tell.

Of Satahradá born, I spring From Java as my sire, O King: Me,
of this lofty lineage, all Giants on earth Virádha call.

The rites austere I long maintained

From Brahmá’s grace the boon have gained To bear a charmed
frame which ne’er Weapon or shaft may pierce or tear.

Go as ye came, untouched by fear, And leave with me this
woman here: Go, swiftly from my presence fly, Or by this hand
ye both shall die.”

Then Ráma with his fierce eyes red With fury to the giant said:

“Woe to thee, sinner, fond and weak, Who madly thus thy death wilt seek! Stand, for it waits thee in the fray: With life thou ne’er shalt flee away.”

He spoke, and raised the cord whereon A pointed arrow flashed and shone, Then, wild with anger, from his bow,

He launched the weapon on the foe. Seven times the fatal cord he drew, And forth seven rapid arrows flew,

Shafts winged with gold that left the wind And e’en Suparr,a’s406 self behind.

Full on the giant’s breast they smote, And purpled like the peacock’s throat,

Passed through his mighty bulk and came To earth again like flakes of flame.

The fiend the Maithil dame unclasped; In his fierce hand his spear he grasped,

And wild with rage, pierced through and through, At Ráma and his brother flew.

So loud the roar which chilled with fear, So massy was the monster’s spear,

He seemed, like Indra's flagstaff, dread
As the dark God who
rules the dead.

On huge Virádha fierce as He⁴⁰⁷

Who smites, and worlds have ceased to be, The princely
brothers poured amain

Their fiery flood of arrowy rain. Unmoved he stood, and opening
wide His dire mouth laughed unterrified, And ever as the
monster gaped

Those arrows from his jaws escaped. Preserving still his life
unharméd,

By Brahmá's saving promise charmed, His mighty spear aloft in
air

He raised, and rushed upon the pair.

406 The king of birds.

407 Kálántakayamopamam, resembling Yáma the destroyer.

From Ráma's bow two arrows flew

[232] And cleft that massive spear in two, Dire as the flaming
levin sent

From out the cloudy firmament. Cut by the shafts he guided well
To earth the giant's weapon fell:

As when from Meru's summit, riven By fiery bolts, a rock is driven.

Then swift his sword each warrior drew, Like a dread serpent black of hue,

And gathering fury for the blow Rushed fiercely on the giant foe. Around each prince an arm he cast, And held the dauntless heroes fast:

Then, though his gashes gaped and bled, Bearing the twain he turned and fled.

Then Ráma saw the giant's plan, And to his brother thus began:

“O Lakshmar,, let Virádha still Hurry us onward as he will, For look, Sumitrá's son, he goes Along the path we freely chose.”

He spoke: the rover of the night Upraised them with terrific might, Till, to his lofty shoulders swung, Like children to his neck they clung. Then sending far his fearful roar,

The princes through the wood he bore,— A wood like some vast cloud to view, Where birds of every plumage flew,

And mighty trees o'erarching threw Dark shadows on the ground;

Where snakes and silvan creatures made Their dwelling, and the
jackal strayed

Through tangled brakes around.

Canto IV. Virádha's Death.

But Sítá viewed with wild affright The heroes hurried from her sight. She tossed her shapely arms on high, And shrieked aloud her bitter cry: “Ah, the dread giant bears away

The princely Ráma as his prey, Truthful and pure, and good and great,

And Lakshmar, shares his brother’s fate. The brindled tiger and the bear

My mangled limbs for food will tear. Take me, O best of giants, me,

And leave the sons of Raghu free.”

Then, by avenging fury spurred, Her mournful cry the heroes heard, And hastened, for the lady’s sake, The wicked monster’s life to take. Then Lakshmar, with resistless stroke

The foe’s left arm that held him broke, And Ráma too, as swift to smite, Smashed with his heavy hand the right. With broken arms and tortured frame To earth the fainting giant came,

Like a huge cloud, or mighty rock Rent, sundered by the levin’s shock.

Then rushed they on, and crushed and beat Their foe with arms and fists and feet, And nerved each mighty limb to pound And bray him on the level ground.

Keen arrows and each biting blade Wide rents in breast and
side had made; But crushed and torn and mangled, still The
monster lived they could not kill. When Ráma saw no arms
might slay The fiend who like a mountain lay,
The glorious hero, swift to save In danger, thus his counsel
gave:

“O Prince of men, his charmed life No arms may take in battle
strife: Now dig we in this grove a pit
His elephantine bulk to fit,
And let the hollowed earth enfold The monster of gigantic
mould.”

This said, the son of Raghu pressed His foot upon the giant’s
breast.

With joy the prostrate monster heard

Victorious Ráma’s welcome word, And straight Kakutstha’s son,
the best Of men, in words like these addressed:

“I yield, O chieftain, overthrown
By might that vies with Indra’s own. Till now my folly-blinded
eyes Thee, hero, failed to recognize.

Happy Kausalyá! blest to be The mother of a son like thee!

I know thee well, O chieftain, now:

Ráma, the prince of men, art thou.

There stands the high-born Maithil dame, There Lakshmar,, lord
of mighty fame.

My name was Tumburu,408 for song

Renowned among the minstrel throng:

Cursed by Kuvera's stern decree I wear the hideous shape you
see.

But when I sued, his grace to crave, The glorious God this
answer gave:

“When Ráma, Dasaratha's son, Destroys thee and the fight is
won, Thy proper shape once more assume,

And heaven again shall give thee room.” When thus the angry
God replied,

No prayers could turn his wrath aside, And thus on me his fury
fell

For loving Rambhá's409 charms too well.

Now through thy favour am I freed From the stern fate the God
decreed,

And saved, O tamer of the foe, [233]

408 Somewhat inconsistently with this part of the story
Tumburu is mentioned in Book II, Canto XII as one of the
Gandharvas or heavenly minstrels summoned to perform at
Bharadvāja's feast.

409 Rambhá appears in Book I Canto LXIV as the temptress of
Visvámitra.

By thee, to heaven again shall go.

A league, O Prince, beyond this spot Stands holy Sarabhanga's
cot:

The very sun is not more bright Than that most glorious
anchorite: To him, O Ráma, quickly turn,

And blessings from the hermit earn. First under earth my body
throw, Then on thy way rejoicing go.

Such is the law ordained of old

For giants when their days are told: Their bodies laid in earth,
they rise To homes eternal in the skies."

Thus, by the rankling dart oppressed, Kakutstha's offspring he
addressed:

In earth his mighty body lay, His spirit fled to heaven away.

Thus spake Virádha ere he died; And Ráma to his brother cried:
“Now dig we in this grove a pit His elephantine bulk to fit.

And let the hollowed earth enfold This mighty giant fierce and
bold.”

This said, the valiant hero put Upon the giant's neck his foot.

His spade obedient Lakshmar, plied, And dug a pit both deep
and wide By lofty souled Virádha's side.

Then Raghu's son his foot withdrew, And down the mighty form
they threw; One awful shout of joy he gave

And sank into the open grave. The heroes, to their purpose true,
In fight the cruel demon slew,

And radiant with delight

Deep in the hollowed earth they cast The monster roaring to the
last,

In their resistless might.

Thus when they saw the warrior's steel No life-destroying blow
might deal,

The pair, for lore renowned,

Deep in the pit their hands had made The unresisting giant laid,

And killed him neath the ground. Upon himself the monster
brought From Ráma's hand the death he sought

With strong desire to gain: And thus the rover of the night

Told Ráma, as they strove in fight,

That swords might rend and arrows smite Upon his breast in
vain.

Thus Ráma, when his speech he heard, The giant's mighty form
interred,

Which mortal arms defied.

With thundering crash the giant fell, And rock and cave and
forest dell

With echoing roar replied.

The princes, when their task was done And freedom from the
peril won,

Rejoiced to see him die.

Then in the boundless wood they strayed, Like the great sun and
moon displayed

Triumphant in the sky.410

Canto V. Sarabhangā.

Then Rāma, having slain in fight Virādha of terrific might,
With gentle words his spouse consoled, And clasped her in his
loving hold.

Then to his brother nobly brave The valiant prince his counsel
gave:

“Wild are these woods around us spread; And hard and rough
the ground to tread: We, O my brother, ne’er have viewed

So dark and drear a solitude:
To Sarabhanga let us haste,
Whom wealth of holy works has graced.”

410 The conclusion of this Canto is all a vain repetition: it is manifestly spurious and a very feeble imitation of Válmíki's style. See Additional Notes.

Thus Ráma spoke, and took the road To Sarabhanga's pure abode.

But near that saint whose lustre vied With Gods, by penance purified,
With startled eyes the prince beheld A wondrous sight unparalleled.

In splendour like the fire and sun He saw a great and glorious one.
Upon a noble car he rode,

And many a God behind him glowed:

And earth beneath his feet unpresse^d411 The monarch of the skies confessed.

Ablaze with gems, no dust might dim The bright attire that covered him.

Arrayed like him, on every side High saints their master glorified. Near, borne in air, appeared in view His car which tawny coursers drew, Like silver cloud, the moon, or sun Ere yet the day is well begun.

Wreathed with gay garlands, o'er his head A pure white canopy was spread,

And lovely nymphs stood nigh to hold Fair chouris with their sticks of gold, Which, waving in each gentle hand, The forehead of their monarch fanned. God, saint, and bard, a radiant ring, Sang glory to their heavenly King:

Forth into joyful lauds they burst As Indra with the sage conversed.

Then Ráma, when his wondering eyes

Beheld the monarch of the skies, [234]

411 “Even when he had alighted,” says the commentator: The feet of Gods do not touch the ground.

To Lakshmar, quickly called, and showed The car wherein Lord Indra rode:

“See, brother, see that air-borne car, Whose wondrous glory
shines afar: Wherefrom so bright a lustre streams That like a
falling sun it seems:

These are the steeds whose fame we know, Of heavenly race
through heaven they go: These are the steeds who bear the
yoke

Of Sakra, 412 Him whom all invoke.

Behold these youths, a glorious band, Toward every wind a
hundred stand: A sword in each right hand is borne, And rings of
gold their arms adorn. What might in every broad deep chest
And club-like arm is manifest!

Clothed in attire of crimson hue They show like tigers fierce to
view.

Great chains of gold each warder deck, Gleaming like fire
beneath his neck.

The age of each fair youth appears Some score and five of
human years: The ever-blooming prime which they Who live in
heaven retain for aye: Such mien these lordly beings wear,
Heroic youths, most bright and fair. Now, brother, in this spot, I
pray, With the Videhan lady stay,

Till I have certain knowledge who This being is, so bright to
view.”

412 A name of Indra.

He spoke, and turning from the spot Sought Sarabhanga's
hermit cot.

But when the lord of Sachí⁴¹³ saw

The son of Raghu near him draw, He hastened of the sage to
take

His leave, and to his followers spake:

“See, Ráma bends his steps this way, But ere he yet a word can
say,

Come, fly to our celestial sphere; It is not meet he see me here.

Soon victor and triumphant he In fitter time shall look on me.

Before him still a great emprise, A task too hard for others, lies.”

Then with all marks of honour high The Thunderer bade the saint
good-bye, And in his car which coursers drew Away to heaven
the conqueror flew.

Then Ráma, Lakshmar,, and the dame, To Sarabhanga nearer
came,

Who sat beside the holy flame. Before the ancient sage they
bent, And clasped his feet most reverent; Then at his invitation
found

A seat beside him on the ground.

Then Ráma prayed the sage would deign Lord Indra's visit to
explain;

And thus at length the holy man In answer to his prayer began:

413 Sachí is the consort of Indra.

“This Lord of boons has sought me here To waft me hence to
Brahmá's sphere, Won by my penance long and stern,—

A home the lawless ne'er can earn. But when I knew that thou
wast nigh, To Brahmá's world I could not fly Until these longing
eyes were blest

With seeing thee, mine honoured guest. Since thou, O Prince,
hast cheered my sight, Great-hearted lover of the right,

To heavenly spheres will I repair

And bliss supreme that waits me there. For I have won, dear
Prince, my way To those fair worlds which ne'er decay, Celestial
seat of Brahmá's reign:

Be thine, with me, those worlds to gain.”

Then master of all sacred lore, Spake Ráma to the saint once
more:

“I, even I, illustrious sage,

Will make those worlds mine heritage: But now, I pray, some
home assign Within this holy grove of thine.”

Thus Ráma, Indra's peer in might, Addressed the aged
anchorite:

And he, with wisdom well endued, To Raghu's son his speech
renewed:

“Sutíkshr,a’s woodland home is near, A glorious saint of life
austere,

True to the path of duty; he

With highest bliss will prosper thee. Against the stream thy
course must be Of this fair brook Mandákiní,

Whereon light rafts like blossoms glide; Then to his cottage turn
aside.

There lies thy path: but ere thou go, Look on me, dear one, till I
throw Aside this mould that girds me in,

As casts the snake his withered skin.”

He spoke, the fire in order laid With holy oil due offerings made,
And Sarabhanga, glorious sire, Laid down his body in the fire.

Then rose the flame above his head, On skin, blood, flesh, and
bones it fed,

Till forth, transformed, with radiant hue Of tender youth, he rose
anew,

Far-shining in his bright attire Came Sarabhanga from the pyre:

Above the home of saints, and those

Who feed the quenchless flame,414 he rose:

Beyond the seat of Gods he passed,

And Brahmá’s sphere was gained at last. [235]

The noblest of the twice-born race, For holy works supreme in place,
The Mighty Father there beheld Girt round by hosts unparalleled;

414 The spheres or mansions gained by those who have duly performed the sacrifices required of them. Different situations are assigned to these spheres, some placing them near the sun, others near the moon.

And Brahmá joying at the sight Welcomed the glorious anchorite.

Canto VI. Ráma's Promise.

When he his heavenly home had found, The holy men who dwelt around

To Ráma flocked, whose martial fame Shone glorious as the kindled flame:
Vaikhánasas⁴¹⁵ who love the wild, Pure hermits Bálakhilyas⁴¹⁶ stiled,

Good Samprakshálas,⁴¹⁷ saints who live On rays which moon and daystar give:

Those who with leaves their lives sustain And those who pound
with stones their grain: And they who lie in pools, and those
Whose corn, save teeth, no winnow knows:

Those who for beds the cold earth use, And those who every
couch refuse:

And those condemned to ceaseless pains, Whose single foot
their weight sustains:

And those who sleep neath open skies, Whose food the wave or
air supplies, And hermits pure who spend their nights

415 Hermits who live upon roots which they dig out of the earth:
literally

diggers, derived from the prefix vi and khan to dig.

416 Generally, divine personages of the height of a man's
thumb, produced from Brahmá's hair: here, according to the
commentator followed by Gorresio, hermits who when they
have obtained fresh food throw away what they had laid up
before.

417 Sprung from the washings of Vishr,uu's feet.

Canto VI. Ráma's Promise.829

On ground prepared for sacred rites; Those who on hills their
vigil hold, Or dripping clothes around them fold: The devotees
who live for prayer,

Or the five fires⁴¹⁸ unflinching bear.

On contemplation all intent,

With light that heavenly knowledge lent, They came to Ráma,
saint and sage,

In Sarabhanga's hermitage.

The hermit crowd around him pressed, And thus the virtuous
chief addressed: "The lordship of the earth is thine,

O Prince of old Ikshváku's line. Lord of the Gods is Indra, so
Thou art our lord and guide below. Thy name, the glory of thy
might, Throughout the triple world are bright: Thy filial love so
nobly shown,

Thy truth and virtue well are known. To thee, O lord, for help we
fly, And on thy love of right rely:

With kindly patience hear us speak, And grant the boon we
humbly seek. That lord of earth were most unjust, Foul traitor to
his solemn trust,

Who should a sixth of all⁴¹⁹ require,

Nor guard his people like a sire. But he who ever watchful
strives

To guard his subjects' wealth and lives, Dear as himself or,
dearer still,

His sons, with earnest heart and will,— That king, O Raghu's son,
secures

418 Four fires burning round them, and the sun above.

419 The tax allowed to the king by the Laws of Manu.

High fame that endless years endures, And he to Brahmá's
world shall rise, Made glorious in the eternal skies.

Whate'er, by duty won, the meed

Of saints whom roots and berries feed, One fourth thereof, for
tender care

Of subjects, is the monarch's share. These, mostly of the
Bráhmañ race,

Who make the wood their dwelling-place, Although a friend in
thee they view,

Fall friendless neath the giant crew. Come, Ráma, come, and
see hard by The holy hermits' corpses lie,

Where many a tangled pathway shows The murderous work of
cruel foes.

These wicked fiends the hermits kill— Who live on Chitrakúta's
hill,

And blood of slaughtered saints has dyed Mandákiní and
Pampá's side.

No longer can we bear to see The death of saint and devotee
Whom through the forest day by day These Rákshasas
unpitying slay.

To thee, O Prince, we flee, and crave Thy guardian help our lives
to save. From these fierce rovers of the night Defend each
stricken anchorite.

Throughout the world 'twere vain to seek An arm like thine to
aid the weak.

O Prince, we pray thee hear our call, And from these fiends
preserve us all.”

The son of Raghu heard the plaint Of penance-loving sage and
saint,

And the good prince his speech renewed To all the hermit
multitude:

“To me, O saints, ye need not sue: I wait the hests of all of you.

I by mine own occasion led

This mighty forest needs must tread, [236]

And while I keep my sire's decree

Your lives from threatening foes will free. I hither came of free
accord

To lend the aid by you implored, And richest meed my toil shall
pay, While here in forest shades I stay.

I long in battle strife to close.

And slay these fiends, the hermits' foes, That saint and sage
may learn aright My prowess and my brother's might.”

Thus to the saints his promise gave That prince who still to
virtue clave

With never-wandering thought: And then with Lakshmar, by his
side, With penance-wealthy men to guide,

Sutikshr,a's home he sought.

Canto VII. Sufíkshna.

So Raghu's son, his foemen's dread, With Sítá and his brother
sped,

Girt round by many a twice-born sage, To good Sufíkshr,a's
hermitage.420

Through woods for many a league he passed, O'er rushing rivers
full and fast,

Until a mountain fair and bright As lofty Meru rose in sight.

Within its belt of varied wood Ikshváku's sons and Sítá stood,
Where trees of every foliage bore Blossom and fruit in endless
store.

There coats of bark, like garlands strung, Before a lonely
cottage hung,

And there a hermit, dust-besmeared, A lotus on his breast,
appeared.

Then Ráma with obeisance due Addressed the sage, as near he
drew:

"My name is Ráma, lord; I seek

Thy presence, saint, with thee to speak. O sage, whose merits
ne'er decay, Some word unto thy servant say."

The sage his eyes on Ráma bent, Of virtue's friends preëminent;
Then words like these he spoke, and pressed The son of Raghu
to his breast:

“Welcome to thee, illustrious youth, Best champion of the rights
of truth! By thine approach this holy ground A worthy lord this
day has found.

I could not quit this mortal frame

420 Near the celebrated Rámagiri or Ráma's Hill, now Rám-tek,
near Nag- pore—the scene of the Yaksha's exile in the
Messenger Cloud.

Till thou shouldst come, O dear to fame: To heavenly spheres I
would not rise, Expecting thee with eager eyes.

I knew that thou, unkinged, hadst made Thy home in
Chitrakúta's shade.

E'en now, O Ráma, Indra, lord Supreme by all the Gods adored,
King of the Hundred Offerings,421 said,

When he my dwelling visited,

That the good works that I have done My choice of all the
worlds have won. Accept this meed of holy vows,

And with thy brother and thy spouse, Roam, through my favour,
in the sky Which saints celestial glorify.”

To that bright sage, of penance stern, The high-souled Ráma
spake in turn, As Vása⁴²² who rules the skies

To Brahmá's gracious speech replies: “I of myself those worlds
will win, O mighty hermit pure from sin:

But now, O saint, I pray thee tell Where I within this wood may
dwell: For I by Sarabhanga old,

The son of Gautama, was told That thou in every lore art wise,
And seest all with loving eyes.”

⁴²¹ A hundred Asvamedhas or sacrifices of a horse raise the
sacrificer to the dignity of Indra.

⁴²² Indra.

Thus to the saint, whose glories high Filled all the world, he
made reply: And thus again the holy man

His pleasant speech with joy began: “This calm retreat, O Prince,
is blest With many a charm: here take thy rest. Here roots and
kindly fruits abound, And hermits love the holy ground.

Fair silvan beasts and gentle deer In herds unnumbered wander
here:

And as they roam, secure from harm, Our eyes with grace and
beauty charm: Except the beasts in thickets bred,

This grove of ours has naught to dread.”

The hermit’s speech when Ráma heard,— The hero ne’er by
terror stirred,—

On his great bow his hand he laid, And thus in turn his answer
made: “O saint, my darts of keenest steel,

Armed with their murderous barbs, would deal Destruction mid
the silvan race

That flocks around thy dwelling-place. Most wretched then my
fate would be For such dishonour shown to thee: And only for
the briefest stay

Would I within this grove delay.”

He spoke and ceased. With pious care He turned him to his
evening prayer, Performed each customary rite,

And sought his lodging for the night,

[237] With Sítá and his brother laid

Beneath the grove's delightful shade,

First good Sutíkshra, as elsewhere, when he saw
The shades of night around them draw,

With hospitable care

The princely chieftains entertained
With store of choicest food
ordained

For holy hermit's fare.

Canto VIII. The Hermitage.

So Ráma and Sumitrá's son,

When every honour due was done,

Slept through the night. When morning broke, The heroes from
their rest awoke.

Betimes the son of Raghu rose, With gentle Sítá, from repose,
And sipped the cool delicious wave Sweet with the scent the
lotus gave, Then to the Gods and sacred flame The heroes and
the lady came,

And bent their heads in honour meet Within the hermit's pure
retreat.

When every stain was purged away, They saw the rising Lord of
Day: Then to Sufíkshr,a's side they went, And softly spoke, most
reverent:

“Well have we slept, O holy lord, Honoured of thee by all adored:
Now leave to journey forth we pray: These hermits urge us on
our way. We haste to visit, wandering by,

The ascetics' homes that round you lie, And roaming Dar,9ak's
mighty wood To view each saintly brotherhood,

For thy permission now we sue, With these high saints to duty
true,

By penance taught each sense to tame,— In lustre like the
smokeless flame.

Ere on our brows the sun can beat With fierce intolerable heat.

Like some unworthy lord who wins His power by tyranny and
sins,

O saint, we fain would part.” The three Bent humbly to the
devotee.

He raised the princes as they pressed His feet, and strained
them to his breast; And then the chief of devotees

Bespake them both in words like these: “Go with thy brother,
Ráma, go, Pursue thy path untouched by woe:

Go with thy faithful Sítá, she Still like a shadow follows thee.

Roam Dar,9ak wood observing well

The pleasant homes where hermits dwell,— Pure saints whose
ordered souls adhere

To penance rites and vows austere. There plenteous roots and
berries grow, And noble trees their blossoms show, And gentle
deer and birds of air

In peaceful troops are gathered there.

There see the full-blown lotus stud The bosom of the lucid flood,

And watch the joyous mallard shake The reeds that fringe the
pool and lake. See with delighted eye the rill

Leap sparkling from her parent hill, And hear the woods that
round thee lie Reëcho to the peacock’s cry.

And as I bid thy brother, so, Sumitrá's child, I bid thee go.

Go forth, these varied beauties see, And then once more return to me.”

Thus spake the sage Sutíkshra: both The chiefs assented,
nothing loth,

Round him with circling steps they paced, Then for the road
prepared with haste.

There Sítá stood, the dame long-eyed, Fair quivers round their
waists she tied, And gave each prince his trusty bow,

And sword which ne'er a spot might know. Each took his quiver
from her hand.

And clanging bow and gleaming brand: Then from the hermits'
home the two Went forth each woodland scene to view. Each
beauteous in the bloom of age, Dismissed by that illustrious
sage,

With bow and sword accoutred, hied Away, and Sítá by their
side.

Canto IX. Sítá's Speech.

Blest by the sage, when Raghu's son His onward journey had begun,
Thus in her soft tone Sítá, meek With modest fear, began
to speak: "One little slip the great may lead To shame that
follows lawless deed:

Such shame, my lord, as still must cling To faults from low desire
that spring.

Three several sins defile the soul, Born of desire that spurns
control: First, utterance of a lying word, Then, viler both, the
next, and third: The lawless love of other's wife,

The thirst of blood uncaused by strife. The first, O Raghu's son,
in thee

None yet has found, none e'er shall see. Love of another's dame
destroys

All merit, lost for guilty joys: Ráma, such crime in thee, I ween,

Has ne'er been found, shall ne'er be seen: The very thought, my
princely lord,

[238] Is in thy secret soul abhorred. For thou hast ever been the
same

Fond lover of thine own dear dame, Content with faithful heart
to do Thy father's will, most just and true: Justice, and faith, and
many a grace In thee have found a resting-place.

Such virtues, Prince, the good may gain Who empire o'er each
sense retain; And well canst thou, with loving view Regarding all,
each sense subdue.

But for the third, the lust that strives, Insatiate still, for others'
lives,—

Fond thirst of blood where hate is none,— This, O my lord, thou
wilt not shun.

Thou hast but now a promise made, The saints of Dar,9ak wood
to aid: And to protect their lives from ill The giants' blood in tight
wilt spill: And from thy promise lasting fame Will glorify the
forest's name.

Armed with thy bow and arrows thou Forth with thy brother
journeyest now, While as I think how true thou art Fears for thy
bliss assail my heart, And all my spirit at the sight

Is troubled with a strange affright. I like it not—it seems not
good— Thy going thus to Dar,9ak wood: And I, if thou wilt mark
me well, The reason of my fear will tell.

Thou with thy brother, bow in hand, Beneath those ancient trees
wilt stand, And thy keen arrows will not spare Wood-rovers who
will meet thee there. For as the fuel food supplies

That bids the dormant flame arise, Thus when the warrior
grasps his bow He feels his breast with ardour glow. Deep in a
holy grove, of yore,

Where bird and beast from strife forbore,

Suchi beneath the sheltering boughs, A truthful hermit kept his
vows.

Then Indra, Sachí's heavenly lord, Armed like a warrior with a
sword,

Came to his tranquil home to spoil The hermit of his holy toil,
And left the glorious weapon there Entrusted to the hermit's
care,

A pledge for him to keep, whose mind To fervent zeal was all
resigned.

He took the brand: with utmost heed He kept it for the warrior's
need:

To keep his trust he fondly strove

When roaming in the neighbouring grove: Whene'er for roots
and fruit he strayed Still by his side he bore the blade:

Still on his sacred charge intent, He took his treasure when he
went. As day by day that brand he wore, The hermit, rich in
merit's store

From penance rites each thought withdrew, And fierce and wild
his spirit grew.

With heedless soul he spurned the right, And found in cruel
deeds delight.

So, living with the sword, he fell, A ruined hermit, down to hell.

This tale applies to those who deal Too closely with the warrior's
steel: The steel to warriors is the same

As fuel to the smouldering flame. Sincere affection prompts my
speech: I honour where I fain would teach.

Mayst thou, thus armed with shaft and bow, So dire a longing
never know

As, when no hatred prompts the fray, These giants of the wood
to slay:

For he who kills without offence Shall win but little glory thence.

The bow the warrior joys to bend Is lent him for a nobler end,
That he may save and succour those

Who watch in woods when pressed by foes. What, matched with
woods, is bow or steel? What, warrior's arm with hermit's zeal?

We with such might have naught to do: The forest rule should
guide us too.

But when Ayodhyá hails thee lord, Be then thy warrior life
restored: So shall thy sire⁴²³ and mother joy

In bliss that naught may e'er destroy. And if, resigning empire,
thou Submit thee to the hermit's vow,

The noblest gain from virtue springs, And virtue joy unending
brings.

All earthly blessings virtue sends: On virtue all the world
depends.

Those who with vow and fasting tame To due restraint the mind
and frame, Win by their labour, nobly wise,

The highest virtue for their prize. Pure in the hermit's grove
remain, True to thy duty, free from stain.

But the three worlds are open thrown To thee, by whom all
things are known. Who gave me power that I should dare His
duty to my lord declare?

'Tis woman's fancy, light as air, That moves my foolish breast.

⁴²³ Gorresio observes that Dasaratha was dead and that Sítá had been informed of his death. In his translation he substitutes for the words of the text "thy relations and mine." This is quite superfluous. Dasaratha though in heaven still took a loving interest in the fortunes of his son.

Now with thy brother counsel take, Reflect, thy choice with
judgment make,

And do what seems the best.”

[239]

Canto X. Ráma's Reply.

The words that Sítá uttered, spurred By truest love, the hero
heard:

Then he who ne'er from virtue strayed To Janak's child his
answer made:

“In thy wise speech, sweet love, I find True impress of thy gentle
mind,

Well skilled the warrior's path to trace, Thou pride of Janak's
ancient race.

What fitting answer shall I frame

To thy good words, my honoured dame? Thou sayst the warrior
bears the bow That misery's tears may cease to flow; And those

pure saints who love the shade Of Dar,9ak wood are sore
dismayed.

They sought me of their own accord, With suppliant prayers my
aid implored: They, fed on roots and fruit, who spend Their lives
where bosky wilds extend, My timid love, enjoy no rest

By these malignant fiends distressed. These make the flesh of
man their meat: The helpless saints they kill and eat.

The hermits sought my side, the chief

Canto X. Ráma's Reply. 843

Of Bráhma race declared their grief. I heard, and from my lips
there fell

The words which thou rememberest well: I listened as the
hermits cried,

And to their prayers I thus replied:

“Your favour, gracious lords, I claim, O'erwhelmed with this
enormous shame That Bráhmans, great and pure as you, Who
should be sought, to me should sue.” And then before the saintly
crowd,

“What can I do?” I cried aloud.

Then from the trembling hermits broke One long sad cry, and
thus they spoke: "Fiends of the wood, who wear at will Each
varied shape, afflict us still.

To thee in our distress we fly: O help us, Ráma, or we die.

When sacred rites of fire are due, When changing moons are full
or new,

These fiends who bleeding flesh devour Assail us with resistless
power.

They with their cruel might torment The hermits on their vows
intent: We look around for help and see Our surest refuge,
Prince, in thee.

We, armed with powers of penance, might Destroy the rovers of
the night:

But loth were we to bring to naught The merit years of toil have
bought. Our penance rites are grown too hard, By many a check
and trouble barred, But though our saints for food are slain The
withering curse we yet restrain.

Thus many a weary day distressed By giants who this wood
infest, We see at length deliverance, thou

With Lakshmar, art our guardian now."

As thus the troubled hermits prayed, I promised, dame, my
ready aid,

And now—for truth I hold most dear— Still to my word must I
adhere.

My love, I might endure to be Deprived of Lakshmar,, life, and
thee, But ne'er deny my promise, ne'er

To Bráhmans break the oath I swear. I must, enforced by high
constraint, Protect them all. Each suffering saint In me,
unasked, his help had found; Still more in one by promise
bound.

I know thy words, mine own dear dame, From thy sweet heart's
affection came:

I thank thee for thy gentle speech, For those we love are those
we teach. 'Tis like thyself, O fair of face,

'Tis worthy of thy noble race: Dearer than life, thy feet are set
In righteous paths they ne'er forget.”

Thus to the Maithil monarch's child, His own dear wife, in
accents mild

The high-souled hero said: Then to the holy groves which lay
Beyond them fair to see, their way

The bow-armed chieftain led.

Canto XI. Agastya.

Ráma went foremost of the three, Next Sítá, followed, fair to see,

And Lakshmar, with his bow in hand Walked hindmost of the little band.

As onward through the wood they went, With great delight their eyes were bent On rocky heights beside the way

And lofty trees with blossoms gay; And streamlets running fair and fast The royal youths with Sítá passed. They watched the sáras and the drake On islets of the stream and lake,

And gazed delighted on the floods Bright with gay birds and lotus buds. They saw in startled herds the roes, The passion-frenzied buffaloes, Wild elephants who fiercely tore The tender trees, and many a boar.

A length of woodland way they passed, And when the sun was low at last

A lovely stream-fed lake they spied, Two leagues across from side to side. Tall elephants fresh beauty gave

To grassy bank and liliated wave, [240]

By many a swan and sáras stirred, Mallard, and gay-winged water-bird. From those sweet waters, loud and long, Though

none was seen to wake the song, Swelled high the singer's
music blent With each melodious instrument.

Ráma and car-borne Lakshmar, heard The charming strain, with
wonder stirred,

Turned on the margent of the lake

To Dharmabhrit⁴²⁴ the sage, and spake:

“Our longing souls, O hermit, burn This music of the lake to
learn:

We pray thee, noblest sage, explain The cause of the mysterious
strain.” He, as the son of Raghu prayed, With swift accord his
answer made, And thus the hermit, virtuous-souled, The story of
the fair lake told:

“Through every age 'tis known to fame, Panchápsaras⁴²⁵ its
glorious name,

By holy Már,⁹akarr,i wrought

With power his rites austere had bought. For he, great votarist,
intent

On strictest rule his stern life spent. Ten thousand years the
stream his bed, Ten thousand years on air he fed.

Then on the blessed Gods who dwell In heavenly homes great
terror fell: They gathered all, by Agni led,
And counselled thus disquieted: “The hermit by ascetic pain
The seat of one of us would gain.” Thus with their hearts by fear
oppressed In full assembly spoke the Blest,
And bade five loveliest nymphs, as fair As lightning in the
evening air,
Armed with their winning wiles, seduce From his stern vows the
great recluse.

424 One of the hermits who had followed Ráma.

425 The lake of the five nymphs.

Though lore of earth and heaven he knew, The hermit from his
task they drew,
And made the great ascetic slave
To conquering love, the Gods to save. Each of the heavenly five
became, Bound to the sage, his wedded dame; And he, for his
beloved’s sake, Formed a fair palace neath the lake.
Under the flood the ladies live,
To joy and ease their days they give, And lap in bliss the hermit
wooed From penance rites to youth renewed. So when the

sportive nymphs within Those secret bowers their play begin,
You hear the singers' dulcet tones
Blend sweetly with their tinkling zones."

"How wondrous are these words of thine!" Cried the famed
chiefs of Raghu's line,
As thus they heard the sage unfold The marvels of the tale he
told.

As Ráma spake, his eyes were bent Upon a hermit settlement
With light of heavenly lore endued, With sacred grass and
vesture strewed. His wife and brother by his side, Within the
holy bounds he hied,

And there, with honour entertained By all the saints, a while
remained. In time, by due succession led, Each votary's cot he
visited,

And then the lord of martial lore, Returned where he had lodged
before.

Here for the months, content, he stayed, There for a year his
visit paid:

Here for four months his home would fix, There, as it chanced,
for five or six.

Here for eight months and there for three The son of Raghu's
stay would be:

Here weeks, there fortnights, more or less, He spent in tranquil
happiness.

As there the hero dwelt at ease Among those holy devotees,
In days untroubled o'er his head Ten circling years of pleasure
fled. So Raghu's son in duty trained

A while in every cot remained,

Then with his dame retraced the road To good Sutíkshr,a's calm
abode.

Hailed by the saints with honours due Near to the hermit's home
he drew, And there the tamer of his foes

Dwelt for a time in sweet repose. One day within that holy wood
By saint Sutíkshr,a Ráma stood,

And thus the prince with reverence meek To that high sage
began to speak:

"In the wide woodlands that extend Around us, lord most
reverend,

As frequent voice of rumour tells, Agastya, saintliest hermit,
dwells. So vast the wood, I cannot trace

The path to reach his dwelling place, Nor, searching unassisted,
find

That hermit of the thoughtful mind. I with my wife and brother
fain

Would go, his favour to obtain, Would seek him in his lone
retreat

And the great saint with reverence greet. This one desire, O
Master, long Cherished within my heart, is strong, That I may
pay of free accord

My duty to that hermit lord.”

As thus the prince whose heart was bent On virtue told his firm
intent,

The good Sutikshra's joy rose high, And thus in turn he made
reply:

“The very thing, O Prince, which thou Hast sought, I wished to
urge but now,

Bid thee with wife and brother see [241]

Agastya, glorious devotee.

I count this thing an omen fair

That thou shouldst thus thy wish declare, And I, my Prince, will
gladly teach

The way Agastya's home to reach. Southward, dear son, direct
thy feet Eight leagues beyond this still retreat: Agastya's hermit
brother there

Dwells in a home most bright and fair. 'Tis on a knoll of woody
ground,

With many a branching Pippal⁴²⁶ crowned:

There sweet birds' voices ne'er are mute, And trees are gay with
flower and fruit. There many a lake gleams bright and cool, And
lilies deck each pleasant pool,

While swan, and crane, and mallard's wings Are lovely in the
water-springs.

There for one night, O Ráma, stay,

⁴²⁶ The holy fig-tree.

And with the dawn pursue thy way. Still farther, bending
southward, by The thicket's edge the course must lie,

And thou wilt see, two leagues from thence Agastya's lovely
residence,

Set in the woodland's fairest spot, All varied foliage decks the
cot: There Sítá, Lakshmar, thou, at ease

May spend sweet hours neath shady trees, For all of noblest
growth are found Luxuriant on that bosky ground.

If it be still thy firm intent To see that saint preëminent,

O mighty counsellor, this day Depart upon thine onward way.”

The hermit spake, and Ráma bent His head, with Lakshmar,,
reverent, And then with him and Janak’s child Set out to trace
the forest wild.

He saw dark woods that fringed the road, And distant hills like
clouds that showed, And, as the way he followed, met

With many a lake and rivulet.

So passing on with ease where led The path Sufíkshr,a bade him
tread, The hero with exulting breast

His brother in these words addressed:

“Here, surely, is the home, in sight, Of that illustrious anchorite:

Here great Agastya’s brother leads A life intent on holy deeds.

Warned of each guiding mark and sign,

I see them all herein combine: I see the branches bending low

Beneath the flowers and fruit they show. A soft air from the forest springs,

Fresh from the odorous grass, and brings A spicy fragrance as it flees

O'er the ripe fruit of Pippal trees. See, here and there around us high Piled up in heaps cleft billets lie, And holy grass is gathered, bright As strips of shining lazulite.

Full in the centre of the shade The hermits' holy fire is laid:

I see its smoke the pure heaven streak Dense as a big cloud's dusky peak.

The twice-born men their steps retrace From each sequestered bathing-place, And each his sacred gift has brought

Of blossoms which his hands have sought. Of all these signs, dear brother, each Agrees with good Sutíkshr,a's speech, And doubtless in this holy bound Agastya's brother will be found.

Agastya once, the worlds who viewed With love, a Deathlike fiend subdued, And armed with mighty power, obtained By holy works, this grove ordained

To be a refuge and defence From all oppressors' violence. In days of yore within this place

Two brothers fierce of demon race, Vátápi dire and Ilval, dwelt, And slaughter mid the Bráhmans dealt. A Bráhman's form, the fiend to cloak,

Fierce Ival wore, and Sanskrit spoke, And twice-born sages
would invite To solemnize some funeral rite.

His brother's flesh, concealed within

A ram's false shape and borrowed skin,— As men are wont at
funeral feasts,—

He dressed and fed those gathered priests. The holy men,
unweeting ill,

Took of the food and ate their fill. Then Ival with a mighty shout
Exclaimed “Vátápi, issue out.” Soon as his brother's voice he
heard,

The fiend with ram-like bleating stirred: Rending in pieces every
frame,

Forth from the dying priests he came. So they who changed
their forms at will Thousands of Bráhmans dared to kill,—

Fierce fiends who loved each cruel deed, And joyed on bleeding
flesh to feed.

Agastya, mighty hermit, pressed To funeral banquet like the
rest, Obedient to the Gods' appeal Ate up the monster at a
meal.

“Tis done, 'tis done,” fierce Ival cried, And water for his hands
supplied: Then lifting up his voice he spake:

“Forth, brother, from thy prison break.” Then him who called the
fiend, who long Had wrought the suffering Bráhmans wrong,
Thus thoughtful-souled Agastya, best

Of hermits, with a smile addressed: “How, Rákshas, is the fiend
empowered To issue forth whom I devoured?

Thy brother in a ram’s disguise

Is gone where Yáma’s kingdom lies.” [242]

When from the words Agastya said He knew his brother fiend
was dead, His soul on fire with vengeful rage, Rushed the night-
rover at the sage. One lightning glance of fury, hot

As fire, the glorious hermit shot,

As the fiend neared him in his stride, And straight, consumed to
dust, he died. In pity for the Bráhmans’ plight

Agastya wrought this deed of might:

This grove which lakes and fair trees grace In his great brother’s
dwelling place.”

As Ráma thus the tale rehearsed, And with Sumitrá’s son
conversed, The setting sun his last rays shed, And evening o’er
the land was spread. A while the princely brothers stayed And
even rites in order paid,

Then to the holy grove they drew And hailed the saint with
honour due. With courtesy was Ráma met

By that illustrious anchoret,

And for one night he rested there Regaled with fruit and hermit
fare.

But when the night had reached its close, And the sun's glorious
circle rose,

The son of Raghu left his bed And to the hermit's brother said:

“Well rested in thy hermit cell, I stand, O saint, to bid farewell;

For with thy leave I journey hence Thy brother saint to
reverence.”

“Go, Ráma go,” the sage replied: Then from the cot the chieftain
hied.

And while the pleasant grove he viewed, The path the hermit
showed, pursued.

Of every leaf, of changing hue.

Plants, trees by hundreds round him grew, With joyous eyes he
looked on all,

Then Jak,⁴²⁷ the wild rice, and Sál;⁴²⁸

He saw the red Hibiscus glow,

He saw the flower-tipped creeper throw The glory of her clusters
o'er

Tall trees that loads of blossom bore. Some, elephants had
prostrate laid,

In some the monkeys leapt and played, And through the whole
wide forest rang The charm of gay birds as they sang.

Then Ráma of the lotus eye

To Lakshmar, turned who followed nigh, And thus the hero
youth impressed

With Fortune's favouring signs, addressed:

“How soft the leaves of every tree, How tame each bird and
beast we see! Soon the fair home shall we behold Of that great
hermit tranquil-souled. The deed the good Agastya wrought

High fame throughout the world has bought: I see, I see his
calm retreat

That balms the pain of weary feet.

Where white clouds rise from flames beneath, Where bark-coats
lie with many a wreath, Where silvan things, made gentle,
throng,

427 The bread-fruit tree, *Artocarpus integrifolia*.

428 A fine timber tree, *Shorea robusta*.

And every bird is loud in song.

With ruth for suffering creatures filled, A deathlike fiend with
might he killed, And gave this southern realm to be

A refuge, from oppression free.

There stands his home, whose dreaded might Has put the giant
crew to flight,

Who view with envious eyes afar The peaceful shades they
cannot mar. Since that most holy saint has made His dwelling in
this lovely shade, Checked by his might the giant brood

Have dwelt in peace with souls subdued. And all this southern
realm, within

Whose bounds no fiend may entrance win, Now bears a name
which naught may dim, Made glorious through the worlds by
him. When Vindhya, best of hills, would stay The journey of the
Lord of Day,

Obedient to the saint's behest

He bowed for aye his humbled crest. That hoary hermit, world-
renowned For holy deeds, within this ground Has set his pure
and blessed home, Where gentle silvan creatures roam.

Agastya, whom the worlds revere, Pure saint to whom the good
are dear, To us his guests all grace will show, Enriched with
blessings ere we go.

I to this aim each thought will turn, The favour of the saint to
earn, That here in comfort may be spent The last years of our
banishment.

Here sanctities and high saints stand,

Gods, minstrels of the heavenly band; Upon Agastya's will they
wait,

And serve him, pure and temperate. The liar's tongue, the
tyrant's mind Within these bounds no home may find: No cheat,
no sinner here can be:

So holy and so good is he.

Here birds and lords of serpent race, Spirits and Gods who
haunt the place, Content with scanty fare remain,

As merit's meed they strive to gain. Made perfect here, the
saints supreme,

On cars that mock the Day-God's gleam,— Their mortal bodies
cast aside,—

Sought heaven transformed and glorified, Here Gods to living
things, who win Their favour, pure from cruel sin,

[243] Give royal rule and many a good, Immortal life and
spirithood.

Now, Lakshmar,, we are near the place: Do thou precede a little space,

And tell the mighty saint that I With Sítá at my side am nigh.”

Canto XII. The Heavenly Bow.

He spoke: the younger prince obeyed: Within the bounds his way he made, And thus addressed, whom first he met, A pupil of the anchoret:

“Brave Ráma, eldest born, who springs, From Dasaratha, hither brings

His wife the lady Sítá: he Would fain the holy hermit see.

Lakshmar, am I—if happy fame

E'er to thine ears has brought the name— His younger brother, prompt to do

His will, devoted, fond, and true. We, through our royal sire's decree,

To the dread woods were forced to flee. Tell the great Master, I
entreat,

Our earnest wish our lord to greet.”

He spoke: the hermit rich in store Of fervid zeal and sacred lore,
Sought the pure shrine which held the fire, To bear his message
to the sire.

Soon as he reached the saint most bright In sanctity's
surpassing might,

He cried, uplifting reverent hands: “Lord Ráma near thy cottage
stands.” Then spoke Agastya's pupil dear

The message for his lord to hear:

“Ráma and Lakshmar,, chiefs who spring From Dasaratha,
glorious king,

Thy hermitage e'en now have sought, And lady Sítá with them
brought.

The tamers of the foe are here To see thee, Master, and revere.

'Tis thine thy further will to say:

Deign to command, and we obey.”

When from his pupil's lips he knew The presence of the princely
two, And Sítá born to fortune high.

The glorious hermit made reply: "Great joy at last is mine this
day That Ráma hither finds his way, For long my soul has
yearned to see The prince who comes to visit me. Go forth, go
forth, and hither bring The royal three with welcoming: Lead
Ráma in and place him near: Why stands he not already here?"

Thus ordered by the hermit, who, Lord of his thought, all duty
knew, His reverent hands together laid, The pupil answered and
obeyed.

Forth from the place with speed he ran, To Lakshmar, came and
thus began: "Where is he? let not Ráma wait,

But speed, the sage to venerate."

Then with the pupil Lakshmar, went Across the hermit
settlement,

And showed him Ráma where he stood With Janak's daughter
in the wood.

The pupil then his message spake Which the kind hermit bade
him take; Then led the honoured Ráma thence And brought him
in with reverence. As nigh the royal Ráma came

With Lakshmar, and the Maithil dame, He viewed the herds of
gentle deer Roaming the garden free from fear.

As through the sacred grove he trod He viewed the seat of
many a God, Brahmá and Agni,⁴²⁹ Sun and Moon,
And His who sends each golden boon;⁴³⁰ Here Vishr,u's stood,
there Bhaga's⁴³¹ shrine, And there Mahendra's, Lord divine;
Here His who formed this earthly frame,⁴³² His there from
whom all beings came.⁴³³ Váyu's,⁴³⁴ and His who loves to hold
The great noose, Varur,⁴³⁵ mighty-souled: Here was the
Vasus'⁴³⁶ shrine to see, Here that of sacred Gáyatrí,⁴³⁷
The king of serpents⁴³⁸ here had place, And he who rules the
feathered race.⁴³⁹ Here Kártikeya,⁴⁴⁰ warrior lord,
And there was Justice King adored. Then with disciples girt
about
The mighty saint himself came out: Through fierce devotion
bright as flame Before the rest the Master came:
And then to Lakshmar,, fortune blest, Ráma these hasty words
addressed: "Behold, Agastya's self draws near,

429 The God of fire.

430 Kuvera, the God of riches.

431 The Sun.

432 Brahmá, the creator.

433 Siva.

434 The Wind-God.

435 The God of the sea.

436 A class of demi-gods, eight in number. 437 The holiest text of the Vedas, deified. 438 Vásuki.

439 Garu9.

440 The War-God.

The mighty saint, whom all revere: With spirit raised I meet my
lord

With richest wealth of penance stored.”

The strong-armed hero spake, and ran Forward to meet the
sunbright man.

Before him, as he came, he bent And clasped his feet most
reverent, Then rearing up his stately height Stood suppliant by
the anchorite,

While Lakshmar,'s strength and Sítá's grace

[244] Stood by the pride of Raghu's race. The sage his
arms round Ráma threw And welcomed him with honours due,
Asked, was all well, with question sweet, And bade the hero to a
seat.

With holy oil he fed the flame,

He brought the gifts which strangers claim, And kindly waiting
on the three

With honours due to high degree, He gave with hospitable care
A simple hermit's woodland fare. Then sat the reverend father,
first Of hermits, deep in duty versed. And thus to suppliant
Ráma, bred In all the lore of virtue, said:

“Did the false hermit, Prince, neglect To hail his guest with due
respect,

He must,—the doom the perjured meet,— His proper flesh
hereafter eat.

A car-borne king, a lord who sways The earth, and virtue's law
obeys, Worthy of highest honour, thou

Hast sought, dear guest, my cottage now.”

He spoke: with fruit and hermit fare, With every bloom the
branches bare, Agastya graced his honoured guest, And thus
with gentle words addressed: “Accept this mighty bow, divine,

Whereon red gold and diamonds shine; 'Twas by the Heavenly
Artist planned For Vishr,u's own almighty hand;

This God-sent shaft of sunbright hue, Whose deadly flight is
ever true,

By Lord Mahendra given of yore: This quiver with its endless
store. Keen arrows hurtling to their aim

Like kindled fires that flash and flame: Accept, in golden sheath
encased,

This sword with hilt of rich gold graced. Armed with this best of
bows

Lord Vishr,u slew his demon foes, And mid the dwellers in the
skies Won brilliant glory for his prize.

The bow, the quivers, shaft, and sword Received from me, O
glorious lord: These conquest to thine arm shall bring, As
thunder to the thunder's King.”

The splendid hermit bade him take The noble weapons as he
spake,

And as the prince accepted each

In words like these renewed his speech:

Canto XIII. Agastya's Counsel.

“O Ráma, great delight I feel,

Pleased, Lakshmar,, with thy faithful zeal, That you within these
shades I see

With Sítá come to honour me.

But wandering through the rough rude wild Has wearied
Janak's gentle child:

With labours of the way oppressed The Maithil lady longs for
rest.

Young, delicate, and soft, and fair, Such toils as these untrained
to bear, Her wifely love the dame has led The forest's troubled
ways to tread. Here, Ráma, see that naught annoy Her easy
hours of tranquil joy:

A glorious task has she assayed,

To follow thee through woodland shade. Since first from
Nature's hand she came, A woman's mood is still the same,
When Fortune smiles, her love to show, And leave her lord in
want and woe.

No pity then her heart can feel,

She arms her soul with warrior's steel, Swift as the storm or
Feathered King, Uncertain as the lightning's wing.

Not so thy spouse: her purer mind Shrinks from the faults of
womankind; Like chaste Arundhatí⁴⁴¹ above,

A paragon of faithful love.

Let these blest shades, dear Ráma, be A home for Lakshmar,,
her, and thee.”

441 One of the Pleiades generally regarded as the model of
wifely excellence.

Canto XIII. Agastya's Counsel. 863

With raised hands reverently meek He heard the holy hermit
speak,

And humbly thus addressed the sire Whose glory shone like
kindled fire:

“How blest am I, what thanks I owe That our great Master
deigns to show His favour, that his heart can be Content with
Lakshmar,, Sítá, me.

Show me, I pray, some spot of ground Where thick trees wave
and springs abound, That I may raise my hermit cell

And there in tranquil pleasure dwell.”

Then thus replied Agastya, best Of hermits, to the chief's
request:

When for a little he had bent

His thoughts, upon that prayer intent:

“Beloved son, four leagues away Is Panchavatí bright and gay:
Thronged with its deer, most fair it looks With berries, fruit, and
water-brooks.

There build thee with thy brother's aid A cottage in the quiet
shade,

And faithful to thy sire's behest, Obedient to the sentence, rest.
For well, O sinless chieftain, well I know thy tale, how all befell:

Stern penance and the love I bore Thy royal sire supply the lore.

To me long rites and fervid zeal The wish that stirs thy heart
reveal, And hence my guest I bade thee be,

That this pure grove might shelter thee. [245]

So now, thereafter, thus I speak:

The shades of Panchavatí seek; That tranquil spot is bright and
fair, And Sítá will be happy there.

Not far remote from here it lies, A grove to charm thy loving eyes,
Godávarí's pure stream is nigh:

There Sítá's days will sweetly fly. Pure, lovely, rich in many a charm,
O hero of the mighty arm,

'Tis gay with every plant and fruit, And throngs of gay buds never mute.
Thou, true to virtue's path, hast might To screen each trusting anchorite,
And wilt from thy new home defend The hermits who on thee depend.

Now yonder, Prince, direct thine eyes Where dense Madhúka⁴⁴² woods arise:

Pierce their dark shade, and issuing forth Turn to a fig-tree on the north:

Then onward up a sloping mead Flanked by a hill the way will lead:

There Panchavatí, ever gay

With ceaseless bloom, thy steps will stay."

The hermit ceased: the princely two With seemly honours bade adieu:

With reverential awe each youth

Bowed to the saint whose word was truth, And then, dismissed with Sítá, they

To Panchavatí took their way.

Thus when each royal prince had grasped

442 The Madhúka, or, as it is now called, Mahuwá, is the *Bassia latifolia*, a tree from whose blossoms a spirit is extracted.

His warrior's mighty bow, and clasped His quiver to his side,
With watchful eyes along the road The glorious saint Agastya
showed, Dauntless in fight the brothers strode,
And Sítá with them hied.

Canto XIV. Jatáyus.

Then as the son of Raghu made His way to Panchavatí's shade,
A mighty vulture he beheld

Of size and strength unparalleled. The princes, when the bird
they saw, Approached with reverence and awe, And as his giant
form they eyed, "Tell who thou art," in wonder cried.

The bird, as though their hearts to gain, Addressed them thus in
gentlest strain; "In me, dear sons, the friend behold Your royal
father loved of old."

He spoke: nor long did Ráma wait His sire's dear friend to
venerate:

He bade the bird declare his name And the high race of which
he came. When Raghu's son had spoken, he Declared his name
and pedigree,

His words prolonging to disclose How all the things that be
arose:

“List while I tell, O Raghu's son, The first-born Fathers, one by
one, Great Lords of Life, whence all in earth And all in heaven
derive their birth.

First Kardam heads the glorious race Where Vikrit holds the
second place, With Seshá, Sansray next in line, And Bahuputra's
might divine.

Then Sthár,u and Maríchi came, Atri, and Kratu's forceful frame.
Pulastya followed, next to him Angiras' name shall ne'er be dim.
Prachetas, Pulah next, and then Daksha, Vivasvat praised of
men: Arishtanemi next, and last Kasyap in glory unsurpassed.

From Daksha,—fame the tale has told—: Three-score bright
daughters sprang of old. Of these fair-waisted nymphs the
great Lord Kasyap sought and wedded eight, Aditi, Diti, Kálaká,

Támrá, Danú, and Analá, And Krodhavasá swift to ire,
And Manu⁴⁴³ glorious as her sire.

443 “I should have doubted whether Manu could have been the right reading here, but that it occurs again in verse 29, where it is in like manner followed in verse 31 by Analá, so that it would certainly seem that the name Manu is intended to stand for a female, the daughter of Daksha. The Gau^{9a} recension, followed by Signor Gorresio (III 20, 12), adopts an entirely different reading at the end of the line, viz. Balám Atibalám api, ‘Balá and Atibilá,’ instead of Manu and Analá. I see that Professor Roth s.v. adduces the authority of the Amara Kosha and of the Commentator on Pár,ini for stating that the word sometimes means ‘the wife of Manu.’ In the following text of the Mahábhárata I. 2553. also, Manu appears to be the name of a female: ‘Anaradyam, Manum, Vañsám, Asurám, Márgar:apriyám, Anúpám, Subhagám, Bhásim iti, Prádhá vyajayata.

Then when the mighty Kasyap cried Delighted to each tender
bride:

“Sons shalt thou bear, to rule the three

Great worlds, in might resembling me.” [246]

Aditi, Diti, and Danú

Obedied his will as consorts true, And Kálaká; but all the rest
Refused to hear their lord's behest. First Aditi conceived, and
she, Mother of thirty Gods and three, The Vasus and Ádityas
bare, Rudras, and Asvins, heavenly pair. Of Diti sprang the
Daityas: fame Delights to laud their ancient name. In days of
yore their empire dread

O'er earth and woods and ocean spread. Danú was mother of a
child,

O hero, Asvagríva styled,

And Narak next and Kálak came Of Kálaká, celestial dame.

Of Támrá, too, five daughters bright In deathless glory sprang
to light.

Ennobling fame still keeps alive The titles of the lovely five:

Immortal honour still she claims For Kraunchí, Bhasí, Syení's
names. And wills not that the world forget Sukí or Dhritarásht्री
yet.

Then Kraunchí bare the crane and owl, And Bhásí tribes of water
fowl:

Vultures and hawks that race through air With storm-fleet
pinions Syení bare.

Prádhá (daughter of Daksha) bore Anavadyá, Manu, Vansá,
Márgar,apriyá, Anúpá, Subhagá. and Bhásí.’ ” Muir’s Sanskrit
Text, Vol. I. p. 116.

All swans and geese on mere and brook Their birth from
Dhritarásht्री took, And all the river-haunting brood
Of ducks, a countless multitude. From Sukí Nalá sprang, who
bare Dame Vinatá surpassing fair.
From fiery Krodhavasá, ten
Bright daughters sprang, O King of men: Mrigí and Mrigamandá
named,
Hari and Bhadramadá famed, Sárdúlí, Svetá fair to see,
Mátangí bright, and Surabhí,
Surasá marked with each fair sign, And Kadrumá, all maids
divine.
Mrigí, O Prince without a peer, Was mother of the herds of deer,
The bear, the yak, the mountain roe Their birth to Mrigamandá
owe; And Bhadramadá joyed to be Mother of fair Irávatí,
Who bare Airávat,444 huge of mould,
Mid warders of the earth enrolled, From Harí lordly lions trace,
With monkeys of the wild, their race. From the great dame
Sárdúlí styled Sprung pards, Lángúrs,445 and tigers wild.

Mátangí, Prince, gave birth to all Mátangas, elephants strong
and tall,

And Svetá bore the beasts who stand

One at each wind, earth's warder band.⁴⁴⁶

444 The elephant of Indra.

445 Golángúlas, described as a kind of monkey, of a black
colour, and having a tail like a cow.

446 Eight elephants attached to the four quarters and
intermediate points of the

Next Surabhí the Goddess bore

Two heavenly maids, O Prince, of yore, Gandharví—dear to
fame is she—

And her sweet sister Rohir,í.

With kine this daughter filled each mead, And bright Gandharví
bore the steed.⁴⁴⁷ Surasá bore the serpents:⁴⁴⁸ all

The snakes Kadrú their mother call.

Then Manu, high-souled Kasyap's⁴⁴⁹ wife, To all the race of
men gave life,

The Bráhmans first, the Kshatriya caste, Then Vaisyas, and the Súdras last.

Sprang from her mouth the Bráhman race; Her chest the Kshatriyas' natal place:

The Vaisyas from her thighs, 'tis said, The Súdras from her feet were bred. From Analá all trees that hang

Their fair fruit-laden branches sprang. The child of beauteous Sukí bore Vinatá, as I taught before:

And Surasá and Kadrú were Born of one dame, a noble pair.

Kadrú gave birth to countless snakes That roam the earth in woods and brakes. Arur, and Garu9 swift of flight

compass, to support and guard the earth.

447 Some scholars identify the centaurs with the Gandharvas.

448 The hooded serpents, says the commentator Tírtha, were the offspring of Surasá: all others of Kadrú.

449 The text reads Kasyapa, "a descendant of Kasyapa," who according to Rám.

II. 10, 6, ought to be Vivasvat. But as it is stated in the preceding part of this passage III. 14, 11 f. that Manu was one of Kasyapa's eight wives, we must here read Kasyap. The Ganda recension reads (III, 20, 30) Manur manushyáms cha

tatha janayámása Rághana, instead of the corresponding line in the Bombay edition. Muir's Sanskrit Text, Vol I, p. 117.

By Vinatá were given to light, And sons of Arur, red as morn
Sampati first, then I was born, Me then, O tamer of the foe,
Jatáyus, son of Syení, know. Thy ready helper will I be,
And guard thy house, if thou agree: When thou and Lakshmar,
urge the chase By Sítá's side shall be my place.”

With courteous thanks for promised aid, The prince, to rapture
stirred,

Bent low, and due obeisance paid,

[247] Embraced the royal bird. He often in the days gone
by

Had heard his father tell

How, linked with him in friendship's tie, He loved Jatáyus well.

He hastened to his trusted friend His darling to confide,

And through the wood his steps to bend By strong Jatáyus'
side.

On to the grove, with Lakshmar, near, The prince his way
pursued

To free those pleasant shades from fear And slay the giant
brood.

Canto XV. Panchavatí.

Arrived at Panchavatí's shade

Where silvan life and serpents strayed, Ráma in words like these
addressed Lakshmar, of vigour unrepressed:

“Brother, our home is here: behold The grove of which the
hermit told: The bowers of Panchavatí see

Made fair by every blooming tree. Now, brother, bend thine
eyes around; With skilful glance survey the ground: Here be
some spot selected, best Approved for gentle hermits' rest,
Where thou, the Maithil dame, and I May dwell while seasons
sweetly fly. Some pleasant spot be chosen where Pure waters
gleam and trees are fair,

Some nook where flowers and wood are found And sacred
grass and springs abound.”

Then Lakshmar,, Sítá standing by, Raised reverent hands, and
made reply:

“A hundred years shall flee, and still Will I obey my brother’s will:

Select thyself a pleasant spot;

Be mine the care to rear the cot.”

The glorious chieftain, pleased to hear That loving speech that
soothed his ear, Selected with observant care

A spot with every charm most fair. He stood within that calm
retreat,

A shade for hermits’ home most meet, And thus Sumitrá’s son
addressed, While his dear hand in his he pressed:

“See, see this smooth and lovely glade Which flowery trees
encircling shade: Do thou, beloved Lakshmar, rear

A pleasant cot to lodge us here. I see beyond that feathery
brake The gleaming of a liliated lake,

Where flowers in sunlike glory throw Fresh odours from the
wave below. Agastya’s words now find we true,

He told the charms which here we view: Here are the trees that
blossom o’er Godávarí’s most lovely shore.

Whose pleasant flood from side to side With swans and geese is beautified, And fair banks crowded with the deer That steal from every covert near.

The peacock's cry is loud and shrill From many a tall and lovely hill, Green-belted by the trees that wave Full blossoms o'er the rock and cave. Like elephants whose huge fronts glow

With painted streaks, the mountains show Long lines of gold and silver sheen

With copper's darker hues between. With every tree each hill is graced, Where creepers blossom interlaced.

Look where the Sál's long branches sway, And palms their fanlike leaves display; The date-tree and the Jak are near,

And their long stems Tamálas rear. See the tall Mango lift his head, Asokas all their glory spread,

The Ketak her sweet buds unfold,

And Champacs hang their cups of gold.⁴⁵⁰ The spot is pure and pleasant: here

Are multitudes of birds and deer.

O Lakshmar,, with our father's friend What happy hours we here shall spend!"

He spoke: the conquering Lakshmar, heard, Obedient to his brother's word.

Raised by his toil a cottage stood To shelter Ráma in the wood,

Of ample size, with leaves o'erlaid,

Of hardened earth the walls were made. The strong bamboos his hands had felled For pillars fair the roof upheld,

And rafter, beam, and lath supplied Well interwrought from side to side. Then Samí⁴⁵¹ boughs he deftly spread Enlaced with knotted cord o'erhead, Well thatched above from ridge to eaves With holy grass, and reed, and leaves.

The mighty chief with careful toil

Had cleared the ground and smoothed the soil [248]

Where now, his loving labour done, Rose a fair home for Raghu's son.

Then when his work was duly wrought, Godávarís sweet stream he sought, Bathed, plucked the lilies, and a store

450 The original verses merely name the trees. I have been obliged to amplify slightly and to omit some *quas versus dicere non est*; e.g. the *tinisa* (*Dalbergia ougeiniensis*), *punnága* (*Rottleria tinctoria*), *tilaka* (not named), *syandana* (*Dalbergia ougeiniensis* again), *vandana* (unknown), *nípa* (*Nauclea Kadamba*), *lakucha* (*Artocarpus lacucha*), *dhava* (*Grislea tomentosa*), *Asvakarna* (another name for the *Sál*), *Samí*

(Acacia Suma), khadira (Mimosa catechu), kinsuka (Butea frondosa), pátala (Bignonia suaveolens).

451 Acacia Suma.

Of fruit and berries homeward bore. Then sacrifice he duly paid,
And wooed the Gods their hopes to aid, And then to Ráma
proudly showed

The cot prepared for his abode. Then Raghu's son with Sítá
gazed Upon the home his hands had raised,

And transport thrilled his bosom through His leafy hermitage to
view.

The glorious son of Raghu round

His brother's neck his arms enwound, And thus began his sweet
address

Of deep-felt joy and gentleness: "Well pleased am I, dear lord,
to see This noble work performed by thee. For this,—sole grace I
can bestow,— About thy neck mine arms I throw. So wise art
thou, thy breast is filled

With grateful thoughts, in duty skilled, Our mighty father, free
from stain,

In thee, his offspring, lives again."

Thus spoke the prince, who lent a grace To fortune, pride of
Raghu's race;

Then in that spot whose pleasant shade Gave store of fruit,
content he stayed. With Lakshmar, and his Maithil spouse

He spent his day's neath sheltering boughs, As happy as a God
on high

Lives in his mansion in the sky.

Canto XVI. Winter.

While there the high-souled hero spent His tranquil hours in
sweet content, The glowing autumn passed, and then Came
winter so beloved of men.

One morn, to bathe, at break of day To the fair stream he took
his way.

Behind him, with the Maithil dame Bearing a pitcher Lakshmar,
came, And as he went the mighty man Thus to his brother chief
began:

“The time is come, to thee more dear Than all the months that mark the year: The gracious seasons’ joy and pride, By which the rest are glorified.

A robe of hoary rime is spread O’er earth, with corn engarlanded.

The streams we loved no longer please, But near the fire we take our ease.

Now pious men to God and shade

Offer young corn’s fresh sprouted blade, And purge away their sins with rice Bestowed in humble sacrifice.

Rich stores of milk delight the swain,

And hearts are cheered that longed for gain, Proud kings whose breasts for conquests glow Lead bannered troops to smite the foe.

Dark is the north: the Lord of Day To Yáma’s south⁴⁵² has turned away:

⁴⁵² The south is supposed to be the residence of the departed.

And she—sad widow—shines no more, Reft of the bridal mark⁴⁵³ she wore.

Himálaya’s hill, ordained of old

The treasure-house of frost and cold, Scarce conscious of the
feebler glow, Is truly now the Lord of Snow.

Warmed by the noontide's genial rays Delightful are the glorious
days:

But how we shudder at the chill Of evening shadows and the rill!

How weak the sun, how cold the breeze! How white the rime on
grass and trees! The leaves are sere, the woods have lost Their
blossoms killed by nipping frost. Neath open skies we sleep no
more: December's nights with rime are hoar: Their triple
watch⁴⁵⁴ in length extends With hours the shortened daylight
lends. No more the moon's sun-borrowed rays Are bright,
involved in misty haze,

As when upon the mirror's sheen The breath's obscuring cloud is
seen. E'en at the full the faint beams fail

To struggle through the darksome veil: Changed like her hue,
they want the grace That parts not yet from Sítá's face.

Cold is the western wind, but how Its piercing chill is heightened
now, Blowing at early morning twice

As furious with its breath of ice! See how the dewy tears they
weep

The barley, wheat, and woodland steep,

453 The sun.

454 The night is divided into three watches of four hours each.

Where, as the sun goes up the sky, The curlew and the sáras cry.

See where the rice plants scarce uphold Their full ears tinged
with paly gold, Bending their ripe heads slowly down Fair as the
date tree's flowery crown.

Though now the sun has mounted high Seeking the forehead of
the sky,

Such mist obscures his struggling beams, No bigger than the
moon he seems.

Though weak at first, his rays at length Grow pleasant in their
noonday strength, And where a while they chance to fall

Fling a faint splendour over all. [249]

See, o'er the woods where grass is wet With hoary drops that
cling there yet, With soft light clothing earth and bough There
steals a tender glory now.

Yon elephant who longs to drink, Still standing on the river's
brink,

Plucks back his trunk in shivering haste From the cold wave he
fain would taste. The very fowl that haunt the mere Stand
doubtful on the bank, and fear

To dip them in the wintry wave

As cowards dread to meet the brave. The frost of night, the rime
of dawn

Bind flowerless trees and glades of lawn: Benumbed in
apathetic chill

Of icy chains they slumber still. You hear the hidden sáras cry

From floods that wrapped in vapour lie, And frosty-shining
sands reveal

Where the unnoticed rivers steal.

The hoary rime of dewy night,

And suns that glow with tempered light Lend fresh cool flavours
to the rill

That sparkles from the topmost hill. The cold has killed the lily's
pride: Leaf, filament, and flower have died:

With chilling breath rude winds have blown, The withered stalk is
left alone.

At this gay time, O noblest chief, The faithful Bharat, worn by
grief, Lives in the royal town where he Spends weary hours for
love of thee. From titles, honour, kingly sway, From every joy he
turns away:

Couched on cold earth, his days are passed With scanty fare
and hermit's fast.

This moment from his humble bed He lifts, perhaps, his weary
head, And girt by many a follower goes To bathe where silver
Sarjú flows. How, when the frosty morn is dim, Shall Sarjú be a
bath for him

Nursed with all love and tender care, So delicate and young and
fair.

How bright his hue! his brilliant eye With the broad lotus leaf
may vie. By fortune stamped for happy fate, His graceful form
is tall and straight. In duty skilled, his words are truth: He
proudly rules each lust of youth.

Though his strong arm smites down the foe, In gentle speech
his accents flow.

Yet every joy has he resigned

And cleaves to thee with heart and mind.

Thus by the deeds that he has done A name in heaven has
Bharat won, For in his life he follows yet

Thy steps, O banished anchoret. Thus faithful Bharat, nobly
wise, The proverb of the world belies: “No men, by mothers’
guidance led, The footsteps of their fathers tread.” How could
Kaikeyí, blest to be Spouse of the king our sire, and see A son
like virtuous Bharat, blot

Her glory with so foul a plot!”

Thus in fraternal love he spoke, And from his lips reproaches
broke: But Ráma grieved to hear him chide The absent mother,
and replied:

“Cease, O beloved, cease to blame Our royal father’s second
dame.

Still speak of Bharat first in place Of old Ikshváku’s princely
race. My heart, so firmly bent but now

To dwell in woods and keep my vow, Half melting as I hear thee
speak

Of Bharat’s love, grows soft and weak, With tender joy I bring to
mind

His speeches ever sweet and kind. That dear as Amrit took the
sense With most enchanting influence. Ah, when shall I, no more
to part, Meet Bharat of the mighty heart? When, O my brother,
when shall we The good and brave Satrughna see?”

Thus as he poured his fond lament The son of Raghu onward
went: They reached the river, and the three Bathed them in fair
Godávarí.

Libations of the stream they paid To every deity and shade,
With hymns of praise, the Sun on high And sinless Gods to
glorify.
Fresh from the purifying tide Resplendent Ráma came,
With Lakshmar, ever by his side, And the sweet Maithil dame.
So Rudra shines by worlds adored, In glory undefiled,
When Nandi⁴⁵⁵ stands beside his lord,
And King Himálaya's child.⁴⁵⁶

Canto XVII. Súrpanakhá.

The bathing and the prayer were o'er; He turned him from the
grassy shore, And with his brother and his spouse
Sought his fair home beneath the boughs. Sítá and Lakshmar,
by his side,
On to his cot the hero hied,
And after rites at morning due

[250] Within the leafy shade withdrew.

455 The chief chamberlain and attendant of Siva or Rudra.

456 Umá or Párvati, the consort of Siva.

Then, honoured by the devotees, As royal Ráma sat at ease,
With Sítá near him, o'er his head A canopy of green boughs
spread,

He shone as shines the Lord of Night By Chitrá's⁴⁵⁷ side, his
dear delight. With Lakshmar, there he sat and told Sweet stories
of the days of old,

And as the pleasant time he spent With heart upon each tale
intent, A giantess, by fancy led,

Came wandering to his leafy shed. Fierce Súrpar, akhá,—her of
yore

The Ten-necked tyrant's mother bore,— Saw Ráma with his
noble mien

Bright as the Gods in heaven are seen; Him from whose brow a
glory gleamed, Like lotus leaves his full eyes beamed: Long-
armed, of elephantine gait,

With hair close coiled in hermit plait: In youthful vigour, nobly
framed,

By glorious marks a king proclaimed: Like some bright lotus
lustrous-hued, With young Kandarpa's⁴⁵⁸ grace endued: As
there like Indra's self he shone,

She loved the youth she gazed upon. She grim of eye and foul
of face

Loved his sweet glance and forehead's grace: She of unlovely
figure, him

Of stately form and shapely limb:

She whose dim locks disordered hung,

Him whose bright hair on high brows clung:

⁴⁵⁷ A star, one of the favourites of the Moon.

⁴⁵⁸ The God of love.

She whose fierce accents counselled fear, Him whose soft tones
were sweet to hear: She whose dire form with age was dried,
Him radiant in his youthful pride:

She whose false lips maintained the wrong, Him in the words of
virtue strong:

She cruel-hearted, stained with sin, Him just in deed and pure
within. She, hideous fiend, a thing to hate, Him formed each eye
to captivate: Fierce passion in her bosom woke, And thus to
Raghu's son she spoke:

“With matted hair above thy brows, With bow and shaft and
this thy spouse, How hast thou sought in hermit dress The giant-
haunted wilderness?

What dost thou here? The cause explain: Why art thou come,
and what to gain?” As Súrpar,akhá questioned so,

Ráma, the terror of the foe,

In answer to the monster’s call, With fearless candour told her
all. “King Dasaratha reigned of old, Like Gods celestial brave
and bold. I am his eldest son and heir,

And Ráma is the name I bear.

This brother, Lakshmar,, younger born, Most faithful love to me
has sworn.

My wife, this princess, dear to fame, Is Sitá the Videhan dame.

Obedient to my sire’s behest

And by the queen my mother pressed, To keep the law and
merit win,

I sought this wood to harbour in. But speak, for I of thee in turn
Thy name, and race, and sire would learn. Thou art of giant
race, I ween.

Changing at will thy form and mien. Speak truly, and the cause
declare That bids thee to these shades repair.”

Thus Ráma spoke: the demon heard, And thus replied by
passion spurred: “Of giant race, what form soe’er

My fancy wills, ’tis mine to wear. Named Súrpar,akhá here I
stray,

And where I walk spread wild dismay. King Rávar, is my brother:
fame

Has taught perchance his dreaded name, Strong Kumbhakarr,a
slumbering deep In chains of never-ending sleep: Vibhíshar, of
the duteous mind,

In needs unlike his giant kind: Dúshar, and Khara, brave and
bold Whose fame by every tongue is told: Their might by mine is
far surpassed; But when, O best of men, I cast These fond eyes
on thy form, I see My chosen love and lord in thee.

Endowed with wondrous might am I: Where’er my fancy leads I
fly.

The poor misshapen Sítá leave, And me, thy worthier bride
receive. Look on my beauty, and prefer

A spouse more meet than one like her: I’ll eat that ill-formed
woman there: Thy brother too her fate shall share.

But come, beloved, thou shalt roam

With me through all our woodland home; Each varied grove with
me shalt seek, And gaze upon each mountain peak.”

As thus she spoke, the monster gazed With sparkling eyes
where passion blazed: Then he, in lore of language learned,

This answer eloquent returned:

Canto XVIII. The Mutilation.

On her ensnared in Káma's net

[251] His eyes the royal Ráma set, And thus, her passion to
beguile,

Addressed her with a gentle smile:

“I have a wife: behold her here, My Sítá ever true and dear:

And one like thee will never brook Upon a rival spouse to look.

But there my brother Lakshmar, stands: Unchained is he by
nuptial bands:

A youth heroic, loved of all, Gracious and gallant, fair and tall.

With winning looks, most nobly bred, Unmatched till now, he
longs to wed. Meet to enjoy thy youthful charms,

O take him to thy loving arms. Enamoured on his bosom lie, Fair
damsel of the radiant eye,

As the warm sunlight loves to rest Upon her darling Meru's
breast."

The hero spoke, the monster heard, While passion still her
bosom stirred. Away from Ráma's side she broke, And thus in
turn to Lakshmar, spoke:

"Come, for thy bride take me who shine In fairest grace that
suits with thine.

Thou by my side from grove to grove Of Dar,9ak's wild in bliss
shalt rove."

Then Lakshmar,, skilled in soft address, Wooed by the amorous
giantess,

With art to turn her love aside, To Súrpar,akhá thus replied:

"And can so high a dame agree The slave-wife of a slave to be?
I, lotus-hued! in good and ill

Am bondsman to my brother's will. Be thou, fair creature
radiant-eyed, My honoured brother's younger bride: With
faultless tint and dainty limb,

A happy wife, bring joy to him.

He from his spouse grown old and grey, Deformed, untrue, will
turn away,

Her withered charms will gladly leave, And to his fair young
darling cleave. For who could be so fond and blind,

O loveliest of all female kind, To love another dame and slight
Thy beauties rich in all delight?"

Thus Lakshmar, praised in scornful jest The long-toothed fiend
with loathly breast, Who fondly heard his speech, nor knew His
mocking words were aught but true.

Again inflamed with love she fled To Ráma, in his leafy shed

Where Sítá rested by his side, And to the mighty victor cried:

"What, Ráma, canst thou blindly cling To this old false
misshapen thing?

Wilt thou refuse the charms of youth For withered breast and
grinning tooth! Canst thou this wretched creature prize And look
on me with scornful eyes?

This aged crone this very hour Before thy face will I devour:
Then joyous, from all rivals free. Through Dar,9ak will I stray
with thee.”

She spoke, and with a glance of flame Rushed on the fawn-eyed
Maithil dame: So would a horrid meteor mar

Fair Rohir,í’s soft beaming star. But as the furious fiend drew
near,

Like Death’s dire noose which chills with fear, The mighty chief
her purpose stayed,

And spoke, his brother to upbraid:

“Ne’er should we jest with creatures rude, Of savage race and
wrathful mood.

Think, Lakshmar,, think how nearly slain My dear Videhan
breathes again.

Let not the hideous wretch escape Without a mark to mar her
shape.

Strike, lord of men, the monstrous fiend, Deformed, and foul,
and evil-miened.”

He spoke: then Lakshmar,'s wrath rose high, And there before
his brother's eye,

He drew that sword which none could stay, And cleft her nose
and ears away.

Noseless and earless, torn and maimed, With fearful shrieks the
fiend exclaimed, And frantic in her wild distress Resought the
distant wilderness.

Deformed, terrific, huge, and dread, As on she moved, her
gashes bled, And groan succeeded groan as loud As roars, ere
rain, the thunder cloud. Still on the fearful monster passed,

While streams of blood kept falling fast, And with a roar, and
arms outspread Within the boundless wood she fled.

To Janasthán the monster flew; Fierce Khara there she found,
With chieftains of the giant crew In thousands ranged around.

Before his awful feet she bent And fell with piercing cries,

As when a bolt in swift descent Comes flashing from the skies.

There for a while with senses dazed Silent she lay and scared:

At length her drooping head she raised, And all the tale
declared,

How Ráma, Lakshmar,, and the dame Had reached that lonely
place:

Then told her injuries and shame,

And showed her bleeding face.

Canto XIX. The Rousing Of Khara.

When Khara saw his sister lie

[252] With blood-stained limbs and troubled eye, Wild fury in his
bosom woke,

And thus the monstrous giant spoke;

“Arise, my sister; cast away This numbing terror and dismay,

And straight the impious hand declare That marred those
features once so fair. For who his finger tip will lay

On the black snake in childish play, And unattacked, with idle
stroke His poison-laden fang provoke?

Ill-fated fool, he little knows

Death's noose around his neck he throws, Who rashly met thee,
and a draught

Of life-destroying poison quaffed.

Strong, fierce as death, 'twas thine to choose Thy way at will,
each shape to use;

In power and might like one of us:

What hand has maimed and marred thee thus? What God or
fiend this deed has wrought, What bard or sage of lofty thought

Was armed with power supremely great Thy form to mar and
mutilate?

In all the worlds not one I see Would dare a deed to anger me:

Canto XIX. The Rousing Of Khara. 889

Not Indra's self, the Thousand-eyed, Beneath whose hand fierce
Páka⁴⁵⁹ died. My life-destroying darts this day

His guilty breath shall rend away, E'en as the thirsty wild swan
drains Each milk-drop that the wave retains.

Whose blood in foaming streams shall burst O'er the dry ground
which lies athirst, When by my shafts transfixed and slain

He falls upon the battle plain?

From whose dead corpse shall birds of air The mangled flesh
and sinews tear,

And in their gory feast delight, When I have slain him in the
fight? Not God or bard or wandering ghost, No giant of our
mighty host

Shall step between us, or avail To save the wretch when I assail.

Collect each scattered sense, recall Thy troubled thoughts, and
tell me all. What wretch attacked thee in the way, And quelled
thee in victorious fray?”

His breast with burning fury fired, Thus Khara of the fiend
inquired: And then with many a tear and sigh Thus Súrpar,akhá
made reply:

“Tis Dasaratha’s sons, a pair

Strong, resolute, and young, and fair: In coats of dark and
blackdeer’s hide, And like the radiant lotus eyed:

On berries roots and fruit they feed, And lives of saintly virtue
lead:

459 A demon slain by Indra.

With ordered senses undefiled, Ráma and Lakshmar, are they
styled.

Fair as the Minstrels’ King⁴⁶⁰ are they,

And stamped with signs of regal sway. I know not if the heroes
trace

Their line from Gods or Dánav⁴⁶¹ race.

There by these wondering eyes between The noble youths a
dame was seen,

Fair, blooming, young, with dainty waist, And all her bright
apparel graced.

For her with ready heart and mind

The royal pair their strength combined, And brought me to this
last distress, Like some lost woman, comfortless.

Perfidious wretch! my soul is fain

Her foaming blood and theirs to drain. O let me head the
vengeful fight,

And with this hand my murderers smite. Come, brother, hasten
to fulfil

This longing of my eager will. On to the battle! Let me drink

Their lifeblood as to earth they sink.”

Then Khara, by his sister pressed, Inflamed with fury, gave his
hest To twice seven giants of his crew, Fierce as the God of
death to view:

460 Chitraratha, King of the Gandharvas.

461 Titanic.

'Two men equipped with arms, who wear Deerskin and bark and matted hair, Leading a beauteous dame, have strayed

To the wild gloom of Dar,9ak's shade. These men, this cursed woman slay, And hasten back without delay,

That this my sister's lips may be Red with the lifeblood of the three. Giants, my wounded sister longs

To take this vengeance for her wrongs. With speed her dearest wish fulfil,

And with your might these creatures kill. Soon as your matchless strength shall lay These brothers dead in battle fray,

She in triumphant joy will laugh,

And their hearts' blood delighted quaff."

The giants heard the words he said, And forth with Súrpar,akhá sped,

As mighty clouds in autumn fly Urged by the wind along the sky.

Canto XX. The Giants' Death.

Fierce Súrpar, akhá with her train To Ráma's dwelling came
again, And to the eager giants showed Where Sítá and the
youths abode. Within the leafy cot they spied The hero by his
consort's side, And faithful Lakshmar, ready still

To wait upon his brother's will. [253]

Then noble Ráma raised his eye And saw the giants standing
nigh,

And then, as nearer still they pressed. His glorious brother thus
addressed, "Be thine a while, my brother dear, To watch o'er
Sítá's safety here,

And I will slay these creatures who The footsteps of my spouse
pursue."

He spoke, and reverent Lakshmar, heard Submissive to his
brother's word.

The son of Raghu, virtuous-souled, Strung his great bow
adorned with gold, And, with the weapon in his hand, Addressed
him to the giant band: “Ráma and Lakshmar, we, who spring
From Dasaratha, mighty king;

We dwell a while with Sítá here In Dar,9ak forest wild and drear.

On woodland roots and fruit we feed, And lives of strictest rule
we lead.

Say why would ye our lives oppress Who sojourn in the
wilderness.

Sent hither by the hermits’ prayer With bow and darts unused to
spare, For vengeance am I come to slay Your sinful band in
battle fray.

Rest as ye are: remain content, Nor try the battle’s dire event.
Unless your offered lives ye spurn, O rovers of the night, return.”

They listened while the hero spoke, And fury in each breast
awoke.

The Bráhma-slayers raised on high Their mighty spears and
made reply: They spoke with eyes aglow with ire, While Ráma’s
burnt with vengeful fire, And answered thus, in fury wild,

That peerless chief whose tones were mild:

“Nay thou hast angered, overbold, Khara our lord, the mighty-
souled, And for thy sin, in battle strife

Shalt yield to us thy forfeit life. No power hast thou alone to
stand Against the numbers of our band.

'Twere vain to match thy single might Against us in the front of
fight.

When we equipped for fight advance With brandished pike and
mace and lance, Thou, vanquished in the desperate field,

Thy bow, thy strength, thy life shalt yield.”

With bitter words and threatening mien Thus furious spoke the
fierce fourteen, And raising scimitar and spear

On Ráma rushed in wild career. Their levelled spears the giant
crew Against the matchless hero threw. His bow the son of
Raghu bent,

And twice seven shafts to meet them sent, And every javelin
sundered fell

By the bright darts he aimed so well.

The hero saw: his anger grew To fury: from his side he drew
Fresh sunbright arrows pointed keen, In number, like his foes,
fourteen.

His bow he grasped, the string he drew, And gazing on the giant
crew,

As Indra casts the levin, so Shot forth his arrows at the foe.

The hurtling arrows, stained with gore, Through the fiends'
breasts a passage tore, And in the earth lay buried deep

As serpents through an ant-hill creep Like trees uptorn by
stormy blast

The shattered fiends to earth were cast, And there with mangled
bodies they, Bathed in their blood and breathless, lay.

With fainting heart and furious eye The demon saw her
champions die. With drying wounds that scarcely bled Back to
her brother's home she fled.

Oppressed with pain, with loud lament At Khara's feet the
monster bent.

There like a plant whence slowly come The trickling drops of
oozy gum,

With her grim features pale with pain She poured her tears in
ceaseless rain, There routed Súrpar,akhá lay,

And told her brother all, The issue of the bloody fray,

Her giant champions' fall.

Canto XXI. The Rousing Of Khara.

Low in the dust he saw her lie,

And Khara's wrath grew fierce and high. Aloud he cried to her
who came Disgracefully with baffled aim:

“I sent with thee at thy request The bravest of my giants, best
Of all who feed upon the slain:

Why art thou weeping here again? Still to their master's interest
true, My faithful, noble, loyal crew,

Though slaughtered in the bloody fray, Would yet their
monarch's word obey. Now I, my sister, fain would know The
cause of this thy fear and woe, Why like a snake thou writhest
there, Calling for aid in wild despair.

Nay, lie not thus in lowly guise:

Cast off thy weakness and arise!”

With soothing words the giant chief Assuaged the fury of her
grief.

Her weeping eyes she slowly dried And to her brother thus
replied:

“I sought thee in my shame and fear With severed nose and
mangled ear:

My gashes like a river bled,

I sought thee and was comforted. [254]

Those twice seven giants, brave and strong, Thou sentest to
avenge the wrong,

To lay the savage Ráma low,

And Lakshmar, who misused me so. But ah, the shafts of Ráma
through The bodies of my champions flew:

Though madly fierce their spears they plied, Beneath his
conquering might they died.

I saw them, famed for strength and speed, I saw my heroes fall
and bleed:

Great trembling seized my every limb At the great deed
achieved by him.

In trouble, horror, doubt, and dread, Again to thee for help I
fled.

While terror haunts my troubled sight, I seek thee, rover of the night.

And canst thou not thy sister free From this wide waste of troublous sea

Whose sharks are doubt and terror, where Each wreathing wave is dark despair?

Low lie on earth thy giant train By ruthless Ráma's arrows slain, And all the mighty demons, fed

On blood, who followed me are dead. Now if within thy breast may be

Pity for them and love for me, If thou, O rover of the night, Have valour and with him can fight, Subdue the giants' cruel foe Who dwells where Dar,9ak's thickets grow. But if thine arm in vain assay

This queller of his foes to slay, Now surely here before thine eyes,

Wronged and ashamed thy sister dies.

Too well, alas, too well I see

That, strong in war as thou mayst be, Thou canst not in the battle stand When Ráma meets thee hand to hand. Go forth,

thou hero but in name, Assuming might thou canst not claim;
Call friend and kin, no longer stay: Away from Janasthán, away!
Shame of thy race! the weak alone Beneath thine arm may sink
o'erthrown: Fly Ráma and his brother: they
Are men too strong for thee to slay. How canst thou hope, O
weak and base, To make this grove thy dwelling-place? With
Ráma's might unmeet to vie, O'ermastered thou wilt quickly die.
A hero strong in valorous deed Is Ráma, Dasaratha's seed:
And scarce of weaker might than he His brother chief who
mangled me."

Thus wept and wailed in deep distress The grim misshapen
giantess:

Before her brother's feet she lay O'erwhelmed with grief, and
swooned away.

Canto XXII. Khara's Wrath.

Roused by the taunting words she spoke, The mighty Khara's
wrath awoke,

And there, while giants girt him round, In these fierce words an
utterance found:

“I cannot, peerless one, contain Mine anger at this high disdain,
Galling as salt when sprinkled o’er The rawness of a bleeding
sore.

Ráma in little count I hold,

Weak man whose days are quickly told. The caitiff with his life
to-day

For all his evil deeds shall pay. Dry, sister, dry each needless
tear, Stint thy lament and banish fear, For Ráma and his brother
go

This day to Yáma’s realm below.

My warrior’s axe shall stretch him slain, Ere set of sun, upon the
plain,

Then shall thy sated lips be red

With his warm blood in torrents shed.”

As Khara’s speech the demon heard, With sudden joy her heart
was stirred: She fondly praised him as the boast And glory of
the giant host.

First moved to ire by taunts and stings, Now soothed by gentle
flatterings,

To Dúshar,, who his armies led, The demon Khara spoke, and
said:

“Friend, from the host of giants call Full fourteen thousand, best
of all, Slaves of my will, of fearful might, Who never turn their
backs in fight: Fiends who rejoice to slay and mar, Dark as the
clouds of autumn are: Make ready quickly, O my friend,
My chariot and the bows I bend.

My swords, my shafts of brilliant sheen, My divers lances long
and keen.

On to the battle will I lead These heroes of Pulastya’s seed,
And thus, O famed for warlike skill, Ráma my wicked foeman
kill.”

He spoke, and ere his speech was done, His chariot glittering
like the sun,

Yoked and announced, by Dúshan’s care, With dappled steeds
was ready there.

High as a peak from Meru rent It burned with golden ornament:
The pole of lazulite, of gold

Were the bright wheels whereon it rolled. With gold and
moonstone blazoned o'er, Fish, flowers, trees, rocks, the panels
bore; Auspicious birds embossed thereon,

And stars in costly emblem shone. O'er flashing swords his
banner hung,

And sweet bells, ever tinkling, swung. [255]

That mighty host with sword and shield And oar was ready for
the field:

And Khara saw, and Dúshan cried, "Forth to the fight, ye giants,
ride."

Then banners waved, and shield and sword Flashed as the host
obeyed its lord.

From Janasthán they sallied out

With eager speed, and din, and shout, Armed with the mace for
close attacks, The bill, the spear, the battle-axe,

Steel quoit and club that flashed afar, Huge bow and sword and
scimitar, The dart to pierce, the bolt to strike,

The murderous bludgeon, lance, and pike. So forth from
Janasthán, intent

On Khara's will, the monsters went. He saw their awful march:
not far Behind the host he drove his car.

Ware of his master's will, to speed

The driver urged each gold-decked steed. Then forth the
warrior's coursers sprang, And with tumultuous murmur rang
Each distant quarter of the sky And realms that intermediate lie.
High and more high within his breast His pride triumphant rose,
While terrible as Death he pressed Onward to slay his foes,
"More swiftly yet," as on they fled, He cried in thundering tones
Loud as a cloud that overhead Hails down a flood of stones.

Canto XXIII. The Omens.

As forth upon its errand went That huge ferocious armament,
An awful cloud, in dust and gloom,
With threatening thunders from its womb Poured in sad augury
a flood
Of rushing water mixt with blood.
The monarch's steeds, though strong and fleet, Stumbled and
fell: and yet their feet
Passed o'er the bed of flowers that lay

Fresh gathered on the royal way.

No gleam of sunlight struggled through The sombre pall of
midnight hue, Edged with a line of bloody red,

Like whirling torches overhead. A vulture, fierce, of mighty size.
Terrific with his cruel eyes,

Perched on the staff enriched with gold, Whence hung the flag
in many a fold. Each ravening bird, each beast of prey Where
Janasthán's wild thickets lay, Rose with a long discordant cry
And gathered as the host went by.

And from the south long, wild, and shrill, Came spirit voices
boding ill.

Like elephants in frantic mood, Vast clouds terrific, sable-hued,
Hid all the sky where'er they bore Their load of water mixt with
gore. Above, below, around were spread

Thick shades of darkness strange and dread, Nor could the
wilderer glance descry

A point or quarter of the sky.

Then came o'er heaven a sanguine hue, Though evening's flush
not yet was due, While each ill-omened bird that flies Assailed
the king with harshest cries.

There screamed the vulture and the crane, And the loud jackal
shrieked again.

Each hideous thing that bodes aright Disaster in the coming
fight,

With gaping mouth that hissed and flamed, The ruin of the host
proclaimed.

Eclipse untimely reft away

The brightness of the Lord of Day, And near his side was seen to
glow A mace-like comet boding woe.

Then while the sun was lost to view A mighty wind arose and
blew,

And stars like fireflies shed their light, Nor waited for the distant
night.

The lilies drooped, the brooks were dried, The fish and birds that
swam them died, And every tree that was so fair

With flower and fruit was stripped and bare. The wild wind
ceased, yet, raised on high, Dark clouds of dust involved the
sky.

In doleful twitter long sustained The restless Sáríkás⁴⁶²
complained,

And from the heavens with flash and flame Terrific meteors
roaring came.

Earth to her deep foundation shook With rock and tree and
plain and brook, As Khara with triumphant shout,

Borne in his chariot, sallied out.

His left arm throbbed: he knew full well That omen, and his
visage fell.

Each awful sign the giant viewed, And sudden tears his eye
bedewed. Care on his brow sat chill and black,

Yet mad with wrath he turned not back. Upon each fearful sight
that raised

The shuddering hair the chieftain gazed, And laughing in his
senseless pride Thus to his giant legions cried:

“By sense of mightiest strength upborne,

462 The Sáríká is the Maina, a bird like a starling.

These feeble signs I laugh to scorn.

I could bring down the stars that shine

In heaven with these keen shafts of mine. Impelled by warlike
fury I

Could cause e'en Death himself to die. [256]

I will not seek my home again Until my pointed shafts have
slain This Raghu's son so fierce in pride,

And Lakshmar, by his brother's side. And she, my sister, she for
whom These sons of Raghu meet their doom, She with delighted
lips shall drain The lifeblood of her foemen slain.

Fear not for me: I ne'er have known Defeat, in battle
overthrown.

Fear not for me, O giants; true

Are the proud words I speak to you. The king of Gods who rules
on high, If wild Airávat bore him nigh, Should fall before me bolt
in hand:

And shall these two my wrath withstand!"

He ended and the giant host

Who heard their chief's triumphant boast, Rejoiced with equal
pride elate, Entangled in the noose of Fate.

Then met on high in bright array, With eyes that longed to see
the fray, God and Gandharva, sage and saint, With beings pure
from earthly taint. Blest for good works aforetime wrought, Thus
each to other spake his thought: "Now joy to Bráhmans, joy to
kine,

And all whom world count half divine! May Raghu's offspring
slay in fight Pulastya's sons who roam by night!" In words like
these and more, the best

Of high-souled saints their hopes expressed, Bending their
eager eyes from where

Car-borne with Gods they rode in air. Beneath them stretching
far, they viewed The giants' death-doomed multitude.

They saw where, urged with fury, far Before the host rolled
Khara's car, And close beside their leader came Twelve giant
peers of might and fame. Four other chiefs⁴⁶³ before the rest
Behind their leader Dúshar, pressed.

Impetuous, cruel, dark, and dread, All thirsting for the fray,

The hosts of giant warriors sped Onward upon their way.

With eager speed they reached the spot Where dwelt the
princely two,—

Like planets in a league to blot The sun and moon from view.

Canto XXIV. The Host In Sight.

463 Mahákapála, Sthúláksha, Pramátha, Trisiras.

While Khara, urged by valiant rage, Drew near that little
hermitage,

Those wondrous signs in earth and sky Smote on each prince's
watchful eye. When Ráma saw those signs of woe Fraught with
destruction to the foe, With bold impatience scarce repressed
His brother chief he thus addressed:

“These fearful signs, my brother bold, Which threaten all our
foes, behold:

All laden, as they strike the view, With ruin to the fiendish crew.

The angry clouds are gathering fast, Their skirts with dusty
gloom o'ercast, And harsh with loud-voiced thunder, rain Thick
drops of blood upon the plain.

See, burning for the coming fight,

My shafts with wreaths of smoke are white, And my great bow
embossed with gold Throbs eager for the master's hold.

Each bird that through the forest flies Sends out its melancholy
cries.

All signs foretell the dangerous strife, The jeopardy of limb and
life.

Each sight, each sound gives warning clear That foemen meet
and death is near.

But courage, valiant brother! well The throbbings of mine arm
foretell That ruin waits the hostile powers, And triumph in the
fight is ours.

I hail the welcome omen: thou

Art bright of face and clear of brow. For Lakshmar,, when the
eye can trace

A cloud upon the warrior's face Stealing the cheerful light away,
His life is doomed in battle fray. List, brother, to that awful cry:

With shout and roar the fiends draw nigh. With thundering beat
of many a drum The savage-hearted giants come.

The wise who value safety know

To meet, prepared, the coming blow: In paths of prudence
trained aright They watch the stroke before it smite. Take thou
thine arrows and thy bow, And with the Maithil lady go

For shelter to the mountain cave

Where thickest trees their branches wave. I will not have thee,
Lakshmar,, say

One word in answer, but obey. By all thy honour for these feet
Of mine, dear brother, I entreat.

Thy warlike arm, I know could, smite To death these rovers of
the night;

But I this day would fight alone

[257] Till all the fiends be overthrown.”

He spake: and Lakshmar, answered naught: His arrows and his
bow he brought,

And then with Sitá following hied For shelter to the mountain
side. As Lakshmar, and the lady through The forest to the cave
withdrew,

“Tis well,” cried Ráma. Then he braced His coat of mail around
his waist.

When, bright as blazing fire, upon His mighty limbs that armour
shone, The hero stood like some great light

Uprising in the dark of night.

His dreadful shafts were by his side; His trusty bow he bent and
plied, Prepared he stood: the bowstring rang, Filling the welkin
with the clang.

The high-souled Gods together drew The wonder of the fight to
view,

The saints made free from spot and stain, And bright
Gandharvas' heavenly train. Each glorious sage the assembly
sought, Each saint divine of loftiest thought, And filled with zeal
for Ráma's sake.

Thus they whose deeds were holy spake:

“Now be it well with Bráhmans, now Well with the worlds and
every cow!

Let Ráma in the deadly fray

The fiends who walk in darkness slay, As He who bears the
discus⁴⁶⁴ slew The chieftains of the Asur crew.”

Then each with anxious glances viewed His fellow and his
speech renewed: “There twice seven thousand giants stand With
impious heart and cruel hand:

Here Ráma stands, by virtue known: How can the hero fight
alone?”

464 Vishr,u, who bears a chakra or discus.

Thus royal sage and Bráhman saint, Spirit, and Virtue free from
taint,

And all the Gods of heaven who rode On golden cars, their
longing showed. Their hearts with doubt and terror rent, They
saw the giants’ armament,

And Ráma clothed in warrior might, Forth standing in the front
of fight. Lord of the arm no toil might tire, He stood majestic in
his ire, Matchless in form as Rudra⁴⁶⁵ when His wrath is fierce
on Gods or men.

While Gods and saints in close array Held converse of the
coming fray,

The army of the fiends drew near

With sight and sound that counselled fear. Long, loud and deep
their war-cry pealed, As on they rushed with flag and shield,
Each, of his proper valour proud,

Urging to fight the demon crowd.

His ponderous bow each warrior tried, And swelled his bulk with
martial pride. 'Mid shout and roar and trampling feet, And
thunder of the drums they beat, Loud and more loud the tumult
went Throughout the forest's vast extent,

And all the life that moved within The woodland trembled at the
din. In eager haste all fled to find

Some tranquil spot, nor looked behind.

465 Siva.

With every arm of war supplied, On-rushing wildly like the tide
Of some deep sea, the giant host Approached where Ráma kept
his post. Then he, in battle skilled and tried, Bent his keen eye on
every side,

And viewed the host of Khara face To face before his dwelling-
place. He drew his arrows forth, and reared

And strained that bow which foemen feared, And yielded to the
vengeful sway

Of fierce desire that host to slay. Terrific as the ruinous fire
That ends the worlds, he glowed in ire, And his tremendous form
dismayed The Gods who roam the forest shade. For in the
furious wrath that glowed Within his soul the hero showed
Like Siva when his angry might Stayed Daksha's sacrificial
rite.⁴⁶⁶

Like some great cloud at dawn of day When first the sun
upsprings,
And o'er the gloomy mass each ray A golden radiance flings:
Thus showed the children of the night, Whose mail and chariots
threw,
With gleam of bows and armlets bright, Flashes of flamy hue.

466 See Additional Notes—DAKSHA'S SACRIFICE{FNS.

Canto XXV. The Battle.

When Khara with the hosts he led Drew near to Ráma's leafy
shed, He saw that queller of the foe Stand ready with his
ordered bow. He saw, and burning at the view

His clanging bow he raised and drew, And bade his driver urge
apace

His car to meet him face to face. Obedient to his master's hest

His eager steeds the driver pressed On to the spot where, none
to aid,

The strong-armed chief his weapon swayed.

Soon as the children of the night

[258]Saw Khara rushing to the fight, His lords with loud
unearthly cry

Followed their chief and gathered nigh. As in his car the leader
rode

With all his lords around, he showed Like the red planet fiery
Mars Surrounded by the lesser stars.

Then with a horrid yell that rent The air, the giant chieftain sent
A thousand darts in rapid shower

On Ráma matchless in his power. The rovers of the night,
impelled

By fiery rage which naught withheld,

Upon the unconquered prince, who strained His fearful bow,
their arrows rained.

With sword and club, with mace and pike, With spear and axe to
pierce and strike, Those furious fiends on every side

The unconquerable hero plied.

The giant legions huge and strong, Like clouds the tempest
drives along, Rushed upon Ráma with the speed Of whirling car,
and mounted steed, And hill-like elephant, to slay

The matchless prince in battle fray. Then upon Ráma thick and
fast The rain of mortal steel they cast,

As labouring clouds their torrents shed Upon the mountain-
monarch's⁴⁶⁷ head. As near and nearer round him drew The
warriors of the giant crew,

He showed like Siva girt by all

His spirits when night's shadows fall. As the great deep receives
each rill And river rushing from the hill,

He bore that flood of darts, and broke

With well-aimed shaft each murderous stroke. By stress of
arrowy storm assailed,

And wounded sore, he never failed, Like some high mountain
which defies The red bolts flashing from the skies. With ruddy
streams each limb was dyed From gaping wounds in breast and
side,

Showing the hero like the sun

'Mid crimson clouds ere day is done. Then, at that sight of terror,
faint

Grew God, Gandharva, sage, and saint, Trembling to see the
prince oppose His single might to myriad foes.

But waxing wrath, with force unspent, He strained his bow to
utmost bent,

467 Himálaya.

And forth his arrows keen and true

In hundreds, yea in thousands flew,— Shafts none could ward,
and none endure: Death's fatal noose was scarce so sure.

As 'twere in playful ease he shot His gilded shafts, and rested
not. With swiftest flight and truest aim Upon the giant hosts
they came.

Each smote, each stayed a foeman's breath As fatal as the coil
of Death.

Each arrow through a giant tore

A passage, and besmeared with gore, Pursued its onward way
and through The air with flamy brilliance flew.

Unnumbered were the arrows sent From the great bow which
Ráma bent, And every shaft with iron head

The lifeblood of a giant shed.

Their pennoned bows were cleft, nor mail Nor shield of hide
could aught avail.

For Ráma's myriad arrows tore

Through arms, and bracelets which they wore, And severed
mighty warriors' thighs

Like trunks of elephants in size, And cut resistless passage sheer

Through gold-decked horse and charioteer, Slew elephant and
rider, slew

The horseman and the charger too, And infantry unnumbered
sent

To dwell 'neath Yáma's government. Then rose on high a fearful
yell

Of rovers of the night, who fell Beneath that iron torrent, sore
Wounded by shafts that rent and tore.

So mangled by the ceaseless storm Of shafts of every kind and
form, Such joy they found, as forests feel

When scorched by flame, from Ráma's steel. The mightiest still
the fight maintained,

And furious upon Ráma rained Dart, arrow, spear, with wild
attacks Of mace, and club, and battle-axe.

But the great chief, unconquered yet, Their weapons with his
arrows met, Which severed many a giant's head, And all the
plain with corpses spread. With sundered bow and shattered
shield Headless they sank upon the field,

As the tall trees, that felt the blast Of Garuda's wing, to earth
were cast. The giants left unslaughtered there Where filled with
terror and despair, And to their leader Khara fled

Faint, wounded, and discomfited. These fiery Dúshar, strove to
cheer, And poised his bow to calm their fear; Then fierce as He
who rules the dead, When wroth, on angered Ráma sped. By
Dúshar, cheered, the demons cast Their dread aside and rallied
fast

With Sals, rocks, palm-trees in their hands With nooses, maces,
pikes, and brands, Again upon the godlike man

The mighty fiends infuriate ran,

These casting rocks like hail, and these A whelming shower of
leafy trees.

Wild, wondrous fight, the eye to scare,

And raise on end each shuddering hair, [259]

As with the fiends who loved to rove By night heroic Ráma strove!

The giants in their fury plied Ráma with darts on every side.

Then, by the gathering demons pressed From north and south and east and west, By showers of deadly darts assailed From every quarter fiercely hailed,

Girt by the foes who swarmed around, He raised a mighty shout whose sound Struck terror. On the giant crew

His great Gandharva⁴⁶⁸ arrow flew.

A thousand mortal shafts were rained From the orbed bow the hero strained, Till east and west and south and north Were filled with arrows volleyed forth. They heard the fearful shout: they saw His mighty hand the bowstring draw, Yet could no wounded giant's eye

See the swift storm of arrows fly. Still firm the warrior stood and cast His deadly missiles thick and fast. Dark grew the air with arrowy hail Which hid the sun as with a veil.

Fiends wounded, falling, fallen, slain, All in a moment, spread the plain, And thousands scarce alive were left

Mangled, and gashed, and torn, and cleft. Dire was the sight, the plain o'erspread With trophies of the mangled dead.

There lay, by Ráma's missiles rent, Full many a priceless ornament,

468 One of the mysterious weapons given to Ráma.

With severed limb and broken gem, Hauberk and helm and
diadem.

There lay the shattered car, the steed, The elephant of noblest
breed,

The splintered spear, the shivered mace, Chouris and screens to
shade the face. The giants saw with bitterest pain

Their warriors weltering on the plain, Nor dared again his might
oppose Who scourged the cities of his foes.

Canto XXVI. Dúshan's Death.

When Dúshar, saw his giant band Slaughtered by Ráma's
conquering hand, He called five thousand fiends, and gave His
orders. Bravest of the brave, Invincible, of furious might,

Ne'er had they turned their backs in flight. They, as their leader
bade them seize

Spears, swords, and clubs, and rocks, and trees, Poured on the
dauntless prince again

A ceaseless shower of deadly rain. The virtuous Ráma,
undismayed, Their missiles with his arrows stayed, And
weakened, ere it fell, the shock Of that dire hail of tree and rock,
And like a bull with eyelids closed, The pelting of the storm
opposed.

Then blazed his ire: he longed to smite To earth the rovers of the
night.

The wrath that o'er his spirit came Clothed him with splendour
as of flame, While showers of mortal darts he poured Fierce on
the giants and their lord.

Dúshar,, the foeman's dusky dread, By frenzied rage inspirited,

On Raghu's son his missiles cast

Like Indra's bolts which rend and blast. But Ráma with a
trenchant dart

Cleft Dúshar,'s ponderous bow apart.

And then the gold-decked steeds who drew The chariot, with
four shafts he slew.

One crescent dart he aimed which shred Clean from his neck the
driver's head; Three more with deadly skill addressed Stood
quivering in the giant's breast.

Hurled from his car, steeds, driver slain, The bow he trusted cleft
in twain,

He seized his mace, strong, heavy, dread, High as a mountain's
towering head.

With plates of gold adorned and bound, Embattled Gods it
crushed and ground. Its iron spikes yet bore the stains

Of mangled foemen's blood and brains. Its heavy mass of
jagged steel

Was like a thunderbolt to feel. It shattered, as on foes it fell,
The city where the senses dwell.⁴⁶⁹

Fierce Dúshar, seized that ponderous mace Like monstrous
form of serpent race,

⁴⁶⁹ A periphrasis for the body.

And all his savage soul aglow With fury, rushed upon the foe.
But Raghu's son took steady aim, And as the rushing giant
came,

Shore with two shafts the arms whereon The demon's glittering
bracelets shone. His arm at each huge shoulder lopped, The
mighty body reeled and dropped, And the great mace to earth
was thrown

Like Indra's staff when storms have blown. As some vast
elephant who lies

Shorn of his tusks, and bleeding dies, So, when his arms were
rent away, Low on the ground the giant lay.

The spirits saw the monster die, And loudly rang their joyful cry,
"Honour to Ráma! nobly done!

Well hast thou fought, Kakutstha's son!" [260]

But the great three, the host who led, Enraged to see their
chieftain dead,

As though Death's toils were round them cast, Rushed upon
Ráma fierce and fast, Mahákapála seized, to strike

His foeman down, a ponderous pike: Sthúláksha charged with
spear to fling, Pramáthi with his axe to swing.

When Ráma saw, with keen darts he Received the onset of the
three,

As calm as though he hailed a guest In each, who came for
shade and rest. Mahákapála's monstrous head

Fell with the trenchant dart he sped. His good right hand in
battle skilled Sthúláksha's eyes with arrows filled,

And trusting still his ready bow He laid the fierce Pramáthi low,
Who sank as some tall tree falls down With bough and branch
and leafy crown. Then with five thousand shafts he slew The rest
of Dúshar,'s giant crew:

Five thousand demons, torn and rent, To Yáma's gloomy realm
he sent.

When Khara knew the fate of all The giant band and Dúshar,'s
fall, He called the mighty chiefs who led His army, and in fury
said:

“Now Dúshar, and his armèd train Lie prostrate on the battle
plain.

Lead forth an army mightier still, Ráma this wretched man, to
kill. Fight ye with darts of every shape, Nor let him from your
wrath escape.”

Thus spoke the fiend, by rage impelled, And straight his course
toward Ráma held. With Syenagámí and the rest

Of his twelve chiefs he onward pressed, And every giant as he
went

A storm of well-wrought arrows sent. Then with his pointed
shafts that came With gold and diamond bright as flame, Dead
to the earth the hero threw

The remnant of the demon crew.

Those shafts with feathers bright as gold, Like flames which
wreaths of smoke enfold, Smote down the fiends like tall trees
rent By red bolts from the firmament.

A hundred shafts he pointed well: By their keen barbs a hundred
fell: A thousand,—and a thousand more In battle's front lay
drenched in gore. Of all defence and guard bereft,

With sundered bows and harness cleft. Their bodies red with
bloody stain Fell the night-rovers on the plain, Which, covered
with the loosened hair Of bleeding giants prostrate there, Like
some great altar showed, arrayed For holy rites with grass
o'erlaid.

The darksome wood, each glade and dell Where the wild
demons fought and fell Was like an awful hell whose floor
Is thick with mire and flesh and gore.

Thus twice seven thousand fiends, a band With impious heart
and bloody hand,

By Raghu's son were overthrown, A man, on foot, and all alone.

Of all who met on that fierce day, Khara, great chief, survived
the fray, The monster of the triple head,⁴⁷⁰ And Raghu's son,
the foeman's dread. The other demon warriors, all

Skilful and brave and strong and tall, In front of battle, side by
side,

Struck down by Lakshmar,'s brother died.

When Khara saw the host he led Triumphant forth to fight

Stretched on the earth, all smitten dead, By Ráma's nobler
might,

⁴⁷⁰ Trisirás.

Upon his foe he fiercely glared, And drove against him fast,

Like Indra when his arm is bared His thundering bolt to cast.

Canto XXVII. The Death Of Trisirás.

But Trisirás,⁴⁷¹ a chieftain dread, Marked Khara as he onward
sped. And met his car and cried, to stay The giant from the

purposed fray: "Mine be the charge: let me attack, And turn thee from the contest back. Let me go forth, and thou shalt see The strong-armed Ráma slain by me. True are the words I speak, my lord: I swear it as I touch my sword:

That I this Ráma's blood will spill, Whom every giant's hand should kill. This Ráma will I slay, or he

In battle fray shall conquer me. Restrain thy spirit: check thy car, And view the combat from afar. Thou, joying o'er the prostrate foe, To Janasthán again shalt go,

Or, if I fall in battle's chance, Against my conqueror advance."

471 The Three-headed.

Canto XXVII. The Death Of Trisirás. 921

Thus Trisirás for death who yearned: And Khara from the conflict turned, "Go forth to battle," Khara cried;

And toward his foe the giant hied. Borne on a car of glittering hue

Which harnessed coursers fleetly drew, Like some huge hill with triple peak

He onward rushed the prince to seek. [261]

Still, like a big cloud, sending out His arrowy rain with many a shout
Like the deep sullen roars that come Discordant from a moistened drum.
But Raghu's son, whose watchful eye Beheld the demon rushing nigh,

From the great bow he raised and bent A shower of shafts to meet him sent.
Wild grew the fight and wilder yet

As fiend and man in combat met,

As when in some dark wood's retreat An elephant and a lion meet.

The giant bent his bow, and true To Ráma's brow three arrows flew.
Then, raging as he felt the stroke, These words in anger Ráma spoke:
"Heroic chief! is such the power

Of fiends who rove at midnight hour? Soft as the touch of flowers I feel
The gentle blows thine arrows deal. Receive in turn my shafts, and know
What arrows fly from Ráma's bow." Thus as he spoke his wrath grew hot,

And twice seven deadly shafts he shot, Which, dire as serpent's deadly fang,

Straight to the giant's bosom sprang. Four arrows more,—each
shaped to deal A mortal wound with barbèd steel,— The
glorious hero shot, and slew

The four good steeds the car that drew. Eight other shafts flew
straight and fleet, And hurled the driver from his seat,

And in the dust the banner laid

That proudly o'er the chariot played. Then as the fiend prepared
to bound Forth from his useless car to ground, The hero smote
him to the heart,

And numbed his arm with deadly smart. Again the chieftain,
peerless-souled, Sent forth three rapid darts, and rolled With
each keen arrow, deftly sped,

Low in the dust a monstrous head. Then yielding to each deadly
stroke,

Forth spouting streams of blood and smoke, The headless trunk
bedrenched with gore Fell to the ground and moved no more.

The fiends who yet were left with life, Routed and crushed in
battle strife, To Khara's side, like trembling deer Scared by the
hunter, fled in fear.

King Khara saw with furious eye His scattered giants turn and
fly; Then rallying his broken train

At Raghu's son he drove amain, Like Ráhu⁴⁷² when his deadly
might Comes rushing on the Lord of Night.

472 The demon who causes eclipses.

Canto XXVIII. Khara Dismounted.

But when he turned his eye where bled Both Trisirás and Dúshar,
dead,

Fear o'er the giant's spirit came

Of Ráma's might which naught could tame. He saw his savage
legions, those

Whose force no creature dared oppose,— He saw the leader of
his train

By Ráma's single prowess slain.

With burning grief he marked the few Still left him of his giant
crew.

As Namuchi⁴⁷³ on Indra, so

Rushed the dread demon on his foe. His mighty bow the
monster strained, And angrily on Ráma rained

His mortal arrows in a flood,

Like serpent fangs athirst for blood. Skilled in the bowman's
warlike art, He plied the string and poised the dart. Here, on his
car, and there, he rode, And passages of battle showed,

While all the skyey regions grew Dark with his arrows as they
flew.

Then Ráma seized his ponderous bow, And straight the heaven
was all aglow

With shafts whose stroke no life might bear That filled with flash
and flame the air,

473 "This Asura was a friend of Indra, and taking advantage of
his friend's confidence, he drank up Indra's strength along with
a draught of wine and Soma. Indra then told the Asvins and
Sarasvatí that Namuchi had drunk up his strength. The Asvins in
consequence gave Indra a thunderbolt in the form of a foam,
with which he smote off the head of Namuchi." GARRETT'S FNS
Classical Dictionary of India. See also Book I. p. 39.

Thick as the blinding torrents sent Down from Parjanya's⁴⁷⁴
firmament. In space itself no space remained, But all was filled
with arrows rained Incessantly from each great bow Wielded by
Ráma and his foe.

As thus in furious combat, wrought To mortal hate, the warriors
fought, The sun himself grew faint and pale, Obscured behind
that arrowy veil.

As when beneath the driver's steel An elephant is forced to
kneel,

So from the hard and pointed head Of many an arrow Ráma
bled.

High on his car the giant rose

[262] Prepared in deadly strife to close, And all the spirits saw
him stand Like Yáma with his noose in hand. For Khara deemed
in senseless pride

That he, beneath whose hand had died The giant legions, failed
at length Slow sinking with exhausted strength. But Ráma, like a
lion, when

A trembling deer comes nigh his den, Feared not the demon
mad with hate,— Of lion might and lion gait.

Then in his lofty car that glowed With sunlike brilliance Khara
rode At Ráma: madly on he came

Like a poor moth that seeks the flame. His archer skill the fiend
displayed, And at the place where Ráma laid

474 Indra.

His hand, an arrow cleft in two The mighty bow the hero drew.
Seven arrows by the giant sent, Bright as the bolts of Indra, rent
Their way through mail and harness joints, And pierced him with
their iron points.

On Ráma, hero unsurpassed,

A thousand shafts smote thick and fast, While as each missile
struck, rang out The giant's awful battle-shout.

His knotted arrows pierced and tore The sunbright mail the hero
wore, Till, band and buckle rent away, Glittering on the ground it
lay.

Then pierced in shoulder, breast, and side, Till every limb with
blood was dyed,

The chieftain in majestic ire

Shone glorious as the smokeless fire. Then loud and long the
war-cry rose Of Ráma, terror of his foes,

As, on the giant's death intent,

A ponderous bow he strung and bent,— Lord Vishr,u's own, of
wondrous size,— Agastya gave the heavenly prize.

Then rushing on the demon foe, He raised on high that mighty
bow,

And with his well-wrought shafts, whereon Bright gold between
the feathers shone,

He struck the pennon fluttering o'er The chariot, and it waved no
more. That glorious flag whose every fold Was rich with
blazonry and gold, Fell as the sun himself by all
The Gods' decree might earthward fall.

From wrathful Khara's hand, whose art Well knew each
vulnerable part,

Four keenly-piercing arrows flew, And blood in Ráma's bosom
drew, With every limb distained with gore

From deadly shafts which rent and tore, From Khara's clanging
bowstring shots, The prince's wrath waxed wondrous hot. His
hand upon his bow that best

Of mighty archers firmly pressed,

And from the well-drawn bowstring, true Each to its mark, six
arrows flew.

One quivered in the giant's head, With two his brawny shoulders
bled;

Three, with the crescent heads they bore, Deep in his breast a
passage tore.

Thirteen, to which the stone had lent The keenest point, were
swiftly sent On the fierce giant, every one Destructive, gleaming

like the sun. With four the dappled steeds he slew; One cleft the
chariot yoke in two, One, in the heat of battle sped,

Smote from the neck the driver's head. The poles were rent
apart by three; Two broke the splintered axle-tree.

Then from the hand of Ráma, while Across his lips there came a
smile, The twelfth, like thunderbolt impelled, Cut the great hand
and bow it held.

Then, scarce by Indra's self surpassed, He pierced the giant with
the last.

The bow he trusted cleft in twain, His driver and his horses slain,

Down sprang the giant, mace in hand, On foot against the foe
to stand.

The Gods and saints in bright array Close gathered in the skies,

The prince's might in battle-fray Beheld with joyful eyes.

Uprising from their golden seats, Their hands in honour raised,

They looked on Ráma's noble feats, And blessed him as they
praised.

Canto XXIX. Khara's Defeat.

When Ráma saw the giant nigh,

On foot, alone, with mace reared high, In mild reproof at first he spoke,

Then forth his threatening anger broke: "Thou with the host 'twas thine to lead, With elephant and car and steed,

Hast wrought an act of sin and shame, An act which all who live must blame. Know that the wretch whose evil mind Joys in the grief of human kind,

Though the three worlds confess him lord, Must perish dreaded and abhorred.

Night-rover, when a villain's deeds Distress the world he little heeds, Each hand is armed his life to take, And crush him like a deadly snake. The end is near when men begin Through greed or lust a life of sin,

E'en as a Bráhma's dame, unwise,

[263] Eats of the fallen hail⁴⁷⁵ and dies. Thy hand has slain the pure and good, The hermit saints of Dar,⁹ak wood, Of holy life, the heirs of bliss;

And thou shalt reap the fruit of this. Not long shall they whose
cruel breasts Joy in the sin the world detests

Retain their guilty power and pride,

But fade like trees whose roots are dried. Yes, as the seasons
come and go,

Each tree its kindly fruit must show, And sinners reap in fitting
time

The harvest of each earlier crime. As those must surely die who
eat Unwittingly of poisoned meat,

They too whose lives in sin are spent Receive ere long the
punishment.

And know, thou rover of the night, That I, a king, am sent to
smite

The wicked down, who court the hate Of men whose laws they
violate.

This day my vengeful hand shall send Shafts bright with gold to
tear and rend, And pass with fury through thy breast As
serpents pierce an emmet's nest.

Thou with thy host this day shalt be Among the dead below, and
see

The saints beneath thy hand who bled, Whose flesh thy cruel
maw has fed.

They, glorious on their seats of gold, Their slayer shall in hell
behold.

475 Popularly supposed to cause death.

Fight with all strength thou callest thine, Mean scion of ignoble
line,

Still, like the palm-tree's fruit, this day My shafts thy head in
dust shall lay.”

Such were the words that Rāma said: Then Khara's eyes with
wrath glowed red, Who, maddened by the rage that burned
Within him, with a smile returned:

“Thou Dasaratha's son, hast slain The meaner giants of my
train:

And canst thou idly vaunt thy might And claim the praise not
thine by right? Not thus in self-laudation rave

The truly great, the nobly brave: No empty boasts like thine
disgrace The foremost of the human race.

The mean of soul, unknown to fame, Who taint their warrior
race with shame, Thus speak in senseless pride as thou,

O Raghu's son, hast boasted now. What hero, when the war-cry rings,

Vaunts the high race from which he springs, Or seeks, when warriors meet and die,

His own descent to glorify? Weakness and folly show confessed In every vaunt thou utterest,

As when the flames fed high with grass Detect the simulating brass.

Dost thou not see me standing here Armed with the mighty mace I rear, Firm as an earth upholding hill Whose summit veins of metal fill?

Lo, here I stand before thy face

To slay thee with my murderous mace, As Death, the universal lord,

Stands threatening with his fatal cord. Enough of this. Much more remains That should be said: but time constrains. Ere to his rest the sun descend,

And shades of night the combat end, The twice seven thousand of my band Who fell beneath thy bloody hand Shall have their tears all wiped away And triumph in thy fall to-day.”

He spoke, and loosing from his hold His mighty mace ringed
round with gold, Like some red bolt alive with fire

Hurled it at Ráma, mad with ire.

The ponderous mace which Khara threw Sent fiery flashes as it
flew.

Trees, shrubs were scorched beneath the blast, As onward to its
aim it passed.

But Ráma, watching as it sped

Dire as His noose who rules the dead, Cleft it with arrows as it
came

On rushing with a hiss and flame. Its fury spent and burnt away,
Harmless upon the ground it lay Like a great snake in furious
mood

By herbs of numbing power subdued.

Canto XXX. Khara's Death.

When Ráma, pride of Raghu's race, Virtue's dear son, had cleft
the mace, Thus with superior smile the best

Of chiefs the furious fiend addressed:

“Thou, worst of giant blood, at length Hast shown the utmost of
thy strength, And forced by greater might to bow, Thy vaunting
threats are idle now.

My shafts have cut thy club in twain:

Useless it lies upon the plain,

And all thy pride and haughty trust Lie with it levelled in the
dust.

The words that thou hast said to-day, That thou wouldst wipe
the tears away Of all the giants I have slain,

My deeds shall render void and vain. Thou meanest of the
giants' breed, Evil in thought and word and deed, My hand shall
take that life of thine

As Garuda seized the juice divine. [264]

Thou, rent by shafts, this day shalt die:

Low on the ground thy corse shall lie, And bubbles from the
cloven neck

With froth and blood thy skin shall deck. With dust and mire all
rudely dyed,

Thy torn arms lying by thy side,

While streams of blood each limb shall steep, Thou on earth's
breast shalt take thy sleep

476 Garuda, the King of Birds, carried off the Amrit or drink of
Paradise from Indra's custody.

Like a fond lover when he strains The beauty whom at length he
gains. Now when thy heavy eyelids close For ever in thy deep
repose,

Again shall Darśak forest be Safe refuge for the devotee.

Thou slain, and all thy race who held The realm of Janasthán
expelled, Again shall happy hermits rove, Fearing no danger,
through the grove.

Within those bounds, their brethren slain, No giant shall this day
remain,

But all shall fly with many a tear And fearing, rid the saints of
fear. This bitter day shall misery bring On all the race that calls
thee king.

Fierce as their lord, thy dames shall know, Bereft of joys, the
taste of woe.

Base, cruel wretch, of evil mind, Plaguer of Bráhmans and
mankind, With trembling hands each devotee Feeds holy fires in
dread of thee.”

Thus with wild fury unrepressed Raghu's brave son the fiend
addressed; And Khara, as his wrath grew high, Thus thundered
forth his fierce reply:

“By senseless pride to madness wrought, By danger girt thou
fearest naught,

Nor heedest, numbered with the dead, What thou shouldst say
and leave unsaid. When Fate's tremendous coils enfold The
captive in resistless hold,

He knows not right from wrong, each sense Numbed by that
deadly influence.”

He spoke, and when his speech was done Bent his fierce brows
on Raghu's son.

With eager eyes he looked around If lethal arms might yet be
found. Not far away and full in view

A Sál-tree towering upward grew. His lips in mighty strain
compressed, He tore it up with root and crest,

With huge arms waved it o'er his head And hurled it shouting,
Thou art dead. But Ráma, unsurpassed in might, Stayed with his

shafts its onward flight, And furious longing seized his soul
The giant in the dust to roll.

Great drops of sweat each limb bedewed, His red eyes showed
his wrathful mood. A thousand arrows, swiftly sent,

The giant's bosom tore and rent. From every gash his body
showed The blood in foamy torrents flowed, As springing from
their caverns leap Swift rivers down the mountain steep.

When Khara felt each deadened power Yielding beneath that
murderous shower, He charged, infuriate with the scent

Of blood, in dire bewilderment.

But Ráma watched, with ready bow, The onset of his bleeding
foe,

And ere the monster reached him, drew Backward in haste a
yard or two.

Then from his side a shaft he took

Whose mortal stroke no life might brook:

Of peerless might, it bore the name

Of Brahmá's staff, and glowed with flame:

Lord Indra, ruler of the skies, Himself had given the glorious
prize. His bow the virtuous hero drew,

And at the fiend the arrow flew. Hissing and roaring like the
blast Of tempest through the air it passed, And fixed, by Ráma's
vigour sped, In the foe's breast its pointed head.

Then fell the fiend: the quenchless flame Burnt furious in his
wounded frame.

So burnt by Rudra Andhak⁴⁷⁷ fell

In Svetárar,ya's silvery dell:

So Namuchi and Vritra⁴⁷⁸ died

By steaming bolts that tamed their pride:

So Bala⁴⁷⁹ fell by lightning sent By Him who rules the
firmament.

Then all the Gods in close array

With the bright hosts who sing and play, Filled full of rapture
and amaze,

Sang hymns of joy in Ráma's praise, Beat their celestial drums
and shed Rain of sweet flowers upon his head.

For three short hours had scarcely flown, And by his pointed
shafts o'erthrown

The twice seven thousand fiends, whose will

⁴⁷⁷ A demon, son of Kasyap and Diti, slain by Rudra or Siva
when he attempted to carry off the tree of Paradise.

478 Namuchi and Vritra were two demons slain by Indra. Vritra personifies

drought, the enemy of Indra, who imprisons the rain in the cloud.

479 Another demon slain by Indra.

Could change their shapes, in death were still, With Trisirás and Dúshar, slain,

And Khara, leader of the train.

“O wondrous deed,” the bards began, “The noblest deed of virtuous man! Heroic strength that stood alone, And firmness e’en as Vishr,u’s own!”

Thus having sung, the shining train

Turned to their heavenly homes again. [265]

Then the high saints of royal race And loftiest station sought the place, And by the great Agastya led,

With reverence to Ráma said:

“For this, Lord Indra, glorious sire, Majestic as the burning fire,
Who crushes cities in his rage, Sought Sarabhanga’s hermitage.
Thou wast, this great design to aid, Led by the saints to seek
this shade, And with thy mighty arm to kill The giants who
delight in ill.

Thou Dasaratha’s noble son,

The battle for our sake hast won, And saints in Dar,9ak’s wild
who live Their days to holy tasks can give.”

Forth from the mountain cavern came The hero Lakshmar, with
the dame.

And rapture beaming from his face, Resought the hermit
dwelling-place. Then when the mighty saints had paid Due
honour for the victor’s aid,

The glorious Ráma honoured too By Lakshmar, to his cot
withdrew. When Sítá looked upon her lord,

His foemen slain, the saints restored, In pride and rapture
uncontrolled She clasped him in her loving hold. On the dead
fiends her glances fell: She saw her lord alive and well,
Victorious after toil and pain,

And Janak's child was blest again.

Once more, once more with new delight Her tender arms she
threw

Round Ráma whose victorious might Had crushed the demon
crew.

Then as his grateful reverence paid Each saint of lofty soul,
O'er her sweet face, all fears allayed, The flush of transport
stole.

Canto XXXI. Rávan.

But of the host of giants one, Akampan, from the field had run
And sped to Lanká⁴⁸⁰ to relate

⁴⁸⁰ The capital of the giant king Rávar,.

In Rávar,'s ear the demons' fate:

“King, many a giant from the shade Of Janasthán in death is laid:

Khara the chief is slain, and I Could scarcely from the battle fly.”

Fierce anger, as the monarch heard, Inflamed his look, his bosom stirred, And while with scorching glance he eyed The messenger, he thus replied:

“What fool has dared, already dead, Strike Janasthán, the general dread?

Who is the wretch shall vainly try

In earth, heaven, hell, from me to fly? Vaisravar,,481 Indra, Vishr,u, He

Who rules the dead, must reverence me; For not the mightiest lord of these

Can brave my will and live at ease. Fate finds in me a mightier fate

To burn the fires that devastate. With unresisted influence I

Can force e'en Death himself to die, With all-surpassing might restrain The fury of the hurricane,

And burn in my tremendous ire The glory of the sun and fire.”

481 Kuvera, the God of gold.

As thus the fiend's hot fury blazed, His trembling hands
Akampan raised, And with a voice which fear made weak,
Permission craved his tale to speak.

King Rávar, gave the leave he sought, And bade him tell the
news he brought. His courage rose, his voice grew bold, And
thus his mournful tale he told:

“A prince with mighty shoulders, sprung From Dasaratha, brave
and young,

With arms well moulded, bears the name Of Ráma with a lion's
frame.

Renowned, successful, dark of limb, Earth has no warrior equals
him.

He fought in Janasthán and slew Dúshar, the fierce and Khara
too.”

Rávar, the giants' royal chief. Received Akampan's tale of grief.
Then, panting like an angry snake, These words in turn the
monarch spake:

“Say quick, did Ráma seek the shade Of Janasthán with Indra's
aid,

And all the dwellers in the skies To back his hardy enterprise?”

Akampan heard, and straight obeyed His master, and his
answer made.

Then thus the power and might he told Of Raghu's son the lofty-
souled:

“Best is that chief of all who know With deftest art to draw the
bow.

His are strange arms of heavenly might, And none can match
him in the fight.

His brother Lakshmar, brave as he, Fair as the rounded moon to
see,

With eyes like night and voice that comes Deep as the roll of
beaten drums,

By Ráma's side stands ever near, Like wind that aids the flame's
career.

That glorious chief, that prince of kings, On Janasthán this ruin
brings.

No Gods were there,—dismiss the thought No heavenly legions
came and fought.

His swift-winged arrows Ráma sent, Each bright with gold and
ornament.

To serpents many-faced they turned: [266]

The giant hosts they ate and burned. Where'er these fled in wild
dismay Ráma was there to strike and slay. By him O King of
high estate,

Is Janasthán left desolate.”

Akampan ceased: in angry pride The giant monarch thus
replied: “To Janasthán myself will go

And lay these daring brothers low.”

Thus spoke the king in furious mood: Akampan then his speech
renewed:

“O listen while I tell at length The terror of the hero's strength.

No power can check, no might can tame Ráma, a chief of
noblest fame.

He with resistless shafts can stay The torrent foaming on its way. Sky, stars, and constellations, all

To his fierce might would yield and fall. His power could earth itself uphold Down sinking as it sank of old.⁴⁸²

Or all its plains and cities drown, Breaking the wild sea's barrier down; Crush the great deep's impetuous will, Or bid the furious wind be still.

He glorious in his high estate The triple world could devastate, And there, supreme of men, could place His creatures of a new-born race.

Never can mighty Ráma be O'ercome in fight, my King, by thee. Thy giant host the day might win

From him, if heaven were gained by sin. If Gods were joined with demons, they Could ne'er, I ween, that hero slay,

But guile may kill the wondrous man; Attend while I disclose the plan.

His wife, above all women graced, Is Sítá of the dainty waist, With limbs to fair proportion true, And a soft skin of lustrous hue,

Round neck and arm rich gems are twined: She is the gem of womankind.

With her no bright Gandharví vies, No nymph or Goddess in the
skies;

And none to rival her would dare

'Mid dames who part the long black hair.

482 In the great deluge.

That hero in the wood beguile,

And steal his lovely spouse the while. Reft of his darling wife, be
sure, Brief days the mourner will endure.”

With flattering hope of triumph moved The giant king that plan
approved, Pondered the counsel in his breast,

And then Akampan thus addressed: “Forth in my car I go at
morn, None but the driver with me borne, And this fair Sítá will I
bring

Back to my city triumphing.”

Forth in his car by asses drawn The giant monarch sped at
dawn, Bright as the sun, the chariot cast Light through the sky
as on it passed. Then high in air that best of cars Traversed the
path of lunar stars, Sending a fitful radiance pale

As moonbeams shot through cloudy veil. Far on his airy way he
flew:

Near Tá9akeya's⁴⁸³ grove he drew.

Márícha welcomed him, and placed Before him food which
giants taste, With honour led him to a seat,

And brought him water for his feet; And then with timely words
addressed Such question to his royal guest:

483 The giant Márícha, son of Tá9aká. Tá9aká was slain by
Ráma. See p. 39.

“Speak, is it well with thee whose sway The giant multitudes
obey?

I know not all, and ask in fear

The cause, O King, why thou art here.”

Ráva, the giants' mighty king, Heard wise Márícha's questioning,
And told with ready answer, taught In eloquence, the cause he
sought: "My guards, the bravest of my band, Are slain by
Ráma's vigorous hand, And Janasthán, that feared no hate Of
foes, is rendered desolate.

Come, aid me in the plan I lay
To steal the conqueror's wife away."

Márícha heard the king's request, And thus the giant chief
addressed:

"What foe in friendly guise is he Who spoke of Sítá's name to
thee?

Who is the wretch whose thought would bring Destruction on
the giants' king?

Whose is the evil counsel, say, That bids thee bear his wife
away, And careless of thy life provoke

Earth's loftiest with threatening stroke? A foe is he who dared
suggest

This hopeless folly to thy breast, Whose ill advice would bid thee
draw The venomed fang from serpent's jaw. By whose unwise
suggestion led

Wilt thou the path of ruin tread?

Whence falls the blow that would destroy Thy gentle sleep of
ease and joy?

Like some wild elephant is he That rears his trunk on high,
Lord of an ancient pedigree, Huge tusks, and furious eye.
Rávar,, no rover of the night With bravest heart can brook,
Met in the front of deadly fight,
On Raghu's son to look. [267]

The giant hosts were brave and strong, Good at the bow and
spear:

But Ráma slew the routed throng, A lion 'mid the deer.
No lion's tooth can match his sword, Or arrows fiercely shot:
He sleeps, he sleeps—the lion lord; Be wise and rouse him not.

O Monarch of the giants, well Upon my counsel think,
Lest thou for ever in the hell Of Ráma's vengeance sink:
A hell, where deadly shafts are sent From his tremendous-bow,
While his great arms all flight prevent, Like deepest mire below:
Where the wild floods of battle rave Above the foeman's head,
And each with many a feathery wave Of shafts is garlanded.
O, quench the flames that in thy breast With raging fury burn;

And pacified and self-possessed To Lanká's town return.
Rest thou in her imperial bowers With thine own wives content,

And in the wood let Ráma's hours With Sítá still be spent.”

The lord of Lanká's isle obeyed The counsel, and his purpose
stayed. Borne on his car he parted thence And gained his royal
residence.

Canto XXXII. Rávan Roused.

But Súrpar,akhá saw the plain
Spread with the fourteen thousand slain, Doers of cruel deeds
o'erthrown
By Ráma's mighty arm alone, Add Trisirás and Dúshar, dead,
And Khara, with the hosts they led. Their death she saw, and
mad with pain, Roared like a cloud that brings the rain, And fled
in anger and dismay

To Lanká, seat of Rávar,'s sway. There on a throne of royal state
Exalted sat the potentate,

Begirt with counsellor and peer,

Like Indra with the Storm Gods near. Bright as the sun's full
splendour shone The glorious throne he sat upon,

As when the blazing fire is red Upon a golden altar fed.

Wide gaped his mouth at every breath, Tremendous as the jaws
of Death.

With him high saints of lofty thought,

Canto XXXII. Rávan Roused. 945

Gandharvas, Gods, had vainly fought. The wounds were on his
body yet

From wars where Gods and demons met. And scars still marked
his ample chest By fierce Airávat's⁴⁸⁴ tusk impressed.

A score of arms, ten necks, had he, His royal gear was brave to
see.

His massive form displayed each sign That marks the heir of
kingly line.

In stature like a mountain height,

His arms were strong, his teeth were white, And all his frame of massive mould Seemed lazulite adorned with gold.

A hundred seams impressed each limb Where Vishnu's arm had wounded him, And chest and shoulder bore the print Of sword and spear and arrow dint, Where every God had struck a blow In battle with the giant foe.

His might to wildest rage could wake

The sea whose faith naught else can shake, Hurl towering mountains to the earth,

And crush e'en foes of heavenly birth. The bonds of law and right he spurned: To others' wives his fancy turned.

Celestial arms he used in fight, And loved to mar each holy rite. He went to Bhogavatí's town,⁴⁸⁵ Where Vāsuki was beaten down, And stole, victorious in the strife, Lord Takshaka's beloved wife.

484 Indra's elephant.

485 Bhogavatí, in Pátála in the regions under the earth, is the capital of the serpent race whose king is Vāsuki.

Kailása's lofty crest he sought, And when in vain Kuvera fought,

Stole Pushpak thence, the car that through The air, as willed the
master, flew.

Impelled by furious anger, he

Spoiled Nandan's shade and Naliní, And Chaitraratha's
heavenly grove, The haunts where Gods delight to rove. Tall as a
hill that cleaves the sky,

He raised his mighty arms on high To check the blessed moon,
and stay The rising of the Lord of Day.

Ten thousand years the giant spent On dire austerities intent,
And of his heads an offering, laid Before the Self-existent,
made.

No God or fiend his life could take, Gandharva, goblin, bird, or
snake: Safe from all fears of death, except From human arm,
that life was kept. Oft when the priests began to raise Their
consecrating hymns of praise,

He spoiled the Soma's sacred juice

[268]Poured forth by them in solemn use. The sacrifice his
hands o'erthrew, And cruelly the Bráhmans slew.

His was a heart that naught could melt, Joying in woes which
others felt.

She saw the ruthless monster there, Dread of the worlds, unused
to spare. In robes of heavenly texture dressed, Celestial wreaths
adorned his breast.

486 the grove of Indra.

He sat a shape of terror, like Destruction ere the worlds it strike.
She saw him in his pride of place, The joy of old Pulastya's⁴⁸⁷
race, Begirt by counsellor and peer, Rávar,, the foeman's mortal
fear, And terror in her features shown, The giantess approached
the throne.

Then Súrpar,akhá bearing yet Each deeply printed trace
Where the great-hearted chief had set A mark upon her face,
Impelled by terror and desire, Still fierce, no longer bold,
To Rávar, of the eyes of fire Her tale, infuriate, told.

Canto XXXIII. Súrpanakhá's Speech.

Burning with anger, in the ring

Of counsellors who girt their king, To Rávar,, ravener of man,

With bitter words she thus began:

487 Pulastya is considered as the ancestor of the Rakshases or giants, as he is the father of Visravas, the father of Rávar, and his brethren.

“Wilt thou absorbed in pleasure, still Pursue unchecked thy selfish will:

Nor turn thy heedless eyes to see

The coming fate which threatens thee? The king who days and hours employs In base pursuit of vulgar joys

Must in his people’s sight be vile As fire that smokes on funeral pile. He who when duty calls him spares No time for thought of royal cares, Must with his realm and people all Involved in fatal ruin fall.

As elephants in terror shrink From the false river’s miry brink,

Thus subjects from a monarch flee Whose face their eyes may
seldom see, Who spends the hours for toil ordained In evil
courses unrestrained.

He who neglects to guard and hold His kingdom by himself
controlled, Sinks nameless like a hill whose head Is buried in the
ocean's bed.

Thy foes are calm and strong and wise, Fiends, Gods, and
warriors of the skies,— How, heedless, wicked, weak, and vain,
Wilt thou thy kingly state maintain?

Thou, lord of giants, void of sense, Slave of each changing
influence, Heedless of all that makes a king, Destruction on thy
head wilt bring.

O conquering chief, the prince, who boasts, Of treasury and rule
and hosts,

By others led, though lord of all, Is meaner than the lowest
thrall.

For this are monarchs said to be Long-sighted, having power to
see Things far away by faithful eyes Of messengers and loyal
spies.

But aid from such thou wilt not seek: Thy counsellors are blind
and weak, Or thou from these hadst surely known Thy legions
and thy realm o'erthrown.

Know, twice seven thousand, fierce in might, Are slain by Ráma
in the fight,

And they, the giant host who led, Khara and Dúshar,, both are
dead. Know, Ráma with his conquering arm

Has freed the saints from dread of harm, Has smitten
Janasthán and made Asylum safe in Dar,9ak's shade.

Enslaved and dull, of blinded sight, Intoxicate with vain delight,
Thou closest still thy heedless eyes To dangers in thy realm that
rise. A king besotted, mean, unkind,

Of niggard hand and slavish mind. Will find no faithful followers
heed Their master in his hour of need.

The friend on whom he most relies, In danger, from a monarch
flies, Imperious in his high estate, Conceited, proud, and
passionate; Who ne'er to state affairs attends

With wholesome fear when woe impends Most weak and
worthless as the grass, Soon from his sway the realm will pass.

For rotting wood a use is found,

For clods and dust that strew the ground,

But when a king has lost his sway, Useless he falls, and sinks for
aye. As raiment by another worn,

As faded garland crushed and torn, So is, unthroned, the
proudest king, Though mighty once, a useless thing. But he who
every sense subdues And each event observant views,

Rewards the good and keeps from wrong, Shall reign secure
and flourish long.

Though lulled in sleep his senses lie He watches with a ruler's
eye, Untouched by favour, ire, and hate, And him the people
celebrate.

[269]O weak of mind, without a trace Of virtues that a king
should grace,

Who hast not learnt from watchful spy That low in death the
giants lie.

Scorner of others, but enchained By every base desire,

By thee each duty is disdained Which time and place require.

Soon wilt thou, if thou canst not learn, Ere yet it be too late,

The good from evil to discern, Fall from thy high estate.”

As thus she ceased not to upbraid The king with cutting speech,
And every fault to view displayed,

Naming and marking each, The monarch of the sons of night,

Of wealth and power possessed, And proud of his imperial
might,

Long pondered in his breast.

Canto XXXIV. Súrpanakhá's Speech.

Then forth the giant's fury broke As Súrpar,akhá harshly spoke.
Girt by his lords the demon king
Looked on her, fiercely questioning:

“Who is this Ráma, whence, and where?

His form, his might, his deeds declare. His wandering steps what
purpose led To Dar,9ak forest, hard to tread?

What arms are his that he could smite In fray the rovers of the
night,

And Trisirás and Dúshar, lay

Low on the earth, and Khara slay? Tell all, my sister, and declare

Who maimed thee thus, of form most fair.”

Thus by the giant king addressed, While burnt her fury
unrepressed, The giantess declared at length

The hero's form and deeds and strength:

“Long are his arms and large his eyes: A black deer's skin his
dress supplies.

King Dasaratha's son is he, Fair as Kandarpa's self to see.

Adorned with many a golden band, A bow, like Indra's, arms his
hand, And shoots a flood of arrows fierce

As venom'd snakes to burn and pierce. I looked, I looked, but
never saw

His mighty hand the bowstring draw That sent the deadly
arrows out,

While rang through air his battle-shout. I looked, I looked, and
saw too well How with that hail the giants fell,

As falls to earth the golden grain, Struck by the blows of Indra's
rain.

He fought, and twice seven thousand, all Terrific giants, strong
and tall,

Fell by the pointed shafts o'erthrown Which Ráma shot on foot,
alone.

Three little hours had scarcely fled,— Khara and Dúshar, both
were dead, And he had freed the saints and made Asylum sure
in Dar,9ak's shade.

Me of his grace the victor spared, Or I the giants' fate had
shared.

The high-souled Ráma would not deign His hand with woman's
blood to stain. The glorious Lakshmar,, justly dear,

In gifts and warrior might his peer, Serves his great brother with
the whole Devotion of his faithful soul: Impetuous victor, bold
and wise,

First in each hardy enterprise,

Still ready by his side to stand, A second self or better hand.

And Ráma has a large-eyed spouse, Pure as the moon her
cheek and brows, Dearer than life in Ráma's sight, Whose
happiness is her delight.

With beauteous hair and nose the dame From head to foot has
naught to blame.

She shines the wood's bright Goddess, Queen Of beauty with
her noble mien.

First in the ranks of women placed Is Sítá of the dainty waist.

In all the earth mine eyes have ne'er Seen female form so
sweetly fair.

Goddess nor nymph can vie with her, Nor bride of heavenly
chorister.

He who might call this dame his own, Her eager arms about him
thrown, Would live more blest in Sítá's love Than Indra in the
world above.

She, peerless in her form and face And rich in every gentle
grace,

Is worthy bride, O King, for thee, As thou art meet her lord to
be.

I even I, will bring the bride

In triumph to her lover's side— This beauty fairer than the rest,

With rounded limb and heaving breast. Each wound upon my
face I owe

To cruel Lakshmar,'s savage blow. But thou, O brother, shalt
survey Her moonlike loveliness to-day,

And Káma's piercing shafts shall smite Thine amorous bosom at
the sight.

If in thy breast the longing rise

To make thine own the beauteous prize, Up, let thy better foot
begin

The journey and the treasure win. If, giant Lord, thy favouring
eyes Regard the plan which I advise, Up, cast all fear and doubt
away And execute the words I say

Come, giant King, this treasure seek,

[270] For thou art strong and they are weak. Let Sítá of the
faultless frame

Be borne away and be thy dame. Thy host in Janasthán who
dwelt

Forth to the battle hied.

And by the shafts which Ráma dealt They perished in their
pride.

Dúshar, and Khara breathe no more, Laid low upon the plain.

Arise, and ere the day be o'er Take vengeance for the slain.”

Canto XXXV. Rávan's Journey.

When Rávar,, by her fury spurred, That terrible advice had
heard,

He bade his nobles quit his side, And to the work his thought
applied. He turned his anxious mind to scan On every side the
hardy plan:

The gain against the risk he laid,
Each hope and fear with care surveyed,

And in his heart at length decreed To try performance of the
deed. Then steady in his dire intent

The giant to the courtyard went. There to his charioteer he cried,
“Bring forth the car whereon I ride.” Aye ready at his master’s
word

The charioteer the order heard, And yoked with active zeal the
best Of chariots at his lord’s behest.

Asses with heads of goblins drew That wondrous car where’er it
flew. Obedient to the will it rolled

Adorned with gems and glistening gold. Then mounting, with a
roar as loud

As thunder from a labouring cloud, The mighty monarch to the
tide

Of Ocean, lord of rivers, hied.

White was the shade above him spread, White chouris waved
around his head, And he with gold and jewels bright Shone like
the glossy lazulite.

Ten necks and twenty arms had he: His royal gear was good to
see.

The heavenly Gods' insatiate foe, Who made the blood of
hermits flow, He like the Lord of Hills appeared

With ten huge heads to heaven upreared. In the great car
whereon he rode,

Like some dark cloud the giant showed, When round it in their
close array

The cranes 'mid wreaths of lightning play. He looked, and saw,
from realms of air, The rocky shore of ocean, where

Unnumbered trees delightful grew With flower and fruit of every
hue. He looked on many a lilled pool With silvery waters fresh
and cool, And shores like spacious altars meet For holy hermits'
lone retreat.

The graceful palm adorned the scene, The plantain waved her
glossy green. There grew the sál and betel, there

On bending boughs the flowers were fair. There hermits dwelt
who tamed each sense By strictest rule of abstinence:

Gandharvas, Kinnars,⁴⁸⁸ thronged the place,

Nágas and birds of heavenly race. Bright minstrels of the
ethereal quire, And saints exempt from low desire, With Ájas,
sons of Brahmá's line, Maríchipas of seed divine, Vaikhánasas
and Máshas strayed, And Bálakhilyas⁴⁸⁹ in the shade.

The lovely nymphs of heaven were there, Celestial wreaths
confined their hair, And to each form new grace was lent
By wealth of heavenly ornament.

Well skilled was each in play and dance And gentle arts of
dalliance.

The glorious wife of many a God Those beautiful recesses trod,
There Gods and Dánavs, all who eat The food of heaven,
rejoiced to meet. The swan and Sáras thronged each bay

⁴⁸⁸ Beings with the body of a man and the head of a horse.

⁴⁸⁹ Ájas, Maríchipas, Vaikhánasas, Máshas, and Bálakhilyas are
classes of supernatural beings who lead the lives of hermits.

With curlews, ducks, and divers gay, Where the sea spray rose
soft and white O'er rocks of glossy lazulite.

As his swift way the fiend pursued Pale chariots of the Gods he viewed,
Bearing each lord whose rites austere Had raised him to the heavenly sphere.
Thereon celestial garlands hung,

There music played and songs were sung. Then bright Gandharvas met his view,
And heavenly nymphs, as on he flew.

He saw the sandal woods below, And precious trees of odorous flow,
That to the air around them lent Their riches of delightful scent;
Nor failed his roving eye to mark Tall aloe trees in grove and park.

He looked on wood with cassias filled, And plants which balmy sweets distilled,
Where her fair flowers the betel showed And the bright pods of pepper glowed.

The pearls in many a silvery heap Lay on the margin of the deep.

And grey rocks rose amid the red

Of coral washed from ocean's bed. [271]

High soared the mountain peaks that bore Treasures of gold and silver ore,

And leaping down the rocky walls Came wild and glorious waterfalls.

Fair towns which grain and treasure held, And dames who every gem excelled,

He saw outspread beneath him far, With steed, and elephant,
and car.

That ocean shore he viewed that showed

Fair as the blessed Gods' abode Where cool delightful breezes
played O'er levels in the freshest shade.

He saw a fig-tree like a cloud

With mighty branches earthward bowed. It stretched a hundred
leagues and made For hermit bands a welcome shade.

Thither the feathered king of yore An elephant and tortoise
bore, And lighted on a bough to eat The captives of his taloned
feet. The bough unable to sustain

The crushing weight and sudden strain, Loaded with sprays and
leaves of spring Gave way beneath the feathered king.

Under the shadow of the tree Dwelt many a saint and devotee,
Ájas, the sons of Brahmá's line, Máshas, Maríchipas divine.

Vaikhánasas, and all the race Of Bálakhilyas, loved the place.

But pitying their sad estate

The feathered monarch raised the weight Of the huge bough,
and bore away

The loosened load and captured prey. A hundred leagues away
he sped, Then on his monstrous booty fed,

And with the bough he smote the lands Where dwell the wild
Nisháda bands. High joy was his because his deed From
jeopardy the hermits freed.

That pride for great deliverance wrought A double share of
valour brought.

His soul conceived the high emprise

To snatch the Amrit from the skies. He rent the nets of iron first,
Then through the jewel chamber burst, And bore the drink of
heaven away That watched in Indra's palace lay.

Such was the hermit-sheltering tree Which Rávar, turned his eye
to see.

Still marked where Garu9 sought to rest, The fig-tree bore the
name of Blest.

When Rávar, stayed his chariot o'er The ocean's heart-
enchancing shore, He saw a hermitage that stood Sequestered
in the holy wood.

He saw the fiend Márícha there With deerskin garb, and matted
hair Coiled up in hermit guise, who spent His days by rule most
abstinent.

As guest and host are wont to meet, They met within that lone
retreat. Before the king Márícha placed Food never known to
human taste. He entertained his guest with meat And gave him
water for his feet, And then addressed the giant king With
timely words of questioning:

“Lord, is it well with thee, and well With those in Lanká’s town
who dwell? What sudden thought, what urgent need Has
brought thee with impetuous speed?”

The fiend Márícha thus addressed Rávar, the king, his mighty
guest, And he, well skilled in arts that guide The eloquent, in turn
replied:

Canto XXXVI. Rávan’s Speech.

“Hear me, Márícha, while I speak, And tell thee why thy home I
seek. Sick and distressed am I, and see My surest hope and help
in thee.

Of Janasthán I need not tell, Where Súrpar,akhá, Khara, dwell,

And Dúshar, with the arm of might, And Trisirás, the fierce in
fight, Who feeds on human flesh and gore, And many noble
giants more,

Who roam in dark of midnight through The forest, brave and
strong and true. By my command they live at ease

And slaughter saints and devotees. Those twice seven thousand
giants, all Obedient to their captain's call,

Joying in war and ruthless deeds Follow where mighty Khara
leads. Those fearless warrior bands who roam Through
Janasthán their forest home, In all their terrible array

Met Ráma in the battle fray.

Girt with all weapons forth they sped With Khara at the army's
head.

Canto XXXVI. Rávan's Speech. 961

The front of battle Ráma held:

With furious wrath his bosom swelled. Without a word his hate
to show

He launched the arrows from his bow. On the fierce hosts the
missiles came, Each burning with destructive flame, The twice
seven thousand fell o'erthrown By him, a man, on foot, alone.

Khara the army's chief and pride, And Dúshar,, fearless warrior,
died, And Trisirás the fierce was slain, And Dar,9ak wood was
free again.

He, banished by his angry sire, Roams with his wife in mean
attire. This wretch, his Warrior tribe's disgrace

Has slain the best of giant race. [272]

Harsh, wicked, fierce and greedy-souled, A fool, with senses
uncontrolled,

No thought of duty stirs his breast: He joys to see the world
distressed.

He sought the wood with fair pretence Of truthful life and
innocence,

But his false hand my sister left Mangled, of nose and ears
bereft. This Ráma's wife who bears the name Of Sítá, in her face
and frame

Fair as a daughter of the skies,— Her will I seize and bring the
prize Triumphant from the forest shade: For this I seek thy
willing aid.

If thou, O mighty one, wilt lend

Thy help and stand beside thy friend, I with my brothers may
defy

All Gods embattled in the sky.

Come, aid me now, for thine the power To succour in the
doubtful hour.

Thou art in war and time of fear, For heart and hand, without a
peer. For thou art skilled in art and wile, A warrior brave and
trained in guile. With this one hope, this only aim,

O Rover of the Night, I came. Now let me tell what aid I ask To
back me in my purposed task. In semblance of a golden deer
Adorned with silver spots appear. Go, seek his dwelling: in the
way Of Ráma and his consort stray.

Doubt not the lady, when she sees The wondrous deer amid the
trees, Will bid her lord and Lakshmar, take The creature for its
beauty's sake.

Then when the chiefs have parted thence, And left her lone,
without defence,

As Ráhu storms the moonlight, I Will seize the lovely dame and
fly. Her lord will waste away and weep For her his valour could
not keep. Then boldly will I strike the blow

And wreak my vengeance on the foe.”

When wise Márícha heard the tale His heart grew faint, his
cheek was pale, He stared with open orbs, and tried

To moisten lips which terror dried, And grief, like death, his
bosom rent As on the king his look he bent.

The monarch's will he strove to stay, Distracted with alarm,
For well he knew the might that lay In Ráma's matchless arm.
With suppliant hands Márícha stood And thus began to tell
His counsel for the tyrant's good, And for his own as well:

Canto XXXVII. Márícha's Speech.

Márícha gave attentive ear The ruler of the fiends to hear:
Then, trained in all the rules that teach The eloquent, began his
speech:

“Tis easy task, O King, to find

Smooth speakers who delight the mind. But they who urge and
they who do Distasteful things and wise, are few.

Thou hast not learnt, by proof untaught, And borne away by
eager thought,

That Ráma, formed for high emprise, With Varur, or with Indra
vies.

Still let thy people live in peace,

Nor let their name and lineage cease, For Ráma with his
vengeful hand Can sweep the giants from the land. O, let not
Janak's daughter bring Destruction on the giant king.

Let not the lady Sítá wake

A tempest, on thy head to break.

Still let the dame, by care untried, Be happy by her husband's
side, Lest swift avenging ruin fall

On glorious Lanká, thee, and all.

Men such as thou with wills unchained, Advised by sin and
unrestrained, Destroy themselves, the king, the state, And leave
the people desolate.

Ráma, in bonds of duty held, Was never by his sire expelled. He
is no wretch of greedy mind, Dishonour of his Warrior kind.

Free from all touch of rancorous spite, All creatures' good is his
delight.

He saw his sire of truthful heart Deceived by Queen Kaikeyí's
art, And said, a true and duteous son,

“What thou hast promised shall be done.” To gratify the lady’s will,

His father’s promise to fulfil, He left his realm and all delight
For Dar,9ak wood, an anchorite. No cruel wretch, no senseless fool
Is Ráma, unrestrained by rule.

This groundless charge has ne’er been heard, Nor shouldst thou
speak the slanderous word. Ráma in truth and goodness bold
Is Virtue’s self in human mould,

The sovereign of the world confessed As Indra rules among the
Blest.

And dost thou plot from him to rend The darling whom his arms
defend?

Less vain the hope to steal away

[273] The glory of the Lord of Day.

O Rávar,, guard thee from the fire Of vengeful Ráma’s kindled
ire,— Each spark a shaft with deadly aim,

While bow and falchion feed the flame. Cast not away in
hopeless strife

Thy realm, thy bliss, thine own dear life. O Rávar, of his might
beware,

A God of Death who will not spare. That bow he knows so well
to draw Is the destroyer's flaming jaw,

And with his shafts which flash and glow He slays the armies of
the foe.

Thou ne'er canst win—the thought forego— From the safe guard
of shaft and bow

King Janak's child, the dear delight Of Ráma unapproached in
might. The spouse of Raghu's son, confessed Lion of men with
lion chest,— Dearer than life, through good and ill Devoted to
her husband's will,

The slender-waisted, still must be From thy polluting touches
free.

Far better grasp with venturous hand The flame to wildest fury
fanned.

What, King of giants, canst thou gain From this attempt so wild
and vain? If in the fight his eye he bend

Upon thee, Lord, thy days must end, So life and bliss and royal
sway, Lost beyond hope, will pass away. Summon each lord of
high estate, And chief, Vibhishar,⁴⁹⁰ to debate.

⁴⁹⁰ “The younger brother of the giant Rávar,; when he and his
brother had practiced austerities for a long series of years,
Brahmá appeared to offer

With peers in lore of counsel tried Consider, reason, and decide

Scan strength and weakness, count the cost, What may be
gained and what be lost.

Examine and compare aright

Thy proper power and Ráma's might, Then if thy weal be still thy
care, Thou wilt be prudent and forbear.

O giant King, the contest shun, Thy force is all too weak

The lord of Kosál's mighty son In deadly fray to seek.

King of the hosts that rove at night, O hear what I advise:

My prudent counsel do not slight; Be patient and be wise.”

Canto XXXVIII. Márícha's Speech.

them boons: Vibhishar,a asked that he might never meditate any unrighteous- ness.... On the death of Rávar, Vibhishar,a was installed as Rájá of Lanká.” GARRETT’S{FNS Classical Dictionary of India.

“Once in my strength and vigour’s pride I roamed this earth from side to side, And towering like a mountain’s crest,

A thousand Nágas’491 might possessed.

Like some vast sable cloud I showed: My golden armlets flashed and glowed. A crown I wore, an axe I swayed,

And all I met were sore afraid.

I roved where Dar,9ak wood is spread; On flesh of slaughtered saints I fed.

Then Visvámitra, sage revered, Holy of heart, my fury feared. To Dasaratha’s court he sped

And went before the king and said:492

“With me, my lord, thy Ráma send On holy days his aid to lend.

Márícha fills my soul with dread And keeps me sore disquieted.”

The monarch heard the saint’s request And thus the glorious sage addressed:

“My boy as yet in arms untrained The age of twelve has scarce attained. But I myself a host will lead

To guard thee in the hour of need.

My host with fourfold troops complete, The rover of the night
shall meet,

And I, O best of saints, will kill Thy foeman and thy prayer fulfil.”

The king vouchsafed his willing aid: The saint again this answer
made:

491 Serpent-gods.

492 See p. 33.

“By Ráma’s might, and his alone, Can this great fiend be
overthrown. I know in days of yore the Blest Thy saving help in
fight confessed. Still of thy famous deeds they tell In heaven
above, in earth, and hell, A mighty host obeys thy hest:

Here let it still, I pray thee, rest. Thy glorious son, though yet a
boy, Will in the fight that fiend destroy. Ráma alone with me
shall go:

Be happy, victor of the foe.”

He spoke: the monarch gave assent, And Ráma to the hermit
lent.

So to his woodland home in joy Went Visvámitra with the boy.
With ready bow the champion stood To guard the rites in
Dar,9ak wood.

With glorious eyes, most bright to view, Beardless as yet and
dark of hue;

A single robe his only wear,

[274]His temples veiled with waving hair, Around his neck a
chain of gold,

He grasped the bow he loved to hold; And the young hero's
presence made A glory in the forest shade.

Thus Ráma with his beauteous mien, Like the young rising moon
was seen, I, like a cloud which tempest brings, My arms
adorned with golden rings, Proud of the boon which lent me
might, Approached where dwelt the anchorite. But Ráma saw
me venturing nigh,

Raising my murderous axe on high; He saw, and fearless of the
foe, Strung with calm hand his trusty bow.

By pride of conscious strength beguiled, I scorned him as a
feeble child,

And rushed with an impetuous bound On Visvámitra's holy
ground.

A keen swift shaft he pointed well, The foeman's rage to check
and quell, And hurled a hundred leagues away Deep in the
ocean waves I lay.

He would not kill, but, nobly brave, My forfeit life he chose to
save.

So there I lay with wandering sense Dazed by that arrow's
violence.

Long in the sea I lay: at length

Slowly returned my sense and strength, And rising from my
watery bed

To Lanká's town again I sped. Thus was I spared, but all my
band

Fell slain by Ráma's conquering hand,— A boy, untrained in
warrior's skill,

Of iron arm and dauntless will. If thou with Ráma still, in spite

Of warning and of prayer, wilt fight, I see terrific woes impend,

And dire defeat thy days will end. Thy giants all will feel the blow

And share the fatal overthrow, Who love the taste of joy and
play, The banquet and the festal day.

Thine eyes will see destruction take Thy Lanká, lost for Sítá's
sake, And stately pile and palace fall

With terrace, dome, and jewelled wall. The good will die: the
crime of kings Destruction on the people brings:

The sinless die, as in the lake

The fish must perish with the snake. The prostrate giants thou
wilt see Slain for this folly wrought by thee,

Their bodies bright with precious scent And sheen of heavenly
ornament;

Or see the remnant of thy train Seek refuge far, when help is
vain

And with their wives, or widowed, fly To every quarter of the sky;

Thy mournful eyes, where'er they turn, Will see thy stately city
burn,

When royal homes with fire are red, And arrowy nets around are
spread. A sin that tops all sins in shame

Is outrage to another's dame,

A thousand wives thy palace fill, And countless beauties wait thy
will. O rest contented with thine own, Nor let thy race be
overthrown.

If thou, O King, hast still delight

In rank and wealth and power and might, In noble wives, in
troops of friends,

In all that royal state attends, I warn thee, cast not all away,

Nor challenge Ráma to the fray. If deaf to every friendly prayer,
Thou still wilt seek the strife, And from the side of Ráma tear
His lovely Maithil wife,
Soon will thy life and empire end

Destroyed by Ráma's bow,
And thou, with kith and kin and friend, To Yáma's realm must
go.”

Canto XXXIX. Márícha's Speech.

“I told thee of that dreadful day
When Ráma smote and spared to slay. Now hear me, Rávar,,
while I tell What in the after time befell.
At length, restored to strength and pride, I and two mighty
fiends beside Assumed the forms of deer and strayed
Through Dar,9ak wood in lawn and glade, I reared terrific horns:
beneath

Were flaming tongue and pointed teeth. I roamed where'er my
fancy led,

And on the flesh of hermits fed, In sacred haunt, by hallowed
tree, Where'er the ritual fires might be.

A fearful shape, I wandered through The wood, and many a
hermit slew. With ruthless rage the saints I killed Who in the
grove their tasks fulfilled. When smitten to the earth they sank,
Their flesh I ate, their blood I drank, And with my cruel deeds
dismayed All dwellers in the forest shade, Spoiling their rites in
bitter hate, With human blood inebriate.

Once in the wood I chanced to see

Ráma again, a devotee,

A hermit, fed on scanty fare,

Who made the good of all his care. His noble wife was by his
side, And Lakshmar, in the battle tried.

In senseless pride I scorned the might Of that illustrious
anchorite,

And heedless of a hermit foe,

[275] Recalled my earlier overthrow.

I charged him in my rage and scorn To slay him with my
pointed horn, In heedless haste, to fury wrought As on my

former wounds I thought. Then from the mighty bow he drew
Three foe-destroying arrows flew,

Keen-pointed, leaping from the string, Swift as the wind or
feathered king.

Dire shafts, on flesh of foemen fed, Like rushing thunderbolts
they sped,

With knots well smoothed and barbs well bent, Shot e'en as one,
the arrows went.

But I who Ráma's might had felt, And knew the blows the hero
dealt, Escaped by rapid flight. The two Who lingered on the
spot, he slew. I fled from mortal danger, freed

From the dire shaft by timely speed. Now to deep thought my
days I give, And as a humble hermit live.

In every shrub, in every tree I view that noblest devotee. In
every knotted trunk I mark

His deerskin and his coat of bark, And see the bow-armed
Ráma stand

Like Yáma with his noose in hand. I tell thee Rávar,, in my fright
A thousand Rámas mock my sight, This wood with every bush
and bough Seems all one fearful Ráma now.

Throughout the grove there is no spot So lonely where I see him
not.

He haunts me in my dreams by night, And wakes me with the
wild affright. The letter that begins his name

Sends terror through my startled frame. The rapid cars whereon
we ride,

The rich rare jewels, once my pride, Have names⁴⁹³ that strike
upon mine ear With hated sound that counsels fear.

His mighty strength too well I know, Nor art thou match for
such a foe.

Too strong were Raghus's son in fight For Namuchi or Bali's
might.

Then Ráma to the battle dare, Or else be patient and forbear;

But, wouldst thou see me live in peace, Let mention of the hero
cease.

The good whose holy lives were spent In deepest thought, most
innocent, With all their people many a time Have perished
through another's crime. So in the common ruin, I

Must for another's folly die,

Do all thy strength and courage can, But ne'er will I approve the
plan.

For he, in might supremely great,

493 The Sanskrit words for car and jewels begin with ra.

The giant world could extirpate, Since, when impetuous Khara
sought The grove of Janasthán and fought For Súrpar,akhá's
sake, he died

By Ráma's hand in battle tried.

How has he wronged thee? Soothly swear, And Ráma's fault
and sin declare.

I warn thee, and my words are wise, I seek thy people's weal:

But if this rede thou wilt despise, Nor hear my last appeal,

Thou with thy kin and all thy friends In fight this day wilt die,

When his great bow the hero bends, And shafts unerring fly.”

Canto XL. Rávan's Speech.

But Rávar, scorned the rede he gave In timely words to warn
and save, E'en as the wretch who hates to live Rejects the herb
the leeches give.

By fate to sin and ruin spurred, That sage advice the giant
heard, Then in reproaches hard and stern Thus to Márícha spoke
in turn:

“Is this thy counsel, weak and base, Unworthy of thy giant race?
Thy speech is fruitless, vain, thy toil Like casting seed on barren
soil.

No words of thine shall drive me back From Ráma and the swift
attack.

A fool is he, inured to sin, And more, of human origin. The
craven, at a woman's call

To leave his sire, his mother, all

The friends he loved, the power and sway, And hasten to the
woods away!

But now his anger will I rouse, Stealing away his darling spouse.
I in thy sight will ravish her From Khara's cruel murderer.

Upon this plan my soul is bent,

And naught shall move my firm intent, Not if the way through
demons led And Gods with Indra at their head. 'Tis thine, when
questioned, to explain The hope and fear, the loss and gain,
And, when thy king thy thoughts would know, The triumph or the
danger show.

A prudent counsellor should wait, And speak when ordered in
debate, With hands uplifted, calm and meek, If honour and
reward he seek.

Or, when some prudent course he sees

Which, spoken, may his king displease [276]

He should by hints of dexterous art His counsel to his lord
impart.

But prudent words are said in vain

When the blunt speech brings grief and pain.

A high-souled king will scarcely thank The man who shames his
royal rank. Five are the shapes that kings assume, Of majesty,
of grace, and gloom:

Like Indra now, or Agni, now

Like the dear Moon, with placid brow: Like mighty Varur, now
they show, Now fierce as He who rules below.

O giant, monarchs lofty-souled

Are kind and gentle, stern and bold, With gracious love their
gifts dispense And swiftly punish each offence.

Thus subjects should their rulers view With all respect and
honour due.

But folly leads thy heart to slight Thy monarch and neglect his
right. Thou hast in lawless pride addressed With bitter words thy
royal guest.

I asked thee not my strength to scan, Or loss and profit in the
plan.

I only spoke to tell the deed O mighty one, by me decreed, And
bid thee in the peril lend

Thy succour to support thy friend. Hear me again, and I will tell
How thou canst aid my venture well. In semblance of a golden
deer Adorned with silver drops, appear: And near the cottage in
the way

Of Ráma and his consort stray.

Draw nigh, and wandering through the brake With thy strange
form her fancy take.

The Maithil dame with wondering eyes Will took upon thy fair
disguise,

And quickly bid her husband go

And bring the deer that charms her so, When Raghu's son has
left the place, Still pressing onward in the chase,

Cry out, "O Lakshmar, Ah, mine own!" With voice resembling
Ráma's tone.

When Lakshmar, hears his brother's cry, Impelled by Sítá he will
fly,

Restless with eager love, to aid The hunter in the distant shade.

When both her guards have left her side, Even as Indra,
thousand-eyed,

Clasps Sachí, will I bear away The Maithil dame an easy prey.

When thou, my friend, this aid hast lent, Go where thou wilt and
live content.

True servant, faithful to thy vow, With half my realm I thee
endow. Go forth, may luck thy way attend That leads thee to the
happy end. I in my car will quickly be

In Dar,9ak wood, and follow thee. So will I cheat this Ráma's
eyes And win without a blow the prize; And safe return to
Lanká's town

With thee, my friend, this day shall crown. But if thou wilt not aid
my will,

My hand this day thy blood shall spill. Yea, thou must share the
destined task, For force will take the help I ask.

No bliss that rebel's life attends Whose stubborn will his lord
offends.

Thy life, if thou the task assay, In jeopardy may stand;

Oppose me, and this very day Thou diest by this hand.

Now ponder all that thou hast heard Within thy prudent breast:

Reflect with care on every word, And do what seems the best.”

Canto XLI. Márícha's Reply.

Against his judgment sorely pressed By his imperious lord's
behest, Márícha threats of death defied

And thus with bitter words replied: “Ah, who, my King, with sinful
thought This wild and wicked counsel taught, By which
destruction soon will fall

On thee, thy sons, thy realm and all? Who is the guilty wretch
who sees With envious eye thy blissful ease, And by this plan, so
falsely shown, Death's gate for thee has open thrown? With
souls impelled by mean desire Thy foes against thy life conspire.

They urge thee to destruction's brink, And gladly would they see
thee sink. Who with base thought to work thee woe This fatal
road has dared to show,

And, triumph in his wicked eye, Would see thee enter in and die?
To all thy counsellors, untrue, The punishment of death is due,

Canto XLI. Márícha's Reply. 979

Who see thee tempt the dangerous way, Nor strain each nerve
thy foot to stay. Wise lords, whose king, by passion led, The
path of sin begins to tread, Restrain him while there yet is time:

But thine,—they see nor heed the crime. These by their master's
will obtain Merit and fame and joy and gain.

'Tis only by their master's grace That servants hold their lofty
place. But when the monarch stoops to sin

They lose each joy they strive to win, And all the people people
high and low

Fall in the common overthrow. [277]

Merit and fame and honour spring, Best of the mighty, from the
king.

So all should strive with heart and will To keep the king from
every ill.

Pride, violence, and sullen hate

Will ne'er maintain a monarch's state, And those who cruel
deeds advise Must perish when their master dies, Like drivers
with their cars o'erthrown In places rough with root and stone.

The good whose holy lives were spent On duty's highest laws
intent,

With wives and children many a time Have perished for
another's crime.

Hapless are they whose sovereign lord, Opposed to all, by all
abhorred,

Is cruel-hearted, harsh, severe: Thus might a jackal tend the
deer. Now all the giant race await, Destroyed by thee, a speedy
fate,

Ruled by a king so cruel-souled, Foolish in heart and
uncontrolled. Think not I fear the sudden blow That threatens
now to lay me low:

I mourn the ruin that I see Impending o'er thy host and thee.
Me first perchance will Ráma kill,

But soon his hand thy blood will spill. I die, and if by Ráma slain

And not by thee, I count it gain. Soon as the hero's face I see
His angry eyes will murder me,

And if on her thy hands thou lay

Thy friends and thou are dead this day. If with my help thou still
must dare The lady from her lord to tear, Farewell to all our
days are o'er, Lanká and giants are no more.

In vain, in vain, an earnest friend, I warn thee, King, and pray.

Thou wilt not to my prayers attend, Or heed the words I say

So men, when life is fleeting fast And death's sad hour is nigh,
Heedless and blinded to the last

Reject advice and die.”

Canto XLII. Márícha Transformed.

Márícha thus in wild unrest

With bitter words the king addressed. Then to his giant lord in
dread, “Arise, and let us go,” he said.

“Ah, I have met that mighty lord

Armed with his shafts and bow and sword, And if again that
bow he bend

Our lives that very hour will end. For none that warrior can
provoke And think to fly his deadly stroke. Like Yáma with his
staff is he,

And his dread hand will slaughter thee. What can I more? My
words can find No passage to thy stubborn mind.

I go, great King, thy task to share, And may success attend
thee there.”

With that reply and bold consent The giant king was well
content.

He strained Márícha to his breast

And thus with joyful words addressed: “There spoke a hero
dauntless still, Obedient to his master’s will, Márícha’s proper
self once more: Some other took thy shape before.

Come, mount my jewelled car that flies. Will-governed, through
the yielding skies. These asses, goblin-faced, shall bear

Us quickly through the fields of air. Attract the lady with thy
shape,

Then through the wood, at will, escape. And I, when she has no
defence,

Will seize the dame and bear her thence.”

Again Mārīcha made reply, Consent and will to signify. With rapid speed the giants two

From the calm hermit dwelling flew, Borne in that wondrous chariot, meet For some great God's celestial seat. They from their airy path looked down On many a wood and many a town, On lake and river, brook and rill,

City and realm and towering hill. Soon he whom giant hosts obeyed, Mārīcha by his side, surveyed

The dark expanse of Dar,9ak wood Where Rāma's hermit cottage stood. They left the flying car, whereon The wealth of gold and jewels shone, And thus the giant king addressed Mārīcha as his hand he pressed:

“Mārīcha, look! before our eyes Round Rāma's home the plantains rise. His hermitage is now in view:

Quick to the work we came to do!”

Thus Rāvar, spoke, Mārīcha heard Obedient to his master's word, Threw off his giant shape and near The cottage strayed a beauteous deer. With magic power, by rapid change,

His borrowed form was fair and strange. A sapphire tipped
each horn with light; His face was black relieved with white. The
turkis and the ruby shed

A glory from his ears and head.

His arching neck was proudly raised, And lazulites beneath it
blazed.

With roseate bloom his flanks were dyed, And lotus tints
adorned his hide.

His shape was fair, compact, and slight; [278]

His hoofs were carven lazulite. His tail with every changing glow
Displayed the hues of Indra's bow.

With glossy skin so strangely flecked, With tints of every gem
bedecked.

A light o'er Râma's home he sent,

And through the wood, where'er he went. The giant clad in that
strange dress

That took the soul with loveliness, To charm the fair Videhan's
eyes

With mingled wealth of mineral dyes, Moved onward, cropping
in his way, The grass and grain and tender spray. His coat with
drops of silver bright, A form to gaze on with delight,

He raised his fair neck as he went To browse on bud and
filament. Now in the Cassia grove he strayed, Now by the cot in
plantains' shade. Slowly and slowly on he came

To catch the glances of the dame, And the tall deer of splendid
hue Shone full at length in Sítá's view. He roamed where'er his
fancy chose Where Ráma's leafy cottage rose.

Now near, now far, in careless ease, He came and went among
the trees. Now with light feet he turned to fly, Now, reassured,
again drew nigh:

Now gambolled close with leap and bound, Now lay upon the
grassy ground:

Now sought the door, devoid of fear, And mingled with the
troop of deer; Led them a little way, and thence Again returned
with confidence.

Now flying far, now turning back Emboldened on his former
track, Seeking to win the lady's glance

He wandered through the green expanse. Then thronging round,
the woodland deer Gazed on his form with wondering fear; A
while they followed where he led, Then snuffed the tainted gale
and fled.

The giant, though he longed to slay
The startled quarry, spared
the prey, And mindful of the shape he wore
To veil his nature,
still forbore.

Then Sítá of the glorious eye, Returning from her task drew nigh;
For she had sought the wood to bring
Each loveliest flower of
early spring.

Now would the bright-eyed lady choose
Some gorgeous bud
with blending hues, Now plucked the mango's spray, and now
The bloom from an Asoka bough.

She with her beauteous form, unmeet
For woodland life and
lone retreat, That wondrous dappled deer beheld
Gemmed with
rich pearls, unparalleled, His silver hair the lady saw,

His radiant teeth and lips and jaw, And gazed with rapture as
her eyes Expanded in their glad surprise.

And when the false deer's glances fell
On her whom Ráma loved
so well, He wandered here and there, and cast
A luminous
beauty as he passed;

And Janak's child with strange delight
Kept gazing on the
unwonted sight.

Canto XLIII. The Wondrous Deer.

She stooped, her hands with flowers to fill, But gazed upon the
marvel still:

Gazed on its back and sparkling side Where silver hues with
golden vied. Joyous was she of faultless mould, With glossy skin
like polished gold. And loudly to her husband cried

And bow-armed Lakshmar, by his side: Again, again she called
in glee:

“O come this glorious creature see; Quick, quick, my lord, this
deer to view. And bring thy brother Lakshmar, too.” As through
the wood her clear tones rang, Swift to her side the brothers
sprang.

With eager eyes the grove they scanned, And saw the deer
before them stand.

But doubt was strong in Lakshmar,'s breast, Who thus his
thought and fear expressed:

“Stay, for the wondrous deer we see The fiend Márícha’s self
may be.

Ere now have kings who sought this place To take their pastime
in the chase,

Met from his wicked art defeat, And fallen slain by like deceit.

He wears, well trained in magic guile, The figure of a deer a
while,

Bright as the very sun, or place Where dwell the gay Gandharva
race. No deer, O Ráma, e’er was seen

Thus decked with gold and jewels’ sheen. ’Tis magic, for the
world has ne’er,

Lord of the world, shown aught so fair.”

But Sítá of the lovely smile, A captive to the giant’s wile,

Turned Lakshmar,’s prudent speech aside And thus with eager
words replied:

“My honoured lord, this deer I see With beauty rare enraptures
me. Go, chief of mighty arm, and bring For my delight this
precious thing. Fair creatures of the woodland roam Untroubled
near our hermit home. The forest cow and stag are there,

The fawn, the monkey, and the bear,

[279] Where spotted deer delight to play,

And strong and beautiful Kinnars⁴⁹⁴ stray. But never, as they
wandered by,

Has such a beauty charmed mine eye As this with limbs so fair
and slight,

494 A race of beings of human shape but with the heads of
horses, like centaurs reversed.

So gentle, beautiful and bright. O see, how fair it is to view With
jewels of each varied hue:

Bright as the rising moon it glows, Lighting the wood where'er it
goes. Ah me, what form and grace are there! Its limbs how fine,
its hues how fair! Transcending all that words express, It takes
my soul with loveliness.

O, if thou would, to please me, strive To take the beautiful
thing alive,

How thou wouldst gaze with wondering eyes Delighted on the
lovely prize!

And when our woodland life is o'er, And we enjoy our realm once
more, The wondrous animal will grace The chambers of my
dwelling-place, And a dear treasure will it be

To Bharat and the queens and me, And all with rapture and
amaze Upon its heavenly form will gaze. But if the beautiful

deer, pursued, Thine arts to take it still elude, Strike it, O
chieftain, and the skin Will be a treasure, laid within.

O, how I long my time to pass Sitting upon the tender grass,
With that soft fell beneath me spread Bright with its hair of
golden thread! This strong desire, this eager will, Befits a gentle
lady ill:

But when I first beheld, its look My breast with fascination took.
See, golden hair its flank adorns,

And sapphires tip its branching horns. Resplendent as the lunar
way,

Or the first blush of opening day, With graceful form and
radiant hue

It charmed thy heart, O chieftain, too.”

He heard her speech with willing ear, He looked again upon the
deer.

Its lovely shape his breast beguiled Moved by the prayer of
Janak’s child, And yielding for her pleasure’s sake, To Lakshmar,
Ráma turned and spake:

“Mark, Lakshmar,, mark how Sítá’s breast With eager longing is possessed.

To-day this deer of wondrous breed Must for his passing beauty bleed, Brighter than e’er in Nandan strayed, Or Chaitraratha’s heavenly shade.

How should the groves of earth possess Such all-surpassing loveliness!

The hair lies smooth and bright and fine, Or waves upon each curving line,

And drops of living gold bedeck The beauty of his side and neck.

O look, his crimson tongue between His teeth like flaming fire is seen, Flashing, whene’er his lips he parts, As from a cloud the lightning darts. O see his sunlike forehead shine With emerald tints and almandine, While pearly light and roseate glow Of shells adorn his neck below.

No eye on such a deer can rest

But soft enchantment takes the breast: No man so fair a thing behold

Ablaze with light of radiant gold, Celestial, bright with jewels’ sheen, Nor marvel when his eyes have seen. A king equipped with bow and shaft Delights in gentle forest craft,

And as in boundless woods he strays The quarry for the venison slays.

There as he wanders with his train A store of wealth he oft may gain. He claims by right the precious ore,

He claims the jewels' sparkling store. Such gains are dearer in his eyes Than wealth that in his chamber lies, The dearest things his spirit knows, Dear as the bliss which Sukra chose. But oft the rich expected gain

Which heedless men pursue in vain, The sage, who prudent counsels know, Explain and in a moment show.

This best of deer, this gem of all,

To yield his precious spoils must fall, And tender Sítá by my side Shall sit upon the golden hide. Ne'er could I find so rich a coat On spotted deer or sheep or goat. No buck or antelope has such,

So bright to view, so soft to touch. This radiant deer and one on high That moves in glory through the sky, Alike in heavenly beauty are,

One on the earth and one a star. But, brother, if thy fears be true,

And this bright creature that we view Be fierce Mārīcha in
disguise,

Then by this hand he surely dies.

For that dire fiend who spurns control With bloody hand and
cruel soul,

Has roamed this forest and dismayed The holiest saints who
haunt the shade. Great archers, sprung of royal race, Pursuing
in the wood the chase,

Have fallen by his wicked art,

And now my shaft shall strike his heart.

[280]Vatápi, by his magic power

Made heedless saints his flesh devour, Then, from within their
frames he rent Forth bursting from imprisonment.

But once his art in senseless pride Upon the mightiest saint he
tried, Agastya's self, and caused him taste The baited meal
before him placed. Vátápi, when the rite was o'er, Would take
the giant form he wore, But Saint Agastya knew his wile And
checked the giant with smile. "Vátápi, thou with cruel spite

Hast conquered many an anchorite The noblest of the Bráhman
caste,— And now thy ruin comes at last." Now if my power he
thus defies, This giant, like Vátápi dies,

Daring to scorn a man like me, A self subduing devotee.

Yea, as Agastya slew the foe, My hand shall lay Mārīcha low

Clad in thine arms thy bow in hand,

To guard the Maithil lady stand,

With watchful eye and thoughtful breast Keeping each word of
my behest

I go, and hunting through the brake This wondrous deer will
bring or take. Yea surely I will bring the spoil Returning from my
hunter's toil

See, Lakshmar, how my consort's eyes Are longing for the lovely
prize.

This day it falls, that I may win The treasure of so fair a skin.

Do thou and Sítá watch with care Lest danger seize you
unaware.

Swift from my bow one shaft will fly; The stricken deer will fall
and die Then quickly will I strip the game And bring the trophy
to my dame.

Jatáyus, guardian good and wise, Our old and faithful friend,

The best and strongest bird that flies, His willing aid will lend

The Maithil lady well protect, For every chance provide, And in
thy tender care suspect

A foe on every side.”

Canto XLIV. Márícha's Death.

Thus having warned his brother bold He grasped his sword with
haft of gold, And bow with triple flexure bent,

His own delight and ornament; Then bound two quivers to his
side, And hurried forth with eager stride. Soon as the antlered
monarch saw

The lord of monarchs near him draw, A while with trembling
heart he fled,

Then turned and showed his stately head. With sword and bow
the chief pursued Where'er the fleeing deer he viewed Sending
from dell and lone recess

The splendour of his loveliness. Now full in view the creature
stood Now vanished in the depth of wood; Now running with a
languid flight, Now like a meteor lost to sight.

With trembling limbs away he sped;

Then like the moon with clouds o'erspread Gleamed for a
moment bright between The trees, and was again unseen.

Thus in the magic deer's disguise Márícha lured him to the prize,
And seen a while, then lost to view, Far from his cot the hero
drew.

Still by the flying game deceived

The hunter's heart was wroth and grieved, And wearied with the
fruitless chase

He stayed him in a shady place. Again the rover of the night
Enraged the chieftain, full in sight, Slow moving in the coppice
near, Surrounded by the woodland deer.

Again the hunter sought the game That seemed a while to court
his aim: But seized again with sudden dread, Beyond his sight
the creature fled.

Again the hero left the shade, Again the deer before him
strayed. With surer hope and stronger will The hunter longed his
prey to kill. Then as his soul impatient grew, An arrow from his

side he drew, Resplendent at the sunbeam's glow, The crusher
of the smitten foe.

With skillful heed the mighty lord Fixed well shaft and strained
the cord. Upon the deer his eyes he bent,

And like a fiery serpent went

The arrow Brahma's self had framed, Alive with sparks that
hissed and flamed, Like Indra's flashing levin, true

To the false deer the missile flew Cleaving his flesh that
wonderous dart Stood quivering in Márícha's heart.

Scarce from the ground one foot he sprang, Then stricken fell
with deadly pang.

Half lifeless, as he pressed the ground, He gave a roar of awful
sound

And ere the wounded giant died He threw his borrowed form
aside Remembering still his lord's behest He pondered in his
heart how best Sítá might send her guard away, And Rávar,
seize the helpless prey.

The monster knew the time was nigh, And called aloud with
eager cry,

[281] "Ho, Sítá, Lakshmar," and the tone He borrowed was like
Ráma's own.

So by that matchless arrow cleft, The deer's bright form Mārīcha
left, Resumed his giant shape and size And closed in death his
languid eyes. When Rāma saw his awful foe

Gasp, smeared with blood, in deadly throe, His anxious
thoughts to Sítá sped,

And the wise words that Lakshmar, said, That this was false
Mārīcha's art, Returned again upon his heart.

He knew the foe he triumphed o'er The name of great Mārīcha
bore.

"The fiend," he pondered, 'ere he died, "Ho, Lakshmar,! ho, my
Sítá!" cried Ah, if that cry has reached her ear, How dire must be
my darling's fear!

And Lakshmar, of the mighty arm, What thinks he in his wild
alarm? As thus he thought in sad surmise, Each startled hair
began to rise, And when he saw the giant slain And thought
upon that cry again, His spirit sank and terror pressed Full
sorely on the hero's breast.

Another deer he chased and struck, He bore away the the fallen
buck, To Janasthán then turned his face And hastened to his
dwelling place.

Canto XLV. Lakshman's Departure.

But Sítá hearing as she thought,

Her husband's cry with anguish fraught, Called to her guardian,
“Lakshmar,, run And in the wood seek Raghu's son.

Scarce can my heart retain its throne, Scarce can my life be
called mine own, As all my powers and senses fail

At that long, loud and bitter wail. Haste to the wood with all thy
speed And save thy brother in his need.

Go, save him in the distant glade Where loud he calls, for timely
aid. He falls beneath some giant foe— A bull whom lions
overthrow.”

Deaf to her prayer, no step he stirred Obedient to his mother's
word,

Then Janak's child, with ire inflamed,

In words of bitter scorn exclaimed exclaimed

“Sumitrá's son, a friend in show, Thou art in truth thy brother's
foe, Who canst at such any hour deny Thy succour and neglect
his cry.

Yes, Lakshmar,, smit with love of me Thy brother's death thou
fain wouldst see. This guilty love thy heart has swayed And
makes thy feet so loth to aid.

Thou hast no love for Ráma, no: Thy joy is vice, thy thoughts are
low

Hence thus unmoved thou yet canst stay While my dear lord is
far away.

If aught of ill my lord betide

Who led thee here, thy chief and guide, Ah, what will be my
hapless fate

Left in the wild wood desolate!”

Thus spoke the lady sad with fear, With many a sigh and many
a tear, Still trembling like a captured doe: And Lakshmar, spoke
to calm her woe:

“Videhan Queen, be sure of this,— And at the thought thy fear
dismiss,— Thy husband's mightier power defies All Gods and
angels of the skies, Gandharvas, and the sons of light, Serpents,
and rovers of the night.

I tell thee, of the sons of earth,

Of Gods who boast celestial birth, Of beasts and birds and
giant hosts, Of demigods, Gandharvas, ghosts, Of awful fiends,
O thou most fair,

There lives not one whose heart would dare To meet thy Ráma
in the fight,

Like Indra's self unmatched in might. Such idle words thou must
not say Thy Ráma lives whom none may slay. I will not, cannot
leave thee here

In the wild wood till he be near.

The mightiest strength can ne'er withstand His eager force, his
vigorous hand.

No, not the triple world allied With all the immortal Gods beside.
Dismiss thy fear, again take heart, Let all thy doubt and woe
depart.

Thy lord, be sure, will soon be here And bring thee back that
best of deer. Not his, not his that mournful cry, Nor haply came
it from the sky.

Some giant's art was busy there And framed a castle based on
air.

A precious pledge art thou, consigned To me by him of noblest
mind,

Nor can I fairest dame, forsake

The pledge which Ráma bade me take. Upon our heads, O
Queen, we drew The giants' hate when Ráma slew Their
chieftain Khara, and the shade Of Janasthán in ruin laid.

Through all this mighty wood they rove With varied cries from
grove to grove On rapine bent they wander here:

But O, dismiss thy causeless fear.”

Bright flashed her eye as Lakshmar, spoke And forth her words
of fury broke

Upon her truthful guardian, flung

With bitter taunts that pierced and stung:

“Shame on such false compassion, base Defiler of thy glorious
race!

'Twere joyous sight I ween to thee [282]

My lord in direst strait to see. Thou knowest Ráma sore bested,
Or word like this thou ne'er hadst said. No marvel if we find such
sin

In rivals false to kith and kin. Wretches like thee of evil kind,
Concealing crime with crafty mind. Thou, wretch, thine aid wilt
still deny,

And leave my lord alone to die. Has love of me unnerved thy
hand, Or Bharat's art this ruin planned? But be the treachery his
or thine, In vain, in vain the base design.

For how shall I, the chosen bride Of dark-hued Ráma, lotus-
eyed,

The queen who once called Ráma mine, To love of other men
decline?

Believe me, Lakshmar,, Ráma's wife Before thine eyes will quit
this life, And not a moment will she stay

If her dear lord have passed away.”

The lady's bitter speech, that stirred Each hair upon his frame,
he heard.

With lifted hands together laid, His calm reply he gently made:

“No words have I to answer now: My deity, O Queen, art thou.

But 'tis no marvel, dame, to find Such lack of sense in
womankind.

Throughout this world, O Maithil dame, Weak women's hearts
are still the same. Inconstant, urged by envious spite, They
sever friends and hate the right.

I cannot brook, Videhan Queen, Thy words intolerably keen.

Mine ears thy fierce reproaches pain As boiling water seethes
the brain. And now to bear me witness all

The dwellers in the wood I call,

That, when with words of truth I plead,

This harsh reply is all my meed. Ah, woe is thee! Ah, grief, that
still Eager to do my brother's will, Mourning thy woman's nature,

I

Must see thee doubt my truth and die. I fly to Ráma's side, and
Oh,

May bliss attend thee while I go! May all attendant wood-gods
screen

Thy head from harm, O large-eyed Queen! And though dire
omens meet my sight And fill my soul with wild affright,

May I return in peace and see

The son of Raghu safe with thee!"

The child of Janak heard him speak, And the hot tear-drops
down her cheek, Increasing to a torrent, ran,

As thus once more the dame began: "O Lakshmar,, if I widowed
be Godávari's flood shall cover me, Or I will die by cord, or leap,

Life weary, from yon rocky steep; Or deadly poison will I drink,
Or 'neath the kindled flames will sink, But never, reft of Ráma,
can
Consent to touch a meaner man.”

The Maithil dame with many sighs, And torrents pouring from
her eyes, The faithful Lakshmar, thus addressed, And smote her
hands upon her breast.

>Sumitrá's son, o'erwhelmed by fears, Looked on the large-eyed
queen:

He saw that flood of burning tears,

He saw that piteous mien.

He yearned sweet comfort to afford, He strove to soothe her
pain;

But to the brother of her lord She spoke no word again.

His reverent hands once more he raised, His head he slightly
bent,

Upon her face he sadly gazed, And then toward Ráma went.

Canto XLVI. The Guest.

The angry Lakshmar, scarce could brook Her bitter words, her
furious look.

With dark forebodings in his breast To Ráma's side he quickly
pressed.

Then ten necked Rávar, saw the time Propitious for his
purposed crime.

A mendicant in guise he came

And stood before the Maithil dame. His garb was red, with
tufted hair And sandalled feet a shade he bare,

And from the fiend's left shoulder slung A staff and water-vessel
hung.

Near to the lovely dame he drew,

While both the chiefs were far from view, As darkness takes the
evening air

When neither sun nor moon is there. He bent his eye upon the
dame,

A princess fair, of spotless fame:

So might some baleful planet be Near Moon-forsaken
Rohir,í.495 As the fierce tyrant nearer drew, The trees in
Janasthán that grew Waved not a leaf for fear and woe,
And the hushed wind forbore to blow. Godávarí's waters as they
fled,
Saw his fierce eye-balls flashing red, And from each swiftly-
gliding wave A melancholy murmur gave.
Then Rávar,, when his eager eye Beheld the longed-for moment
nigh, In mendicant's apparel dressed
Near to the Maithil lady pressed. [283]
In holy guise, a fiend abhorred,
He found her mourning for her lord. Thus threatening draws
Sanischar496 nigh To Chitrá497 in the evening sky;
Thus the deep well by grass concealed Yawns treacherous in the
verdant field. He stood and looked upon the dame
Of Ráma, queen of spotless fame
With her bright teeth and each fair limb Like the full moon she
seemed to him, Sitting within her leafy cot,
Weeping for woe that left her not. Thus, while with joy his pulses
beat, He saw her in her lone retreat,
Eyed like the lotus, fair to view In silken robes of amber hue.
Pierced to the core by Káma's dart

495 The favourite wife of the Moon.

496 The planet Saturn.

497 Another favourite of the Moon; one of the lunar mansions.

He murmured texts with lying art, And questioned with a soft
address The lady in her loneliness.

The fiend essayed with gentle speech The heart of that fair
dame to reach, Pride of the worlds, like Beauty's Queen Without
her darling lotus seen:

“O thou whose silken robes enfold A form more fair than finest
gold, With lotus garland on thy head,

Like a sweet spring with bloom o'erspread, Who art thou, fair
one, what thy name, Beauty, or Honour, Fortune, Fame,

Spirit, or nymph, or Queen of love Descended from thy home
above? Bright as the dazzling jasmine shine Thy small square
teeth in level line. Like two black stars aglow with light

Thine eyes are large and pure and bright. Thy charms of smile
and teeth and hair And winning eyes, O thou most fair, Steal all
my spirit, as the flow

Of rivers mines the bank below.

How bright, how fine each flowing tress! How firm those orbs
beneath thy dress! That dainty waist with ease were spanned,
Sweet lady, by a lover's hand.

Mine eyes, O beauty, ne'er have seen Goddess or nymph so fair
of mien,

Or bright Gandharva's heavenly dame, Or woman of so perfect
frame.

In youth's soft prime thy years are few, And earth has naught
so fair to view.

I marvel one like thee in face

Should make the woods her dwelling-place. Leave, lady, leave
this lone retreat

In forest wilds for thee unmeet,

Where giants fierce and strong assume All shapes and wander
in the gloom. These dainty feet were formed to tread Some
palace floor with carpets spread, Or wander in trim gardens
where

Each opening bud perfumes the air. The richest robe thy form
should deck, The rarest gems adorn thy neck,

The sweetest wreath should bind thy hair, The noblest lord thy
bed should share.

Art thou akin, O fair of form,

To Rudras,⁴⁹⁸ or the Gods of storm,⁴⁹⁹ Or to the glorious
Vasus⁵⁰⁰? How

Can less than these be bright as thou? But never nymph or
heavenly maid Or Goddess haunts this gloomy shade. Here
giants roam, a savage race; What led thee to so dire a place?

Here monkeys leap from tree to tree, And bears and tigers
wander free; Here ravening lions prowl, and fell Hyenas in the
thickets yell,

And elephants infuriate roam,

Mighty and fierce, their woodland home. Dost thou not dread,
so soft and fair, Tiger and lion, wolf and bear?

⁴⁹⁸ The Rudras, agents in creation, are eight in number; they
sprang from the forehead of Brahmá.

⁴⁹⁹ Maruts, the attendants of Indra.

⁵⁰⁰ Radiant demi-gods.

Hast thou, O beauteous dame, no fear In the wild wood so lone
and drear?

Whose and who art thou? whence and why Sweet lady, with no
guardian nigh,

Dost thou this awful forest tread By giant bands inhabited?”

The praise the high-souled Rávar, spoke No doubt within her bosom woke.

His saintly look and Bráhmañ guise Deceived the lady's trusting eyes.

With due attention on the guest Her hospitable rites she pressed. She bade the stranger to a seat, And gave him water for his feet. The bowl and water-pot he bare,

And garb which wandering Bráhmañs wear Forbade a doubt to rise.

Won by his holy look she deemed The stranger even as he seemed

To her deluded eyes. Intent on hospitable care,

She brought her best of woodland fare, And showed her guest a seat.

She bade the saintly stranger lave His feet in water which she gave,

And sit and rest and eat.

He kept his eager glances bent On her so kindly eloquent, Wife of the noblest king;

And longed in heart to steal her thence, Preparing by the dire
offence,

[284]Death on his head to bring.

The lady watched with anxious face For Ráma coming from the
chase

With Lakshmar, by his side:

But nothing met her wandering glance Save the wild forest's
green expanse

Extending far and wide.

Canto XLVII. Rávan's Wooing.

As, clad in mendicant's disguise,

He questioned thus his destined prize, She to the seeming
saintly man

The story of her life began.

"My guest is he," she thought, "and I, To 'scape his curse, must
needs reply:" "Child of a noble sire I spring

From Janak, fair Videha's king. May every good be thine! my
name Is Sítá, Ráma's cherished dame.

Twelve winters with my lord I spent Most happily with sweet
content

In the rich home of Raghu's line, And every earthly joy was
mine.

Twelve pleasant years flew by, and then His peers advised the
king of men, Ráma, my lord, to consecrate

Joint ruler of his ancient state.

But when the rites were scarce begun, To consecrate Ikshváku's
son,

The queen Kaikeyí, honoured dame, Sought of her lord an
ancient claim.

Her plea of former service pressed, And made him grant her
new request, To banish Ráma to the wild

And consecrate instead her child. This double prayer on him, the
best And truest king, she strongly pressed: "Mine eyes in sleep I
will not close, Nor eat, nor drink, nor take repose.

This very day my death shall bring If Ráma be anointed king."

As thus she spake in envious ire, The aged king, my husband's
sire, Besought with fitting words; but she Was cold and deaf to
every plea.

As yet my days are few; eighteen The years of life that I have
seen; And Ráma, best of all alive,

Has passed of years a score and five— Ráma the great and
gentle, through All region famed as pure and true,

Large-eyed and mighty-armed and tall, With tender heart that
cares for all.

But Dasaratha, led astray

By woman's wile and passion's sway, By his strong love of her
impelled, The consecrating rites withheld.

When, hopeful of the promised grace, My Ráma sought his
father's face, The queen Kaikeyí, ill at ease,

Spoke to my lord brief words like these: "Hear, son of Raghu,
hear from me

The words thy father says to thee: "I yield this day to Bharat's
hand, Free from all foes, this ancient land.

Fly from this home no longer thine, And dwell in woods five
years and nine. Live in the forest and maintain

Mine honour pure from falsehood's stain.' ” Then Ráma spoke, untouched by dread: “Yea, it shall be as thou hast said.”

And answered, faithful to his vows, Obeying Dasaratha's spouse:

“The offered realm I would not take, But still keep true the words he spake.” Thus, gentle Bráhmaṇ, Ráma still Clung to his vow with firmest will.

And valiant Lakshmar,, dear to fame, His brother by a younger dame,

Bold victor in the deadly fray, Would follow Ráma on his way. On sternest vows his heart was set, And he, a youthful anchoret, Bound up in twisted coil his hair

And took the garb which hermits wear; Then with his bow to guard us, he Went forth with Ráma and with me.

By Queen Kaikeyí's art bereft

The kingdom and our home we left, And bound by stern religious vows We sought this shade of forest boughs. Now, best of Bráhmaṇs, here we tread These pathless regions dark and dread. But come, refresh thy soul, and rest Here for a while an honoured guest, For he, my lord, will soon be here With fresh supply of woodland cheer, Large store of venison of the buck, Or some great boar his hand has struck.

Meanwhile, O stranger, grant my prayer: Thy name, thy race, thy
birth declare, And why with no companion thou Roamest in
Dar,9ak forest now.”

Thus questioned Sítá, Ráma’s dame. Then fierce the stranger’s
answer came: “Lord of the giant legions, he

From whom celestial armies flee,— The dread of hell and earth
and sky, Rávar, the Rákshas king am I.

Now when thy gold-like form I view Arrayed in silks of amber
hue,

My love, O thou of perfect mould, For all my dames is dead and
cold. A thousand fairest women, torn From many a land my
home adorn. But come, loveliest lady, be

The queen of every dame and me. My city Lanká, glorious town,

[285]Looks from a mountain’s forehead down Where ocean
with his flash and foam Beats madly on mine island home.

With me, O Sítá, shalt thou rove Delighted through each shady
grove, Nor shall thy happy breast retain Fond memory of this
life of pain.

In gay attire, a glittering band,

Five thousand maids shall round thee stand, And serve thee at
thy beck and sign,

If thou, fair Sítá, wilt be mine.”

Then forth her noble passion broke As thus in turn the lady
spoke:

“Me, me the wife of Ráma, him The lion lord with lion’s limb,
Strong as the sea, firm as the rock, Like Indra in the battle
shock.

The lord of each auspicious sign, The glory of his princely line,
Like some fair Bodh tree strong and tall, The noblest and the
best of all,

Ráma, the heir of happy fate Who keeps his word inviolate, Lord
of the lion gait, possessed Of mighty arm and ample chest,
Ráma the lion-warrior, him

Whose moon bright face no fear can dim, Ráma, his bridled
passions’ lord,

The darling whom his sire adored,— Me, me the true and loving
dame

Of Ráma, prince of deathless fame— Me wouldst thou vainly
woo and press? A jackal woo a lioness!

Steal from the sun his glory! such Thy hope Lord Ráma's wife to
touch. Ha! Thou hast seen the trees of gold, The sign which
dying eyes behold, Thus seeking, weary of thy life,

To win the love of Ráma's wife. Fool! wilt thou dare to rend
away The famished lion's bleeding prey, Or from the threatening
jaws to take The fang of some envenomed snake?

What, wouldst thou shake with puny hand

Mount Mandar, 501 towering o'er the land, Put poison to thy lips
and think

The deadly cup a harmless drink? With pointed needle touch
thine eye, A razor to thy tongue apply,

Who wouldst pollute with impious touch The wife whom Ráma
loves so much?

Be round thy neck a millstone tied, And swim the sea from side
to side; Or raising both thy hands on high Pluck sun and moon
from yonder sky; Or let the kindled flame be pressed, Wrapt in
thy garment, to thy breast;

More wild the thought that seeks to win Ráma's dear wife who
knows not sin.

The fool who thinks with idle aim To gain the love of Ráma's
dame,

With dark and desperate footing makes His way o'er points of
iron stakes.

As Ocean to a bubbling spring, The lion to a fox, the king

Of all the birds that ply the wing To an ignoble crow

As gold to lead of little price, As to the drainings of the rice

The drink they quaff in Paradise, The Amrit's heavenly flow,

As sandal dust with perfume sweet Is to the mire that soils our
feet,

A tiger to a cat,

As the white swan is to the owl, The peacock to the waterfowl,

501 The mountain which was used by the Gods as a churning
stick at the Churning of the Ocean.

An eagle to a bat,

Such is my lord compared with thee; And when with bow and
arrows he, Mighty as Indra's self shall see

His foeman, armed to slay,

Thou, death-doomed like the fly that sips The oil that on the
altar drips,

Shalt cast the morsel from thy lips And lose thy half-won prey.”

Thus in high scorn the lady flung

The biting arrows of her tongue
In bitter words that pierced and stung The rover of the night.
She ceased. Her gentle cheek grew pale, Her loosened limbs
began to fail,
And like a plantain in the gale She trembled with affright.
He terrible as Death stood nigh,
And watched with fierce exulting eye The fear that shook her
frame.
To terrify the lady more,
He counted all his triumphs o'er, Proclaimed the titles that he
bore,
His pedigree and name.

Canto XLVIII. Rávan's Speech.

With knitted brow and furious eye The stranger made his fierce
reply: "In me O fairest dame, behold
The brother of the King of Gold.

The Lord of Ten Necks my title, named Rávar,, for might and
valour famed.

Gods and Gandharva hosts I scare; Snakes, spirits, birds that
roam the air Fly from my coming, wild with fear, Trembling like
men when Death is near.

Vaisravar, once, my brother, wrought

[286]To ire, encountered me and fought, But yielding to
superior might

Fled from his home in sore affright. Lord of the man-drawn
chariot, still He dwells on famed Kailása's hill.

I made the vanquished king resign

The glorious car which now is mine,— Pushpak, the far-
renowned, that flies Will-guided through the buxom skies.

Celestial hosts by Indra led

Flee from my face disquieted,

And where my dreaded feet appear

The wind is hushed or breathless is fear. Where'er I stand,
where'er I go

The troubled waters cease to flow, Each spell-bound wave is
mute and still And the fierce sun himself is chill.

Beyond the sea my Lanká stands

Filled with fierce forms and giant bands, A glorious city fair to
see

As Indra's Amarávatí.

A towering height of solid wall, Flashing afar, surrounds it all,
Its golden courts enchant the sight, And gates aglow with
lazulite.

Steeds, elephants, and cars are there, And drums' loud music
fills the air,

Fair trees in lovely gardens grow

Whose boughs with varied fruitage glow. Thou, beauteous
Queen, with me shalt dwell In halls that suit a princess well,
Thy former fellows shall forget Nor think of women with regret,
No earthly joy thy soul shall miss, And take its fill of heavenly
bliss. Of mortal Ráma think no more,

Whose terms of days will soon be o'er. King Dasaratha looked in
scorn

On Ráma though the eldest born, Sent to the woods the
weakling fool, And set his darling son to rule.

What, O thou large-eyed dame, hast thou To do with fallen
Ráma now,

From home and kingdom forced to fly, A wretched hermit soon
to die?

Accept thy lover, nor refuse

The giant king who fondly woos. O listen, nor reject in scorn

A heart by Káma's arrows torn. If thou refuse to hear my
prayer,

Of grief and coming woe beware; For the sad fate will fall on
thee Which came on hapless Urvasí,

When with her foot she chanced to touch Purúravas, and
sorrowed much.⁵⁰².

My little finger raised in fight

Were more than match for Ráma's might. O fairest, blithe and
happy be

With him whom fortune sends to thee.”

⁵⁰² The story will be found in GARRETT'S{FNS Classical
Dictionary. See ADDITIONAL NOTES{FNS

Such were the words the giant said, And Sítá's angry eyes were
red.

She answered in that lonely place The monarch of the giant
race:

“Art thou the brother of the Lord Of Gold by all the world
adored, And sprung of that illustrious seed Wouldst now
attempt this evil deed? I tell thee, impious Monarch, all The
giants by thy sin will fall,

Whose reckless lord and king thou art, With foolish mind and
lawless heart. Yea, one may hope to steal the wife Of Indra and
escape with life.

But he who Ráma's dame would tear From his loved side must
needs despair. Yea, one may steal fair Sachí, dame

Of Him who shoots the thunder flame, May live successful in his
aim

And length of day may see; But hope, O giant King, in vain,

Though cups of Amrit thou may drain, To shun the penalty and
pain

Of wronging one like me.”

Canto XLIX. The Rape Of Sítá.

The Rákshas monarch, thus addressed, His hands a while
together pressed, And straight before her startled eyes Stood
monstrous in his giant size.

Then to the lady, with the lore

Of eloquence, he spoke once more:

“Thou scarce,” he cried, “hast heard aright The glories of my
power and might.

I borne sublime in air can stand

And with these arms upheave the land, Drink the deep flood of
Ocean dry And Death with conquering force defy, Pierce the
great sun with furious dart And to her depths cleave earth
apart.

See, thou whom love and beauty blind, I wear each form as wills
my mind.”

As thus he spake in burning ire His glowing eyes were red with
fire. His gentle garb aside was thrown And all his native shape
was shown. Terrific, monstrous, wild, and dread As the dark God
who rules the dead, His fiery eyes in fury rolled,

His limbs were decked with glittering gold. Like some dark cloud
the monster showed, And his fierce breast with fury glowed.

The ten-faced rover of the night, With twenty arms exposed to
sight, His saintly guise aside had laid

And all his giant height displayed. [287]

Attired in robes of crimson dye

He stood and watched with angry eye The lady in her bright
array

Resplendent as the dawn of day

When from the east the sunbeams break, And to the dark-
haired lady spake:

“If thou would call that lord thine own Whose fame in every
world is known, Look kindly on my love, and be

Bride of a consort meet for thee. With me let blissful years be
spent, For ne'er thy choice shalt thou repent. No deed of mine
shall e'er displease My darling as she lives at ease.

Thy love for mortal man resign, And to a worthier lord incline. Ah
foolish lady, seeming wise

In thine own weak and partial eyes, By what fair graces art thou
held To Râma from his realm expelled? Misfortunes all his life
attend,

And his brief days are near their end. Unworthy prince, infirm of mind!

A woman spoke and he resigned

His home and kingdom and withdrew From troops of friends and retinue.

And sought this forest dark and dread By savage beasts inhabited.”

Thus Rávar, urged the lady meet

For love, whose words were soft and sweet. Near and more near the giant pressed

As love's hot fire inflamed his breast. The leader of the giant crew

His arm around the lady threw:

Thus Budha⁵⁰³ with ill-omened might

⁵⁰³ Mercury: to be carefully distinguished from Buddha.

Steals Rohir,í's delicious light.

One hand her glorious tresses grasped, One with its ruthless pressure clasped The body of his lovely prize,

The Maithil dame with lotus eyes. The silvan Gods in wild alarm

Marked his huge teeth and ponderous arm, And from that
Death-like presence fled, Of mountain size and towering head.

Then seen was Rávar,'s magic car Aglow with gold which blazed
afar,— The mighty car which asses drew Thundering as it
onward flew.

He spared not harsh rebuke to chide The lady as she moaned
and cried, Then with his arm about her waist His captive in the
car he placed.

In vain he threatened: long and shrill Rang out her lamentation
still,

O Ráma! which no fear could stay: But her dear lord was far
away.

Then rose the fiend, and toward the skies Bore his poor helpless
struggling prize: Hurrying through the air above

The dame who loathed his proffered love. So might a soaring
eagle bear

A serpent's consort through the air. As on he bore her through
the sky She shrieked aloud her bitter cry.

As when some wretch's lips complain In agony of maddening
pain;

“O Lakshmar,, thou whose joy is still To do thine elder brother's
will,

This fiend, who all disguises wears,

From Ráma's side his darling tears.

Thou who couldst leave bliss, fortune, all, Yea life itself at duty's call,

Dost thou not see this outrage done To hapless me, O Raghu's son? 'Tis thine, O victor of the foe,

To bring the haughtiest spirit low, How canst thou such an outrage see And let the guilty fiend go free?

Ah, seldom in a moment's time Comes bitter fruit of sin and crime, But in the day of harvest pain Comes like the ripening of the grain. So thou whom fate and folly lead To ruin for this guilty deed,

Shalt die by Ráma's arm ere long

A dreadful death for hideous wrong. Ah, too successful in their ends

Are Queen Kaikeyí and her friends, When virtuous Ráma, dear to fame, Is mourning for his ravished dame. Ah me, ah me! a long farewell

To lawn and glade and forest dell In Janasthán's wild region, where The Cassia trees are bright and fair With all your tongues to Ráma say That Rávar, bears his wife away. Farewell, a long farewell to thee, O pleasant stream Godávarí,

Whose rippling waves are ever stirred By many a glad wild
water-bird!

All ye to Ráma's ear relate

The giant's deed and Sítá's fate.

O all ye Gods who love this ground

Where trees of every leaf abound, Tell Ráma I am stolen hence,

I pray you all with reverence. On all the living things beside

That these dark boughs and coverts hide, Ye flocks of birds, ye
troops of deer,

I call on you my prayer to hear. All ye to Ráma's ear proclaim
That Rávar, tears away his dame

With forceful arms,—his darling wife, Dearer to Ráma than his
life.

O, if he knew I dwelt in hell,

My mighty lord, I know full well,

Would bring me, conqueror, back to-day, Though Yáma's self
reclaimed his prey.”

Thus from the air the lady sent [288]

With piteous voice her last lament, And as she wept she
chanced to see The vulture on a lofty tree.

As Rávar, bore her swiftly by, On the dear bird she bent her eye,
And with a voice which woe made faint Renewed to him her wild
complaint:

“O see, the king who rules the race Of giants, cruel, fierce and
base, Rávar, the spoiler bears me hence The helpless prey of
violence.

This fiend who roves in midnight shade By thee, dear bird, can
ne'er be stayed, For he is armed and fierce and strong
Triumphant in the power to wrong.

For thee remains one only task,

To do, kind friend, the thing I ask. To Ráma's ear by thee be
borne How Sítá from her home is torn, And to the valiant
Lakshmar, tell The giant's deed and what befell.”

Canto L. Jatáyus.

The vulture from his slumber woke And heard the words which
Sítá spoke He raised his eye and looked on her, Looked on her
giant ravisher.

That noblest bird with pointed beak, Majestic as a mountain
peak,

High on the tree addressed the king Of giants, wisely
counselling:

“O Ten-necked lord, I firmly hold To faith and laws ordained of
old,

And thou, my brother, shouldst refrain From guilty deeds that
shame and stain. The vulture king supreme in air, Jatáyus is the
name I bear.

Thy captive, known by Sítá’s name, Is the dear consort and the
dame

Of Ráma, Dasaratha’s heir

Who makes the good of all his care. Lord of the world in might
he vies With the great Gods of seas and skies. The law he
boasts to keep allows

No king to touch another’s spouse, And, more than all, a prince’s
dame

Canto L. Jatáyus. 1021

High honour and respect may claim. Back to the earth thy way
incline, Nor think of one who is not thine.

Heroic souls should hold it shame

To stoop to deeds which others blame, And all respect by them
is shown

To dames of others as their own. Not every case of bliss and
gain The Scripture's holy texts explain,

And subjects, when that light is dim, Look to their prince and
follow him. The king is bliss and profit, he

Is store of treasures fair to see,

And all the people's fortunes spring, Their joy and misery, from
the king. If, lord of giant race, thy mind

Be fickle, false, to sin inclined, How wilt thou kingly place retain?

High thrones in heaven no sinners gain. The soul which gentle
passions sway Ne'er throws its nobler part away,

Nor will the mansion of the base

Long be the good man's dwelling-place. Prince Ráma, chief of
high renown, Has wronged thee not in field or town. Ne'er has
he sinned against thee: how Canst thou resolve to harm him
now?

If moved by Súrpar,akhá's prayer The giant Khara sought him
there, And fighting fell with baffled aim, His and not Ráma's is

the blame. Say, mighty lord of giants, say What fault on Ráma
canst thou lay?

What has the world's great master done

That thou should steal his precious one? Quick, quick the Maithil
dame release; Let Ráma's consort go in peace,

Lest scorched by his terrific eye Beneath his wrath thou fall and
die Like Vritra when Lord Indra threw

The lightning flame that smote and slew. Ah fool, with blinded
eyes to take

Home to thy heart a venomed snake! Ah foolish eyes, too blind
to see That Death's dire coils entangle thee!

The prudent man his strength will spare, Nor lift a load too great
to bear.

Content is he with wholesome food

Which gives him life and strength renewed, But who would dare
the guilty deed

That brings no fame or glorious meed, Where merit there is
none to win

And vengeance soon o'ertakes the sin? My course of life,
Pulastya's son,

For sixty thousand years has run. Lord of my kind I still
maintain Mine old hereditary reign.

I, worn by years, am older far

Than thou, young lord of bow and car, In coat of glittering mail
encased

And armed with arrows at thy waist, But not unchallenged shalt
thou go, Or steal the dame without a blow.

Thou canst not, King, before mine eyes Bear off unchecked thy
lovely prize, Safe as the truth of Scripture bent

By no close logic's argument. Stay if thy courage let thee, stay

And meet me in the battle fray,

And thou shalt stain the earth with gore Falling as Khara fell
before.

Soon Ráma, clothed in bark, shall smite [289]

Thee, his proud foe, in deadly fight,— Ráma, from whom have
oft times fled The Daitya hosts discomfited.

No power have I to kill or slay: The princely youths are far away,

But soon shalt thou with fearful eye Struck down beneath their
arrows lie. But while I yet have life and sense, Thou shalt not,
tyrant, carry hence Fair Sítá, Ramá's honoured queen, With lotus
eyes and lovely mien.

Whate'er the pain, whate'er the cost, Though in the struggle life
be lost, The will of Raghu's noblest son And Dasaratha must be
done.

Stay for a while, O Rávar,, stay, One hour thy flying car delay,
And from that glorious chariot thou Shalt fall like fruit from
shaken bough, For I to thee, while yet I live,
The welcome of a foe will give."

Canto LI. The Combat.

Rávar,'s red eyes in fury rolled: Bright with his armlets' flashing
gold, In high disdain, by passion stirred

He rushed against the sovereign bird. With clash and din and
furious blows Of murderous battle met the foes:

Thus urged by winds two clouds on high Meet warring in the
stormy sky.

Then fierce the dreadful combat raged As fiend and bird in war
engaged,

As if two winged mountains sped To dire encounter overhead.

Keen pointed arrows thick and fast, In never ceasing fury cast,
Rained hurtling on the vulture king And smote him on the breast
and wing. But still that noblest bird sustained

The cloud of shafts which Rávar, rained, And with strong beak
and talons bent The body of his foeman rent.

Then wild with rage the ten-necked king Laid ten swift arrows
on his string,— Dread as the staff of Death were they, So
terrible and keen to slay.

Straight to his ear the string he drew, Straight to the mark the
arrows flew, And pierced by every iron head

The vulture's mangled body bled. One glance upon the car he
bent Where Sítá wept with shrill lament, Then heedless of his
wounds and pain Rushed at the giant king again.

Then the brave vulture with the stroke Of his resistless talons
broke

The giant's shafts and bow whereon The fairest pearls and
jewels shone.

The monster paused, by rage unmanned: A second bow soon
armed his hand, Whence pointed arrows swift and true In
hundreds, yea in thousands, flew.

The monarch of the vultures, plied With ceaseless darts on every
side, Showed like a bird that turns to rest Close covered by the
branch-built nest. He shook his pinions to repel

The storm of arrows as it fell;

Then with his talons snapped in two The mighty bow which
Rávar, drew. Next with terrific wing he smote

So fiercely on the giant's coat,

The harness, glittering with the glow Of fire, gave way beneath
the blow.

With storm of murderous strokes he beat The harnessed asses
strong and fleet,— Each with a goblin's monstrous face And
plates of gold his neck to grace.

Then on the car he turned his ire,— The will-moved car that
shone like fire, And broke the glorious chariot, broke The golden
steps and pole and yoke.

The chouris and the silken shade Like the full moon to view
displayed, Together with the guards who held

Those emblems, to the ground he felled. The royal vulture
hovered o'er

The driver's head, and pierced and tore With his strong beak
and dreaded claws His mangled brow and cheek and jaws.

With broken car and sundered bow, His charioteer and team
laid low, One arm about the lady wound, Sprang the fierce giant
to the ground. Spectators of the combat, all

The spirits viewed the monster's fall: Lauding the vulture every
one

Cried with glad voice, Well done! well done! But weak with
length of days, at last

The vulture's strength was failing fast. The fiend again assayed
to bear

The lady through the fields of air. But when the vulture saw him
rise Triumphant with his trembling prize, Bearing the sword that
still was left When other arms were lost or cleft, Once more,
impatient of repose,

Swift from the earth her champion rose, Hung in the way the
fiend would take, And thus addressing Rávar, spake: "Thou,
King of giants, rash and blind, Wilt be the ruin of thy kind,
Stealing the wife of Ráma, him

With lightning scars on chest and limb.

A mighty host obeys his will

[290]And troops of slaves his palace fill; His lords of state are
wise and true, Kinsmen has he and retinue.

As thirsty travellers drain the cup, Thou drinkest deadly poison
up.

The rash and careless fool who heeds No coming fruit of guilty
deeds,

A few short years of life shall see, And perish doomed to death
like thee.

Say whither wilt thou fly to loose

Thy neck from Death's entangling noose, Caught like the fish
that finds too late The hook beneath the treacherous bait?

Never, O King—of this be sure—

Will Raghu's fiery sons endure, Terrific in their vengeful rage,
This insult to their hermitage.

Thy guilty hands this day have done A deed which all reprove
and shun, Unworthy of a noble chief,

The pillage loved by coward thief. Stay, if thy heart allow thee,
stay And meet me in the deadly fray.

Soon shall thou stain the earth with gore, And fall as Khara fell
before.

The fruits of former deeds o'erpower The sinner in his dying
hour:

And such a fate on thee, O King, Thy tyranny and madness
bring. Not e'en the Self-existent Lord,

Who reigns by all the worlds adored, Would dare attempt a
guilty deed Which the dire fruits of crime succeed.”

Thus brave Jatáyus, best of birds, Addressed the fiend with
moving words, Then ready for the swift attack

Swooped down upon the giant's back. Down to the bone the
talons went; With many a wound the flesh was rent: Such blows
infuriate drivers deal

Their elephants with pointed steel. Fixed in his back the strong
beak lay,

The talons stripped the flesh away.

He fought with claws and beak and wing, And tore the long hair
of the king.

Still as the royal vulture beat

The giant with his wings and feet, Swelled the fiend's lips, his
body shook With furious rage too great to brook.

About the Maithil dame he cast One huge left arm and held her
fast. In furious rage to frenzy fanned

He struck the vulture with his hand. Jatáyus mocked the vain
assay, And rent his ten left arms away.

Down dropped the severed limbs: anew Ten others from his
body grew:

Thus bright with pearly radiance glide Dread serpents from the
hillock side, Again in wrath the giant pressed

The lady closer to his breast,

And foot and fist sent blow on blow In ceaseless fury at the foe.

So fierce and dire the battle, waged Between those mighty
champions, raged: Here was the lord of giants, there

The noblest of the birds of air. Thus, as his love of Ráma taught,

The faithful vulture strove and fought. But Rávar, seized his
sword and smote His wings and side and feet and throat. At
mangled side and wing he bled;

He fell, and life was almost fled. The lady saw her champion lie,

His plumes distained with gory dye, And hastened to the
vulture's side

Grieving as though a kinsman died. The lord of Lanká's island
viewed

The vulture as he lay:

Whose back like some dark cloud was hued, His breast a paly
grey,

Like ashes, when by none renewed, The flame has died away.

The lady saw with mournful eye, Her champion press the plain,—

The royal bird, her true ally Whom Rávar,'s might had slain.

Her soft arms locked in strict embrace Around his neck she kept,

And lovely with her moon-bright face Bent o'er her friend and
wept.

Canto LII. Rávan's Flight.

Fair as the lord of silvery rays Whom every star in heaven
obeys, The Maithil dame her plaint renewed O'er him by Rávar,'s
might subdued: "Dreams, omens, auguries foreshow Our
coming lot of weal and woe: But thou, my Ráma, couldst not see

The grievous blow which falls on thee. The birds and deer desert
the brakes And show the path my captor takes, And thus e'en
now this royal bird

Flew to mine aid by pity stirred. Slain for my sake in death he
lies,

The broad-winged rover of the skies. O Ráma, haste, thine aid I
crave:

O Lakshmar,, why delay to save? Brave sons of old Ikshváku,
hear And rescue in this hour of fear.”

Her flowery wreath was torn and rent, Crushed was each
sparkling ornament. She with weak arms and trembling knees
Clung like a creeper to the trees,

And like some poor deserted thing With wild shrieks made the
forest ring.

[291] But swift the giant reached her side, As loud on Ráma's
name she cried. Fierce as grim Death one hand he laid Upon her
tresses' lovely braid.

“That touch, thou impious King, shall be The ruin of thy race and
thee.”

The universal world in awe That outrage on the lady saw,

All nature shook convulsed with dread, And darkness o'er the
land was spread. The Lord of Day grew dark and chill, And every
breath of air was still.

The Eternal Father of the sky Beheld the crime with heavenly
eye,

And spake with solemn voice, "The deed, The deed is done, of
old decreed."

Sad were the saints within the grove, But triumph with their
sorrow strove. They wept to see the Maithil dame Endure the
outrage, scorn, and shame: They joyed because his life should
pay The penalty incurred that day.

Then Rávar, raised her up, and bare His captive through the
fields of air, Calling with accents loud and shrill On Ráma and
on Lakshmar, still.

With sparkling gems on arm and breast, In silk of paly amber
dressed,

High in the air the Maithil dame

Gleamed like the lightning's flashing flame. The giant, as the
breezes blew

Upon her robes of amber hue,

And round him twined that gay attire, Showed like a mountain
girt with fire. The lady, fairest of the fair,

Had wreathed a garland round her hair; Its lotus petals bright
and sweet Rained down about the giant's feet.

Her vesture, bright as burning gold, Gave to the wind each
glittering fold, Fair as a gilded cloud that gleams

Touched by the Day-God's tempered beams. Yet struggling in
the fiend's embrace,

The lady with her sweet pure face, Far from her lord, no longer
wore The light of joy that shone before. Like some sad lily by the
side

Of waters which the sun has dried; Like the pale moon uprising
through An autumn cloud of darkest hue,

So was her perfect face between The arms of giant Rávar, seen:

Fair with the charm of braided tress And forehead's finished
loveliness; Fair with the ivory teeth that shed White lustre
through the lips' fine red,

Fair as the lotus when the bud Is rising from the parent flood.

With faultless lip and nose and eye, Dear as the moon that
floods the sky With gentle light, of perfect mould, She seemed a
thing of burnished gold, Though on her cheek the traces lay

Of tears her hand had brushed away. But as the moon-beams
swiftly fade

Ere the great Day-God shines displayed, So in that form of
perfect grace

Still trembling in the fiend's embrace, From her beloved Ráma
reft,

No light of pride or joy was left. The lady with her golden hue

O'er the swart fiend a lustre threw, As when embroidered girths
enfold An elephant with gleams of gold. Fair as the lily's bending
stem,— Her arms adorned with many a gem, A lustre to the
fiend she lent Gleaming from every ornament,

As when the cloud-shot flashes light The shadows of a mountain
height. Whene'er the breezes earthward bore The tinkling of the
zone she wore, He seemed a cloud of darkness hue Sending
forth murmurs as it flew.

As on her way the dame was sped

From her sweet neck fair flowers were shed, The swift wind
caught the flowery rain

And poured it o'er the fiend again.

The wind-stirred blossoms, sweet to smell, On the dark brows of
Rávar, fell,

Like lunar constellations set On Meru for a coronet.

From her small foot an anklet fair

With jewels slipped, and through the air, Like a bright circlet of
the flame

Of thunder, to the valley came. The Maithil lady, fair to see As
the young leaflet of a tree

Clad in the tender hues of spring, Flashed glory on the giant
king, As when a gold-embroidered zone Around an elephant is
thrown.

While, bearing far the lady, through The realms of sky the giant
flew, She like a gleaming meteor cast

A glory round her as she passed. Then from each limb in swift
descent Dropped many a sparkling ornament:

On earth they rested dim and pale Like fallen stars when virtues
fail.⁵⁰⁴ Around her neck a garland lay Bright as the Star-God's
silvery ray:

It fell and flashed like Gangá sent From heaven above the
firmament.⁵⁰⁵ The birds of every wing had flocked

To stately trees by breezes rocked: [292]

These bowed their wind-swept heads and said: "My lady sweet,
be comforted."

With faded blooms each brook within Whose waters moved no
gleamy fin, Stole sadly through the forest dell

504 The spirits of the good dwell in heaven until their store of accumulated merit is exhausted. Then they redescend to earth in the form of falling stars. 505 See The Descent of Gangá, Book I Canto XLIV.

Mourning the dame it loved so well. From every woodland region near Came lions, tigers, birds, and deer, And followed, each with furious look, The way her flying shadow took.

For Sítá's loss each lofty hill

Whose tears were waterfall, and rill, Lifting on high each arm-like steep, Seemed in the general woe to weep. When the great sun, the lord of day, Saw Rávar, tear the dame away,

His glorious light began to fail

And all his disk grew cold and pale. "If Rávar, from the forest flies

With Ráma's Sítá as his prize,

Justice and truth have vanished hence, Honour and right and innocence." Thus rose the cry of wild despair From spirits as they gathered there.

In trembling troops in open lawns Wept, wild with woe, the
startled fawns, And a strange terror changed the eyes They
lifted to the distant skies.

On silvan Gods who love the dell A sudden fear and trembling
fell, As in the deepest woe they viewed The lady by the fiend
subdued.

Still in loud shrieks was heard afar

That voice whose sweetness naught could mar, While eager
looks of fear and woe

She bent upon the earth below. The lady of each winning wile
With pearly teeth and lovely smile, Seized by the lord of Lanká's
isle,

Looked down for friends in vain. She saw no friend to aid her,
none, Not Ráma nor the younger son

Of Dasaratha, and undone

She swooned with fear and pain.

Canto LIII. Sítá's Threats.

Soon as the Maithil lady knew

That high through air the giant flew, Distressed with grief and
sore afraid Her troubled spirit sank dismayed. Then, as anew
the waters welled

From those red eyes which sorrow swelled, Forth in keen words
her passion broke, And to the fierce-eyed fiend she spoke:

“Canst thou attempt a deed so base, Untroubled by the deep
disgrace,—

To steal me from my home and fly, When friend or guardian
none was nigh? Thy craven soul that longed to steal, Fearing the
blows that warriors deal, Upon a magic deer relied

To lure my husband from my side, Friend of his sire, the vulture
king Lies low on earth with mangled wing, Who gave his aged
life for me

And died for her he sought to free. Ah, glorious strength indeed
is thine, Thou meanest of thy giant line, Whose courage dared
to tell thy name

And conquer in the fight a dame. Does the vile deed that thou
hast done

Cause thee no shame, thou wicked one— A woman from her
home to rend

When none was near his aid to lend? Through all the worlds, O
giant King, The tidings of this deed will ring, This deed in law
and honour's spite By one who claims a hero's might.

Shame on thy boasted valour, shame! Thy prowess is an empty
name.

Shame, giant, on this cursed deed

For which thy race is doomed to bleed! Thou fliest swifter than
the gale,

For what can strength like thine avail? Stay for one hour, O
Rávar,, stay; Thou shalt not flee with life away.

Soon as the royal chieftains' sight Falls on the thief who roams
by night, Thou wilt not, tyrant, live one hour

Though backed by all thy legions' power. Ne'er can thy puny
strength sustain

The tempest of their arrowy rain:

Have e'er the trembling birds withstood The wild flames raging
in the wood?

Hear me, O Rávar,, let me go,

And save thy soul from coming woe. Or if thou wilt not set me
free, Wroth for this insult done to me.

With his brave brother's aid my lord Against thy life will raise his
sword. A guilty hope inflames thy breast His wife from Ráma's
home to wrest. Ah fool, the hope thou hast is vain;

Thy dreams of bliss shall end in pain. If torn from all I love by
thee

My godlike lord no more I see, Soon will I die and end my woes,
Nor live the captive of my foes.

Ah fool, with blinded eyes to choose The evil and the good
refuse!

So the sick wretch with stubborn will Turns fondly to the cates
that kill, And madly draws his lips away

From medicine that would check decay.

About thy neck securely wound [293]

The deadly coil of Fate is bound, And thou, O Rávar,, dost not
fear Although the hour of death is near.

With death-doomed sight thine eyes behold The gleaming of the
trees of gold,—

See dread Vaitarar,i, the flood

That rolls a stream of foamy blood,— See the dark wood by all
abhorred— Its every leaf a threatening sword.

The tangled thickets thou shall tread Where thorns with iron
points are spread. For never can thy days be long,
Base plotter of this shame and wrong To Ráma of the lofty soul:
He dies who drinks the poisoned bowl. The coils of death around
thee lie: They hold thee and thou canst not fly. Ah whither,
tyrant, wouldst thou run The vengeance of my lord to shun?
By his unaided arm alone
Were twice seven thousand fiends o'erthrown: Yes, in the
twinkling of an eye

He forced thy mightiest fiends to die. And shall that lord of lion
heart, Skilled in the bow and spear and dart, Spare thee, O
fiend, in battle strife, The robber of his darling wife?"

These were her words, and more beside, By wrath and bitter
hate supplied.

Then by her woe and fear o'erthrown She wept again and made
her moan. As long she wept in grief and dread, Scarce
conscious of the words she said, The wicked giant onward fled
And bore her through the air.

As firm he held the Maithil dame, Still wildly struggling, o'er her
frame With grief and bitter misery came

The trembling of despair.

Canto LIV. Lanká.

He bore her on in rapid flight, And not a friend appeared in sight. But on a hill that o'er the wood

Raised its high top five monkeys stood. From her fair neck her scarf she drew, And down the glittering vesture flew. With earring, necklet, chain, and gem, Descending in the midst of them:

“For these,” she thought, “my path may show, And tell my lord the way I go.”

Nor did the fiend, in wild alarm,

Mark when she drew from neck and arm And foot the gems and gold, and sent To earth each gleaming ornament.

The monkeys raised their tawny eyes That closed not in their first surprise, And saw the dark-eyed lady, where She shrieked above them in the air. High o'er their heads the giant passed Holding the weeping lady fast.

O'er Pampa's flashing flood he sped And on to Lanká's city fled.

He bore away in senseless joy

The prize that should his life destroy, Like the rash fool who
hugs beneath His robe a snake with venom'd teeth. Swift as an
arrow from a bow, Speeding o'er lands that lay below, Sublime
in air his course he took

O'er wood and rock and lake and brook. He passed at length
the sounding sea Where monstrous creatures wander free,—
Seat of Lord Varur,'s ancient reign, Controller of the eternal
main.

The angry waves were raised and tossed As Rávar, with the lady
crossed,

And fish and snake in wild unrest Showed flashing fin and
gleaming crest. Then from the blessed troops who dwell In air
celestial voices fell:

“O ten-necked King,” they cried, “attend: This guilty deed will
bring thine end.”

Then Rávar, speeding like the storm, Bearing his death in human
form,

The struggling Sítá, lighted down In royal Lanká's glorious town;

A city bright and rich, that showed Well-ordered street and noble road; Arranged with just division, fair With multitudes in court and square. Thus, all his journey done, he passed Within his royal home at last.

There in a queenly bower he placed The black-eyed dame with dainty waist: Thus in her chamber Máyá laid

The lovely Máyá, demon maid. Then Rávar, gave command to all

The dread she-fiends who filled the hall: “This captive lady watch and guard From sight of man and woman barred. But all the fair one asks beside

Be with unsparing hand supplied:

As though 'twere I that asked, withhold No pearls or dress or gems or gold.

And she among you that shall dare Of purpose or through want of care One word to vex her soul to say, Throws her unvalued life away.”

Thus spake the monarch of their race

To those she-fiends who thronged the place, And pondering on the course to take

Went from the chamber as he spake. He saw eight giants, strong and dread, On flesh of bleeding victims fed,

[294]Proud in the boon which Brahmá gave,

And trusting in its power to save. He thus the mighty chiefs
addressed

Of glorious power and strength possessed: “Arm, warriors, with
the spear and bow; With all your speed from Lanká go,

For Janasthán, our own no more, Is now defiled with giants’
gore; The seat of Khara’s royal state

Is left unto us desolate.

In your brave hearts and might confide, And cast ignoble fear
aside.

Go, in that desert region dwell

Where the fierce giants fought and fell. A glorious host that
region held,

For power and might unparalleled, By Dúshar, and brave Khara
led,— All, slain by Ráma’s arrows, bled.

Hence boundless wrath that spurns control Reigns paramount
within my soul,

And naught but Ráma’s death can sate The fury of my vengeful
hate.

I will not close my slumbering eyes Till by this hand my foeman
dies. And when mine arm has slain the foe Who laid those giant
princes low, Long will I triumph in the deed,

Like one enriched in utmost need. Now go; that I this end may
gain, In Janasthán, O chiefs, remain.

Watch Ráma there with keenest eye, And all his deeds and
movements spy. Go forth, no helping art neglect,

Be brave and prompt and circumspect, And be your one
endeavour still

To aid mine arm this foe to kill. Oft have I seen your warrior
might Proved in the forehead of the fight,

And sure of strength I know so well Send you in Janasthán to
dwell.”

The giants heard with prompt assent The pleasant words he
said,

And each before his master bent For meet salute, his head.

Then as he bade, without delay, From Lanká's gate they passed,

And hurried forward on their way Invisible and fast.

Canto LV. Sítá In Prison.

Thus Rávar, his commandment gave To those eight giants
strong and brave, So thinking in his foolish pride Against all
dangers to provide.

Then with his wounded heart aflame With love he thought upon
the dame, And took with hasty steps the way To the fair
chamber where she lay.

He saw the gentle lady there

Weighed down by woe too great to bear, Amid the throng of
fiends who kept Their watch around her as she wept:

A pinnacle sinking neath the wave When mighty winds around
her rave: A lonely herd-forsaken deer,

When hungry dogs are pressing near. Within the bower the
giant passed:

Her mournful looks were downward cast. As there she lay with
streaming eyes

The giant bade the lady rise,

And to the shrinking captive showed The glories of his rich
abode,

Where thousand women spent their days In palaces with gold
ablaze;

Where wandered birds of every sort, And jewels flashed in hall
and court. Where noble pillars charmed the sight With diamond
and lazulite,

And others glorious to behold With ivory, crystal, silver, gold.

There swelled on high the tambour's sound, And burnished ore
was bright around

He led the mournful lady where Resplendent gold adorned the
stair, And showed each lattice fair to see With silver work and
ivory:

Showed his bright chambers, line on line, Adorned with nets of
golden twine.

Beyond he showed the Maithil dame His gardens bright as
lightning's flame, And many a pool and lake he showed Where
blooms of gayest colour glowed. Through all his home from view
to view The lady sunk in grief he drew.

Then trusting in her heart to wake Desire of all she saw, he
spake: "Three hundred million giants, all Obedient to their
master's call,

Not counting young and weak and old,

Serve me with spirits fierce and bold. A thousand culled from all
of these Wait on the lord they long to please.

This glorious power, this pomp and sway, Dear lady, at thy feet
I lay:

Yea, with my life I give the whole, O dearer than my life and
soul.

A thousand beauties fill my hall: Be thou my wife and rule them
all. O hear my supplication! why

This reasonable prayer deny? Some pity to thy suitor show,
For love's hot flames within me glow. This isle a hundred leagues
in length, Encompassed by the ocean's strength, Would all the
Gods and fiends defy Though led by Him who rules the sky. No
God in heaven, no sage on earth,

[295] No minstrel of celestial birth, No spirit in the worlds I see

A match in power and might for me. What wilt thou do with
Ráma, him Whose days are short, whose light is dim, Expelled
from home and royal sway, Who treads on foot his weary way?

Leave the poor mortal to his fate, And wed thee with a worthier
mate. My timid love, enjoy with me

The prime of youth before it flee. Do not one hour the hope
retain To look on Ráma's face again.

For whom would wildest thought beguile To seek thee in the
giants' isle?

Say who is he has power to bind

In toils of net the rushing wind. Whose is the mighty hand will
tame And hold the glory of the flame?

In all the worlds above, below, Not one, O fair of form, I know
Who from this isle in fight could rend The lady whom these arms
defend.

Fair Queen, o'er Lanká's island reign, Sole mistress of the wide
domain.

Gods, rovers of the night like me, And all the world thy slaves
will be. O'er thy fair brows and queenly head Let consecrating
balm be shed,

And sorrow banished from thy breast, Enjoy my love and take
thy rest.

Here never more thy soul shall know The memory of thy former
woe, And here shall thou enjoy the meed Deserved by every
virtuous deed.

Here garlands glow of flowery twine, With gorgeous hues and
scent divine. Take gold and gems and rich attire: Enjoy with me
thy heart's desire.

There stand, of chariots far the best, The car my brother once
possessed. Which, victor in the stricken field,

I forced the Lord of Gold to yield.

'Tis wide and high and nobly wrought, Bright as the sun and
swift as thought. Therein O Síta, shalt thou ride Delighted by thy
lover's side.

But sorrow mars with lingering trace The splendour of thy lotus
face.

A cloud of woe is o'er it spread,

And all the light of joy is fled.”

The lady, by her woe distressed, One corner of her raiment
pressed

To her sad cheek like moonlight clear, And wiped away a falling
tear.

The rover of the night renewed His eager pleading as he viewed
The lady stand like one distraught,

Striving to fix her wandering thought:

“Think not, sweet lady, of the shame Of broken vows, nor fear
the blame.

The saints approve with favouring eyes This union knit with
marriage ties.

O beauty, at thy radiant feet

I lay my heads, and thus entreat. One word of grace, one look I
crave: Have pity on thy prostrate slave.

These idle words I speak are vain, Wrung forth by love’s
consuming pain, And ne’er of Rávar, be it said

He wooed a dame with prostrate head.” Thus to the Maithil lady
sued

The monarch of the giant brood,

And “She is now mine own,” he thought, In Death’s dire coils
already caught.

Canto LVI. Sítá’s Disdain.

His words the Maithil lady heard Oppressed by woe but
undeterred. Fear of the fiend she cast aside, And thus in noble
scorn replied: “His word of honour never stained King
Dasaratha nobly reigned,

The bridge of right, the friend of truth. His eldest son, a noble youth,

Is Ráma, virtue's faithful friend,

Whose glories through the worlds extend. Long arms and large full eyes has he,

My husband, yea a God to me.

With shoulders like the forest king's, From old Ikshváku's line he springs. He with his brother Lakshmar,'s aid

Will smite thee with the vengeful blade. Hadst thou but dared before his eyes

To lay thine hand upon the prize,

Thou stretched before his feet hadst lain In Janasthán like Khara slain.

Thy boasted rovers of the night

With hideous shapes and giant might,— Like serpents when the feathered king Swoops down with his tremendous wing,— Will find their useless venom fail

When Ráma's mighty arms assail. The rapid arrows bright with gold, Shot from the bow he loves to hold,

Will rend thy frame from flank to flank As Gangá's waves erode the bank.

Though neither God nor fiend have power To slay thee in the battle hour,

Yet from his hand shall come thy fate, Struck down before his
vengeful hate. That mighty lord will strike and end The days of
life thou hast to spend.

Thy days are doomed, thy life is sped Like victims to the pillar
led.

Yea, if the glance of Ráma bright With fury on thy form should
light,

[296]Thou scorched this day wouldst fall and die Like Káma
slain by Rudra's eye.506

He who from heaven the moon could throw, Or bid its bright
rays cease to glow,—

He who could drain the mighty sea Will set his darling Sítá free.

Fled is thy life, thy glory, fled

Thy strength and power: each sense is dead. Soon Lanká
widowed by thy guilt

Will see the blood of giants spilt. This wicked deed, O cruel King,
No triumph, no delight will bring.

Thou with outrageous might and scorn A woman from her lord
hast torn.

My glorious husband far away, Making heroic strength his stay,
Dwells with his brother, void of fear, In Dar,9ak forest lone and
drear.

No more in force of arms confide:

That haughty strength, that power and pride My hero with his
arrowy rain

From all thy bleeding limbs will drain. When urged by fate's dire
mandate, nigh Comes the fixt hour for men to die.

506 See Book I Canto XXV.

Caught in Death's toils their eyes are blind, And folly takes each
wandering mind.

So for the outrage thou hast done

The fate is near thou canst not shun,— The fate that on thyself
and all

Thy giants and thy town shall fall. I spurn thee: can the altar
dight With vessels for the sacred rite,

O'er which the priest his prayer has said, Be sullied by an
outcaste's tread?

So me, the consort dear and true Of him who clings to virtue
too, Thy hated touch shall ne'er defile, Base tyrant lord of
Lanká's isle.

Can the white swan who floats in pride Through lilies by her
consort's side, Look for one moment, as they pass, On the poor
diver in the grass?

This senseless body waits thy will, To torture, chain, to wound or
kill. I will not, King of giants, strive To keep this fleeting soul
alive But never shall they join the name Of Sítá with reproach
and shame.”

Thus as her breast with fury burned Her bitter speech the dame
returned. Such words of rage and scorn, the last She uttered, at
the fiend she cast.

Her taunting speech the giant heard, And every hair with anger
stirred. Then thus with fury in his eye

He made in threats his fierce reply: “Hear Maithil lady, hear my
speech:

List to my words and ponder each.

If o'er thy head twelve months shall fly And thou thy love wilt
still deny,

My cooks shall mince thy flesh with steel And serve it for my morning meal.”

Thus with terrific threats to her Spake Rávar,, cruel ravener.

Mad with the rage her answer woke He called the fiendish train and spoke:

“Take her, ye Rákshas dames, who fright With hideous form and mien the sight, Who make the flesh of men your food,— And let her pride be soon subdued.”

He spoke, and at his word the band Of fiendish monsters raised each hand In reverence to the giant king,

And pressed round Sítá in a ring. Rávar, once more with stern behest

To those she-fiends his speech addressed: Shaking the earth beneath his tread,

He stamped his furious foot and said: “To the Asoka garden bear

The dame, and guard her safely there Until her stubborn pride be bent

By mingled threat and blandishment. See that ye watch her well,
and tame, Like some she-elephant, the dame.”

They led her to that garden where The sweetest flowers
perfumed the air, Where bright trees bore each rarest fruit, And
birds, enamoured, ne'er were mute. Bowed down with terror and
distress, Watched by each cruel giantess,—

Like a poor solitary deer

When ravening tigresses are near,— The hapless lady lay
distraught

Like some wild thing but newly caught, And found no solace, no
relief

From agonizing fear and grief; Not for one moment could
forget Each terrifying word and threat, Or the fierce eyes upon
her set

By those who watched around.

She thought of Ráma far away,

She mourned for Lakshmar, as she lay In grief and terror and
dismay

Half fainting on the ground.

Canto LVII. Sítá Comforted.

Soon as the fiend had set her down Within his home in Lanká's
town Triumph and joy filled Indra's breast, Whom thus the
Eternal Sire addressed:

“This deed will free the worlds from woe And cause the giants'
overthrow.

The fiend has borne to Lanká's isle The lady of the lovely smile,
True consort born to happy fate

[297] With features fair and delicate.

She looks and longs for Ráma's face, But sees a crowd of
demon race, And guarded by the giant's train Pines for her lord
and weeps in vain. But Lanká founded on a steep

Is girdled by the mighty deep, And how will Ráma know his fair
And blameless wife is prisoned there? She on her woe will sadly
brood

And pine away in solitude,
And heedless of herself, will cease To live, despairing of release.
Yes, pondering on her fate, I see Her gentle life in jeopardy.
Go, Indra, swiftly seek the place, And look upon her lovely face.
Within the city make thy way:
Let heavenly food her spirit stay.”

Thus Brahma spake: and He who slew The cruel demon Páka,
flew

Where Lanká's royal city lay,
And Sleep went with him on his way. “Sleep,” cried the heavenly
Monarch, “close Each giant's eye in deep repose.”

Thus Indra spoke, and Sleep fulfilled With joy his mandate, as
he willed,

To aid the plan the Gods proposed, The demons' eyes in sleep
she closed. Then Sachí's lord, the Thousand-eyed, To the Asoka
garden hied.

He came and stood where Sítá lay, And gently thus began to say:

“Lord of the Gods who hold the sky, Dame of the lovely smile, am I. Weep no more, lady, weep no more; Thy days of woe will soon be o’er.

I come, O Janak’s child, to be The helper of thy lord and thee.

He through my grace, with hosts to aid, This sea-girt land will soon invade. ’Tis by my art that slumbers close

The eyelids of thy giant foes.

Now I, with Sleep, this place have sought, Videhan lady, and have brought

A gift of heaven’s ambrosial food To stay thee in thy solitude.

Receive it from my hand, and taste, O lady of the dainty waist:

For countless ages thou shall be

From pangs of thirst and hunger free.”

But doubt within her bosom woke As to the Lord of Gods she spoke: “How may I know for truth that thou Whose form I see before me now Art verily the King adored

By heavenly Gods, and Sachi’s lord? With Raghu’s sons I learnt to know

The certain signs which Godhead show. These marks before
mine eyes display If o'er the Gods thou bear the sway.”

The heavenly lord of Sachí heard, And did according to her
word.

Above the ground his feet were raised; With eyelids motionless
he gazed.

No dust upon his raiment lay,

And his bright wreath was fresh and gay. Nor was the lady's
glad heart slow

The Monarch of the Gods to know, And while the tears
unceasing ran From her sweet eyes she thus began: “My lord
has gained a friend in thee, And I this day thy presence see
Shown clearly to mine eyes, as when Ráma and Lakshmar,,
lords of men, Beheld it, and their sire the king, And Janak too
from whom I spring. Now I, O Monarch of the Blest,

Will eat this food at thy behest,

Which thou hast brought me, of thy grace, To aid and
strengthen Raghu's race.”

She spoke, and by his words relieved, The food from Indra's
hand received, Yet ere she ate the balm he brought,

On Lakshmar, and her lord she thought. "If my brave lord be still
alive,

If valiant Lakshmar, yet survive, May this my taste of heavenly
food

Bring health to them and bliss renewed!" She ate, and that
celestial food

Stayed hunger, thirst, and lassitude, And all her strength
restored.

Great joy her hopeful spirit stirred At the glad tidings newly
heard

Of Lakshmar, and her lord.

And Indra's heart was joyful too:

He bade the Maithil dame adieu, His saving errand done.

With Sleep beside him parting thence He sought his heavenly
residence

To prosper Raghu's son.

Canto LVIII. The Brothers' Meeting.

When Ráma's deadly shaft had struck The giant in the seeming
buck,

The chieftain turned him from the place His homeward way
again to trace.

Then as he hastened onward, fain To look upon his spouse
again, Behind him from a thicket nigh Rang out a jackal's
piercing cry.

Alarmed he heard the startling shriek

That raised his hair and dimmed his cheek, And all his heart was
filled with doubt

As the shrill jackal's cry rang out:

“Alas, some dire disaster seems Portended by the jackal's
screams.

O may the Maithil dame be screened

From outrage of each hungry fiend! [298]

Alas, if Lakshmar, chanced to hear That bitter cry of woe and
fear What time Mārīcha, as he died,

With voice that mocked my accents cried, Swift to my side the
prince would flee And quit the dame to succour me.

Too well I see the demon band

The slaughter of my love have planned. Me far from home and
Sítá's view

The seeming deer Márícha drew.

He led me far through brake and dell Till wounded by my shaft
he fell, And as he sank rang out his cry,

“O save me, Lakshmar,, or I die.” May it be well with both who
stayed In the great wood with none to aid, For every fiend is
now my foe

For Janasthán's great overthrow, And many an omen seen to-
day

Has filled my heart with sore dismay.”

Such were the thoughts and sad surmise Of Ráma at the
jackal's cries,

And all his heart within him burned As to his cot his steps he
turned.

He pondered on the deer that led His feet to follow where it fled,
And sad with many a bitter thought His home in Janasthán he
sought.

His soul was dark with woe and fear When flocks of birds and
troops of deer Move round him from the left, and raised
Discordant voices as they gazed.

The omens which the chieftain viewed

The terror of his soul renewed,

When lo, to meet him Lakshmar, sped With brows whence all the
light had fled. Near and more near the princes came, Each
brother's heart and look the same; Alike on each sad visage lay

The signs of misery and dismay, Then Ráma by his terror moved
His brother for his fault reproved In leaving Sítá far from aid

In the wild wood where giants strayed. Lakshmar,'s left hand he
took, and then In gentle tones the prince of men, Though sharp
and fierce their tenour ran, Thus to his brother chief began:

“O Lakshmar,, thou art much to blame Leaving alone the Maithil
dame,

And flying hither to my side: O, may no ill my spouse betide! But
ah, I know my wife is dead,

And giants on her limbs have fed, So strange, so terrible are all

The omens which my heart appal. O Lakshmar,, may we yet
return The safety of my love to learn.

To find the child of Janak still Alive and free from scathe and ill!
Each bird with notes of warning screams, Though the hot sun
still darts his beams. The moan of deer, the jackal's yell
Of some o'erwhelming misery tell. O mighty brother, still may
she, My princess, live from danger free!

That semblance of a golden deer Allured me far away,
I followed nearer and more near, And longed to take the prey.
I followed where the quarry fled: My deadly arrow flew,
And as the dying creature bled, The giant met my view.
Great fear and pain oppress my heart That dreads the coming
blow,
And through my left eye keenly dart The throbs that herald woe.
Ah Lakshmar,, all these signs dismay, My soul that sinks with
dread,
I know my love is torn away, Or, haply, she is dead.”

Canto LIX. Rāma's Return.

When Ráma saw his brother stand With none beside him, all
unmanned, Eager he questioned why he came

So far without the Maithil dame: “Where is my wife, my darling,
she Who to the wild wood followed me? Where hast thou left my
lady, where The dame who chose my lot to share? Where is my
love who balms my woe As through the forest wilds I go,
Unkinged and banished and disgraced,— My darling of the
dainty waist?

Canto LIX. Ráma’s Return. 1059

She nerves my spirit for the strife,
She, only she gives zest to life,
Dear as my breath is she who vies
In charms with daughters of the skies.
If Janak’s child be mine no more,
In splendour fair as virgin ore,
The lordship of the skies and earth
To me were prize of little worth.
Ah, lives she yet, the Maithil dame,
Dear as the soul within this frame?
O, let not all my toil be vain,

The banishment, the woe and pain!
O, let not dark Kaikeyí win
The guerdon of her treacherous sin,
If, Sítá lost, my days I end,
And thou without me homeward wend!
O, let not good Kausalyá shed
Her bitter tears to mourn me dead,
Nor her proud rival's hest obey,
Strong in her son and queenly sway!
Back to my cot will I repair
If Sítá live to greet me there, [299]
But if my wife have perished, I
Reft of my love will surely die.
O Lakshmar,, if I seek my cot,
Look for my love and find her not
Sweet welcome with her smile to give,
I tell thee, I will cease to live.
O answer,—let thy words be plain,—
Lives Sítá yet, or is she slain?
Didst thou thy sacred trust betray

Till ravening giants seized the prey?

Ah me, so young, so soft and fair,

Lapped in all bliss, untried by care,

Rent from her own dear husband, how Will she support her
misery now?

That voice, O Lakshmar, smote thine ear, And filled, I ween, thy
heart with fear, When on thy name for succour cried

The treacherous giant ere he died. That voice too like mine own,
I ween, Was heard by the Videhan queen.

She bade thee seek my side to aid, And quickly was the hest
obeyed, But ah, thy fault I needs must blame, To leave alone
the helpless dame, And let the cruel giants sate

The fury of their murderous hate. Those blood-devouring
demons all Grieve in their souls for Khara's fall, And Sítá, none
to guard her side, Torn by their cruel hands has died.

I sink, O tamer of thy foes,

Deep in the sea of whelming woes. What can I now? I must
endure

The mighty grief that mocks at cure.”

Thus, all his thoughts on Síta bent, To Janasthán the chieftain
went, Hastening on with eager stride,

And Lakshmar, hurried by his side. With toil and thirst and
hunger worn, His breast with doubt and anguish torn,

He sought the well-known spot.

Again, again he turned to chide

With quivering lips which terror dried: He looked, and found her
not.

Within his leafy home he sped,

Each pleasant spot he visited Where oft his darling strayed.

“Tis as I feared,” he cried, and there, Yielding to pangs too
great to bear,

He sank by grief dismayed.

Canto LX. Lakshman Reproved.

But Ráma ceased not to upbraid, His brother for untimely aid,
And thus, while anguish wrung his breast, The chief with eager
question pressed: “Why, Lakshmar,, didst thou hurry hence And
leave my wife without defence?

I left her in the wood with thee,

And deemed her safe from jeopardy. When first thy form
appeared in view, I marked that Sítá came not too.

With woe my troubled soul was rent, Prophetic of the dire event.

Thy coming steps afar I spied, I saw no Sítá by thy side,

And felt a sudden throbbing dart

Through my left eye, and arm, and heart.”

Lakshmar,, with Fortune’s marks impressed, His brother
mournfully addressed:

“Not by my heart’s free impulse led, Leaving thy wife to thee I
sped;

But by her keen reproaches sent, O Ráma, to thine aid I went.

She heard afar a mournful cry, “O save me, Lakshmar,, or I die.”

The voice that spoke in moving tone Smote on her ear and
seemed thine own. Soon as those accents reached her ear She
yielded to her woe and fear,

She wept o'ercome by grief, and cried, "Fly, Lakshmar,, fly to
Ráma's side." Though many a time she bade me speed, Her
urgent prayer I would not heed.

I bade her in thy strength confide, And thus with tender words
replied: "No giant roams the forest shade

From whom thy lord need shrink dismayed. No human voice,
believe me, spoke

Those words thy causeless fear that woke. Can he whose might
can save in woe

The heavenly Gods e'er stoop so low, And with those piteous
accents call For succour like a caitiff thrall?

And why should wandering giants choose The accents of thy
lord to use,

In alien tones my help to crave, And cry aloud, O Lakshmar,,
save? Now let my words thy spirit cheer,

Compose thy thoughts and banish fear. In hell, in earth, or in
the skies

There is not, and there cannot rise

A champion whose strong arm can slay Thy Ráma in the battle
fray.

To heavenly hosts he ne'er would yield Though Indra led them to
the field." To soothe her thus I vainly sought:

Her heart with woe was still distraught. While from her eyes the
waters ran Her bitter speech she thus began:

"Too well I see thy dark intent:

Thy lawless thoughts on me are bent. Thou hopest, but thy hope
is vain, To win my love, thy brother slain.

Not love, but Bharat's dark decree

To share his exile counselled thee, [300]

Or hearing now his bitter cry Thou surely to his aid wouldst fly.

For love of me, a stealthy foe Thou choosest by his side to go,

And now thou longest that my lord Should die, and wilt no help
afford."

Such were the words the lady said: With angry fire my eyes were
red.

With pale lips quivering in my rage I hastened from the
hermitage." He ceased; and frenzied by his pain The son of
Raghu spoke again:

“O brother, for thy fault I grieve, The Maithil dame alone to
leave. Thou knowest that my arm is strong To save me from the
giant throng,

And yet couldst leave the cottage, spurred To folly by her angry
word.

For this thy deed I praise thee not,—

To leave her helpless in the cot, And thus thy sacred charge
forsake For the wild words a woman spake. Yea thou art all to
blame herein, And very grievous is thy sin.

That anger swayed thy faithless breast And made thee false to
my behest.

An arrow speeding from my bow Has laid the treacherous giant
low, Who lured me eager for the chase Far from my hermit
dwelling-place. The string with easy hand I drew, The arrow as
in pastime flew,

The wounded quarry bled.

The borrowed form was cast away, Before mine eye a giant lay
With bright gold braceleted.

My arrow smote him in the chest: The giant by the pain
distressed

Raised his loud voice on high.

Far rang the mournful sound: mine own, It seemed, were
accent, voice, and tone, They made thee leave my spouse alone
And to my rescue fly.”

Canto LXI. Rāma's Lament.

As Rāma sought his leafy cot

Through his left eye keen throbbings shot, His wonted strength
his frame forsook, And all his body reeled and shook.

Still on those dreadful signs he thought,— Sad omens with
disaster fraught,

And from his troubled heart he cried, “O, may no ill my spouse
betide!” Longing to gaze on Sítá's face

He hastened to his dwelling-place, Then sinking neath his
misery's weight, He looked and found it desolate.

Tossing his mighty arms on high He sought her with an eager
cry, From spot to spot he wildly ran Each corner of his home to
scan. He looked, but Sítá was not there; His cot was disolate

and bare, Like streamlet in the winter frost, The glory of her lilies
lost.

With leafy tears the sad trees wept As a wild wind their
branches swept.

Mourned bird and deer, and every flower Drooped fainting
round the lonely bower. The silvan deities had fled

The spot where all the light was dead, Where hermit coats of
skin displayed, And piles of sacred grass were laid.

He saw, and maddened by his pain Cried in lament again,
again: "Where is she, dead or torn away, Lost, or some hungry
giant's prey? Or did my darling chance to rove

For fruit and blossoms though the grove? Or has she sought the
pool or rill,

Her pitcher from the wave to fill?" His eager eyes on fire with
pain

He roamed about with maddened brain.

Each grove and glade he searched with care, He sought, but
found no Sítá there.

He wildly rushed from hill to hill; From tree to tree, from rill to rill,
As bitter woe his bosom rent

Still Ráma roamed with fond lament: “O sweet Kadamba say
has she

Who loved thy bloom been seen by thee? If thou have seen her
face most fair,

Say, gentle tree, I pray thee, where. O Bel tree with thy golden
fruit

Round as her breast, no more be mute, Where is my radiant
darling, gay

In silk that mocks thy glossy spray? O Arjun, say, where is she
now

Who loved to touch thy scented bough? Do not thy graceful
friend forget,

But tell me, is she living yet?

Speak, Basil, thou must surely know, For like her limbs thy
branches show,— Most lovely in thy fair array

Of twining plant and tender spray. Sweet Tila, fairest of the
trees, Melodious with the hum of bees, Where is my darling Sítá,
tell,—

The dame who loved thy flowers so well? Asoka, act thy gentle
part,—

Named Heartsease,⁵⁰⁷ give me what thou art,

To these sad eyes my darling show And free me from this load
of woe.

O Palm, in rich ripe fruitage dressed

[301] Round as the beauties of her breast,

507 Asoka is compounded of a not and soka grief.

If thou have heart to know and feel, My peerless consort's fate
reveal.

Hast thou, Rose-apple, chanced to view My darling bright with
golden hue?

If thou have seen her quickly speak, Where is the dame I wildly
seek?

O glorious Cassia, thou art gay With all thy loveliest bloom to-
day, Where is my dear who loved to hold In her full lap thy
flowery gold?" To many a tree and plant beside,

To Jasmin, Mango, Sál, he cried. "Say, hast thou seen, O gentle
deer, The fawn-eyed Sítá wandering here? It may be that my
love has strayed

To sport with fawns beneath the shade, If thou, great elephant,
have seen

My darling of the lovely mien,

Whose rounded limbs are soft and fine As is that lissome trunk
of thine,

O noblest of wild creatures, show

Where is the dame thou needs must know. O tiger, hast thou
chanced to see

My darling? very fair is she, Cast all thy fear away, declare,
Where is my moon-faced darling, where? There, darling of the
lotus eye,

I see thee, and 'tis vain to fly,

Wilt thou not speak, dear love? I see Thy form half hidden by
the tree.

Stay if thou love me, Sítá, stay In pity cease thy heartless play.

Why mock me now? thy gentle breast Was never prone to cruel
jest.

'Tis vain behind yon bush to steal: Thy shimmering silks thy path
reveal. Fly not, mine eyes pursue thy way; For pity's sake, dear
Sítá, stay.

Ah me, ah me, my words are vain; My gentle love is lost or slain.

How could her tender bosom spurn Her husband on his home-
return? Ah no, my love is surely dead, Fierce giants on her flesh
have fed, Rending the soft limbs of their prey When I her lord
was far away.

That moon-bright face, that polished brow, Red lips, bright
teeth—what are they now? Alas, my darling's shapely neck
She loved with chains of gold to deck,— That neck that mocked
the sandal scent, The ruthless fiends have grasped and rent.
Alas, 'twas vain those arms to raise

Soft as the young tree's tender sprays. Ah, dainty meal for
giants' lips

Were arms and quivering finger tips. Ah, she who counted many
a friend Was left for fiends to seize and rend, Was left by me
without defence From ravening giants' violence.

O Lakshmar, of the arm of might, Say, is my darling love in
sight? O dearest Sítá. where art thou?

Where is my darling consort now?"

Thus as he cried in wild lament From grove to grove the
mourner went, Here for a moment sank to rest,

Then started up and onward pressed. Thus roaming on like one
distraught Still for his vanished love he sought, He searched in
wood and hill and glade, By rock and brook and wild cascade.

Through groves with restless step he sped And left no spot
unvisited.

Through lawns and woods of vast extent Still searching for his
love he went

With eager steps and fast.

For many a weary hour he toiled, Still in his fond endeavour
foiled,

Yet hoping to the last.

Canto LXII. Ráma's Lament.

When all the toil and search was vain He sought his leafy home
again. 'Twas empty still: all scattered lay The seats of grass in
disarray.

He raised his shapely arms on high And spoke aloud with bitter
cry: "Where is the Maithil dame?" he said, "O, whither has my
darling fled?

Who can have borne away my dame, Or feasted on her tender
frame?

If, Sítá hidden by some tree, Thou joyest still to mock at me,

Cease, cease thy cruel sport, and take Compassion, or my heart
will break. Bethink thee, love, the gentle fawns

With whom thou playest on the lawns, Impatient for thy coming
wait

With streaming eyes disconsolate. Reft of my love, I needs must
go

Hence to the shades weighed down by woe. The king our sire
will see me there,

And cry, "O perjured Ráma, where, Where is thy faith, that thou
canst speed From exile ere the time decreed?"

Ah Sítá, whither hast thou fled And left me here disquieted,

A hapless mourner, reft of hope, Too feeble with my woe to
cope? E'en thus indignant Glory flies

The wretch who stains his soul with lies. If thou, my love, art lost
to view,

I in my woe must perish too."

Thus Ráma by his grief distraught Wept for the wife he vainly
sought,

And Lakshmar, whose fraternal breast

[302] Longed for his weal, the chief addressed Whose soul gave way
beneath the pain When all his eager search was vain, Like
some great elephant who stands Sinking upon the treacherous
sands: “Not yet, O wisest chief, despair; Renew thy toil with
utmost care.

This noble hill where trees are green Has many a cave and dark
ravine.

The Maithil lady day by day Delighted in the woods to stray,
Deep in the grove she wanders still,

Or walks by blossom-covered rill, Or fish-loved river stealing
through Tall clusters of the dark bamboo.

Or else the dame with arch design

To prove thy mood, O Prince, and mine, Far in some sheltering
thicket lies

To frighten ere she meet our eyes. Then come, renew thy labour,
trace The lady to her lurking-place,

And search the wood from side to side To know where Sítá loves
to bide.

Collect thy thoughts, O royal chief, Nor yield to unavailing grief.”

Thus Lakshmar,, by attention stirred, To fresh attempts his
brother spurred, And Ráma, as he ceased, began

With Lakshmar,'s aid each spot to scan. In eager search their
way they took

Through wood, o'er hill, by pool and brook, They roamed each
mount, nor spared to seek On ridge and crag and towering
peak.

They sought the dame in every spot; But all in vain; they found
her not. Above, below, on every side

They ranged the hill, and Ráma cried, "O Lakshmar,, O my
brother still

No trace of Sítá on the hill!"

Then Lakshmar, as he roamed the wood Beside his glorious
brother stood,

And while fierce grief his bosom burned This answer to the chief
returned: "Thou, Ráma, after toil and pain

Wilt meet the Maithil dame again,

As Vishr,u, Bali's might subdued, His empire of the earth
renewed."508

Then Ráma cried in mournful tone, His spirit by his woe
o'erthrown;

“The wood is searched from side to side, No distant spot
remains untried,

No lilled pool, no streamlet where The lotus buds are fresh and
fair.

Our eyes have searched the hill with all His caves and every
waterfall,—

But ah, not yet I find my wife,

More precious than the breath of life.”

As thus he mourned his vanished dame A mighty trembling
seized his frame, And by o'erpowering grief assailed,

His troubled senses reeled and failed. Too great to bear his
misery grew, And many a long hot sigh he drew,

Then as he wept and sobbed and sighed, “O Sítá, O my love!” he
cried.

Then Lakshmar,, joining palm to palm, Tried every art his woe to
calm.

But Ráma in his anguish heard Or heeded not one soothing
word,

Still for his spouse he mourned, and shrill Rang out his
lamentation still.

508 See Book I Canto XXXI.

Canto LXIII. Ráma's Lament. 1073

Canto LXIII. Ráma's Lament.

Thus for his wife in vain he sought: Then, his sad soul with pain
distraught, The hero of the lotus eyes

Filled all the air with frantic cries. O'erpowered by love's strong
influence, he His absent wife still seemed to see,

And thus with accents weak and faint Renewed with tears his
wild complaint:

“Thou, fairer than their bloom, my spouse, Art hidden by Asoka
boughs.

Those blooms have power to banish care, But now they drive
me to despair.

Thine arms are like the plantain's stem: Why let the plantain
cover them?

Thou art not hidden, love; thy feet Betray thee in thy dark
retreat.

Thou runnest in thy girlish sport To flowery trees, thy dear resort.

But cease, O cease, my love, I pray, To vex me with thy cruel
play.

Such mockery in a holy spot

Where hermits dwell beseems thee not. Ah, now I see thy fickle
mind

To scornful mood too much inclined, Come, large-eyed beauty, I
implore; Lone is the cot so dear before.

No, she is slain by giants; they Have stolen or devoured their
prey, Or surely at my mournful cry

My darling to her lord would fly.

O Lakshmar,, see those troops of deer: In each sad eye there
gleams a tear.

Those looks of woe too clearly say My consort is the giants'
prey.

O noblest, fairest of the fair,

Where art thou, best of women, where? This day will dark

Kaikeyí find

Fresh triumph for her evil mind, When I, who with my Sítá came

Return alone, without my dame. But ne'er can I return to see

Those chambers where my queen should be

[303] And hear the scornful people speak Of Ráma as a coward
weak.

For mine will be the coward's shame Who let the foeman steal

his dame. How can I seek my home, or brook Upon Videha's

king to look?

How listen, when he bids me tell, My wanderings o'er, that all is

well? He, when I meet his eager view, Will mark that Sítá comes

not too, And when he hears the mournful tale His wildered sense

will reel and fail. "O Dasaratha" will he cry,

"Blest in thy mansion in the sky!" Ne'er to that town my steps

shall bend, That town which Bharat's arms defend, For e'en the

blessed homes above Would seem a waste without my love.

Leave me, my brother, here, I pray; To fair Ayodhyá bend thy

way.

Without my love I cannot bear To live one hour in blank despair.

Round Bharat's neck thy fond arms twine, And greet him with
these words of mine: "Dear brother, still the power retain,
And o'er the land as monarch reign." With salutation next incline
Before thy mother, his, and mine. Still, brother, to my words
attend, And with all care each dame befriend. To my dear
mother's ear relate

My mournful tale and Sítá's fate."

Thus Ráma gave his sorrow vent, And from a heart which
anguish rent, Mourned for his wife in loud lament,—

Her of the glorious hair,

From Lakshmar,'s cheek the colour fled, And o'er his heart came
sudden dread, Sick, faint, and sore disquieted

By woe too great to bear.

Canto LXIV. Ráma's Lament.

Reft of his love, the royal chief,

Weighed down beneath his whelming grief, Desponding made
his brother share

His grievous burden of despair. Over his sinking bosom rolled
The flood of sorrow uncontrolled.

And as he wept and sighed,

In mournful accents faint and slow With words congenial to his
woe,

To Lakshmar, thus he cried: "Brother, I ween, beneath the sun,
Of all mankind there lives not one So full of sin, whose hand has
done

Such cursed deeds as mine.

For my sad heart with misery bleeds, As, guerdon of those evil
deeds,

Still greater woe to woe succeeds In never-ending line.

A life of sin I freely chose,

And from my past transgression flows A ceaseless flood of
bitter woes

My folly to repay.

The fruit of sin has ripened fast, Through many a sorrow have I
passed, And now the crowning grief at last

Falls on my head to-day.

From all my faithful friends I fled, My sire is numbered with the
dead, My royal rank is forfeited,

My mother far away.

These woes on which I sadly think Fill, till it raves above the
brink,

The stream of grief in which I sink,— The flood which naught
can stay.

Ne'er, brother, ne'er have I complained; Though long by toil and
trouble pained, Without a murmur I sustained

The woes of woodland life.

But fiercer than the flames that rise

When crackling wood the food supplies,— Flashing a glow
through evening skies,—

This sorrow for my wife.

Some cruel fiend has seized the prey And torn my trembling
love away, While, as he bore her through the skies, She shrieked
aloud with frantic cries, In tones of fear which, wild and shrill,
Retained their native sweetness still.

Ah me, that breast so soft and sweet, For sandal's precious
perfume meet, Now all detained with dust and gore, Shall meet
my fond caress no more. That face, whose lips with tones so

clear Made pleasant music, sweet to hear,— With soft locks
plaited o'er the brow,— Some giant's hand is on it now.

It smiles not, as the dear light fails When Ráhu's jaw the moon
assails. Ah, my true love! that shapely neck She loved with
fairest chains to deck, The cruel demons rend, and drain

The lifeblood from each mangled vein. Ah, when the savage
monsters came And dragged away the helpless dame, The lady
of the long soft eye

Called like a lamb with piteous cry. Beneath this rock, O
Lakshmar,, see, My peerless consort sat with me, And gently
talked to thee the while, Her sweet lips opening with a smile.
Here is that fairest stream which she Loved ever, bright
Godávarí.

Ne'er can the dame have passed this way:

So far alone she would not stray, Nor has my darling, lotus-
eyed, Sought lilies by the river's side,

[304]For without me she ne'er would go

To streamlets where the wild flowers grow, Tell me not, brother,
she has strayed

To the dark forest's distant shade

Where blooming boughs are gay and sweet, And bright birds
love the cool retreat.

Alone my love would never dare,— My timid love,—to wander
there.

O Lord of Day whose eye sees all We act and plan, on thee I
call:

For naught is hidden from thy sight,— Great witness thou of
wrong and right. Where is she, lost or torn away?

Dispel my torturing doubt and say. And O thou Wind who
blowest free,

The worlds have naught concealed from thee. List to my prayer,
reveal one trace

Of her, the glory of her race. Say, is she stolen hence, or dead,
Or do her feet the forest tread?”

Thus with disordered senses, faint With woe he poured his sad
complaint, And then, a better way to teach,

Wise Lakshmar, spoke in seemly speech: “Up, brother dear, thy
grief subdue, With heart and soul thy search renew.

When woes oppress and dangers threat Brave effort ne'er was
fruitless yet.”

He spoke, but Ráma gave no heed To valiant Lakshmar,'s
prudent rede. With double force the flood of pain Rushed o'er
his yielding soul again.

Canto LXV. Ráma's Wrath.

With piteous voice, by woe subdued, Thus Raghu's son his
speech renewed:

“Thy steps, my brother, quickly turn To bright Godávarí and
learn

If Sítá to the stream have hied To cull the lilies on its side.”

Obedient to the words he said, His brother to the river sped.

The shelving banks he searched in vain, And then to Ráma
turned again.

“I searched, but found her not,” he cried; “I called aloud, but none replied.

Where can the Maithil lady stray,

Whose sight would chase our cares away? I know not where,
her steps untraced, Roams Sítá of the dainty waist.”

When Ráma heard the words he spoke Again he sank beneath
the stroke,

And with a bosom anguish-fraught Himself the lovely river
sought.

There standing on the shelving side, “O Sítá, where art thou?” he
cried. No spirit voice an answer gave,

No murmur from the trembling wave Of sweet Godávarí
declared

The outrage which the fiend had dared. “O speak!” the pitying
spirits cried, But yet the stream their prayer denied, Nor dared
she, coldly mute, relate

To the sad chief his darling’s fate Of Rávar,’s awful form she
thought,

And the dire deed his arm had wrought, And still withheld by
fear dismayed, The tale for which the mourner prayed. When
hope was none, his heart to cheer,

That the bright stream his cry would hear While sorrow for his
darling tore

His longing soul he spake once more: “Though I have sought
with tears and sighs Godárvarí no word replies,

O say, what answer can I frame To Janak, father of my dame?
Or how before her mother stand Leading no Sítá by the hand?

Where is my loyal love who went Forth with her lord to
banishment? Her faith to me she nobly held

Though from my realm and home expelled,— A hermit, nursed
on woodland fare,—

She followed still and soothed my care.

Of all my friends am I bereft, Nor is my faithful consort left.

How slowly will the long nights creep While comfortless I wake
and weep! O, if my wife may yet be found,

With humble love I’ll wander round This Janasthán, Prasravar,’s
hill, Mandákiní’s delightful rill.

See how the deer with gentle eyes Look on my face and
sympathize. I mark their soft expression: each

Would soothe me, if it could, with speech.”

A while the anxious throng he eyed. And “Where is Sítá, where?”
he cried. Thus while hot tears his utterance broke The mourning
son of Raghu spoke.

The deer in pity for his woes Obeyed the summons and arose.
Upon his right thy stood, and raised

Their sad eyes up to heaven and gazed Each to that quarter
bent her look Which Rávar, with his captive took.

Then Raghu’s son again they viewed, And toward that point
their way pursued.

Then Lakshmar, watched their looks intent As moaning on their
way they went,

And marked each sign which struck his sense With mute
expressive influence,

Then as again his sorrow woke Thus to his brother chief he
spoke:

“Those deer thy eager question heard [305]

And rose at once by pity stirred:

See, in thy search their aid they lend, See, to the south their
looks they bend. Arise, dear brother, let us go

The way their eager glances show, If haply sign or trace
descried

Our footsteps in the search may guide.”

The son of Raghu gave assent, And quickly to the south they
went; With eager eyes the earth he scanned,

And Lakshmar, followed close at hand. As each to other spake
his thought,

And round with anxious glances sought, Scattered before them
in the way, Blooms of a fallen garland lay.

When Rāma saw that flowery rain

He spoke once more with bitterest pain: “O Lakshmar, every
flower that lies Here on the ground I recognize.

I culled them in the grove, and there My darling twined them in
her hair. The sun, the earth, the genial breeze

Have spared these flowers my soul to please.”

Then to that woody hill he prayed, Whence flashed afar each
wild cascade: “O best of mountains, hast thou seen

A dame of perfect form and mien

In some sweet spot with trees o’ergrown,— My darling whom I
left alone?”

Then as a lion threatens a deer

He thundered with a voice of fear: "Reveal her, mountain, to my view

With golden limbs and golden hue. Where is my darling Sítá?
speak Before I rend thee peak from peak."

The mountain seemed her track to show, But told not all he
sought to know.

Then Dasaratha's son renewed

His summons as the mount he viewed: "Soon as my flaming
arrows fly, Consumed to ashes shall thou lie Without a herb or
bud or tree,

And birds no more shall dwell in thee. And if this stream my
prayer deny, My wrath this day her flood shall dry, Because she
lends no aid to trace

My darling of the lotus face."

Thus Ráma spake as though his ire Would scorch them with his
glance of fire; Then searching farther on the ground

The footprint of a fiend he found, And small light traces here
and there, Where Sítá in her great despair, Shrieking for Ráma's
help, had fled Before the giant's mighty tread.

His careful eye each trace surveyed Which Sítá and the fiend
had made,— The quivers and the broken bow

And ruined chariot of the foe,—

And told, distraught by fear and grief, His tidings to his brother
chief:

“O Lakshmar,, here,” he cried “behold My Sítá's earrings
dropped with gold. Here lie her garlands torn and rent,

Here lies each glittering ornament. O look, the ground on every
side

With blood-like drops of gold is dyed.

The fiends who wear each strange disguise Have seized, I ween,
the helpless prize.

My lady, by their hands o'erpowered, Is slaughtered, mangled,
and devoured. Methinks two fearful giants came

And waged fierce battle for the dame. Whose, Lakshmar,, was
this mighty bow With pearls and gems in glittering row? Cast to
the ground the fragments lie, And still their glory charms the
eye.

A bow so mighty sure was planned For heavenly God or giant's hand. Whose was this coat of golden mail Which, though its lustre now is pale, Shone like the sun of morning, bright With studs of glittering lazulite?

Whose, Lakshmar,, was this bloom-wreathed shade With all its hundred ribs displayed?

This screen, most meet for royal brow, With broken staff lies useless now.

And these tall asses, goblin-faced, With plates of golden harness graced,

Whose hideous forms are stained with gore Who is the lord whose yoke they bore?

Whose was this pierced and broken car That shoots a flame-like blaze afar?

Whose these spent shafts at random spread, Each fearful with its iron head,—

With golden mountings fair to see, Long as a chariot's axle-tree?

These quivers see, which, rent in twain,

Their sheaves of arrows still contain. Whose was this driver?
Dead and cold, His hands the whip and reins still hold. See,
Lakshmar,, here the foot I trace Of man, nay, one of giant race.
The hatred that I nursed of old Grows mightier now a hundred
fold Against these giants, fierce of heart,
Who change their forms by magic art. Slain, eaten by the giant
press,
Or stolen is the votaress,
Nor could her virtue bring defence To Sítá seized and hurried
hence. O, if my love be slain or lost
All hope of bliss for me is crossed. The power of all the worlds
were vain To bring one joy to soothe my pain. The spirits with
their blinded eyes Would look in wonder, and despise
The Lord who made the worlds, the great Creator when
compassionate.
And so, I ween, the Immortals turn
Cold eyes upon me now, and spurn [306]
The weakling prompt at pity's call, Devoted to the good of all.
But from this day behold me changed, From every gentle grace
estranged.
Now be it mine all life to slay,
And sweep these cursed fiends away. As the great sun leaps up
the sky,

And the cold moonbeams fade and die, So vengeance rises in
my breast,

One passion conquering all the rest. Gandharvas in their radiant
place,

The Yakshas, and the giant race, Kinnars and men shall look in
vain For joy they ne'er shall see again. The anguish of my great
despair,

O Lakshmar,, fills the heaven and air; And I in wrath all life will
slay Within the triple world to-day.

Unless the Gods in heaven who dwell Restore my Sítá safe and
well,

I armed with all the fires of Fate, The triple world will devastate.

The troubled stars from heaven shall fall, The moon be wrapped
in gloomy pall, The fire be quenched, the wind be stilled, The
radiant sun grow dark and chilled; Crushed every mountain's
towering pride, And every lake and river dried,

Dead every creeper, plant, and tree, And lost for aye the mighty
sea.

Thou shalt the world this day behold In wild disorder
uncontrolled,

With dying life which naught defends From the fierce storm my
bowstring sends. My shafts this day, for Sítá's sake,

The life of every fiend shall take. The Gods this day shall see the
force

That wings my arrows on their course, And mark how far that
course is held, By my unsparing wrath impelled.

No God, not one of Daitya strain, Goblin or Rákshas shall
remain.

My wrath shall end the worlds, and all Demons and Gods
therewith shall fall. Each world which Gods, the Dánav race,

And giants make their dwelling place, Shall fall beneath my
arrows sent

In fury when my bow is bent.

The arrows loosened from my string Confusion on the worlds
shall bring. For she is lost or breathes no more, Nor will the Gods
my love restore. Hence all on earth with life and breath This day
I dedicate to death.

All, till my darling they reveal, The fury of my shafts shall feel.”

Thus as he spake by rage impelled, Red grew his eyes, his fierce
lips swelled. His bark coat round his form he drew And coiled his
hermit braids anew,

Like Rudra when he yearned to slay The demon Tripur⁵⁰⁹ in the
fray.

So looked the hero brave and wise, The fury flashing from his
eyes.

Then Ráma, conqueror of the foe,

From Lakshmar,'s hand received his bow, Strained the great
string, and laid thereon A deadly dart that flashed and shone,
And spake these words as fierce in ire

As He who ends the worlds with fire:

⁵⁰⁹ An Asur or demon, king of Tripura, the modern Tipperah.

“As age and time and death and fate All life with checkless
power await, So Lakshmar, in my wrath to-day
My vengeful might shall brook no stay, Unless this day I see my
dame
In whose sweet form is naught to blame,— Yea, as before, my
love behold
Fair with bright teeth and perfect mould, This world shall feel a
deadly blow Destroyed with ruthless overthrow,
And serpent lords and Gods of air, Gandharvas, men, the doom
shall share.”

Canto LXVI. Lakshman's Speech.

He stood incensed with eyes of flame, Still mourning for his
ravished dame, Determined, like the fire of Fate,
To leave the wide world desolate. His ready bow the hero eyed,
And as again, again he sighed,
The triple world would fain consume Like Hara⁵¹⁰ in the day of
doom.
Then Lakshmar, moved with sorrow viewed His brother in
unwonted mood,

And reverent palm to palm applied, Thus spoke with lips which
terror dried “Thy heart was ever soft and kind,
To every creature’s good inclined.

510 Siva.

Canto LXVI. Lakshman’s Speech. 1089

Cast not thy tender mood away,
Nor yield to anger’s mastering sway.

The moon for gentle grace is known,

The sun has splendour all his own,

The restless wind is free and fast,

And earth in patience unsurpassed.

So glory with her noble fruit

Is thine eternal attribute.

O, let not, for the sin of one,

The triple world be all undone.

I know not whose this car that lies

In fragments here before our eyes,

Nor who the chiefs who met and fought,

Nor what the prize the foemen sought;

Who marked the ground with hoof and wheel, [307]

Or whose the hand that plied the steel
Which left this spot, the battle o'er,
Thus sadly dyed with drops of gore.
Searching with utmost care I view
The signs of one and not of two.
Where'er I turn mine eyes I trace
No mighty host about the place.
Then mete not out for one offence
This all-involving recompense.
For kings should use the sword they bear,
But mild in time should learn to spare,
Thou, ever moved by misery's call,
Wast the great hope and stay of all.
Throughout this world who would not blame
This outrage on thy ravished dame?
Gandharvas, Dánavs, Gods, the trees,
The rocks, the rivers, and the seas,
Can ne'er in aught thy soul offend,
As one whom holiest rites befriend.

But him who dared to steal the dame Pursue, O King, with
ceaseless aim, With me, the hermits' holy band, And thy great
bow to arm thy hand By every mighty flood we'll seek,
Each wood, each hill from base to peak. To the fair homes of
Gods we'll fly, And bright Gandharvas in the sky, Until we reach,
where'er he be,
The wretch who stole thy spouse from thee. Then if the Gods will
not restore
Thy Sítá when the search is o'er, Then, royal lord of Kosal's land,
No longer hold thy vengeful hand.
If meekness, prayer, and right be weak To bring thee back the
dame we seek, Up, brother, with a deadly shower
Of gold-bright shafts thy foes o'erpower, Fierce as the flashing
levin sent
From King Mahendra's firmament.

Canto LXVII. Ráma Appeased.

As Ráma, pierced by sorrow's sting, Lamented like a helpless
thing, And by his mighty woe distraught

Was lost in maze of troubled thought, Sumitrá's son with loving
care Consoled him in his wild despair, And while his feet he
gently pressed

With words like these the chief addressed:

Canto LXVII. Ráma Appeased. 1091

“For sternest vow and noblest deed Was Dasaratha blessed
with seed. Thee for his son the king obtained, Like Amrit by the
Gods regained. Thy gentle graces won his heart, And all too
weak to live apart

The monarch died, as Bharat told, And lives on high mid Gods
enrolled. If thou, O Ráma, wilt not bear

This grief which fills thee with despair, How shall a weaker man
e'er hope, Infirm and mean, with woe to cope?

Take heart, I pray thee, noblest chief: What man who breathes
is free from grief? Misfortunes come and burn like flame, Then
fly as quickly as they came.

Yayáti son of Nahush reigned

With Indra on the throne he gained. But falling for a light
offence

He mourned a while the consequence. Vasishtha, reverend saint
and sage, Priest of our sire from youth to age, Begot a hundred
sons, but they

Were smitten in a single day.⁵¹¹

And she, the queen whom all revere, The mother whom we hold
so dear, The earth herself not seldom feels Fierce fever when
she shakes and reels.

And those twin lights, the world's great eyes, On which the
universe relies,—

Does not eclipse at times assail

Their brilliance till their fires grow pale?

511 See Book I, Canto LIX.

The mighty Powers, the Immortal Blest Bend to a law which
none contest.

No God, no bodied life is free

From conquering Fate's supreme decree. E'en Sakra's self must
reap the meed

Of virtue and of sinful deed.

And O great lord of men, wilt thou Helpless beneath thy misery
bow? No, if thy dame be lost or dead,

O hero, still be comforted, Nor yield for ever to thy woe

O'er-mastered like the mean and low. Thy peers, with keen far-
reaching eyes, Spend not their hours in ceaseless sighs; In dire
distress, in whelming ill

Their manly looks are hopeful still. To this, great chief, thy
reason bend, And earnestly the truth perpend.

By reason's aid the wisest learn The good and evil to discern.

With sin and goodness scarcely known Faint light by chequered
lives is shown; Without some clear undoubted deed We mark
not how the fruits succeed.

In time of old, O thou most brave, To me thy lips such counsel
gave. Vrihaspati⁵¹² can scarcely find New wisdom to instruct
thy mind. For thine is wit and genius high Meet for the children
of the sky.

I rouse that heart benumbed by pain And call to vigorous life
again.

512 The preceptor of the Gods.

Be manly godlike vigour shown;

Put forth that noblest strength, thine own. [308]

Strive, best of old Ikshváku's strain, Strive till the conquered foe
be slain. Where is the profit or the joy

If thy fierce rage the worlds destroy? Search till thou find the
guilty foe, Then let thy hand no mercy show.”

Canto LXVIII. Jatáyus.

Thus faithful Lakshmar, strove to cheer The prince with counsel
wise and clear. Who, prompt to seize the pith of all, Let not that
wisdom idly fall.

With vigorous effort he restrained The passion in his breast that
reigned, And leaning on his bow for rest

His brother Lakshmar, thus addressed: “How shall we labour
now, reflect; Whither again our search direct?

Brother, what plan canst thou devise To bring her to these
longing eyes?”

To him by toil and sorrow tried The prudent Lakshmar, thus
replied:

“Come, though our labour yet be vain, And search through
Janasthán again,— A realm where giant foes abound,
And trees and creepers hide the ground. For there are caverns
deep and dread, By deer and wild birds tenanted,
And hills with many a dark abyss, Grotto and rock and
precipice.

There bright Gandharvas love to dwell, And Kinnars in each
bosky dell.

With me thy eager search to aid Be every hill and cave
surveyed.

Great chiefs like thee, the best of men, Endowed with sense and
piercing ken, Though tried by trouble never fail, Like rooted hills
that mock the gale.”

Then Ráma, pierced by anger's sting, Laid a keen arrow on his string,

And by the faithful Lakshmar,'s side Roamed through the forest far and wide. Jatáyus there with blood-drops dyed, Lying upon the ground he spied,

Huge as a mountain's shattered crest, Mid all the birds of air the best.

In wrath the mighty bird he eyed,

And thus the chief to Lakshmar, cried:

“Ah me, these signs the truth betray; My darling was the vulture's prey.

Some demon in the bird's disguise

Roams through the wood that round us lies. On large-eyed Sítá he has fed,

And rests him now with wings outspread. But my keen shafts whose flight is true, Shall pierce the ravenous monster through.”

An arrow on the string he laid, And rushing near the bird surveyed, While earth to ocean's distant side Trembled beneath his furious stride.

With blood and froth on neck and beak The dying bird essayed
to speak,

And with a piteous voice, distressed, Thus Dasaratha's son
addressed:

“She whom like some sweet herb of grace Thou seekest in this
lonely place,

Fair lady, is fierce Rávar,'s prey, Who took, beside, my life away.
Lakshmar, and thou had parted hence And left the dame
without defence.

I saw her swiftly borne away

By Rávar,'s might which none could stay. I hurried to the lady's
aid,

I crushed his car and royal shade, And putting forth my warlike
might Hurlled Rávar, to the earth in fight. Here, Ráma, lies his
broken bow, Here lie the arrows of the foe.

There on the ground before thee are The fragments of his battle
car.

There bleeds the driver whom my wings Beat down with
ceaseless buffetings.

When toil my aged strength subdued, His sword my weary
pinions hewed. Then lifting up the dame he bare
His captive through the fields of air. Thy vengeful blows from
me restrain, Already by the giant slain.”

When Ráma heard the vulture tell The tale that proved his love
so well, His bow upon the ground he placed, And tenderly the
bird embraced: Then to the earth he fell o'erpowered,
And burning tears both brothers showered, For double pain and
anguish pressed Upon the patient hero's breast.

The solitary bird he eyed

Who in the lone wood gasped and sighed, And as again his
anguish woke

Thus Ráma to his brother spoke:

“Expelled from power the woods I tread, My spouse is lost, the
bird is dead.

A fate so sad, I ween, would tame The vigour of the glorious
flame. If I to cool my fever tried

To cross the deep from side to side, The sea,—so hard my
fate,—would dry His waters as my feet came nigh.

In all this world there lives not one So cursed as I beneath the
sun;

So strong a net of misery cast Around me holds the captive fast,

Best of all birds that play the wing, Loved, honoured by our sire
the king, The vulture, in my fate enwound, Lies bleeding, dying
on the ground.”

Then Ráma and his brother stirred [309]

By pity mourned the royal bird,

And, as their hands his limbs caressed, Affection for a sire
expressed.

And Ráma to his bosom strained

The bird with mangled wings distained, With crimson blood-
drops dyed.

He fell, and shedding many a tear, “Where is my spouse than
life more dear?

Where is my love?” he cried.

Canto LXIX. The Death Of Jatáyus.

As Ráma viewed with heart-felt pain The vulture whom the fiend
had slain, In words with tender love impressed His brother chief
he thus addressed:

“This royal bird with faithful thought For my advantage strove
and fought.

Slain by the fiend in mortal strife For me he yields his noble life.

See, Lakshmar,, how his wounds have bled; His struggling
breath will soon have fled.

Faint is his voice, and near to die, He scarce can lift his
trembling eye. Jatáyus, if thou still can speak, Give, give the
answer that I seek.

The fate of ravished Sítá tell,

And how thy mournful chance befell. Say why the giant stole my
dame: What have I done that he could blame? What fault in me
has Rávar, seen

That he should rob me of my queen?

How looked the lady's moon-bright cheek? What were the words
she found to speak? His strength, his might, his deeds declare:
And tell the form he loves to wear.

To all my questions make reply: Where does the giant's dwelling
lie?"

The noble bird his glances bent On Ráma as he made lament,
And in low accents faint and weak With anguish thus began to
speak: "Fierce Rávar,, king of giant race, Stole Sítá from thy
dwelling-place. He calls his magic art to aid

With wind and cloud and gloomy shade. When in the fight my
power was spent My wearied wings he cleft and rent.

Then round the dame his arms he threw,

And to the southern region flew. O Raghu's son, I gasp for
breath,

My swimming sight is dim in death. E'en now before my vision
pass Bright trees of gold with hair of grass, The hour the
impious robber chose Brings on the thief a flood of woes.

The giant in his haste forgot

'Twas Vinda's hour,⁵¹³ or heeded not. Those robbed at such a
time obtain Their plundered store and wealth again. He, like a
fish that takes the bait,

In briefest time shall meet his fate. Now be thy troubled heart
controlled And for thy lady's loss consoled,

For thou wilt slay the fiend in fight And with thy dame have new
delight."

With senses clear, though sorely tried, The royal vulture thus
replied,

While as he sank beneath his pain Forth rushed the tide of blood
again. "Him,⁵¹⁴ brother of the Lord of Gold, Visravas' self begot
of old."

Thus spoke the bird, and stained with gore Resigned the breath
that came no more.

"Speak, speak again!" thus Rāma cried, With reverent palm to
palm applied,

But from the frame the spirit fled And to the skiey regions sped.

The breath of life had passed away. Stretched on the ground
the body lay.

513 From the root vid, to find.

514 Rávar,.

When Ráma saw the vulture lie, Huge as a hill, with darksome
eye, With many a poignant woe distressed His brother chief he
thus addressed: "Amid these haunted shades content Full many
a year this bird has spent. His life in home of giants passed,

In Dar,9ak wood he dies at last.

The years in lengthened course have fled Untroubled o'er the
vulture's head,

And now he lies in death, for none The stern decrees of Fate
may shun. See, Lakshmar,, how the vulture fell While for my
sake he battled well. And strove to free with onset bold My Sítá
from the giant's hold.

Supreme amid the vulture kind His ancient rule the bird
resigned,

And conquered in the fruitless strife Gave for my sake his noble
life.

O Lakshmar,, many a time we see Great souls who keep the
law's decree, With whom the weak sure refuge find, In creatures
of inferior kind.

The loss of her, my darling queen, Strikes with a pang less
fiercely keen Than now this slaughtered bird to see Who nobly
fought and died for me. As Dasaratha, good and great,
Was glorious in his high estate, Honoured by all, to all endeared,
So was this royal bird revered. Bring fuel for the funeral rite:
[310] These hands the solemn fire shall light

And on the burning pyre shall lay The bird who died for me to-
day. Now on the gathered wood shall lie The lord of all the birds
that fly, And I will burn with honours due My champion whom
the giant slew. O royal bird of noblest heart, Graced with all
funeral rites depart To bright celestial seats above, Rewarded
for thy faithful love.

Dwell in thy happy home with those Whose constant fires of
worship rose. Live blest amid the unyielding brave, And those
who land in largess gave.”

Sore grief upon his bosom weighed As on the pyre the bird he
laid,

And bade the kindled flame ascend To burn the body of his
friend.

Then with his brother by his side The hero to the forest hied.

There many a stately deer he slew, The flesh around the bird to
strew. The venison into balls he made, And on fair grass before
him laid. Then that the parted soul might rise And find free
passage to the skies, Each solemn word and text he said Which
Bráhmans utter o'er the dead.

Then hastening went the princely pair To bright Godávarí, and
there Libations of the stream they poured In honour of the
vulture lord,

With solemn ritual to the slain,

As scripture's holy texts ordain. Thus offerings to the bird they
gave And bathed their bodies in the wave.

The vulture monarch having wrought A hard and glorious feat,
Honoured by Ráma sage in thought, Soared to his blissful seat.

The brothers, when each rite was paid To him of birds supreme,
Their hearts with new-found comfort stayed, And turned them
from the stream.

Like sovereigns of celestial race Within the wood they came,
Each pondering the means to trace, The captor of the dame.

Canto LXX. Kabandha.

When every rite was duly paid

The princely brothers onward strayed, And eager in the lady's
quest

They turned their footsteps to the west. Through lonely woods
that round them lay Ikshváku's children made their way,

And armed with bow and shaft and brand Pressed onward to
the southern land.

Thick trees and shrubs and creepers grew In the wild grove they
hurried through. 'Twas dark and drear and hard to pass For
tangled thorns and matted grass.

Still onward with a southern course

They made their way with vigorous force, And passing through
the mazes stood Beyond that vast and fearful wood.

With toil and hardship yet unspent Three leagues from
Janasthán they went, And speeding on their way at last Within
the wood of Krauncha⁵¹⁵ passed: A fearful forest wild and
black

As some huge pile of cloudy rack,

Filled with all birds and beasts, where grew Bright blooms of every varied hue.

On Sítá bending every thought

Through all the mighty wood they sought, And at the lady's loss dismayed

Here for a while and there they stayed. Then turning farther eastward they Pursued three leagues their weary way,

Passed Krauncha's wood and reached the grove Where elephants rejoiced to rove.

The chiefs that awful wood surveyed Where deer and wild birds filled each glade, Where scarce a step the foot could take

For tangled shrub and tree and brake. There in a mountain's woody side

A cave the royal brothers spied, With dread abysses deep as hell,

Where darkness never ceased to dwell. When, pressing on, the lords of men Stood near the entrance of the den, They saw within the dark recess

A huge misshapen giantess;

515 Or Curlews' Wood.

A thing the timid heart that shook With fearful shape and
savage look. Terrific fiend, her voice was fierce, Long were her
teeth to rend and pierce. The monster gorged her horrid feast
Of flesh of many a savage beast, While her long locks, at
random flung, Dishevelled o'er her shoulders hung.

Their eyes the royal brothers raised, And on the fearful monster
gazed.

Forth from her den she came and glanced At Lakshmar, as he
first advanced,

Her eager arms to hold him spread, And "Come and be my love"
she said, Then as she held him to her breast,

The prince in words like these addressed: "Behold thy treasure
fond and fair:

[311] Ayomukhi⁵¹⁶ the name I bear.

In thickets of each lofty hill, On islets of each brook and rill,

With me delighted shalt thou play, And live for many a
lengthened day."

Enraged he heard the monster woo; His ready sword he swiftly
drew,

And the sharp steel that quelled his foes Cut through her breast
and ear and nose. Thus mangled by his vengeful sword

In rage and pain the demon roared, And hideous with her awful
face Sped to her secret dwelling place. Soon as the fiend had
fled from sight, The brothers, dauntless in their might,

516 Iron-faced.

Reached a wild forest dark and dread Whose tangled ways
were hard to tread. Then bravest Lakshmar,, virtuous youth, The
friend of purity and truth,

With reverent palm to palm applied Thus to his glorious brother
cried:

“My arm presaging throbs amain, My troubled heart is sick with
pain, And cheerless omens ill portend Where'er my anxious eyes
I bend. Dear brother, hear my words: advance Resolved and
armed for every chance, For every sign I mark to-day

Foretells a peril in the way.

This bird of most ill-omened note, Loud screaming with
discordant throat, Announces with a warning cry

That strife and victory are nigh.”

Then as the chiefs their search pursued Throughout the dreary
solitude,

They heard amazed a mighty sound That broke the very trees
around, As though a furious tempest passed Crushing the wood
beneath its blast. Then Ráma raised his trusty sword,

And both the hidden cause explored. There stood before their
wondering eyes A fiend broad-chested, huge of size.

A vast misshapen trunk they saw In height surpassing nature's
law. It stood before them dire and dread Without a neck,
without a head.

Tall as some hill aloft in air,

Its limbs were clothed with bristling hair, And deep below the
monster's waist

His vast misshapen mouth was placed. His form was huge, his
voice was loud As some dark-tinted thunder cloud.

Forth from his ample chest there came A brilliance as of
gushing flame.

Beneath long lashes, dark and keen The monster's single eye
was seen. Deep in his chest, long, fiercely bright, It glittered with
terrific light.

He swallowed down his savage fare Of lion, bird, and
slaughtered bear, And with huge teeth exposed to view O'er his

great lips his tongue he drew. His arms unshapely, vast and
dread,

A league in length, he raised and spread. He seized with
monstrous hands a herd Of deer and many a bear and bird.

Among them all he picked and chose, Drew forward these,
rejected those. Before the princely pair he stood Barring their
passage through the wood. A league of shade the chiefs had
passed When on the fiend their eyes they cast. A monstrous
shape without a head With mighty arms before him spread,
They saw that hideous trunk appear That struck the trembling
eye with fear. Then, stretching to their full extent

His awful arms with fingers bent, Round Raghu's princely sons
he cast Each grasping limb and held them fast.

Though strong of arm and fierce in fight, Each armed with bow
and sword to smite, The royal brothers, brave and bold,

Were helpless in the giant's hold. Then Raghu's son, heroic still,
Felt not a pang his bosom thrill;

But young, with no protection near, His brother's heart was sad
with fear, And thus with trembling tongue he said To Ráma, sore
disquieted:

“Ah me, ah me, my days are told: O see me in the giant’s hold.
Fly, son of Raghu, swiftly flee, And thy dear self from danger
free. Me to the fiend an offering give; Fly at thine ease thyself
and live.

Thou, great Kakutstha’s son, I ween, Wilt find ere long thy
Maithil queen, And when thou holdest, throned again, Thine old
hereditary reign,

With servants prompt to do thy will, O think upon thy brother
still.”

As thus the trembling Lakshmar, cried, The dauntless Ráma thus
replied:

“Brother, from causeless dread forbear. A chief like thee should
scorn despair.” He spoke to soothe his wild alarm:

Then fierce Kabandha⁵¹⁷ long of arm,

Among the Dánavs⁵¹⁸ first and best, The sons of Raghu thus
addressed:

⁵¹⁷ Kabandha means a trunk.

⁵¹⁸ A class of mythological giants. In the Epic period they were
probably personifications of the aborigines of India.

“What men are you, whose shoulders show Broad as a bull’s,
with sword and bow, Who roam this dark and horrid place,
Brought by your fate before my face?

Declare by what occasion led These solitary wilds you tread,
[312] With swords and bows and shafts to pierce, Like bulls
whose horns are strong and fierce. Why have you sought this
forest land

Where wild with hunger’s pangs I stand? Now as your steps my
path have crossed Esteem your lives already lost.”

The royal brothers heard with dread The words which fierce
Kabandha said. And Ráma to his brother cried,
Whose cheek by blanching fear was dried:

“Alas, we fall, O valiant chief, From sorrow into direr grief, Still
mourning her I hold so dear We see our own destruction near.

Mark, brother, mark what power has time O’er all that live, in
every clime.

Now, lord of men, thyself and me Involved in fatal danger see.

’Tis not, be sure, the might of Fate That crushes all with deadly
weight.

Ne’er can the brave and strong, who know The use of spear and
sword and bow,

The force of conquering time withstand, But fall like barriers
built of sand.”

Thus in calm strength which naught could shake The son of
Dasaratha spake,

With glory yet unstained Upon Sumitrá's son he bent His eyes,
and firm in his intent

His dauntless heart maintained.

Canto LXXI. Kabandha's Speech.

Kabandha saw each chieftain stand Imprisoned by his mighty
hand, Which like a snare around him pressed And thus the royal
pair addressed: “Why, warriors, are your glances bent On me

whom hungry pangs torment? Why stand with wildered senses?

Fate

Has brought you now my maw to sate.”

When Lakshmar, heard, a while appalled, His ancient courage
he recalled,

And to his brother by his side With seasonable counsel cried:

“This vilest of the giant race Will draw us to his side apace.

Come, rouse thee; let the vengeful sword Smite off his arms, my
honoured lord.

This awful giant, vast of size,

On his huge strength of arm relies, And o'er the world victorious,
thus With mighty force would slaughter us. But in cold blood to
slay, O King, Discredit on the brave would bring, As when some
victim in the rite Shuns not the hand upraised to smite.”

The monstrous fiend, to anger stirred, The converse of the
brothers heard.

His horrid mouth he opened wide And drew the princes to his side.

They, skilled due time and place to note Unsheathed their glittering swords and smote, Till from the giant's shoulders they Had hewn the mighty arms away. His trenchant falchion Ráma plied And smote him on the better side, While valiant Lakshmar, on the left The arm that held him prisoned cleft. Then to the earth dismembered fell The monster with a hideous yell, And like a cloud's his deep roar went Through earth and air and firmament. Then as the giant's blood flowed fast, On his cleft limbs his eye he cast, And called upon the princely pair Their names and lineage to declare. Him then the noble Lakshmar,, blest

With fortune's favouring marks, addressed, And told the fiend his brother's name

And the high blood of which he came: "Ikshváku's heir here Ráma stands, Illustrious through a hundred lands.

I, younger brother of the heir,

O fiend, the name of Lakshmar, bear. His mother stole his realm away

And drove him forth in woods to stray. Thus through the mighty forest he Roamed with his royal wife and me.

While glorious as a God he made

His dwelling in the greenwood shade, Some giant stole away his
dame,

And seeking her we hither came. But tell me who thou art, and
why

With headless trunk that towered so high, With flaming face
beneath thy chest, Thou liest crushed in wild unrest.”

He heard the words that Lakshmar, spoke, And memory in his
breast awoke,

Recalling Indra’s words to mind He spoke in gentle tones and
kind: “O welcome best of men, are ye Whom, blest by fate, this
day I see. A blessing on each trenchant blade

That low on earth these arms has laid! Thou, lord of men, incline
thine ear The story of my woe to hear,

While I the rebel pride declare

Which doomed me to the form I wear.”

Canto LXXII. Kabandha’s Tale.

“Lord of the mighty arm, of yore

A shape transcending thought I wore,

And through the triple world’s extent

[313] My fame for might and valour went. Scarce might the sun
and moon on high, Scarce Sakra, with my beauty vie.

Then for a time this form I took,

And the great world with trembling shook. The saints in forest
shades who dwelt

The terror of my presence felt. But once I stirred to furious rage
Great Sthúlasiras, glorious sage. Culling in woods his hermit
food

My hideous shape with fear he viewed. Then forth his words of
anger burst That bade me live a thing accursed: “Thou, whose
delight is others’ pain, This grisly form shalt still retain.”

Then when I prayed him to relent And fix some term of
punishment,—

Prayed that the curse at length might cease, He bade me thus
expect release:

“Let Ráma cleave thine arms away And on the pyre thy body
lay,

And then shalt thou, set free from doom, Thine own fair shape
once more assume.” O Lakshmar,, hear my words: in me

The world-illustrious Danu see. By Indra's curse, subdued in
fight,

I wear this form which scares the sight. By sternest penance
long maintained

The mighty Father's grace I gained. When length of days the
God bestowed, With foolish pride my bosom glowed. My life, of
lengthened years assured,

I deemed from Sakra's might secured. Let by my senseless
pride astray

I challenged Indra to the fray.

A flaming bolt with many a knot With his terrific arm he shot,
And straight my head and thighs compressed Were buried in
my bulky chest.

Deaf to each prayer and piteous call He sent me not to Yáma's
hall.

"Thy prayers and cries," he said "are vain: The Father's word
must true remain." "But how may lengthened life be spent By
one the bolt has torn and rent?

How can I live," I cried, "unfed,

With shattered face and thighs and head?" As thus I spoke his
grace to crave,

Arms each a league in length he gave, And opened in my chest
beneath

This mouth supplied with fearful teeth. So my huge arms I used
to cast

Round woodland creatures as they passed, And fed within the
forest here

On lion, tiger, pard, and deer.

Then Indra spake to soothe my grief: “When Ráma and his
brother chief

From thy huge bulk those arms shall cleave, Then shall the skies
thy soul receive.” Disguised in this terrific shape

I let no woodland thing escape,

And still my longing soul was pleased

Whene'er my arms a victim seized, For in these arms I fondly
thought Would Ráma's self at last be caught. Thus hoping,
toiling many a day

I yearned to cast my life away,

And here, my lord, thou standest now: Blessings be thine! for
none but thou

Could cleave my arms with trenchant stroke: True are the words
the hermit spoke.

Now let me, best of warriors, lend My counsel, and thy plans
befriend, And aid thee with advice in turn
If thou with fire my corse wilt burn.”

As thus the mighty Danu prayed With offer of his friendly aid,
While Lakshmar, gazed with anxious eye, The virtuous Ráma
made reply: “Lakshmar, and I through forest shade From
Janasthán a while had strayed.

When none was near her, Rávar, came And bore away my
glorious dame, The giant’s form and size unknown,
I learn as yet his name alone.

Not yet the power and might we know Or dwelling of the
monstrous foe.

With none our helpless feet to guide We wander here by sorrow
tried.

Let pity move thee to requite Our service in the funeral rite.
Our hands shall bring the boughs that, dry Where elephants
have rent them, lie, Then dig a pit, and light the fire
To burn thee as the laws require.

Do thou as meed of this declare

Who stole my spouse, his dwelling where. O, if thou can, I pray
thee say,

And let this grace our deeds repay.”

Danu had lent attentive ear

The words which Ráma spoke to hear, And thus, a speaker
skilled and tried, To that great orator replied:

“No heavenly lore my soul endows, Naught know I of thy Maithil
spouse. Yet will I, when my shape I wear, Him who will tell thee
all declare.

Then, Ráma, will my lips disclose His name who well that giant
knows. But till the flames my corse devour

This hidden knowledge mocks my power. For through that
curse’s withering taint My knowledge now is small and faint.

Unknown the giant’s very name Who bore away the Maithil
dame. Cursed for my evil deeds I wore

A shape which all the worlds abhor. Now ere with wearied
steeds the sun

Through western skies his course have run,

Deep in a pit my body lay [314]

And burn it in the wonted way.

When in the grave my corse is placed, With fire and funeral
honours graced, Then I, great chief, his name will tell Who
knows the giant robber well.

With him, who guides his life aright, In league of trusting love
unite,

And he, O valiant prince, will be

A faithful friend and aid to thee. For, Ráma, to his searching
eyes The triple world uncovered lies. For some dark cause of old,
I ween,

Through all the spheres his ways have been.”

Canto LXXIII. Kabandha's Counsel.

The monster ceased: the princely pair Heard great Kabandha's
eager prayer. Within a mountain cave they sped, Where kindled
fire with care they fed. Then Lakshmar, in his mighty hands
Brought ample store of lighted brands, And to a pile of logs
applied

The flame that ran from side to side. The spreading glow with
gentle force Consumed Kabandha's mighty corse, Till the
unresting flames had drunk The marrow of the monstrous trunk,
As balls of butter melt away

Amid the fires that o'er them play.

Then from the pyre, like flame that glows Undimmed by cloudy
smoke, he rose,

In garments pure of spot or speck, A heavenly wreath about his
neck. Resplendent in his bright attire

He sprang exultant from the pyre.

While from neck, arm, and foot was sent The flash of gold and
ornament.

High on a chariot, bright of hue,

Canto LXXIII. Kabandha's Counsel. 1117

Which swans of fairest pinion drew, He filled each region of the
air With splendid glow reflected there. Then in the sky he stayed
his car And called to Ráma from afar:

“Hear, chieftain, while my lips explain The means to win thy
spouse again.

Six plans, O prince, the wise pursue To reach the aims we hold in
view.⁵¹⁹ When evils ripening sorely press

They load the wretch with new distress, So thou and Lakshmar,,
tried by woe, Have felt at last a fiercer blow,

And plunged in bitterest grief to-day Lament thy consort torn
away.

There is no course but this: attend;

Make, best of friends, that chief thy friend. Unless his prospering
help thou gain

Thy plans and hopes must all be vain. O Ráma, hear my words,
and seek, Sugriva, for of him I speak.

His brother Báli, Indra's son,

Expelled him when the fight was won. With four great chieftains,
faithful still, He dwells on Rishyamúka's hill.— Fair mountain,
lovely with the flow

Of Pampá's waves that glide below,— Lord of the Vánars⁵²⁰
just and true, Strong, very glorious, bright to view, Unmatched
in counsel, firm and meek, Bound by each word his lips may
speak, Good, splendid, mighty, bold and brave,

⁵¹⁹ Peace, war, marching, halting, sowing dissensions, and
seeking protection.

⁵²⁰ See Book I, Canto XVI.

Wise in each plan to guide and save. His brother, fired by lust of
sway,

Drove forth the prince in woods to stray. In all thy search for
Sítá he

Thy ready friend and help will be. With him to aid thee in thy
quest Dismiss all sorrow from thy breast. Time is a mighty
power, and none His fixed decree can change or shun. So rich
reward thy toil shall bless, And naught can stay thy sure
success. Speed hence, O chief, without delay, To strong Sugriva
take thy way.

This hour thy footsteps onward bend, And make that mighty
prince thy friend. With him before the attesting flame

In solemn truth alliance frame. Nor wilt thou, if thy heart be
wise, Sugriva, Vánar king, despise.

Of boundless strength, all shapes he wears, He hearkens to a
suppliant's prayers,

And, grateful for each kindly deed, Will help and save in hour of
need. And you, I ween, the power possess To aid his hopes and
give redress. He, let his cause succeed or fail, Will help you, and
you must prevail. A banished prince, in fear and woe

He roams where Pampá's waters flow, True offspring of the
Lord of Light Expelled by Báli's conquering might. Go, Raghu's
son, that chieftain seek Who dwells on Rishyamúka's peak.

Before the flame thy weapons cast

And bind the bonds of friendship fast. For, prince of all the
Vánar race,

He in his wisdom knows each place Where dwell the fierce
gigantic brood Who make the flesh of man their food. To him, O
Raghu's son, to him

Naught in the world is dark or dim, Where'er the mighty Day-
God gleams

Resplendent with a thousand beams. [315]

He over rocky height and hill, Through gloomy cave, by lake and
rill, Will with his Vánars seek the prize, And tell thee where thy
lady lies.

And he will send great chieftains forth To east and west and
south and north, To seek the distant spot where she

All desolate laments for thee.

He even in Rávar,'s halls would find Thy Sítá, gem of
womankind.

Yea, if the blameless lady lay On Meru's loftiest steep,

Or, far removed from light of day, Where hell is dark and deep,

That chief of all the Vánar race His way would still explore,

Meet the cowed giants face to face And thy dear spouse
restore.”

Canto LXXIV. Kabandha's Death.

When wise Kabandha thus had taught The means to find the
dame they sought, And urged them onward in the quest,

He thus again the prince addressed:

“This path, O Raghu's son, pursue

Where those fair trees which charm the view, Extending
westward far away,

The glory of their bloom display,

Where their bright leaves Rose-apples show, And the tall Jak
and Mango grow.

Whene'er you will, those trees ascend, Or the long branches
shake and bend, Their savoury fruit like Amrit eat, Then onward
speed with willing feet. Beyond this shady forest, decked

With flowering trees, your course direct. Another grove you then
will find

With every joy to take the mind,

Like Nandan with its charms displayed, Or Northern Kuru's
blissful shade; Where trees distil their balmy juice, And fruit

through all the year produce; Where shades with seasons ever
fair With Chaitraratha may compare:

Where trees whose sprays with fruit are bowed Rise like a
mountain or a cloud.

There, when you list, from time to time, The loaded trees may
Lakshmar, climb, Or from the shaken boughs supply Sweet fruit
that may with Amrit vie.

The onward path pursuing still

From wood to wood, from hill to hill, Your happy eyes at length
will rest

On Pampá's lotus-covered breast. Her banks with gentle slope
descend, Nor stones nor weed the eyes offend, And o'er smooth
beds of silver sand Lotus and lily blooms expand.

There swans and ducks and curlews play, And keen-eyed
ospreys watch their prey, And from the limpid waves are heard
Glad notes of many a water-bird.

Untaught a deadly foe to fear They fly not when a man is near,
And fat as balls of butter they

Will, when you list, your hunger stay. Then Lakshmar, with his
shafts will take The fish that swim the brook and lake, Remove
each bone and scale and fin,

Or strip away the speckled skin, And then on iron skewers broil
For thy repast the savoury spoil.

Thou on a heap of flowers shalt rest

And eat the meal his hands have dressed, There shalt thou lie on
Pampá's brink,

And Lakshmar,'s hand shall give thee drink, Filling a lotus leaf
with cool

Pure water from the crystal pool,

To which the opening blooms have lent The riches of divinest
scent.

Beside thee at the close of day

Will Lakshmar, through the woodland stray, And show thee
where the monkeys sleep

In caves beneath the mountain steep. Loud-voiced as bulls they
forth will burst And seek the flood, oppressed by thirst; Then rest
a while, their wants supplied,

Their well-fed bands on Pampá's side. Thou roving there at eve
shalt see Rich clusters hang on shrub and tree, And Pampá
flushed with roseate glow, And at the view forget thy woe.

There shalt thou mark with strange delight Each loveliest flower
that blooms by night, While lily buds that shrink from day

Their tender loveliness display. In that far wild no hand but thine
Those peerless flowers in wreaths shall twine: Immortal in their
changeless pride,

Ne'er fade those blooms and ne'er are dried. There erst on holy
thoughts intent

Their days Matanga's pupils spent. Once for their master food
they sought, And store of fruit and berries brought. Then as they
laboured through the dell From limb and brow the heat-drops
fell:

Thence sprang and bloomed those wondrous trees: Such holy
power have devotees.

Thus, from the hermits' heat-drops sprung, Their growth is ever
fresh and young.

There Savarí is dwelling yet,

[316] Who served each vanished anchoret. Beneath the shade of
holy boughs That ancient votaress keeps her vows. Her happy
eyes on thee will fall,

O godlike prince, adored by all,

And she, whose life is pure from sin, A blissful seat in heaven will
win.

But cross, O son of Raghu, o'er,

And stand on Pampá's western shore. A tranquil hermitage that
lies

Deep in the woods will meet thine eyes. No wandering elephants
invade

The stillness of that holy shade,

But checked by saint Matanga's power They spare each
consecrated bower.

Through many an age those trees have stood World-famous as
Matanga's wood

Still, Raghu's son, pursue thy way:

Through shades where birds are vocal stray, Fair as the blessed
wood where rove Immortal Gods, or Nandan's grove.

Near Pampá eastward, full in sight,

Stands Rishyamúka's wood-crowned height. 'Tis hard to climb
that towering steep Where serpents unmolested sleep.

The free and bounteous, formed of old By Brahmá of superior
mould,

Who sink when day is done to rest Reclining on that mountain
crest,— What wealth or joy in dreams they view, Awaking find
the vision true.

But if a villain stained with crime That holy hill presume to climb,
The giants in their fury sweep From the hill top the wretch
asleep.

There loud and long is heard the roar Of elephants on Pampá's shore,

Who near Matanga's dwelling stray And in those waters bathe and play. A while they revel by the flood,

Their temples stained with streams like blood, Then wander far away dispersed,

Dark as huge clouds before they burst. But ere they part they drink their fill

Of bright pure water from the rill, Delightful to the touch, where meet Scents of all flowers divinely sweet, Then speeding from the river side Deep in the sheltering thicket hide. Then bears and tigers shalt thou view

Whose soft skins show the sapphire's hue, And silvan deer that wander nigh

Shall harmless from thy presence fly. High in that mountain's wooded side Is a fair cavern deep and wide,

Yet hard to enter: piles of rock The portals of the cavern block.⁵²¹ Fast by the eastern door a pool

Gleams with broad waters fresh and cool, Where stores of roots and fruit abound, And thick trees shade the grassy ground. This mountain cave the virtuous-souled Sugriva, and his Vánars hold,

And oft the mighty chieftain seeks

The summits of those towering peaks.”

Thus spake Kabandha high in air His counsel to the royal pair.

Still on his neck that wreath he bore, And radiance like the sun's
he wore. Their eyes the princely brothers raised And on that
blissful being gazed: “Behold, we go: no more delay;

Begin,” they cried, “thy heavenward way.” “Depart,” Kabandha's
voice replied, “Pursue your search, and bliss betide.”

521 Or as the commentator Tírtha says, Silápidháná, rock-
covered, may be the name of the cavern.

Thus to the happy chiefs he said, Then on his heavenward
journey sped. Thus once again Kabandha won

A shape that glittered like the sun Without a spot or stain.

Thus bade he Ráma from the air To great Sugríva's side repair

His friendly love to gain.

Canto LXXV. Savarí.

Thus counselled by their friendly guide On through the wood the
princes hied, Pursuing still the eastern road

To Pampá which Kabandha showed, Where trees that on the
mountains grew With fruit like honey charmed the view. They
rested weary for the night

Upon a mountain's wooded height, Then onward with the dawn
they hied And stood on Pampá's western side, Where Savarí's
fair home they viewed Deep in that shady solitude.

The princes reached the holy ground Where noble trees stood
thick around, And joying in the lovely view

Near to the aged votaress drew. To meet the sons of Raghu
came,

With hands upraised, the pious dame, And bending low with
reverence meet

Welcomed them both and pressed their feet.

Then water, as beseems, she gave, Their lips to cool, their feet
to lave. To that pure saint who never broke One law of duty
Ráma spoke:

“I trust no cares invade thy peace, While holy works and zeal
increase; That thou content with scanty food All touch of ire
hast long subdued;

[317] That all thy vows are well maintained While peace of mind
is surely gained, That reverence of the saints who taught Thy
faithful heart due fruit has brought.”

The aged votaress pure of taint, Revered by every perfect saint,
Rose to her feet by Ráma’s side And thus in gentle tones replied:
“My penance meed this day I see Complete, my lord, in meeting
thee. This day the fruit of birth I gain, Nor have I served the
saints in vain. I reap rich fruits of toil and vow, And heaven itself
awaits me now, When I, O chief of men, have done Honour to
thee the godlike one.

I feel, great lord, thy gentle eye My earthly spirit purify,

And I, brave tamer of thy foes,

Shall through thy grace in bliss repose. Thy feet by Chitrakúta
strayed

When those great saints whom I obeyed, In dazzling chariots
bright of hue, Hence to their heavenly mansions flew.

As the high saints were borne away I heard their holy voices
say:

“In this pure grove, O devotee, Prince Ráma soon will visit thee.

When he and Lakshmar, seek this shade, Be to thy guests all
honour paid.

Him shalt thou see, and pass away

To those blest worlds which ne'er decay.” To me, O mighty chief,
the best

Of lofty saints these words addressed. Laid up within my
dwelling lie

Fruits of each sort which woods supply,— Food culled for thee in
endless store

From every tree on Pampá's shore.”

Thus to her virtuous guest she sued And he, with heavenly lore
endued, Words such as these in turn addressed To her with
equal knowledge blest: “Danu himself the power has told

Of thy great masters lofty-souled.

Now if thou will, mine eyes would fain Assurance of their glories
gain.”

She heard the prince his wish declare: Then rose she, and the
royal pair

Of brothers through the wood she led That round her holy
dwelling spread. “Behold Matanga’s wood” she cried, “A grove
made famous far and wide.

Dark as thick clouds and filled with herds Of wandering deer,
and joyous birds.

In this pure spot each reverend sire With offerings fed the holy
fire.

See here the western altar stands Where daily with their
trembling hands The aged saints, so long obeyed

By me, their gifts of blossoms laid. The holy power, O Raghu’s
son, By their ascetic virtue won,

Still keeps their well-loved altar bright, Filling the air with beams
of light.

And those seven neighbouring lakes behold Which, when the
saints infirm and old, Worn out by fasts, no longer sought,
Moved hither drawn by power of thought. Look, Ráma, where
the devotees

Hung their bark mantles on the trees, Fresh from the bath: those
garments wet Through many a day are dripping yet.

See, through those aged hermits' power The tender spray, this
bright-hued flower With which the saints their worship paid,
Fresh to this hour nor change nor fade.

Here thou hast seen each lawn and dell, And heard the tale I
had to tell:

Permit thy servant, lord, I pray, To cast this mortal shell away,
For I would dwell, this life resigned, With those great saints of
lofty mind, Whom I within this holy shade
With reverential care obeyed.”

When Ráma and his brother heard The pious prayer the dame
preferred, Filled full of transport and amazed
They marvelled as her words they praised. Then Ráma to the
votaress said

Whose holy vows were perfected:

“Go, lady, where thou fain wouldst be, O thou who well hast
honoured me.”

Her locks in hermit fashion tied, Clad in bark coat and black
deer-hide, When Ráma gave consent, the dame Resigned her
body to the flame.

Then like the fire that burns and glows, To heaven the sainted
lady rose,

In all her heavenly garments dressed, Immortal wreaths on
neck and breast, Bright with celestial gems she shone Most
beautiful to look upon,

And like the flame of lightning sent A glory through the
firmament.

That holy sphere the dame attained, By depth of contemplation
gained,

Where roam high saints with spirits pure In bliss that shall for
aye endure.

Canto LXXVI. Pampá.

When Savarí had sought the skies

And gained her splendid virtue's prize, Ráma with Lakshmar,
stayed to brood

O'er the strange scenes their eyes had viewed. His mind upon
those saints was bent,

For power and might preëminent And he to musing Lakshmar,
spoke

The thoughts that in his bosom woke: [318]

“Mine eyes this wondrous home have viewed Of those great
saints with souls subdued, Where peaceful tigers dwell and
birds,

And deer abound in heedless herds. Our feet upon the banks
have stood Of those seven lakes within the wood, Where we
have duly dipped, and paid Libations to each royal shade.

Forgotten now are thoughts of ill And joyful hopes my bosom
fill. Again my heart is light and gay

And grief and care have passed away. Come, brother, let us
hasten where Bright Pampá's flood is fresh and fair, And
towering in their beauty near Mount Rishyamúka's heights
appear, Which, offspring of the Lord of Light, Still fearing Báli's
conquering might, With four brave chiefs of Vánar race Sugriva
makes his dwelling-place.

I long with eager heart to find That leader of the Vánar kind,

For on that chief my hopes depend

That this our quest have prosperous end.”

Thus Ráma spoke, in battle tried, And thus Sumitrá's son replied:

“Come, brother, come, and speed away: My spirit brooks no more delay.”

Thus spake Sumitrá's son, and then Forth from the grove the king of men With his dear brother by his side

To Pampá's lucid waters hied.

He gazed upon the woods where grew

Trees rich in flowers of every hue. From brake and dell on every side The curlew and the peacock cried, And flocks of screaming parrots made Shrill music in the bloomy shade.

His eager eyes, as on he went,

On many a pool and tree were bent. Inflamed with love he journeyed on Till a fair flood before him shone. He stood upon the water's side

Which streams from distant hills supplied: Matanga's name that water bore:

There bathed he from the shelving shore. Then, each on earnest thoughts intent, Still farther on their way they went.

But Ráma's heart once more gave way Beneath his grief and wild dismay.

Before him lay the noble flood Adorned with many a lotus bud. On its fair banks Asoka glowed,

And all bright trees their blossoms showed. Green banks that
silver waves confined With lovely groves were fringed and lined.
The crystal waters in their flow

Showed level sands that gleamed below. There glittering fish
and tortoise played, And bending trees gave pleasant shade.
There creepers on the branches hung With lover-like embraces
clung.

There gay Gandharvas loved to meet, And Kinnars sought the
calm retreat. There wandering Yakshas found delight, Snake-
gods and rovers of the night.

Cool were the pleasant waters, gay

Each tree with creeper, flower, and spray. There flushed the
lotus darkly red,

Here their white glory lilies spread,

Here sweet buds showed their tints of blue: So carpets gleam
with many a hue.

A grove of Mangoes blossomed nigh, Echoing with the
peacock's cry.

When Ráma by his brother's side The lovely flood of Pampá
eyed, Decked like a beauty, fair to see With every charm of

flower and tree, His mighty heart with woe was rent And thus he spoke in wild lament

“Here, Lakshmar,, on this beauteous shore, Stands, dyed with tints of many an ore,

The mountain Rishyamúka bright

With flowery trees that crown each height. Sprung from the chief who, famed of yore, The name of Riksharajas bore,

Sugriva, chieftain strong and dread, Dwells on that mountain’s towering head. Go to him, best of men, and seek

That prince of Vánars on the peak, I cannot longer brook my pain, Or, Sítá lost, my life retain.”

Thus by the pangs of love distressed, His thoughts on Sítá bent, His faithful brother he addressed, And cried in wild lament.

He reached the lovely ground that lay On Pampá’s wooded side, And told in anguish and dismay, The grief he could not hide.

With listless footsteps faint and slow His way the chief pursued, Till Pampá with her glorious show Of flowering woods he viewed.

Through shades where every bird was found The prince with
Lakshmar, passed,

And Pampá with her groves around Burst on his eyes at last.

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