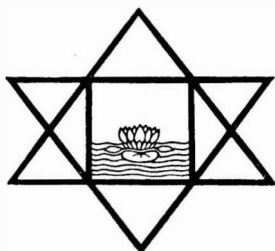




T R A N S L A T I O N S

FROM SANSKRIT AND OTHER LANGUAGES



Translations

FROM SANSKRIT
AND
OTHER LANGUAGES

VOLUME 8

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Why fell her face upon my sight,
That is a love her moon in light,
Since but for one poor moment she
With her sweet eyes emparadised me.
Surely it was to slay my soul
That under her long lashes stole
The cruel grace of that transient look.
Desire laid hands upon her breasts
And there my poor heart clinging rests:
Love new-born its office took.
My ears yet wait upon her words;
Her murmurs dwell like caged birds.
I strive to part; my feet refuse.
The net of sweet desires is loose,
Yet thence my body will not move,
Faint with the sudden hands of Love.

I

FROM SANSKRIT

RAMAYANA

An Aryan City*

Coshala by the Soroyou, a land
Smiling at heaven, of riches measureless
And corn abounding glad; in that great country
Ayodhya was, the city world-renowned,
Ayodhya by King Manou built, immense.
Twelve yojans long the mighty city lay
Grandiose, and wide three yojans. Grandly spaced
Ayodhya's streets were and the long highroad
Ran through it spaciouly with sweet cool flowers
Hourly new-paved and hourly watered wide.
Dussarutha in Ayodhya, as in heaven
Its natural lord, abode, those massive walls
Ruling, and a great people in his name
Felt greater, — door and wall and ponderous arch
And market places huge. Of every craft
Engines mechanical and tools there thronged,
And craftsmen of each guild and manner. High rang
With heralds and sonorous eulogists
The beautiful bright city imperial.
High were her bannered edifices reared,
With theatres and dancing-halls for joy
Of her bright daughters, and sweet-scented parks
Were round and gardens cool. High circling all
The city with disastrous engines stored
In hundreds, the great ramparts like a zone
Of iron spanned in her moated girth immense
Threatening with forts the ancient sky. Defiant
Ayodhya stood, armèd, impregnable,
Inviolable in her virgin walls.
And in her streets was ever large turmoil,
Passing of elephants, the steed and ox,
Mules and rich-laden camels. And through them drove
The powerful barons of the land, great wardens
Of taxes, and from countries near and far
The splendid merchants came much marvelling

* Bala Kanda, Sarga 5, 5-22.

To see those orgulous high builded homes
With jewels curiously fretted, topped
With summer houses for the joy of girls,
Like some proud city in heaven. Without a gap
On either side as far as eye could reach
Mass upon serried mass the houses rose,
Seven-storied architectures metrical
Upon a level base, and made sublime.
Splendid Ayodhya octagonally built,
The mother of beautiful women and of gems
A world. Large granaries of rice unhusked
She had and husked rice for the fire, and sweet
Her water, like the cane's delightful juice,
Cool down the throat. And a great voice throbbed of drums,
The tabour and the tambourine, while ever
The lyre with softer rumours intervened.
Nor only was she grandiosely built,
A city without earthly peer, — her sons
Were noble, warriors whose arrows scorned to pierce
The isolated man from friends cut off
Or guided by a sound to smite the alarmed
And crouching fugitive, but with sharp steel
Sought out the lion in his den or grappling
Unarmed they murdered with their mighty hands
The tiger roaring in his trackless woods
Or the mad tusked boar. Even such strong arms
Of heroes kept that city and in her midst
Regnant king Dussaruth the nations ruled.

Speech of Dussaruth to the Assembled States-General of His Empire*

Then with a far reverberating sound
As of a cloud in heaven or war-drum's call
Deep-voiced to battle and with echoings
In the wide roof of his majestic voice
That like the resonant surges onward rolled
Moving men's hearts to joy, a King to Kings
He spoke and all they heard him.

"It is known

To you, O princes, how this noblest realm
Was by my fathers ruled, the kings of old
Who went before me, even as one dearest son
Is by his parents cherished; therefore I too
Would happier leave than when my youth assumed
Their burden, mankind, my subjects, and this vast
World-empire of the old Ikshwacou kings.
Lo, I have trod in those imperial steps
My fathers left, guarding with sleepless toil
The people while strength was patient in this frame
O'erburdened with the large majestic world.
But now my body broken is and old,
Aging beneath the shadow of the white
Canopy imperial and outworn with long
Labouring for the good of all mankind.
My people, Nature fails me! I have lived
Thousands of years and many lives of men
And all my worn heart wearies for repose.
Weary am I of bearing up this heavy
Burden austere of the great world, duties
Not sufferable by souls undisciplined:
O folk, to rest from greatness I desire.
Therefore with your august, assembled will,
O powers and O twice-born nations, I
Would share with Rama this great kingdom's crown,

* Ayodhya Kanda, Sarga 2, 1-20.

Rama, my warrior son, son by kingly birth
 And by gifts inherited confessed my son,
 Rama, a mighty nation's joy. Less fair,
 Yoked with his favouring constellation bright,
 The regent moon shall be than Rama's face,
 When morn upon his crowning smiles. O folk,
 Say then shall Luxman's brother be your lord,
 Glory's high favourite who empire breathes?
 Yea, if the whole vast universe should own
 My son for king, it would be kinged indeed
 And regal: Lords, of such desirable
 Fortune I would possess this mother of men;
 Then would I be at peace, at last repose
 Transferring to such shoulders Earth. Pronounce
 If I have nobly planned, if counselled well;
 Grant me your high permissive voices; people,
 But if my narrower pleasure, private hope,
 Of welfare general the smooth disguise
 Have in your censure donned, then let the folk
 Themselves advise their monarch or command.
 For other is disinterested thought
 And by the clash of minds dissimilar
 Counsel increases."

Then with a deep sound
 As when a cloud with rain and thunder armed
 Invades the skies, the jewelled peacocks loud
 Clamour, assembled monarchs praised their king.
 And like a moving echo came the voice
 Of the great commons answering them, a thunder
 And one exultant roar. Earth seemed to rock
 Beneath the noise. Thus by their Emperor high
 Admitted to his will great conclave was
 Of clergy and of captains and of kings
 And of the people of the provinces
 And of the people metropolitan: all these
 Deliberated and became one mind.
 Resolved, they answered then their aged king.

A Mother's Lament*

“Hadst thou been never born, Rama, my son,
Born for my grief, I had not felt such pain,
A childless woman. For the barren one
Grief of the heart companions, only one,
Complaining, ‘I am barren’; this she mourns,
She has no cause for any deeper tears.
But I am inexperienced in delight
And never of my husband’s masculine love
Had pleasure, — still I lingered, still endured
Hoping to be acquainted yet with joy.
Therefore full many unlovely words that strove
To break the suffering heart had I to hear
From wives of my husband, I the Queen and highest,
From lesser women. Ah, what greater pain
Than this can women have who mourn on earth,
Than this my grief and infinite lament?
O Rama, even at thy side so much
I have endured, and if thou goest hence,
Death is my certain prospect, death alone.
Cruelly neglected, grievously oppressed
I have lived slighted in my husband’s house
As though Kaikayie’s serving-woman, — nay,
A lesser thing than these. If any honours,
If any follows me, even that man
Hushes when he beholds Kaikayie’s son.
How shall I in my misery endure
That bitter mouth intolerable, bear
Her ceaseless petulance. Oh, I have lived
Seventeen years since thou wast born, my son,
O Rama, seventeen long years have I lived,
Wearily wishing for an end to grief;
And now this mighty anguish without end!
I have no strength to bear for ever pain;
Nor this worn heart with suffering fatigued
To satisfy the scorn of rivals yields

* Ayodhya Kanda, Sarga 20, 36-55.

More tears. Ah how shall I without thy face
 Miserably exist, without thy face,
 My moon of beauty, miserable days?
 Me wretched, who with fasts and weary toil
 And dedicated musings reared thee up,
 Vainly. Alas, the river's giant banks,
 How great they are! and yet when violent rain
 Has levelled their tops with water, they descend
 In ruin, not like this heart which will not break.
 But I perceive death was not made for me,
 For me no room in those stupendous realms
 Has been discovered; since not even today
 As on a mourning hind the lion falls
 Death seizes me or to his thicket bears
 With his huge leap, — death ender of all pain.
 How livest thou, O hard, O iron heart,
 Unbroken, O body, tortured by such grief,
 How sinkst thou not all shattered to the earth?
 Therefore I know death comes not called — he waits
 Inexorably his time. But this I mourn,
 My useless vows, gifts, offerings, self-control.
 And dire ascetic strenuousness perfected
 In passion for a son, — yet all like seed
 Fruitless and given to ungrateful soil.
 But if death came before his season, if one
 By anguish of unbearable heavy grief
 Naturally might win him, then today
 Would I have hurried to his distant worlds
 Of thee deprived, O Rama, O my son.
 Why should I vainly live without thine eyes,
 Thou moonlight of my soul? No, let me toil
 After thee to the savage woods where thou
 Must harbour, I will trail these feeble limbs
 Behind thy steps slow as the sick yearning dam
 That follows still her ravished young." Thus she
 Yearning upon her own beloved son; —
 As over her offspring chained a centauress
 Impatient of her anguish deep, so wailed
 Cowshalya; for her heart with grief was loud.

The Wife*

But Sita all the while, unhappy child,
Worshipped propitious gods. Her mind in dreams
August and splendid coronations dwelt
And knew not of that woe. Royal she worshipped,
A princess in her mind and mood, and sat
With expectation thrilled. To whom there came
Rama, downcast and sad, his forehead moist
From inner anguish. Dark with thought and shaken
He entered his august and jubilant halls.
She started from her seat, transfixed, and trembled,
For all the beauty of his face was marred,
Who when he saw his young beloved wife
Endured no longer; all his inner passion
Of tortured pride was opened in his face.
And Sita, shaken, cried aloud, "What grief
Comes in these eyes? Was not today thine hour
When Jupiter, the imperial planet, joins
With Pushya, that high constellation? Why
Art thou then pale, disturbed? Where is thy pomp,
Thy crowning where? No foam-white softness silk
With hundred-shafted canopy o'erhues
Thy kingly head, no fans o'erwave thy face
Like birds that beat their bright wings near a flower;
Minstrel nor orator attends thy steps
To hymn thy greatness, nor are heralds heard
Voicing high stanzas. Who has then forbade
The honeyed curds that Brahmins Veda-wise
Should pour on thy anointed brow, — the throngs
That should behind thee in a glory surge, —
The ministers and leading citizens
And peers and commons of the provinces
And commons metropolitan? Where stays
Thy chariot by four gold-clad horses drawn,
Trampling, magnificent, wide-maned? thy huge
High-omened elephant, a thunder-cloud
Or moving mountain in thy front? thy seat

* Ayodhya Kanda, Sarga, 26-30.

Enriched with curious gold? Such are the high
 Symbols men lead before anointed kings
 Through streets flower-crowned. But thou com'st careless, dumb,
 Alone. Or if thy coronation still,
 Hero, prepares and nations for thee wait,
 Wherefore comes this grey face not seen before
 In which there is no joy?" Trembling she hushed.
 Then answered her the hope of Raghov's line:
 "Sita, my sire exiles me to the woods.
 O high-born soul, O firm religious mind,
 Be strong and hear me. Dussaruth my sire,
 Whose royal word stands as the mountains pledged
 To Bharath's mother boons of old, her choice
 In her selected time, who now prefers
 Athwart the coronation's sacred pomp
 Her just demand; me to the Dundac woods
 For fourteen years exiled and in my stead
 Bharath, my brother, royally elect
 To this wide empire. Therefore I come, to visit
 And clasp thee once, ere to far woods I go.
 But thou before King Bharath speak my name
 Seldom; thou knowest great and wealthy men
 Are jealous and endure not others' praise.
 Speak low and humbly of me when thou speakest,
 Observing all his moods; for only thus
 Shall man survive against a monarch's brow.
 He is a king, therefore to be observed;
 Holy, since by a monarch's sacred hands
 Anointed to inviolable rule.
 Be patient; thou art wise and good. For I
 Today begin exile, Sita, today
 Leave thee, O Sita. But when I am gone
 Into the paths of the ascetics old
 Do thou in vows and fasts spend blamelessly
 Thy lonely seasons. With the dawn arise
 And when thou hast adored the Gods, bow down
 Before King Dussaruth, my father, then
 Like a dear daughter tend religiously

Cowshalya, my afflicted mother old;
 Nor her alone, but all my father's queens
 Gratify with sweet love, smiles, blandishments
 And filial claspings; — they my mothers are,
 Nor than the breasts that suckled me less dear.
 But mostly I would have thee show, beloved,
 To Shatrughna and Bharath, my dear brothers,
 More than my life-blood dear, a sister's love
 And a maternal kindness. Cross not Bharath
 Even slightly in his will. He is thy king,
 Monarch of thee and monarch of our house
 And all this nation. 'Tis by modest awe
 And soft obedience and high toilsome service
 That princes are appeased, but being crossed
 Most dangerous grow the wrathful hearts of kings
 And mischiefs mean. Monarchs incensed reject
 The sons of their own loins who durst oppose
 Their mighty policies, and raise, of birth
 Though vile, the strong and serviceable man.
 Here then obedient dwell unto the King,
 Sita; but I into the woods depart."

He ended, but Videha's daughter, she
 Whose words were ever soft like one whose life
 Is lapped in sweets, now other answer made
 In that exceeding anger born of love,
 Fierce reprimand and high. "What words are these,
 Rama, from thee? What frail unworthy spirit
 Converses with me uttering thoughts depraved,
 Inglorious, full of ignominy, unmeet
 For armed heroical great sons of Kings?
 With alien laughter and amazed today
 I hear the noblest lips in all the world
 Uttering baseness. For father, mother, son,
 Brother or son's wife, all their separate deeds
 Enjoying their own separate fates pursue.
 But the wife is the husband's and she has
 Her husband's fate, not any private joy.

Have they said to thee 'Thou art exiled'? Me
 That doom includes, me too exiles. For neither
 Father nor the sweet son of her own womb
 Nor self, nor mother, nor companion dear
 Is woman's sanctuary, only her husband
 Whether in this world or beyond is hers.
 If to the difficult dim forest then,
 Rama, this day thou journeyest, I will walk
 Before thee, treading down the thorns and sharp
 Grasses, smoothing with my torn feet thy way;
 And henceforth from my bosom as from a cup
 Stale water, jealousy and wrath renounce.
 Trust me, take me; for, Rama, in this breast
 Sin cannot harbour. Heaven, spacious terraces
 Of mansions, the aerial gait of Gods
 With leave to walk among those distant stars,
 Man's wingèd aspiration or his earth
 Of sensuous joys, tempt not a woman's heart:
 She chooses at her husband's feet her home.
 My father's lap, my mother's knees to me
 Were school of morals, Rama; each human law
 Of love and service there I learned, nor need
 Thy lessons. All things else are wind; I choose
 The inaccessible inhuman woods,
 The deer's green walk or where the tigers roam,
 Life savage with the multitude of beasts,
 Dense thickets; there will I dwell in desert ways,
 Happier than in my father's lordly house,
 A pure-limbed hermitess. How I will tend thee
 And watch thy needs, and thinking of no joy
 But that warm wifely service and delight
 Forget the unneeded world, alone with thee.
 We two shall dalliance take in honied groves
 And scented springtides. These heroic hands
 Can in the forest dangerous protect
 Even common men, and will they then not guard
 A woman and the noble name of wife?
 I go with thee this day, deny who will,

Nor aught shall turn me. Fear not thou lest I
 Should burden thee, since gladly I elect
 Life upon fruits and roots, and still before thee
 Shall walk, not faltering with fatigue, eat only
 Thy remnants after hunger satisfied,
 Nor greater bliss conceive. O I desire
 That life, desire to see the large wide lakes,
 The cliffs of the great mountains, the dim tarns,
 Not frightened since thou art beside me, and visit
 Fair waters swan-beset in lovely bloom.
 In thy heroic guard my life shall be
 A happy wandering among beautiful things,
 For I shall bathe in those delightful pools,
 And to thy bosom fast-devoted, wooed
 By thy great beautiful eyes, yield and experience
 On mountains and by rivers large delight.
 Thus if a hundred years should pass or many
 Millenniums, yet I should not tire or change,
 For wandering so not heaven itself would seem
 Desirable, but this were rather heaven.
 O Rama, Paradise and thou not there
 No Paradise were to my mind. I should
 Grow miserable and reject the bliss.
 I rather mid the gloomy entangled boughs
 And sylvan haunts of elephant and ape,
 Clasp my husband's feet, intend to lie
 Obedient, glad, and feel about me home."

But Rama, though his heart approved her words
 Yielded not to the entreaty, for he feared
 Her dolour in the desolate woods; therefore
 Once more he spoke and kissed her brimming eyes.
 "Of a high blood thou comest and thy soul
 Turns naturally to duties high. Now, too,
 O Sita, let thy duty be thy guide;
 Elect thy husband's will. Thou shouldst obey,
 Sita, my words, who art a woman weak.
 The woods are full of hardship, full of peril,

And 'tis thy ease that I command. Nay, nay,
 But listen and this forestward resolve
 Thou wilt abandon: Love! for I shall speak
 Of fears and great discomforts. There is no pleasure
 In the vast woodlands drear, but sorrows, toils,
 Wretched privations. Thundering from the hills
 The waterfalls leap down, and dreadfully
 The mountain lions from their caverns roar
 Hurting the ear with sound. This is one pain.
 Then in vast solitudes the wild beasts sport
 Untroubled, but when they behold men, rage
 And savage onset move. Unfordable
 Great rivers thick with ooze, the python's haunt,
 Or turbid with wild elephants, sharp thorns
 Beset with pain and tangled creepers close
 The thirsty tedious paths impracticable
 That echo with the peacock's startling call.
 At night thou must with thine own hands break off
 The sun-dried leaves, thy only bed, and lay
 Thy worn-out limbs fatigued on the hard ground,
 And day or night no kindlier food must ask
 Than wild fruit shaken from the trees, and fast
 Near to the limits of thy fragile life,
 And wear the bark of trees for raiment, bind
 Thy tresses piled in a neglected knot,
 And daily worship with large ceremony
 New-coming guests and the high ancient dead
 And the great deities, and three times 'twixt dawn
 And evening bathe with sacred accuracy,
 And patiently in all things rule observe.
 All these are other hardships of the woods.
 Nor at thy ease shalt worship, but must offer
 The flowers by thine own labour culled, and deck
 The altar with observance difficult,
 And be content with little and casual food.
 Abstinent is their life who roam in woods,
 O Mithilan, strenuous, a travail. Hunger
 And violent winds and darkness and huge fears

Are their companions. Reptiles of all shapes
 Coil numerous where thou walkest, spirited,
 Insurgent, and the river-dwelling snakes
 That with the river's winding motion go,
 Beset thy path, waiting. Fierce scorpions, worms,
 Gadflies and gnats continually distress,
 And the sharp grasses pierce and thorny trees
 With an entangled anarchy of boughs
 Oppose. O many bodily pains and swift
 Terrors the inhabitants in forests know.
 They must expel desire and wrath expel,
 Austere of mind, who such discomforts choose,
 Nor any fear must feel of fearful things.
 Dream not of it, O Sita; nothing good
 The mind recalls in that disastrous life
 For thee unmeet; only stern miseries
 And toils ruthless and many dangers drear."

Then Sita with the tears upon her face
 Made answer very sad and low: "Many
 Sorrows and perils of that forest life
 Thou hast pronounced, discovered dreadful ills.
 O Rama, they are joys if borne for thee,
 For thy dear love, O Rama. Tiger or elk,
 The savage lion and fierce forest-bull
 Marsh-jaguars and the creatures of the woods
 And desolate peaks, will from thy path remove
 At unaccustomed beauty terrified.
 Fearless shall I go with thee if my elders
 Allow, nor they refuse, themselves who feel
 That parting from thee, Rama, is a death.
 There is no danger, Hero, at thy side
 Who shall touch me? Not sovran Indra durst,
 Though in his might he master all the Gods,
 Assail me with his thunder-bearing hands.
 O how can woman from her husband's arms
 Divorced exist? Thine own words have revealed,
 Rama, its sad impossibility.

Therefore my face is set towards going, for I
 Preferring that sweet service of my lord,
 Following my husband's feet, surely shall grow
 All purified by my exceeding love.
 O thou great heart and pure, what joy is there
 But thy nearness? To me my husband is
 Heaven and God. O even when I am dead
 A bliss to me will be my lord's embrace.
 Yea, thou who know'st, wilt thou, forgetful grown
 Of common joys and sorrows sweetly shared,
 The faithful heart reject, reject the love?
 Thou carest nothing then for Sita's tears?
 Go! poison or the water or the fire
 Shall yield me sanctuary, importuning death."

Thus while she varied passionate appeal
 And her sweet miserable eyes with tears
 Swam over, he her wrath and terror and grief
 Strove always to appease. But she alarmed,
 Great Janac's daughter, princess Mithilan,
 Her woman's pride of love all wounded, shook
 From her the solace of his touch and weeping
 Assailed indignantly her mighty lord.
 "Surely my father erred, great Mithila
 Who rules and the Videhas, that he chose
 Thee with his line to mate, Rama unworthy,
 No man but woman in a male disguise.
 What casts thee down, wherefore art thou then sad,
 That thou art bent thus basely to forsake
 Thy single-hearted wife? Not Savitri
 So loved the hero Dyumathsena's son
 As I love thee and from my soul adore.
 I would not, like another woman, shame
 Of her great house, turn even in thought from thee
 To watch a second face; for where thou goest
 My heart follows. 'Tis thou, O shame! 'tis thou
 Who thy young wife and pure, thy boyhood's bride
 And bosom's sweet companion, like an actor,

Resign'st to others. If thy heart so pant
 To be his slave for whom thou art oppressed,
 Obey him thou, court, flatter, for I will not.
 Alas, my husband, leave me not behind,
 Forbid me not from exile. Whether harsh
 Asceticism in the forest drear
 Or paradise my lot, either is bliss
 From thee not parted, Rama. How can I,
 Guiding in thy dear steps my feet, grow tired
 Though journeying endlessly? as well might one
 Weary, who on a bed of pleasure lies.
 The bramble-bushes in our common path,
 The bladed grasses and the pointed reeds
 Shall be as pleasant to me as the touch
 Of cotton or of velvet, being with thee.
 And when the storm-blast rises scattering
 The thick dust over me, I, feeling then
 My dear one's hand, shall think that I am smeared
 With sandal-powder highly-priced. Or when
 From grove to grove upon the grass I lie,
 In couches how is there more soft delight
 Or rugs of brilliant wool? The fruits of trees,
 Roots of the earth or leaves, whate'er thou bring,
 Be it much or little, being by thy hands
 Gathered, I shall account ambrosial food,
 I shall not once remember, being with thee,
 Father or mother dear or my far home.
 Nor shall thy pains by my companionship
 Be greatened; doom me not to parting, Rama.
 For only where thou art is Heaven; 'tis Hell
 Where thou art not. O thou who know'st my love,
 If thou canst leave me, poison still is left
 To be my comforter. I will not bear
 Their yoke who hate thee. And if today I shunned
 Swift solace, grief at length would do its work
 With torments slow. How should the broken heart
 That once has beaten on thine, absence endure
 Ten years and three to these and yet one more?"

So writhing in the fire of grief, she wound
Her body about her husband, fiercely silent,
Or sometimes wailed aloud; as a wild beast
That maddens with the fire-tipped arrows, such
Her grief ungovernable and like the streams
Of fire from its stony prison freed,
Her quick hot tears, or as when the whole river
From new-culled lilies weeps, — those crystal brooks
Of sorrow poured from her afflicted lids.
And all the moonlight glories of her face
Grew dimmed and her large eyes vacant of joy.
But he revived her with sweet words: “Weep not;
If I could buy all heaven with one tear
Of thine, Sita, I would not pay the price,
My Sita, my beloved. Nor have I grown,
I who have stood like God by nature planted
High above any cause of fear, so suddenly
Familiar with alarm. Only I knew not
Thy sweet and resolute courage, and for thee
Dreaded the misery that sad exiles feel.
But since to share my exile and o’erthrow
God first created thee, O Mithilan,
Sooner shall high serenity divorce
From the self-conquering heart, than thou from me
Be parted. Fixed I stand in my resolve
Who follow ancient virtue and the paths
Of the old perfect dead; ever my face
Turns steadfast to that radiant goal, self-vowed
Its sunflower. To the drear wilderness I go.
My father’s stainless honour points me on,
His oath that must not fail. This is the old
Religion, brought from dateless ages down,
Parents to honour and obey; their will
Should I transgress, I would not wish to live.
For how shall man with homage or with prayer
Approach the distant Deity, yet scorn
A present godhead, father, mother, sage?
In these man’s triple objects live, in these

The triple world is bounded, nor than these
 Has all wide earth one holier thing. Large eyes,
 These therefore let us worship. Truth or gifts,
 Or Honour or liberal proud sacrifice,
 Nought equals the effectual force and pure
 Of worship filial done. This all bliss brings,
 Compels all gifts, compels harvests and wealth,
 Knowledge compels and children. All these joys
 And human boons great filial souls on earth
 Recovering here enjoy, and in that world
 Heaven naturally is theirs. But me whatever,
 In the strict path of virtue while he stands,
 My father bids, my heart bids that. I go,
 But not alone, o'ercome by thy sweet soul's
 High courage. O intoxicating eyes,
 O faultless limbs, go with me, justify
 The wife's proud name, partner in virtue, Love,
 Warm from thy great high-blooded lineage old
 Thy purpose springing mates with the pure strain
 Of Raghou's ancient house. O let thy large
 And lovely motion forestward make speed
 High ceremonies to absolve. Heaven's joys
 Without thee now were beggarly and rude.
 Haste then, the Brahmin and the pauper feed
 And to their blessings answer jewels. All
 Our priceless diamonds and our splendid robes,
 Our curious things, our couches and our cars,
 The glory and the eye's delight, do these
 Renounce, nor let our faithful servants lose
 Their worthy portion." Sita, of that consent
 So hardly won sprang joyous, as on fire,
 Disburdened of her wealth, lightly to wing
 Into dim wood and wilderness unknown.

The Book of the Wild Forest

THEN, possessing his soul, Rama entered the great forest, the forest Dundac with difficulty approachable by men and beheld a circle there of hermitages of ascetic men; a refuge for all living things, with ever well-swept courts and strewn with many forms of beasts and swarming with companies of birds and holy, high and temperate sages graced those homes. The high of energy approached them unstringing first his mighty bow and they beholding him like a rising moon with wonder in their looks gazed at the fabric of his beauty and its glory and softness and garbed grace and at Vaidehie too with unfalling eyelids they gazed and Luxman; for they were things of amazement to those dwellers in the woods. Great-natured sages occupied in doing good to all living things, they made him sit a guest in their leafy home and burning with splendour of soul like living fires they offered him guest-worship due and presented all things of auspice, full of high gladness in the act, roots, flowers and fruits they gave, yea, all the hermitage they laid at the feet of Rama. And high-souled, learned in righteousness they said to him with outstretched and upward folded palms: "For that he is the keeper of the virtue of all this folk, a refuge and a mighty fame, high worship and honour are the king's, and he holds the staff of justice and is reverent to all. Of Indra's self he is the fourth part and protects the people. O seed of Raghou, therefore he enjoys noble and beautiful pleasures and to him men bow down. Thou shouldst protect us, then, dwellers in thy dominions; for whether the city hold thee or the wilderness, still art thou the king and the master of the folk. But we, O king, have laid by the staff of offence, we have put anger from us and the desire of the senses and 'tis thou must protect us always, ascetics rich in austerity but helpless as children in the womb."

* Aranya Kanda, Sarga 1, 1-21.

CANTO TWO*

Now when he had taken of their hospitality, Rama towards the rising of the sun took farewell of all these seers and plunged into mere forest scattered through with many beasts of the chase and haunted by the tiger and the bear. There he and Luxman following him, saw a desolation in the midmost of that wood, for blasted were tree and creeper and bush and water was nowhere to be seen, but the forest was full of the screaming of vultures and rang with the crickets' cry. And walking with Sita there Cacoostha in that haunt of fierce wild beasts beheld the appearance like a mountain peak and heard the thundering roar of an eater of men; deep set were his eyes and huge his face, hideous was he and hideous bellied, horrid, rough and tall, deformed and dreadful to the gaze and wore a tiger's skin moist with fat and streaked with gore, a terror to all creatures even as death the ender when he comes with yawning mouth. Three lions, four tigers, two wolves, ten spotted deer and the huge fat-smearred head of an elephant with its tusks he had stuck up on an iron spit and roared with a mighty sound. As soon as he saw Rama and Luxman and Sita Maithili he ran upon them in sore wrath like Death the ender leaping on the nations. And with a terrible roar that seemed to shake the earth he took Vaidehie up in his arms and moved away and said, "You who wearing the ascetic's cloth and matted locks, O ye whose lives are short, yet with a wife have you entered Dundac woods and you bear the arrow, sword and bow, how is this that you being anchorites hold your dwelling with a woman's beauty? Workers of unrighteousness, who are ye, evil men, disgrace to the garb of the seer? I Viradha the Rakshasa range armed these tangled woods eating the flesh of the sages. This woman with the noble hips shall be my spouse, but as for you, I will drink in battle your sinful blood." Evil-souled Viradha speaking thus wicked words, Sita heard his haughty speech, alarmed she shook in her apprehension as a plantain trembles in the storm-wind. The son of Raghous seeing the beautiful Sita in Viradha's arms said to Luxman, his face drying up with grief, "Behold, O my brother, the daughter of Janak, lord of men, my wife of noble life taken into Viradha's arms, the king's daughter high-splendoured and nurtured in utter ease! The thing Kaikeyie desired, the thing dear to her that she chose for a gift, how quickly today, O Luxman, has it been utterly fulfilled, she whose foresight was not satisfied with the kingdom for her son, but she sent me, be-

* Aranya Kanda, Sarga 2, 1-25.

loved of all beings to the wild woods. Now today she has her desire, that middle mother of mine. For no worse grief can befall me than that another should touch Vaidehie and that my father should perish and my own kingdom be wrested from my hands.” So Cacoostha spoke and Luxman answered him, his eyes filled with the rush of grief, panting like a furious snake controlled, “O thou who art like Indra and the protector of this world’s creatures, why dost thou afflict thyself as if thou wert one who has himself no protector, even though I am here, the servant of thy will? Today shall the Rakshasa be slain by my angry shaft and Earth drink the blood of Viradha dead. (The wrath that was born in me against Bharat for his lust of rule, I will loose upon Viradha as the Thunderer hurls his bolt against a hill.)”

CANTO THREE*

Then Viradha spoke yet again and filled the forest with his voice. "Answer to my questioning, who are ye and whither do ye go?" And Rama answered to the Rakshasa with his mouth of fire, in his pride of strength he answered his questioning and declared his birth in Ikshwaku's line. "Kshatriyas accomplished in virtue know us to be, farers in this forest, but of thee we would know who thou art that rangest Dundac woods." And to Rama of enormous might Viradha made reply: "Java's son am I, Shatahrida was my dam and Viradha am I called by all Rakshasas on earth..."

* Aranya Kanda, Sarga 3, 1-5.

The Slaying of Dhumraksha*

Loud in their gladness and their lust of fight
Shouted the forest-host when they beheld
The dreadful Rakshas coming forth to war,
Dhumraksha; loud the noise of mella clashed,
Giants and Apes with tree and spear and mace
Smiting their foemen. For the Giants hewed
Their dread opponents earthward everywhere,
And they too with the trunks of trees bore down
Their monstrous foes and levelled with the dust.

(Incomplete)

* Yuddha Kanda, Sarga 52, 1-4.

MAHABHARATA

THE BOOK OF THE ASSEMBLY HALL

The Building of the Hall

And before Krishna's face to great Arjoon
Maya with clasped hands bending, mild and boon
His voice as gratitude's: "Me the strong ire
Had slain of Krishna or the hungry fire
Consumed: by thee I live, O Kunti's son:
What shall I do for thy sake?" And Arjoon,
"Paid is thy debt. Go thou and prosper: love
Repay the lover: this our friendship prove."
"Noble thy word and like thyself," returned
The Titan, "yet in me a fire has burned
Some deed to do for love's sake. He am I,
The Titan architect and poet high,
The maker: something give me to create."
Arjoon replied, "If from the grasp of Fate
Rescued by me thou pray'st, then is the deed
Sufficient, Titan: I will take no meed.
Yet will I not deny thee: for my friend
Do somewhat and thy debt to me shall end."
Then by the Titan questioned Vasudev
Pondered awhile what boon were best to have.
At length he answered: "Let a hall be raised
Peerless, thou great artificer high-praised, —
If thou wilt needs do somewhat high designed, —
For Yudhisthere such hall as may thy mind
Imagine. Wonderful the pile shall be,
No mortal man shall copy although he
Labour to grasp it, nor on transient earth
Another equal wonder shall have birth.
Vast let it be. Let human and divine
And the Titanic meet in one design."
Joyful the builder took the word and high
The Pandav's hall he made imperially.
(But first the heroes to the King repair,
Just Yudhisthere, and all their story there

Tell out. The Titan also they present,
 Their living proof of great accomplishment.
 Nobly he welcomed was by that just King.)
 There in high ease, befriended, sojourning
 The life of elder gods dethroned of old
 The Titan to the Pandav princes told.
 Short space for rest took the creative mind
 And inly planned and mightily designed
 A hall imperial for those mighty ones.
 With Krishna then consulting and the sons
 Of Pritha on a day of sacred light
 All fate-appeasing ceremonies right
 He ordered and with rice in sugared milk
 Sated the priests, silver and herds and silk.
 In energy of genius next he chose
 Ten thousand cubits, mapped a mighty close,
 Region delightful where divinely sweet
 The joy of all the seasons seemed to meet.
 Four were the sides, ten thousand cubits all.
 This was the measure of the Pandav's hall.

But in the Khandav plain abode in ease
 Janardan mid the reverent ministries
 Of the great five: their loves his home renew.
 But for his father's sight a yearning grew
 And drew him thence. He of the monarch just
 And Pritha craved departure. In the dust
 His head he lowered at her worshipped feet,
 He for the whole world's homage only meet.
 Him she embraced and kissed his head. Next he
 His sister dear encountered lovingly.
 Wet were his eyes as with low words and few,
 Pregnant and happy, admirably true
 He greeted that divine fair girl and heard
 Of her sweet eloquence many a tender word
 That to her kin should travel; reverent
 She bowed her lovely head. And Krishna went
 To Draupadie and Dhaum and took of these

Various farewell, — soft words her heart to ease,
 But to the priest yielded the man divine
 Obeisance just and customary sign.
 (Thereafter with Arjoon the hero wise
 His brothers met and in celestial guise,
 Like Indra with the great immortals round,
 All rites that to safe journeying redound
 Performing, bath and pure ablution made
 And worship due with salutation paid,
 Garlanded, praying, in rich gems arrayed,
 All incenses that breathe beneath the sun
 To Gods and Brahmans offered. These things done
 Departure now was next. Stately he came
 Outward and all of venerable name
 Who bore the sacred office, had delight
 Of fruit and grain yet in the husk and white
 Approved curds, much wealth; and last the ground
 He trod and traced the gyre of blessing round.)
 So with a fortunate day and fortunate star
 And moment in his chariot built for war,
 Golden, swift-rushing, with the Bird for sign
 And banner, sword and discus, bow divine
 And mace round hung, and horses twin of stride,
 Sugrive and Shaibya, went the lotus-eyed.
 Next in his love the monarch Yudhishtere
 Mounted, and Daruk, the great charioteer,
 He put aside. Himself he grasped the rein,
 Himself he drove the chariot o'er the plain.
 And great Arjoona mounted, seized the white
 Wind-bringer with the golden staff and bright
 And called with his strong arm the circling wind;
 And Bheema and the princes twin behind
 Followed, and citizen and holy priest:
 With the horizon the procession ceased.
 All these with the far-conquering Krishna wend,
 As a high sage whom his disciples tend,
 So for a league they journeyed; then no more
 He suffered but Yudhishtere's will o'erbore

And forced return; then grappled to his breast
 Arjoon beloved. Greeting well the rest
 Religiously the monarch's feet embraced
 Govinda, but the Pandav raised and kissed
 The head of Krishna beautiful-eyed. "Go then,"
 He murmured, yet even so the word was vain
 Until reunion promised. Hardly at length
 He stayed them with entreaty's utmost strength
 From following him on foot; so glad has gone
 Like Indra thundering to the immortal's town.
 But they stood following with the eyes their light
 Until he vanished from the paths of sight.
 Ev'n then their hearts, though distance now conceals,
 Run yet behind his far invisible wheels.
 But the swift chariot takes their joy and pride,
 Too swift, alas! from eyes unsatisfied
 With that dear vision, and reluctant, slow,
 In thoughts that still with Krishna's horse-hooves go,
 Ceasing at last to their own town again
 Silent they wend, the lion lords of men.
 So entered the immortal Yudhishtere
 Girt round with friends his glorious city; here
 He left them and in bowers for pleasure made
 With Draupadie the godlike hero played.
 But Krishna, glad of soul, in whirling car
 Came speeding to his noble town afar
 With Daruk and the hero Satyaki
 Swift as the great God's wingèd favourite he
 Entered, and all the Yadav lords renowned
 Came honouring him, with one the chief and crowned.
 And Krishna stayed his father old to greet
 And Ahuk and his glorious mother's feet
 And Balaram, his brother. His own sons
 He next embraced and all their little ones.
 Last of his elders leave he took and went
 To Rukminie's fair house in glad content,
 In Dwarca he; but the great Titan Mai
 Still pondered and imagined cunningly

A jewelled brightness in his thought begun,
 An audience hall supreme for Hades' son.
 (So with the conqueror unparalleled,
 Arjoon, the Titan now this discourse held :
 "To the great hill I go and soon return,
 Whose northern peaks from Coilas upward burn.
 There when the Titans sacrifice of yore
 Intended by the water Bindusor,
 Rich waste of fine material was left,
 Wondrous, of stone a variegated weft
 That for the mighty audience hall was stored
 Of Vrishaparvan, the truth-speaking lord.
 Thither I wend and make, if yet endure
 All that divine material bright and pure,
 The Pandav's hall, a glory to behold,
 Admirable, set with jewelry and gold
 Taking the heart to pleasure. These besides
 A cruel mace in Bindusor abides,)
 Massive endurance, studded aureate,
 Ponderous, a death of foes, commensurate
 With many thousand more in murderous will.
 There after slaughter huge of foes it still
 Lies by a king relinquished. This believe
 For Bheem created as for thee Gandeve.
 There too the mighty conch Varunian lies:
 Thunders God-given swell its ocean voice.
 Expect these from my hand infallibly."
 Thus saying went the Titan hastily
 To the north-eastern edge of heaven where high
 Soars Mainac hill into the northward sky
 From Coilas. Golden soar its ridges large
 And noble gems it stores and bright the marge
 Of Bindusor. The high conceiving Lord,
 King of all creatures and by worlds adored,
 Here grandiose offerings gave and sacrifice
 By hundreds, and with excellent device,
 For beauty not to old tradition, made
 Pillars of sacrifice with gems inlaid

And monumental temples massed with gold.
 Long here enduring Bhagiruth the bold
 Through tedious seasons dwelt, yearning to see
 Ganges, his self-named river Bhagirathie.
 Nor these alone, but he, the Argus-eyed
 Lord of imperial Sachi, to his side
 Victory by sacrifice compelled. Creating
 World systems, energy irradiating
 He sits here whom the awful ghosts attend,
 Shiva, who no beginning has nor end.
 Nar and Naraian there and Brahma there
 And Hades and the Immovable repair, —
 Revolving when a thousand ages wend,
 To absolve with sacrifice the cycle's end.
 Here now ambitious of religion gave
 Long years his mighty offerings Vasudev,
 Devoutly, and bright temples raised their head,
 Memorial columns golden-garlanded,
 Unnumbered, multitudinous, immense.
 Thither went Maia and recovered thence
 Conchshell and mace and for the audience hall
 The old Titanic stone marmoreal.
 All mighty wealth the servile giants guard,
 The Titan genius gathered and prepared
 This famous hall unparalleled, divine,
 Where all the jewels of the earth combine.
 To Bheem he gave that mighty mace, the shell
 God-given called, whose cry unutterable
 When from the great conch's ocean mouth 'tis hurled
 Far borne, trembling of creatures fills the world,
 To great Arjoona. But immense the hall
 Ten thousand cubits spread its bulk and all
 Its sides ten thousand, upon mighty boles
 Columnar elevate: nor either rolls
 The sun through heaven, moon nor vast fire so bright.
 Slaying the sunshine with superior light
 It blazed as if aflame, most luminous, white,
 Celestial, large, raised like a cloud to soar

Against the heavens whose lustre it o'erbore.
 Nor weariness nor sorrow enter might
 That wide and noble palace of delight.
 Of fair material was it made, the walls
 And arches jewelled were of those rich halls.
 Such wonder of creative genius won
 The World's Designer to companion.
 For neither Brahma's roof nor Vishnu's high
 Might equal this for glorious symmetry.
 Nor yet Sudharma, Indra's council hall,
 With Maia's cunning strove. At Maia's call
 Eight thousand Helots of the Giants' blood
 Upbore the pile and dreadful sentries stood,
 Travellers on wind, huge-bodied, horrible,
 Shell-eared, far-strikers, with bloodshot eyes and fell.
 And in the middle a lotus-lake he made
 Unparalleled, white lotuses displayed,
 And birds innumerable and all the stems
 Of that fair blossom were of beauteous gems
 And all the leaves were sapphires: through them rolled
 Gold tortoises and wondrous fish of gold.
 Marble mosaic was the stair: the wave
 Translucent ran its edges fine to lave,
 Wrinkled with soft cool winds that over it sped.
 A rain of pearl drops on the floor was shed,
 And seats from slabs of precious stone combined
 The marble banks of that fair water lined.
 And all around it ever-flowering trees
 Of various race hung dark and huge with ease
 Of cool delightful shade, sweet-smelling woods
 And quiet waters where the white swan broods
 And ducks and waders of the ripples. Sweet
 The wind came from them, fragrance in its feet
 The lotus gave and lily of the land,
 And with its booty the great brothers fanned.
 Full fourteen months he laboured: the fifteenth
 Saw ready jewelled arch and luminous plinth.
 Then only came the Titan and declared

To the just King his mighty hall prepared.

Ceremony of entrance Yudhishtere
 Then held. Thousands of Brahmins luscious cheer
 Of rice with sugared milk enjoyed wherein
 Honey was mingled; flesh besides they win
 Of boar and stag and all roots eatable
 And fruits and sesamum-rice that tastes full well
 And grain of offering and pedary
 Yea, meats of many natures variously
 Eaten and chewed, of drinks a vast array;
 And robes brought newly from the loom that day
 Were given, all possible garlands scented sweetly
 To Brahmins, from all regions gathering, meetly
 Presented, and to each a thousand cows.
 O then was air all thunder with their vows:
 The din of blessing touched the very skies.
 With these the notes of instruments arise
 Varied, celestial, and sweet fumes untold.
 Before the son of Hades mighty-souled
 Wrestlers and mimes made show and those who play
 With fencing staves and jongleurs. For that day
 He who installed the deities, worshipping,
 Was the greatest of the Kurus and a king.
 He by his brothers hemmed, high worship done,
 With saint and hero for companion,
 In that his palace admirably bright,
 Like Indra in his heaven took delight.

The Debated Sacrifice

. . . . But when Yudhishtere had heard
 The sages' speech, his heart was moved with sighs
 He coveted Imperial Sacrifice.
 All bliss went from him. Only to his thought
 The majesty of royal saints was brought
 By sacrifice exalted, Paradise
 Acquired augustly, and before his eyes
 He most was luminous who in heaven shone,
 Heaven by sacrificial merit won.
 He too that offering would absolve; so now
 Receiving reverence with a courteous brow,
 The assembly broke, to meditate retiring
 On that great sacrifice of his desiring.
 Frequent the thought and ever all its length
 His mind leaned that way. Yet though huge his strength,
 His heroism though admired, the King
 Forgot no Right, but pondered how this thing
 Might touch the peoples, whether well or ill.
 For just was Yudhishtere and courted still
 His people and with vast impartial mind
 Served all, nor ever from this word declined,
 "To each his own; nor shall the king disturb
 With wrath or violence Right, but these shall curb."
 So was all speech of men one grand acclaim;
 The nation as a father trusted him:
 No hater had he in his whole realm's bound,
 By the sweet name of Enemiless renowned.
 And through his gracious government upheld
 By Bheema's force and foreign battle quelled
 By the two-handed might of great Arjoon;
 Sahadev's cultured equity and boon
 Nokula's courteous mood to all men shown,
 The thriving provinces were void of fear;
 Strife was forgotten and each liberal year

The rains were measured to desire; nor man
 The natural limit of his course outran:
 Usury, tillage, rearing, merchandise
 Throve with good government and sacrifice
 Prospered; rack-renting was not nor unjust
 Extortion; from the land pestilence was thrust,
 And mad calamity of fire unknown
 Became while this just monarch had his own.
 Robbers and cheats and royal favourites
 Were now not heard of to infringe men's rights
 Nor the king's harm nor mutual injury
 Intrigue. To yield into his treasury
 Their taxes traders came and princes high
 On the sixfold pretexts of policy,
 Or at Yudhishtere's court good grace to win.
 Even greedy, passionate, luxurious men
 His just rule to the common welfare turned.
 He in the glory of all virtues burned,
 An all-pervading man, by all adored,
 An emperor and universal lord
 Bearing upon his shoulders the whole State,
 And from the neat-herd to the twice-born great
 All in his wide domains that lived and moved,
 Him more than father, more than mother loved.
 He now his brothers and his ministers
 Summoning severally their mind infers
 And often with repeated subtle speech
 Solicitous questions and requestions each.
 All with one cry unanimous advise
 To institute Imperial Sacrifice.
 "O King," they said, "the man by God designed
 Who has acquired the Oceanic mind
 Of kingship, not with this bounds his pretence,
 But hungers for imperial excellence.
 In thee it dwells, high Kaurav; we thy friends
 See clear that Fate this sacrifice intends.
 To complete heroes it is subject. Men
 Who centre chivalry within them gain

Its sanction when with ancient chants the fires
 Are heaped by sages, lords of their desires
 Through self-control intense. The serpentine
 And all rites other in this one rite twine.
 And he who at its end is safely crowned
 Is as World Conqueror, is as King renowned.
 Puissance is thine, great-armed, and we are thine.
 O King, soon then shall Empire crown thy line:
 O King, debate no longer; aim thy will
 At Sacrifice Imperial." So they still
 Advised their king together and apart,
 And deep their accents sunk into his heart.
 Bold was their speech, rang pleasant to his ear,
 Seemed excellent and just, yet Yudhishtere
 Still pondered though he knew his puissance well.
 Again he bade his hardy brothers tell
 Their mind and priests high-souled and ministers:
 With Dhowma and Dwypaian too confers,
 Wise and deliberate he. "Speak justly, friends,
 What happy way my hard desire attends.
 Hard is the sacrifice imperial meant
 For an imperial mind's accomplishment."
 All answered with a seasonable voice:
 "Just King, thine is that mind and thou the choice
 Of Fate for this high ceremony renowned."
 Sweet did the voice of friends and flamens sound:
 Yet still he curbed himself and still he thought.
 His yearning for the people's welfare wrought
 A noble hesitation. Wise the man
 Who often will his power and vantage scan,
 Who measures means with the expenditure,
 Season with place, then acts; his deeds endure.
 "Not with my mere resolve the enterprise
 Begins and ends of this great sacrifice."
 While thus in a strong grasp his thought he held,
 His mind to Krishna who all beings excelled
 Of mortal breed, for surest surety ran,
 Krishna, the strong unmeasurable man

Whom Self-born upon earth conjectured he
 Because his deeds measured with deity.
 "To Krishna's mind all things are penetrable,
 His genius knows not the impossible."
 Pondered the son of Hades, "nor is there
 A weight his mighty mind cannot upbear."
 On Krishna as on sage and guide his mind
 (Who is indeed the guide of all mankind)
 He fixed and sent his messenger afar
 To Yadav land in a swift-rolling car.
 Then sped the rushing wheels with small delay
 And reached the gated city Dwaraca,
 The gated city where Janardan dwelt.
 Krishna to Yudhishtere's desire felt
 Answering desire and went with Indrasen
 Passing through many lands to Indra-Plain,
 Fierily passing with impetuous hooves
 To Indraprastha and the men he loves.
 With filial soul his brothers Yudhishtere
 And Bheem received the man without compeer:
 But Krishna to his father's sister went
 And greeted her with joyous love; then bent
 His heart to pleasure with his heart's own friend,
 While reverently the courteous twins attend.
 But after rest in those bright halls renowned
 Yudhishtere sought the immortal man and found
 At leisure sitting and revealed his need.
 "King's Sacrifice I covet, but indeed
 Thou knowest not practicable by will alone
 Like other rites is this imperial one,
 But he in whom all kingly things combine,
 He whom all men, all lands to honour join,
 A King above all kings, he finds alone
 Empire. And now though all my friends are one
 To bid me forward, I even yet attend
 From thy voice only certainty, O friend.
 Some from affection lovingly suppress
 Their friend's worst fault and some from selfishness,

Speaking what most will please. Others conceal
 Their own good with the name of commonweal.
 Such counsel in his need a monarch hath.
 But thou art pure of selfish purpose; wrath
 And passion know thee not; and thou wilt tell
 What shall be solely and supremely well.”

Krishna made answer: “All thy virtues, all
 Thy gifts make thee the man imperial.
 Thou dost deserve this sacrifice. Yet well
 Though thou mayst know it, one thing will I tell.
 When Rama, Jamadagni’s son, had slain
 The chivalry of earth, those who were fain
 To flee, left later issue to inherit
 The name of Kshatriya and the regal spirit.
 Of these the rule by compact of the clan
 Approved thou knowest, and each high-born man
 Whate’er and all the kingly multitude
 Name themselves subjects of great Ila’s brood
 And the Ikshwaku house. Now by increase
 The Ikshwaku Kings and Ilian count no less
 Than are a hundred clans. Of all most huge
 Yayati of the Bhojas, a deluge
 Upon the earth in multitude and gift.
 To these all chivalry their eyes uplift,
 These and their mighty fortunes serve. But now
 King Jarasandha lifts his diademed brow
 And Ila and Ikshwaku pale their fires,
 O’erwhelmed. He over kings and nations towers;
 This way and that way with impetuous hands
 Assailing overbears; the middle lands
 Inhabits and by division rules the world,
 Since he in whose sole hand the earth is furled,
 Who is first monarch and supreme may claim,
 He and he only, the imperial name.
 And him the mighty hero, Shishupal
 Owns singly nor disdains his lord to call,
 But leads his warfare, and, of captains best,

The puissant man and subtle strategist,
 Chucrar, the Karoosh king, and those two famed
 Grew to his side, Hansa and Dimbic named,
 Brave men and high of heart, and Corrusus,
 Duntvacar, Maghavahan, Corobhus,
 Great kings; and the wide-ruler of the West
 The Yavan lord upon whose gleaming crest
 Burns the strange jewel wonderful, whose might
 Is like the boundless Oceans infinite,
 Whose rule Narac obeys and Muruland.
 King Bhagadutt owns Jarasandh's command,
 Thy father's ancient friend, and more with hand
 Serves him than word. He only of the West
 And southern end of earth who is possessed,
 The hero Kuntivardhan Purujit
 Feel for thee as a tender father might.
 Chained by affection to thee is his heart
 And by affection in thy weal has part.
 To Jarasandh he whom I did not slay
 Is gathered, he who must forsooth display
 My signs, gives himself out god humanized
 And man ideal, and for such is prized
 Now in the world, a madman soiled of soul,
 The tyrant of the Chedies, whose control
 Poundra and Keerat own, a mighty lord,
 King of Bengal and by the name adored
 Of Poundrian Vasudev. The Bhoja strong
 To whom wide lands, one fourth of all, belong,
 Called friend of Indra — he made tameable
 Pandya and Cruth and Kayshic by his skill
 And science, and his brother Aacrity
 Is very Parashuram in prowess — he,
 Even Bheeshmuc, even this high, far-conquering king
 To Jarasandh is vowed. We worshipping,
 We who implore his favour, we his kin
 Are utterly rejected, all our pain
 Of benefaction met with sharp contempt,
 Benefit with harm returned or evil attempt.

He has forgot his birth, his pride, his name ;
 Blinded by Jarasandha's burning fame
 To him is gone. To him high fortune yields ;
 Great nations leave their old ancestral fields.
 The Bhojas of the North to western plain
 Their eighteen clans transplanted, Shoorasen,
 Shalwa, Petucchur, Kuntie, Bhadracar,
 Susthal, Kulind, Sucutta. All that are
 Of the Shalwaian kings brother or friend,
 Are with their leaders gone, nor yet an end ;
 The Southern Panchals and in Kuntie-land
 The Eastern Coshalas. Their native north
 Abandoning the Matsyas have gone forth
 And from their fear take southern sanctuary :
 With them the clan Sannyastapad. Lastly
 The warrior great Panchalas terrified
 Have left their kingdoms and to every side
 Are scattering before Jarasandh's name.
 On us the universal tempest came,
 When Kansa furiously crushed of old
 The Yadavs: for to Kansa bad and bold
 The son of Brihadrath his daughters gave
 Born younger feminine to male Sahadave,
 Ustie and Prapthie. In this tie made strong
 His royal kin he overpowered ; nor long,
 Being supreme, ruled prudently, but grew
 A tyrant and a fool. Whereupon drew
 The Bhoja lords together, those whom tired
 His cruelties, and these with me conspired
 Seeking a national deliverer.
 Therefore I rose and Ahuk's daughter, her
 The sweet and slender, gave to Acrur, — then
 Made free from tyranny my countrymen.
 With me was Ram, the plougher of the foe ;
 Our swords laid Kansa and Sanaaman low.
 Scarce was this inbred peril crossed and we
 Safe, Jarasandh arose. Then laid their plans
 By vast majority the eighteen clans,

That though we fought for ever, though we slew
 With mighty blows infallible, o'erthrew
 Foe upon foe, three centuries might take wing
 Nor yet be slain the armies of the King.
 For him and his two men like gods made strong,
 Unslayable where the weapons thickest throng,
 Hansa and Dimbhuc styled. Those two uniting,
 Heroes, and Jarasandh heroic fighting
 Might battle with assembled worlds and win;
 Such was my thought, nor mine alone has been,
 But all the kings this counsel entertain,
 O wisest Yudhithere. Now there was slain
 By Ram in eight days' battle duelling
 One Hansa truly named, a mighty king.
 "Hansa is slain," said one to Dimbhuc. Him
 Hearing the Jumna's waters overwhelm
 Devoted. Without Hansa here alone
 He had not heart to linger, so is gone
 His way to death. Of Dimbhuc's death when knew
 Hansa, sacker of cities, he too drew
 To the same waves that closed above his friend.
 There were they joined in one o'erwhelming end.
 This hearing Jarasandha discontent
 With empty heart to his own city went.
 The King being gone we in all joy again
 In Mathura dwelt and our ancestral plain.
 But she, the royal princess lotus-eyed,
 Went to her father mourning; she, the pride
 Of Jarasandh and Kansa's wife, and cried,
 Spurring the mighty Maagadh, weeping: "Kill
 My husband's murderer, O my father", and still,
 "Kill him!" But we minding the old thought planned
 With heavy hearts out from our native land,
 Son, friend and kinsman, all in fear must flee.¹
 Our endless riches' loose prolixity²
 Unportable by division we compressed
 And with it fared sadly into the West.

¹ flee fast. ² Our loose prolixity of riches vast

The lovely city, fair Kushasthaly,
 With mountains beautiful, our colony
 We made, the Ryevat mountains; and up-piled
 Ramparts which even the gods in battle wild
 Could hardly scale, ramparts which women weak
 Might hold — of Vrishny's swords what need to speak?
 Five are the leagues our dwelling place extends,
 Three are the mountain-shoulders and each ends
 An equal space: hundred-gated the town.
 Each gate with heroism and renown
 Is bolted and has eighteen keys close-bound,
 Eighteen strong bows in whom the trumpets sound
 Wakes headlong lust of war. Thousands as many
 Our race. Ahuk has hundred sons nor any
 Less than a god: And Charudeshna, he
 With his dear brother, hero Satyaki,
 Chacrodave, I, the son of Rohinie,
 And Samba and Pradyumna, seven are we,
 Seven strong men; nor other seven more weak,
 Cunca, Shuncou, Kountie and Someque,
 Anadhrishty, Somitinjoy, Critavurm:
 Undhuk's two sons besides and the old King: firm
 As adamant they, heroes energetic.
 These are the Vrishny men who lead there, all
 Remembering the sweet middle lands we lost.
 There we behold that flood of danger crossed
 The Maagadh, Jarasandh, the mountain jaws
 Impassable behold. There free from cause
 Of fear, eastern or northern, Madhou's sons
 Dwell glad of safety. Lo, we the mighty ones,
 Because King Kansa married, to the West,
 By Jarasandha utterly distressed,
 Are fled, and there on Ryevat, hill of kine,
 Find sanctuary from danger Magadhine.
 Therefore though thou art with imperialness
 Endiademed already, though the race
 Of highborn princes thou must weld in one
 And be their King and Emperor alone,

Yet not while Jarasandha liveth dream
 That thou canst wear thy destined diadem.
 Great Jarasandha living; for he brings
 The princes of the earth and all her kings
 And Girivraj with mighty prisoners fills, —
 As in a cavern of the lordly hills,
 A lion's homestead, slaughtered elephants lie,
 So they a hecatomb of royalty
 Wait their dire ending; for Magadha's King
 A sacrifice of princes purposing,
 With fierce asceticism of will adored
 Mahadev mighty-minded, Uma's lord.
 Conquering he moves towards his purpose, (brings
 Army on army, kings on battling kings,
 Victorious brings and binds and makes of men
 His mountain city a huge cattle-pen.
 Us too his puissance drove in strange dismay
 To the fair-gated city, Dwaraca.)
 Therefore if of Imperial Sacrifice
 Thou art ambitious, first, O Prince, devise
 To rescue all those murdered kings and slay
 King Jarasandha, since thus only may
 The instituted Sacrifice attain
 Its great proportion and immenser plan.
 King, I have said; yet as thy deeper mind
 Adviseth thee. Only when all's designed,
 All reasons weighed, then give me word." "O thou
 Art only wise," Yudhishthere cried: "Lo now
 A word no other heart might soar so high
 To utter; yet thy brave sagacity
 Plainly hath phrased it; nor like thee on earth
 Another loosener of doubts takes birth.¹
 (Behold, the earth is full of kings; they still
 Each in his house do absolutely their will;
 Yet who attains to empire? Nay, the word
 Itself is danger.) He who has preferred
 His enemy's greatness by sad study known,

¹ Another sword of counsel shall take birth.

How shall he late forget and praise his own?
 Only who in his foemen's shock not thrown
 Wins by ordeal praise, deserves the crown.
 (This vast and plenteous earth, this mine of gems,
 Is from a distance judged, how vast its realms,
 Not from the dells. Nor otherwise, O pride
 Of Vrishny's seed, man's greatness is espied.
 In calm and sweet content is highest bliss,
 Mine be the good that springs from chastened peace.)
 Or I with this attempt hope not the crown
 Of high supremacy to wear. Renown
 Girds these and high-born minds; and so they deem
 Lo I and I am warrior and supreme.
 But we by Jarasandha's force alarmed
 And all his bold tyrannies iron-armed
 Shun the emprise. O Hero, O high-starred,
 In whose great prowess we have done and dared,
 In whose heroic arm our safeties dwell,
 Yet lo thou fearest him, deemst invincible
 And where thou fearest, my conceit of strength
 Becomes a weakling's dream until at length
 I hardly dare to hope by strongest men
 This mighty Jarasandha can be slain,
 Arjoon or Bheem or Rama or combined.
 Thou, Keshav, in all things to me art mind."
 Out Bhema spoke, the strong man eloquent:
 "The unstrenuous king, unhardy, unvigilant
 Sinks like an ant-hill; nor the weak-kneed less
 Who on a stranger leans his helplessness.
 But the unsleeping and resourceful man
 With wide and adequate attempt oft can
 His mightier enemy vanquish; him though feeble
 His wished-for good attends invariable.
 Krishna has policy and I have strength
 And with our mother's son Dhananjay, length
 Assured of victory dwells; we shall assail
 Victoriously the Magadhan and quell
 As triple fire a victim." Krishna then:

“Often we see that rash unthinking men
 Imprudent undertake nor consequence
 Envisage; yet will not his foe dispense
 Therefore the one-ideaed and headstrong man.
 Now since the virtuous ages first began
 Five emperors have reigned to history known,
 Maroutta, Bharat, Yuvanaswa’s son,
 Great Bhagirath and Kartavirya old.
 By wealth Maroutta conquered, Bharat bold
 By armed strength; Mandhata’s victories
 Enthroned him and his subtle soul and wise.
 By strenuous greatness Kartavirya bent
 The world, but Bhagirath beneficent
 Gathered the willing nations to his sway.
 But thou purposing like greatness, to one way
 Not limited, restor’st the imperial five.
 Their various masteries reunited live:
 Virtue, high policy, wealth without dearth
 And conquest and the rapid grasp at Earth —
 Yet these avail not to make solely great.
 Strong Jarasandha bars thee from thy fate,
 (Whom not the hundred nations can deter
 But with great might he grows an emperor;
 The jewel-sceptred kings to serve him start.
 Yet he in his unripe and violent heart)
 Unsatisfied, assumes the tyrant’s part.
 He, the first man of men, lays his rude hand
 On the anointed monarchs of the land
 And pillages. Not one we see exempt.
 How then shall feebler king his fall attempt?
 Well-nigh a hundred in his sway are whelmed.
 With these like cattle cleansed, like cattle hemmed
 In Shiva’s house, the dreadful Lord of beasts,
 Purified as for sacrificial feasts,
 Surely life’s joy is turned to bitterness,
 Not dying like heroes in the battle’s press.
 Honour is his who in swift battle falls
 And best mid swords high death to princes calls.

In battle let us 'gainst the Maagadh thrust,
 By battle ignominy repel. To just
 Eighty and six the royal victims mount,
 Fourteen remain to fill the dire account,
 Who being won his horrid violence
 No farther pause will brook. (Glory immense
 He wins, glory most glorious who frustrates
 Interposing the tyrant and amates.
 Kings shall acclaim him lord inevitably.)")

But Yudhishthere made answer passionately:
 "Shall I, ambitious of imperial place,
 Krishna, expose, in my mad selfishness,
 Urged on by naked daring, men to death
 Whom most I love? O Krishna, what is breath
 To one that's mad and of his eyes bereft?
 What joy has he that life to him is left?
 These are my eyes, Thou Krishna art my mind,
 Lo, I have come as one who stumbles blind
 Upon the trackless Ocean's spuming shore,
 Then wakes, so I all confident before
 Upon this dreadful man whom even death
 Dare not in battle cross. What use is breath
 Of hopeless effort? Mischief only can
 Result to the too blindly daring man.
 Better not undertaken, is my mind
 On riper thought, than fruitlessly designed.
 Nay, let us leave this purpose, wiser so
 Than with eyes open to our death to go.
 For all my heart within is broken and slain
 Viewing the vast impracticable pain
 Of Sacrifice Imperial." Then replied
 To Yudhishthere great Partha in the pride
 Of wonders self-attained, banner and car,
 And palace Titan-built (and in the war
 Quiver made inexhaustible) and great
 Unequaled bow. "O King," he said, "since Fate
 Has given me bow and shafts, a sword like flame,
 Great lands and strength, courage, allies and fame,

Yea, such has given as men might covet long
 And never win; O King, what more? For strong
 Is Birth and conquers, cries the theorist
 Conversant in deep books; but to my taste
 Courage is strongest strength. How helps it then
 The uncourageous that heroic men
 His fathers were? From uncourageous sires
 Who springs a hero, he to glory towers.
 That man the name of Kshatriya merits best
 Whose soul is ever to the battle drest.
 Courage, all gifts denied, ploughs through amain
 A sea of foes: courage without, in vain
 All other gifts conspire; rather all gifts
 Courage into a double stature lifts.
 But conquest is in three great strengths complete —
 Action, capacity, fate: where these three meet,
 There conquest comes; nor strengths alone suffice;
 Men by neglect forfeit their Paradise.
 And this the cause the strong much-hated man
 Before his enemies sinks. Hard 'tis to scan
 Whether of these flaws strength most fatally,
 A spirit poor or an o'erweening eye.
 Both are destruction. Kings who highly aim
 And court success, must either quite disclaim.
 And if by Jarasandha's overthrow,
 Rescuing Kings, to Sacrifice we go,
 What fairer, what more glorious? Mighty prince,
 Deeds unattempted virtue maimed evince.
 In us when virtue dwells, why deemst thou, brother,
 A nothingness the children of thy mother.
 Easy it is the ochre gown to take
 Afterwards, if for holy calmness' sake
 We must the hermit virtues imitate.
 But here is Empire! here a royal fate!
 Let others quietism's sweets embrace;
 We the loud battle seek, the foeman's face."
 "In Kuntie's son and born of Bharat's race
 What spirit should dwell, Arjoon's great words express,"

Said Krishna, "And of death we have no light
 (Whether it comes by day or comes by night;
 Nor this of mortal man was ever known
 That one by going not to fight has grown
 Immortal. Let him then who's man indeed
 Clash forth against his foes, yet rule decreed
 Of policy forget not: so his mind
 Shall live at poise. For when in battle combined
 Conduct meets long felicity, then high
 Success must come nor two met equally
 Equal can issue thence: from clash and strife
 Of equals inequality takes life.
 But rash impolicy with helplessness
 Having joined issue in their mutual stress
 Breed ruin huge; equality inglorious
 Then doubt engenders, nor are both victorious.
 Therefore in skilful conduct putting trust
 If with our foe we grapple, fell him we must
 As a wild torrent wrestling with a tree
 Uproots and hurls it downward to the sea.
 'Trying the weak points in thine enemy's mail,
 Subtly thine own disguise, then prompt assail';
 So runs the politic maxim of the wise
 And to my mind rings just. If we devise
 Secret, yet with no spot of treacherous blame,
 To penetrate our foeman's house and limb
 Grappling with limb, oh, won infallibly then
 Our object is. Often one man of men
 Pervades the nations like a soul, whose brow
 Glory eternal-seeming wears; so now
 This lion lord of men; but yet I deem
 Shall that eternal vanish like a dream
 In battle slaying him if at the last
 By many swords we perish, so 'tis best
 We shall by death the happy skies attain,
 Saving from tyranny our countrymen."

III

The Slaying of Jarasandha

Krishna pursued: "Now is the call of Fate,
Fallen is Dimbhuc, fallen Hansa great,
Kansa is slain and all his host; the hour
At last draws nigh when Jarasandha's power
Must bow to death; yet not in violent war
Is conquerable nor all the gods that are
Nor the embattled Titans overwhelm:
In deadly duel we must vanquish him.
Conduct is mine, strength Bheem's and in the field
Arjoon who is very victory stands to shield.
We will consume the Maagadh, King, believe,
As three strong fires a sacrifice achieve
If we three in a lonely place attain
To see him, no doubt is, the King of men
Duel with one of three will undertake,
In pride and strength and greed of glory's sake
Grandiose of heart, duel with Bhema claim
But Bheme great-armed, Bheme vigorous for him
Suffices, even as death that closes all
Sufficient is for the immense world's fall.
King, if my heart thou knowest and if trust
Thou hast in me at all, then as a just
And dear deposit in my hands implied
Bheem and Arjoona give." And the King cried,
"Achyuta, O Achyuta, never so,
O hero, speak, O slayer of the foe.
Thou art the Pandav's lord, their refuge thou.
Govinda, all thou speakest I avow
Truth merely; (whom thou guidest are not men
Fortune abandons. Nay, already slain
King Jarasandha is, rescued already
Those kings of earth, and won and greatly ready
Imperial Sacrifice, now that I stand,
O first of men, in thy controlling hand.

Quickly this work to accomplish, be it planned
 But prudently; for without you no zest,
 No courage I have to live, as one distressed,¹
 One overcome with sickness, who lives on
 When life no meaning has but pain alone.)
 Without the child of Pandu Krishna is none,
 Nor possible without Krishna Pritha's son.
 By Krishna led unvanquishable are these.
 Splendid in strength, strongest of strong men is,
 Vricodar: joined and made a third with you,
 Famous and noble, nought is he may not do.
 (Well led the armèd multitudes effect
 Great deeds, but led must be by men elect.
 Blind and inert mere strength is, all its force
 Impetuous but a block. As by that course
 Where dips the soil, there water's led and whence
 A gap most opens rivermen lead thence
 Water, even such is guiding policy.)
 Therefore, Govinda, in thy hand are we,
 Whom the world names its hero famousest
 For conduct and in that great science best.
 Krishna whose strength is wisdom, counsel, who
 Is girded with resource, Krishna must you
 Put in your van with action's every need:
 So only action's purpose may succeed:
 Arjoon by Krishna led, Bheema by Arjoon:
 Then conduct, victory, strength — these three triune
 Shall grow and conquer, making valour good.”
 He said, and those three huge in hardihood,
 The Vrishny hero and the Pandavs twain,
 Went forth to Magadha of happy men.
 To Girivraj, the city of the hills,
 A nation of the four-fold orders fills,
 A prosperous race and glad, they travelled are,
 Flushed with high festival and void of care
 (A virgin city inviolable in war).
 So came they to the city gates where soared

¹ For I shall live as lasts a man distressed,

The height by Brihadratha's sons adored
 And all the people, one of peaks that stand,
 Delightful hills, Chytyac, in Magadh land; —
 Thither they storming came. There Rishabha,
 The eater of forbidden flesh, to slay
 Came Brihadrath the king (and slew and bound
 Three war-drums with its hide whose threatening sound
 Far borne through a whole month went echoing).
 These in his city placed the Maagadh king.
 (Covered with dust of glorious blossoms there
 The drums hurled oft their thunders through the air.)
 But now came storming to the Chytyac-wall
 The heroes and the war-drums broke and all
 Upon the rampart fell as if to smite
 The very head of Jarasandha's might:
 Chytyac, the ancient peak enorm, deep-based,
 Ever with flowers and fragrance worshipped, vast
 And famous, with Titanic force of arm
 Assailed and overthrew with loud alarm;
 So leaped exulting through no usual gate.
 To war with Jarasandh they came, and yet
 Weapons of war had none, with their arms merely
 Sworded and shielded with the vow austere
 Assumed wherein men enter worldly life,
 Snatucs. A town they saw with riches rife,
 Food-mart and flower-mart and populous street,
 In all desirable wealth grandly complete.
 So went they mid the shops and highroad wide
 And from the garland-makers in the pride
 Of hostile strength fresh garlands violently
 They mastered. Then in bright variety
 Of garments many-hued the mighty three
 With wreaths and burnished ear-rings bright a fame
 To Jarasandha's lordly dwelling came.
 As lions of the Himalaya eye
 A cattle-pen, so they the palace high.
 But on the Maagadh men amazement fell
 Seeing those shapes of heroes formidable,

Like elephants in strength, broad-breasted, wide
 And great of shoulder and like boles their arms
 Of shaal trees mighty, fit for warlike harms;
 Now sandal-smear'd and rubb'd with aloe-scent,
 They through the courts in courage arrogant
 Pass sternly, through three crowded courts attain
 The royal presence freed from anxious pain.
 And the great King arose, for them he judg'd
 Worthy of high guest-offerings, nowise grudg'd
 The water for the feet, the honied curds
 And gifts of kine, but with deserv'd words
 Greeted them crying "Welcome, holy men".
 And no word answer'd him the Pandavs twain.
 Then Krishna in their midst, the man of mind,
 Said only, "King of kings, these two must bind
 Silence till midnight hour, envisaging
 Their vow. Then will they speak to thee, O King."
 So in the chamber sacrificial plac'd
 They sojourn'd and the King with awe possess'd
 Return'd to his high mansion. But when night
 Was deep, went the strong arbiter of fight
 To those three twice-born; for his vow prefer'd
 Compell'd him, through earth famous, when he heard
 Of Snatac Brahmins in his city bright
 To meet them even in the deep midnight.
 And they indeed with strange astonishment
 Dismay'd him and their garments hue-besprent
 Unwonted. As he came the three arose,
 The lion men, the victors of their foes.
 "Welfare, O King," they cried, and each on each
 They look'd and scanned the King awaiting speech.
 Then to those lords conceal'd in priestly dress
 The King said with his haughty graciousness,
 "Sit, holy men." They sat, heroic forms
 Blazing with mightier beauty than informs
 The fires of sacrifice, when a great king
 Sacrifices. And sternly censuring
 Disguise and travesty of shape sincere

The conqueror steadfast, "Why come you here,
 Not as the Snatac, in this transient world
 Who takes the household vow, the Brahmin. Curled
 Garlands he wears not, smears not sandal paste.
 What names are yours who come in flowers dressed,
 Upon your mighty arms the bowstring scored
 (And wearing heroism like a sword,
 Yet Brahminhood pretend? Speak truth whence springs
 Your race. (Truth is the ornament of kings.)
 Splitting the Chytyac peak fiercely you came,
 Yet wear a vain disguise to hide a flame
 Yourselves reveal. Where no gate was, no path
 Allowed, you entered, nor a monarch's wrath
 Calamitous feared; and are ye Brahmins? Bright
 In speech the Brahmin; speech his only might
 And prowess. You whose deeds your caste deny,
 What needing come you to my palace high?
 And wherefore took you not the offering
 To guests observed but scorned Magadha's King?"
 Then Krishna in a deep and quiet voice
 Replied, adept in words of exquisite choice.
 "Brahmins thou deemest us whom duties call
 Worldward, but Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vyshya, all
 Equal entitled are to Snatahood.
 Vows personal, vows general, both are good.
 But those the Kshatriya's majesty prepare,
 To Kshatriyas those belong. Flowers if we wear,
 Who decks his aspiration stern with flowers,
 The majesty he wins outbraves the hours.
 (Rightly thou sayest, King, the Kshatriya's might
 Speaks from his arm, in words has no delight,
 Wild words and many uses not; for God
 Set in the arm, its natural abode,
 The Kshatriya prowess) (which if thou aspire
 To see, surely we will not baulk desire;
 Today thou shalt behold it.) Nor debate
 Of path allowable and door and gate.
 No gate is in the house of enemies.

By the plain door a friend's house entered is,
 But by no door with ruin impetuous
 A foeman's. These are virtue's gates and thus
 Enters the self-possessed, right-seeing man.
 Nor offering hospitable take we can
 In foemen's house with deeds upon our hands.
 This is our vow and this eternal stands."

And Jarasandh replied, "Enmity, strife
 I can recall not gazing through my life,
 Brahmins, with you begun, nor aught that men
 Pervert to hatred. Wherefore call you then
 A sinless man your enemy? The good
 One practice keep, one rule well understood;
 And he, the Kshatriya who with causeless blame
 Lightly has taxed the innocent, he with maim
 Virtue curtails inheriting remorse:
 But he in virtue conversant, in force
 A warrior among warriors, if he act
 Other than good, has with his own hand hacked
 His own felicity here and there his soul
 Following the sinner's way shall reach the sinner's goal.
 Throughout the triple universe confessed
 The Kshatriya virtue, the Kshatriya life is best
 For nobleness, for goodness. Other rule
 They praise not who have learned in virtue's school.
 That virtue and that life are mine. Steadfast
 Today I stand in them with spirit braced,
 Sinless before my people. And ye prate
 Madness." Krishna made sterner answer: "Great
 Is he who sent us, of a mighty strain
 Upbearer, and upon his shoulders lain
 The burden of a deed for kindred blood.
 From him we come upon thee like a flood.
 Sinless dost thou, O Jarasandha, claim
 And thou the world's great princes dost overwhelm
 Gathered for cruel slaughter? When before
 Did kings on good kings tyranny explore?
 But thou, a king, hast conquered and subdued,

And Rudra's altar thou wouldst have imbrued
 With blood of kings for victims. On our head
 Their piteous blood shall lie which thy hands shed.
 For we are Virtue's and in her have force
 Virtue to bulwark. (Giving tyranny course,
 We share the sin.) Not yet the world has seen
 That crowning horror, butchery of men.
 O man, how couldst thou to a god devise,
 To Shankara, a human sacrifice?
 (It is thy blood, thy kind thou levellest
 Comparing human natures with the beast.)
 Is there a man in all the world whose mind
 Like thine is violent, like thine is blind?
 But this remember, not with the deed man does
 There is an end; he reaps from what he sows
 And as he planted such the fruit he sees:
 (Footprints his action left, Fate treads in these.)
 Therefore 'gainst thee, destroyer of our caste,
 We, champions of the miserable oppressed,
 For rescue of our kindred men are here
 To slay thee. But thou sayest, 'What should I fear?
 There is no man in all the Kshatriya race
 And I am he alone.' Great witlessness
 Is thine, O King, and error most unjust.
 What Kshatriya has a soul and lives but must
 Recall with pride his birth from valiant men?
 Who would not by the way of battle then
 Enter the doors of Paradise eterne,
 Felicitous gates. When paradise to earn
 Heroes to war as to a sacrifice
 Initiate go, resistless then they rise
 Conquering Nature. (Veda fathers heaven;
 To glory excellent its gates are given;
 Austerity masters it. In battle who falls
 He most infallibly wins the happy halls.
 For what is Indra's heaven, what Paradise?
 Heaven in noble deeds and virtue lies.)
 By these the myriad-sacrificing god

Conquered the Titans and the world bestrode.
 And what more excellent way to heaven than strife
 With thee? Nor thou by lustiness of life
 Deceived and thy huge armies Magadhine
 Maddening with strength thy foemen quite disdain.
 In many hearts a fire of courage dwells
 That equals thine, nay, maybe, far excels.
 While these are hidden in the hands of fate,
 So long thou art supreme, but so long great.
 Yes, I will speak it, we, even we, can bear
 The brunt of all thy greatness. King, forbear
 Pride with thy equals and vain insolence.
 (O King, why wilt thou with thy son go hence,
 With all thy captains and great men below
 To Yama's melancholy mansions go?
 Were there not kings as great as thou? Who strove
 With Brihadrath, Cartoveriya, Dambhodbhove,
 High Uttara? All they are sunk unmourned,
 Great kings and mighty captains; for they scorned
 Mightier than they.) No Brahmins, learn, are we,
 Antagonists of thy supremacy.
 Shourian I am and Hrishiksha styled;
 These are the Pandav heroes. Brother's child
 I of their mother am — Krishna, thy foe.
 Take our defiance, King. In battle show
 Thy steadfast courage, prince of Magadha,
 Or while thou mayst, escape. Either this day
 Release the captive princes all or die.”
 Then answered Jarasandha puissantly:
 “Not without conquest I collect amain
 Princes; who is there panned my walls within
 And not in equal battle overthrown?
 This is the law and life to Kshatriyas known,
 To battle and subdue and work their will
 Upon the conquered, Krishna. Owable
 Upon God's altar I have gathered these;
 And shall I for ignoble fear release,
 While yet the Kshatriya blood beats in my veins,

And yet one Kshatriya thought unquenched remains?
 Army with battled army, single gage
 With single or alone I will engage
 With two or three together or one by one.”
 So spake the King and ordered that his son
 Be straight anointed for the kingdom's needs.
 (Himself must fight with men of dreadful deeds.)
 And in that hour King Jarasandha sighed
 Remembering great captains who had died,
 Cowshic and Chitrasane, (but other names
 Men gave in converse with world-wide acclaims,
 Hamsa and Dimbhuc calling). Of them that night
 Recalled and shadow of the coming fight.

Then spake the Yadove pure and eloquent,
 Seeing the monarch upon battle bent:
 “With which of three will thy heart battle dare,
 O King, or which of us shall now prepare
 For battle?” Then that famous royal man,
 The Maagadh Jarasandh, with Bheemasen
 Chose battle. Wreaths, pigment of augury
 Bovine and all auspicious grammary,
 Medicaments beside that lighten pain
 Or call the fugitive senses back again,
 The high priest brought for Jarasandh and read
 The word of blessing o'er the monarch's head.

Sabhaparva, Adhyayas 20-22 and
 Adhyaya 23 incomplete

UDYOGA PARVA

CANTO ONE

Let the reciter bow down to Naraian, likewise to Nara the Highest Male, also to our Lady the Muse (Goddess Saraswati), and thereafter utter the word of Hail!

Vaishampayan continueth:

But the hero Kurus and who clove to them thereafter having performed joyously the marriage of Abhimanyu rested that night and then at dawn went glad to the Assembly hall of Virata.

Now wealthy was that hall of the lord of Matsya with mosaic of gems excellent and perfect jewels, with seats set out, garlanded, perfumed; thither went those great among the kings of men.

Then took their seats in front the two high kings, Drupada and Virata, old they and honoured of earth's lords, and Rama and Janardan with their father.

Now by the Panchala king was the hero Shini with the son of Rohinie but very near likewise to the Matsya king Janardan and Yudhishtira;

And all the sons of Drupada, Bhima, Arjuna and the sons of Madravatie and Pradyumna and Samba, heroes in the strife, and Abhimanyu with the children of Virata;

And all those heroes equal to their fathers in heroism and beauty and strength sat down, the princely boys, sons of Draupadie, on noble seats curious with gold.

Thus as those great warriors sat with shining ornaments and shining robes rich shone that senate of kings like wide heaven with its stainless stars.

Shlokas 1-7

*
**

“To all of you it is known how Yudhishtira here was conquered by Saubala in the hall of the dicing; by fraud was he conquered and his kingdom torn from him and contract made of exile in the forest; and though infallible in the mellay, though able by force impetuous to conquer the whole earth, yet the sons of Pandu stood by their honour religiously; harsh and austere their vow but for the six years and the seven they kept it, noblest of men, the sons of Pandu; and this the thirteenth year and most

difficult they have passed before all your eyes unrecognised; in exile they passed it, the mighty-minded ones, suffering many and intolerable hardships, in the service of strangers, in menial employments cherishing their desire of the kingdom that belongeth to their lineage. Since this is so, do ye think out somewhat that shall be for the good both of the King, the son of Righteousness and of Duryodhana, just and glorious and worthy of the great Kurus; for Yudhishtira the just would not desire even the kingship of the gods unjustly, yet would he cling to the lordship of some small village which he might hold with expediency and justice. For it is known to you kings how by dishonest proceeding his father's kingdom was torn from him by the sons of Dhritarashtra and himself cast into great and unbearable danger; for not in battle did they conquer him by their own prowess, these sons of Dhritarashtra; even so the king with his friends desired the welfare of his wrongers. But what the sons of Pandu with their own hands amassed by conquest crushing the lords of earth, that these mighty ones demand, even Kuntie's sons and Madravatie's. But even when they were children, they were sought by various means to be slain of their banded foemen, savage and unrighteous, for greed of their kingdom; yea, all this is known to you utterly. Considering therefore their growing greed and the righteousness of Yudhishtira, considering also their close kinship, form you a judgment each man to himself and together. And since these have always clung to truth and loyally observed the contract, if they know they are wronged, they may well slay all the sons of Dhritarashtra. And hearing of any wrong done by these in this business their friends would gather round, the Pandavas, yea and repel war with war and slay them. If nathless ye deem these too weak in numbers for victory, yet would they all band together and with their friends at last to strive to destroy them. Moreover none knoweth the mind of Duryodhan rightly, what he meaneth to do, and what can you decide that shall be the best to set about when you know not the mind of your foeman? Therefore let one go hence, some virtuous, pure-minded and careful man such as shall be an able envoy for their appeasement and the gift of half the kingdom to Yudhishtira. This hearing, the just, expedient, sweet and impartial speech of Janardan, the elder brother of him took up the word, O prince, honouring the younger's speech even greatly."

VIDULA

This poem is based on a passage comprising four chapters (Adhyayas) in the Udyog-parva of the Mahabharata. It is not a close translation but a free poetic paraphrase of the subject-matter; it follows closely the sequence of the thoughts with occasional rearrangements, translates freely in parts, in others makes some departures or adds, develops and amplifies to bring out fully the underlying spirit and idea. The style of the original is terse, brief, packed and allusive, sometimes knotted into a pregnant obscurity by the drastic economy of word and phrase. It would have been impossible to preserve effectively in English such a style; a looser fullness of expression has been preferred sacrificing the letter to the spirit. The text of a Calcutta edition has been followed throughout. The whole passage with its envoi or self-laudatory close reads like an independent poem dovetailed into the vast epic.

THE MOTHER TO HER SON*

There are few more interesting passages in the Mahabharata than the conversation of Vidula with her son. It comes into the main poem as an exhortation from Kunti to Yudhisthir to give up the weak spirit of submission, moderation, prudence, and fight like a true warrior and Kshatriya for right and justice and his own. But the poem bears internal evidence of having been written by a patriotic poet to stir his countrymen to revolt against the yoke of the foreigner. Sanjay, prince and leader of an Aryan people, has been defeated by the king of Sindhu and his Kingdom is in the possession of the invader. The fact of the king of Sindhu or the country around the Indus being named as the invader shows that the poet must have had in his mind one of the aggressive foreign powers, whether Persia, Graeco-Bactria, Parthia or the Scythians, which took possession one after the other of these regions and made them the base for inroads upon the North-West. The poet seeks to fire the spirit of the conquered and subject people and impel them to throw off the hated subjection. He personifies in Vidula the spirit of the motherland speaking to her degenerate son and striving to awaken in him the inherited Aryan manhood and the Kshatriya's preference of death to servitude.

* When the poem was first published in *Bande Mataram* in 1907 it was called *The Mother to Her Son* and prefixed with this note.

VIDULA

Hearken to the ancient converse of which old traditions tell,
Of the youthful Sunjoy with his mother the indomitable
Vidula, the passionate princess, royal in her mood and form,
Fiery-souled, the resolute speaker with her tameless heart of storm,
High her fame in kingly senates where the nations' princes met,
Eloquent and proud and learned, with a soul foreseeing fate.
Conquered by the King of Sindhu, hurled down from his lofty throne,
As he lay unnerved and abject, came she to her warlike son,
Vidula, the passionate princess, and she spoke with burning eyes,
Scourging him with words like flakes of fire, bidding him arise.
"Son," she cried, "no son of mine to make thy mother's hearth rejoice!
Hark, thy foemen mock and triumph, yet to live is still thy choice.
Nor thy hero father got thee, nor I bore thee in my womb,
Random changeling from some world of petty souls and coward gloom!
Passionless and abject nature, stripped and void of bold desire,
Nerveless of all masculine endeavour, without force and fire,
Reckon not thy name midst men who liest flinging manhood far.
Rise and bear thy yoke, thou warhorse, neighing for the crash of war!
Make not great thy foemen with thy terrors, panic eyes behind.
Thou, a king's son, canst thou tremble? be a king indeed in mind,
Soar up like a sudden eagle beating high against the wind.
Out, arise, thou coward! lie not thus upon the ground o'erthrown,
Shorn of pride, thy foes' delight, thy friends' shame, making fruitless moan.
Easily a paltry river with the meagre floods o'erflows,
Easily the field-mouse with her mite of grain contented goes,
Easily the coward ceases fainting from his great emprise.
Break the serpent's fangs between thy hands and perish, not as dies
Impotent a whining dog, go deathward, but as circles o'er his prey,
But as wheels an angry falcon through the wide and azure day
Watching for his moment, thou in fearless silence wait thy time
Or with resonant and far-voiced challenge waken war sublime.
Wherefore like a dead thing thunder-blasted liest thou on the ground?
Rise, thou coward, seek not slumber while the victors jeer around.
Turn not miserably to thy set, but smiting with the sword
Make the world re-echo! deem that thou wast born to be its lord,
Not with middle place content nor abject; all subjection spurn.

Stand erect, whate'er befall thee, roaring on thy hunters turn.
 Blaze out like a fireband even if for a moment burning high,
 Not like the poor fire of husks that smoulders long, afraid to die.
 Better is the swift and glorious flame that mounting dies of power,
 Not to smoke in squalid blackness, hour on wretched futile hour.
 Out to battle, do thy man's work, falter not in high attempt;
 So a man is quit before his God and saved from self-contempt.
 For the great heart grieves not though he lose the glorious crown of strife,
 But he does the work before him, holding cheap his body's life.
 Show thy prowess, be the hero thou wast born, with flashing glaive
 Hew thy way with God before thee to the heaven of the brave.
 All the wells that thou hast dug, the beasts that thou hast offered, all
 Fame is gone to wrack; thy roots of pleasure cut, the tree must fall.
 Eunuch, wherefore dost thou live? if thou must sink, with thy last breath
 Seize thy foeman by the thigh and drag him with thee down to death.
 Though his roots be cut, the strong man stands up stiff, he sinks not prone.
 Mark the warhorse in the battle with the sunken car o'erthrown,
 Up he struggles, full of pride and rage. Thou too like him exalt
 Thy low fortunes, lift thy great house shamed and ruined through thy fault.
 He whose perfect deeds as of a demigod in strength and mind
 Make not up the daily talk and glory of amazed mankind,
 What is he but one more clod to feed the fire and help the soil?
 He is neither man nor woman. Man is he whose fire and toil,
 Turned to wealth or turned to wisdom, truth or piety of soul,
 Travel through the spacious world renowned from pole to ringing pole,
 Or in austere works or knowledge or in valour quick and high
 He outdoes his fellow-creatures scaling the immortals' sky.
 Be not as the vagrant beggar seeking food from door to door,
 Shameless with his skull and rosary wretched handfuls to implore.
 Cowardly, ignoble and unfeeling is the life they lead,
 Equal to the houseless street-dog whom compassionate hands must feed.
 Let not ever son of mine be such an one as all men scorn,
 Without throne and without purple, weak, emaciate and forlorn,
 Mean and with mean things content and vaunting o'er a little gain.
 Such an one his foes delight in, but his friends are joyless men.
 We shall perish, exiles from our country, plagued with wretched want,
 All obscure who were so glorious, doomed to petty things and scant,
 Wandering in loveless places, dreaming at an alien door

Of delightful things and pleasant in our joyous lives of yore.
 Death and shame in thee I bore and fondly deemed I had a son.
 Better were a woman barren than to bear with labour one
 Sluggish, weak and hopeless, without noble wrath and warlike fire.
 Sunjoy, Sunjoy, waste not thou thy flame in smoke! Impetuous, dire,
 Leap upon thy foes for havoc as a famished lion leaps,
 Storming through thy vanquished victors till thou fall on slaughtered heaps.
 This is manhood to refuse defeat and insult not to bear.
 He who suffers and forgives, who bows his neck the yoke to wear,
 Is too weak for man, too base to be a woman. Loiterings
 Clog a mounting fortune, low contentment fetters, fear unwinings,
 And a fainting over-pitiful heart she scorns for her abode.
 In thy strength reject these poisons, tread not vile subjection's road.
 Make thy man's heart hard like iron to pursue and take thy own.
 Out to battle! let not woman's weakness shame thy manhood, son.
 Fortune dogs the hero's goings who like Ocean in his pride
 Walks through life with puissant footsteps as a lion the hill-side.
 Even when he has gone where fate shall lead him, still his people climb
 On the wave of his great actions to a joy and strength sublime.
 For a King must exile pleasure, turn from safety to waylay
 Fortune for his nation like a hunter tracking down his prey.
 Wise and fortunate ministers shall help him, thousands share his joy."

But to Vidula, amazed and angry answered swift the boy.
 "Where shall be thy bliss, my mother, though the whole wide earth were
 thine,
 If thine eyes of me are vacant? the delight of raiment fine,
 Food and gems and rich enjoyments, what were these without thy son?"

But the mother in her surge of passion answered rushing on.
 "Be that Hell my foeman's where the loiterer and the coward climb,
 Who avoid occasion, murmuring, 'Why today? 'tis not the time,'
 May my friends go flocking to that world where the high-crested go,
 Who respect the self within them and its noble value know.
 But who, stripped of mastery, eat the bitter bread that others give,
 Miserable souls and strengthless, is it life that such men live?
 Live not with such abject living, be a prince and chief of men.
 Let the Brahmins look toward thee even as to the King of Rain

All this world of creatures turns for sustenance with expectant eyes.
Mighty Gods to mightier Indra from their golden thrones arise.
Lo, his hands to whom all creatures for their bliss come crowding fast,
As to a ripe-fruited tree the birds innumerably haste,
And his life indeed is counted, for he reaps the earth with deeds
And on friend and fere and kinsman showers unasked their princely
needs, —
Living by his arm's strength, taking only what his hand has won,
Gathering here an earthly glory, shining there like Indra's sun.”

"Evil is thy state, O Sunjoy; lose the manhood from thy soul
 And thou treadst the path of vilest spirits with their Hell for goal.
 Shall a warrior born of warriors to whom Heaven gave fire divine,
 Spend it not in mighty actions lavish of the God within?
 Shall he hug his life for ever? He is then a thief to Heaven;
 For to swell the days of earth with glorious deeds that strength was given.
 Hear me, Sunjoy! Sindhu's monarch rules in might the conquered folk,
 But their hearts bend not before him, they abhor the foreign yoke.
 They from weakness sit with minds bewildered, full of hate and grief,
 Waiting sullenly a sea of miseries, hopeless of relief.
 Gather faithful friends and get thee valiant helpers; through our lands
 Working with a fierce persistence, strengthening still thy mighty hands.
 Others when they see thy daring shall be stirred to noble strife,
 Catch thy fire and rise in strong rebellion scorning goods and life.
 Make with these a close and mighty following, seek the pathless hills,
 Region difficult and strong and sullen passes walled with ills
 For the rash invader; there in arms expect the tyrant's hour;
 He is not a god to be immortal, not for ever lasts his power.
 Knowst thou not the ancient Brahmin with his deep and inward eye
 That beholds the ages, told of thee that lowly thou shouldst lie,
 Yet again arise and prosper! Victor¹ named, a victor be.
 Therefore have I chidden and urged thee, to awake thy destiny.
 O my son, believe me, he whose victory brings the common gain
 And a nation conquers with him, cannot fail; his goal is plain
 And his feet divinely guided, for his steps to Fate belong.
 O my son, think this whilst thou art fighting: 'Generations long
 Of my fathers walk beside me and a nation's mighty dead
 Watch me; for my greatness is their own, my slavery bows their head.'
 In this knowledge turn thy thoughts to battle; Sunjoy, draw not back!
 Eviller plight is not nor sinfuller, this day's bread to lack
 Nor to know from whence shall come the bitter morrow's scanty meal.
 It is worse than death of spouse or child such indigence to feel.
 That's a grief that strikes and passes, this a long and living death.
 In a house of mighty monarchs I derived my earliest breath;
 As from ocean into ocean sails a ship in bannered pride,

¹ "Sunjoy", Sanskrit "Sanjaya", means "Victory".

To a house of mighty monarchs came I in my marriage-tide,
 Queen and Empress, filled with joys and blessings, worshipped by my lord,
 And my kin rejoiced to see me rich in wealth and jewelled hoard,
 Clothed in smooth and splendid raiment, girt with friends and nobly stored.
 When thou seest me weak and abject and the weeping of thy wife,
 Wilt thou in thy breath take pleasure, wilt thou love thy shameful life?
 Wouldst thou see thy household priests and holy teachers leave our side,
 Our retainers hopeless of their sustenance who had served thy pride?
 In thy proud aspiring actions, son, I lived; if these are past,
 Peace can dwell not in my bosom and my heart shall break at last.
 Must I then turn back the Brahmin when he sues for gold or lands?
 Shame would tear my heart-strings; never, Sunjoy, went with empty hands
 From thy father's seat or from thy mother's presence suppliant men.
 We were ever all men's refuge; shall we sue to others then?
 Life shall leave me rather, I will seek that house of nether calms.
 Never will I tread a stranger's floor and live upon his insolent alms.
 Lo! we toss in shoreless waters, be the haven to our sail!
 Lo! we drown in monstrous billows, be our boat with kindly hail!
 Save our hopeless fortunes! We are dead men drawing empty breath,
 Be a hero and deliverer, raise us from this living death.
 Dare to die, O hero! Where is then the foeman half so strong
 As to overcome thy onset? Who would choose to suffer long
 Years of sad despondent weakness? sudden death is better far.
 Single out their mightiest, let thy fame o'ertop the surge of war.
 Indra by the death of Vritra seized the monarchy of Heaven;
 Lord of teeming worlds, to him the largest sovereign part is given.
 Calling to his armoured foes defiance, lo, the hero proud
 Shouts his name across the roar of battle like a lion loud
 And he breaks their foremost, and they fall apart like scattered spray,
 Till he slays their leader and mightiest winning glory wide as day.
 Then his haters' hearts are troubled, then they bow reluctant heads.
 For he hurls his life into the battle and on death he treads
 Towards victory; all the cowards and the tremblers of the earth
 Come with gifts and incense crowding to provide his ease and mirth.
 Is it death thou fleest from? Sunjoy, savage is the fall of Kings,
 For a wise foe leaves no remnants, hands to stab or fugitive wings.
 To be King is heaven, O Sunjoy, sweet as nectar to the lip
 Power is to the mighty. Son of Kings, thou holdest in thy grip

Heaven or empire; rush then like a meteor on the vaunting foe!
 Reaper in the battle! kinglike lay their armèd thousands low.
 Sunjoy, terror of thy foemen, let me see not in thy close
 A poor crouching coward girt with weeping friends and shouting foes.
 Vail not thou thy crest to be a mock for Sindhu's laughing girls:
 Take her highborn damsels for thy handmaids, with her conquered pearls
 Wreathe thy queen, be strong and splendid as of yore in youthful pride.
 Young and shaped to princely beauty, cultured, to great Kings allied,
 Such a man as thou to deviate from thy bold and radiant mood!
 Thou to bow thy neck to other yoke than Earth's, for alien food
 Speaking sweet to strangers, following with a meek inclinèd head!
 If I see thee thus degraded, I shall think my son is dead.
 But I know this country's mighty princes and their lordly race
 Firmer-rooted than the mountains in eternal kingliness.
 In our fathers and forefathers 'twas the same and in our sons
 Shall be and their progeny for ever while the Ganges runs.
 It was made by God a grandeur! Never prince of the ancient seed,
 Never prince who did the deeds of princehood in this land was bred,
 Who would crouch and gaze for sustenance, who in fear would bow his
 neck.

Like a giant tree he has no joints to bend with, though he break;
 Break he may, but bends not. If he bows, to holy men in awe
 Bows he; if he yields, it is to justice and religion's law,
 Not to equal or inferiors: them he holds with sternest hand,
 Smiting still the strong ill-doer and the troublers of the land,
 Mightily like a maddened elephant through the world he storms abroad
 Conquering fate through high adventure, kneeling not to bear the load —
 Little recks if he has helpers or stands lonely, dispossessed;
 He is what he is and will not alter, lowers not his crest."

III

“Mother, mother stony-natured, ore of pitiless iron black
Heaven collected and together forged thy dreadful heart to make.
Mother mine, heroic-minded, high-disdaining common mould,
Dreadful is the warrior code of ethics that our princes hold,
Harsh, devoid of love and sweetness; thou my mother driv’st me on
To the battle like a stranger, like another woman’s son!
Am I not thy child? has any other in thy love a part?
Yet thy words are harsh and ruthless. Will it please thy fiery heart
If I lie in battle cold and in my stead thou own the earth?
What were all life’s splendour, what were bright and fair things worth?
When thine eyes seek me in vain, will these things soothe their sad desire?”
But the mother answered still with words that breathed her soul of fire.
“Dear my son, for joy or sorrow twofold is the great life’s scope,
To be righteous in our actions, to fulfil each human hope.
Private welfare, high religion, both alike should urge thee on.
It has come at last, the mightiest hour of all thy life, O son.
Now if thou shouldst spurn occasion from vile fear or pitifulness,
All thy beauty were dishonoured and thy strength grows thy disgrace.
When dishonour stains thee, should I shape my words to soothe thy mind?
Like a she-mule’s were my mother’s love, a brutish impulse blind.
Leave the path of fools and cowards, vileness hated by the wise.
Strange the sorcery of affection sealing up this people’s eyes!
But not mine! While only thou art noble, art thou dear and loved.
But a graceless son or grandchild by aspiring thoughts unmoved,
Crude and brutish-brained with unformed soul, revolts a father’s mind,
Knowing he had all in vain his labour to create his kind.
Shrink not from a noble action, stoop not to unworthy deed!
Vile are they who stoop, they gain not Heaven’s doors, nor here succeed.
Kshatriyas on this world were loosed for battle by their Maker high,
Sunjoy, for the strife and victory, and they conquer or they die.
Ever by their doom of Nature to a labour unrevoked
And a fierce hard-hearted action for the people’s safety yoked,
Conquering or dying, glorious Indra’s radiant world they share:
Yet his heavenly mansions to a warrior’s heart are not so dear
As to dare and triumph, as the gust and glory of the strife,
As to set his foes beneath his feet and drink the joy of life.

When the thinking soul of manhood is insulted and oppressed,
 Deep he burns with fire for ever and revenge is in his breast,
 Till he's strong to hurl disfigured self away and nobly cease
 Or to crush the proud wrongdoer; other way is none to peace.
 Wilt thou faint for difficulty and sorrow? they but strengthen men.
 Even a little pleasure comes not here without a little pain,
 Without struggle no delight is and without delight the soul
 Cannot live, but ceases like the Ganges in the ocean's roll."

Then King Sunjoy answered, faintly now, but making once more moan.
 "Not such counsel thou shouldst give me. Mother, still I am thy son.
 Be as dumb men are, my mother, be as dull and joyless things;
 Look to pity and softness only, not the iron moods of Kings."

"Greatest were my joy then if thy thoughts like mine grew eagle-eyed.
 Thou bidst me to woman's softness? I bid thee to masculine pride.
 When the men of Sindhu are not, blotted by thy hands from life,
 When thou winnest difficult victory from the clutch of fearful strife,
 I shall know thou art my offspring and shall love my son indeed."

But King Sunjoy, "Where have I a single helper in my need?
 All alone what man can struggle? Without means who groweth great?
 I have neither friends nor treasure; when I view my dreadful state,
 Fallen, helpless, wretched, all my sick heart turns from useless toil
 As a sinner lost despairs of heaven for a thing so vile.
 But, O mother, if thy wisdom find an issue from this net,
 Tell me, mother; I may do thy lofty bidding even yet."

"Never scorn thyself for past defeat; be bold and proud of heart.
 Fortune goes and comes again; she seeks us only to depart.
 Foolish are those careful thinkers who would ponder all their days,
 Thinking this and that, and leap not to their crown, ask perfect ways.
 Where is in the world an action whose result is wholly sure?
 Here uncertainty's the one thing certain. To a noble lure
 Man puts forth his manhood, wins and is or dies in the attempt.
 They who act not, try not, they are nothing and their crown contempt.
 Single is inaction's nature to forego Fate's mighty call:
 Double-edged high aspiration wins life's throne or loses all.

Knowing that his life is transient, sure of its uncertainties
 Swift the hero clashing with adversity jostles for increase.
 All you who are men, awake and rise and struggle; free and great
 Now resolve to be and shrink not from the dangerous face of Fate.
 Be you resolute for victory; this shall drag her to your side,
 For the iron will takes Fortune captive like a vanquished bride.
 Call the gods to bless thy purpose; set the Brahmin's subtle brain
 And the nation's princes in thy vanguard; fight! thou shalt attain.
 There are angered bold ambitious natures, many a breast
 Arrogant and active, there are men insulted and disgraced
 By the foreign tyrant, there are soaring spirits that aspire,
 Minds of calm courageous wisdom, quiet strengths and souls of fire,
 Desperate men with broken fortunes; link thyself to these and dare.
 Care not for his giant armies, care not for his tools of war.
 With these native flames to help thee, those shall break like piles of cloud
 When a mighty storm awakes in heaven and the winds grow loud.
 Give them precedence, rise to yield them courtesy, speak them ever fair:
 They shall make thee then their leader and for thee shall do and dare.
 When the tyrant sees his conquered foeman careless grown of death,
 Bent on desperate battle, he will tremble, he will hold his breath
 Like a man who sees a Python lashing forward for the grip.
 Doubtless he will strive to soothe or tame thee, but if thou escape
 His deceit and violence, he will parley, give and take for peace.
 So at least there's gained a respite and good terms for thy increase.
 Respite and a footing gained, then gather wealth to swell thy force.
 Friends and helpers crowd around him who has money and resource,
 But the poor man they abandon and they shun his feeble state,
 Losing confidence, saying, 'Where are then his means and favouring fate?'
 When thy foe shall grow thy helper, sessions new and treaties make,
 Then thou'lt understand how easy 'twas to win thy kingdom back."

IV

“Never should a prince and leader bow his haughty head to fear,
Let his fortune be however desperate, death however near.
If his soul grow faint, let him imprison weakness in his heart,
Keep a bold and open countenance and play on a hero's part.
If the leader fear and faint, then all behind him faint and fear.
So a king of men should keep a dauntless look and forehead clear.
Now this nation and this army and the statesmen of the land,
All are torn by different counsels and they part to either hand.
Some affect as yet the foreign tyrant, many leave his side,
Others yet shall leave him, frowning, for his insults and his pride.
Some there are, thy friends who love thee, but they serve and eat his bread,
Weak, though praying for thy welfare, like poor cattle bound and led,
Like a cow that sees her calf tied, so they serve reluctantly,
Yet they sorrow in thy sorrow, weeping as for kin that die.
Some there are whom thou hast loved and honoured, loyal friends of old,
Who believe yet in the nation though its king grow faint and cold.
Yield not to thy fear, O Sunjoy; let not such thy side forsake
Scorning thy poor terrors. Wake for victory, Sunjoy! Warrior, wake!
I have laboured to provoke the will, the strength thy heart within.
All is truth I've uttered and thou knowst it; thy despair was sin.
Know that thou hast still great treasure, know that I have funds concealed,
Mighty stores that I alone know; thou shalt have them for the field.
Know that thou hast numerous secret helpers, friends who wait their hour,
Daring to endure privation and disaster's utmost power.
They shall turn not backward from the battle, they are helpers, friends
Such as daring souls aspirant need for their gigantic ends.”
So she spoke with words of varied splendour urging him to dare
Till his gloom and shadow left him and his foolish weak despair.

“O thou strong and resolute speaker, even the feeblest fainting soul
Would put darkness from him, listening, for thy words would make him
whole.

I will high uphold my country in its swift precipitous fate,
Having thee to lead me on whose vision past and future wait.
My denial and my silence were but craft; consent deferred
Drew thee on to speak lest I should lose even one inspiring word.

It is sudden nectar to the desolate to find a friend!
 Now I rise to smite the foe and cease not till I make an end.”
 On he rushed to desperate battle burning in his pride and might,
 As a noble war-horse wounded rushes faster to the fight.
 Stung with arrows of her speech he did his mother's high command
 Driving out the foe and stranger, freeing all the conquered land.

Lo, this strong and famous poem that shall make men gods for might,
 Kindling fiery joy of battle. When a King has lost the fight
 By his foemen whelmed and broken, let his well-wishers and friends
 Read to him this poem. All who need high strength for noble ends,
 Let them read it daily; for the warrior hearing turns to flame,
 Tramples down a hundred foemen and acquires a deathless name.
 And the pregnant woman who shall hear it day by day
 Bears a hero or a strong man dowered with strength to help or slay,
 Or a soul of grandiose virtues, or a helper of the Light,
 Or a glorious giver blazing with the spirit's radiance bright.
 But a daughter of high princes and a fighter's wife shall bear
 Splendid like a flame and swift and fortunate, strong to dare,
 Unapproachable in battle and invincible in war,
 Armèd champion of the right, injustice' scourge, some human star.

BHAGAVAD GITA

BHAGAVAD GITA

CHAPTER ONE

DHRITARASHTRA

In the holy field, the field of the Kurus, assembled for the fight, what did my children, O Sunjoy, what did Pandou's sons?

SUNJOY

Then the king, even Duryodhan, when he beheld the Pandav army marshalled in battle array, approached the master and spoke this word.

“Behold, O Master, this mighty host of the sons of Pandou by Droupad's son, thy wise disciple, marshalled in battle array. There are their heroes and great bowmen, like unto Bhema and Urjoona in war, Yuyudhana and Virata and Drupad, the mighty warrior, Dhristaketou and Chekitana and Kashi's heroic king; and Pourujit, Coontybhaj and Shaivya, lion of men, and Yudhamanyu of mighty deeds and hero Uttamaujas and Subhadra's son and the sons of Draupady, great warriors all. And they who are our chief and first, them also mark, O best of the twice-born, — leaders of my army, for the reckoning let me speak their names, thou and Bhishma and Curna, Cripa victorious in battle, Aswatthama and Vicurna and Somadutta's son, and many other courageous hearts that for me have cast their lives behind them, smiters with various weapons and many arms, and all are expert in war. Weak to its task is this our strength but Bhishma guards the host; sufficient to its task is yonder strength of the foe and Bhema is their guard. Do ye then, each stationed to his work, stand up in all the gates of the war and Bhishma, ever Bhishma do ye guard, yea all guard him alone.”

Then giving joy birth in Duryodhan's heart the Grandsire, elder of the Kurus, thundered loud his war-cry's lion roar, and blew his conchshell's blare, the man of might. Then conchshell and bugle, trumpet and horn and drum, all suddenly were smitten and blown, and a huge rushing sound arose. Then in their mighty car erect, their car with snow-white steeds, Madhava and Pandava blew their divine shells, Hrishikesh on Panchajanya, on Devadatta, god-given, Dhanunjoy blew, and on his great shell from far Bengal blew Bhema, wolf-belly, the man of dreadful deeds, and on Anantavijay, boundless conquest, Yudhisthira the king, even Coonty's son, and Nacool and Sahadev on Sughosha, far-sounding and Manipushpaca, jewel-

flower. And Kashi's king, that excellent bowman, and Shikandi, that great fighter, and Dhristadyoumna and Virat and Satyaqy unconquered, and Drupad and the children of Draupady, and Subhadra's great-armed son — all these from all sides blew each his separate shell, O Lord of earth, that the thunder of them tore the hearts of Dhritarashtra's sons and earth and heaven re-echoed with the clamour and the roar. Now as the ape-bannered, the Pandava, saw the Dhritarashtrians at their war-like posts, so heaved he up his bow and even as the shafts began to fall spake to Hrishiksha this word, O King.

“Right in the midst between either host set thou my car, O unfallen. Let me scan these who stand arrayed and greedy for battle; let me know who must wage war with me in this great holiday of fight. Fain would I see who are these that are here for combat to do in battle the will of Dhritarashtra's witless son.”

Thus, O Bharata, to Hrishiksha Gudakesha said, who set in the midst between either army the noble car, in front of Bhishma and Drona and all those kings of earth.

“Lo, O Partha,” he said, “all these Kurus met in one field!” There Partha saw fathers and grandsires stand, and teachers and uncles and brothers and sons and grandsons and dear comrades, and fathers of wives and heart's friends, all in either battle opposed. And when the son of Coonty beheld all these dear friends and kindred facing each other in war, his heart was besieged with utter pity and failed him, and he said,

“O Krishna, I behold these kinsmen and friends arrayed in hostile arms and my limbs sink beneath me and my face grows dry, and there are shudderings in my body, and my hair stands on end, Gandeva falls from my hand and my very skin is on fire. Yea, I cannot stand and my brain whirls, and evil omens, O Keshava, meet mine eyes. I can see no blessing for me, having slain my kin in fight. I desire not victory, O Krishna, no nor kingship nor delights. What shall we do with kingship, O Govinda, what with enjoyments, what with life? They for whose sake we desire kingship and enjoyments and delight, lo they all stand in battle against us casting behind them their riches and lives, our teachers and our fathers and our sons, our grandsires and uncles and the fathers of our wives, and our grandsons and our wives' brothers and the kin of our beloved. These, though they slay me, O Madhushudan, I would not slay, no not for the empire of heaven and space and hell, much less for this poor earth of ours. Slaying the sons of Dhritarashtra what joy would be left to us, O Janar-

dana? Sin, sin alone would find lodging in us, if we slew these, though our adversaries and foes. Therefore we do not right to slay the children of Dhritarashtra and their friends, for how can we be happy, O Madhava, if we slay our kin? Even though these see not, for their hearts are swept away by greed, error done in the ruin of our house and grievous sin in treachery to natural friends, how shall we not understand and turn back from this sin, we who have eyes, O Janardana, for error done in the ruin of our house? When the family dwindle, the eternal ideals of the race are lost, and when ideals are lost, unrighteousness besets the whole race; in the prevalence of unrighteousness, O Krishna, the women of the race go astray, and when women grow corrupt, bastard confusion is born again; but confusion brings the slayers of the race and the race itself to very hell; for the long line of fathers perish and the food ceaseth and the water is given no more. By these sins who bring their race to perdition, fathers they of bastard confusion, the eternal ideals of the nation and the hearth are overthrown, and for men who have lost the ancient righteousness of the race, in hell an eternal habitation is set apart, it is told. Alas, a dreadful sin have we set ourselves to do, that we have made ready, from greed of lordship and pleasure, to slay our own kin. Yea, even if the sons of Dhritarashtra slay me with their armed hands, me unarmed and unresisting, it were better and more fortunate for me than this.”

Thus spake Urjoona, and in the very battle's heart sat down upon his chariot seat, and let fall his bow when the arrow was on the string, for his soul was perplexed with grief.

CHAPTER TWO

To him thus besieged with pity and his eyes full bewildered with crowding tears, to him weak with sorrow, Madhusudan spake this word.

KRISHNA

“Whence hath this stain of darkness come upon thee in the very crisis and the stress, O Urjoona, this weakness unheavenly, inglorious, beloved of un-Aryan minds? Fall not into coward impotence, O Partha; not on thee does that sit well; fling from thee the miserable weakness of thy heart, O scourge of thy foes.”

URJOONA

“How shall I combat Bhisma in the fight and Drona, O Madhusudan, how shall I smite with arrows those venerable heads? Better were it, not piercing these great and worshipped hearts to eat even a beggar’s bread on this our earth. I slay our earthly wealth and bliss when I slay these; blood-stained will be the joys I shall taste. Therefore we know not which of these is better, that we should be victors or that we should be vanquished: for they whom slaying we should have no heart to live, lo, they Dhritarashtrians face us in the foeman’s van. Pain and unwillingness have swept me from my natural self, my heart is bewildered as to right and wrong: thee then I question. Tell me what would surely be my good, for I am thy disciple; teach me, for in thee I have sought my refuge. I see not what shall banish from me the grief that parcheth up the senses, though I win on earth rich kingship without rival and empire over the very gods in heaven.”

Thus Gudakesha to Hrishikesha; the scourger of his foe said unto Govinda, “I will not fight”, and ceased from words. On him thus overcome with weakness in the midmost of either battle,

Krishna smiled a little and said:

“Thou grieveest for whom thou shouldst not grieve and yet speakest wise-seeming words, but the wise grieve not, whether for the dead or for the living. It is not that I was not before, nor thou nor these lords of the folk, nor yet that we shall not be again hereafter. Even as the embodied spirit passes in this body to boyhood and youth and age, so also it passes away from this body to another; the strong man suffers not his soul to be clouded by this. But the things of material touch, O son of Coonty, which bring cold and warmth, pleasure and pain, they come and they pass; transient

are they, these seek to abandon, O Bharata. The man whom these vex not, O lion of men, who is strong and receiveth sorrow and bliss as one, that man is ready for immortality. For that which is not, there is no coming into being, and for that which is, there is no ceasing to be; yea, of both of these the lookers into truth have seen an end. But That in which all this universe is extended, know to be imperishable; none hath force to bring to nought the One who decays not neither passes away. Finite and transient are these bodies called, of the eternal, imperishable and immeasurable embodied Spirit; arise, therefore, and fight, O son of Bharata. Who knoweth the Spirit as slayer and who deemeth Him to be slain, both of these discern not. He slayeth not, neither is he slain. He is not born nor dieth ever, nor having once been shall not be again. He is unborn, for ever and perpetual. He is the Ancient One who is not slain with the slaying of the body. He who knoweth Him to be imperishable, eternal, unborn and undecaying, whom doth that man, O Partha, slay or cause to be slain? As a man casteth from him his worn-out robes and taketh to him other and new raiment, so the embodied Spirit casteth away its worn-out bodies and goeth to other and new casings. Him the sword cleaveth not, Him the fire cannot burn, Him the water wetteth not and the hot wind withereth not away; indivisible, unconsumable, unmergible, unwitherable is He. He is for ever and everywhere, constant and moveth not, He is the One Sempiternal Being. If thou knowest him as such, thou hast no cause to grieve.

And now if yet thou deemest of the Spirit as everborn or everdying, even so thou hast no cause to grieve for him, O strong-armed. For of that which is born the death is certain, and of that which is dead, the birth is sure; therefore in a thing inevitable thou oughtest not to grieve. Unmanifested in their beginning are creatures, manifested in the middle, O Bharata; they become but unmanifest again at death; what room is here for lamentation? As a Mystery one seeth Him, as a Mystery another speaketh of Him, as a Mystery a third heareth of Him, but even with revelation not one knoweth Him. The embodied One is for ever unslayable in the body of every man, O Bharata; and from Him are all creatures; therefore thou hast no cause for grief. Moreover if thou considerest the law of thy own being, thou oughtest not to tremble, for than battling in a just cause the Kshatriya knoweth no greater bliss. Happy are the Kshatriyas, O Partha, who win such a battle to their portion; it is as though one came past by chance and found the door of Paradise open. Now if thou wilt not wage this just and righteous battle, then hast thou cast from thee

thy glory and the law of thy being, and brought sin upon thy head; yea, thy shame shall be eternal in the mouth of all creatures; and for one who hath been honoured, shame is worse than death. The warriors will think that from fear thou hast ceased from battle, and in their eyes who thought highly of thee, thou shalt be belittled. And thine ill-wishers will speak of thee many unutterable words, disparaging thy might and thy greatness, than which there is no worse bitterness under heaven. Slain thou shalt conquer heaven, victorious thou shalt enjoy earth for thy kingdom; therefore arise, O son of Coonty, arise with a heart resolute for war. Make thou thy soul indifferent to pain and pleasure, to gain and loss, to defeat and victory, then gird thyself to the combat; sin shall not touch thee then.

Thus hath been declared to thee the mind that dwelleth in the way of Sankhya; hearken now to that which dwelleth in Yoga, to which being wedded, thou shalt cast from thee, O Partha, action's binding chain. On this path no step once taken is lost, in this path thou shalt meet with no stumbling-block; even a little of this Law saveth the heart from its great fear. One is the mind of a man that holds fast to its aim, but infinite are their minds, and many-branching, who have no resolved goal. 'Tis a flowery word they babble, men of little understanding who take delight in the creed of Veda, disputing, saying "There is nought else", their souls full of desires, their hopes bent upon Heaven; but he who hearkeneth to their words that give but the fruit of life's actions, and is crowded with multifold rituals aiming only at splendour and enjoyment and lordship, — lo, it hurrieth away his heart and causeth it to cling to lordship and pleasures, and his mind is unfixed to God and cannot set itself on the rock of concentration. Of the three nature-moods are the stuff of the Vedas, but thou, O Urjoona, rise above the three, high beyond the dualities, steadfast on the plane of the Light, be careless of getting and having, be a man with a soul. As much use as there is in a well, when all the regions are flowing with water, so much is there in all the Vedas to the Brahman who hath the Knowledge. Thou hast right to action only, to the fruit of action thou hast no manner of right at all; be not motived by the fruits of action, neither to inaction sell thy soul; but put attachment far from thee, O Dhanunjoy, and do thy deeds with a mind awaiting success and failure with an equal heart, for 'tis such equipoise of the soul they call Yoga indeed. For far lower is action than Yoga of the Supermind; in the Supermind seek thy refuge, for this is a mean and pitiful thing that a man should work for success and rewards. The man whose Supermind is in Yoga casteth from

him even in this world both righteousness and sin; therefore to Yoga gird thy soul; when thou dost works Yoga is the one auspicious way. For the wise whose understandings have reached God, cast from them the fruit that is born of their deeds, they are delivered from the fetters of birth, they pass into that sphere where suffering is not, neither any disease. When thy soul shall have voyaged to the other shore over the Chorus of the Great Bewilderment, then shalt thou become careless of the Scripture that is and the Scripture that shalt be, and when the mind that is perplexed and beaten about by the Scripture shall stand fast and motionless in Samadhi, then shalt thou attain Yoga.”

URJOONA

“What is the speech of him in whom Wisdom hath taken its firm seat, O Keshava, of him who is in Samadhi, whose thought standeth on settled understanding? What speaketh he, what are his sittings and what his goings?”

KRISHNA

“When a man casteth far away from him, O son of Pritha, all the desires that cling to the mind, when he is self-content in the Self, then it is said of him that his Reason is fixed in its seat. He whose soul is not shaken in sorrows and in happinesses, hungers not after their delight, he to whom fear and liking and wrath are forgotten things, he is the sage thought in whom is settled. He who is in all things without affections, whether evil come to him or whether good, who delights not in the pleasure neither hateth the pain, he is the man of an established understanding. As the tortoise gathereth in its limbs from all sides, so when this understanding spirit gathereth in the senses away from the things in which the senses work, then is the Reason in a man safely seated. By fasting and refraining the objects of passion cease from a man, but the desire and the delight in them remain; but when the embodied spirit hath beheld the most High, the very desire and delight cease and are no more. For very furious and turbulent are the senses, O son of Coonty, and though a man be God-seeking, though he have the soul that discerneth, they seize upon even his mind and ravish it violently away. Let a man devoted to Me coerce all these and sit fast in Yoga utterly giving himself up to Me, for only when a man has his senses in his grip is the Reason of him firm in its seat. But when a man thinketh much and often of the things of sense, fondness for them groweth upon

him, and from fondness desire and passion are born; and passion's child is wrath; out of wrath cometh delusion and disturbance of the brain; and from delusion cometh confusion of the recording mind; and when memory faileth the overmind is destroyed, and by the ruin of the overmind the soul goeth to its perdition. When one moveth over the fields of the passions with his senses in the grip of the Self, delivered from likings and dislikings, and when the Spirit itself answers to the helm, a pure serenity becometh his. In that bright gladness of the soul there cometh to him a waning away of all grief; for when a man's heart is like a calm and pure sky the Thought in him findeth very quickly its firm foundation. Who hath not Yoga hath not understanding, who hath not Yoga hath not infinite and inward contemplation, who thinketh not infinitely and inwardly hath not peace of soul, and how shall he be happy whose soul is not at peace? For the mind that followeth the control and working of the senses when they range abroad hurleth alone with it the Thought in the Spirit as the wind hurleth along a ship upon the waters. Therefore it is, O strong-armed, that his Reason is firmly based whose senses are reined in on all sides from the things of their desire.

In the night which is darkness to all creatures, the governed soul is awake and liveth; that in which all creatures wake and live, is night to the eyes of the seer. The waters enter into the vast, full and unmoving ocean, and the ocean stirs not nor is troubled, and he into whom all desires even in such wise enter attaineth unto peace, and not the lover of passion. That man who casteth away all desires and doeth works without craving, not melting to aught because it is his, not seeing in aught his separate self, attaineth his soul's peace. This is that God-state, O son of Pritha, to which attaining man is not again bewildered, but standing fast in it even in the hour of his ending mounteth to Cessation in the Eternal."

CHAPTER THREE

URJOONA

“If indeed to Thy mind Thought is mightier than action, O Janardan, vexer of the host, wherefore then dost thou yoke me to a dark and fearful deed? ’Tis as if thou wouldst bewilder me with mixed and tangled speech, therefore speak decidedly one clear thing which shall guide me to my highest welfare.”

KRISHNA

“Two are the ways of devotion in this world; already have I declared it to thee, O sinless one: the devotion of the men of the Sankhyas is by singleness in knowledge, by singleness in works is the devotion of the men of Yoga. Not by refraining from works shall a man taste actionlessness, and not by renouncing of the world shall he reach perfection. For verily no man even for a moment remains without doing, since each is made to do whether he will or not by the moods of his essential nature. He who coerceth the organs of action, and sitteth remembering in his heart the things in which the senses work, is a man deceived in spirit, him they call hypocrite, but whosoever governeth the senses with his mind, O Urjoona, and entereth on Yoga in works using the organs of action without attachment, is distinguished above all beings. Do thou works that the law demands of thee, for action is mightier than inaction; yea, without works the very maintenance of thy body cannot be. ’Tis by doing works in other spirit than as a sacrifice, that this world of creatures falleth into bondage to its works; but do thou practise works as a sacrifice, O son of County, with a mind free from the yoke of attachment. For with Sacrifice the Father, of old, created all people and said unto them, “By Sacrifice shall ye beget offspring; lo, the chosen joys of your desire, they shall be to you the milk of her udders. Cherish you the gods with Sacrifice, and the gods shall cherish in turn; thus by cherishing each other shall ye attain to your highest welfare. Cherished with sacrifice the gods shall bestow on you the joys you most desire”; and he is no better than a thief who enjoyeth what they give, and giveth not to them again. The good who eat the remnants of the Sacrifice are delivered from all their transgressions, but the accursed eat and drink sin who cook their food but for their own selfish bellies. From food all creatures are born, and from rain is the birth of food, but rain ariseth from the Sacrifice and Sacrifice hath its root in works; works know to be

born of the Eternal, for by the imperishable word of the Eternal they were brought into being. Therefore is the Eternal everywhere and in all things; yea, He hath His home for ever in the heart of the Sacrifice. This is the wheel that God hath set going, and who goeth not with it, whose days are a wickedness, whose delight and ease are in the senses, liveth his life in vain, O son of Pritha. But for the man whose whole pleasure is in the spirit and who satisfies his longing with the Spirit, yea, who is utterly content with the Spirit, for him there is no needful action. For, indeed, he hath no end at all to gain by doing neither any by not doing, he hath no dependence for end or aim on any in even this whole world of creatures. Therefore, without attachment do ever the work before thee, since by doing works without attachment man reacheth the Highest. 'Twas by works alone that the men of old reached to utter perfection, even Junak and the rest. Moreover, even if thou lookest to the right government of the world, thou shouldest be doing. What they see their Greatest do, even that the rest of the folk will practise, and the standard that the Best setteth up, the world will surely follow. Behold, O Partha, there is nought at all in the three worlds that I must do. There is nothing I have not, or that I yet need to win, and still I move in the path of works. For verily were I not to move sleeplessly in the path of works, — lo, men follow utterly the way wherein I tread, O son of Pritha, — then would all these worlds sink and perish were I not to do works, and I should become the creator of bastard confusion and the slayer of all these creatures. That which the ignorant do with attachment to the work, O Bharata, the wise man should do without attachment, wishing only to keep the world in its traces. Let him not be the cause of division and confusion of mind in the ignorant who are attached to their works, but let him, knowing all, set them to all the works of this world by doing works in Yoga. Lo, works are done but by the modes of Nature in their inevitable working, but the spirit of man is deceived by the sense of separate existence and he sayth in himself, "I, even I, am the doer". But he who knoweth to the core how the workings of the modes are parcelled out, believeth that the modes work in and upon the modes, and suffereth not attachment to seize him. But most men who are deceived by the modes of Nature cling to her mode-workings; these men of dull brains, these imperfect knowers, let not the perfect knower cause to swerve and stumble.

Reposing all thy works upon Me and with thy heart spiritually inclined, be desireless, be selfless; then arise, fight, O Urjoona, let the fever of thy soul pass from thee. For men who with faith and without carping

follow this my Word are released, they also, from bondage to their works; but they who carp at and follow not this my word, know of them that all their knowledge is a delusion; their intellect is nought, they are lost men, Urjoona. Lo, even the wise man who knoweth can but act according to his own essential nature; for to their nature all creatures come at last, and what shall coercing it avail? Only in the field of each and every sense love and hate are there, and ever they lie in ambush; let not the Spirit of man fall into their clutches, for they are his adversaries in his great journey. Better is it, the rule of thine own life ill done, than to follow an alien rule well-accomplished. Yea, death in the path of one's own nature is better: it is a fearful and perilous thing to follow the law of another's being."

URJOONA

"Who then is this by whom man is impelled that he worketh sin in the world, yea, though he will it not, O Varshneya, if forced to it by very violence?"

KRISHNA

"It is craving, it is wrath, the child of Rajoguna, mode of Passion. Know him for Fiend, the Enemy of Man's soul here on earth, a great devourer, a mighty sinner. As a fire engirt with smoke, as a mirror covered with dust, as the unborn child with the caul, so is the universe by him enveloped. By him knowledge is besieged and girt round, O son of Coonty, by this eternal enemy of the wise, this insatiable fire of desire and passion. The senses, the soul and the overmind, these three are the places of his session, with these he cloudeth over knowledge and bewildereth the embodied spirit. Therefore in the beginning constrain the senses, O Lion of the Bharatas, and slay that accursed with the sword of Knowledge and Discernment. High, say the wise, reign the senses, but the heart is higher than they; and the overmind is higher than the heart; he who is higher than the overmind, that is He. Thus when thou hast understood him who is higher than the overmind, slay thy enemy, O strong-armed, even that terrible and invincible one whose shape is passion."

CHAPTER FOUR

KRISHNA

“This is the Yoga, I declared to Vivasvan, that cannot perish; Vivasvan told it to Manu, Manu to Ixvacou repeated it. Thus was it handed down from generation to generation, and known of the philosopher kings, till in a mighty lapse of time that Yoga was lost, O scourge of thy foemen. This is that same ancient Yoga that I today have declared to thee because thou art my worshipper and lover and friend, for it is the noblest mystery of all.”

URJOONA

“Of these latter times is thy birth, O Krishna, of the high ancient times was the birth of Vivasvan, how should I understand aright this thy saying that thou in the beginning declaredst it?”

KRISHNA

“Many are my births that are past and gone and thine also, Urjoona; all of them I know but thou knowest not, O scourge of thy foemen. Yea, though I be unborn, and imperishable Spirit, though I be the Lord of all creatures, yet, I resort to my own nature and am born by the power of my Self-Illusion. For whenever and whenever righteousness and justice decline and faint upon the earth, O Bharata, and unrighteousness and injustice arise and flourish, then do I put forth myself; for the salvation of the pure and the destruction of evildoers, to raise up justice and righteousness, I am born again and again from age to age. He who in this sort knoweth aright my divine birth and works, cometh not to birth when he leaveth the body, to Me he cometh, Urjoona. Many have sought refuge with me and made themselves full of me, who have risen beyond love and wrath and fear and made themselves holy by the austere energisms of Knowledge, and become even as Myself. In whatsoever way men come to me, in their own way I accept and love them; utterly, do men, O son of Pritha, follow in the path which I tread. Desiring good success of their works men sacrifice to the gods on earth, for very quickly in the world of men cometh the success that is born of works. By me were the four orders created according unto the division of the workings of the stuff of their nature; know Me for their maker and yet neither for doer nor maker who am imperishable. On Me actions leave no stain for I have no craving for their fruits; he who really knoweth this of Me is not bound by his works. Knowing that in this wise

works were done by the ancient seekers after salvation, do thou also do works as they were done by the men of old. What is action and what is inaction, as to this the very sages are bewildered; therefore I will declare action unto thee by the knowledge whereof thou shalt be delivered out of evil. For of works thou must understand, of mis-work thou must understand, and thou must understand also of inaction; very difficult is the way of works and their mystery. He who in action can see inaction and action in inaction, he is the understanding mind among men; he doeth all works, yet is in Yoga. When the imaginations of desire are shut out from all that a man beginneth and undertaketh, and his works have been burned up in the fires of knowledge, then it is he that the wise call the truly learned. When he hath relinquished attachment to the fruit of his work, is ever satisfied of soul and dependeth not on any outward things, such a man though he engage himself deep in works yet really doeth nothing: pure of lusts, he is governed in heart and spirit, he hath surrendered all sense of belonging, doing actions only with his body he receiveth no stain of sin; well-content with the gains that chance and time may bring him, lifted above the plane of the dualities, void of jealousy, receiving success and failure as friends, though he do works yet is he not bound by them; leaving all heart-clingings behind him, a Spirit released, a mind safe in its tower of knowledge, performing works for a sacrifice, all his works are swallowed up and vanish.

Brahman is his giving and Brahman is his sacrifice, Brahman casteth and Brahman is cast into the fire that is Brahman; by Samadhi of his works in Brahman he goeth unto Brahman. Of the Yogins some make to the natural Gods their session of sacrifice, others offer the sacrifice by the sacrifice into the fire that is Brahman. Some offer the hearing and all the senses into the fires of self-mastery and some offer sound and the other things of sense into the fires of the senses. All the works of the senses and all the works of the vital breath others offer into the Yoga-fire of a controlled Spirit that knowledge hath kindled with her hands. And some make the sacrifice of their goods, and some make a sacrifice of their austerity and others the knowledge of the Vedas. Lords of askesis are they all, keen in the vow of their undertaking. Some offer the upper breath into the lower and the lower breath into the upper, stopping the passages of the inbreath and outbreath, absorbed in government of the breath that is life; others, eating temperately, offer up the breaths into the breaths as into a sacrificial fire. And all these, yea all, are wise in sacrifice, and by sacrifice the obscuration

of sin fades away from them, for they live on the remnants of their sacrifice, deeming it as the food of Gods, and rise to pass over into the Brahman that is for ever. This world belongeth not to him who doeth not sacrifice, how then shall another, O prince of the Kurus? Thus there are many sorts of sacrifice extended in the mouth of the eternal; know all these to be born of works, so knowing thou shalt find deliverance. Better than the sacrifice that is all of goods is the sacrifice of knowledge, O Scourge of thy foemen, for all man's work upon earth accomplisheth itself utterly in Wisdom. This wisdom thou must learn by prostration and questioning and service; then shall the knowers, they who have seen the truth of existence initiate thee in the knowledge which, when thou hast learnt, thou shalt not again fall into delusion, O son of Pandou; by the knowledge thou shalt see all creatures, even to the meanest, in the Self and therefore in Me. Yea, wert thou the vilest and most lewd in sin, yet shouldest thou pass over to the other shore of Perversity in the ship of the Knowledge. Even as a fire when it hath been kindled, O Urjoona, burneth to ashes the fuel of it, even so doth the fire of the Knowledge burn all a man's works to nothingness. In all the world there is nought that is so great and pure as Wisdom, and one who hath been made perfect by Yoga findeth Wisdom in his self naturally and by the mere lapse of time. The man of faith, the self-devoted, who has bridled his senses, he winneth the Knowledge; and when a man has got the Knowledge, he attains very quickly to the high and perfect peace. But the ignorant, the man of little faith, the soul full of doubts, these go to perdition; this world is not for the doubting soul, nor the other world, nor any kind of happiness. But he who reposeth all his works in Yoga and cleaveth Doubt asunder with the sharp edge of Knowledge, the man that possesseth his Self, O Dhanunjoy, his works cannot bind. Therefore take up the sword of Knowledge, O Urjoona, and cleave asunder this Doubt that hath made his seat in thy heart, this child of the Ignorance; lay fast hold upon Yoga, arise, O seed of Bharata."

CHAPTER FIVE

URJOONA

“Thou declarest the renunciation of works, O Krishna, and again thou declarest Yoga in works. Which one alone of these twain is the better, this tell me clearly, leaving no doubt behind.”

KRISHNA

“Renunciation of works, or Yoga in works, both of them make for the soul’s highest welfare, but of these two Yoga in works is distinguished above renunciation of works. Know him for the perpetual Sannyasin, who neither hates nor desires aught, for the mind that rises above the dualities, O strong-armed, is easily and happily released from its bondage. It is children who talk of Sankhya and Yoga as distinct and different, and not the learned; he who cleaveth wholly to even one of these findeth the fruit of both. To the high heaven whereto the Sankhyas win, the men of Yoga go also, and he who seeth Sankhya and Yoga as one seeth indeed. But renunciation, without Yoga, O great of arm, is very difficult to arrive at; and the sage that hath Yoga travelleth quickly to God. When a man hath Yoga, the Self of him is purified from obscuration, he is master of the Self and victor over the senses; he whose Self has become one with the self of all created things, though he do works, can receive no defilement. The Yogin sees the reality of things and thinks, “Truly I do nothing at all”; yea, when he sees or hears or touches, when he smells and when he tastes, in his going and in his sleeping and in his breathing, whether he talk, whether he put out or take in, whether he close his eyes or open them, still he holds, “Lo, ’tis but the senses that move in the fields of the senses.” When a man doeth, reposing all his works on the Eternal and abandoning attachment, sin cannot stay in his soul even as water on the leaf of a lotus. With their body, mind and understanding self and with pure and unaffected senses the Yogins, relinquishing attachment, do works for the cleansing of the Self. The soul that has Yoga abandons the fruit of its works, and gains instead a confident and utter peace; but the soul that has not Yoga clings to the fruit of its works, and by the working of desire it falleth into bondage. When a man is master of his self, and has renounced all works in his heart, then the embodied spirit sitteth at ease in his nine-gated city, neither doing nor causing to be done. The Lord createth not works nor the authorship of works for His people, neither yoketh He them to the fruits of their works; ’tis the nature in a man that is busy and taketh its own course.

The Lord taketh to himself the sin of none, neither accepteth He the righteousness of any; but the wisdom of living beings is clouded over with Nescience and 'tis by this that these are bewildered. Of those who by Knowledge have destroyed the nescience of the Self, Wisdom riseth like the sun and lighteth up that Self of all. Then they perceive Him alone and are Self of Him, and to Him consecrated in faith and all for Him; the revolving wheel clutches them not any more because Wisdom has washed them pure of all stain. The Brahmin endowed with learning and modest culture, the cow, the elephant and the very dog and the Pariah none touches, all these the wise regard with equal eyes. Even in their human life they have conquered this creation whose minds have taken root in that divine Equality, for the Eternal also is without a defect and looketh on all his creatures with equal eyes; therefore in the Eternal they have their root. He is not overjoyed when he getteth what is of pleasant growth, nor is he troubled when he tasteth of bitterness; his reason is steadfast and he subjects not himself to delusion but knoweth the Eternal and in him abideth. His soul clings not to the touches of outward things but what happiness he finds in the Self; therefore his soul is made one in Yoga with Eternal Brahman, the happiness he tastes does not cease or perish. For the enjoyments that are born of touch and contact are very wombs of misery, they begin and they end; the wise man taketh no delight in these. For he who even on this earth and before his release from this mortal body hath strength to stand up in the speed and rush of wrath and lust, he is the happy man. That man is the Yogin whose bliss is within and his delight and ease are inward; him an inner light illumines, and he goeth to cessation in the Brahman for be becometh Brahman. Rishis from whom all stain and darkness have faded away, who have cut Doubt away from their hearts and are masters of Self, whose whole delight and work is to do good to all created things — these win to cessation in the Eternal. The strivers after perfection, the governed souls who are delivered from the grip of wrath and desire, lo, the Paradise of cessation in Brahman liveth all about them, for they have knowledge of the Self within. Keeping the touches of outward things from his soul and concentrating sight between his eyebrows, making equal the outbreath and the inbreath as they move within the nostrils, master of his senses and mind and reason, who utterly desireth salvation, desire and wrath and fear have departed from him for ever; verily, he is already a released and delivered soul. He knows me for the One that feasteth on man's sacrifice and his austerities, the mighty Lord of all the worlds and the heart's friend of all creatures, and knowing, he travelleth to the Peace."

CHAPTER SIX

KRISHNA

“Who doeth the works he hath to do but dependeth not on the fruit of his works, he is the Sannyasin, and he is the Yogin, and not he who lighteth not the daily fire and doeth not the daily ritual. Know, O son of Pandou, that what they have called renunciation is even Yoga, since no man cometh a Yogin if he hath not renounced the imaginations of the Will. Of the sage who has yet to ascend the hill of Yoga, works are the medium, but calm is the medium of him who sitteth already on the hill-tops. For when a man has renounced all the imaginings of the Will and his heart clings not to his works and clings not to the objects of the senses, that is the true Sannyasin, that is the sitter on the hill-top of Yoga. Let a man deliver his soul by its own strength and let him not afflict his spirit to weaken it; for a man’s Self is its own and only friend and its own and only enemy. To that man his Self is a friend who has conquered the Self by the Self, but when he is not in possession of his Self it worketh enmity against him like an outward foe. Now when he has mastered Self and is at peace, then the Self of him is utterly at its ease, unaffected by heat and cold, pleasure and pain, imperturbable in honour and disgrace. The Yogin whose soul is satisfied with Wisdom and discernment, the immovable sitter on his hill-top and victor over his senses, he alone is called the Yogin who hath the Yoga; and gold and gravel or stone, to him all are one substance. He who hath one heart for lover, and friend, and foe-man and those who care not for him, who maketh no difference between the saint and the sinner, he is the truly great among men. Let the Yogin gird his Self continually to Yoga, solitary, governed in heart and spirit, without desires and without the sense of belongings. In a pure and holy region let him set up his steady seat, neither very high nor very low, with grass of Cusha and a deerskin thereon, and on that a robe. Then with his mind directed to one point, with a rein on the workings of his heart and senses, let him sit on the seat he has made and betake himself to Yoga for the cleansing of the Self within. He shall sit steady, holding head and neck and body in one line and motionless, and he shall keep his gaze fixed on the joining point of his nostrils, so that his eyes shall not wander over the regions; so steadfast in the vow of abstinence and purity, with a glad and calm spirit from which fear hath been driven out, with a mind under restraint, with a heart full of Me, let him sit in Yoga, giving himself utterly to Me. Even if he yoke himself so to Yoga with a governed heart, the Yogin

reacheth to that Peace in Me of which cessation in the Eternal is the summit. Yoga is not for the overeater, neither can a man get Yoga by abstaining utterly from food, nor for him that is overgiven to sleep nor yet for him that waketh always. Whoso eateth and playeth with his mind in God, whose striving in his works, and his sleep and his waking is for Him, Yoga cometh to that man and slayeth his sorrows. When the mind is wholly under government, and stands well-tamed in the Self, when all desirable things cannot get the heart to hunger after them, then a man is said to be in Yoga. Even as the flame of a lamp in a windless place moveth not at all, such is the image men have handed down of a Yogin when he practiseth Yoga with his heart under rein. Where the heart is sucked in from its workings by the practice of Yoga, where by the strength of the Self the mind of man seeth the Self and is wholly satisfied in the Self, where his inward spirit knoweth that extreme and exceeding happiness which is beyond the reach of the senses and which the reason cannot grasp, and it cleaveth to it and moveth not from the truth of things — which when a man has won he cannot conceive of any greater gain, to which when he holds he cannot be moved therefrom even by the most sore poignant grief — know that for a man's divorce from his long wedlock with sorrow, which is called Yoga; resolutely should a man set himself to that Yoga with a heart that will not despair. Let him relinquish all the desires that are born of the Will's imaginings, not keeping one back for his comfort. He must surround with his mind and force in from their delight the cohort of the senses; so with the understanding self held well within the grasp of a strong control he must cabin in the mind to the Self and think of nothing at all. Whenever and to whatever side darts away the infirm and restless mind thou must curb it from its journey to bring it back within the Self and tame it to obedience — for a high beatitude cometh to such a Yogi, whose mind is calmed, whose active nature is tranquillised, who has no sin, who has wholly become Brahman. Easily shall the Yogi whoever thus setteth himself to Yoga put from him the stain of obscuration, easily feel the utter bliss and the touch divine. The soul that is set in Yoga seeth himself in all creatures and all creatures in himself, and he hath one heart for all beings that the world containeth. When a man seeth Me everywhere and all the world in Me, I am with him always and he is always with Me, and we are lost to each other never. When the Yogin becometh one with all beings and loveth Me in all creatures, though he live and move in all manner of activities, he liveth and doeth only in Me. For him I deem to be the greatest Yogin, O Urjoona,

who looks alike on all beings everywhere as if they his own self, whether it be for happiness or whether it be for pain.”

URJOONA

“Nay, Madhusudan, for the restlessness of man’s mind I can see no sure abiding in this Yoga of one-heartedness of which thou hast spoken. For very restless is the mind, O Krishna, and turbulent and strong and hard of mouth, and to rein it in I hold as difficult as to put a bridle upon the wind.”

KRISHNA

“Surely, O strong of arm, the mind is restless and hard to bridle, but by askesis, O son of Coonty, and by turning away the heart from its affections, it can be caught and controlled. Very difficult of attainment is Yoga to the ungoverned spirit, so I hold; but when a man governeth himself and striveth by the right means, Yoga is not impossible to attain.”

URJOONA

“When a man hath faith but cannot strive aright and his mind swerveth from Yoga, and he attaineth not to success in Yoga, what is the last state of such a man, O Krishna? Does he lose this world and that other, does he perish like a breaking cloud, failing, O strong-armed, to get his immortal seat, losing his way on the path of the Eternal? This doubt of mine must thou solve to its very heart, O Krishna, for I shall not find any other who can destroy this doubt, but only Thee.”

KRISHNA

Neither in this world nor in the other, Partha, is there for that man any perdition. None who doeth good can come to an evil end, O beloved. But to the world of the righteous he goeth and there dwelleth for endless seasons and then is born again, the man fallen from Yoga, in a house of pure and fortunate men. Or else he even cometh to being in the house of the wise, in a land of Yogins, for such a birth as this in this world is one of the hardest to win. There he getteth touch again with the mind he had in his former body, and with that to start him he striveth yet harder after perfection, O delight of the Kurus. For he is seized and hurried forward even by that former habit and askesis of his, though it be without his own will. Even if a man’s mind is curious after Yoga, he overpasseth the outer Brahman in

the Word. The Yogin earnestly striving is purified of sin; perfected by toil of many births he arriveth at his highest salvation. Greater than the man of askesis is the Yogin, and greater I hold him even than the men of Knowledge, and than the men of works he is surely greater: a Yogin, therefore, shouldst thou be, O Urjoona. And of all that are Yogins I deem him to have most yoga who, with his inner Self taking refuge in Me, hath faith in Me, and loveth Me and worshipping Me.

KALIDASA

KUMARASAMBHAVA
THE BIRTH OF THE WAR-GOD

Three Renderings

The Birth of the War-God.

CANTO ONE : FIRST RENDERING

I

A God mid hills northern Himaloy rears
His snow-piled summits' dizzy majesties,
And in the eastern and the western seas
He bathes his giant sides; lain down appears
Measures the dreaming earth in an enormous ease.

2

Him, it is told, the living mountains made
A mighty calf of earth, the mother large,
When Meru of that milking had the charge
By Prithu bid, and jewels brilliant-rayed
Were brightly born and herbs on every mountain marge.

3

So is he in his infinite riches dressed
Not all his snows can slay that opulence.
As drowned in luminous floods the mark though dense
On the moon's argent disc; so faints oppressed
One fault mid crowding virtues fading from our sense.

4

Brightness of minerals on his peaks outspread
In their love-sports and in their dances gives
To heavenly nymphs adornment, which when drive
The split clouds across, those broken hues displayed
Like an untimely sunset's magic glories live.

5

Far down the clouds droop to his girdle-waist;
And to this low-hung plateaus' coolness won
The siddhas in soft shade repose, but run
Soon gleaming upwards by wild rains distressed
To unstained summits splendid with the veiless sun.

6

Although unseen the reddened footprints blotted
 By the new-fallen snows, the hunters know
 The path their prey the mighty lions go;
 For pearls from the slain elephants there clotted
 Fallen from the hollow claws their dangerous passage show.

7

The birch-leaves on his slopes love-pages turn:
 Like spots of age upon the tusky kings
 Of liquid metal ink their letterings
 Make crimsoned pages that with passion burn
 Where heaven's divine Circes pen heart-moving things.

8

He fills the hollows of his bamboo trees
 With the breeze rising from his deep ravines,
 Breathes¹ from his rocky mouths as if he means
 To be tune-giver to the minstrelsies
 Of high-voiced Kinnars chanting in his woodland glens.

9

His poplars by the brows of elephants
 Shaken and rubbed loose forth their odorous cream;
 And the sweet resin pours its trickling stream,
 And wind on his high levels burdened pants
 With fragrance making all the air a scented dream.

10

His grottoes are love-chambers in the night
 For the stray forest-wanderer when he lies
 Twined with his love, marrying with hers his sighs
 And from the dim banks luminous herbs give light
 Strange² oilless lamps to their locked passion's ecstasies.

¹ Flutes ² Like

11

Himaloy's snows in frosted slabs distress
 The delicate heels of his maned Kinnaris,
 And yet for all their chilly path's unease
 They change not their slow motion's swaying grace
 For their burden of breasts and heavy hips.

12

He guards from the pursuing sun far hid
 In his deep caves of gloom the fallen night
 Afraid of the day's eyes of brilliant light:
 Even on base things and low for refuge fled
 High-crested souls shed love and kindly might.

13

The mountain yaks lift up their bushy tails
 And with their lashing scatter gleamings round
 White as the moonbeams on the rocky ground
 They seem to fan their king, his parallels
 Of symbolled monarchy more perfectly to found.

14

There in his glens upon his grottoed floors
 When from her limbs is plucked the raiment fine
 Of the Kinnar's shame-fast love, hanging come in
 The concave clouds across the cavern doors;
 Chance curtains shielding her bared¹ loveliness divine.

¹ shield her unveiled

Like the Spirit and its unawakened force.
Near were they now, yet to each other unknown,
He meditating, she in service bowed.
Closing awhile her vast and shining lids,
Fate over them paused suspended on the hills.

18

Companion of Meru, their high floor
 In equal wedlock to his mighty¹ bed
 The mind-born child of the world-fathers wed,
 Mena whose wisdom the deep seers adore,
 Stable and wise himself his stable race to spread.

19

Their joys of love were like themselves immense
 And its long puissant ecstasies at last
 Bore fruit, for in her womb a seed was cast
 Bearing the banner of her youth intense
 In moving beauty and charm to motherhood she passed.

20

Mainac she bore, the ocean's guest and friend,
 Upon whose peaks the serpent-women roam,
 Dwellers in their unsunned and cavernous home;
 Mainac, whose sides though angry Indra rend
 Feels not the anguish of the thunder's shock of doom.

(Incomplete)

18. In equal rites he to his mighty bed
 The mind-born child of the world-fathers bore.
 Companion fit of Meru their high home,
 Stable of thought to stabilise his race,
 Mena the wise he wed by seers adored.
19. Their joys of love were like themselves immense
 And in long puissant ecstasy at last
 Bore fruit; for in her womb his seed was thrown
 And bearing like a banner with her youth's
 Heart-moving beauty motherhood she crossed.
20. Mainac she bore, the guest of the great sea,
 Upon whose peaks the serpent women sport
 Who through the Titan slayer's wrath has shorn
 His budding wings, felt not the fiery blow,
 Shook not with anguish of the thunder's scars.

¹ large

The Birth of the War-God

CANTO ONE : SECOND RENDERING

A God concealed in mountain majesty
Embodied to our cloudy physical sight
In snowy summits and green-gloried slopes,
To northward of the many-rivered land,
Measuring the earth in an enormous ease,
Immense Himaloy dwells¹ and in the moan
Of eastern ocean and in western floods
Plunges his giant sides. Him once the hills
Imagined as the mighty calf of Earth
When the wideness milked her udders; gems brilliant-rayed
Were born and herbs on every mountain marge.
So in his infinite riches is he dressed,
Not all his snows can slay his opulence,
And though they chill the feet of heaven, her sons
Forget that fault mid² all his crowding gifts,
As faints in luminous floods the gloomy mark
On the moon's argent disc; they choose his vales
For playground, his hill-peaks for divine homes.
Brightness of minerals on his rocks is spread
Which to the Apsaras give adorning hues
In their love-sports and in their dances; flung
On the split clouds in their brilliant colours ranged,
Like an untimely sunset's glories live.
Far down the clouds droop to his girdle-waist;
Then by the low-hung plateaus' coolness drawn
The siddhas in soft shade repose, but flee
Soon upward by wild driving rain distressed
To summits splendid in the veiless sun.
The hunter seeks for traces on his sides,
And though their reddened footprints are expunged
By the new-falling snows, yet can he find
The path his prey the mighty lions go;
For, it is told, pearls from slain elephants

Are clotted, fallen from their hollow claws,
 And tell their dangerous passage. When he rests
 Tired with the chase and bares to winds his brow,
 They come, fay-breezes dancing on the slopes,
 Shaking the cedars on Himaloy's breast,
 Scattering the peacock's gorgeous-plumed attire,
 And with spray of Ganges' cascades on their wings
 Sprinkling his hair. He makes the grottoed glens
 His chambers of desire and in the night
 When the strong forest-wanderer is lain
 Twined with his love, marrying with hers his sighs,
 The luminous herbs from the dim banks around
 Strange¹ oilless lamps, give light to see his joy.
 Nor only earthly footsteps tread the grass,
 Or mortal love finds there its happy scenes.
 The birch-leaves of the hills love-pages are;
 Like spots of age upon the tusky kings,
 In ink of liquid metals letters strange
 Make crimson signs, pages where passion burns
 And divine Circes pen heart-moving things.
 The Kinnars wander singing in his glades
 He fills the hollows of his bamboo trees²
 With the wind rising from his deep ravines,
 And with a moaning and melodious sound
 Breathes from his rocky mouths as if he meant
 To flute,³ time-giver to their minstrelsies.
 The delicate heels of the maned Kinnari
 Are by his frosted slabs of snow distressed,
 Yet for her burden of breasts and heavy hips
 Can change not her slow motion's swaying grace
 To escape the biting pathway's chill unease.
 She too in grottoed caverns lies embraced.
 When from her limbs is plucked the raiment fine
 Of the Kinnar's shame-fast love, then hanging come
 The concave clouds across the grotto doors
 And make chance curtains against mortal eyes,
 Shielding the naked goddess from our sight.

The elephant-herds there wander: resinous trees
 Shaken and rubbed by their afflicting brows
 Loose down their odorous tears in creamy drops;
 The winds upon the plateaus burdened pant
 And make of all the air a scented dream.
 The yaks are there; they lift their bushy tails
 And in their lashings scatter gleamings white
 As moonbeams shed upon the sleeping hills:
 Brightly they seem to fan the mountain king.
 He hides in his deep caves the hunted night
 Fearful of the day's brilliant eyes. His peaks
 Seem to outpeer the lower-circling sun,
 Which sends its upward beams as if to wake
 Immortal lilies in his tarns unplucked
 By the seven sages in their starry march.
 Such is Himaloy's greatness, such his strength
 That seems to uplift to heaven the earth. He bears
 The honey Soma plant upon his heights,
 Of Godward symbols the exalted source.
 He by the Master of sacrifice was crowned
 The ancient monarch of a million hills.
 In equal rites he to his giant bed
 The mind-born child of the world-fathers bore.
 The earthly comrade and the help fellow
 Of Meru, their sublime celestial home,
 Stable of soul, to make a stable race
 Mena he wed whose wisdom seers adored.
 Their joy of love was like themselves immense,
 And in the wide felicitous lapse of time
 Its long and puissant ecstasy bore fruit;
 Bearing the banner of her unchanged youth
 And beauty to charmed motherhood she crossed.
 Mainac she bore, the guest of the deep seas,
 Upon whose peaks the serpent women play,
 Their jewelled tresses glittering through the gloom,
 Race of a cavernous and monstrous world;
 There fled when Indra tore the mountains' wings,

His divine essence bore no cruel sign,¹
 Nor felt the anguish of the thunder's scars.²
 Next to a nobler load her womb gave place;
 For Daksha's daughter, Shiva's wife, the Lord
 Of Being, in her angry will who left
 Her body lifeless³ in her father's hall,
 Sought in their mountain home a happier birth,
 And by her in a trance profound of joy
 Conceived was born of strong⁴ Himaloy's seed.
 Out of the soul unseen the splendid child
 Came like success with daring for its sire
 And for its mother clear-eyed thought sublime.
 Then were the regions subtle with delight,
 Soft, pure, from cloud and stain; then heaven's shells
 Blew sweetly, flowery rain came drifting down,
 Earth answered to the rapture of the skies
 And all her moving and unmoving life
 Felt happiness because the Bride was born.
 So the fair mother by this daughter shone
 So that new beauty radiated its beams
 As if a land of lapis lazuli
 Torn by the thunder's voice shot suddenly forth
 A jewelled sprouting from the mother bed.
 Parvati was she called the mountain's child,
 When love to love cried answer in her house
 And to that sound she turned her lovely face,
 But afterdays the great maternal name
 Of Uma gave. On her as fair she grew
 Her father banqueted his sateless look,
 He felt himself a lamp fulfilled in light,
 Like Heaven's silent path by Ganges voiceful made,
 Like⁵ thought made glorious by a perfect word.
 Like bees that winging come upon the wind
 Among the infinite sweets of honeyed spring
 Drawn to the mango-flower's delicious breast,
 All eyes sought her. Her little childlike form

¹ mark, ² lightning's bite. ³ soulless ⁴. great ⁵ Or

Increasing to new curves of loveliness,
 She grew like the moon's arc from day to day.
 Among her fair companions of delight
 She built frail walls of heavenly Ganges' sands
 Or ran to seize the tossing ball or pleased
 With puppet children her maternal mind,
 Absorbed in play, the mother of the worlds.
 And easily too to her as if in play
 All sciences and wisdoms crowding came
 Out of her former life, like swans that haste
 In autumn to a sacred river's shores;
 They started from her mind as grow at night
 Born from some luminous herb its glimmering rays.
 To her child-body youth, a charm, arrived
 Adorning every limb, a wine of joy
 To intoxicate the heart, the eyes that gazed,
 Shooting the arrows of love's curving bow.
 Even as a painting grows beneath the hand
 Of a great master, as the lotus opens
 Its petals to the flatteries of the sun,
 So into perfect roundness grew her limbs
 And opened up sweet colour, form and light.
 Her feet that threw at every step a rose
 Upon the earth, like reddened lilies seemed¹
 Moving² from spot to spot their petalled bloom;
 Her motion studied from the queenly swans
 Its³ wanton swaying musically timed
 The sweet-voiced anklets' murmurous refrain.
 From moulded knee to ankle the supreme
 Divinely lessening curve so lovely was,
 It looked as if on this alone were spent
 All her Creator's cunning and well the rest
 Might tax his labour to build half such grace,
 Yet was that miracle accomplished. Soft

¹ Her feet limned a red rose at every step
 On the enamoured earth; like magic flowers

² They moved ³ With

In roundness, warm in their smooth sweep her thighs
 Were without parallel in Nature's work.
 The greatness of her hips on which life's girdle
 Had found its ample rest deserved already
 The lap of divine love where she alone
 Might hope one day embosomed by god to lie.
 Deep was her navel's hollow where wound in
 Above her¹ raiment's knot that tender line
 Of down as slight as the dark ray shot up
 From the blue jewel central in her zone.
 Her waist was like an altar's middle small
 And there the triple stair of love was built.
 Twin breasts large, lovely pale with darkened paps
 That could not allow the slender lotus thread
 A passage, on whose either side there waited
 Softer than delicatest flowers the arms
 Which Love victorious in defeat would find
 His chains to bind down the Eternal's neck.
 Her throat adorned the necklace which it wore;
 Its sweep and undulation to the breast
 Outmatched the gleaming roundness of its gems.
 Above all this her marvellous face where met
 The golden mother of beauty and delight
 At once the graces of her lotus throne
 And the soft lashes of the moon. The smile
 Parting the rosy sweetness of her lips
 Like a white flower across a ruddy leaf
 Or pearls that sever lines of coral. Noble
 Her speech dropped nectar from a liquid voice
 To which the coil's call seemed rude and harsh
 And sob of smitten lyres a tuneless sound.
 She had exchanged with the wild woodland deer
 The startled glance of her long lovely eyes
 Fluttering like a blue lotus in the wind.
 The pencilled long line of her arching brows
 Made vain the beauty of Love's bow. Her hair's
 Tossed masses put voluptuously to shame

¹ Passing the

The mane of lions and the drift of clouds.
 To see¹ all beauty in a little space
 He who created all this wondrous world
 Had fashioned only her. Throned in her limbs
 All possibilities of loveliness
 Have crowded to their fair attractive seat
 And now the artist eyes that scan all things
 Saw every symbol and sweet parallel
 Of beauty only realised in her.
 Then was he satisfied and loved his work.
 The sages ranging at their will the stars
 Saw her and knew that this indeed was she
 Who must become by love the beautiful half
 Of the fair body of the Lord and all
 His heart. This from the seers of future things
 Her father heard and his high hope renounced
 All other but the greatest for her spouse.
 Nor dared yet to anticipate the divine mind
 He dared not, but remained like a great soul
 Curbing the impatience of its godlike hopes,
 The silent sentinel of its destined hour.
 Prepared by Time for her approaching Lord
 She waited like a sacrifice for the fire.
 But he, the spirit of the world, forsaken
 By that first body of the mother of all,
 Nor to her second birth yet wed,² remained³
 Alone and passionless and unespoused,⁴
 The Master of the animal life absorbed
 In dreamings, wandering with his demon hordes
 Desireless in the blind desire of things.
 At length he ceased; like sculptured marble still
 To meditation was his spirit turned,
 Clothed in the skins of beasts, with ashes smeared
 He sat a silent shape upon the hills.
 Below him curved Himadri's slope; a soil
 With fragrance of the musk deer odorous
 Was round him, where the awful splendour mused

¹ clasp ² come, ³ abode ⁴ Unwed, ascetic, stern, mid crowded worlds,

Mid the cedars sprinkled with the sacred dew
 Of Ganges, softly murmuring their chants
 In strains subdued the Kinnar minstrels sang.
 On the oil-filled slabs among the resinous herbs
 His grisly hosts sat down, their bodies stained
 With mineral unguents, bark upon their limbs;
 Ill-shaped they were and their tremendous hands
 Around their ears had wreathed the hill-side's flowers.
 On the white rocks compact of frozen snow,
 The great bull voicing loud immortal pride
 Pawed with his hoof the argent soil to dust,
 Alarmed the bisons fled his gaze, he bellowed
 Impatient of the mountain lion's roar.
 Concentrating his world-vast energies
 Amid them built his daily form of fire,¹
 He who gives all austerities their fruit,
 In what impenetrable and deep desire?
 And though to him the worship even of gods
 Is negligible, worship the mountain gave
 And gave his daughter the Great Soul to serve.
 And though to remote trance near beauty is
 A danger, the Great Soul accepted her.
 Surrounded by all sweetness in the world
 He can be passionless who is creation's king.²
 She brought him daily offering of flowers
 And holy water morn and noon and eve
 And swept the altar of the divine fire
 And heaped his altar seat of sacred grass,
 Then bending over his feet her falling locks,
 Drowned all her soft fatigue of gentle hours
 In the cool moonbeams from the Eternal's head.
 So had they met on summits of the world

¹ Built daily his eternal shape of flame,

² Yet though to remote trance near beauty brings
 The danger of beauty, he refused her not,
 Surrounded by all sweetness in the world
 He can be passionless in his still mind
 Austere, unmoved, creation's silent king.

The Birth of the War-God

CANTO ONE : THIRD RENDERING

A God concealed in mountain majesty,
Embodied to our cloudy physical sight
In dizzy summits and green-gloried slopes,
Measuring the earth in an enormous ease,
Immense Himaloy dwells and in the moan
Of western waters and in eastern floods
Plunges his hidden spurs. Such is his strength¹
High-piled or thousand-crested is his look
That with the scaling greatness of his peaks
He seems to uplift to heaven our prostrate soil.
He mounts from the green luxury of his vales,
Ambitious of the skies; naked and lost
The virgin chill immensity of snow
Covers the breathless spirit of his heights.
To snows his savage pines aspire; the birch
And all the hardy brotherhood which climb
Against the angry muttering of the winds,
Challenge the dangerous air in which they live.
He is sated with the silence of the stars:
Lower he dips into life's beauty, far
Below he hears the cascades, now he clothes
His rugged sides the gentle breezes kiss
With soft grass and the gold and silver fern.
Holding upon her breast the hill-god's feet
Earth in her tresses hides his giant knees.
Over lakes of mighty sleep, where fountains lapse,
Dreaming, and by the noise of waterfalls,
In an unspoken solitary joy
He listens to her chant. The distant hills
Imagined him the calf to which she lows
When the wideness milks her udders and (Meru is near
The heavenly unseen height; like visible hints
Of his great subtle growths of peace and joy

¹ Of such a strength

His dreaming woods arise;) gems brilliant-rayed
 She yields and herbs on every mountain marge.
 He gives his colours to the Apsara's grace.
 The smooth gold of her limbs with harder hues
 Stolen from his mineral rocks she loves to stain.
 Reflections of those brilliant colourings
 Oft on the hangings of the cloudy heavens
 Like an untimely sunset's glories lie.¹
 In such warm infinite riches is he dressed
 His fire of life from his cold heights of thought
 The great snows cannot slay its opulence.
 Though stark they chill the feet of heaven, her sons
 Forgive the fault amid a throng of joys
 As faints from our charmed sense in luminous floods
 The gloomy mark² on the moon's argent disk,
 They have forgot his chill severity
 In sweetness which escapes from him in life.
 For as from passion of some austere soul
 Delight and love have stolen to rapturous birth,
 From ice-born waters his delicious vales
 Are fed. Indulgent like the smile of God,
 White grandeurs overlook wild green romance.
 He keeps his summits for immortal steps,
 The life of man upon his happy slopes
 Roams wild and bare and free, the life of gods
 Prone from the unattainable summits climbs
 Down the rude greatness of his huge rock-park
 As if rejecting the glory of its veils
 It peeps out from the subtle gleam of air,
 Visible to man by waterfall and glade,
 And finds us in the hush of sleeping woods,
 And meets us with low whisperings in the night

¹ The glamoured splendour of his mineral rocks
 Reflecting all its brilliant colourings
 Upon the hangings of the cloudy heavens
 Like an untimely sunset's glories sleeps.

Of their surrounding presence unaware.
 Chasing the dreadful wanderers of the hill
 The hunter seeks for traces on his side,
 He, though soft-falling innocent snows weep off
 The cruelty of their red footprints, finds
 The path his prey the mighty lions go.
 For glittering pearls from the felled elephants
 Lain clotted, dropping from the hollow claws
 Betray¹ their dangerous passage. When he sits
 Tired of the hunt on a slain poplar's base
 And bares to winds the weariness of his brow
 They come fay-breezes dancing on the slopes,
 Scattering the peacock's gorgeous-plumed attire,
 Shaking the cedars on Himaloy's breast,
 With spray from Ganges' cascades on their wings,
 To kiss² the wind-blown tangles of his hair,
 Sprinkling their coolness on his soul. He has made
 The grottoed glens his chambers of desire,
 He has packed their dumbness with his passionate bliss;
 Stone witnesses of ecstasy they sleep.
 And wonderful luminous herbs from night's dim banks
 Give light to see the joy those thrilled rocks keep
 When the strong forest-wanderer is lain
 Twined with his love, marrying with hers his sighs,
 Moved to desire in their stony dreams.
 Nor only human footsteps tread the grass
 Upon his slopes, nor only mortal love
 Finds there the lovely setting of the hills
 Amid the broken caverns and the trees,
 In the weird moonlight pouring from the clouds
 And the clear sunlight glancing from the pines
 A wandering choir, a flash of unseen forms,
 Go sweeping sometimes they and leave our hearts
 Startled with hintings of some greater life,
 The Kinnar passes singing in his glades.
 Then stirred to repeat the echoes of their voice,³

¹ recall ² They drive

³ Then stirred to keep some sweetness of their voice,

He fills the hollows of his bamboo stems
 With the wind sobbing from the deep ravines
 And in a moaning and melodious sound
 Breathes from his rocky mouths, as if he meant
 To flute, tune-giver to wild minstrelsies.
 The delicate heels of the maned Kinnari
 Are with his frosted slabs of snow distressed.
 But with the large load of her breasts and hips
 To escape the biting pathway's chill unease
 She is forbidden: she must not break the grace
 Of her slow¹ motion's tardy rich appeal.
 She too in grottoed caverns lies embraced,
 Forced from the shame-fast sweetness of her limbs
 The subtle raiment leaves her fainting hands
 To give her tremulous beauty to the gaze
 Of her eternal lover. But thick clouds
 Stoop hastily bowed to the rocky doors
 And hang chance curtains against mortal eyes,
 Shielding the naked goddess from our sight.
 The birch-leaves of his hills love-pages are.
 In ink of liquid metals letters strange
 We see make crimson signs; they lie in wait
 Upon the slopes, pages where passion burns,
 The flushed epistles of enamoured gods
 Where divine Circes pen heart-moving things.
 The Apsaras rhyme out their wayward dance,
 The smooth gold of their limbs by harder hues
 Of minerals stained, attracting seize
 The curious fancy in love's straying eyes.
 When far down the clouds droop to his girdle waist
 Holding the tearful burden of their hearts,
 Drifting grey melancholy through the skies,²
 There by the low-hung plateaus' wideness lain
 The siddhas in soft shade repose, or flee
 Soon up chased by wild driving rain for refuge
 To summits splendid in the veiless sun.
 Earth's mighty animal life has reached his woods.

¹ dumb ² air,

The lion on Himaloy keeps his lair,
 The elephant herds there wander. Oozing trees
 Wounded by stormy rubbings of the tuskers' brows
 Loose down their odorous tears in creamy drops,
 And winds upon the plateau burdened pant
 Weaving the air into a scented dream.
 The yaks are there; they lift their bushy tails
 To lash the breeze and scatter gleamings white:
 With candour casting snares for heart and eye
 The moonbeams lie upon the sleeping hills.
 Like souls divine who in a sweet excess
 All-clasping draw their fallen enemies
 Into¹ the impartial refuge of their love
 Out of the ordered cruelties of life,
 He takes into his cavern bosom hunted night.
 Afraid of heaven's radiant eyes, crouched up,
 She cowers in Nature's great subliminal gloom,
 A trembling fugitive from the ardent day,
 Lest one embrace should change her into light.
 Himaloy's peaks outpeer the circling sun.
 He with his upstretched brilliant hands awakes
 Immortal lilies in the unreached tarns,
 Morning has found miraculous blooms unculled
 By the seven sages in their starry march.
 Such are the grandeurs of Himaloy's soul,
 Such are his divine moods; moonlit he bears,
 Of godward symbols the exalted source,
 The mystic Soma-plant upon his heights.
 He by the Father of sacrifice climbs crowned,
 Headman and dynast of earth's soaring hills.

These were the scenes in which the Lovers met.
 There lonely mused the silent Soul of all,
 And to awake him from his boundless trance
 Took woman's form the beauty of the world;
 Then infinite sweetness bore a living shape;
 She made her body perfect for his arms.

¹ To

Indignant for his severing thought of God.
 Now in a trance profound of joy by her
 Conceived she sprang again to a livelier birth
 To heal the sorrow and the dumb divorce.
 Out of the unseen soul the splendid child
 Came like bright lightning from the invisible air,
 Welcome as Fortune to an earthly king
 When she is born with daring for her sire
 And for her mother policy sublime.
 Then was their festival holiday in the world,
 Then were the regions subtle with delight:
 Heaven's shells blew sweetly through the stainless air
 And flowery rain came drifting down; Earth thrilled
 Back ravished to the rapture of the skies,
 And all her moving and unmoving life
 Felt happiness because the Bride was born.
 So that fair mother by this daughter shone,
 So her young beauty radiated its beams
 As might a land of lapis lazuli
 Torn by the thunder's voice. As from the earth
 Tender and green an infant lance of life,
 A jewelled sprouting from the mother slab
 The divine child lay on her mother's breast.
 They called her Parvati, the mountain child,
 When love to love cried answer in the house
 And to the sound she turned her lovely face.
 A riper day the great maternal name
 Of Uma brought. Her father banqueted
 Upon her as she grew his sateless¹ eyes,
 Who saw his life like a large lamp by her
 Fulfilled in light; like Heaven's silent path
 By Ganges voiceful grown his soul rejoiced;
 It flowered like a great and shapeless thought
 Suddenly immortal in a perfect word.
 Wherever her bright laughing body rolled,
 Wherever faltered her sweet tumbling steps,
 All eyes were drawn to her like winging bees

¹ unsated

Which sailing come upon the wanderer wind
 Amid the infinite sweets of honeyed spring
 To choose the mango-flowers' delicious breast.
 Increasing to new curves of loveliness
 Fast grew like the moon's arc from day to day
 Her childish limbs. Along the wonderful glens
 Among her fair companions of delight
 Bounding she strayed, or stooped by murmurous waves
 To build frail walls on Ganges' heavenly sands,
 Or ran to seize the tossing ball, or pleased
 With puppet children her maternal mind
 And easily out of that earlier time
 All sciences and wisdoms crowding came
 Into her growing thoughts like swans that haste
 In autumn to a sacred river's shores.
 They started from her soul as grow at night
 Born from some luminous herb its glimmering rays.
 Her mind, her limbs betrayed themselves divine.
 Thus she prepared her spirit for mighty life,
 Wandering at will in freedom like a deer
 On Nature's summits, in enchanted glens,
 Absorbed in play, the Mother of the world.

Then youth a charm upon her body came
 Adorning every limb, a heady wine
 Of joy intoxicating to the heart,
 Maddened the eyes that gazed, from every limb
 Shot the fine arrows of Love's curving bow.
 Her forms into a perfect roundness grew
 And opened up sweet colour, grace and light.
 So might a painting grow beneath the hand
 Of some great master, so a lotus opens
 Its bosom to the splendour of the sun.
 On the enamoured earth at every step her feet
 Threw a red rose, like magic flowers they went
 Moving from spot to spot their petalled bloom.
 Her motion from the queenly swans had learned
 Its wanton swayings; musically it timed

The sweet-voiced anklets' murmuring refrain.
 And¹ rising to that amorous support
 From moulded knee to ankle the supreme
 Divinely lessening curve so lovely was
 It looked as if on this alone were spent
 All her Creator's cunning. Well the rest
 Might tax his labour to build half such grace!
 Yet was that miracle accomplished. Soft
 In roundedness, warm in their smooth sweep, her thighs
 Were without parallel in Nature's work.
 The greatness of her hips on which life's girdle
 Had found its ample rest, deserved already
 The lap of divine love where she alone
 Might hope one day embosomed by God to lie.
 Deep was her hollowed navel where wound in
 Above her raiment's knot the tender line
 Of down slighter than that dark beam cast forth
 From the blue jewel central in her zone.
 Her waist was like an altar's middle and there
 A triple stair of love was softly built.
 Her twin large breasts were pale with darkened paps
 They would not let the slender lotus thread
 Find passage, on their either side there waited
 Tenderer than delicatest flowers the arms
 Which Love must turn,² victorious in defeat,
 His chains to bind down the Eternal's neck.
 Her throat adorning all the pearls it wore,
 With sweep and undulation to the breast
 Outmatched the gleaming roundness of its gems.
 Crowning all this a marvellous face appeared
 In which the lotus found its human bloom
 In the soft lustres of the moon. Her smile
 Parted the rosy sweetness of her lips
 Like candid pearls severing soft coral lines
 Or a white flower across a ruddy leaf.
 Her speech dropped nectar from a liquid voice
 To which the coil's call seemed rude and harsh

¹ Soft ² would make,

And sob of smitten lyres a tuneless sound.
 The startled glance of her long lovely eyes
 Stolen from her by the swift woodland deer
 Fluttered like a blue lotus in the wind,
 And the rich pencilled arching of her brows
 Made vain the beauty of Love's bow. Her hair's
 Dense masses put voluptuously to shame
 The mane of lions and the drift of clouds.
 He who created all this wondrous world
 Weary of scattering perfection¹ wide;
 To see all beauty in a little space
 Had fashioned only her. Called to her limbs
 All possibilities of loveliness
 Had hastened to their fair attractive seats,
 And now the artist eyes that scan all things
 Saw every symbol and sweet parallel
 Of beauty only realised in her.
 Then was he satisfied and loved his work.
 The² sages ranging at their will the stars
 Saw her and knew that this indeed was she
 Who must become by love the beautiful half
 Of the Almighty's body and be all
 His heart. This from earth's seers of future things
 Himaloy heard and his proud hopes contemned
 All other than the greatest for her spouse.
 Yet dared he not provoke that dangerous boon
 Anticipating its unwakened hour,
 But seated in the grandeur of his hills
 Like a great soul curbing its giant hopes,
 A silent sentinel of destiny,
 He watched in mighty calm the wheeling years
 She like an offering waited for the fire,
 Prepared by Time for her approaching lord.

But the great Spirit of the world forsaken
 By that first body of the Mother of all,
 Not to her second birth yet come, abode

¹ his marvels ² His

In crowded worlds ascetic, stern,
 And passionless and unespoused,
 The Master of the animal life absorbed
 In dreamings, wandering with his demon hordes,
 Desireless in the blind desire of things.
 At length like sculptured marble still he paused,
 To meditation yoked. With ashes smeared
 Clothed in the skin of beasts
 He sat a silent shape upon the hills.
 Below him curved Himadri's slope; a soil
 With fragrance of the musk-deer odorous
 Was round, and there the awful Splendour mused.
 Mid cedars sprinkled with the sacred dew
 Of Ganges, softly murmuring their chants
 In streams subdued the Kinnar minstrels sang.
 Where oil-filled slabs were clothed in resinous herbs,
 His grisly hosts sat down, their bodies stained
 With mineral unguents; bark their ill-shaped limbs
 Clad. . . .¹ and their tremendous hands
 Around their ears had wreathed the hillside's flowers.
 On the white rocks compact of frozen snow
 His great bull voicing loud immortal pride
 Pawed with his hoof the argent soil to dust.
 Alarmed the bisons fled his gaze; he bellowed
 Impatient of the mountain lion's roar.
 Concentrating his world-vast energies,
 He who gives all austerities their fruits
 Built daily his eternal shape of flame,
 In what impenetrable and deep desire?
 The worship even of gods he reckons not
 Who on no creature leans; yet worship still
 To satisfy his awe the mountain paused
 And gave his daughter the great Soul to serve.
 She brought him daily offerings of flowers
 And holy water morn and noon and eve
 And swept the altar of the divine fire
 And plucking heaped the outspread sacred grass,

¹ Blank in MS.

Then showering¹ over his feet her falling locks
Drowned all her soft fatigue of gentle toils
In the cool moonbeams from the Eternal's head.
Though to austerity of trance a peril
The touch of beauty, he repelled her not
Surrounded by all sweetness in the world
He can be passionless in his large mind,
Austere, unmoved, creation's silent king.
So had they met on the summits of the world.
Like the still spirit and its unawakened force
Near were they now, yet to each other unknown,
He meditating, she in service bowed.
Closing awhile her vast and shadowy wings
Fate over them paused suspended on the hills.

¹ She raining

The Birth of the War-God*

CANTO TWO

But now in spheres above whose motions fixed
Confirm our cyclic steps, a cry arose
Anarchic. Strange disorders threatened Space.
There was a tumult in the calm abodes,
A clash of arms, a thunder of defeat.
Hearing that sound our smaller physical home
Trembled in its pale circuits, fearing soon
The ethereal revolt might touch its stars.
Then were these knots of our toy orbits torn
And like a falling leaf this world might sink
From the high tree mysterious where it hangs
Between that voiceful and this silent flood.
For long a mute indifference had seized
The Lord of all; no more the Mother of forms
By the persuasion of her clinging arms
Bound him to bear the burden of her works.
Therefore with a slow dreadful confidence
Chaos had lifted his gigantic head.
His movement stole, a shadow on the skies,
Out of the dark inconscience where he hides.
Breaking the tread of the eternal dance
Voices were heard life's music shudders at,
Thoughts were abroad no living mind can bear,
Enormous rhythms had disturbed the gods
Of which they knew not the stupendous law,
And taking new amorphous giant shapes
Desires the primal harmonies repel
Fixed dreadful eyes upon their coveted heavens.
Awhile they found no form could clothe their strength,
No spirit who could brook their feet of fire
Gave them his aspirations for their home.
Only in the invisible heart of things
A dread unease and expectation lived,
Which felt immeasurable energies
In huge revolt against the established world.

But now awake to the fierce nether gods
 Tarak the Titan rose; and the gods fled
 Before him driven in a luminous rout.
 Rumours of an unalterable defeat
 Astonished heaven. Like a throng of stars
 Drifting through night before the clouds of doom,
 Like golden leaves hunted by dark-winged winds
 They fled back to their old delightful seats,
 Nor there found refuge. Bent to a Titan yoke
 They suffered, till their scourged defeated thoughts
 Turned suplicants to a greater seat above.
 There the Self-born who weaves from his deep heart
 Harmonious spaces, sits concealed and watches
 The inviolable cycles of his soul.
 Thither ascending difficult roads of sleep
 Those colonists of heaven, the violent strength
 Of thunderous Indra flashing in their front,
 Climbed up with labour to their mighty Source.
 But as they neared, but as their yearning reached,
 Before them from the eternal secrecy
 A Form grew manifest from all their forms.
 A great brow seemed to face them everywhere,
 Eyes which survey the threads of Space looked forth,
 The lips whose words are Nature's ordinances
 Were visible. Then as at dawn the sun
 Smiles upon listless pools and at each smile
 A sleeping lotus wakes, so on them shone
 That glory and awoke to bloom and life
 The drooping beauty of those tarnished gods.
 Thus with high voices echoing his word
 They hymned their great Creator where he sits
 In the mystic lotus musing out his worlds:
 "Pure Spirit who wast before creation woke,
 Calm violence, destroyer, gulf of Soul,
 One, though divided in thy own conceit,
 Brahma we see thee here, who from thy deeps
 Of memory rescuest forgotten Time,
 We see thee, Yogin, on the solemn snows,

Shiva, withdrawing into thy hush the Word
 Which sang the fiat of the speeding stars,
 They pass like moths into thy flaming gaze.
 We adore thee, Vishnu, whose eternal steps
 To thee are casual footprints yet thy small base
 For luminous systems measureless to our mind,
 Whose difficult touch¹ thy light and happy smile
 Sustains, O wide discoverer of Space!
 To thee our adoration, triune Form!
 Imagining her triple mood thou gavest
 To thy illimitable Nature play.
 When nothing was except thy lonely soul
 In the ocean of thy being, then thou sowedst
 Thy seed infallible, O Spirit unborn,
 And from that seed a million unlike forms
 Thou variously hast made. Thy world that moves
 And breathes, thy world inconscient and inert,
 What are they but a corner of thy life?
 Thou hast made them and preservest; if thou slayst
 It is thy greatness, Lord. Mysterious source
 Of all, from thee we draw this light of mind,
 This mighty stirring and these failings dark.
 In thee we live, by thee act thy thoughts,
 Thou grewest thyself a Woman and divine.
 Thou grewest twain who wert the formless One,
 In one sole body thou wert Lord and Spouse
 To found the bliss which by division joins,
 Then borest thy being, a spirit who is Man.
 All are thy creatures: in the meeting vast
 Of thy swift Nature with thy brilliant Mind,
 Thou madest thy children, man and beast and god.
 Thy days and nights are numberless aeons; when
 Thou sleepest, all things sleep, O conscient God;
 Thy waking is a birth of countless souls.
 Thou art the womb from which all life arose.
 But who begot thee? thou the ender of things,
 But who has known thy end? Beginningless,

¹ Doubtful reading.

All our beginnings are thy infant powers,
Thou governest their middle and their close,
But over thee where is thy ruler, Lord?
None knoweth this; alone thou knowest thyself.
By thy ineffable identity
Knowledge approaches the unknown. We seek
Discoveries of ourselves in distant things
When first desire stirred, the seed of mind,
And to existence from the plenary void
Thy seers built the golden bridge of thought,
Out of thy uncreated Ocean's rest
By thy own energy thou sprangest forth,
Thou art thy action's path and thou its law,
Thou art thy own vast ending and its sleep,
The subtle and the dense, the flowing and firm,
The hammered close consistency of things,
The clings of the atoms, lightness, load,
What are all these things but thy shapes? Things seen
And sensible and things no thought has scanned,
Thou grewest, and all such pole and contrary
Art equally, O self-created God.
Thou hast become all this at thy desire;
And nothing is impossible in thee;
Creation is the grandeur of thy soul.
The chanting Veda and the threefold voice,
The sacrifice of works, the heavenly fruit,
The all-initiating OM, from thee,
From thee they sprang; out of thy ocean-heart
The rhythms of our fathomless Words were born,
They name thee Nature, she the mystic law
Of all things done and seen who drives us, mother
And giver of our spirit's seeking, won
In her enormous strength though won from her.
They know thee for Spirit, far above thou dwellest,
Pure of achievement, empty of her noise,
Silent spectator of thy infinite stage,
Unmoved in a serene tremendous calm
Thou viewest indifferently the grandiose scene,

O Deity from whom all deities are,
 O Father of the sowers of the world,
 O Master of the godheads of the law,
 Who so supreme but shall find thee above?
 Thou art the enjoyer and the sweet enjoyed,
 The hunter and the hunted in the worlds,
 The food, the eater, O sole Knower, sole Known!
 Sole Dreamer, this bright-imaged dream is thou
 Which we pursue in our miraculous minds;
 No other thinker is or other thought.
 O Lord, when we bow, who from thy being came,
 To thee in prayer, is it not thou who prayst,
 Spirit transcendent and eternal All?"
 Shedding a smile in whose benignancy
 Some sweet return like pleasant sunlight glowed,
 Then to the wise in heaven the original Seer,
 Maker and poet of the magic spheres,
 Sent chanting from his fourfold mouth a voice
 In which were justified the powers of sound,
 "Welcome, you excellent mightinesses of heaven,
 Who hold your right by self-supported strengths,
 The centuries for your arms. How have you risen
 Together in one movement of great Time!
 Wherefore bring you now your divine faces, robbed
 Of their old inborn light and beauty, pale
 As stars in winter mists dim-rayed and cold
 Swimming through the dumb melancholy of heaven?
 Why do I see your power dejected, frail
 Which bounded free and lionlike through heaven?
 The thunder in the Python-slayer's hand
 Flames not exultant, wan its darings droop,
 Quelled is the iridescence of its dance,
 Its dreadful beauty like a goddess shamed,
 Shrinks back into its violated powers.¹
 Varuna's unescaped and awful noose
 Hangs slack, impuissant and its ruthless coils
 Are a charmed serpent's folds, a child can smite

¹ pride.

The whirling lasso snare for Titan strengths.
 In Kuver's face there is defeat and pain.
 Low as an opulent tree its broken branch
 In an insulted sullen majesty
 His golden arm hangs down the knotted mace.
 Death's lord is wan and his tremendous staff
 Writes idly on the soil, the infallible stroke
 Is an extinguished terror, a charred line
 The awful script no tears could ever erase.
 O you pale sungods chill and shorn of fire,
 How like the vanity of painted suns
 You glow, where eyes can set their mortal ray
 Daring eternal splendours with their sight.
 O fallen rapidities, you lords of speed,
 With the resisted torrents' baffled roar
 Back on themselves recoil your stormy strengths,
 Why come you now like sad and stumbling souls,
 Who bounded free and lionlike through heaven?
 And you, O Rudras, how the matted towers
 Upon your heads sink their dishevelled pride!
 Dim hang your moons along the raking twines,
 No longer from your puissant throats your voice
 Challenges leonine the peaks of Night.
 Who has put down the immortal gods? What foe
 Stronger than strength could make eternal puissance vain,
 As if beyond imagination amidst
 The august immutability of law
 Some insolent exception unforeseen
 Had set in doubt the order of the stars?
 Speak, children, wherefore have you come to me?
 What prayer is silent on your lips? Did I
 Not make the circling suns and give to you
 The grandiose thoughts to keep. Guardians of life,
 Keepers of the inviolable round,
 Why come you to me with defeated eyes?
 Helpers, stand you in need of help?" He ceased,
 And like a rippling lotus lake whose flowers
 Stirred to a gentle wind, the Thunderer turned

Upon the Seer his thousand eyes of thought,
 The Seer who is His greater eye than these,
 He is the teacher of the sons of light,
 His speech inspired outleaps the labouring mind
 And opens truth's mysterious doors to gods.
 "Veiling by question thy all-knowing sense,
 Lord, thou hast spoken," Brihaspati began,
 "The symbol of our sad defeat and fall.
 What soul can hide himself from his own source?
 Thy vision looks through every eye and sees
 Beyond our seeings, thinks in every mind,
 Passing our pale peripheries of light.
 Tarak the Titan growing in thy smile
 As Ocean swells beneath the silent moon . . .
 Discouraged from the godhead of his rays
 In Tarak's town the Sun dares not to burn
 More than can serve to unseal the lotus' eyes
 In rippling waters of his garden pools.
 The mystic moon yields him its nectarous heart;
 Only the crescent upon Shiva's head
 Is safe from the desire of his soul.
 The violent winds forget their mightier song,
 Their breezes through his gardens dare not rush,
 Afraid to steal the flowers upon its boughs,
 And only near him sobbingly can pant
 A flattering coolness, dreadful brows to fan.
 The seasons are forbidden their cycling round.
 They are his garden-keepers and must fill
 The branches with chaotic wealth of flowers.
 Autumn and Spring and Summer joining hands
 . . .¹ him with their multitudinous sweets,
 Their married fragrances surprise the air.
 Ocean his careful servant brings to light
 The reposing jewels for his toys, his mine
 Of joy is the inexorable abyss.
 The serpent gods with blazing gems at night
 Hold up their hoods to be his living lamps,

¹ Blank in MS.

And even great Indra sends his messengers;
Flowers from the tree of bounty and of bliss
They bear to the one fierce and sovereign mind:
All his desires the boughs of heaven must give.
But how can kindness win that violent heart?
Only by chastisement it is appeased.
A tyrant grandeur is the Titan soul ...

(Incomplete)

MALAVICA AND THE KING
A Play by Kalidasa in Five Acts
(Rough Draft)

SCENE: THE PALACE IN VIDISHA

PERSONAGES

AGNIMITRA:	King of Vidisha, son of Puspamitra, Commander-in-chief and afterwards supplanter of the Maurya Dynasty in Vidisha.
VAHATAKA:	Prime minister of Vidisha
GAUTAMA:	The Brahmin Buffoon, companion of the King
GANADASA	} Ministers of acting, drama and opera, the one entertained by Queen Dharinie, the other by the King
HARADUTTA	
DHARINIE:	Queen of Vidisha
IRAVATIE:	Second queen and hitherto favourite wife of Agnimitra
MALAVICA:	A princess of the Vidurbhan house
VACOLAVALICA:	A handmaid of Queen Dharinie
COMUDICA:	Her friend
COUSHIQUE:	Widow of the Vidurbhan minister, become a religious mendicant
JAYASENA:	Keeper of the door in the royal seraglio
NIPOUNICA:	Handmaid and companion of Iravatie

ACT ONE

SCENE ONE

The Palace Grounds. Outside the Hall of Music.

INVOCATION

The One who is Almighty, he who showers
Upon his worshippers all wealth, all joy,
Yet wears himself a hide, nought richer; who
With his beloved is one body, and yet
The first of passionless ascetics stands;
Who in his eightfold form bears up the world,
Yet knows not egoism, he from you
Remove your darkness and reveal the light,
The paths of righteousness to reillumine.

*After the invocation the Manager speaks
Enter Assistant-Manager.*

MANAGER

Here, friend.

ASSISTANT-MANAGER

Behold me!

MANAGER

By the audience I am bid
To stage this high Mayday carnival to stage
The drama of Malavica and the King
Plotted by Kalidasa. Therefore begin
The overture.

ASSISTANT-MANAGER

Why, sir, this is most strange!
Are there not classics old, are there not works
Of Bhasa and Saumilla, famous plays,
Great Kaviputra's name and others many

That thus the audience honours, all these scorned,
A living poet's work?

MANAGER

Not well hast thou
Spoken in this, nor like a judging man.
For think, not all that's old is therefore good,
Nor must a poem straightway be condemned
Because 'tis new. The critic watches, hears,
Weighs patiently, then judges, but the fool
Follows opinion's beaten way and walks
By other's seeing.

ASSISTANT-MANAGER

Well, sir, you are the judge.

MANAGER

(Haste then, for ever since with bended head
The learned audience will I have accepted,
I have no ease till 'tis performed, but my mind
Haste like yon maiden's, Dharinie's attendant
Light-footed to her royal mistress' will.)¹

Exeunt. Enter Vacoolavalica.

VACOOVALICA

My lady bids me seek out Ganadasa
(Her Master of the Stage, from him to learn
How in the Dance of Double Entendre progresses
Our Malavica, a recent scholar yet)²
Here in this Hall of Music.

Enter another handmaid with a ring in her palm.

¹ Being to the audience' will already pledged,
To absolve me, even as yonder maidens are,
Attendants of Queen Dharinie to do her will.

² Her Master of the Stage and know from him
How Malavica in her recent study
Progresses of the dance called Mime Antique

Comudica,

What, have you taken to religion then
Or why do you sail past me with an eye
Abstracted, not one glance for me?

COMUDICA

Forgive me,

(Vacoovavavica! I was absorbed
In this delightful jewel—on this ring
Fresh from the jeweller's hands for our great lady
Look 'tis a Python seal!)¹
Therefore I have offended.

VACOOVAVALICA

O Heavens, how lovely!

Well might you have no eyes for aught else, look!
Your fingers are all blossoming with the jewel!
The rays of light are golden filaments
Just breaking out of bud.

COMUDICA

Whither bound?

VACOOVAVALICA

To our stage master. Our lady seeks to know
What sort of pupil Malavica proves,
How quick to learn.

COMUDICA

Oh! is it true, the rumour

That Malavica by this study kept
Far from his eye, was by our lord the King
Seen lately?

¹ I was absorbed in the delightful jewel —
Look! 'tis a Python seal! here on this ring
Just ready from the jeweller's for the Queen.

VACOOALAVALICA

Seen — but in a picture, close
Beside my lady.

COMUDICA

How did it chance?

VACOOALAVALICA

I will tell you.

My lady in the painting-school was seated
Studying the marvellous colours that enhue
The Master's great design — when suddenly
My lord comes on her.

COMUDICA

Well, what followed?

VACOOALAVALICA

Greeting.

Then sitting down by her he scanned the painting,
There saw of all the attendants Malavica
Nearest the Queen and asked of her.

COMUDICA

His words?

VACOOALAVALICA

“This face the like of which I not remember,
And yet she stands just by you — who is she?”

COMUDICA

Beauty's indeed a magnet to the affections
And seizes at first sight. My lady?

VACOOALAVALICA

Made

No answer: he in some astonishment
Urged her with questions. Then my lady's sister

The princess Vasouluxmy all in wonder
Breaks out "Why, brother, this is Malavica!"

COMUDICA

Oh, good! How like the child's sweet innocence!
Afterwards?

VACOO LAVALICA

Why, what else? Since then still more
Is Malavica from the royal eye
Kept close secluded.

COMUDICA

Well, I should not stop you
Upon your errand. I too will to my lady
Carry this ring.

Exit.

VACOO LAVALICA

Who comes out from the Hall
Of Music? Oh 'tis Ganadasa himself.
I will accost him.

Enter Ganadasa.

GANADASA

Each worker, doubtless, his own craft exalts
Practised by all his sires before him: yet not
A mere vainglory is the drama's praise.
For drama is to the immortal Gods
A sacrifice of beauty visible.
The Almighty in his body most divine
Where Male and Female join, parted it
Twixt sweet and terrible. Drama unites
In one fair view the whole conflicting world,
Pictures man's every action, his complex
Emotions infinite makes harmony;
So that each temperament in its own taste
Howsoever various, gathers from the stage,

Rapt with some pleasing echo of itself,
Peculiar pleasure. Thus one selfsame art
Meets in their nature's wants most various minds.

VACOOALAVALICA

Obeisance to the noble Ganadasa!

GANADASA

Live long, my child.

VACOOALAVALICA

My lady sent me, sir,
To ask how Malavica makes progress. Sir,
Does she learn quickly yet?

GANADASA

Tell my lady,
No swifter brain, no apter delicate taste
Has ever studied with me. In one word,
Whate'er emotion to the dance translated
I show the child, that she improvising seems
To teach the teacher.

VACOOALAVALICA (*aside*)

Victory! I foresee
Iratie already conquered! (*aloud*) Sir,
That pupil gains the very aim of study
Of whom her master says so much.

GANADASA

Vacoola,
Because such genius is most rare, I ask thee:
Whence did my lady bring this matchless wonder?

VACOOALAVALICA

The brother of my lady in a womb
Less noble got, who for my lord commands
His watchful frontier fortress by the stream

Mundaquinie, Virasena to his great sister,
For mistresshood and office in the Arts
Deemed worthy, sent her.

GANADASA (*aside*)

So rare her form and face,
Her nature too so modest and so noble,
I cannot but conceive that of no mean
Material was composed this beauty. (*aloud*) Child,
I shall be famous by her! The Master's art
Into a brilliant mind projected turns
To power original, as common rain
Dropping into the ocean-harboured shell
Empearls and grows a rareness.

VACOO LAVALICA

Where is she, sir?

GANADASA

Tired with much study in the five parts of gesture
She rests yonder enjoying the cool breezes
Beside the window that o'erlooks the lake.
Seek for your friend.

VACOO LAVALICA

Sir, will you permit me
To tell her how much you are pleased with her?
Such praise will be a spur indeed.

GANADASA

Go, child.
Embrace your friend. I too will to my house
Taking the boon of this permitted leisure.

SCENE TWO

A room in the palace. The King seated with the minister Vahataka in attendance on him. Vahataka reading a letter. The King's attendants stand apart at one side.

AGNIMITRA (*seeing that the Minister has finished reading the letter*)

Well, Vahataka, what answers the Vidurbhan?

VAHATAKA

His own destruction!

AGNIMITRA

I would hear the letter.

VAHATAKA

Thus runs his present missive: — In these terms
Your Highness has sent to me; “Madhavasena,
Thy father's brother's son, bound to my court
For the fulfilment of contracted bonds,
Within thy dungeons lies: for by the way
The governor of thy frontiers leaped on him
And harried. Therefore if thou regardest me,
Him with his wife and sister straight unbind.”
To which I answer thus; “Your Highness knows
What conduct kings should use to princes born
Their equals. In this quarrel then I look
From your great name for just neutrality.
Touching his sister, she in the quick scuffle
Of capture disappeared, whom to seek out
I shall not want in my endeavours. But if
Your Highness must indeed release my cousin,
Then hear my only terms. First from your dungeons
The Premier of the Maurya princes loose
And brother of my queen; this done, at once
Are Madhavasena's farther bonds excused.”

AGNIMITRA (*enraged*)

How! dares the weakling trade with me in favour?

Knows he himself so little? Vahataka,
 Command towards Vidurbha the division
 That under Virasena new-mobilized
 Stands prompt to arms. I will exterminate
 This man who rises up my enemy.
 Vidurbha was my natural foeman first,
 Now he grows such in action.

VAHATAKA

As my lord wills.

AGNIMITRA

Vahataka, but what thinkst thou of it?

VAHATAKA

Your Highness speaks by the strict rule of statecraft:¹
 Then is a foeman easiest to pluck out
 When new upon his throne; for then his roots
 Have not sunk deep into his people's hearts,
 And he is like an infant shooting tree
 Loose in its native earth, soon therefore uprooted.

AGNIMITRA

Wise is the Tantra's author and his word
 A gospel. Let us seize this plea to set
 Our war in motion.

VAHATAKA

I will so give order.

*Exit Vahataka, the attendants take their places
 according to their offices; enter Gautama.*

GAUTAMA (*to himself*)

Now can I tell the King that not in vain
 He sought for my assistance: "Gautama," he said
 Calling me, "know you not some exquisite cunning
 By which the face of Malavica seen

¹ Your Highness speaks within the rules of policy: or by the rule politic:

At first by chance on a dumb counterfeit
 With the dear life may bless my vision?" Well,
 By this I have planned somewhat worth the telling.

AGNIMITRA

Here comes my Premier in another field
 Of policy.

GAUTAMA

Hail to the King.

AGNIMITRA

Be seated.

Well, Gautama, and has your eye of wisdom
 Caught sight of any plan?

GAUTAMA

Ask me, my lord,

About the accomplishment.

AGNIMITRA

How!

GAUTAMA

In your ear, Sir.

AGNIMITRA

O admirable! Thou hast indeed devised
 The cunningest adroitness! Now I dare
 To hope for things impossible, since thou
 Art of my counsels part. In difficulty
 How necessary is a helpful friend;
 For when one is befriended, every hindrance
 Is turned to ease. Even so without a lamp
 The eye beholds not in night's murky gloom
 Its usual objects.

VOICE (*within*)

Enough, enough, thou braggart.

Before the King himself shall be decision
Of less and greater 'twixt us twain.

AGNIMITRA

Listen!

This is the flower of your good tree of counsel!

GAUTAMA

The fruit's not far behind.

Enter Maudgalya.

MAUDGALYA

The Premier, Sire,
Announces that Your Highness' will ere this
Is put in motion. Here besides the great
Stage-Masters, Haradutta and Ganadasa,
Storming with anger, mad with emulation,
Themselves like two incarnate passions, ask
To see Your Highness.

AGNIMITRA

Admit them.

MAUDGALYA

'Tis done, my lord.

Exit and re-enter with Haradutta and Ganadasa.

This way, this way, noble and worthy signiors.

GANADASA

How quelling-awful in its majesty
Is the great brow and aspect of a King!
For nowise unfamiliar is this face
Of Agnimitra, no, nor stern, but full
Of beauty and kindness, yet with awe I near him.
So Ocean in his vast unresting surge
Stales never, but each changing second brings
New aspects of his grandeur to the eye
That lives with waves even as this kingly brow does
Each time I see it.

HARADUTTA

For 'tis no mortal greatness

But God's own glory in an earthly dwelling.

Lo, I admitted by the janitor

Of princes, led to the foot of his great throne

By one that ever moves near to his lustre,

Feel yet forbidden by his silent glories

That force me to avert my dazzled gaze.

MAUDGALYA

Here is my lord. Approach him, worthies.

BOTH

Hail,

Our sovereign!

AGNIMITRA

Welcome to both. Chairs for these signiors?

What brings into the presence at this hour

Usual to study both the high stage-Masters?

GANADASA

Sir, hear me! from a great and sacred teacher

My craft was studied. I have justified

My genius in the scenic pomps of dance.

The King and Queen accept me.

AGNIMITRA

Surely I know it.

GANADASA

Yet being what I am, I have been taxed,

Insulted, censured by this Haradutta:

"You are not worth the dust upon my shoes",

Before the greatest subject in the land

Thus did he scorn me.

HARADUTTA

He first began detraction

Crying to me, "As well, sir, might your worship
 Compete with me as one particular puddle
 Equal itself to Ocean." Therefore, my lord,
 Judge twixt my art and his as well in science
 As in the execution. Than Your Highness
 We cannot ask a more discerning critic
 Or just examiner.

GAUTAMA

A good proposal.

GANADASA

First-class. And now, my lord, attend and judge.

AGNIMITRA

A moment's patience, gentlemen. The Queen
 Might tax our verdict as a partial judgment.
 Therefore in all ways it were better far
 She too should watch this trial, Caushiquie
 Will give her learned aid.

GAUTAMA

Well urged, my lord.

GANADASA AND HARADUTTA

Your Highness' pleasure shall command our patience.

AGNIMITRA

Then go, Maudgalya, let Her Highness know
 All that has chanced and call her to us here
 With Caushiquie.

MAUDGALYA

I go, my lord.

Exit and re-enter with the Queen and Caushiquie.

This way,

My lady Dharinie.

DHARINIE

Good mother, tell me

What do you think of this so sudden passion
Twixt Haradutta and Ganadasa ?

CAUSHIQUIE

Idly

You fear your side's defeat, since in no point
Is Ganadasa less than his opponent.¹

DHARINIE

'Tis so, but the King's favour weighs him down
And wrests pre-eminence to the other.

CAUSHIQUIE

Forget not

That you too bear the style of majesty.
Think² that you are an Empress! If fire
From the sun's grace derives his flaming glories,
Night too the imperial darkness solemnises
The moon with splendour.

GAUTAMA

Hawk, hawk,³ my lord!

Here comes the Queen and with her our own
Back-scratcher in Love's wrestling match, the learned
Dame Caushiquie.

AGNIMITRA

I see her. How fair, how noble

My lady shines adorned with holy symbols
And Caushiquie before her, anchorite.
Religion's self incarnate so might look
When high philosophy comes leading her
Into the hearts of men.

¹ Is Ganadasa second to his rival.

² Remember ³ 'Ware, 'ware,

CAUSHIQUE

Greeting Your Highness.

AGNIMITRA

Mother, I greet thee.

CAUSHIQUE

Live a hundred years
Blessed with two queens alike in sweet submission
And mothers of heroic births, the Earth
That bears thy nation and the wife who loves thee.

DHARINIE

Victory to the King!

AGNIMITRA

Welcome, my Queen.
Pray you sit down, good mother. In this collision
Of two great masters, it is just that you
Should take the critic's chair.

CAUSHIQUE (*smiling*)

Your Highness seeks
To laugh at me. For who is that mad man
Would leave behind his great metropolis
To test his jewels in some petty village?

AGNIMITRA

No, no! You are the learned Caushique,
Then too the Queen and I are both suspect
As partial judges.

GANADASA AND HARADUTTA

This is no less than truth.
Unbiased is the learned mother's mind.
Her judgment shall, by merit only swayed,
Leave no reserve behind.

AGNIMITRA

Begin debate.

CAUSHIQUE

Not thus, my lord.

The soul of drama is in its performance,
And not for tilting theories is a field.
What says my lady?

DHARINIE

If I have any voice,
I say I do dislike the whole debate.

GANADASA

Her Highness must not dwarf me in her thinkings,
Misdeeming me inferior to my equal.

GAUTAMA

Come, come, my lady, do not let us lose
The sport of these great rams butting each other.
Why should they draw their salaries for nothing?

DHARINIE

You always loved a quarrel.

GAUTAMA

Good mouse, no.

Rather I am your only peacemaker.
When two great elephants go mad with strength
And counter, until one of them is beaten
There's no peace in the forest.

AGNIMITRA

But surely, mother,

You have already seen either's performance,
Judged of their action's each particular
And studied grace in every movement.

CAUSHIQUIE

Surely.

AGNIMITRA

What else is't then of which yet uninstructed
You need conviction?

CAUSHIQUIE

This. One man has art,
Other but science; performance admirable
Distinguishes the first, but in himself
Is rooted and confined, the other's skill
Ranging in swift transmission lightens forth,
(At home inapt and poor: who perfect in both
Him at the head we put of art's instructors.)¹

GAUTAMA

Sirs, you have heard the mother's argument,
The brief and marrow being this that judgment
Goes by your visible proof of good instruction
To shape the pupil in her art.

HARADUTTA

This test

We both approve.

GANADASA

So then it stands, my lady?

DHARINIE

Thus if a pupil, brainless or inapt
Blur in the act the Master's deft instruction,
Rests then the blot upon the Teacher?

¹ Dark at home; but him who is in both
Perfect, to do and teach, we count alone
A master and the head of all his craft.

AGNIMITRA

Madam,

So still 'tis judged. He who a block unworthy
Accepts to hew from it a masterpiece
Shows well the lightness of his wit.

DHARINIE

What more now?

Too much already have I given my lord the rein,
Feeding his eagerness with my indulgence.
Desist, desist; this is an idle movement
And shapes to nothing good.

GAUTAMA

Well said, my lady.

Come, Ganadasa, eat in peace your sweetmeats
Upon the Muses' day, a safe renown
Enjoying while you teach our girls to dance.
But in this path of rugged emulation
To stumble's easy and disgrace expects you.
Caution were good.

GANADASA

Indeed my lady's words
Lend themselves to no other fair construction.

(Incomplete)

The Line of Raghu*

For mastery of word and sense I bow to the Pair close-wedded as word and sense, the parents of the world, the Mountain's child and the Mighty Lord.

Wide is the gulf between the race born of the Sun and a mind thus scantily stored! I am one that in his infatuation would cross in a raft the difficult ocean.

Dull of wit, yet aspiring to poetic glory I shall expose myself to mockery like a dwarf who in his greed lifts up his arms to a fruit meant only for the giant's grasp.

Yet into the story of this race a door of speech has been made by the inspired minds of old and through which I can enter as a thread can pass through a gem which the diamond's point has bored.

Therefore this tale of the Raghus, the kings pure from their birth, they who left not work till work's fruit appeared, they who were masters of earth to the ocean's bound and their chariot journeyed even to the heavens.

Ever according to the ordinance they offered to the sacrificial flames and honoured ever the suppliant with his whole desire, they meted the punishment of the guilty by his offence, they were wakeful to the hour.

They gathered riches only to give and spoke little that they might speak nought but truth and conquered only for glory and were householders only to prolong the race.

In childhood students of knowledge, in youth seekers after enjoyment, in old age pursuers of the sage's path and in their end left by Yoga their bodies,—

The tale of their line I will tell though meagre my wealth of speech, for I am impelled to this rashness by their virtues that have touched my ear.

The wise should lend ear to it who are cause that good is discerned from bad, for it is by fire that the purity of gold is marked or else the darkness of its alloy.¹

(Incomplete)

* A translation of the first ten verses from the *Raghuvamsha* of Kalidasa.

¹ dullness of hue.

THE CENTURY OF LIFE

**The Nitishataka of Bhartrihari
Freely rendered into English verse**

THE CENTURY OF LIFE

I had at first entitled the translation “The Century of Morals”, but the Sanskrit word Niti has a more complex sense. It includes also policy and worldly wisdom, the rule of successful as well as the law of ideal conduct and gives scope for observation of all the turns and forces determining the movement of human character and action.

The Shataka or ‘Century’ should normally comprise a hundred epigrams, but the number that has come down to us is considerably more. The excess is probably due to accretion and the mistaken ascription to Bhartrihari of verses not of his making but cast in his spirit and manner.

INVOCATION

To the calm Light inviolable all hail
Whom Time divides not, nor Space measures, One,
Boundless and Absolute who is alone,
The eternal vast I am immutable!

ON FOOLS AND FOLLY

Love's Folly

She with whom all my thoughts dwell, is averse,—
 She loves another. He whom she desires
Turns to a fairer face. Another worse
 For me afflicted is with deeper fires.
Fie on my love and me and him and her!
Fie most on Love, this madness' minister!

The Middle Sort

Easily shalt thou the ignorant appease;
 The wise more easily is satisfied;
 But one who builds his raw and foolish pride
On a little lore not God himself can please.

Obstinacy in Folly

Go, with strong violence thy jewel tear
 From the fierce alligator's yawning jaws;
Swim the wild surges when they lash the air
 Billow on billow thundering without pause;
Or set an angry serpent in thy hair
For garland! Sooner shalt thou gain their ruth
Than conquer the fool's obstinate heart with truth.

On the Same

Nay, thou wilt find sweet oil in the sea-sands,
Press them but firmly in thy strenuous hands:
The desert-born mirage shall slake thy thirst,
Or wandering through the earth thou shalt be first
To find the horns of hares, who think'st to school
With reason the prejudgments of the fool.

Obstinacy in Vice

Yea, wouldst thou task thy muscles then the dread
Strength of the mammoth to constrain with thread,
Canst thou the diamond's adamant heart disclose
With the sweet edge and sharpness of a rose,
With a poor drop of honey wondrously
Wilt thou make sweetness of the wide salt sea,
Who dream'st with sugared perfect words to gain
The dishonest to the ways of noble men.

Folly's Wisdom

One cloak on ignorance absolutely fits;
Justly if worn, some grace is even lent;
Silence in sessions of the learned sits
On the fool's brow like a bright ornament.

A Little Knowledge

When I was with a little knowledge cursed,
 Like a mad elephant I stormed about
 And thought myself all-knowing. But when deep-versed
 Rich minds some portion of their wealth disbursed
 My poverty to raise, then for a lout
 And dunce I knew myself, and the insolence went
 Out from me like a fever violent.

Pride of Littleness

The dog upon a meatless bone and lank
 Horrible, stinking, vile, with spittle wet,
 Feasts and with heaven's nectar gives it rank.
 Then though the ambrosial God should by him stand,
 He is not awed nor feels how base his fate,
 But keeps his ghastly gettings more in hand.
 The little nature deems its small things great
 And virtue scorns and strength and noble state.

Facilis Descensus

In highest heavens the Ganges' course began;
 From Shiva's loftiest brow to the white snows
 She tumbles, nor on the cold summits can,
 But headlong seeks the valley and the rose.
 Thence downward still the heaven-born waters ran.
 Say not, "Is this that Ganges? can her place
 Be now so low?" Rather when man at all
 From heavenly reason swerves, he sinks from grace
 Swiftly. A thousand voices downward call,
 A thousand doors are opened to his fall.

The Great Incurable

For all ill things there is a cure; the fire's
 Red spleen cool water shall at once appease,
And noontide's urgent rays the sunshade tires,
 And there are spells for poison, and disease
Finds in the leech's careful drugs its ease.
The raging elephant yet feels the goad,
 And the dull ass and obstinate bullock rule
Cudgel and stick and force upon their road.
 For one sole plague no cure is found — the fool.

Bodies without Mind

Some minds there are to Art and Beauty dead,
 Music and poetry on whose dull ear
Fall barren. Horns grace not their brutish head,
 Tails too they lack, yet is their beasthood clear.
That Heaven ordained not upon grass their feasts,
Good fortune is this for the other beasts.

The Human Herd

Whose days to neither charity nor thought
 Are given, nor holy deeds nor virtues prized,
Nor learning, such to cumber earth were brought.
 How in the human world as men disguised
This herd walk grazing, higher things unsought!

A Choice

Better were this, to roam in deserts wild,
On difficult mountains and by desolate pools,
A savage life with wild beasts reconciled,
Than Paradise itself mated with fools.

ON WISDOM

Poets and Princes

Unhonoured in a State when poets dwell
Whose fames range wider than its strong-winged birds,
Whose utterance is for grace adorable
Of chosen speech and art of noble words,
Whose wisdom hundreds come to hear and tell;
The world that nation's chief for dullness blames,
For poets without wealth are rich and kings:
When values low depreciate costly things,
'Tis the appraiser's shame and not the gem's.

True Wealth

Knowledge is truest wealth, not this which dies, —
It cherishes a strange deep peace within
Unutterably, nor the robber's eyes
Ever shall find it out; to give it is gain,
It then grows most when parted with, and poured
With sleepless hand fills gloriously its lord.
Worlds perish may, Knowledge survives their fall;
This wise men cherish; O Kings, your pride recall,
You have but wealth, they inner royalty
Of lordliest wisdom. Who with these shall vie?

The Man of Knowledge

Scorn not the man of knowledge to whose eyes
The secrets of the world have been revealed!
Thou canst not hold his spirit from the skies
By fortune light nor all that earth can yield.
The furious tusker with new dark rut stained
Were sooner by a lotus-thread detained.

Fate and Wisdom

What can the extreme wrath of hostile Fate?
The swan that floats in the cool lotus-wood
She from his pleasant mansion can exclude.
His fame remains, in food adulterate¹
Who could the better choose, the worse discern.
Fate cannot touch glory that mind can earn.

The Real Ornament

It is not armlets that adorn a man,
Nor necklaces all crammed with moonbright pearls,
Nor baths, nor ointments, nor arranged curls.
'Tis art of excellent speech that only can
Adorn him: jewels perish, garlands fade;
This only abides and glitters undecayed.

The Praises of Knowledge

Knowledge is nobler beauty in a man
Than features: 'tis his hidden hoard of price;
This the long roll of Masters first began;
Pleasure it brings, just fame and constant bliss,
And is a helping friend in foreign lands,
And is a very god with puissant hands.
Knowledge, not wealth in great men is adored,
Nor better than a beast the mind unstored.

¹ The swan was supposed to have the power of separating milk from water when the two were mixed.

Comparisons

Men cherish burning anger in their hearts,
Yet look without to find if they have foes.
Who sweet forbearance has, requires no arts
Of speech; persuading silently he goes.

Why fear the snake when in thy kindness bask
Men evil, or a fire while kinsmen jar
Burning thy house! From heaven no medicines ask
To heal a troubled mind, where true friends are.

Nor seek for ornaments, noble modest shame
Being with thee, nor for wealth when wisdom's by.
Who needs a kingdom when his mind can claim
A golden realm in sweetest poetry?

Worldly Wisdom

Have mercy for all men, for thy own race
Have kindness, for the cunning cunning have,
Affection for the good, and politic ways
For princes: for thy foes a spirit brave,
Patience for elders, candour for the wise:
Have skilful ways to steal out women's hearts.
Who shine here, masters in these social arts,
In them the human scheme deep-rooted lies.

Good Company

Company of good men is a very soil
 Of plenty, yielding all high things to man.
 The dull weight of stupidity it can
 Lift from the mind and cleanse of falsehood vile,
 Sprinkling truth's fragrance sweet upon the speech;
 And it can point out greatness' rising path,
 And drive out sinful lust and drive out wrath,
 And a calm gladness to the senses teach;
 Glory that to the very stars would climb,
 Can give thee, conquering thy heart and time.

The Conquests of Sovereign Poetry

Who are the conquerors? Not mere lords of land,
 But kihigly poets, whose high victories
 Are perfect works; men's hearts at their command
 Are wholly; at their will the passions rise.
 Glory their body is, which Death's pale fear
 Afflicts not, nor abhorred Age comes near.

Rarities

Whatever most the soul on earth desires,
 Are rarities, as, a virtuous son; a wife
 Who wholly loves; Fortune that never tires;
 A friend whose sweet affection waters life;
 A master pleased; servants that ne'er deceive;
 A charming form; a mind no sorrows grieve;
 A mouth in wisdom proved that makes not strife.
 These to his favourites being pleased allows
 Hari, of whom the world grows amorous.

The Universal Religion

All varying Scriptures that the earth divide,
Have yet one common rule that need o'erride
Dogma nor rite, nor any creed offend;
All to their heavens by one sole path intend.
'Tis this: — Abstain from slaughter; others' wealth
To covet cease, and in thy speech no stealth
Of falsehood harbour; give in season due
According to thy power; from ribald view
Or word keep far of woman, wife or maid;
Be mild obedience to thy elders paid;
Dam longing like a river; each act beneath
Show mercy and kindness to all things that breathe.

Great and Meaner Spirits

Some from high action through base fear refrain;
The path is difficult, the way not plain.
Others more noble to begin, are stayed
By a few failures. Great spirits undismayed
Abandon never what once to do they swore.
Baffled and beaten back, they spring once more,
Buffeted and borne down, rise up again,
And, full of wounds, come on like iron men.

The Narrow Way

Kind to be, yet immutably be just;
To find all baser act too hard to do, —
Yea, though not doing shatter our life to dust; —
Contempt that will not to the evil sue;
Not to the friend that's poor our need to state;
Baffled by fortune still erect to stand;
Being small to tread in footprints of the great;
Who for weak men such rugged path has planned,
Harder to tread than edge of this sharp brand?

ON PRIDE AND HEROISM

Lion-Heart

The manèd lion, first of kingly names,
Magnanimous and famed, though worn with age,
Wasted with hunger, blunted his keen edge
And low the splendid spirit in him flames,
Not therefore will with wretched grass assuage
His famished pangs-as graze the deer and bull.
Rather his dying breath collects desire,
Leaping once more from shattered brows to pull
Of the great tuskèd elephants mad with ire
His sovereign banquet fierce and masterful.

The Way of the Lion

The dog with a poor bone is satisfied,
Meatless, with bits of fat and sinew greased,
Nor is his hunger with such remnants eased.
Not so the kingly lion in his pride!
He lets the jackal go grazed by his claw
And slays the tuskèd kings. Such Nature's law;
Each being pitches his high appetite
At even with his courage and his might.

A Contrast

The dog may servile fawn upon the hand
That feeds him, with his tail at wag, nor pain
In crouching and his abject rollings bland
With upward face and belly all in vain:
The elephant to countless flatteries
Returns a quiet look in steadfast eyes.

The Wheel of Life

The world goes round and, as returns the wheel,
 All things that die must yet again be born :
 His birth is birth indeed by whose return
 His race and country grandeur's summits scale.

Aut Caesar aut Nullus

Two fates alone strong haughty minds endure,
 Of worth convinced; — on the world's forehead proud
 Singly to bloom exalted o'er the crowd,
 Or wither in the wilderness obscure.

Magnanimity

My brother, exalt thyself though in o'erthrow!
 Five noble planets through these spaces roll,
 Jupiter is of them; — not on these he leaps,
 Rahu,¹ the immortal demon of eclipse,
 In his high magnanimity of soul.

Smit with God's thunders only his head he keeps,
 Yet seizes in his brief and gloomy hour
 Of vengeance the great luminous kings of heaven,
 Day's Lord and the light to whom night's soul is given;
 He scorns to strive with things of lesser power.

¹ Rahu, the Titan, stole or seized part of the nectar which rose from the world-ocean at the churning by the Gods and Titans and was appropriated by the Gods. For this violence he was smitten in two by the discus of Vishnu; but as he had drunk the nectar, he remains immortal and seeks always to revenge himself by swallowing the Sun and Moon who had detected his theft. The Tortoise mentioned in the next epigram upheld the mountain Mandar, which was the stick of the churning. The Great Snake, Ananta, was the rope of the churning, he on whose hood the earth now rests.

The Motion of Giants

On his wide hood as on a painted shield
 Bears up the rangèd worlds, Infinite, the Snake;
 Him in the giant midmost of his back
 The eternal Tortoise brooks, whom the great field
 Of vague and travelling waters ceaselessly
 Encompass with the proud unfathomed sea.
 O easy might and marvellous of the great,
 Whose simplest action is yet vast with fate!

Mainak

O child of the immortal mountains hoar,
 Mainak,¹ far better had this been to bear
 The bleeding wings that furious Indra tore,
 The thunder's scars that with disastrous roar
 Vomiting lightnings made the heavens one flare, —
 Not, not this refuge in the cool wide sea
 While all thy suffering people cried to thee.

Noble Resentment

The crystal hath no sense disgrace to know,
 Yet blazes angry when the sun's feet rouse;
 Shall man the high-spirited, the orgulous,
 Brook insult vile from fellow or from foe?

¹ The mountains had formerly wings and could move about, — to the great inconvenience of everybody: Indra, attacked by them, smote off their wings with the thunderbolt. Mainak, son of Himalay, took refuge in the sea.

Age and Genius

Nature, not age is the high spirit's cause
That burns in mighty hearts and genius high.
Lo, on the rutting elephant's tuskèd jaws
The infant lion leaps invincibly.

ON WEALTH

The Prayer to Mammon

Cast birth into the nether Hell; let all
The useless tribe of talents farther fall;
Throw virtue headlong from a rock and turn
High nobleness into the fire to burn;
The heroic heart let some swift thunder rive,
Our enemy that hinders us to live;
Wealth let us only keep; this one thing less,
All those become as weeds and emptiness.

A Miracle

Behold a wonder mid the sons of men!
The man is undiminished he we knew,
Unmaimed his organs and his senses keen
Even as of old, his actions nowise new,
Voice, tone and words the same we heard before,
The brain's resistless march too as of yore;
Only the flattering heat of wealth is gone,
And lo! the whole man changed, his praises done.

Wealth the Sorcerer

He who has wealth, has birth; gold who can spill,
Is scholar, doctor, critic, what you will;
For who has golden coin, has golden tongue,
Is glorious, gracious, beautiful and young;
All virtues, talents, fames to gold repair
And lodge in gold leaving the poor man bare.

Two Kinds of Loss

These things are deaths, ill-counsel ruining kings,
 The son by fondling spoiled, by him the race,
 Attachment, to the sage's heart that clings,
 And natural goodness marred by company base,
 The Brahmin by scant study unbrahminised,
 Sweet shame by wine o'erthrown, by wandering long
 Affection waning, friendship true unprized,
 Tillage uncared, good fortune follies wrong;
 But wealth in double way men may reject,
 Nobly by giving, poorly by neglect.

The Triple Way of Wealth

Three final roads wealth takes and only three,
 To give, enjoy or lose it utterly:
 And his whose miser hand to give is slow
 Nor yet enjoys, the worst third way shall go.

The Beauty of Giving

Be not a miser of thy strength and store;
 Oft in a wounded grace more beauty is.
 The jewel which the careful graveurs score;
 The sweet fair girl-wife broken with bridal bliss,
 The rut-worn tusker, the autumnal stream
 With its long beaches dry and slender flood;
 The hero wreathed with victory's diadem,
 Adorned with wounds and glorious with his blood;
 The moon's last disc; rich men of their bright dross,
 By gifts disburdened, fairer shine by loss.

Circumstance

There is no absoluteness in objects. See

This indigent man aspire as to a prize
To handfuls of mere barley-bread! yet he
A few days past, fed full with luxuries,
Held for a trifle earth and all her skies.

Not in themselves are objects great or small,
But circumstance works on the elastic mind,
To widen or contract. The view is all,
And by our inner state the world's defined.

Advice to a King

He fosters, King, the calf who milks the cow,
And thou who takest of the wide earth tax,
Foster the people; with laborious brow
And sleepless vigil strive till nought it lacks.
Then shall the earth become thy faery tree
Of plenty, pleasure, fame, felicity.

Policy

Often she lies, wears sometimes brow of truth,
Kind sometimes, sometimes ravening-merciless;
Now open-handed, full of bounty and grace,
And now a harpy; now sweet honey and ruth
Flows from her tongue, now menace harsh or stern;
This moment with a bottomless desire
She gathers millions in, the next will tire, —
Endless expense takes prodigally its turn.
Thus like a harlot changes momentarily
In princes the chameleon Policy.

The Uses of High Standing

Men highly placed by six good gifts are high
The first is noble liberality;
The second, power that swift obedience brings;
Service to holy men and holy things
Comes next; then fame; protection then of friends;
Pleasure in pleasant things the great list ends.
Whose rising with these six is unallied,
What seeks he by a mighty prince's side?

Remonstrance with the Suppliant

What the Creator on thy forehead traced
As on a plate of bronze indelibly,
Expect that much or little, worst or best,
Wherever thou dwell, nobly or wretchedly,
Since thou shalt not have less, though full of pain
In deserts waterless mid savage men
Thou wander sole; nor on Olympus hoar
Ranked amid mighty Gods shalt thou have more.
Therefore be royal-hearted still and bold,
O man, nor thy proud crest in vain abase
Cringing to rich men for their gathered gold.
From the small well or ocean fathomless
The jar draws equally what it can hold.

The Rain-lark to the Cloud

You opulent clouds that in high heavens ride,
Is't fame you seek? but surely all men know
To you the darting rain-larks homage owe!
Hold you then back your showers, because your pride
By our low suings must be gratified?

To the Rain-lark

O rain-lark, rain-lark, flitting near the cloud,
Attentive hear, winged friend, a friendly word.
All vapours are not like, the heavens that shroud
Darkening; some drench the earth for noble fruit,
Some are vain thunderers wandering by with bruit:
Sue not to each thou seest then, O bird;
If humbly entreat thou must, let few have heard.

ON THE WICKED

Evil Nature

A heart unpitying, brawling vain and rude,
An eye to others' wives and wealth inclined,
Impatience of true friends and of the good, —
These things are self-born in the evil mind.

The Human Cobra

Avoid the evil man with learning crowned.
Lo, the dread cobra, all his hood a gem
Of glory, yet he crawls upon the ground.
Fear'st thou him less for that bright diadem?

Virtue and Slander

A spiritless dull block call modesty;
Love of long fasts and holy vows must be
Mere shows, yon pure heart but a Pharisee,
The world-renouncing sage a fool; the high
World-conquering hero's taxed with cruelty.
This sweet word's baseness, that great orator
A windbag, and the great spirit furious pride,
And calm patience an impotent weakness poor.
Thus the base-natured all high things deride.
Judged by the slanderous tongue, the uncandid eyes,
What brightest virtue turns not blackest vice?

Realities

Greed if thou hast, thou art of sin secure :

Being treacherous, of what heinous fault hast need ?

No distant temple wants whose soul is pure :

Heart's truth is more than penance, vow or creed.

With natural goodness, why mere virtues pile ?

The soul being great, a royal crown were poor ;

Good books thou hast, rubies were surplus vile ;

When shame has pierced the heart, can death do more ?

Seven Grievs

Seven griefs are as seven daggers in my heart, —

To see a lake without its lily bloom,

The moon grow beggared of her radiant part,

Sweet woman's beauty fade towards the tomb,

A noble hug his wealth, a good man gone

Down in the press of miseries, a fair

And vacant face when knowledge is not there,

A base man standing by a monarch's throne.

The Friendship of Tyrants

Tyrants have neither kin nor lover. Fire

Accepts the rich man's offerings; at the end

Shall these then slake its wrathful swift desire ?

Nay, let him touch it! It will spare its friend!

The Hard Lot of the Courtier

Hard is the courtier's lot who fain would please.

Being silent, "Lo the dumb man!" they gibe; if speech

Eloquent edge his wit, "He seeks to teach,

The chatterer!" else, "Hark to his flatteries!"

Rude, if he sit near; far,— "What want of ease!"

Enduring insult, "Coward!"; if he spurn

The injurer, "Surely a spawn of parents base!"

Such service is in courts, whose laws to learn

Wise sages are perplexed, or tread its ways.

The Upstart

Yea, how this high sun burns that was so low,

Enlightening with his favours all things base!

Hating all goods, with chainless license vile

Of those his filthy deeds makes arrogant show

Obscurely engendered in his unseen days

Ere sudden fortune raised from miry soil.

No virtue now, genius nor merit's safe

From vulture eyes that at all cleanness chafe.

Two Kinds of Friendship

Like shadows of the afternoon and morn

Friendship in good men is and in the base;

All vast the lewd man's in its first embrace,

But lessens and wears away; the other's, born

A dwarfish thing, grows giant-like apace.

Natural Enmities

Trust not thy innocence, nor say, "No foe
I have the world through;" other is the world.
The deer's content with simple grass, yet bow
Of hunter fears; the fisher's net is hurled
To catch the water's innocents; his high
And simple life contented leads the good,
Yet by the evil heart insatiably
With causeless hatred finds himself pursued.

ON VIRTUE

Description of the Virtuous

Homage to him who keeps his heart a book
For stainless matters, prone great talk to prize
And nearness of the good; whose faithful look
Rejoices in his own dear wife, whose eyes
Are humble to the Master good and wise;

A passion high for learning, noble fear
Of public shame who feels; treasures the still
Sweet love of God; to self no minister,
But schools that ravener to his lordlier will,
Far from the evil herd on virtue's hill.

The Noble Nature

Eloquence in the assembly; in the field
The puissant arm, the lion's heart; proud looks
Unshaken in defeat; but modest-kind
Mercy when victory crowns; passionate for books
High love of learning, thoughts to fame inclined; —
These things are natural to the noble mind.

The High and Difficult Road

To give in secret as beneath a shroud;
To honour all who to thy threshold come;
Do good by stealth and of thy deeds be dumb,
But of another's noble acts be proud
And vaunt them in the senate and the crowd;
To keep low minds in fortune's arrogant day;
To speak of foemen without scorn or rage;
What finger appointed first this roughest way
Of virtue narrower than the falchion's edge?

Adornment

The hand needs not a bracelet for its pride,
 High liberality its greatness is;
 The head no crown wants to show deified;
 Fallen at the Master's feet it best doth please.
 Truth-speaking makes the face more bright to shine,
 Deep study girds the brow with diamond rays;
 Strength and not gold in conquering arms divine
 Triumphs; calm purity the heart arrays.
 Nature's great men have these for wealth and gem;
 Riches they need not, nor a diadem.

The Softness and Hardness of the Noble

Being fortunate, how the noble heart grows soft
 As lilies! but in calamity's rude shocks
 Rugged and high like a wild mountain's rocks
 It fronts the thunders, granite piled aloft.

The Power of Company

Behold the water's way, — on iron red
 When it falls hissing, not a trace remains,
 Yet 'tis the same that on the lotus shines,
 A dewy thing like pearls, — yea, pearl indeed
 Turns when the oyster-shell receives and heaven
 To those rain-bringing stars their hour has given.
 High virtue, vice or inconspicuous mean
 'Tis company that moulds in things or men.

The Three Blessings

He is a son whose noble deeds and high
His loving father's heart rejoice;
She is a wife whose only jewellery
Is her dear husband's joy and bliss;
He the true friend whose actions are the same
In peaceful days or hours of bale and shame;
These three who wins, finds earth his Paradise.

The Ways of the Good

Who would not honour good men and revere
Whose loftiness by modesty is shown,
Whose merits not by their own vaunts appear,
Best in their constant praise of others known,
And for another's good each power to brace
To passionate effort is their selfishness.

Hark to their garrulous slanderer's gurge of blame
Foaming with censure violent and rude!
Yet they revile not back, but put to shame
By their sweet patience and calm fortitude.
Such are their marvellous moods, their noble ways,
Whom men delight to honour and to praise.

Wealth of Kindness

'Tis more than earrings when the ear inclines
To wisdom; giving bracelets rich exceeds.
So the beneficent heart's deep-storèd mines
Are worked for ore of sweet compassionate deeds,
And with that gold the very body shines.

The Good Friend

Thus is the good friend pictured by the pens
 Of good men: — still with gentle hand he turns
 From sin and shame his friend, to noble gains
 Still spurs him on; deep in his heart inurns
 His secret errors, bares his parts abroad,
 Gives at his need, nor takes the traitor's road
 Leaving with facile wings when fortune spurns.

The Nature of Beneficence

Freely the sun gives all his beams to wake
 The lotus slumbering in the darkened lake;
 The moon unasked expends her gentle light,
 Wooing to bloom her lily of the night;
 Unasked the cloud its watery burden gives.
 The noble nature in beneficence lives;
 Unsought, unsued, not asking kindness back
 Does good in secret for that good's sole sake.

The Abomination of Wickedness

Rare are the hearts that for another's joy
 Fling from them self and hope of their own bliss;
 Himself unhurt for other's good to try
 Man's impulse and his common nature is:
 But they who for their poor and selfish aims
 Hurt others, are but fiends with human names.
 Who hurt their brother-men, themselves unhelped,
 What they are we know not, nor what horror whelped.

Water and Milk

By water and sweet milk example Love.

Milk all its sweetness to the water gives,
For in one wedded self their friendship lives;
And when hot pangs the one to anguish move,
The other immolates itself to fire.

To steal his friend's grief is a friend's desire.
He seeing his friend's hard state is minded too
To seek the flame; but happily again
Wedded to him is eased of all his pain.

This friendship is, one heart that's shared by two.

Altruism Oceanic

Here Vishnu sleeps, there find his foes their rest;
The hills have taken refuge; serried lie
Their armies in deep Ocean's sheltering breast;
The clouds of doom are of his heart possessed,
He harbours nether fire whence he must die.
Cherisher of all in vast equality,
Lo, the wide strong sublime and patient sea!

The Aryan Ethic

Hear the whole Gospel and the Law thereto: —
 Speak truth, and in wise company abide;
 Slay lust, thine enemy; abandon pride;
 Patience and sweet forgiveness to thee woo;
 Set not in sin thy pleasure, but in God;
 Follow the path high feet before thee trod;

Give honour to the honourable; conceal
 Thy virtues with a pudent veil of shame,
 Yet cherish to the end a stainless fame;
 Speak sweetness to thy haters and their weal
 Pursue; show pity to unhappy men,
 Lift up the fallen, heal the sufferer's pain.

The Altruist

How rare is he who for his fellows cares!
 His mind, speech, body all are as pure jars
 Full of his soul's sweet nectar; so he goes
 Filling the world with rows on shining rows
 Of selfless actions ranked like the great stars.

He loves man so that he in others' hearts
 Finding an atom even of noble parts
 Builds it into a mountain and thereon
 His soul grows radiant like a flower full-blown;
 Others are praised, *his* mind with pleasure starts.

Mountain Moloy

Legends of golden hills the fancy please,

But though they were real silver and solid gold,
Yet are the trees they foster only trees.

Moloy shall have my vote with whom, 'tis told,
Harbouring the linden, pine and basest thorn
Ennobled turn to scent and earth adorn.

ON FIRMNESS

Gods

Cease never from the work thou hast begun
Till thou accomplish. Such the great Gods be,
Nor paused for gems unknown beneath the Sun,
Nor feared for the huge poisons of the sea,
Then only ceased when nectar's self was won.

The Man of High Action

Happines is nothing, sorrow nothing. He
Recks not of these whom his clear thoughts impel
To action, whether little and miserably
He fare on roots or softly dine and well,
Whether bare ground receive his sleep or bed
With smoothest pillows ease his pensive head,
Whether in rags or heavenly robes he dwell.

Ornaments

What is an ornament? Courtesy in high place,
Speech temperate in the hero, innocence
In high philosophers, and wrathlessness
In hermits, and in riches noble expense.
Sincerity and honest meaning plain
Save outward holiness, mercy the strong
Adorns and modesty most learned men;
One grace to every station can belong.
Cause of all other gems, of all is blent
Virtue, the universal ornament.

The Immutable Courage

If men praise thee, O man, 'tis well; nor ill,
If they condemn. Let fortune curst or boon
Enter thy doors or leave them as she will;
Though death expect thee ere yon sinking moon
Vanish or wait till unborn stars give light,
The firm high soul remains immutable
Nor by one step will deviate from the right.

The Ball

Lo, as a ball that, by the player's palm
Smit downward, falls but to again rebound,
So the high virtuous man hurled to the ground
Bends not to fortune long his spirit calm.

Work and Idleness

Their bitterest enemy in their bodies pent
Men cherish, idleness. Be in thy breast
The tireless gust of work thy mighty guest,
Man's ceaseless helper, whose great aid once lent
Thy strength shall fail not, nor thy head be bent.

The Self-Reliance of the Wise

The tree once pruned shall seek again the skies,
The moon in heaven waning wax once more:
Wise men grieve not nor vex their soul with sighs
Though the world tread them down with savage roar;
Knowing their strength, they husband it to rise.

ON FATE

Fate Masters the Gods

Brihaspathy¹ his path of vantage shows,
The red disastrous thunder leaves his hand
Obedient, the high Gods in burning rows
His battled armies make, high heaven's his fort,
Iravath swings his huge trunk for his sport,
The Almighty's guardian favours over him stand; —
That Indra with these strengths, this lordship proud
Is broken by his foes in battle loud.
Come then, bow down to Fate. Alas, the vain
Heroisms, virtues, toils of glorious man!

A Parable of Fate

A serpent in a basket crushed despaired,
His organs all with hunger weak and worn,
While patiently at night the mouse prepared
A hole in that self basket. Ere the morn
By his own industry, such Nature's law,
The patient labourer fills the serpent's maw.
He with that food replenished, by the way
The mouse had made escaped. O world, behold
The mighty master of thy sad decay
And fortunate rising, Fate, the godhead old.

¹ Brihaspathy is counsellor to Indra, the King of Heaven, and spiritual guide of the Gods. Iravath is Indra's elephant.

Fate and Freewill

“The actions of our former life control
This life’s sweet fruit or bitter; even the high
Intellect follows where these point its eye.”
All this is true, — O yet, be wise of soul,
Think ere thou act, thou who wouldst reach the goal.

III Luck

A bald man, goes the story, when the noon
Beat his plagued brows into a fiery swoon,
Desiring dimness and cool place was led
By subtle Fate into a high palm’s shade.
There where he shelter hoped, a giant fruit
Crashed on his pate and broke with horrid bruit.
Wherever the unfortunate hides his head,
Grief and disaster in his footprints tread.

Fate Masters All

I saw the brilliant moon eclipsed, the sun
Baulked darkly of his radiant pilgrimage,
And halter-bound the forest’s mighty one,
The iron-coiled huge python in a cage;
Then saw the wise skilled brain a pauper, and said
“Fate only is strong whose hand on all is laid.”

The Follies of Fate

Sometimes the gods build up a very man
Whom genius, virtue, glory crowd to bless,
And Earth with him adorned grows measureless.
Then if death early spoil that noble plan,
Ah, blind stupidity of Fate that throws
From her brow the jewel, from her breast the rose!

The Script of Fate

When on the desert-bramble's boughs you find
Leafage nor flower, blame not the bounteous Spring!
Is it the sun's fault if the owlet blind
Sees not by day so radiant-bright a thing?
Though down the rain-lark's throat no sweet drops flow,
Yet for his falling showers the high cloud praise.
What Fate has written in power upon the brow,
Where is the hand so mighty it shall raise?

ON KARMA*

Action be Man's God

Whom shall men worship? The high Gods? But they
Suffer fate's masteries, enjoy and rue.
Whom shall men worship? Fate's stern godhead? Nay,
Fate is no godhead. Many fruits or few
Their actions bring to men, — that settled price
She but deals out, a steward dumb, precise.
Let action be man's God, o'er whom even Fate
Can rule not, nor his puissance abrogate.

The Might of Works

Bow ye to Karma who with puissant hand
Like a vast potter all the universe planned,
Shut the Creator in and bade him work
In the dim-glinting womb and luminous murk;
By whom impelled high Vishnu hurled to earth
Travels his tenfold depths and whorls of birth;
Who leading mighty Rudra by the hand
Compels to wander strange from land to land, —
A vagrant begging with a skull for bowl
And suppliant palms, who is yet the world's high Soul.
Lo, through the skies for ever this great Sun
Wheels circling round and round by Karma spun.

* There is a distinction, not always strictly observed, between Fate and Karma. Karma is the principle of Action in the universe with its stream of cause and infallible effect, and for man the sum of his past actions whose results reveal themselves not at once, but in the dispensation of Time, partly in this life, mostly in lives to come. Fate seems a more mysterious power imposing itself on men, despite all their will and endeavour, from outside them and above — *daivam*, a power from the Gods.

Karma

It is not beauty's charm nor lineage high,
 It is not virtue, wisdom, industry,
 Service, nor careful arduous toil that can
 Bring forth the fruits of his desire to man;
 Old merit mind's strong asceticism had stored
 Returns to him with blessing or a sword,
 His own past deeds that flower soon or late
 Each in its season on the tree of Fate.

Protection from behind the Veil

Safe is the man good deeds forgotten claim,
 In pathless deserts or in dangerous war
 Or by armed foes enringed; sea and fierce flame
 May threaten, death's door waiting swing ajar;
 Slumbering or careless though his foemen find,
 Yea, though they seize him, though they smite or bind,
 On ocean wild or on the cliff's edge sheer
 His deeds walk by his side and guard from fear;
 Through death and birth they bore him and are here.

The Strength of Simple Goodness

Toiler ascetic, who with passionate breath
 Sweldest huge holinesses, — vain thy faith!
 Good act adore, the simple goddess plain,
 Who gives the fruit thou seekest with such pain.
 Her touch can turn the lewd man into a saint,
 Inimitably her quiet magic lent
 Change fools to sages and hidden mysteries show
 Beyond eye's reach or brain's attempt to know,
 Fierce enemies become friends and poisons ill
 Transform in a moment to nectar at her will.

Foresight and Violence

Good be the act or faulty, its result
The wise man painfully forecasting first
Then does; who in mere heedless force exult,
Passionate and violent, taste a fruit accursed.
The Fury keeps till death her baleful course
And blights their life, tormenting with remorse.

Misuse of Life

This noble earth, this place for glorious deeds
The ill-starred man who reaching nowise heeds,
Nor turns his soul to energy austere,
With little things content or idlesse drear, —
He is like one who gets an emerald pot
To bake him oil-cakes on a fire made hot
With scented woods, or who with golden share
For sorry birthwort ploughs a fertile fair
Sweet soil, or cuts rich camphor piece by piece
To make a hedge for fennel. Not for this
In the high human form he walks great earth
After much labour getting goodliest birth.

Fixed Fate

Dive if thou wilt into the huge deep sea,
The inaccessible far mountains climb,
Vanquish thy foes in battle fierily,
All arts and every science, prose and rhyme,
Tillage and trade in one mind bring to dwell, —
Yea, rise to highest effort, ways invent
And like a bird the skies immeasurable
Voyage; all this thou mayst, but not compel
What was not to be, nor what was prevent.

Flowers from a Hidden Root

With store of noble deeds who here arrives,
Finds on this earth his well-earned Paradise.

The lonely forest grows his kingly town
Of splendour, every man has friendly eyes

Seeing him, or the wide earth for his crown
Is mined with gems and with rich plenty thrives.
This high fate is his meed of former lives.

MISCELLANEOUS VERSES

Definitions

What is clear profit? Meeting with good men.

A malady? Of incompetent minds the spell.

What is a loss? Occasion given in vain.

True skill of life? With heavenward thoughts to dwell.

A hero? The heart that is o'er passion lord.

A mistress? She to loving service sworn.

Best wealth? Wisdom. True happiness? The sward

Of one's own country, life where it was born.

A kingdom? Swift obedience fruitful found

At the low word from hearts of all around.

A Rarity

Rich in sweet loving words, in harshness poor,

From blame of others' lives averse, content

With one dear wife and so heart-opulent,

Candid and kindly, like an open door,

Some here and there are found on teeming earth;

Her fairest ornament is their quiet worth.

The Flame of the Soul

Insulted, wronged, oppressed the unshaken mind,

Treasuring its strength, insurgent its high will,

Towers always, though beat fiercely down to hell.

The torch is to the inglorious soil declined,

Its flame burns upward and unconquered still.

The Conqueror

That man whose soul bright beauty cannot pierce
 With love's sweet burning javelins from her eyes,
 Nor sorrow torture his heart, nor passions fierce
 Miserably over his senses tyrannize,
 Conquers the world by his high-seated will,
 The man well-balanced, noble, wise and still.

The Hero's Touch

Touched by one hero's tread how vibrating
 Earth starts as if sun-visited, ablaze,
 Vast, wonderful, young! Man's colourless petty days
 Bloom suddenly and seem a grandiose thing.

The Power of Goodness

The bloom of natural goodness like a flower
 Is Nature's darling, all her creatures prize,
 And on whose body's stock its fragrant power
 Blossoms, all fiercest things can humanise.
 For him red fire becomes like water pale and cool,
 For him heaven-threatening Ocean sinks into a pool
 Of quiet azure; for him the lion's heart
 Tames its dire hungers to be like the hind's,
 And the fell snake unsoothed by music's art
 Upon his brows in floral wreaths he binds.
 Poisons for him to nectar change; impassable hills
 Droop, gentle slopes; strong blessings grow from ruthless ills.

Truth

Dear as his own sweet mother to the man
Of truth his word is, dear as his heart's blood.
Truth, 'tis the mother of his soul's great brood,
High modesty and virtue's lordly clan.
Exceeding pure of heart as to a youth
His mother, and like a mother to him cleaves
This sweet proud goddess. Rather life he leaves
And happiness puts away, not divine Truth.
Others clasp some dear vice, gold, woman, wine;
He keeps for Truth his passion fiery and fine.

Woman's Heart

More hard the heart of woman is to seize
Than an unreal mirrored face, more hard
Her moods to follow than on mountains barred
With rocks that skirt a dreadful precipice
A dangerous luring pathway near the skies.

And transient is her frail exacting love
Like dew that on some lotus' petal lies.
As with rich fatal shoots an upas-grove,
Woman with faults is born, with faults she grows.
Thorns are her nature, but her face the rose.

Fame's Sufficiency

“Victory is his on earth or Paradise,
The high heart slain in battle face to face.”
Let be your empire and your golden skies;
For him enough that friends and foemen praise
And with fame's rumour in his ears he dies.

Magnanimity

The world teems miracles, breeds grandest things,
 But Rahu of all most marvellous and great
 Or the vast Boar on white tusks delicate
 Like buds who bears up earth, else chaos rings.
 Rahu, cleft, trunkless, deathless, passionate,
 Leaps on his foemen and can overbear,
 A miracle, then, greater miracle, spare.

Man Infinite

Earth is hemmed in with Ocean's vaster moan;
 The world of waters flows not infinitely;
 A high unwearied traveller, the Sun
 Maps out the limits of the vaulted sky.
 On every creature born a seal is set
 With limits budded in, kept separate.
 Only man's soul looks out with luminous eyes
 Upon the worlds illimitably wise.

The Proud Soul's Choice

But one God to worship, hermit Shiv or puissant Vishnu high;
 But one friend to clasp, the first of men or proud Philosophy;
 But one home to live in, Earth's imperial city or the wild;
 But one wife to kiss, Earth's sweetest face or Nature, God's own
 child.
 Either in your world the mightiest or my desert solitary.

The Waverer

Seven mountains, eight proud elephants, the Snake,
The Tortoise help to bear this Earth on high,
Yet is she troubled, yet her members shake!
Symbol of minds impure, perplexed and wry.
Though constant be the strife and claim, the goal
Escapes the sin-driven and the doubting soul.

Gaster Anaides

Nay, is there any in this world who soon
Comes not to heel, his mouth being filled with food?
The inanimate labour, lo, with flour well-glued
Begins with sweeter voice its song to croon.

The Rarity of the Altruist

Low minds enough there are who only care
To fill their lusts with pleasure, maws with food.
Where shall we find him, the high soul and rare
To whom the good of others is his good?
First of the saints is he, first of the wise.

The Red Mare of the Ocean drinks the seas
Her own insatiable fire to feed;
The cloud for greater ends exacts his need,
The parching heats to cool, Earth's pain to ease.
Wealth's sole good is to heal the unhappy's sighs.

Statesman and Poet

How like are these whose labour does not cease,
 Statesman and poet, in their several cares;
 Anxious their task, no work of splendid ease!
 One ranges far for costly words, prepares
 Pure forms and violence popular disdains,
 The voice of rare assemblies strives to find,
 Slowly adds phrase to noble phrase and means
 Each line around the human heart to wind.
 The statesman seeks the nation's wealth from far;
 Not to the easy way of violence prone
 He puts from him the brutal clang of war
 And seeks a better kind dominion,
 To please the just in their assemblies high,
 Slowly to build his careful steps between
 A noble line of linkèd policy, —
 He shapes his acts a nation's heart to win.
 Their burden and their toil make these two kin.

The Words of the Wise

Serve thou the wise and good, covet their speech
 Although to trivial daily things it keeps.
 Their casual thoughts are foam from solemn deeps;
 Their passing words make Scripture, Science; rich,
 Though seeming poor, their common actions teach.

Noblesse Oblige

If some day by some chance God thought this good
 And lilies were abolished from the earth,
 Would yet the swan like fowls of baser birth
 Scatter a stinking dunghill for his food?

The Roots of Enjoyment

That at thy door proud-necked the high-foaming steeds
 Prance spirited and stamp in pride the ground
 And the huge elephants stand, their temple's bound
 Broken with rut, like slumbrous mountains round, —
 That in harmonious concert fluted reeds,
 The harp's sweet moan, the tabour and the drum
 And conch-shell in their married moments come
 Waking at dawn in thy imperial dome, —
 Thy pride, thy riches, thy full-sated needs,
 That like a king of gods thou dwell'st on earth, —
 From duties high-fulfilled these joys had birth;
 All pleasant things washes to men of worth
 The accumulated surge of righteous deeds.

Natural Qualities

Three things are faithful to their place decreed, —
 Its splendour as of blood in the lotus red,
 Kind actions, of the noble nature part,
 And in bad men a cold and cruel heart.

Death, not Vileness

Better to a dire verge by foemen borne,
 O man, thy perishable body dashed
 Upon some ragged beach by Ocean lashed,
 Hurl'd on the rocks with bleeding limbs and torn;

Better thy hand on the dire cobra's tooth
 Sharp-venomed or to anguish in the fire,
 Not at the baser bidding of desire
 Thy heart's high virtue lost and natural truth.

Man's Will

Renounce thy vain attempt, presumptuous man,
 Who think'st and labourest long impossibly
 That the great heart for misery falter can:
 Fruitless thy hope that cruel fall to see.
 Dull soul! these are not petty transient hills,
 Himalay and Mahendra and the rest,
 Nor your poor oceans, their fixed course and wills
 That yield by the last cataclysm oppressed.
 Man's will his shattered world can long survive:
 When all has perished, it can dare to live.

The Splendid Harlot

Victory's a harlot full of glorious lust
 Who seeks the hero's breast with wounds deep-scored,
 Hate's passionate dints like love's! So when the sword
 Has ploughed its field, leap there she feels she must.

Fate

Lo, the moon who gives to healing herbs their virtue, nectar's
 home,
 Food immortalising, — every wise physician's radiant Som,¹
 Even him consumption seizes in its cruel clinging arms.
 Then be ready! Fate takes all her toll and heeds not gifts nor
 charms.

¹ Soma, the moon-god of the immortalising nectar, the Vedic Soma-Wine.

The Transience of Worldly Rewards

Your gleaming palaces of brilliant stone,
Your bright-limbed girls for grace and passion made,
Your visible glory of dominion,
Your sceptre and wide canopy displayed,
These things you hold, but with what labour won
Weaving with arduous toil a transient thread
Of shining deeds on careful virtue spun!
Which easily broken, all at once is sped;
As when in lover's amorous war undone
A pearl-string, on all sides the bright pearls shed
Collapse and vanish from the unremembering sun.

Bhavani

Father nor mother, daughter nor son are mine,
I obey no master, served am I by none,
Learning or means I have not, wife nor kin;
My refuge thou, Bhavani, thou alone!

Charity I have not learned, Yoga nor trance,
Mantra nor hymn nor Tantra have I known,
Worship nor dedication's covenants:
My refuge thou, Bhavani, thou alone!

Virtue is not mine nor holy pilgrimage,
Salvation or world's joy I have never won,
Devotion I have not, Mother, no vows I pledge:
My refuge thou, Bhavani, thou alone!

From a Sanskrit hymn
of Shankaracharya

II

FROM BENGALI

Hymn to Durga

Mother Durga! Rider on the lion, giver of all strength, Mother, beloved of Siva! We, born from thy parts of Power, we the youth of India, are seated here in thy temple. Listen, O Mother, descend upon earth, make thyself manifest in this land of India.

Mother Durga! From age to age, in life after life, we come down into the human body, do thy work and return to the Home of Delight. Now too we are born, dedicated to thy work. Listen, O Mother, descend upon earth, come to our help.

Mother Durga! Rider on the lion, trident in hand, thy body of beauty armour-clad, Mother, giver of victory, India awaits thee, eager to see the gracious form of thine. Listen, O Mother, descend upon earth, make thyself manifest in this land of India.

Mother Durga! Giver of force and love and knowledge, terrible art thou in thy own self of might, Mother beautiful and fierce. In the battle of life, in India's battle, we are warriors commissioned by thee; Mother, give to our heart and mind, a titan's strength, a titan's energy, to our soul and intelligence a god's character and knowledge.

Mother Durga! India, world's noblest race, lay whelmed in darkness. Mother, thou risest on the eastern horizon, the dawn comes with the glow of thy divine limbs scattering the darkness. Spread thy light, Mother, destroy the darkness.

Mother Durga! We are thy children, through thy grace, by thy influence may we become fit for the great work, for the great Ideal. Mother, destroy our smallness, our selfishness, our fear.

Mother Durga! Thou art Kali, naked, garlanded with human heads, sword in hand, thou slayest the Asura. Goddess, do thou slay with thy pitiless cry the enemies who dwell within us, may none remain alive there, not one. May we become pure and spotless, this is our prayer, O Mother, make thyself manifest.

Mother Durga! India lies low in selfishness and fearfulness and littleness. Make us great, make our efforts great, our hearts vast, make us true to our resolve. May we no longer desire the small, void of energy, given to laziness, stricken with fear.

Mother Durga! Extend wide the power of Yoga. We are thy Aryan children, develop in us again the lost teaching, character, strength of intelligence, faith and devotion, force of austerity, power of chastity and true knowledge, bestow all that upon the world. To help mankind, appear, O Mother of the world, dispel all ills.

Mother Durga! Slay the enemy within, then root out all obstacles outside. May the noble heroic mighty Indian race, supreme in love and unity, truth and strength, arts and letters, force and knowledge ever dwell in its holy woodlands, its fertile fields, under its sky-scraping hills, along the banks of its pure-streaming rivers. This is our prayer at the feet of the Mother. Make thyself manifest.

Mother Durga! Enter our bodies in thy Yogic strength. We shall become thy instruments, thy sword slaying all evil, thy lamp dispelling all ignorance. Fulfil this yearning of thy young children, O Mother. Be the master and drive thy instrument, wield thy sword and slay the evil, hold up the lamp and spread the light of knowledge. Make thyself manifest.

Mother Durga! When we possess thee, we shall no longer cast thee away; we shall bind thee to us with the tie of love and devotion. Come, Mother, manifest thyself in our mind and life and body.

Come, Revealer of the hero-path. We shall no longer cast thee away. May our entire life become a ceaseless worship of the Mother, all our acts a continuous service to the Mother, full of love, full of energy. This is our prayer, O Mother, descend upon earth, make thyself manifest in this land of India.

SONGS OF BIDYAPATI

Songs of Bidyapati

Childhood and youth each other are nearing;
Her two eyes their office yield to the hearing.
Her speech has learned sweet maiden craft
And low not as of old she laughed,
Her laughter murmurs. A moon on earth
Is dawning into perfect birth.
Mirror in hand she apparels her now
And asks of her sweet girl-comrades to show
What love is and what love does
And all shamed delight that sweet love owes.
And often she sits by herself and sees
Smiling with bliss her breasts' increase,
Her own milk-breasts that, plums at first,
Now into golden oranges burst.
Day by day Love's vernal dreams
Expand her lovely blossoming limbs.
Madhav, I saw a marvellous flower
Of girls; childhood and youth one power,
One presence grown in one body fair.
Foolish maiden, not thus declare
The oneness of these contraries.
Rather the two were yoked, say the wise.

II

Day by day her milk-breasts drew splendour.
Wider her hips grew, her middle more slender.
Love has enlarged her childlike gaze.
Yea, all grace of childhood and childhood's ways
Fall from their thrones and take sweet flight.
Her breasts before were plums of light,
Golden oranges next and then
As bodiless Love made bloom with pain
Of increase her body day by day,
Pomegranate seed-cities were they.
Their fair maturities now begin,
Now are they fruits-of-opulence twin.
Madhav, I sought thy lovely lady,
Bathing I found her in woodland shady.
Coiled on her heart but not to drape
Her thin dress clung to her lovely shape.
Blest were his eyes who had seen her thus
And his whole life made felicitous.
Over her bosom her great hair floods
With curls divine two golden gods.
True love must his be, O youth, who would play,
Her darling and joy, with this beautiful may.

III

Now and again a sidelong look
Along her lashes its shy curve took.
Now and again her thin white dress
O'erlies like dust all her loveliness.
Now she laughs divine and clear
And her pearly teeth like stars appear,
And now to hide in her robe make shift.
For a little her startled feet run swift
But soon that bounding gait subsides
And she in maiden gravity glides.
Love's scholar she and newly set
To his first lesson and alphabet.
Where her bosom's buds are hardly seen
Now she draws fast her robe to screen,
Now careless leaves. In her limbs divine
Child and woman meet and twine.
Nor mark I yet whether older she
Of girlhood or younger of infancy.
Beautiful Krishna, youth in her
Its childhood begins, these signs declare.

IV

Childhood and youth, maiden, are met
And strife twixt their armèd powers is set.
Now her ordered locks she dresses,
Now scattering loosens a storm of tresses.¹
Sometimes she covers her body fair,
Sometimes the golden limbs are bare
In childhood's naked innocence.
And childhood's steadfast eyes with a sense
Of girlhood a little waver now
And her bosom is stained where the flowers grow.
Her light uncertain feet now tell
The uncertain heart and variable.
Love is awake but his eyes are shut.
O Krishna, flower of lovers, put
In thy heart patience, for surely she
Shall be brought at last and given to thee.

¹ falls a cascade.

V

Playing she plays not, so newly shy,
She may not brook the passing eye.
Looking she looks not lest surmise
Laugh from her own girl-comrades' eyes.
Hearken, O hearken, Madhav, to me.
Just is the case I bring to thee.
Radha today these eyes beheld;
A maid she is unparalleled.
O her face and its lovely lights!
O looks that ravish, O charm that invites!
Flower of ruby with lotus grows
In her vermeil lips that exceed the rose;
And with honey have snared her large twin eyes
Two shapes of bees that may not rise;
And her brow's arch is as tho' left slack
Love's own bow in hue were black.
Saith the envoy girl whose words I teach
"The bloom of her limbs surpasseth speech."

VI

In elder's eyes' she brooks not stay,
 Half-clad no more her body but alway
 She covers her beauty¹ most maidenly.
 Yet with young girls when stayeth² she
 Knowing her ripened child and budding may
 They plague her with sweet mockery.
 Madhav, for thee I wooed the sight
 Of this fair flower; whom some delight
 Child to call, but most agree
 That woman's morning bloom has she.
 When of Love's rites she hears and lovers' play
 She turns her downcast eyes another way.
 O but her ears drink greedily.
 Should with more words one tease her shame,
 With tears and angry smiles she utters blame.
 Who is wise in love alone knoweth
 The way of a girl, the poet sayeth.

VII

A little and a little now
See the bright bud half open blow.
Her swift and wilful feet grown wise
Yield their rudderless gait to the eyes.
Ever her hand to her bosom's dress
Clings to control its waywardness.
Afraid to utter her shy hushed thought
Her comrade-girls she questions not.
Madhav, how shall faltering word
Her sweet and twilight age record?
Love, even Love, beholding her
In his own bonds her captive were.
Nay but the lord of all desire
Her heart's precincts raising higher
Has set for passion's sacred duty
Altars of surpassing beauty.
Love's speech her listening heart doth stop
As the hunter's song the antelope.
Two powers dispute this beauteous prize.
Nought one deems gained while aught there is
To gain, nor the other failure owns
While yet he holds to his golden thrones.
Still with sweet violence she clings
To her loved childhood's parting wings.

VIII

Childhood is fled and youth in its seat;
Not light as of old her wandering feet,
Yet are Love's glorious envoys two
Seeing her eyes her errands do.
In secret dawns each lovely smile
And laughter low with maiden guile.
Her hand each moment plucks her dress
Its fluttering treasons to repress.
And all the low speech of her lips
From a modest head and drooping slips.
Her heavy hips have now replaced
The old lost pride of her rounded waist.

Thus I decide her doubtful state
Conclusion sweet of sweet debate.
Thine is this fair decision's fruit
Judgment to give and execute.
I, Bidyapati, love's lights bring
To lady Lachhima and the King.

IX

Ah how shall I her lovely body express?
Fair things how many Nature in her blended,
Mine own eyes saw ere my lips praise.

Her twin fair feet were lordly leaves of summer,
Her gait vied with the forest's best.
Upon two golden trees a lion slender,
Thereover the hills of heaven were placed.

And on the hills two lotuses were budding
That stemless kept their gracious hours.
In shape of pearl-drops strung heaven's stream descended,
Therefore not withered those sweet flowers.

Her teeth pomegranate-seeds on lips of ruby,
The sun and moon on either side,
Her hair eclipse, but coming never nearer
Hid not at all their golden pride.

The cuckoo's speech, the antelope's eyes has Radha,
And Love has in her glances thrones —
Upon two lotuses two bees that hover
And sip their honey: these she owns

The spring's five children. O delicious maiden,
Not the wide worlds her second know,
To Shiva Singha Rupnaraian my music
And lady Lachhima doth show.

X

Ah, who has built this girl of nectarous face?
Ah, who this matchless, beauteous dove?
An omen and a bounteous boon of Love,
A garland of triumphant grace!

O glorious countenance and O shaded deep
Delicious eyes for purple extolled,
You dark-winged flutterers in that lily of gold
The splendour of the snake who keep!

Thy tendrilled down's a snake, to drink cool winds
That from thy harbouring navel stirred,
But by the fancied bill of emperor bird
Cowed to thy breast's hill-cavern winds.

The strong five-missiled Love with arrows three
The three worlds conquered; two remained
Which to thine eyes some cruel Fate did lend
To slay poor lovers' hearts with thee.

A well of love is he who knoweth, O girl,
Her beauty I the poet sing
To Shiva Singha Rupnaraian the King
And Lachhima, his bosom's pearl.

XI

How shall I tell of Caanou's beauty bright?
Men will believe it a vision of the night.

As lightning was his saffron garment blown
Over the beautiful cloud-limbs half shown.

His coal-black curls assumed with regal grace
A peacock's plume above that moonlike face.

And such a fragrance fierce the mad wind wafts
Love wakes and trembles for his flowery shafts.

Yea, what shall words do, friend? Love's whole estate
Exhausted was that wonder to create.

XII

Caanou to see I had desire;
Caanou seen, my life grew fire.
Thenceforth deep down, ah, foolish I,
In a great sea of love I lie.
Hardly I know, a girl and weak,
What these words mean my heart would speak.
Only my tears for ever rain,
Only my soul burns in its pain.
O wherefore, friend, did mine eyes see,
Friend of my bosom, thoughtlessly?
When a little mirth was all I planned,
I have given my life into another's hand.

I know not what this lovely thief
Did to me in that moment brief.
Surely such craft none yet possessed!
He robbed my heart out of its nest
Only with seeing, and gone is he
Taking my poor heart far from me
And ah! his eyes did then express
Such tenderness, such tenderness,
The more I labour to forget
My very soul remembers it.
Mourn not, sweet girl, for thy heart's sake;
Who took thy heart, thyself at last shall take.

XIII

Sweet and strange as 'twere a dream,
I have seen a vision gleam.
Lotus flowers were his feet,
Bearing moons a carcanet.
Rounded thighs and ankles smooth
Towered of the glories of youth,
And continual lightnings drape,
So I dreamed, that faultless shape.
Dark Calindie, by thy stream
Slowly went he in my dream.
And I dreamed of boughs that shone
With a row of moons thereon,
Fingers fair like young leaves born
With a rosy light of morn.
Flower-of-coral bloom his lips,
Over which Love's parrot peeps,
And his eyes like wild birds wake
And each curl's a little snake
Stung me. Twice I looked and then
With a sweet and sudden pain
Maddened. Ah, what power is this
For a look can slay with bliss?
Even so leaps, O my dove,
Into the heart made for him, Love.

XIV

O friend, my friend, has pain a farther bound
Which sounds can utter, for which words are found ?

Fiercely the flute's breath through me ran and thrilled,
My body with sweet dreadful sound was filled.

By violence that brooks not of control
The cruel music enters all my soul.

Then every limb enamoured swoons with shame
And every thought is wrapped in utter flame.

Yea, all my labouring body mightily
Was filled and panted with sweet agony.

I dared not lift my eyes. My elders spoke
Around me when that wave of passion broke,

And such a languor through my being crept,
My very robe no more its office kept.

With slow feet on their careful steps intent
Panting into the inner house I went.

Even yet I tremble from the peril past,
So fierce a charm the flute upon me cast.

XV

As the swan sails, so moved she
 Then when her face was lost to me.
 As she went, O she turned, she looked, she smiled.
 Ah arrows made of Love's own flower,
 O sweet magician! faery power!
 No mortal maid but an enchanteress wild.

Her arms, those sweet twin lovelinesses,
 Clasped, bent in languorous self-caresses,
 Enhaloed had the lustres of her face.
 Her fingers slim for Champaks taking,
 Love to delicious worship waking,
 A moon of autumn with such flowers did bless.

Her careless breasts (O happy lover!)
 Their rich defences but half discover
 Because of haste when the light robe was worn.
 As tho' by winds that overpower
 Clouds in the season of storm and shower,
 The hills of heaven thro' a dim veil made morn.

Vision delightful! shall again
 I ease with you my life's deep pain!
 Ah! shall again division's boundaries break?
 The henna that her feet enrosèd
 Was fire wherein my heart enclosed
 Did burn and all my limbs to burn did make.

O lovely maiden, hear the speech
 These numbers murmur each to each.
 My soul since then no ease, no quiet knows.
 Ah! shall I ever, fortune, meet her,
 The woman than all women sweeter,
 The jewel of all beauties that earth owes?

XVI

The manèd steeds in the mountain glen¹ for fear
 Of these thy locks, O maiden, hide.
 The moon at thy face from the high heaven doth peer,
 And thy voice alarms the cuckoo's pride.
 Thy gait hath driven the swan to the forest-mere,
 And the wild deer flee thy large eyes' light.
 Ah beautiful girl! why mute then to my love?
 Lo! fear of thee all these to flight doth move, —
 Whom dost thou fear then, maiden bright?

The lotus-buds in the water closed reside
 Thy paps being lovelier and the flame
 Absorbs the pitcher and in air abide
 The pomegranate and quince at thy breasts' sweet name.

Yea, Shiv doth swallow poison and in ooze
 The golden lotus-stalk, lo! shuns
 Thine arm and the new leaves shake these hands to see.
 But ah! my weary lips refuse
 O'erstrained with honey-sweet comparisons
 All images to tell Love taught to me.

¹ glens

XVII

Why fell her face upon my sight,
That is a lovelier moon in light,
Since but for one poor moment she
With her sweet eyes emparadised me?
Surely it was to slay my soul
That under her long lashes stole
The cruel grace of that transient look.
Desire laid hands upon her breasts
And there my poor heart clinging rests:
Love new-born its office took.
My ears yet wait upon her words;
Her murmurs dwell like caged birds.
I strive to part; my feet refuse.
The net of sweet desires is loose,
Yet thence my body will not move,
This is the very sea of love.¹

¹ Faint with the sudden hands of love.

XVIII

In her beautiful face did use
A star of the red ceruse,
As tho' the moon with the sun to aid
Were arisen and darkness hung afraid
Behind in her burden of great, dark hair.
O woman of moonlight rarer than nature's,
O delicate body, wonderful features,
Whence did Fate build you with effort made fair?
The buds of her flowerlike breasts between
Her robe's white folds were a little seen.
The snows may cover the high bright hill,
Hidden it is not, strive as you will.
From her darkened eyes, her shy look roving
On lids love-troubled tenderly burned,
Like the purple lilies winds were moving
By the weight of a bee overturned.
Hearken, O girl, to Bidyapati
And the lyre made sweet in the year's sweet end,
To Lachhima, lady of Mithila city,
And Shiva Singha the King, his friend.

XIX

A shining grace the damsel's face to her laughter and speech doth lend,
As tho' the sweet full moon of autumn heaven's nectar rained.
A jewel of women with beauty more than human,
I saw her gait of lion state ungracèd nought nor common.
Her middle than the lion's slender is,
Her body soft as lotuses;
It seemed a branch with weight breaking of her breasts pomegranate.
Yea and her lovely eyes being with blackness dressed
Were unstained lotuses enamoured bees invest.
The lover beautiful seeing sweet Radha's grace
Breaketh his longing heart with passionate distress.

XX

I saw not to the heart's desire.
Beautiful friend! that sight was fire
Of lightning and like lightning went:
My heart with the bright bolt was rent.
Her dim white robe like the hoar-frost thin
Half from the shoulder had fallen in.
Her beautiful mouth half-smiled and half
A glance from under her lids did laugh.
Half-naked shone her breasts' sweet globes
And half lay shadowy in her robes.
O then this bitter love and new!
Her body was of honey hue,
Her breasts, those cups of wondrous gold,
Love like a bodice did enfold.
The bodiless Love with subtle plan
To seize and hold the heart of man
With flowery cords his beauteous net
In the guise of a girl's breasts had set.
Her teeth, a row of pearls, did meet
Her moving lips and sweet, O sweet
As liquid honey her delicate speech.
Within me burned a pain like fire;
My eyes dwelt with her, yet could not reach
Gazing, the bottom of desire.

XXI

The moonwhite maiden from her bath
Passing I saw on a woodland path.
Moonwhite beauty from all sweet things
Had stolen beauty fit for kings.
The tresses that her small hands wrung
A rain of glittering water flung
As carcanets of loveliest pearl
Did from a fan imperial whirl.
Her wet curls wearing wondrous grace
Like bees besieged her lotus face
For all that honey wild with lust.
The water from her sweet eyes thrust
Yet left them reddened, as in the ooze
Petals of lotus with ceruse.
Heavy with water her thin robe
Defined each bright and milky globe;
Like golden apples gleamed her breasts
On which the happy hoar-frost rests.
So the robe clung as if it said
“Soon will she leave me and love be dead,
Nor ever once shall I attain
Such exquisite delight again.”
So the robe thought, as well appears,
And therefore sorrowed, showering tears.

XXII

Beauty stood bathing in the river
When I beheld her — Love's whole quiver
Pierced my heart with fivefold fire.
Her curls flung back from the face of my desire
Rained great tears as tho' the night
Stood by and wept in fear of the moon's light.
To every limb her wet robe kissed and clung.
Had even the sage been there
His heart had burned, even his grown young
Seeing through her dress her marvellous limbs made bare.
Her fair twin breasts were river-birds
Whose language is three amorous words.
It seemed that pitying heaven had to one shore
Brought the sweet lovers thence to part no more.
Yet she I deem in such alarm
Held them fast bound within one golden arm,
As if some noise should startle the sweet pair
And they take flight from her.
O amorous boy, be not afraid —
For youth like thee heaven gave this wondrous maid.

XXIII

O happy day that to mine eyes betrayed
Bathing the beautiful maid!
A cloud of beauty was her hair
Dripping with jewels marvellous rare.
Her lifted hands did harshly press
The lingering water from her face,
As tho' a golden mirror were made clean;
Therewith her robe fell to her lovely feet
And naked breasts revealed their beauties twin
Like golden cups that seemed reversely set;
The lapse her robe's one bond undid
And naked made what yet lay hid.
O Mithil lyre!
This is the apex of desire.

XXIV

Beautiful Rai, the flower-like maid
Risen from the river where she played,
Saw under downcast lids and shy
The lovely boy, dark Krishna named.
A high-born child with face afraid
Before her elders and eyes ashamed
She might not gaze as she went by.
O subtle is that beautiful girl!
She left the gracious troop behind;
With half-turned face and half-declined
From far in front fell sweet her call.
She broke her carcanet of pearl
And let the precious seedlings fall.
“O friends, my broken carcanet.”
Each girl her lovely hand did set
Stooping to find the scattered grain.
Meanwhile the damsel’s eyes full fain,
Like birds that on white moonbeams feed,
Of Krishna’s shape took amorous heed.
Divine the nectar that she drained,
O Krishna, from thy cheeks of light.
Yea, each of each had honied sight.
Thus gazing girl and boy extend
Love’s boundaries seen by none but me
The poet, sweet Bidyapati.

XXV

She looked on me a little, then
A little smile her lips o'erran
As though a moonbeam making bright
The darkness of the blessed night;
And from her eyes a lustrous glance
Fell shy and tenderly askance,
As though blue heaven's infinities
Were grown a sudden swarm of bees.
I know not whose she is, being fair:
I know she hath my soul with her.
With a sweet fear as to deny
Her virgin soul to the honey-fly
That in the lotus' womb did play,
With startled feet and hurried look,
The beauteous damsel went her way.
The sweet and hasty motion shook
The robe from her warm breasts of gold
Like lotus-flowers the heart to hold.
Half-hid, yet naked half, they seemed
To speak aloud the bliss they dreamed.
O sweet, O young desire! the dart
Of secret love omits¹ no heart.

¹ leaves out

XXVI

Upon a thorn when the flowers bloom,
Poor bee athirst for the rich perfume,
Cruel thy thirst, yet thou mayst not drink.
Upon the jasmine's honied brink
Lo! the bee hovers and will have
Heart's pleasure nor cares his life to save.
O Radha, flower of honey, have pity
And grant thy lover's sweet entreaty,
Pilgrim of honey thy lover — no more
In virgin shame¹ thy nectarous store
Deny. Alas! in thy rich bloom
The thirsty bee finds never a room.
O jasmine, save thy honey breast
He hath forsworn all other rest.
On thee the sin, beautiful Rai,
Of the poor bee's death shall surely lie.
O from thy lips the dear boon give
Of heaven's honey and he will live.

¹ maiden pride

XXVII

Wherever her twin fair feet found room
 There the flowers of the water bloom;
 Wherever her golden body shone,
 There have the waves of lightning gone.
 Wonderful beauty, golden-sweet,
 How in my heart hast thou set thy feet!
 Wherever her eyes have opened bright,
 The bloom of the lotus burns its light;
 Wherever her musical laugh has flown
 Need of the nectar is not known;
 Wherever her shy curved glances rove,
 There are ten thousand arrows of love;
 Eyes, for a little your orbs did see!
 In the three worlds now there is none but she.
 O shall I see her ever again
 To heal¹ my heart of its piteous pain?
 Soon, O lover, soon will she rest
 Drawn by thy passion on thy breast.²

¹ ease² O! on my bosom once to hold
Her boundless beauty and manifold.

XXVIII

I have seen a girl no words can measure,
 On golden tendrils proudly borne a face,
A spotless moon, a snowy treasure.
Her eyes two lotuses with unguent shaded,
 Were play-grounds of sweet loving thought,
Or fluttering, captive birds in a net embedded
 Of that dark unguent solely wrought.
Her heavy hills of milk a necklace richer
 Of elephant pearls did touch and gleam —
Love sprinkling from her throat, that brimful pitcher,
 On golden images heaven's stream.
Fortunate were he who by Prayaga's waters
 Long sacrificing might avail
At last to win her. Lover of Gocul's daughters!
 Darling of Gocul! true thy tale.

XXIX

When the hour of twilight its period kept
The damsel out from her dwelling stepped,
Like flashes in a new-born cloud that battling crept,
Golden, a beauty dire.

A high-born maiden, a little child,
Woven of flowers and fragrance she smiled.
How with a little sight should hope be reconciled?
Love but increased his fire.

Her small sweet body of pale gold made
That shining gold thro' her robe displayed,
The forest lion yields to her slender middle; swayed
Glances much love must earn.

A soft smile burned in her lips and she
With a smile and a look did murder me.
Lord of the five Bengals, may longer life with thee
Starlike eternal burn.

XXX

O life is sweet but youth more bright.
O life, it is youth and youth is delight.
And what is youth if it be not this,
Love, true love, and lover's long kiss.
Love that the noble heart conceives
Will leave thee never till life leaves.
Every day the moons increase,
Every day love greater is.
Of all girl-lovers thou art crown,
Caanou of youth the sole renown.
When hardest holiest deeds accrue,
Meet in this world lovers true.
Stolen love, how sweet it is!
Two brief words its only keys;
Murmur but these and thou shalt hold
Secret delights a thousand-fold.
So true a lover all wide earth
To another such gave never birth,
And Braja's hearts with love are wild
Of the noble gracious child.
Haste to thy king, sweet, pay him duty
Of thy loving heart and beauty.

XXXI

Lotus bosom, lotus feet,
Justify, I charge thee, sweet!
Knowing the true love thou hast won
Will thou not love back, lovely one?
Love in true hearts gold surpasses.
To the fire golden masses
Double price and beauty owe.
Loves by trial greater grow.
Love, my sweet, 's a wondrous thing
Imperishable in suffering.
Break it, but it will not break.
Love, like fibres of the lake,
Thrives on torture; beaten, grows;
Bleeding, thrills to sweeter rose.
Not from every elephant
Pearl-drops ooze iridescent,
Not from all lips accents fall
Melodious as the cuckoo's call.
Every season is not spring,
Every man love's perfect king,
Nor all women the world through
Always lovely, always true.
This is love, as sweet as rare;
Wilt thou spurn it, vainly fair?

XXXII

When the young warm Love her heart doth fill
Where is the let stays woman's will?
Alone to set forth lightly she dares,
Path or pathless not Radha who cares.
She has left her pearlèd carcanet
Her breast's high towers that hamperèd.
The bracelets fair on her wrists that shone
All by the path has the young girl thrown.
Anklets gemmed on her feet did glow
She has thrown them far the lighter to go.
The gloom is thick and heavy the night,
But Love to her eyes makes darkness light.
Her every step new perils doth prove,
She has pierced thro' all with the sword of Love.
Her passionate heart the poet knows.
Another like her not the wide world shows.

XXXIII

“’Tis night and very timid my little love.
How long ere I see her hither swanlike move!
Dread serpents fill with fear the way;
What perils those soft beloved feet waylay.
Providence, I lay her at thy feet;
Scatheless keep she the tryst, my own, my sweet.
The sky is thick and mired the earth,
Perils wide strewn: ah me, what fears have birth.
Thick darkness are the quarters ten.
The feet stumble, nought clear the eyes may gain.
She comes! with timid backward glances
Every creature’s heart now she entrances!
A girl she is of human grace,
Yet wears all heaven stolen in her face.”
For high-born women to be o’erborne
By love endure; all other check they scorn.

XXXIV

Hide now thy face, O darling white,
Hide it well with thy robe's delight.
For the King has heard that one the moon
Has stolen and his sentinels soon
At each house stationed and each again,
Damsel beloved, will thee detain.
Laugh not thy lightning, O nectarous face!
Low and few from their sweet home press
The accents of those lyric lips.¹
Thy teeth make starlight, through eclipse,²
And on the brow of the high-born girl
A vermeil drop and a shimmering pearl.
Hearken, good counsel, beautiful maid;
Even in a dream be not afraid,
Spots hath the moon, no beauty clear.
Stained is she, thou stainless, dear.

¹ voice ² maiden choice,

XXXV

Still in the highways wake nor dream
 The citizens and with beam on beam
 Moonlight clings to the universe.
 New is her love, not to coerce
 Nor lull, and yet with tremors she
 The luminous wakeful night doth see.
 What shifts will love on maids impose!
 In a boy's dress to the tryst she goes.
 She has loosened showering her ordered hair
 New-fastened in a crest to wear;
 The cloth of her body she doth treasure
 About her in another measure
 And since her bounteous breasts disdain
 Her robe's coercion,¹ she has ta'en
 Over her heart an instrument.
 In such guise to the grove she went
 And in such guise met in the grove:
 Her when he saw, the flower of love
 Knew not tho' seen his darling bright, —
 He doubted in his heart's despite.
 Only when those dear limbs he touches
 Her sweet identity he vouches.
 What then befell? Sweet Love the rather
 How many mirthful things did father!

¹ light government,

XXXVI

The best of the year has come, the Spring,
Of the six seasons one season King;
And now with all his tribes the bee
Runs to the creeper spring-honey.
The sun's rays come of boyish age,
The day-describing sun, his page,
A sceptre of gold the saffron-bloom
And the young leaves a crowning-room.
Gold-flowers of Chompuk o'er him stand,
The umbrellaed symbol of command;
The cary-buds a crown do set
And before him sings a court-poet
The Indian cuckoo to whom is given
The sweetest note of all the seven.
Peacocks dance and for instrument
Murmur of bees, while sacrament
Of blessing and all priestly words
Brahmins recite, the twice-born birds.
Pollen, the flying dust of flowers,
His canopy above him towers.
His favourite the southern breeze,
Jasmine of youth and Tuscan-trees
His battle-flag. The season of dew,
Seeing sweet blossoms-of-bliss renew,
Seven-leaf and boughs that fragrance loves
And Kingshook and the climbing cloves,
Seven things of bloom together, flees
Nor waits the perfumed shock of these.
Spring's army too the chill-estate
Of the dew-season annihilate —
Invading honey-bees — and make
Secure the lilies of the lake.

And these being saved yield them a home
In their own soft, new-petalled bloom.
In Brindaban anew is mirth
For the restored bloom of earth.
These are the season's sweet and these
The essence of the spring's increase.

XXXVII

A new Brindaban I see
 And renewed each barren tree;
 New flowers are blooming,
 And another Spring is; new
 Southern breezes chase the dew
 With new bees roaming.
 And the sweet Boy of Gocul strays
 In new and freshly blossoming ways.
 The groves upon Kalindi's shore
 With his tender beauty bloom
 While fresh-disturbèd heart brims o'er
 By the new-born love o'ercome.

And the new, sweet cary-buds
 Are wild with honey in the woods;
 New birds are singing;
 And the young girls wild with love
 Run delightèd to the grove
 New hearts bringing.
 For young the heir of Gocul is
 And young his passionate mistresses.
 Meetings new and fresh love-rites
 And lights of ever-fresh desire,
 Sports ever-new and new delights
 Set Bidyapati's heart on fire.

XXXVIII

Season of honey when sweets combine,
Honey-bees line upon line,
From sweet blossoms honeyed feet
Honied blossoms and honey sweet.
O sweet is Brindaban today
And sweeter than these our Lord of May;
His maiden-train the sweets of earth,
Honey-girls with laughter and mirth,
Sports of love and dear delight,
When instruments honey-sweet unite
Their sounds soul-moving, and sweet, O sweet
The smitten hands and the pacing feet.
Sweet the swaying dancer whirls,
Honied the movement of dancing girls,
And sweet as honey the love-song rings.
Sweet Bidyapati honey sings.

XXXIX

Hark how round you the instruments sound!
 With the sweet love wild
 Of Gocul's child
 She danceth mistress of the fair arts sixty-four.
 And her hands rhyme keeping time
 Her smitten hands that still the fall restore.

And the tabors keep melody deep
 And the heavy thrum
 Of the measured drum
 And anklets' running cry their own slim music loving.
 The waist bells sprinkle their silver tinkle
 And bracelets gold that gems do hold;
 Loud is the instruments' din to madness moving.

And harps begin and the violin
 And the five vessels
 Where melody swells
 Thro' all the gamut move and various moods express.
 And over and under the twydrums thunder,
 With whose noise the vessels five mix and embrace.

From loosened tresses that toil undresses
 And floating whirls
 On the shoulders of girls
 The jasmine garlands' buds sprinkle the vernal night.
 Ah revels of Spring! with powerless wing
 These verses grieve, not reaching your delight.

XL

In the spring moonlight the Lord of love
Thro' the amorous revel's maze doth move;
The crown of Love love's raptures proves;
For Radha his amorous darling moves,
Radha, the ruby of ravishing girls
With him bathed in love's moonlight whirls.
And all the merry maidens with rapture
Dancing together the light winds capture.
And the bracelets speak with a ravishing cry.
And the murmur of waist-bells rises high —
Meanwhile rapture-waking string
Ripest of strains the sonata of Spring
That lover and lord of love-languid notes
With tired delight in throbbing throats.
And rumours of violin and bow
And the mighty Queen's-harp mingle and flow;
And Radha's ravisher makes sweet measure
With the flute, that musical voice of pleasure.
Bidyapati's genius richly wove
For King Rounparaian this rhythm of love.

XLI

Angry beauty, be not loth!
I will swear a holy oath.
On thy garland's serpent fold,
On thy sacred breasts of gold
Here I lay my yearning hand.

If I leave thee, if I touch
Other lady of delight,
Let this snake my bosom bite.
If thou deem my error such,
Be thy malice on me spent
In many an amorous punishment.
Bind my body with thine arms,
Scourge my limbs with pretty harms,
Press my panting heart with weight
Of thy sweet breasts passionate,
In thy labouring bosom deep
Night and day thy prisoner keep.
Punishments like these demand
Love's sweet sins from love's sweet hand.

VII

ALTERNATE VERSION

A little and a little now
 See the sweet bud half-open blow!
 The light and wilful feet grow wise
 And yield their rudderless gait to the eyes.
 Each moment see her hand repress
 Upon her bosom her fluttering dress¹
 Nor questions she her comrades now
 Too shy to her secret thought to show.
 Madhav, how shall faltering word
 Her sweet and twilight age record.
 The very Love had he beheld
 Within her lovely chains were held.
 Ah yet the god of yearning eyes
 Just where her heart's high² waves arise
 Made for himself a sacred ground
 Where two unrivalled towers are found.
 Love's speech her listening heart doth stop
 As the hunter's song the antelope.
 Two powers dispute this beauteous prize,
 Nought one deems gained while aught there lies
 To gain, nor the other failure owns
 While yet he holds his golden thrones.
 Still with sweet violence she clings
 To her loved childhood's parting wings.

¹ The wilful flutterings of her dress

² wild

VIII

ALTERNATE VERSION

Childhood is flown, youth arrived.
The swift, light spirit in her feet that lived
Has fled to its new home in her eyes.
Yet are Love's glorious envoys two
Seeing her eyes her errands do.
Now every other moment flies
Her hand to seize her raiment's border
And to rebuke its sweet disorder.
She clothèd now in bashfulness
Her lovely laughter must suppress.
All her musical words she speaks
With bent head and shamèd cheeks.
Her heavy hips usurped the pride
Have, was once to her waist allied.
And she her faltering steps sustained
Walks clinging to some girl's light hand
In her companion train. Thus grown
Ripe for thee is Radha known.
Hear, Madhav, this conclusion true
And hearing, what Love wills that do.

XVIII

ALTERNATE VERSION

Low on her radiant forehead shone
 A star of the bright vermilion.
 O marvellous face! O shining maid!
 Moonlight and sunlight drawn together
 Met in a heaven of golden weather,
 While the massed midnight hangs afraid
 Behind in her burden of great dark hair.
 O woman of moonlight rarer than Nature's!
 O delicate body! O wonderful features!
 Whence did Fate build you with effort made fair?
 The buds of her flower-like breasts between
 Her robe's white folds were a little seen.
 The snows may cover the high bright hill —
 Hidden it is not, strive as you will.

From her darkened eyes her shy look roving
 On lids love-troubled tenderly burned
 Like the purple lilies winds were moving
 By the weight of a bee overturned.
 Hearken, O girl, to Bidyapati
 And the lyre made sweet in the year's sweet end.
 To Lachhima, lady of Mithila city,
 And Shiva Singha the King, his friend.

XXIII

ALTERNATE VERSION

O happy day that to mine eyes betrayed
Bathing the beautiful maid!
The water dripped from her dark curls
As if a cloud was to rain pearls;
And while her hands were busy making
Her face a golden glow,
Her robe therefore advantage taking
Her golden cups did show.
Her girdle knot its bonds undid
And naked made what there lay hid.
O Mithil lyre,
This is the apex of desire.

SELECTED POEMS OF NIDHU BABU

Selected Poems of Nidhu Babu

Eyes of the hind, you are my jailors, sweetest;
My heart with the hind's frightened motion fleetest
 In terror strange would flee,
But find no issue, sweet; for thy quick smiling,
Thy tresses like a net with threads beguiling
 Detain it utterly.

I am afraid of thy great eyes and well-like,
I am afraid of thy small ears and shell-like,
 And everything in thee.
Comfort my fainting heart with soft assurance
And soon it will grow tame and love its durance,
 Hearing such melody.

II

Line not with these dark rings thy bright eyes ever!
 Such keen shafts are enough to slay unaided;
To tip the barbs with venom why endeavour?
 O then no heart could live thy glance invaded.

Why any live wouldst thou have explanation?
Three powers have thine eyes of grievous passion.
 The first is poison making them death's portal,
The second wine of strong intoxication;
 The third is nectar that makes gods immortal.

III

If the heart's hope were never satisfied,
 Then no man could for long his life retain.
 The cloud to which the impatient rain-lark cried
 Contents at last the suffering bird with rain
 And bids him not to thirst forever.

And see the lamp with the moth flitting near it;
 A little forward and he swells the fire.
 But he invites that end and does not fear it,
 Gladly he burns himself at love's desire.
 In bliss to die is his endeavour.

IV

What else have I to give thee? I have yielded
 My heart at thy discretion,
 And is there than the heart a closer-shielded
 Reluctant sweet possession?
 Dear, if thou know of such as yet ungiven,
 I will not grudge but yielding think it heaven.

V

My eyes are lost in thine as in great rivers,
 My soul is in their depths of beauty drownèd.
 Love in thine eyes three sacred streams delivers,
 Whose waves with crests of rushing speed are crownèd.

The wind of love has stirred thy fluttering lashes,
 The tide of love heaves in thy sweet emotion;
 My beating heart feels as it seaward washes
 Billows of passion rush a stormy ocean.

VI

Sweet, gaze not always on thine own face in the mirror,
 Lest looking so on thine own wondrous beauty,
 Thou lose the habit of thy queenly duty
 And thy poor subject quite forget.
 Well may I fear such fatal error,
 Since they who always on their own wealth look
 Grow misers and to spend it cannot brook,
 Lest thou like these grow miser of thy beauty, sweet.

VII

Why gazing in the glass I stand nor move
 As rapt in bliss, hast thou not then divined?
 Because thy home is in my eyes, dear love
 And gazing there I gaze on thee enshrined.
 And therefore must my face seen in the glass
 In beauty my own former face surpass.
 Thine own eyes, sweet suspecter, long have known
 I love my beauty for their sake alone.

VIII

He whom I woo makes with me no abiding;
 He whom I shun¹ parts not for all my chiding.
 Absence I quite contemn; he loves nor loves me;
 Union my life is; ever he deceives me.

¹ scorn

IX

Cease, clouds of autumn, cease to roll;
Your thunders slay a poor girl's soul.
Love of my heart, in distant lands thou roamest.
 The musical rich sound of rain
 But touching me, ah, turns to pain.
Love of my heart, in distant lands thou roamest.

The pleasant daylight brings delay
 Of added infelicity
Because of one face far away,
 Grief of heart where joy should be.
Love of my heart, in distant lands thou roamest.

The glorious lightning as it burns
 Goes shuddering through my body faint
And my sad eyes remembrance turns
 Into moist fountains of complaint.
Love of my heart, in distant lands thou roamest.

Cease, clouds of autumn, cease to roll;
Your thunders slay a poor girl's soul.
Love of my heart, in distant lands thou roamest.

X

The spring is here, sweet friend, the spring is here
 And all his captains brings to make me moan.
 How many dreadful armed things appear
 One by one.

The cuckoo of his black bands captain is,
 The full moon marshals his white companies.

The nectared moon grows poisonous as a snake,
 A venomed arrow is the murmuring bee.
 The cuckoo's cunning note my heart doth break
 Utterly.

XI

Ere I had taken half my will of joy,
 Why hast thou, Night, with cruel swiftness ceased?
 To slay a woman's heart with sad annoy,
 O ruddy Dawn, thou openest in the east.
 The whispering world begins in dawn's red shining,
 Nor will Night stay one hour for lovers' pining.
 Ere love is done, must Dawn our love discover?

Ah why should lover's blissful meeting
 Mix so soon with parting's sorrow?
 On happy night come heavy morrow?
 Night will not stay for love's entreating.
 Ere love was done, ah me! the night was over.

XII

Nay, though thy absence was a tardy fire,
 Yet in such meeting is a worse derision;
 For never yet the passionate eyes' desire
 Drew comfort from such momentary vision.
 Who ever heard of great heats soon expended,
 Huge fire with a little burning ended?

XIII

I said in anger, "When next time he prays,
 I will be sullen and repulse his charms."
 Ah me! but when I saw my lover's face,
 I quite forgot and rushed into his arms.

Mine eyes said, "We will joy in him no longer;
 Vainly let him entreat nor pardon crave."
 He came, nor pardon asked; my bonds grew stronger,
 I am become more utterly¹ his slave.

XIV

Ah sweet, thou hast not understood my love, —
 This is my grief, thou hast not understood.
 Else would my heart's pain thy compassion move,
 Who in my heart persistest like heart's blood.
 When I am dead, then wilt thou pity prove
 And with thy sorrow on deaf ears intrude?
 This is my grief thou hast not understood.

¹ hopelessly

XV

How much thou didst entreat! with what sweet wooing
 Thou hast bewitched my soul to love thee!
 Now when I've loved thee to my own undoing,
 O marvel! all my piteous tears and suing
 To bless me with thy presence cannot move thee.

Would I, if I had known ere all was over,
 Have given my heart for thy sole pleasure?
 So sweet thy words, I fell in love with loving
 And gave my heart, the very roots removing.
 How could I know that thy love had a measure?

XVI

How could I know that he was waiting only
 For an excuse to leave me?
 I was so sure he loved me, not one lonely
 Suspicion came to grieve me.

But now a small offence his pretext making
 He has buried Love and left me;
 Blithely has gone, his whole will of me taking,
 Having of bliss bereft me.

Too well he knows my grief of heart, not caring
 Tho' it break through his disdain.
 I sit forsaken, all my beauty wearing
 But as a crown of pain.

XVII

Into the hollow of whose hand my heart
I gave once, surely thinking him my lover,
How shall I now forget him? by what art
My captive soul recover?

I took Love's graver up and slow portrayed
His beauty on my soul with lingering care.
How shall the picture¹ from its back-ground fade,
Burnt in so deeply there.

"He has forgotten thee, forget him thou;"
All say to me, "a vain thing is regret."
Ah yes, that day when death is on my brow,
I shall indeed forget.

XVIII

Hast thou remembered me at last, my own
And therefore come after so many days?
When man has once drained love and elsewhere flown,
Does he return to the forgotten face?
Therefore I think by error thou hast come,
Or else a passing pity led thee home.

¹ etching

XIX

I did not dream, O love, that I
 Would ever have thee back again.
The sunflower drooping hopelessly
 Expects no sun to end her pain.

I did not dream my lord would show
 Favour to his poor slave-girl more,
That I should mix my eyes as now
 With the dear eyes I panted for.

I did not dream my huge desire
 Would be filled full and grief be over,
But burning in love's bitter fire
 With hopeless longing for my lover,

One thought alone possessed thy slave,
 "Lord of my life, where art thou gone?
Wilt thou not come this life to save?"
 Dumbly this thought and this alone.

XX

In true sweet love what more than utter bliss is,
 He only knows who is himself true lover.
As moonbird seeks the moon, she seeks his kisses,
 Liberal of nectar he yearns down above her.

SELECTED POEMS OF HORU THAKUR

Selected Poems of Horu Thakur

The soul beset by God wishes to surrender itself.

Who is this with smearèd limbs
Of sandal wreathed with forest blossom.
For a beauty in him gleams
Earth bears not on her mortal bosom.

He his hair with bloom has crowned,
And many bees come murmuring, swarming.
Who is he that with sweet sound
Arrests our feet, our hearts alarming?

Daily came I to the river,
Daily passed these boughs of blessing,
But beneath their shadow never
Saw such beauty heart-caressing.

Like a cloud yet moist with rain
His hue is, robe of masquerader.
Ah, a girl's soul out to win
Outposts here what amorous raider?

Ankle over ankle lays
And moonbeams from his feet make glamour;
When he moves, at every pace
His body's sweets Love's self enamour.

A strange wish usurps my mind;
My youth, my beauty, ah, life even
At his feet if I resigned
Were not that rich surrender heaven?

II

The soul catching a reflection of God's face in the river of worlds, is enchanted with its beauty.

Lolita, say
What is this strange, sweet thing I watch today,
Fixed lightning in the water's quiet dreaming?

Lolita, none
Disturb a single wave here, even one!
Great is her sin who blots the vision gleaming.

Lolita, see
What glimmers in the wave so wondrously?
Of Crishna's limbs it has each passionate motion.

Lolita, then
To lure my soul comes that dark rose of men
In a shadow's form, and witch with strange emotion?

Lolita, daily
To bring sweet water home we troop here gaily,
But never yet saw in the waves such beauty.

Lolita, tell me
Why do so many strange sweet thoughts assail me,
As moon-bloom petals to the moon pay duty?

Lolita, may
This be the moon eclipsed that fain would stay
In the clear water being from heaven effaced?

Lolita, no,
The moon is to the lotus bright a foe;
But this — my heart leaps forward to embrace it.

III

Look, Lolita, the stream one loves so
And water brings each day!
But what is this strange light that moves so,
In Jamouna today?

What is it shining, heaving, glimmering,
Is it a flower or face
Thus shimmering with the water's shimmering
And swaying as it sways?

Is it a lotus darkly blooming
In Jamouna's clear stream?
What else the depths opaque illuming
Could with such beauty claim?

Is it his shadow whom dark-burning
In sudden bloom we see
When with our brimming jars returning
We pass the Tamal-tree?

Is there in upper heavens or under
A moon that's dark of hue?
By daylight does that moon of wonder
Its mystic dawn renew?

IV

The soul recognises the Eternal for whom it has failed in its earthly conventional duties and incurred the censure of the world.

I know him by the eyes all hearts that ravish,
For who is there beside him?
O honey grace of amorous sweetness lavish!

I know him by his dark compelling beauty,
Once only having spied him
For him I stained my honour, scorned my duty.

I know him by his feet of moonbeam brightness,
Because for their sake purely
I live and move, my name is taxed with lightness.

Ah now I know him surely.

V

*The soul finds that the Eternal is attracted to other than itself
and grows jealous.*

O fondly hast thou loved, thyself deceiving,
But he thou lovest truth nor kindness keeps;
His tryst thou servest, disappointed, grieving, —
He on another's lovelier bosom sleeps.

With Chundra's sweets he honeys out the hours.
If thou believe not, come and thou wilt find him
In night's pale close upon a bed of flowers,
Thy Shyama with those alien arms to bind him.

For I have seen her languid swooning charms
And I have seen his burning lovely youth,
Bound breast to breast with close entwining arms
And mouth upon inseparable mouth.

VI

*The Eternal departing from the soul to His kingdom of action
and its duties, the latter bemoans its loneliness.*

What are these wheels whose sudden thunder
Alarms the ear with ominous noise?
Who brought this chariot to tread under
Gocool, our Paradise?
Watching the wheels our hearts are rent asunder.

Alas! and why is Crishna standing
With Ocroor in the moving car?
To Mothura is he then wending,
To Mothura afar,
The anguish in our eyes not understanding.

What fault, what fault in Radha finding
Hast thou forsaken her who loved thee;
Her tears upon thy feet not minding?
Once surely they had moved thee!
O Radha's Lord, what fault in Radha finding?

But Shyama, dost thou recollect not,
That we have left all for thy sake?
Of other thought, of other love we recked not,
Labouring thy love to wake.
Thy love's the only thought our minds reject not.

Hast thou forgot how we came running
At midnight when the moon was full,
Called by thy flute's enamoured crooning,
Musician beautiful,
Shame and reproach for thy sake never shunning?

To please thee was our sole endeavour,
To love thee was our sole delight;
This was our sin; for this, O lover,
Dost thou desert us quite?
Is it therefore thou forsakest us for ever?

Ah why should I forbid thee so?
To Mothura let the wheels move thee,
To Mothura if thy heart go,
For the sad souls that love thee,
That thou art happy is enough to know.

But O with laughing face half-willing,
With eyes that half a glance bestow
Once only our sad eyes beguiling
Look backward ere thou go,
On Braja's neat-herdess once only smiling.

One last look all our life through burning,
One last look of our dear delight
And then to watch the great wheels turning
Until they pass from sight,
Hopeless to see those well-loved feet returning.

All riches that we had, alone
Thou wast, therefore forlorn we languish;
From empty breasts we make our moan,
Our souls with the last anguish
Smiting in careless beauty thou art gone!

VII

*The soul longs for reunion with God, without whom the
sweetnesses of love and life are vain.*

All day and night in lonely anguish wasting
The heart's wish to the lips unceasing comes, —
“O that I had a bird's wings to go hastening
Where that dark wanderer roams!
I should behold the flute on loved lips resting.”

Where shall I find him, joy in his sweet kisses?
How shall I hope my love's feet to embrace?
O void is home and vain affection's bliss is
Without the one loved face,
Crishna who has nor home nor kindred misses.

SELECTED POEMS OF JNANADAS

Selected Poems of Jnanadas

The soul, as yet divided from the Eternal, yet having caught a glimpse of his intoxicating beauty grows passionate in remembrance and swoons with the sensuous expectation of union.

O beauty meant all hearts to move!
O body made for girls to kiss!
In every limb an idol of love,
A spring of passion and of bliss.

The eyes that once his beauty see,
Poor eyes! can never turn away,
The heart follows him ceaselessly
Like a wild beast behind its prey.

Not to be touched those limbs, alas!
They are another's nest of joy.
But ah their natural loveliness!
Ah God, the dark, the wonderful boy!

His graceful sportive motion sweet
Is as an ornament to earth,
And from his lovely pacing feet
Beauties impossible take birth.

Catching one look not long nor sure,
One look of casual glory shed,
How many noble maidens pure
Lay down on love as on a bed.

The heart within the heart deep hid
He ravishes; almost in play
One looks, — ere falling of the lid,
Her heart has gone with him away!

Oh if his eyes wake such sweet pain
That even sleep will not forget,
What dreadful sweetness waits me when
Body and passionate body meet..

II

The human Spirit has undertaken with Nature its nurse to cross the deep river of life in the frail and ragged boat of the human mind and senses; storms arising, it flings itself in terror at the feet of the divine boatman and offers itself to him as the price of safety.

Ah nurse, what will become of us? This old
And weary, battered boat,
No iron its decrepit planks to hold,
Hardly it keeps afloat.

The solemn deep unquiet awful river
Fathomless, secret, past
All plummet with a wind begins to quiver;
The storm arises fast.

Jamouna leaps into the boat uplifting
A cry of conquering waves;
The boat is tossed, the boat is whirled; the shifting
Large billows part like graves.

The boat hurls down with the mad current fleeing,
Ah pity, oarsman sweet,
I lay myself for payment, body and being
Abandoned at thy feet.

III

The Eternal replies that the beauty of human souls has driven out all care for or art of guidance in the phenomenal world and unless the latter reveal themselves naked of earthly desires and gratify his passion, they must sink in the Ocean of life.

In vain my hands bale out the waves inleaping,
 The boat is drowning, drowning;
 A storm comes over the great river sweeping;
 Huge billows rise up frowning.

The rudder from my hand is wrenched in shivers,
 Death stares in all his starkness.
 The boat is tossed and whirled, and the great river's
 Far banks plunge into darkness.

What can I do? Jamouna's rising, surging
 To take us to her clasp,
 And the fierce rush of waters hurries urging
 The rudder from my grasp.

Never I knew till now, nor any word in
 The mouths of men foretold
 That a girl's beauty was too great a burden
 For one poor boat to hold.

Come, make you bare, throw off your robes, each maiden;
 Your naked beauties bring,
 Lighten your bodies of their sweets o'erladen;
 Then I'll resume rowing.

Girls, you have made me drunk with milk and sweetness,
 You have bewitched my soul,
 My eyes can judge no more the wind's fierce fleetness,
 Nor watch the waters roll.

They are fixed in you, they are tangled in your tresses,
They will never turn again.
Where I should see the waves, I see your faces,
Your bosoms, not the rain.

You will not let me live, you are my haters,
Your eyes have caused my death.
I feel the boat sink down in the mad waters,
Down, down the waves beneath.

IV

- She.* For love of thee I gave all life's best treasures.
He. For love of thee I left my princely pleasures.
She. For love of thee I roam in woodland ways.
He. For love of thee the snow-white kine I graze.
She. For love of thee I don the robe of blue.
He. For love of thee I wear thy golden hue.
She. For love of thee my spotless name was stained.
He. For love of thee my father was disdained.
She. Thy love has changed my whole world into thee.
He. Thy love has doomed mine eyes one face to see.
She. Save love of thee no thought my sense can move.
He. Thee, thee I worship,¹ and thy perfect love.

¹ cherish

V

The divine Soul pities, stays and comforts the human, which is set to toil in the heat and dust of life by its lord the world and its elders, the laws and ways of the world.

Neat-herdess, my star!
 What has led to fields so far
 The loveliest face and limbs ever created!
 Love's heart cries out beholding all
 Thy potent beauty natural;
 The world is with thy robe intoxicated.

Rest by me a space,
 I will fan thy lovely face,
 Lest the sun gaze on it with too much nearness.
 Alas, thy little rosy feet,
 How canst thou walk upon them, sweet.
 My body aches to see their tired fairness.

Elders stone of heart!
 They have sent to the mart
 Far-distant in their callous greed of earning;
 How shall thy own lord long avoid
 Lightning whose breast of pity¹ void
 Endured to send thee through this heat and burning.

Thy soft cheeks that burn
 Laughing shyly thou dost turn
 Away still, all thy shamefast bosom veiling.
 This is no way to sell, sweet maid!
 When such divine saleswomen trade,
 Honey-sweet words help best their rich retailing.

¹ softness

VI

The divine Soul besets the human as it fares upon the business of life, adorned and beautiful and exacts dues of love.

Beautiful Radha, Caanou dost thou see not
Toll-keeper here, that thou wouldst pass by stealth;
But I have caught thee fast and thou shalt go not
Until thou give me toll of all thy wealth.

First thine eyes' unguent, then thy star vermilion,
For these a million kisses I extort,
Upon thy bosom's vest I fix two million
And the stringed pearls that with thy bosom sport.

For bracelets fine to these thy small wrists clinging
And jewelled belt three million kisses say,
This red lac on thy feet and anklets bringing
Four million thou hast doomed thy lips to pay.

These thy king asks nor will one jot recall;
These yield me patiently in law's due course
Or here amidst thy damsels from thy small
Red mouth I will extort my dues by force.

VII

The human soul, in a moment of rapt excitement when the robe of sense has fallen from it, is surprised and seized by the vision of the Eternal.

I will lay bare my heart's whole flame,
To thee, heart's sister, yea the whole.
The dark-hued limbs I saw in dream,
To these I have given my body and soul.

It was a night of wildest showers;
Ever incessant and amain
The heavens thundered through the hours,
Outside was pattering of the rain.

Exulting in the lightning's gleams,
Joyous, I lay down on my bed;
The dress had fallen from my limbs,
I slept with rumours overhead.

The peacocks in the treetops high
Between their gorgeous dances shrilled,
The cuckoo cried exultantly,
The frogs were clamorous in the field;

And ever with insistent chime
The bird of rumour shrieking fled
Amidst the rain, at such a time
A vision stood beside my bed.

He moved like fire into my soul,
The love of him became a part
Of being, and oh his whispers stole
Murmuring in and filled my heart.

His loving ways, his tender wiles,
The hearts that feel, ah me! so burn
That maidens pure with happy smiles
From shame and peace and honour turn.

The lustre of his looks effaced
The moon, of many lovely moods
He is the master; on his breast
There was a wreath of jasmine buds.

Holding my feet, down on the bed
He sat; my breasts were fluttering birds;
His hands upon my limbs he laid,
He bought me for his slave with words.

O me! his eyebrows curved like bows!
O me! his panther body bright!
Love from his sidelong glances goes
And takes girls prisoners at sight.

He speaks with little magic smiles
That force a girl's heart from her breast.
How many sweet ways he beguiles,
I know; they cannot be expressed.

Burning he tore me from my bed
And to his passionate bosom clutched;
I could not speak a word; he said
Nothing, his lips and my lips touched.

My body almost swooned away
And from my heart went fear and shame
And maiden pride; panting I lay;
He was around me like a flame.¹

SELECTED POEMS OF CHANDIDAS

Selected Poems of Chandidas

Love, but my words are vain as air!
In my sweet joyous youth, a heart untried,
Thou took'st me in Love's sudden snare,
Thou wouldst not let me in my home abide.

And now I have nought else to try,
But I will make my soul one strong desire
And into Ocean leaping die:
So shall my heart be cooled of all its fire.

Die and be born to life again
As Nanda's son, the joy of Braja's girls,
And I will make thee Radha then,
A laughing child's face set with lovely curls.

Then I will love thee and then leave;
Under the Codome's boughs when thou goest by
Bound to the water morn or eve,
Lean on that tree fluting melodiously.

Thou shalt hear me and fall at sight
Under my charm; my voice shall wholly move
Thy simple girl's heart to delight;
Then shalt thou know the bitterness of love.

II

O love, what more shall I, shall Radha speak,
 Since mortal words are weak?
 In life, in death,
 In being and in breath
 No other lord but thee can Radha seek.

About thy feet the mighty net is wound
 Wherein my soul they bound;
 Myself resigned
 To servitude my mind;
 My heart than thine no sweeter slavery found.

I, Radha, thought; through the three worlds my gaze
 I sent in wild amaze;
 I was alone.
 None called me "Radha!", none;
 I saw no hand to clasp, no friendly face.

I sought my father's house; my father's sight
 Was empty of delight;
 No tender friend
 Her loving voice would lend;
 My cry came back unanswered from the night.

Therefore to this sweet sanctuary I brought
 My chilled and shuddering thought.
 Ah, suffer, sweet,
 To thy most faultless feet
 That I should cling unchid; ah, spurn me not!

Spurn me not, dear, from thy beloved breast,
 A woman weak, unblest.
 Thus let me cling,
 Thus, thus about my king
 And thus remain caressing and caressed.

I, Radha, thought; without my life's sweet lord,
— Strike now thy mightiest chord —
 I had no power
 To live one simple hour;
His absence slew my soul as with a sword.

If one brief moment steal thee from mine eyes,
 My heart within me dies.
 As girls who keep
 The treasures of the deep,
I string thee round my neck and on my bosom prize.

III

O heart, my heart, a heavy pain is thine!

What land is that where none doth know
Love's cruel name nor any word of sin?
My heart, there let us go.

Friend of my soul, who then has called love sweet?

Laughing I called from heavenly spheres
The sweet love close; he came with flying feet
And turned my life to tears.

What highborn girl, exiling virgin pride,

Has wooed love to her with a laugh?
His fires shall burn her as in harvest-tide
The mowers burn the chaff.

O heart, my heart, merry thy sweet youth ran

In fields where no love was; thy breath
Is anguish, since his cruel reign began.
What other cure but death?

Appeal

Thy youth is but a noon, of night take heed, —
A noon that is a fragment of a day,
And the swift eve all sweet things bears away,
All sweet things and all bitter, rose and weed.
For others' bliss who lives, he lives indeed.

But thou art pitiful and ruth shouldst know.
I bid thee trifle not with fatal love,
But save our pride and dear one, O my dove,
And heaven and earth and the nether world below
Shall only with thy praises peopled grow.

Life is a bliss that cannot long abide,
But while thou livest, love. For love the sky
Was founded, earth upheaved from the deep cry
Of waters, and by love is sweetly tied
The golden cordage of our youth and pride.

(Suggested by an old Bengali poem)

BANDE MATARAM
HYMN TO THE MOTHER

HYMN TO THE MOTHER

Bande Mataram

Mother, I bow to thee!
Rich with thy hurrying streams,
Bright with thy orchard gleams,
Cool with thy winds of delight,
Dark fields waving, Mother of might,
Mother free.

Glory of moonlight dreams
Over thy branches and lordly streams, —
Clad in thy blossoming trees,
Mother, giver of ease,
Laughing low and sweet!
Mother, I kiss thy feet,
Speaker sweet and low!
Mother, to thee I bow.

Who hath said thou art weak in thy lands,
When the swords flash out in seventy million hands
And seventy million voices roar
Thy dreadful name from shore to shore?
With many strengths who art mighty and stored,
To thee I call, Mother and Lord!

Thou who savest, arise and save!
To her I cry who ever her foemen drave
Back from plain and sea
And shook herself free.

Thou art wisdom, thou art law,
Thou our heart, our soul, our breath,
Thou the love divine, the awe
In our hearts that conquers death.
Thine the strength that nerves the arm,
Thine the beauty, thine the charm.

Every image made divine
In our temples is but thine.

Thou art Durga, Lady and Queen,
With her hands that strike and her swords of sheen,
Thou art Lakshmi lotus-throned,
And the Muse a hundred-toned.
Pure and perfect without peer,
Mother, lend thine ear.
Rich with thy hurrying streams,
Bright with thy orchard gleams,
Dark of hue, O candid-fair
In thy soul, with jewelled hair
And thy glorious smile divine,
Loveliest of all earthly lands,
Showering wealth from well-stored hands!
Mother, mother mine!
Mother sweet, I bow to thee
Mother great and free!

BANDE MATARAM

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

It is difficult to translate the National Anthem of Bengal into verse in another language owing to its unique union of sweetness, simple directness and high poetic force. All attempts in this direction have been failures. In order, therefore, to bring the reader unacquainted with Bengali nearer to the exact force of the original, I give the translation in prose line by line.

वन्दे मातरम् ।

सुजलां सुफलां मलयज-शीतलाम्
शस्य-श्यामलां मातरम् ॥

शुभ्र-ज्योत्स्ना-गुलकित-यामिनीम्
फुल्ल-कुसुमित-द्रुमदल-शोभिनीम्,
सुहासिनीं सुमधुर-भाषिणीम्,
सुखदां वरदां मातरम् ॥

सप्तकोटि-कण्ठ-कलकल-निनाद-कराले,
द्विसप्तकोटि-भुजैर्धृत-स्वरकरवाले,
अबला केन मा एत बले !

बहुबल-धारिणीं नमामि तारिणीम्
रिपुदल-वारिणीं मातरम् ॥

तुमि विद्या तुमि धर्म,
तुमि हृदि तुमि मर्म,
त्वं हि प्राणाः शरीरे ।
बाहुते तुमि मा शक्ति,
हृदये तुमि मा भक्ति,
तोमारद्द प्रतिमा गड़ि मन्दिरे मन्दिरे ।

त्वं हि दुर्गा ब्रह्महरण-धारिणी
कमला कमल-दल-विहारिणी
वाणी विद्यादायिनी नमामि त्वाम्
नमामि कमलाम् अमलाम् अतुलाम्
सुजलां सुफलां मातरम्,
वन्दे मातरम् ।
श्यामलां सरलां सुस्मितां भूषिताम्
धरणीं भरणीं मातरम् ॥

Bande Mataram

I bow to thee, Mother,
richly-watered, richly-fruited,
cool with the winds of the south,
dark with the crops of the harvests,
the Mother!

Her nights rejoicing in the glory of the moonlight,
her lands clothed beautifully with her trees in flowering bloom,
sweet of laughter, sweet of speech,
the Mother, giver of boons, giver of bliss!

Terrible with the clamorous shout of seventy million throats,
and the sharpness of swords raised in twice seventy million hands,
Who sayeth to thee, Mother, that thou art weak?
Holder of multitudinous strength,

I bow to her who saves,
to her who drives from her the armies of her foemen,
the Mother!

Thou art knowledge, thou art conduct,
thou art heart, thou art soul,
for thou art the life in our body.
In the arm thou art might, O Mother,
in the heart, O Mother, thou art love and faith,
it is thy image we raise in every temple.

For thou art Durga holding her ten weapons of war,
Kamala at play in the lotuses
and speech, the goddess, giver of all lore,
to thee I bow!

I bow to thee, goddess of wealth
pure and peerless,
richly-watered, richly-fruited,
the Mother!

I bow to thee, Mother,
dark-hued, candid,
sweetly smiling, jewelled and adorned,
the holder of wealth, the lady of plenty,
the Mother!

ANANDAMATH
OF
BANKIM CHANDRA CHATTERJEE
First thirteen chapters only

PROLOGUE

A wide interminable forest. Most of the trees are *Sāls*, but other kinds are not wanting. Treetop mingling with treetop, foliage melting into foliage, the interminable lines progress; without crevice, without gap, without even a way for the light to enter, league after league and again league after league the boundless ocean of leaves advances, tossing wave upon wave in the wind. Underneath, thick darkness; even at midday the light is dim and uncertain; a seat of terrific gloom. There the foot of man never treads; there, except the illimitable rustle of the leaves and the cry of wild beasts and birds, no sound is heard.

In this interminable, impenetrable wilderness of blind gloom, it is night. The hour is midnight, and a very dark midnight; even outside the wood-land it is dark and nothing can be seen. Within the forest the piles of gloom are like the darkness in the womb of the earth itself.

Bird and beast are utterly and motionlessly still. What hundreds of thousands, what millions of birds, beasts, insects, flying things have their dwelling within that forest! But not one is giving forth a sound. Rather the darkness is within the imagination; but inconceivable is that noiseless stillness of the ever-murmurous, ever noise-filled earth. In that limitless empty forest, in the solid darkness of that midnight, in that unimaginable silence, there was a sound: "Shall the desire of my heart ever be fulfilled?"

After that sound the forest reaches sank again into stillness. Who would have said then that a human sound had been heard in those wilds? A little while after, the sound came again, again the voice of man rang forth troubling the hush: "Shall the desire of my heart ever be fulfilled?"

Three times the wide sea of darkness was thus shaken. Then the answer came: "What is the stake put down?"

The first voice replied, "I have staked my life and all its riches."

The echo answered, "Life! it is a small thing which all can sacrifice."

"What else is there? What more can I give?"

This was the answer, "Thy soul's worship."

ANANDAMATH

CHAPTER ONE

It is a summer day of the Bengali year 1176. The glare and heat of the sun lies very heavy on the village of Padachinha. The village is crowded with houses, yet there is not a man to be seen. Line upon line of shops in the bazaar, rows upon rows of booths in the mart, hundreds of earthen houses interspersed with stone mansions, high and low, in every quarter. But today all is silent. In the bazaar the shops are closed, and where the shopkeeper has fled no man can tell. It is market day today, but in the mart there is no buying and selling. It is the beggars' day, but the beggars are not out. The weaver has shut up his loom and lies weeping in his house; the trader has forgotten his traffic and weeps with his infant in his lap; the givers have left giving and the teachers closed their schools; the very infant, it would seem, has no longer heart to cry aloud. No wayfarers are to be seen in the highways, no bathers in the lake, no human forms at door and threshold, no birds in the trees, no cattle in the pastures; only in the burning-ground dog and jackal crowd.

In that crowded desolation of houses one huge building, whose great fluted pillars could be seen from afar, rose glorious as the peak of a hill. And yet where was the glory? The doors were shut, the house empty of the concourse of men, hushed and voiceless, difficult even to the entry of the wind. In a room within this dwelling where even noon was a darkness, in that darkness, like a pair of lilies flowering in the midnight, a wedded couple sat in thought. Straight in front of them stood Famine.

The harvest of the year 1174 had been poor, consequently in the year 1175 rice was a little dear; the people suffered, but the Government exacted its revenues to the last fraction of a farthing. As a result of this careful reckoning the poor began to eat only once a day. The rains in 1175 were copious, and people thought Heaven had taken pity on the land. Joyously once more the herdsman sang his ditty in the fields; the tiller's wife again began to tease her husband for a silver bracelet. Suddenly in the month of Aswin Heaven turned away its face. In Aswin and Kartick not a drop of rain fell; the grain in the fields withered and turned to straw as it stood.

Wherever a ear or two flourished, the officials bought it for the troops. The people no longer had anything to eat. First, they stinted themselves of one meal in the day; then even from their single meal they rose with half-filled stomachs; next the two meal-times became two fasts. The little harvest reaped in Chaitra was not enough to fill the hungry mouths. But Mahomed Reza Khan, who was in charge of the revenues, thought fit to show himself off as a loyal servant and immediately enhanced the taxes by ten per cent. Throughout Bengal arose a clamour of great weeping.

First, people began to live by begging but afterwards who could give alms? They began to fast. Next they fell into the clutch of disease. The cow was sold, plough and yoke were sold, the seed-rice was eaten, hearth and home were sold, land and goods were sold. Next they began to sell their girls. After that they began to sell their boys. After that they began to sell their wives. Next, girl, boy, or wife, — who would buy? Purchasers there were none, only sellers. For want of food men began to eat the leaves of trees, they began to eat grass, they began to eat weeds. The lower castes and the forest men began devouring dogs, mice and cats. Many fled, but those who fled only reached some foreign land to die of starvation. Those who remained ate uneatables or subsisted without food till disease took hold of them and they died.

Disease had its day, — fever, cholera, consumption, small-pox. The virulence of small-pox was especially great. In every house men began to perish of the disease. There was none to give water to his fellow, none who would touch him, none to treat the sick. Men would not turn to care for each other's sufferings, nor was there any to take up the corpse from where it lay. Beautiful bodies lay rotting in wealthy mansions. For where once the small-pox made its entry, the dwellers fled from the house and abandoned the sick man in their fear.

Mohendra Singha was a man of great wealth in the village of Pada-chinha, but today rich and poor were on one level. In this time of crowding afflictions his relatives, friends, servants, maid-servants had all been seized by disease and gone from him. Some had died, some had fled. In that once peopled household there was only himself, his wife and one infant girl. This was the couple of whom I spoke.

The wife, Kalyani, gave up thinking and went to the cowshed to milk the cow; then she warmed the milk, fed her child and went again to give the cow its grass and water. When she returned from her task Mohendra said, "How long can we go on in this way?"

“Not long,” answered Kalyani, “as long as we can. So long as possible I will keep things going, afterwards you and the girl can go to the town.”

MOHENDRA

If we have to go to the town at the end, why should I inflict all this trouble on you at all? Come, let us go at once.

After much arguing and contention between husband and wife, Kalyani said, “Will there be any particular advantage in going to the town?”

MOHENDRA

Very possibly that place too is as empty of men and empty of means of subsistence as we are here.

KALYANI

If you go to Murshidabad, Cossimbazar or Calcutta, you may save your life. It is in every way best to leave this place.

Mohendra answered, “This house has been full for many years of the gathered wealth of generations. All this will be looted by thieves.”

KALYANI

If thieves come to loot it, shall we two be able to protect the treasure? If life is not saved who will be there to enjoy? Come, let us shut up the whole place this moment and go. If we survive, we can come back and enjoy what remains.

“Will you be able to do the journey on foot?” asked Mohendra. “The palanquin-bearers are all dead. As for cart or carriage, where there are bullocks there is no driver; and where there is a driver there are no bullocks.”

KALYANI

Oh, I shall be able to walk, do not fear.

In her heart she thought, even if she fell and died on the way, these two at least would be saved.

The next day at dawn the two took some money with them, locked up room and door, let loose the cattle, took the child in their arms and set out for the capital. At the time of starting Mohendra said, “The road is very difficult, at every step dacoits and highwaymen are hovering about, it is not well to go empty-handed.” So saying Mohendra returned to the house and took from it musket, shot, and powder.

When she saw the weapon, Kalyani said, “Since you have remembered to take arms with you, hold Sukumari for a moment and I too will

bring a weapon with me." With these words she put her daughter into Mohendra's arms and in her turn entered the house.

Mohendra called after her, "Why, what weapon can you take with you?"

As she came, Kalyani hid a small casket of poison in her dress. Fearing what fate might befall her in these days of misfortune, she had already procured and kept the poison with her.

It was the month of Jyaistha, a savage heat, the earth as if a flame, the wind scattering fire, the sky like a canopy of heated copper, the dust of the road like sparks of fire. Kalyani began to perspire profusely. Now resting under the shade of a *bāblā* tree, now sitting in the shelter of a date-palm, drinking the muddy water of dried ponds, with great difficulty she journeyed forward. The girl was in Mohendra's arms and sometimes he fanned her with his robe. Once the two refreshed themselves, seated under the boughs of a creeper-covered tree flowering with odorous blooms and dark-hued with dense shade-giving foliage. Mohendra wondered to see Kalyani's endurance under fatigue. He drenched his robe with water from a neighbouring pool and sprinkled it on his and Kalyani's face, forehead, hands and feet.

Kalyani was a little cooled and refreshed, but both of them were distressed with great hunger. That could be borne, but the hunger and thirst of their child could not be endured, so they resumed their march. Swimming through those waves of fire they arrived before evening at an inn. Mohendra had cherished a great hope that on reaching the inn he would be able to give cool water to his wife and child to drink and food to save their lives. But he met with a great disappointment. There was not a man in the inn. Big rooms were lying empty, the men had all fled. Mohendra after looking about the place made his wife and daughter lie down in one of the rooms. He began to call from outside in a loud voice, but got no answer. Then Mohendra said to Kalyani, "Will you have a little courage and stay here alone? If there is a cow to be found in this region, may Sri Krishna have pity on us and I shall bring you some milk." He took an earthen water jar in his hand and went out. A number of such jars were lying about the place.

CHAPTER TWO

Mohendra departed. Left alone with no one near her but her little girl, Kalyani in that solitary and unpeopled place, in that almost pitch-dark cottage began to study closely every side. Great fear was upon her. No one anywhere, no sound of human existence to be heard, only the howling of the dogs and the jackals. She regretted letting her husband go — hunger and thirst might after all have been borne a little longer. She thought of shutting all the doors and sitting in the security of the closed house. But not a single door had either panel or bolt. As she was thus gazing in every direction suddenly something in the doorway that faced her caught her eye, something like a shadow. It seemed to her to have the shape of a man and yet not to be human. Something utterly dried up and withered, something like a very black, a naked and terrifying human shape had come and was standing at the door. After a little while the shadow seemed to lift a hand — with the long withered finger of a long withered hand, all skin and bone, it seemed to make a motion of summons to someone outside. Kalyani's heart dried up in her with fear. Then just such another shadow, withered, black, tall, naked, came and stood by the side of the first. Then another came and yet another came. Many came, — slowly, noiselessly they began to enter the room. The room with its almost blind darkness grew dreadful as a midnight burning-ground. All those corpse-like figures gathered round Kalyani and her daughter. Kalyani almost swooned away. Then the black withered men seized and lifted up the woman and the girl, carried them out of the house and entered into a jungle across the open fields.

A few minutes afterwards Mohendra arrived with the milk in the water jar. He found the whole place empty. Hither and thither he searched, often called aloud his daughter's name and at last even his wife's. There was no answer, he could find no trace of his wife and child.

CHAPTER THREE

It was a very beautiful woodland in which the robbers set down Kalyani. There was no light, no eye to see the loveliness, — the beauty of the wood remained invisible like the beauty of soul in a poor man's heart. There might be no food in the country, but there was a wealth of flowers in the woodland; so thick was the fragrance that even in that darkness one seemed to be conscious of a light. On a clear spot in the middle covered with soft grass, the thieves set down Kalyani and her child and themselves sat around them. Then they began to debate what to do with them, for what ornaments Kalyani had with her were already in their possession. One group was very busy with the division of this booty. But when the ornaments had been divided, one of the robbers said, "What are we to do with gold and silver? Someone give me a handful of rice in exchange for an ornament; I am tortured with hunger, I have eaten today nothing but the leaves of trees." No sooner had one so spoken than all echoed him and a clamour arose. "Give us rice, give us rice, we do not want gold and silver!" The leader tried to quiet them, but no one listened to him. Gradually high words began to be exchanged, abuse flowed freely, a fight became imminent. Everyone in a rage pelted the leader with his whole allotment of ornaments. He also struck one or two and this brought all of them upon him striking at him in a general assault. The robber captain was emaciated and ill with starvation; one or two blows laid him prostrate and lifeless. Then one in that hungry, wrathful, excited, maddened troop of plunderers cried out, "We have eaten the flesh of dogs and jackals and now we are racked with hunger; come, friends, let us feast to-day on this rascal." Then all began to shout aloud, "Glory to Kali! Bom Kali! today we will eat human flesh." And with this cry those black emaciated corpse-like figures began to shout with laughter and dance and clap their hands in the congenial darkness. One of them set about lighting a fire to roast the body of the leader. He gathered dried creepers, wood and grass, struck flint and iron and set light to the collected fuel. As the fire burned up a little, the dark green foliage of the trees that were neighbours to the spot, mango, lemon, jackfruit and palm, tamarind and date, were lit up faintly with the flames. Here the leaves seemed ablaze, there the grass brightened in the light: in some places the darkness only became more crass and deep. When the fire was ready, one began to drag the corpse by the leg and was about to throw it on the fire, but another intervened and said, "Drop it!

stop, stop! if it is on the grand meat that we must keep ourselves alive today, then why the tough and juiceless flesh of this old fellow? We shall eat what we have looted and brought with us today. Come along, there is that tender girl, let us roast and eat her.” Another said, “Roast anything you like, my good fellow, but roast it; I can stand this hunger no longer.” Then all gazed greedily towards the place where Kalyani and her daughter had lain. They saw the place empty; neither child nor mother was there. Kalyani had seen her opportunity when the robbers were disputing, taken her daughter into her arms, put the child’s mouth to her breast and fled into the wood. Aware of the escape of their prey, the ghost-like ruffian crew ran in every direction with a cry of “Kill, Kill”. In certain conditions man is no better than a ferocious wild beast.

CHAPTER FOUR

The darkness of the wood was very deep and Kalyani could not find her way. In the thickly-woven entanglement of trees, creepers, and thorns there was no path at the best of times and on that there came this impenetrable darkness. Separating the branches and creepers, pushing through thorn and briar, Kalyani began to make her way into the thickness of the wood. The thorns pierced the child's skin and she cried from time to time; and at that the shouts of the pursuing robbers rose higher. In this way with torn and bleeding body, Kalyani made farther progress into the woodland. After a little while the moon rose. Until then there was some slight confidence in Kalyani's mind that in the darkness the robbers would not be able to find her and after a brief and fruitless search would desist from the pursuit, but, now that the moon had risen, that confidence left her. The moon, as it mounted into the sky, shed its light on the woodland tops, and the darkness within was suffused with it. The darkness brightened, and here and there, through gaps, the outer luminousness found its way inside and peeped into the thickets. The higher the moon mounted, the more the light penetrated into the reaches of foliage, the deeper all the shadows took refuge in the thicker parts of the forest. Kalyani too with her child hid herself farther and farther in where the shadows retreated. And now the robbers shouted higher and began to come running from all sides, and the child in her terror wept louder. Kalyani then gave up the struggle and made no further attempt to escape. She sat down with the girl on her lap on a grassy thornless spot at the foot of a great tree and called repeatedly, "Where art Thou? Thou whom I worship daily, to whom daily I bow down, in reliance on whom I had the strength to penetrate into this forest, where art Thou, O Madhusudan?" At this time, what with fear, the deep emotion of spiritual love and worship and the lassitude of hunger and thirst, Kalyani gradually lost sense of her outward surroundings and became full of an inward consciousness in which she was aware of a heavenly voice singing in mid-air,

"O Hari, O Murari, O foe of
Kaitabh and Madhu!

O Gopal, O Govinda, O Mukunda,
O Shauri!

O Hari, O Murari, O foe of
Kaitabh and Madhu!"

Kalyani had heard from her childhood, in the recitation of the Puranas, that the sages of Paradise roam the world on the paths of the sky, crying aloud to the music of the harp the name of Hari. That imagination took shape in her mind and she began to see with the inner vision a mighty ascetic, harp in hand, white-bodied, white-haired, white-bearded, white-robed, tall of stature, singing in the path of the azure heavens,

"O Hari, O Murari, O foe of
Kaitabh and Madhu!"

Gradually the song grew nearer, louder she heard the words,

"O Hari, O Murari, O foe of
Kaitabh and Madhu!"

Then still nearer, still clearer, —

"O Hari, O Murari, O foe of
Kaitabh and Madhu!"

At last over Kalyani's head the chant rang echoing in the woodland,

"O Hari, O Murari, O foe of
Kaitabh and Madhu!"

Then Kalyani opened her eyes. In the half-lustrous moonbeams suffused and shadowed with the darkness of the forest, she saw in front of her that white-bodied, white-haired, white-bearded, white-robed image of a sage. Dreamily all her consciousness centred on the vision. Kalyani thought to bow down to it, but she could not perform the salutation; even as she bent her head, all consciousness left her and she lay fallen supine on the ground.

CHAPTER FIVE

In a huge tract of ground in the forest there was a great monastery engirt with ruined masses of stone. Archaeologists would tell us that this was formerly a monastic retreat of the Buddhists and afterwards became a Hindu monastery. Its rows of edifices were two-storeyed; in between were temples and in front a meeting-hall. Almost all these buildings were surrounded with a wall and so densely hidden with the trees of the forest that, even at day-time and at a short distance from the place, none could divine the presence of a human habitation here. The buildings were broken in many places, but by daylight one could see that the whole place had been recently repaired. A glance showed that man had made his dwelling in this profound and inaccessible wilderness. It was in a room in this monastery, where a great log was blazing, that Kalyani first returned to consciousness and beheld in front of her that white-bodied, white-robed Great One. Kalyani began once more to gaze on him with eyes large with wonder, for even now memory did not return to her. Then the Mighty One of Kalyani's vision spoke to her: "My child, this is a habitation of the Gods, here have no apprehension. I have a little milk, drink it and then I will talk with you."

At first Kalyani could understand nothing, then, as by degrees her mind recovered some firm foundation, she threw the hem of her robe round her neck and made an obeisance at the Great One's feet. He replied with a blessing and brought out from another room a sweet-smelling earthen pot in which he warmed some milk at the blazing fire. When the milk was warm he gave it to Kalyani and said, "My child, give some to your daughter to drink and then drink some yourself, afterwards you can talk." Kalyani, with joy in her heart, began to administer the milk to her daughter. The unknown then said to her, "While I am absent, have no anxiety," and left the temple. After a while he returned from outside and saw that Kalyani had finished giving the milk to her child, but had herself drunk nothing; the milk was almost as it was at first, very little had been used. "My child," said the unknown, "you have not drunk the milk; I am going out again, and until you drink I will not return."

The sage-like personage was again leaving the room, when Kalyani once more made him an obeisance and stood before him with folded hands.

"What is it you wish to say?" asked the recluse.

Then Kalyani replied, "Do not command me to drink the milk, there is an obstacle. I will not drink it."

The recluse answered in a voice full of compassion, "Tell me what is the obstacle; I am a forest-dwelling ascetic, you are my daughter; what can you have to say which you will not tell me? When I carried you unconscious from the forest, you then seemed to me as if you had been sadly distressed with thirst and hunger; if you do not eat and drink, how can you live?"

Kalyani answered, the tears dropping from her eyes, "You are a god and I will tell you. My husband remains still fasting and until I meet him again or hear of his tasting food, how can I eat?"

The ascetic asked, "Where is your husband?"

"I do not know," said Kalyani, "the robbers stole me away after he had gone out in search of milk." Then the ascetic by question after question elicited all the information about Kalyani and her husband. Kalyani did not indeed utter her husband's name, — she could not; but the other information the ascetic received about him was sufficient for him to understand. He asked her, "Then you are Mohendra Singha's wife?" Kalyani, in silence and with bowed head, began to heap wood on the fire at which the milk had been warmed. Then the ascetic said, "Do what I tell you, drink the milk; I am bringing you news of your husband. Unless you drink the milk, I will not go." Kalyani asked, "Is there a little water anywhere here?" The ascetic pointed to a jar of water. Kalyani made a cup of her hands, the ascetic filled it with water; then Kalyani approaching her hands with the water in them to the ascetic's feet, said, "Please put the dust of your feet in the water." When the ascetic had touched the water with his foot, Kalyani drank it and said, "I have drunk nectar of the gods, do not tell me to eat or drink anything else; until I have news of my husband I will take nothing else." The ascetic answered, "Abide without fear in this temple. I am going in search of your husband."

CHAPTER SIX

It was far on in the night and the moon rode high overhead. It was not the full moon and its brilliance was not so keen. An uncertain light, confused with shadowy hints of darkness, lay over an open common of immense extent the two extremities of which could not be seen in that pale lustre. This plain affected the mind like something illimitable and desert-like, a very abode of fear. Through it there ran the road between Murshidabad and Calcutta.

On the road-side was a small hill which bore upon it a goodly number of mango-trees. The tree-tops glimmered and trembled with a sibilant rustle in the moonlight, and their shadows, too, black upon the blackness of the rocks, shook and quivered. The ascetic climbed to the top of the hill and there in rigid silence listened, but for what he listened, it is not easy to say; for in that great plain that seemed as vast as infinity, there was not a sound except the murmurous rustle of the trees. At one spot there was a great jungle near the foot of the hill, — the hill above, the high road below, the jungle between. I do not know what sound met his ear from the jungle, but it was in that direction the ascetic went. Entering into the denseness of the growth he saw in the forest, under the darkness of the branches at the foot of long rows of trees, men sitting, — men tall of stature, black of hue, armed; their burnished weapons glittered fierily in the moonlight where it fell through gaps in the woodland leafage. Two hundred such armed men were sitting there, not one uttering a single word. The ascetic went slowly into their midst and made some signal, but not a man rose, none spoke, none made a sound. He passed in front of all, looking at each as he went, scanning every face in the gloom, as if he were seeking someone he could not find. In his search he recognised one, touched him and made a sign, at which the other instantly rose. The ascetic took him to a distance and they stood and talked apart. The man was young; his handsome face wore a thick black moustache and beard; his frame was full of strength; his whole presence beautiful and attractive. He wore an ochre-coloured robe and on all his limbs the fairness and sweetness of sandal was smeared. The Brahmacharin said to him, "Bhavananda, have you any news of Mohendra Singha?"

Bhavananda answered, "Mohendra Singha and his wife and child left their house today; on the way, at the inn, —"

At this point the ascetic interrupted him, "I know what happened at

the inn. Who did it?"

"Village rustics, I imagine. Just now the peasants of all the villages have turned dacoits from compulsion of hunger. And who is not a dacoit nowadays? Today we also have looted and eaten. Two maunds of rice belonging to the Chief of Police were on its way; we took and consecrated it to a devotee's dinner."

The ascetic laughed and said, "I have rescued his wife and child from the thieves. I have just left them in the monastery. Now it is your charge to find out Mohendra and deliver his wife and daughter into his keeping. Jivananda's presence here will be sufficient for the success of today's business."

Bhavananda undertook the mission and the ascetic departed elsewhere.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Mohendra rose from the floor of the inn where he was sitting, for nothing could be gained by sitting there and thinking over his loss. He started in the direction of the town with the idea of taking the help of the officials in the search for his wife and child. After journeying for some distance he saw on the road a number of bullock-carts surrounded by a great company of sepoy.

In the Bengali year 1175 the province of Bengal had not become subject to British administration. The English were then the revenue officials of Bengal. They collected the taxes due to the treasury, but up to that time they had not taken upon themselves the burden of protecting the life and property of the Bengali people. The burden they had accepted was to take the country's money; the responsibility of protecting life and property lay upon that despicable traitor and disgrace to humanity, Mirzafar. Mirzafar was incapable of protecting even himself; it was not likely that he would or could protect the people of Bengal. Mirzafar took opium and slept; the English raked in the rupees and wrote despatches; as for the people of Bengal they wept and went to destruction.

The taxes of the province were therefore the due of the English, but the burden of administration was on the Nawab. Wherever the English themselves collected the taxes due to them, they had appointed a collector, but the revenue collected went to Calcutta. People might die of starvation, but the collection of their monies did not stop for a moment. However, very much could not be collected; for if Mother Earth does not yield wealth, no one can create wealth out of nothing. Be that as it may, the little that could be collected, had been made into cart-loads and was on its way to the Company's treasury at Calcutta in charge of a military escort. At this time there was great danger from dacoits, so fifty armed sepoy marched with fixed bayonets, ranked before and behind the carts. Their captain was an English soldier who went on horseback in the rear of the force. On account of the heat the sepoy did not march by day but only by night. As they marched, Mohendra's progress was stopped by the treasure carts and this military array. Mohendra, seeing his way barred by sepoy and carts, stood at the side of the road; but as the sepoy still jostled him in passing, holding this to be no fit time for debate, he went and stood at the edge of the jungle by the road.

Then a sepoy said in Hindustani, "See, there's a dacoit making off."

The sight of the gun in Mohendra's hand confirmed this belief. He went for Mohendra, caught hold of his neck and, with the salutation "Rogue! thief!" suddenly gave him a blow of the fist and wrested the gun from his hand. Mohendra, empty-handed, merely returned the blow. Needless to say, Mohendra was something more than a little angry, and the worthy sepoys reeled with the blow and went down stunned on the road. Upon that, three or four sepoy came up, took hold of Mohendra and, dragging him forcibly to the commander, told the Saheb, "This man has killed one of the sepoy." The Saheb was smoking and a little bewildered with strong drink; he replied, "Catch hold of the rogue and marry him." The soldiers did not understand how they were to marry an armed highwayman, but in the hope that, with the passing of the intoxication, the Saheb would change his mind and the marriage would not be forced on them, three or four sepoy bound Mohendra hand and foot with the halters of the cart-bullocks and lifted him into the cart. Mohendra saw that it would be in vain to use force against so many, and, even if he could effect his escape by force, what was the use? Mohendra was depressed and sorrowful with grief for his wife and child and had no desire for life. The sepoy bound Mohendra securely to the wheel of the cart. Then with a slow and heavy stride the escort proceeded on its march.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Possessed of the ascetic's command, Bhavananda, softly crying the name of Hari, went in the direction of the inn where Mohendra had been sitting; for he thought it likely that there he would get a clue to Mohendra's whereabouts.

At that time the present roads made by the English were not in existence. In order to come to Calcutta from the district towns, one had to travel by the marvellous roads laid down by the Mogul Emperors. On his way from Padachinha to the town, Mohendra had been travelling from south to north; thus it was that he met the soldiers on the way. The direction Bhavananda had to take from the Hill of Palms towards the inn, was also from south to north: necessarily, he too on his way fell in with the sepoys in charge of the treasure. Like Mohendra, he stood aside to let them pass. Now, for one thing, the soldiers naturally believed that the dacoits would be sure to attempt the plunder of this despatch of treasure, and on that apprehension had come the arrest of a dacoit on this very highway. When they saw Bhavananda too standing aside in the night-time, they inevitably concluded that here was another dacoit. Accordingly, they seized him on the spot.

Bhavananda smiled softly and said, "Why so, my good fellow?"

"Rogue!" answered a sepoy, "you are a robber."

"You can very well see I am an ascetic wearing the yellow robe. Is this the appearance of a robber?"

"There are plenty of rascally ascetics and Sannyasins who rob," retorted the sepoy, and he began to push and drag Bhavananda. Bhavananda's eyes flashed in the darkness, but he only said very humbly, "Good master, let me know your commands."

The sepoy was pleased at Bhavananda's politeness and said, "Here, rascal, take this load and carry it," and he clapped a bundle on Bhavananda's head. Then another of the sepoys said to the first, "No, he will run away; tie up the rascal on the cart where the other rogue is bound." Bhavananda grew curious to know who was the man they had bound; he threw away the bundle on his head and administered a slap on the cheek of the soldier who had put it there. In consequence, the sepoys bound Bhavananda, lifted him on to the cart and flung him down near Mohendra. Bhavananda at once recognised Mohendra Singha.

The sepoys again marched on, carelessly and with noise, and the

creaking of the cart-wheels recommenced. Then, softly and in a voice audible only to Mohendra, Bhavananda said, "Mohendra Singha, I know you and am here to give you help. There is no need for you to know just at present who I am. Do very carefully what I tell you. Put the rope that ties your hands on the wheel of the cart."

Mohendra, though astonished, carried out Bhavananda's suggestion without a word. Moving a little towards the cart-wheel under cover of darkness, he placed the rope that tied his hands so as to just touch the wheel. The rope was gradually cut through by the friction of the wheel. Then he cut the rope on his feet by the same means. As soon as he was free of his bonds, by Bhavananda's advice, he lay inert in the cart. Bhavananda also severed his bonds by the same device. Both lay utterly still and motionless.

The path of the soldiers took them precisely by the road where the Brahmacharin had stood on the highway near the jungle and gazed round him. As soon as they arrived near the hill, they saw under it, on the top of a mound, a man standing. Catching sight of his dark figure silhouetted against the moonlit azure sky, the havildar said, "There is another of the rogues; catch him and bring him here: he shall carry a load."

At that a soldier went to catch the man, but, though he saw the fellow coming to lay hold of him, the watcher stood firm; he did not stir. When the soldier laid hands on him, he said nothing. When he was brought as a prisoner to the havildar, even then he said nothing. The havildar ordered a load to be put on his head; a soldier put the load in place; he took it on his head. Then the havildar turned away and started marching with the cart. At this moment a pistol shot rang suddenly out, and the havildar, pierced through the head, fell on the road and breathed his last. A soldier shouted, "This rascal has shot the havildar," and seized the luggage-bearer's hand. The bearer had still the pistol in his grasp. He threw the load from him and struck the soldier on the head with the butt of his pistol; the man's head broke and he dropped further proceedings. Then with a cry of "Hari! Hari! Hari!" two hundred armed men surrounded the soldiery. The sepoy were at that moment awaiting the arrival of their English captain, who, thinking the dacoits were on him, came swiftly up to the cart and gave the order to form a square; for an Englishman's intoxication vanishes at the touch of danger. The sepoy immediately formed into a square facing four ways and at a further command of their captain lifted their guns in act to fire. At this critical moment some one wrested

suddenly the Englishman's sword from his belt and with one blow severed his head from his body. With the rolling of the Englishman's head from his shoulders the unspoken command to fire was silenced for ever. All looked and saw a man standing on the cart, sword in hand shouting loud the cry of "Hari, Hari" and calling "Kill, kill the soldiers." It was Bhavananda.

The sudden sight of their captain headless and the failure of any officer to give the command for defensive action kept the soldiers for a few moments passive and appalled. The daring assailants took advantage of this opportunity to slay and wound many, reach the carts and take possession of the money chests. The soldiers lost courage, accepted defeat and took to flight.

Then the man who had stood on the mound and afterwards assumed the chief leadership of the attack came to Bhavananda. After a mutual embrace Bhavananda said, "Brother Jivananda, it was to good purpose that you took the vow of our brotherhood." "Bhavananda," replied Jivananda, "justified be your name." Jivananda was charged with the office of arranging for the removal of the plundered treasure to its proper place and he swiftly departed with his following. Bhavananda alone remained standing on the field of action.

CHAPTER NINE

Mohendra had descended from the cart, wrested a weapon from one of the sepoy and made ready to join in the fight. But at this moment it came home clearly to him that these men were robbers and the plunder of the treasure the object of their attack on the soldiery. In obedience to this idea he stood away from the scene of the fight, for to help the robbers meant to be a partner in their ill-doing. Then he flung the sword away and was slowly leaving the place when Bhavananda came and stood near him. Mohendra said to him, "Tell me, who are you?"

Bhavananda replied, "What need have you to know that?"

"I have a need," said Mohendra. "You have done me today a very great service."

"I hardly thought you realized it," said Bhavananda, "you had a weapon in your hand, and yet you stood apart. A landholder are you, and that's a man good at being the death of milk and ghee, but when work has to be done, an ape."

Before Bhavananda had well finished his tirade Mohendra answered with contempt and disgust, "But this is bad work, — a robbery!"

"Robbery or not," retorted Bhavananda, "we have done you some little service and are willing to do you a little more."

"You have done me some service, I own," said Mohendra, "but what new service can you do me? And at a dacoit's hands I am better unhelped than helped."

"Whether you accept our proffered service or not," said Bhavananda, "depends on your own choice. If you do choose to take it, come with me. I will bring you where you can meet your wife and child."

Mohendra turned and stood still. "What is that?" he cried.

Bhavananda walked on without any reply, and Mohendra had no choice but to walk on with him, wondering in his heart what new kind of robbers were these.

CHAPTER TEN

Silently in the moonlit night the two crossed the open country. Mohendra was silent, sorrowful, full of pride, but also a little curious.

Suddenly Bhavananda's whole aspect changed. No longer was he the ascetic, serious of aspect, calm of mood; no longer the skilful fighter, the heroic figure of the man who had beheaded the English captain with the sweep of a sword; no longer had he that aspect with which even now he had proudly rebuked Mohendra. It was as if the sight of that beauty of plain and forest, river and numerous streams, all the moonlit peaceful earth, had stirred his heart with a great gladness; it was as if the Ocean were laughing in the moonbeams. Bhavananda became smiling, eloquent, courteous of speech. He grew very eager to talk and made many efforts to open a conversation, but Mohendra would not speak. Then Bhavananda, having no other resource, began to sing to himself.

“Mother, I bow to thee!
Rich with thy hurrying streams,
Bright with thy orchard gleams,
Cool with thy winds of delight,
Dark fields waving, Mother of might,
Mother free!”

The song astonished Mohendra, and he could understand nothing of it. Who might be this richly watered, richly-fruited Mother, cool with delightful winds and dark with the harvests? “What Mother?” he asked.

Bhavananda without any answer continued his song:

“Glory of moonlight dreams
Over thy branches and lordly streams;
Clad in thy blossoming trees,
Mother, giver of ease,
Laughing low and sweet!
Mother, I kiss thy feet.
Speaker sweet and low!
Mother, to thee I bow.

Mohendra said, “That is the country, it is not the Mother.”

Bhavananda replied, "We recognize no other Mother. 'Mother and Motherland is more than heaven itself.' We say the motherland is our mother. We have neither mother nor father nor brother nor friend, wife nor son nor house nor home. We have her alone, the richly-watered, richly-fruited, cool with delightful winds, rich with harvests —"

Then Mohendra understood and said, "Sing it again." Bhavananda sang once more:

Mother, I bow to thee!
 Rich with thy hurrying streams,
 Bright with thy orchard gleams,
 Cool with thy winds of delight,
 Dark fields waving, Mother of might,
 Mother free.

Glory of moonlight dreams
 Over thy branches and lordly streams, —
 Clad in thy blossoming trees,
 Mother, giver of ease,
 Laughing low and sweet!
 Mother, I kiss thy feet,
 Speaker sweet and low!
 Mother, to thee I bow.

Who hath said thou art weak in thy lands,
 When the swords flash out in seventy million hands
 And seventy million voices roar
 Thy dreadful name from shore to shore?
 With many strengths who art mighty and stored,
 To thee I call, Mother and Lord!

Thou who savest, arise and save!
 To her I cry who ever her foemen drave
 Back from plain and sea
 And shook herself free.

Thou art wisdom, thou art law,
 Thou our heart, our soul, our breath,

Thou the love divine, the awe
 In our hearts that conquers death.
 Thine the strength that nerves the arm,
 Thine the beauty, thine the charm.
 Every image made divine
 In our temples is but thine.

Thou art Durga, Lady and Queen,
 With her hands that strike and her swords of sheen,
 Thou art Lakshmi lotus-throned,
 And the Muse a hundred-toned.
 Pure and perfect, without peer,
 Mother, lend thine ear.
 Rich with thy hurrying streams,
 Bright with thy orchard gleams,
 Dark of hue, O candid-fair
 In thy soul, with jewelled hair
 And thy glorious smile divine,
 Loveliest of all earthly lands,
 Showering wealth from well-stored hands!

Mohendra saw the robber shedding tears as he sang. In wonder he asked, "Who are you?"

Bhavananda replied, "We are the Children."

"What is meant by the Children?" asked Mohendra, "Whose children are you?"

Bhavananda replied, "The children of the Mother."

"Good," said Mohendra. "Do the children worship their mother with theft and looting? What kind of filial piety is that?"

"We do not thief and loot," answered Bhavananda.

"Why, just now you plundered the carts."

"Is that theft and looting? Whose money did we plunder?"

"Why, the ruler's."

"The ruler's! What right has he to the money, that he should take it?"

"It is his royal share of the wealth of the country."

"Who rules and does not protect his kingdom, is he a ruler at all?"

"I see you will be blown one day from the cannon's mouth by the sepoy's."

“I have seen your rascal sepoy's more than once: I dealt with some today too.”

“Oh, that was not a real experience of them; one day you will get it.”

“Suppose it is so, a man can only die once.”

“But what profit is there in going out of one's way to die?”

“Mohendra Singha,” said Bhavananda, “I had a kind of idea that you were a man worth the name, but now I see you are what all the rest of them are, merely the death of ghee and milk. Look you, the snake crawls on the ground and is the lowest of living things, but put your foot on the snake's neck and even he will rise with lifted hood. Can nothing overthrow your patience, then? Look at all the countries you know. Magadh, Mithila, Kashi, Kanchi, Delhi, Cashmere; in what other country do men from starvation eat grass? Eat thorns? Eat the earth white ants have gathered? Eat the creepers of the forest? Where else are men forced to eat dogs and jackals, yes, even the bodies of the dead? Where else can men have no ease of heart because of fear for the money in their chests, the household gods on the sacred seats, the young women in their homes, the unborn children in the women's wombs? Ay, here they rip open the womb and tear out the child. In every country the relation with the ruler is that of protector and protected, but what protection do our Mussalman rulers give us? Our religion is destroyed, our caste defiled, our honour polluted, our family honour shamed; and now our very lives are going the same way. Unless we drive out these vice-besodden longbeards, the Hinduism of the Hindu is doomed.”

“How will you drive them out?” asked Mohendra.

“By blows.”

“You will drive them out single-handed? With one slap, I suppose.”

The robber sang:

“Who hath said thou art weak in thy lands,
When the swords flash out in seventy million hands
And seventy million voices roar
Thy dreadful name from shore to shore?”

“But,” said Mohendra, “I see you are alone.”

“Why, just now you saw two hundred men.”

“Are they all Children?”

“They are all Children.”

“How many more are there of them?”

“Thousands like these, and by degrees there will be yet more!”

“Even if there were ten or twenty thousand, will you be able with that number to take the throne from the Mussalman?”

“What army had the English at Plassey?”

“Can Englishmen and Bengalis be compared?”

“Why not? What does physical strength matter? Greater physical strength will not make the bullet fly farther.”

“Then,” asked Mohendra, “why is there such a difference between an Englishman and a Mussalman?”

“Take this first,” said Bhavananda, “an Englishman will not run away even from the certainty of death. A Mussalman runs as soon as he perspires and roams in search of a glass of *sherbet*. Next take this, that the Englishman has tenacity; if he takes up a thing, he carries it through. ‘Don’t care’ is a Mussalman’s motto. He is giving his life for a hire, and yet the soldiers don’t get their pay. Then the last thing is courage. A cannon ball can fall only in one place, not in ten; so there is no necessity for two hundred men to run from one cannon ball. But one cannon ball will send a Mussalman with his whole clan running, while a whole clan of cannon balls will not put even a solitary Englishman to flight.”

“Have you all these virtues?” asked Mohendra.

“No,” said Bhavananda, “but virtues don’t fall from the nearest tree. You have to practise them.”

“Do you practise them?”

“Do you not see we are Sannyasins? It is for this practice that we have made renunciation. When our work is done, when our training is complete, we shall again become householders. We also have wives and daughters.”

“You have abandoned all those ties, but have you been able to overcome Maya?”

“The Children are not allowed to speak falsely, and I will not make a lying boast to you. Who has the strength to conquer Maya? When a man says, ‘I have conquered Maya,’ either he never had any feeling or he is making a vain boast. We have not conquered Maya, we are only keeping our vow. Will you be one of the Children?”

“Until I get news of my wife and daughter, I cannot say anything.”

“Come then, you shall see your wife and child.”

The two went on their way; and Bhavananda began again to sing *Bande Mataram*.

Mohendra had a good voice and was a little proficient in singing and fond of it; therefore he joined in the song, and found that, as he sang, the tears came into his eyes. Then Mohendra said, "If I have not to abandon my wife and daughter, then initiate me into this vow."

"Whoever," answered Bhavananda, "takes this vow, must abandon wife and child. If you take this vow, you cannot be allowed to meet your wife and daughter. Suitable arrangements will be made for their protection, but until the vow is crowned with success, to look upon their faces is forbidden."

"I will not take your vow," answered Mohendra.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

The day had dawned. That unpeopled forest, so long dark and silent, now grew full of light, blissful with the cooing and calling of the birds. In that delightful dawn, in that joyous forest, that "Monastery of Bliss," Satyananda, seated on a deerskin, was performing his morning devotions. Jivananda sat near. It was at such a time that Bhavananda appeared with Mohendra Singha behind. The ascetic without a word continued his devotions and no one ventured to utter a sound. When the devotions were finished, Bhavananda and Jivananda saluted him and with humility seated themselves after taking the dust of his feet. Then Satyananda beckoned to Bhavananda and took him outside. What conversation took place between them, we do not know; but on the return of the two into the temple the ascetic, with compassion and laughter in his countenance, said to Mohendra, "My son, I have been greatly distressed by your misfortune; it was only by the grace of the Friend of the poor and miserable that I was able to rescue your wife and daughter last night." The ascetic then told Mohendra the story of Kalyani's rescue and said at the end, "Come, let me take you where they are."

The ascetic in front, Mohendra behind, they entered into the inner precincts of the temple. Mohendra beheld a wide and lofty hall. Even in this cheerful dawn, glad with the youth of the morning, when the neighbouring groves glittered in the sunshine as if set and studded with diamonds, in this great room there was almost a gloom as of night. Mohendra could not at first see what was in the room; but by gazing and gazing and still gazing he was able to distinguish a huge image of the four-armed Vishnu, bearing the shell, the discus, the club, the lotus-blossom, adorned with the jewel Kaustubha on his breast; in front the discus called Sudarshan, the Beautiful, seemed visibly to be whirling round. Two huge headless images representing Madhu and Kaitabh were painted before the figure, as if bathed in their own blood. On the left stood Lakshmi with flowing locks garlanded with wreaths of hundred-petalled lotuses, as if distressed with fear. On the right stood Saraswati, surrounded by books, musical instruments, the incarnate strains and symphonies of music. On Vishnu's lap sat an image of enchanting beauty, lovelier than Lakshmi and Saraswati, more splendid with opulence and lordship. Gandharva and Kinnara and god and elf and giant paid her homage. The ascetic asked Mohendra in a voice of deep solemnity and awe, "Can you see all?"

“Yes”, replied Mohendra.

“Have you seen what is in the lap of Vishnu?” asked the ascetic.

“Yes,” answered Mohendra, “who is she?”

“It is the Mother.”

“What mother?”

“She whose children we are,” replied the ascetic.

“Who is she?”

“In time you will recognise her. Cry ‘Hail to the Mother!’ Now come, you shall see.”

The ascetic took Mohendra into another room. There he saw an image of Jagaddhatri, Protectress of the world, wonderful, perfect, rich with every ornament. “Who is she?” asked Mohendra.

The Brahmacharin replied, “The Mother as she was.”

“What is that?” asked Mohendra.

“She trampled underfoot the elephants of the forest and all wild beasts, and in the haunt of the wild beasts she erected her lotus-throne. She was covered with every ornament, full of laughter and beauty. She was in hue like the young sun, splendid with all opulence and empire. Bow down to the Mother.”

Mohendra saluted reverently the image of the Motherland as the protectress of the world. The Brahmacharin then showed him a dark underground passage and said, “Come by this way.” Mohendra with some alarm followed him. In a dark room in the bowels of the earth an insufficient light entered from some unperceived outlet. By that faint light he saw an image of Kali.

The Brahmacharin said, “Look on the Mother as she now is.”

Mohendra said in fear, “It is Kali.”

“Yes, Kali enveloped in darkness, full of blackness and gloom. She is stripped of all, therefore naked. Today the whole country is a burial ground, therefore is the Mother garlanded with skulls. Her own God she tramples under her feet. Alas, my Mother!”

The tears began to stream from the ascetic’s eyes.

“Why,” asked Mohendra, “has she in her hands the club and the skull?”

“We are the Children, we have only just given weapons into our Mother’s hands. Cry ‘Hail to the Mother!’”

Mohendra said, “Bande Mataram” and bowed down to Kali.

The ascetic said, “Come by this way,” and began to ascend another

underground passage. Suddenly the rays of the morning sun shone in their eyes and from every side the sweet-voiced family of birds shrilled in song. In a wide temple built in stone of marble they saw a beautifully fashioned image of the Ten-armed Goddess made in gold, laughing and radiant in the light of the early sun. The ascetic saluted the image and said, "This is the Mother as she shall be. Her ten arms are extended towards the ten regions and they bear many a force imaged in her manifold weapons; her enemies are trampled under her feet and the lion on which her foot rests is busy destroying the foe. Behold her, with the regions for her arms" — as he spoke, Satyananda began to sob, — "with the regions for her arms, wielder of manifold weapons, trampler-down of her foes, with the lion-heart for the steed of her riding; on her right Lakshmi as Prosperity, on her left Speech, giver of learning and science, Kartikeya with her as strength, Ganesh as Success. Come, let us both bow down to the Mother." Both with lifted faces and folded hands began to cry with one voice, "O auspicious with all well-omened things, O thou ever-propitious who effectest all desire, O refuge of men, three-eyed and fair of hue, O Energy of Narayan, salutation to thee!"

The two men bowed down with awe and love; and when they rose, Mohendra asked in a broken voice, "When shall I see this image of the Mother?" "When all the Mother's sons," replied the Brahmacharin, "learn to call the Mother by that name, on that day the Mother will be gracious to us."

Suddenly Mohendra asked, "Where are my wife and daughter?"

"Come," said the ascetic, "you shall see them."

"I wish to see them once and say farewell."

"Why should you say farewell?"

"I shall take up this mighty vow."

"Where will you send them to?"

Mohendra thought for a little and then said, "There is no one in my house, and I have no other place. Yet in this time of famine, what other place can I find?"

"Go out of the temple," said the ascetic, "by the way by which you came here. At the door of the temple you will see your wife and child. Up to this moment Kalyani has eaten nothing. You will find articles of food in the place where they are sitting. When you have made her eat, do whatever you please; at present you will not again meet any of us. If this mind of yours holds, at the proper time I shall show myself to you."

Then suddenly by some path unknown the ascetic vanished from the place. Mohendra went forth by the way pointed out to him and saw Kalyani with her daughter sitting in the court of meeting.

Satyananda on his side descended by another underground passage into a secret cellar under the earth. There Jivananda and Bhavananda sat counting rupees and arranging them in piles. In that room gold, silver, copper, diamonds, coral, pearls were arrayed in heaps. It was the money looted on the previous night that they were arranging. Satyananda, as he entered the room, said, "Jivananda, Mohendra will come to us. If he comes, it will be a great advantage to the Children, for in that case the wealth accumulated in his family from generation to generation will be devoted to the Mother's service. But so long as he is not body and soul devoted to the Mother, do not take him into the order. As soon as the work you have in hand is completed, follow him at various times; and when you see it is the proper season, bring him to the temple of Vishnu. And in season or out of season, protect their lives. For even as the punishment of the wicked is the duty of the Children, so is the protection of the good equally their duty."

CHAPTER TWELVE

It was after much tribulation that Mohendra and Kalyani met again. Kalyani flung herself down and wept. Mohendra wept even more than she. The weeping over, there was much ado of wiping the eyes, for as often as the eyes were wiped, the tears began to come again. But when at last the tears had ceased to come, the thought of food occurred to Kalyani. She asked Mohendra to partake of the food which the ascetic's followers had kept with her. In this time of famine there was no chance of ordinary food and vegetables, but whatever there was in the country was to be had in plenty among the Children. That forest was inaccessible to ordinary men. Wherever there was a tree with fruit upon it, famishing men stripped it of what it bore, but none other than the Children had access to the fruit of the trees in this impenetrable wilderness. For this reason the ascetic's followers had been able to bring for Kalyani plenty of forest fruits and some milk. In the property of the Sannyasin were included a number of cows. At Kalyani's request, Mohendra first took some food. Afterwards Kalyani sat apart and ate something of what he had left. She gave some of the milk to her child and kept the rest to feed her with again. Then both of them, overcome with sleep, took rest for a while. When they woke, they began to discuss where they should go next. "We left home," said Kalyani, "in fear of danger and misfortune, but I now see there are greater dangers and misfortunes abroad than at home. Come then, let us return to our own house." That also was Mohendra's intention. It was his wish to keep Kalyani at home under the care of some suitable guardian and take upon himself this beautiful, pure and divine vow of service to the Mother. Therefore he gave his consent very readily. Husband and wife, rested from fatigue, took their daughter in their arms and set forth in the direction of Padachinha.

But which way led to Padachinha, they could not at all make out in that thick and difficult forest. They had thought that once they could find the way out of the wood, they would be able to find the road. But now they could not find the way out of the wood itself. After long wandering in the thickets, their circlings began to bring them round to the monastery once more; no way of exit could be found. In front of them they saw an unknown ascetic in the dress of a Vaishnav Gosain, who stood in the path and laughed at them. Mohendra, in some irritation, said to him, "What are you laughing at Gosain?"

“How did you enter the forest?” asked the Gosain.

“Well, we have entered it, it does not matter how.”

“Then, when you have entered, how is it you cannot get out again?”

So saying, the ascetic resumed his laughter.

“Since you laugh,” said Mohendra much provoked, “I presume you can yourself get out?”

“Follow me,” said the Vaishnav, “I will show you the way. You must undoubtedly have entered the forest in the company of one of the ascetics. No one else knows the way either into or out of the forest.”

On this Mohendra asked, “Are you one of the Children?”

“I am,” answered the Vaishnav. “Come with me. It is to show you the way that I am standing here.”

“What is your name?” asked Mohendra.

“My name,” replied the Vaishnav, “is Dhirananda Goswami.”

Dhirananda proceeded in front, Mohendra and Kalyani followed. Dhirananda took them out of the forest by a very difficult path and again plunged back among the trees.

On leaving the forest, one came after a little while to a common with trees. To one side of it there was the highway running along the forest, and in one place a little river flowed out of the woodland with a murmuring sound. Its water was very clear but dark like a thick cloud. On either bank beautiful dark-green trees of many kinds threw their shadows over the river, and in their branches birds of different families sat and gave forth their various notes. Those notes too were sweet and mingled with the sweet cadence of the stream. With a similar harmony the shadows of the trees agreed and mingled with the colour of the stream. Kalyani sat under a tree on the bank and bade her husband sit near. Mohendra sat down, and she took her child from her husband’s lap into her own. Kalyani held her husband’s hand in hers and for some time sat in silence. Then she asked, “Today I see that you are very melancholy. The calamity that was on us, we have escaped; why then are you so sad?”

Mohendra answered with a deep sigh, “I am no longer my own man, and what I am to do, I cannot understand.”

“Why?” asked Kalyani.

“Hear what happened to me after I lost you,” said Mohendra, and he gave a detailed account of all that had happened to him.

Kalyani said, “I too have suffered greatly and gone through many misadventures. It will be of no advantage to you to hear it. I cannot say

how I managed to sleep in such exceeding misadventure, but today in the early hours of the morning I fell asleep, and in my sleep I saw a dream. I saw — I cannot say by what force of previous good works I went there, — but I saw myself in a region of wonder, where there was no solid Earth, but only light, a very soft sweet light, as if of a cool lustre broken by clouds. There was no human being there, only luminous forms; no noise, only a sound as if of sweet song and music at a great distance. Myriads of flowers seemed to be ever newly in bloom, for the scent of them was there, jasmines of many kinds and other sweet-smelling blossoms. There in a place high over all, the cynosure of all, someone seemed to be sitting, like a dark blue hill that has grown bright as fire and burns softly from within. A great fiery crown was on his head, his arms seemed to be four. Those who sat on either side of him, I could not recognize; but I think they were women by their forms, but so full of beauty, light and fragrance that every time I gazed in that direction, my senses were perplexed — I could not fix my gaze nor see who they were. In front of the Four-Armed another woman's form seemed to be standing. She too was luminous, but surrounded by clouds so that the light could not well manifest itself; it could only be dimly realised that one in the form of a woman wept, one full of heart's distress, one worn and thin, but exceedingly beautiful. It seemed to me that a soft fragrant wind carried me along, pushing me as with waves, till it brought me to the foot of the Four-Armed's throne. It seemed to me that the worn and cloud-besieged woman pointed to me and said, 'This is she, for whose sake Mohendra will not come to my bosom.' Then there was a sound like the sweet clear music of a flute; it seemed that the Four-Armed said to me, 'Leave your husband and come to Me. This is your Mother; your husband will serve her; but if you stay at your husband's side, that service cannot be given. Come away to Me.' I wept and said, 'How shall I come, leaving my husband?' Then the flute-like voice came again, 'I am husband, father, mother, son, daughter; come to Me.' I do not remember what I said. Then I woke." Kalyani spoke and was again silent.

Mohendra also, astonished, amazed, alarmed, kept silent. Overhead the *doyel* began its clamour, the *pāpiā* flooded heaven with its voice, the call of the cuckoo set the regions echoing, the *bhringarāj* made the grove quiver with its sweet cry. At their feet the stream murmured softly between its banks. The wind carried to them the soft fragrance of the woodland flowers. In places bits of sunlight glittered on the waves of the rivulet. Somewhere palm-leaves rustled in the slow wind. Far off a blue range of

mountains met the eye. For a long time they remained silent in delight. Then Kalyani again asked, "What are you thinking?"

"I am thinking what I should do. The dream is nothing but a thought of fear, it is born of itself in the mind and of itself it disappears, — a bubble from the waking life. Come, let us go home."

"Go where God bids you," said Kalyani and put her child in her husband's lap.

Mohendra took his daughter in his lap and said, "And you, — where will you go?"

Kalyani, covering her eyes with her hands and pressing her forehead between them, answered, "I too will go where God has bid me."

Mohendra started and said, "Where is that? How will you go?"

Kalyani showed him the small box of poison.

Mohendra said in astonishment, "What, you will take poison?"

"I meant to take it, but —" Kalyani became silent and began to think. Mohendra kept his gaze on her face and every moment seemed to him a year, but when he saw that she did not complete her unfinished words, he asked: "But what? What were you going to say?"

"I meant to take it, but leaving you behind, leaving Sukumari behind, I have no wish to go to Paradise itself. I will not die."

With these words Kalyani set down the box on the earth. Then the two began to talk of the past and future and became absorbed in their talk. Taking advantage of their absorption, the child in her play took up the box of poison. Neither of them observed it.

Sukumari thought, "This is a very fine toy." She held it in her left hand and slapped it well with her right, put it in her right, and slapped it with her left. Then she began pulling at it with both hands. As a result the box opened and the pill fell out.

Sukumari saw the little pill fall on her father's cloth and took it for another toy. She threw the box away and pounced on the pill.

How it was that Sukumari had not put the box into her mouth, it is hard to say, but she made no delay in respect of the pill. "Eat it as soon as you get it;" — Sukumari crammed the pill into her mouth. At that moment her mother's attention was attracted to her.

"What has she eaten? What has she eaten?" cried Kalyani, and she thrust her finger into the child's mouth. Then both saw that the box of poison was lying empty. Then Sukumari, thinking that here was another game, clenched her teeth, — only a few had just come out, — and smiled

in her mother's face. By this time the taste of the poison-pill must have begun to feel bitter in the mouth, for a little after she loosened the clench of her teeth herself, and Kalyani took out the pill and threw it away. The child began to cry.

The pill fell on the ground. Kalyani dipped the loose end of her robe in the stream and poured the water into her daughter's mouth. In a tone of pitiful anxiety she asked Mohendra, "Has a little of it gone down her throat?"

It is the worst that comes first to a parent's mind — the greater the love, the greater the fear. Mohendra had not seen how large the pill was before, but now, after taking the pill into his hand and scrutinising it for some time, he said, "I think she has sucked in a good deal of it."

Necessarily, Kalyani adopted Mohendra's belief. For a long time she too held the pill in her hand and examined it. Meanwhile the child, owing to the little she had swallowed, became a little indisposed; she grew restless, cried, and at last grew a little dull and feeble. Then Kalyani said to her husband, "What more? Sukumari has gone the way God calls me to go. I too must follow her."

And with the words Kalyani put the pill into her mouth and in a moment had swallowed it.

Mohendra cried out, "What have you done, Kalyani, what have you done?"

Kalyani returned no answer, but taking the dust of her husband's feet on her head, only said, "Lord and Master, words will only multiply words. I take farewell."

But Mohendra cried out again, "Kalyani, what have you done?" and began to weep aloud. Then Kalyani said in a very soft voice, "I have done well. You might otherwise neglect the work given you by Heaven for the sake of so worthless a thing as a woman. See, I was transgressing a divine command, therefore my child has been taken from me. If I disregarded it further, you too might go."

Mohendra replied with tears, "I could have kept you somewhere and come back, — when our work had been accomplished, I could have again been happy with you. Kalyani, my all! Why have you done this thing? You have cut from me the hand by whose strength I could have held the sword. What am I without you?"

"Where could you have taken me? Where is there any place? Mother, father, friends, all in this terrible time of calamity have perished. In whose

house is there any place for us, where is the road we can travel, where will you take me? I am a burden hanging on your neck. I have done well to die. Give me this blessing that when I have gone to that luminous world, I may again see you." With these words Kalyani again took the dust of her husband's feet and placed it on her head. Mohendra made no reply, but once more began to weep. Kalyani again spoke, — her voice was very soft, very sweet, very tender, as she again said, "Consider who has the strength to transgress what God has willed. He has laid his command on me to go; could I stay, if I would? If I had not died of my own will, inevitably someone else would have slain me. I do well to die. Perform with your whole strength the vow you have undertaken; it will create a force of well-doing by which I shall attain heaven and both of us together will enjoy celestial bliss to all eternity."

Meanwhile the little girl threw up the milk she had drunk and recovered, — the small amount of poison that she had swallowed was not fatal. But at that time Mohendra's mind was not turned in that direction. He put his daughter in Kalyani's lap and closely embracing both of them began to weep incessantly. Then it seemed that in the midst of the forest a soft yet thunder-deep sound arose, —

"O Hari, O Murari, O foe of
Kaitabh and Madhu!
O Gopal, O Govinda, O Mukunda,
O Shauri!"

By that time the poison had begun to act on Kalyani. Her consciousness was being somewhat taken from her; in her half-unconscious condition she seemed to hear the words ringing out in the marvellous flute-like voice she had heard in the Vaikuntha of her dream:

"O Hari, O Murari, O foe of
Kaitabh and Madhu!
O Gopal, O Govinda, O Mukunda,
O Shauri!"

Then Kalyani in her semi-unconsciousness began to sing in a voice sweeter than any Apsara's:

“O Hari, O Murari, O foe of
Kaitabh and Madhu!”

She cried to Mohendra: “Say,

O Hari, O Murari, O foe of
Kaitabh and Madhu!”

Deeply moved by the sweet voice that rose from the forest and the sweet voice of Kalyani and in the grief of his heart thinking, “God is my only helper,” Mohendra called aloud,

“O Hari, O Murari, O foe of
Kaitabh and Madhu!”

Then from all sides the sound arose,

“O Hari, O Murari, O foe of
Kaitabh and Madhu!”

Then it seemed as if the very birds in the trees were singing,

“O Hari, O Murari, O foe of
Kaitabh and Madhu!”

It seemed as if the murmurs of the river repeated,

“O Hari, O Murari, O foe of
Kaitabh and Madhu!”

Then Mohendra, forgetting his grief and affliction and, full of ecstasy, sang in one voice with Kalyani,

“O Hari, O Murari, O foe of
Kaitabh and Madhu!”

From the forest the cry seemed to rise in chorus with their song,

“O Hari, O Murari, O foe of
Kaitabh and Madhu!”

Kalyani's voice became fainter and fainter, but still she cried,

“O Hari, O Murari, O foe of
Kaitabh and Madhu!”

Then by degrees her voice grew hushed, no sound came from her lips, her eyes closed, her body grew cold, and Mohendra understood that Kalyani had departed to Vaikuntha with the cry of “O Hari, O Murari”, on her lips. Then Mohendra began to call out loudly like one frantic, making the forest quiver and startling the birds and beasts,

“O Hari, O Murari, O foe of
Kaitabh and Madhu!”

At that time one came and, embracing him closely, began to call with him in a voice as loud as his,

“O Hari, O Murari, O foe of
Kaitabh and Madhu!”

Then in that glory of the Infinite, in that boundless forest, before the body of her who now travelled the eternal way, the two sang the name of Eternal God. The birds and beasts were voiceless, the earth full of a miraculous beauty, — the fitting temple for this highest anthem. Satyananda sat down with Mohendra in his arms.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Meanwhile there was a great commotion on the high road in the capital. The noise went abroad that Sannyasins had plundered the revenue that was being despatched from the royal treasury to Calcutta. Then by order of the Government sepoy and spearsmen sped on all sides to seize Sannyasins. Now at that time in that famine-stricken country there was no great number of real Sannyasins; for these ascetics lived upon alms, and when people themselves get nothing to eat, there is not likely to be anyone to give alms to the mendicant. Therefore all the genuine ascetics had fled from the pinch of hunger to the country about Benares and Prayag. Only the Children wore the robe of the Sannyasin when they willed, abandoned it when abandonment was needed. Now too, many, seeing trouble abroad, left the dress of the ascetic. For this reason the hungry retainers of power, unable to find a Sannyasin anywhere, could only break the water-jars and cooking-pots of the householders and return with their empty bellies only half-filled. Satyananda alone would at no time leave his saffron robe.

At the moment when on the bank of that dark and murmurous rivulet, on the borders of the high road, at the foot of the tree on the water's verge, Kalyani lay still and Mohendra and Satyananda in each other's embrace were calling on God with streaming eyes, Jamadar Nazir-ud-din and his sepoy arrived at the spot. Forthwith he put his hand on Satyananda's throat and said, "Here is a rascal of a Sannyasin." Immediately another seized Mohendra, for a man who consorts with Sannyasins must necessarily be a Sannyasin. A third hero was about to arrest the dead body of Kalyani where it lay at length on the grass. Then he saw that it was the corpse of a woman and very possibly might not be a Sannyasin, and did not proceed with the arrest. On the same reasoning they left the little girl alone. Then without colloquy of any kind they bound the two prisoners and marched them off. The corpse of Kalyani and the still living body of her little daughter remained lying unprotected at the foot of the tree.

Mohendra was at first almost senseless with the oppression of grief and the frenzy of divine love; he could not understand what was toward or what had happened and made no objection to being bound; but when they had gone a few paces, he awoke to the fact that they were being led away in bonds. Immediately it occurred to him that Kalyani's corpse was left lying without funeral rites, that his little daughter was left lying unprotected

and that even now wild beasts might devour them; he wrenched his hands apart by sheer force and with the one wrench tore his bonds apart. With one kick he sent the jamadar sprawling to the ground and fell upon one of the sepoys; but the other three seized him from three sides and once more overpowered him and rendered him helpless. Then Mohendra in the wretchedness of his grief said to the Brahmacharin Satyananda: — “If only you had helped me a little, I would have slain these five miscreants.” “What strength is there,” answered Satyananda, “in this aged body of mine, — except Him on whom I was calling, I have no other strength. Do not struggle against the inevitable. We shall not be able to overpower these five men. Come, let us see where they will take us. The Lord will be our protection in all things.” Then both of them without further attempt at escape followed the soldiers. When they had gone a little distance, Satyananda asked the sepoys, “My good fellows, I am in the habit of calling on the name of Hari; is there any objection to my calling on His name?” The Jamadar thought Satyananda to be a simple and inoffensive man, and he said, “Call away, I won’t stop you. You are an old Brahmacharin and I think there will be an order for your discharge; this ruffian will be hanged.” Then the Brahmacharin began softly to sing,

With the lingering wind in her tresses,
Where the stream its banks caresses,
There is one in the woodland,
A woman and fair.

Arise, O thou hero, let speed
Be swift in thy feet to her need;
For the child who is there
Is full of sorrow and weeping and care.

On arriving in the city they were taken to the Chief of Police, who sent word to the Government and put the Brahmacharin and Mohendra for the time into confinement. That was a dreadful prison, for it was seldom that he who entered came out, because there was no one to judge. It was not the British jail with which we are familiar — at that time there was not the British system of justice. Those were the days of no procedure, these are the days of procedure. Compare the two!

SONGS OF THE SEA
SAGAR SANGIT OF C. R. DAS

Songs of the Sea

O thou unhoped-for elusive wonder of the skies,
Stand still one moment! I will lead thee and bind
With music to the chambers of my mind.
Behold how calm today this sea before me lies
And quivering with what tremulous heart of dreams
In the pale glimmer of the faint moonbeams.
If thou at last art come indeed, O mystery, stay
Woven by song into my heart-beats from this day.

Stand, goddess, yet! Into this anthem of the seas
With the pure strain of my full voiceless heart
Some rhythm of the rhythmless, some part
Of thee I would weave today, with living harmonies
Peopling the solitude I am within.
Wilt thou not here abide on that vast scene,
Thou whose vague raiment edged with dream haunts us and flees,
Fulfilled in an eternal quiet like this sea's?

II

I lean to thee a listening ear
And thy immense refrain I hear,
O Ocean circled with the lights of morn.
What word is it thou sing'st? what tune
My heart is filled with, and it soon
Must overflow? What mystical unborn
Spirit is singing in thy white foam-caves?
What voice turns heaven to music from thy waves?

III

Long gazing on this dawn and restless sea,
My heart is moved with a strange minstrelsy.
Tranquil and full and slow that music's sound
Or a chant pitiful, tender and profound.
At times its passing fills my heart with tears.
Maddened it runs and maddening him who hears.
What spirit lives and laughs and weeps in thee?
What thought is here that cries eternally?
I know not, but a trembling sweet and strong
Has taken my every limb touched by thy song,
O infinite Voice, O Soul that callst to me,
As I look on this luminous dawn and on the sea!

IV

The flute of dawn has rung out on the sea,
And in a holiday of festal glee
The radiant sunbeams dally and happily stream:
How on thy body they wallow, laugh and gleam!
Flowers blown in song on a bright welter cast!
The riches of sunlight quiver along thy vast
Sweet tumult, kindle the world thy chantings hold,
Or, rocking, for thy feet are chains of gold.
Now has thy cry become a bird of sound,
And on the wings, the throbbing breast around
A dream of gold is smeared; in my heart's skies
The beautiful vagrant making springtide flies.
There wings the floating mighty creature, joys
Threading and lights, a glory and a voice.

V

Upon what bosom shall I lay my bliss
Or whom enrich with all my welling tears,
The unguessed joy, the grief that nameless is
And will not be denied? All checks they pierce.
The riches of my bliss have broken in bloom,
And all my sorrow seeks melodious room.
How have they made of all my secret hours
A kingdom of strange singing in groves of flowers!
A mystic wind, a nameless trouble keeps
My spirit. All the load of my heart's deeps
Where shall I rest, moved to thy passionate play,
O Ocean, upon this thy festal day?

VI

Dawn has become to me a golden fold
Of shining dreams, hearing thy potent cry.
A marvel chant on every wave is rolled,
And sky and wind repeat one melody.
What hast thou done? My mind has grown a lyre
Whose many hundred strings thy tones inspire;
Thy touch, thy hand have made it eternally
A refrain of thy pride and majesty.

VII

Behold, the perfect-gloried dawn has come
 Far-floating from eternity her home.
 Her limbs are clad in silver light of dreams,
 Her brilliant influence on the water streams,
 And in that argent flood to one white theme
 Are gathering all the hues and threads of dream.
 Tricked with her fire the heavens richly fill;
 To an eternal chant the winds are still;
 And all thy bosom's deep unquiet taken
 Thou hast wrung out and into melody shaken,
 And all the sounds that stirred the earth so long
 Are called into a wordless trance of song.
 O minstrel of infinity! What world
 Soundless has known that music? What ether curled
 In voiceless sleep? Where are those notes withdrawn?
 Into the hush of what eternal dawn?

VIII

I have no art of speech, no charm of song,
 Rhythm nor measure nor the lyric pace.
 No words alluring to my skill belong.
 Now in me thought's free termless heavens efface
 Limit and mark; upon my spirit is thrown
 The shadow of infinity alone.

I at thy voice in brilliant dawn or eve
 Have felt strange formless words within my mind.
 Then my heart's doors wide to thy cry I leave
 And in thy chant I seek myself and find.
 Now some few hymns of that dim union sweet
 Have filled my soul. I bring them to thy feet.

IX

All day within me only one music rings.
I have become a lyre of helpless strings,
And I am but a horn for thee to wind,
O vast musician! Take me, all thy mind
In light, in gloom, by day, by night express.
Into me, minstrel, breathe thy mightiness.
On solitary shores, in lonely skies,
In night's huge sieges when the winds blow wild,
In many a lovely land of mysteries,
In many a shadowy realm, or where a child,
Dawn, bright and young, sweet unripe thoughts conceives,
Or through the indifferent calm desireless eyes,
In magic night and magic light of thee,
Play on thy instrument, O Soul, O Sea.

X

What is this play thou playest with my life?
How hast thou parted lids mind held so stiff
Against the vision, that like a bud shut long
My mind has opened only to thy song,
And all my life lies like a yearning flower
Hued, perfumed, quivering in thy murmurous power,
And all my days are grown an infinite strain
Of music sung by thee, O shoreless main?

XI

My heart wings restless with this music's pain,
 Bird of some wonderful harmonious reign :
 No time, no place it meets, touches no end,
 But rests and flies in melody contained.
 Song's boundless regions have no isle preferred,
 Its depths no plummet moment yet has found.
 Memories and strange deep silences are heard
 Here in thy solitude of shoreless sound.
 Thou melody fathomless! O sea where floats
 Song timeless! What were these immortal notes
 To which my heart could silently disclose
 The hidden petals of the eternal rose?

XII

O painter, thou thy marvellous art didst use
 In green and pearl and blue and countless hues
 To make this pattern of myriad flowers untold,
 Passions of azure, miracles of gold.
 My eyes had hunger for form's mysteries
 And wandered in vision upon colour's seas.
 Paint out these hues! draw darkness like a brush
 Over these tired eyelids! blind me, hush!
 Ah, not for visible delight I long!
 My soul enchanted only by thy song
 I will swim out upon thy waves of sound,
 O Voice, and sink into thee for ever drowned.
 Then shall I pass into thy hymn, O sea.
 There shall be nothing else to eternity.
 The universe shall but to sound belong,
 And Time and Space shall tremble into song.

XIII

O now today like a too brilliant dream

What is this that thy floating heart reveals
In the full moon's intense wide-flowing beam?

What infinite peace from thy calm moonlight steals
Waking my breast to this unchecked delight?
What melody moves thee in the luminous night?

What shadow of a dream from lives long past

Returns into thy ancient heart, O sea?
What bygone virtue comes fulfilled at last?

What dead illusion paints this dream on thee?
A hundred glimmering memories break like flowers
On waves of moonlight in my life's still hours.

It seems as if a hundred lives' joy, fears
And burden of their laughter and their tears
Today came round me and incessantly
Sang to my soul their anthem in this sea.
A million lives today have met in one
And float on dream a single flower alone.

XIV

The day is filled with clouds and dusk and grey.

Wave sobbing falls on wave; there flowers, there rocks
A pain unquiet in their broken shocks.
Trembling there moans a large lament today.
The heavens are filled with dusk and sad and grey.

An endless outcry fills my soul today.

Is't joy? is't pain? Are these the depths of love!
Troubled, restless, peering with wild crests above,
What is it cries, what yearns in thee this day,
O heart? Thy heavens are full of dusk and grey.

XV

Today the heavens are sealed with clouds and blind,
A leaping madman comes the pathless wind,
The rains of deluge flee, a storm-tossed shade,
Over thy breast of gloom. Loud and dismayed
Thy lost enormous chant rolls purposeless
Seeking its end in an unregioned space.
O come, thou great mad sea, O surging come!
My breast defenceless mates thy dolorous foam.
Darkness the heavens, the wind doom's signal breath,
I shall float on through thee or sink in death.

XVI

This is not now the lyre's melodious stream,
These are not now the blossoming groves of dream,
But Rudra's torrent comes with pitiless play:
The world sinks down as on its last wild day.
The fathomless depths leap up to mix the sky;
Winds of destruction's sport walk tenebrously.
Masses of driving death go chanting by,
The dreadful laughters of eternity.
No lightning cleaves the night thy thunders fill';
Thy wounded bosom pours out clamour and wail;
The myriad serpents of infinitude
Their countless hoods above thy waves extrude.
I hear mid the loud stormwinds and the night
A voice arise of terror infinite;
Death's shoutings in a darkness without shore
Join like a million Titans' hungry roar.

XVII

When thy enormous wind has filled my breast,
Torn sail and broken rudder shall have rest.
My soul shall refugeless, a sinking boat,
Go down in thy fierce seas nor wish to float.
I under thy brow of great destruction's frown
In the eternal darkness shall lie down
Upon that other coast remote and dumb.
Though in the image of death today thou come,
My heart keeps open for thee thy house, this breast.
O king, O sea, enter and dwell and rest.

XVIII

O high stark Death, ascetic proud and free,
Draw back thy trident of eternity:
Leave, leave my days their natural life and death
Reclined in the heart's grove, lulled with music's breath.
The lotus of creation, like a rhyme
Trembling with its own joy and sorrow, long
On the harmonious ocean of old Time
Has floated, heaven above the infinite song.
O great last death of all, leave yet to stay
Or pass, to fade or bloom my little day.

XIX

O loud blind conqueror, stay thy furious car,
Lay down thy arrow. Evening from afar
Comes pacing with her smooth and noiseless step.
And dusk pale light of quiet in heavens of sleep.
Stay then thy chariot, rest! O tired with strife!
O wearied soul of death! conqueror of life!
Vain was thy war, O Lord, my soul to win;
Myself was giving myself without that pain.
Now I will light the evening lamps for thee,
My soul with vesper hymns thy fane shall be,
And I will spread a cool couch for thy sleep
And at thy feet calm's holy water keep.
What need, to conquer me, hadst thou to strive,
Who only longed unasked myself to give?

XX

Thou hast come back, O Lord! this soul, thy sky,
Looks glad on flowers and fruits and ecstasy:
Ceased has thy song of death, thy call of pain,
Life settles on thy lips and lids again.
Once more I look upon thy joyous dawn
And the links of rapture twixt our hearts are drawn.
My heart leans out to hear thy song. Ah, when
Thy voice calls, all its buds shall open then,
While mid the touch of breezes wrapped in flowers
Cry under lyric heavens the harmonious hours.

XXI

The light of the young dawn round every limb
Sweeps over thee as golden billows may;
Out every moment glimmers some new dream.
Thou in a swing of gold hast sat at play.
Like a great king thou robest thyself, O sea,
And pour'st thy love in waves of precious gold,
Like a young royal lover lavishly
Chasing my heart with wealth through every fold.
And I to thee a youthful soul have brought
Full of the dawn to lay it at thy feet.
A wreath of lilies gold my hands have wrought,
For thy rich golden neck a carcanet.
We two together bound shall lie and gleam
Golden with dawn in solitudes of dream.

XXII

O today in heaven there rings high a mournful strain,
Till our empty hearts beat slow and of ending fain.
Mournful moans the cloud, mournfully and loud
 Kissing ocean, roaming heaven in vain
 Hear the winds complain!
And today with lost desire
Sobs my spirit like a lyre
 Wakened to complain.
For it seeks a want it cannot name,
Aching with a viewless flame
Knows not how to rest nor where to flee,
 Only wailing knows and pain.
Towards the clouds it soars up fitfully,
Lured it knows not where nor why:
 Singing only from the soul
 Songs of bitter dole!
Neither rhythm keeps nor cry
Of saving measure, fitfully
 Wailing out its shapeless pain.
They have filled the heavens and filled my soul,
Songs of weeping wild and bitter dole,
 Chants of utter pain.

XXIII

Sleep, sleep through clouded moons, O sea, at last
Under a lonely sky; the eyelids close
Wearied of song. Held are the regions fast;
Mute in the hushed and luminous world repose.

I sit upon thy hither shore, O main,
My gaze is on thy face. Yet sleep, O sleep!
My heart is trembling with a soundless strain,
My soul is watching by thy slumber deep.

When shall I know thee who thou art, O friend?
When wilt thou wake? with what grand paeon vast?
Lo, I will wait for thee. Thou at the end
Stretch out thy arms in some dim eve at last.

XXIV

Where have I seen thee? where have clasped thy hand?
When gazed into thy eyes? what distant time
Saw our first converse? what forgotten land?
Sangst thou? or was thy laughter heard sublime?

Then was the soul so full of deepest pains?
Were then the eyes so ready with their tears?
Such thoughts, such griefs, so many sobbing strains
Played on our soul-strings in those distant years?

Then didst thou take me to thy bosom wide
Like a kind friend with close-encircling arm?
Did all my thoughts into thy nature glide
Led out by love as with a whispered charm?

All I remember not, but this alone,
My heart joined thine in some past age or clime;
Because thy touch has never from me gone,
I float to thee across eternal Time.

I think, in a strange secret trysting-place
We too shall meet at last and recognise,
Where day weds night in some enchanted space,
All the old love awakening in our eyes.

XXV

None is awake in all the world but I;
While the sun hesitated, I upstood
And met thee in a grandiose secrecy
To lave my soul in thy majestic flood.

Be outward songs the outward nature's part!
These are for all and all their tones may hear.
There is a strain that fills the secret heart:
Reveal that music to my listening ear.

Therefore, O sea, O friend, I came alone,
That I might hear that rapture or that moan.

XXVI

The sun has not yet risen. Luring night
Shelters thee still as with a robe of love.
Calm are thy lips, thy eyes have tranquil light.
Whether thou sleep or dream or wake or move.

In the last trance of darkness visible
How beautiful and calm thy gaze, O sea!
My speech, my song have suddenly grown still
In this enamoured twilight's ecstasy.

Am I not as thy brother younger born?
Then sometimes turn a loving gaze, O sea.
The song that shakes thy bosom night and morn
Bid echo sometimes, Ocean, even in me.

XXVII

The sunbeams fall and kiss thy lips and gleam
 Calm and profound like thy own majesty.
 How all my million golden flowers of dream
 Out of my soul thou hast drawn utterly,
 And these thou wearest as a garland now;
 I stand with empty hands upon thy shore.

Sing me one chant of thine! Ah, let it flow
 An endless nectar and my soul explore
 With echoes and with lights, and turn thy gaze
 For ever and for ever on my days,
 And from today, O Ocean without strand,
 Thy song I'll sing, wandering from land to land.

XXVIII

Nay, nay, let be! O not today that sound
 Before these multitudes, but what all can hear!
 These robed for joy have come thy margin round;
 Draw close their hearts to thine, give dance and cheer.

But when the midnight broods on thee again,
 These happy laughters sunk upon thy swell,
 The world shall close in song about us twain
 And darkness shall stand there as sentinel.

Thou shalt sing out one chant, a different song
 From me return; we shall together lie
 In infinite gladness while ambrosial, long,
 Thy thunders drown me in their harmony.

When thickest night shall hold again thy shore,
 We two shall meet in song and join once more.

XXIX

How many aeons hast thou flowed like this,
The torture of this music in thy heart?
World-maddening melodies that stormed heart to kiss
After what cycles from thy surge still part,
Recalling endless ages,
Regretting countless lives?

Birthless and endless, bearing from the first
Eternal wailing thou sweep'st on, O sea.
What hunger sobs in thee? what vehement thirst?
What tireless anguish moans implacably?
Moans many a thousand ages,
Moans many a million lives.

O friend cursed thus through the unending years!
O my unquiet ocean all of tears!
Yet 'tis to thee that leaving all I come,
As always came I to my real home
And always shall come in the endless years,
Parted through endless ages,
Met in unnumbered lives.

XXX

What years, what clime, what dim and distant shore
Beheld our meeting first? What thundrous roar
Or low sweet plaint of music first had bound
In what eternal seats of what vast sound?
What heart of mighty singing devious-souled,
What mystery of beaten time controlled?
The spirit of what nameless tune could bring
Our births to oneness from their wandering?
From some huge soul's beginningless infinity
Our waters side by side began their course, O sea.
How often our lives have parted been since then!
How often have our two hearts met again!
Thou float's, O friend, for ever to that Vast;
I float on thy chant only to the last.

XXXI

My sleepless midnight thou hast filled indeed
With seas of song, O King of minstrelsy.
What poms of sound through the thick night proceed!
What surf, what surge of thunders rolls over me!
My eyes, my face are covered with thee, O main,
My heart sunk down beneath thy echo-plain.
My soul like a flower offered to the storm
Trembles. What wild great song without a form
Burdened with all the joys a heart can feel,
Torn with all agonies no joy can heal,
Rolls through this darkness? Nothing do I see,
Only a rumour and infinity
I feel upon my bosom lay its weight,
A Clamouring vague vastness increate.
A hundred strains left voiceless to the ear,
A thousand silences of song I hear.
Of universal sound the wordless tongue
That in each voice and cry is hidden deep,
The heart unsung of all songs ever sung
Comes to me through the veils of death and sleep.

XXXII

Lighting small lamps and in a little room
 I played and poorly hummed a trivial theme;
 With the lamp's rays on my soul's half-lit gloom
 I traced the image of a bounded dream.
 Thee I had quite forgotten, Ocean vast:
 Well did my dream-bound little play-room please,
 An idly-plaited wreath before me placed,
 Holding my petty lamp, content, at ease.
 Then with thy solemn thunders didst thou call
 Chanting eternity in thy deep strain;
 Thy huge rebuke shook all my nature, all
 The narrow coasts of thought sank crumbling in.
 Collapsed that play-room and that lamp was quenched.
 I stood in Ocean's thunders washed and drenched.

XXXIII

Evening has not descended yet, fast sets the sun;
 Darkness and light together seize on thee as one.
 Gazing upon thy luminous dusk the clouds float by,
 The charmed wind o'er thy troubled lights sings murmuringly.
 Upon this undark darkness and enchanted light
 Heaven wondering gazes down, a silence infinite.
 O Ocean, travelling what uncertain shadowy reign
 Sing'st thou a song of sadness and a hampered strain?
 To what vast problem hast thou found no answer yet?
 With what sad doubt are thy steps burdened, pilgrim great?
 With life and death what converse dost thou hold today?
 What lyre has broken in thy hands? what pains dismay?
 All darkness earth endures, all light that reaches life
 Pour on my being, Ocean, from thy soul's huge strife.
 My soul too grows a trembling shadow mid these shades.
 What hope is here or truth? What fear? What lie invades?

XXXIV

In this hushed evening on thy billows grey
 Where swells thy chant or whither flows today?
 To what far dimness is revealed thy cry?
 Thou for my soul prepar'st what ministry?
 The conch-shell's sound for vesper worship blown
 Is now within my heart thy evening tone;
 With frankincense as at a holy tide
 Like a dim temple I am purified.
 Deep-souled and saved from passion and desire,
 To whom then does thy solemn song aspire,
 Vast worshipper? whose rites dost thou prepare?
 Towards whom hold'st thou my soul, a lamp of prayer?
 What rhythmic hymn of power dost thou repeat?
 Initiate me, Ocean calm, complete
 My heart of worship with thy mystic word:
 Let all my soul with one wide prayer be stirred.

XXXV

Evening has fallen upon the world; its fitting tone,
 O sea, thy quiet bosom gives, making dim moan,
 And that wide solemn murmur, passion's ceasing flow,
 Becomes a chant of silence for our souls their depths to know.
 Thy garrulous waves have sunk to sleep upon thy breast,
 The unquiet winds have been persuaded now to rest,
 In heaven there is no moon nor star: void ancient space
 Settles on all things in its solemn measurelessness.
 Is there no last desire left in thy mind today?
 Is love then finished for thee? Has life done its play?
 Therefore in this illusionless grey twilight lost
 Thou plungest down into thyself, unmoved, untossed.
 I too will veil myself within my being deep:
 Thou when thy musing's done, call me out of my sleep.

XXXVI

The great heaven have no voice, the world is lying still:
 Thou too hast spoken no word awhile, O illimitable.
 The evening rains down on thee its calm influences,
 Thou liest a motionless flood of purity and peace;
 Thy song fallen silent in the first pale cave of night,
 Keeps thy heart secret, murmuring with dumb joy of light.
 My petty house of pain and pleasure sinks unshaped
 In thy vast body by a tranced delight enwrapped:
 All Nature floats to thee like a lotus still and sweet,
 And Death and Time have paused arrested at thy feet.
 Some mighty Yogin keeps his posture on my breast,
 Collected, unbreathing, mute, with lids of moveless rest.
 The light of Him I have seen, Himself I reach not. O sea,
 Silent I'll wait; make me one formless soul with thee.

XXXVII

O by long prayer, by hard attempt have bloomed two flowers, thy
 eyes!

Swimming with adoration they possess the skies,
 And from thy love-intoxicated hymns there start
 On tossing waves these new sonatas of the heart.
 Heaven falters with the frequent, deep and solemn sound,
 The world is gazing as when the great Dance went round.
 A horn is blown and cymbals clash upon the Void:
 So deep a tabor never to earth's music was allied.
 The free winged winds of dawn in their ecstatic dance
 Are circling round my soul and seek it with their hands,
 The cry of hymns of rapture in my soul's abode
 Has entered, flowers of longing bloom from me towards God.
 My heart is mad for God today. Though my heart's bliss
 Find or not find, sink down or float, — this, only this!
 O soul-fulfiller, O adorer, sing for ever
 New chants! live still for God-love and divine endeavour.

XXXVIII

Here there is light, — is it darkness on thy farther shore?
Thither my heart upon thy waters ferry o'er.

Something there rings from that far space;

I know not what its strains express,

Whether 'tis light that sings or darkness cries upon thy shore.

There will I go, my eyes shall see,

My soul shall hear unflinching

Anthems of light or strains of darkness on that farther shore.

The songs of this side all are known,

My heart has cherished every tone;

Of these I'll weave remembered garlands on thy far-off shore.

Take me, O mighty sea, across thy long dividing roar.

XXXIX

Burns on that other shore the mystic light

That never was lit here by eve or dawn?

Is't there, the song eternal, infinite,

None ever heard from earthly instruments drawn?

Sits there then any like myself who yearns

Thirsting for unknown touches on the soul?

Is't there, the heart's dream? unsurpassable burns

Thy shadowy self we seek, there bright and whole?

My thirst is great, O mighty One! deep, deep

The thirst is in my heart unsatisfied.

Ah, drown me in thy dumb unfathomed sleep

Or carry to that ungrasped other side.

Will not my hope's dream there be held at last?

My barren soul grow kingly, rich and vast?

XL

This shore and that shore, — I am tired, they pall.
Where thou art shoreless, take me from it all.
My spirit goes floating and can find oppressed
In thy unbanked immensity only rest.
Thick darkness falls upon my outer part,
A lonely stillness grips the labouring heart,
Dumb weeping with no tears to ease the eyes.
I am mad for thee, O king of mysteries.
Have I not sought thee on a million streams,
And wheresoever the voice of music dreams,
In wondrous lights and sealing shadows caught,
And every night and every day have sought?
Pilot eternal, friend unknown embraced,
O, take me to thy shoreless self at last.

Mother India*

India, my India, where first human eyes awoke to heavenly light,
 All Asia's holy place of pilgrimage, great Motherland of might!
 World-mother, first giver to humankind of philosophy and sacred lore,
 Knowledge thou gav'st to man, God-love, works, art, religion's opened door.

India, my India, who dare call thee a thing for pity's grace today?
 Mother of wisdom, worship, works, nurse of the spirit's inward ray!

To thy race, O India, God himself once sang the Song of Songs divine,
 Upon thy dust Gouranga danced and drank God-love's mysterious wine,
 Here the Sannyasin Son of Kings lit up compassion's deathless sun,
 The youthful Yogin, Shankar, taught thy gospel: "I and He are one."

India, my India, who dare call thee a thing for pity's grace today?
 Mother of wisdom, worship, works, nurse of the spirit's inward ray!

Art thou not she, that India, where the Aryan Rishis chanted high
 The Veda's deep and dateless hymns and are we not their progeny?
 Armed with that great tradition we shall walk the earth with heads unbowed:
 O Mother, those who bear that glorious past may well be brave and proud.

India, my India, who dare call thee a thing for pity's grace today?
 Mother of wisdom, worship, works, nurse of the spirit's inward ray!

O even with all that grandeur dwarfed or turned to bitter loss and maim,
 How shall we mourn who are thy children and can vaunt thy mighty name?
 Before us still there floats the ideal of those splendid days of gold:
 A new world in our vision wakes, Love's India we shall rise to mould.

India, my India, who dare call thee a thing for pity's grace today?
 Mother of wisdom, worship, works, nurse of the spirit's inward ray!

Farewell Flute*

A Flute of farewell calls and calls,
Farewell to earthly things:
But when shall I the message learn
That high-voiced music sings?

Earth's pleasures come like scented winds,
Invite a mortal clasp:
I seek to keep them in my clutch,
Captives of a vain grasp!

How shall thy nectar fill this cup,
Brimming with passion's wine?
Only when the turn of day is done
Thy starry lamps can shine.

Ever to the eager cry of hope
Re-echoes the heart's lyre,
Will it answer to thy Song of songs
That climbs beyond desire?

Arise now in my shadowy soul
And let it sing farewell
To the near glow, the intimate voice,
Familiar conch and bell!

For little lights I crave no more,
Now shall I silently
Turn towards my heaven and greater home:
Thy far Eternity.

Lakshmi*

At the mobile passion of thy tread the cold snows faint and fail,
Hued by the magic touches — shimmering glow the horizons pale.

The heavens thrill with thy appeal, earth's grey moods break and die,
In nectarous sound thou lav'st men's hearts with thy voice of eternity.

All that was bowed and rapt lifting clasped hands out of pain and night,
How hast thou filled with murmuring ecstasy make proud and bright!

Thou hast chosen the grateful earth for thy own in her hour of anguish
and strife,
Surprised by thy rapid feet of joy, O Beloved of the Master of Life!

* Dilip Kumar Roy

Uma*

O thou inspired by a far effulgence,
 Adored of some distant Sun gold-bright,
 O luminous face on the edge of darkness
 Agleam with strange and viewless light!

A spark from thy vision's scintillations
 Has kindled the earth to passionate dreams,
 And the gloom of ages sinks defeated
 By the revel and splendour of thy beams.

In this little courtyard Earth thy rivers
 Have made to bloom heaven's many-rayed flowers,
 And, throned on thy lion meditation,
 Thou slayest with a sign the Titan powers.

Thou art rapt in unsleeping adoration
 And a thousand thorn-wounds are forgot;
 Thy hunger is for the unseizable,
 And for thee the near and sure are not.

Thy mind is affianced to lonely seeking,
 And it puts by the joy these poor worlds hoard,
 And to house a cry of infinite dreaming
 Thy lips repeat the formless Word.

O beautiful, blest, immaculate,
 My heart falls down at thy feet of sheen,
 O Huntress of the Impossible,
 O Priestess of the light unseen!

* Dilip Kumar Roy

"K's translation is far from bad, but it is not perfect either and uses too many oft-heard locutions without bringing in the touch of magic that would save them. Besides, his metre, in spite of his trying to lighten it, is one of the common and obvious metres which are almost proof against subtlety of movement. It may be mathematically more equivalent to yours, but there is an underrunning lilt of celestial dance in your rhythm which he tries to get but, because of the limitations of the metre, cannot manage. I think my iambic-anapaestic choice is better fitted to catch the dance-lilt and keep it."

From a letter to the poet.

Mahalakshmi*

In lotus-groves Thy spirit roves: where shall I find a seat for Thee?
To Thy feet's tread — feet dawn-rose red — opening my heart Thy throne
shall be.

All things unholy hurt Thy soul:

I would become a stainless whole:

O world's delight, All-beauty's might! unmoving house Thy grace in me.

An arid heart Thou canst not bear:

It is Thy will love's bonds to wear:

Then by Thy sweetness' magic completeness make me Thy love's eternal sea.

King and Devotee*

The King of kings has made you a king,
Your sceptre gave, your throne of gold,
Man and fair maid for retinue,
Your swords of sheen, your warriors bold,

Your crown, your flag, your victor-pomps,
High elephants and steeds of pride,
The wise to counsel, the strong to serve,
And queens of beauty at your side.

To me He gave His alms of grace,
His little wallet full of songs,
His azure heavens for my robe,
His earth, my nest, to me belongs.

My sleeping room is His wide world,
Planet and star for bulb and lamp,
The King of kings who beggared me,
Walks by my side, a comrade tramp.

Golden Daughter*

At the day-end behold the Golden Daughter of Imagination —

She sits alone under the Tree of Life.

A form of the Truth of Being has risen before her rocking there like a
lake

And on it is her unwinking gaze. But from the unfathomed Abyss where it
was buried, upsurges

A tale of lamentation, a torrent-lightning passion,

A melancholy held in the flowing blood of the veins, —

A curse thrown from a throat of light.

The rivers of a wind that has lost its perfumes are bearing away

On their waves the Mantra-rays that were her ornaments

Into the blue self-born sea of the silent Dawn;

The ceaseless vibration-scroll of a hidden Sun

Creates within her, where all is a magic incantation,

A picture of the transcendent Mystery¹ — that luminous laughter

Is like the voice of a gold-fretted flute from the inmost heart of the Creator.

* Nirodbaran

¹ A mystery-picture of the Transcendent

Since thou hast called me*

Since thou hast called me, see that I
Go' not from thee, — surrounding me stand.
In thy own love's diviner way
Make me too love thee without end.

My fathomless blackness hast thou cleft
With thy infinity of light,
Then waken in my mortal voice
Thy music of illumined sight.

Make me thy eternal journey's mate,
Tying my life around thy feet.
Let thy own hand my boat unmoor,
Sailing the world thy self to meet.

Fill full of thee my day and night,
Let all my being mingle with thine,
And every tremor of my soul
Echo thy Flute of flutes divine.

Come in thy chariot, Charioteer,
And drive me whither thou wouldst go.
All within me and all my acts
Make luminous with surrender's glow.

A Beauty Infinite*

A Beauty infinite, an unborn Power
On Time's vast forehead drew her mystic line;
An unseen Radiance filled the primal hour, —
First script, creation's early rapture-wine.
Lightning in Night the eternal moment wrote.
Her lone eyes bathed in hue of loveliness
Saw on a flaming stream a single boat
Follow through dawn some great Sun's orbit-trace.
The Dawn-world flashed — torn was the heart of Night.
Why came then Dawn here with her cloud and surge?
Darkness erased the hint of new-born Light, —
Till suddenly quivered above the pilgrim Urge,
Its flower-car washed blood-red. Smile of the Moon,
And, held in her hand, a Sun-flute's golden croon.

The New Creator*

You rose in India, O glorious in contemplation, O Sun,
 Illuminator of the vast ocean of life.

Clarioning the new Path of an unstumbling progression.
 You have dug up the immense, sombre bedrock of the earth's ignorance,
 And sought to unite in eternal marriage the devotion of the heart
 and the Force of life.

We bow to you, Sri Aurobindo, O Sun of the New Age,
 Bringer of the New Light!

May India, irradiated by your rays, become the Light-house of the world!

To the country which, by losing its soul-mission, had lost the rhythm
 of its life's advance,

And was darkened and blinded by the gloom of the ages,
 To point the inward way and reduce all obstacles to subservient aids,
 You have brought the message of the night's end,
 O divine Ambidexter, wisdom-bright!

We bow to you, Sri Aurobindo, O Sun of the New Age,
 Bringer of the New Light!

May India, irradiated by your rays, become the Light-house of the world!

The dust of your feet turned the prison into a temple,
 Your lofty ideal has lifted the nation's life to a sublime aim,
 Your accomplishment has brought to our door
 the supreme treasure of Supermanhood,
 Your feet faltered not even when the heart of the world trembled.

We bow to you, Sri Aurobindo, O Sun of the New Age,
 Bringer of the New Light!

May India, irradiated by your rays, become the Light-house of the world!

You have made humanity hear the message, the great Truth
 which none has ever uttered:

That man's birth-right is not only to freedom from slavery
 but to eternal divinity.

You have proclaimed: The whole earth shall march forward
with India in the van;

India will set the example and the earth will follow her ideal.

We bow to you, Sri Aurobindo, O Sun of the New Age,
Bringer of the New Light!

May India, irradiated by your rays, become the Light-house of the world!

III

FROM TAMIL

The Kural*

1. Alpha of all letters the first,
Of the worlds the original Godhead the beginning.
2. What fruit is by learning, if thou adore not
The beautiful feet of the Master of luminous wisdom?
3. When man has reached the majestic feet of him whose walk is on
flowers,
Long upon earth is his living.
4. Not to the feet arriving of the one with whom none can compare,
Hard from the heart to dislodge is its sorrow.
5. Not to the feet of the Seer, to the sea of righteousness coming,
Hard to swim is this different ocean.
6. When man has come to the feet of him who has neither want nor
unwanting,
Nowhere for him is affliction.
7. Night of our stumbling twixt virtue and sin not for him, is
The soul in the glorious day of God's reality singing.
8. In the truth of his acts who has cast out the objects five from the gates
of the senses
Straight if thou stand, long shall be thy fullness of living.
9. Some are who cross the giant ocean of birth; but he shall not cross it
Who has touched not the feet of the Godhead.
10. Lo, in a sense unillumined no virtue is, vainly is lifted
The head that fell not at the feet of the eightfold in Power, the
Godhead.

* A celebrated work in Tamil by Poet Tiruvalluvar.

Nammalwar's Hymn of the Golden Age

1. 'Tis glory, glory, glory! For Life's hard curse has expired; swept out are Pain and Hell, and Death has nought to do here. Mark ye, the Iron Age shall end. For we have seen the hosts of Vishnu; richly do they enter in and chant His praise and dance and thrive.
2. We have seen, we have seen, we have seen — seen things full sweet for our eyes. Come, all ye lovers of God, let us shout and dance for joy with oft-made surrenderings. Wide do they roam on earth singing songs and dancing, the hosts of Krishna who wears the cool and beautiful Tulsi, the desire of the Bees.
3. The Iron Age shall change. It shall fade, it shall pass away. The gods shall be in our midst. The mighty Golden Age shall hold the earth and the flood of the highest Bliss shall swell. For the hosts of our dark-hued Lord, dark-hued like the cloud, dark-hued like the sea, widely they enter in, singing songs, and everywhere they have seized on their stations.
4. The hosts of our Lord who reclines on the sea of Vastness, behold them thronging hither. Meseems they will tear up all these weeds of grasping cults. And varied songs do they sing, our Lord's own hosts, as they dance falling, sitting, standing, marching, leaping, bending.
5. And many are the wondrous sights that strike mine eyes. As by magic have Vishnu's hosts come in and firmly placed themselves everywhere. Nor doubt it, ye fiends and demons, if, born such be in our midst, take heed! ye shall never escape. For the Spirit of Time will slay and fling you away.
6. These hosts of the Lord of the Discus, they are here to free this earth of the devourers of Life, Disease and Hunger and vengeful Hate and all other things of evil. And sweet are their songs as they leap and dance extending wide over earth. Go forth, ye lovers of God and meet these hosts divine; with right minds serve them and live.
7. The Gods that ye fix in your minds, in His name do they grant you deliverance. Even thus to immortality did the sage Markanda attain. I mean no offence to any, but there is no other God but Krishna. And let

all your sacrifices be to them who are but His forms.

8. His forms he has placed as Gods to receive and taste the offerings that are brought in sacrifices in all the various worlds. He our divine Sovereign on whose mole-marked bosom the goddess Lakshmi rests — His hosts are singing sweetly and deign to increase on earth. O men, approach them, serve and live.

9. Go forth and live by serving our Lord, the deathless One. With your tongues chant ye the hymns, the sacred Riks of the Veda, nor err in the laws of wisdom. Oh, rich has become this earth in the blessed ones and the faithful who serve them with flowers and incense and sandal and water.

10. In all these rising worlds they have thronged and wide they spread, those beauteous forms of Krishna — the unclad Rudra, is there, Indra, Brahma, all. The Iron Age shall cease to be — do ye but unite and serve these.

Love-Mad*

The poetic image used in the following verses is characteristically Indian. The mother of a love-stricken girl (symbolising the human soul yearning to merge into the Godhead) is complaining to her friend of the sad plight of her child whom love for Krishna has rendered "mad" — the effect of the "madness" being that in all things she is able to see nothing but forms of Krishna — , the ultimate Spirit of the universe.

The Realisation of God in all things by the Vision of Divine Love.

1. Seated, she caresses Earth and cries, "This Earth is Vishnu's";
Salutes the sky and bids us "behold the Heaven He ruleth";
Or standing with tear-filled eyes cries aloud, "O sea hued Lord!"
All helpless am I, my friends; my child He has rendered mad.

2. Or joining her hands she fancies "The Sea where my Lord reposes!"
Or hailing the ruddy Sun she cries: "Yes, this is His form",
Languid, she bursts into tears and mutters Narayan's name.
I am dazed at the things she is doing, my gazelle, my child shaped
god-like.

3. Knowing, she embraces red Fire, is scorched and, cries "O Death-
less!"
And she hugs the Wind; " 'Tis my own Govinda", she tells us.
She smells of the honied Tulsi, my gazelle-like child. Ah me!
How many the pranks she plays for my sinful eyes to behold.

4. The rising moon she showeth, " 'Tis the shining gem-hued Krishna!"
Or, eyeing the standing hill, she cries: "O come, high Vishnu!"
It rains; and she dances and cries out "He hath come, the God of
my love!"
O the mad conceits He hath given to my tender, dear one!

5. The soft-limbed calf she embraces, for "Such did Krishna tend",
And follows the gliding serpent, explaining "That is His couch".

I know not where this will end, this folly's play in my sweet one
Afflicted, ay, for my sins, by Him, the Divine Magician.

6. Where tumblers dance with their pots, she runs and cries "Govinda";
At the charming notes of a flute she faints, for "Krishna, He
playeth."
When cowherd dames bring butter, she is sure it was tasted by
Him, —
So mad for the Lord who sucked out the Demones's life through
her bosom!
7. In rising madness she raves, "All worlds are by Krishna made"
And she runs after folk ash-smear'd; forsooth, they serve high
Vishnu!
Or she looks at the fragrant Tulsi and claims Narayan's garland.
She is ever for Vishnu, my darling, or in, or out of her wits.
8. And in all your wealthy princes she but sees the Lord of Lakshmi.
At the sight of beautiful colours, she cries, "O my Lord world-
scanning!"
And all the shrines in the land, to her, are shrines of Vishnu.
In awe and in love, unceasing, she adores the feet of that Wizard.
9. All Gods and saints are Krishna — Devourer of infinite Space!
And the huge, dark clouds are Krishna; all fain would she fly to
reach them.
Or the kine, they graze on the meadow and thither she runs to find
Him.
The Lord of Illusions, He makes my dear one pant and rave.
10. Languid she stares around her or gazes afar into space;
She sweats and with eyes full of tears she sighs and faints away;
Rising, she speaks but His name and cries, "Do come, O Lord."
Ah, what shall I do with my poor child o'erwhelmed by this maddest
love?

Refuge*

1. Though thou shouldst not spare me the anguish of the world, yet I have no refuge but thy feet. O Lord of the City of the wise begirt by gardens full of sweet flowers, if, in a keen-edged wrath, the mother cast off the babe, what can it do but cry for the mother's love? I am like that babe.
2. If the man whom she loves subject her to contumely, the high-born wife still clings to him; for he is her chosen lord. And I, too, O Lord of the City of the wise whose walls reach up to Heaven, I will ever praise thy victorious feet, even if thou shouldst leave me unprotected.
3. Reject me, O Lord, and I will yet hold on to thee, not knowing another prop. O Lord of the City of the wise encircled by green fields with their glancing fish, the rightful king may cause much pain to his country's heart, not looking at things with his own eyes, but still the country trusts in him. I am like that country.
4. The sufferer loves the wise physician even when his flesh is cut and burnt. O Lord of the City of the wise, let thy Illusion inflict on me an endless pain, I will yet remain thy servant, I will yet look up to thy feet.
5. O Lord of the City of the wise, who didst slay the strong and cruel Beast, ah, where shall I fly for refuge, if I leave thy feet? On the tossing sea the bird leaves the mast of the ship, he flies to all sides but no shore is visible, and he again returns to the mast. I am like that bird.
6. Let Fire himself assail with its heat the lotus-flower, it will blossom to none but the Sun. Even if thou shouldst refrain from healing its pain, my heart can be melted by nothing else as by thy unlimited beauty.
7. The Rain may forget the fields, but the fields will ever be thirsting for its coming. O Lord of the City of the wise, what care I whether thou heal my wound or no, my heart shall ever be thine.

* Kulasekhara Alwar, the Chera king and saint.

8. The rivers course down through many lands but must yield themselves to the Sea, they cannot flow back. O sea-hued Lord of the City of the wise, even so must I ever be drawn to thy resplendent glory.

9. Illusory Power ever seeks him who seeketh thee not, not seeking thy lasting Might. O Lord of the City of the wise whose discus flashes like the lightning, I must ever seek thee, who am thy servant.

To the Cuckoo*

O Cuckoo that peckest at the blossomed flower of honey-dripping Cham-paka and, inebriate, pipest forth the melodious notes, be seated in thy ease and with thy babblings, which are yet no babblings, call out for the coming of my Lord of the Venkata hill. For He, the pure one, bearing in his left hand the white summoning conch shows me not his form. But He has invaded my heart; and while I pine and sigh for his love, He looks on indifferent as if it were all a play.

I feel as if my bones had melted away and my long javelin eyes have not closed their lids for these many days. I am tossed on the waves of the sea of pain without finding the boat that is named the Lord of the highest realm. Even thou must know, O Cuckoo, the pain we feel when we are parted from those whom we love. He whose pennon bears the emblem of the golden eagle, call out for his coming, O bird.

I am a slave of Him whose stride has measured the worlds. And now because He is harsh to me, how strange that this south-wind and these moonbeams should tear my flesh, enfeebling me. But thou, O Cuckoo, that ever livest in this garden of mine, it is not meet that thou shouldst pain me also. Indeed I shall drive thee out if He who reposes on the waters of life come not to me by thy songs today.

I Dreamed a Dream*

I dreamed a dream, O friend.

The wedding was fixed for the morrow. And He, the Lion, Madhava, the young Bull whom they call the master of radiances, He came into the hall of wedding decorated with luxuriant palms.

I dreamed a dream, O friend.

And the throng of the Gods was there with Indra, the Mind Divine, at their head. And in the shrine they declared me bride and clad me in a new robe of affirmation. And Inner Force is the name of the goddess who adorned me with the garland of the wedding.

I dreamed a dream, O friend.

There were beatings of the drum and blowings of the conch; and under the canopy hung heavily with strings of pearls He came, my lover and my lord, the vanquisher of the demon Madhu and grasped me by the hand.

I dreamed a dream, O friend.

Those whose voices are blest, they sang the Vedic songs. The holy grass was laid. The sun was established. And He who was puissant like a war-elephant in its rage, He seized my hand and we paced round the Flame.

Ye Others*

Ye others cannot conceive of the love that I bear to Krishna. And your warnings to me are vain like the pleadings of the deaf and mute. The Boy who left his mother's home and was reared by a different mother, — Oh, take me forth to his city of Mathura where He won the field without fighting the battle and leave me there.

Of no further avail is modesty. For all the neighbours have known of this fully. Would ye really heal me of this ailing and restore me to my pristine state? Then know ye this illness will go if I see Him, the maker of illusions, the youthful one who measured the world. Should you really wish to save me, then take me forth to his home in the hamlet of the cowherds and leave me there.

The rumour is already spread over the land that I fled with Him and went the lonely way, leaving all of you behind — my parents, relations and friends. The tongue of scandal ye can hardly silence now. And He, the deceiver, is haunting me with his forms. Oh, take me forth at midnight to the door of the Cowherd named Bliss who owns this son, the maker of havoc, this mocker, this pitiless player; and leave me there.

Oh, grieve not ye, my mothers. Others know little of this strange malady of mine. He whose hue is that of the blue sea, a certain youth called Krishna — the gentle caress of his hand can heal me, for his Yoga is sure and proved.

On the bank of the waters he ascended the Kadamba tree and he leaped to his dance on the hood of the snake, the dance that killed the snake. Oh take me forth to the bank of that lake and leave me there.

There is a parrot here in this cage of mine that ever calls out his name, saying 'Govinda, Govinda'. In anger I chide it and refuse to feed it. 'O Thou' it then cries, in its highest pitch, 'O Thou who hast measured the worlds.' I tell you, my people, if ye really would avoid the top of scandal in all this wide country, if still ye would guard your weal and your good fame, then take me forth to his city of Dwaraka of high mansion and decorated turrets; and leave me there.

IV

FROM GREEK AND LATIN

Odyssey*

BOOK ONE

Sing to me, Muse, of the man many-counselled who far through the world's
ways

Wandering, was tossed after Troya he sacked, the divine stronghold,
Many cities of men he beheld, learned the minds of their dwellers,
Many the woes in his soul he suffered driven on the waters,
Fending from fate his life and the homeward course of his comrades.
Them even so he saved not for all his desire and his striving;
Who by their own infatuate madness piteously perished,
Fools in their hearts! for they slew the herds the deity pastured,
Helios high-climbing; but he from them reft their return and the daylight.
Sing to us also of these things, goddess, daughter of heaven.

Now all the rest who had fled from death and sudden destruction
Safe dwell at home, from the war escaped and the swallowing ocean:
He alone far was kept from his fatherland, far from his consort,
Long by the nymph divine, the sea-born goddess Calypso,
Stayed in her hollow caves, for she yearned to keep him her husband.
Yet when the year came at last in the rolling gyre of the seasons
When in the web of their wills the gods spun out his returning
Homeward to Ithaca, — there too he found not release from his labour,
In his own land with his loved ones — all the immortals had pity
Save Poseidon alone; but he with implacable anger
Moved against godlike Odysseus before his return to his country.
Now was he gone to the land of the Aethiopes, nations far-distant, —
They who to either hand divided, remotest of mortals,
Dwell where the high-climbing Helios sets and where he arises;
There of bulls and of rams the slaughtered hecatomb tasting
He by the banquet seated rejoiced; but the other immortals
Sat in the halls of Zeus Olympian, the throng of them gathered,
First led the word the father divine of men and immortals;
For in his heart had the memory risen of noble Aegisthus
Whom in his halls Orestes, the famed Agamemnonid, slaughtered;
Him in his heart recalling he spoke mid the assembled immortals:
“Out on it! how are the gods ever vainly accused by earth's creatures!

* Homer

Still they say that from us they have miseries; they rather always
By their own folly and madness draw on them woes we have willed not.
Even as now Aegisthus, violating Fate, from Atrides
Took his wedded wife and slew her husband returning,
Knowing their¹ violent end; for we warned him before, we sent him
Hermes charged with our message, the far-scanning slayer of Argus,
Neither the hero to smite nor wed the wife of Atrides,
Since from Orestes a vengeance shall be, the Atreid offspring,
When to his youth he shall come and desire the soil² of his country.
Yet not for all his voice, would the infatuate heart of Aegisthus
Heed that friendly counsellor; now all in a mass has been paid for.”
Answered then to Zeus the goddess grey-eyed Athene.
“Father of ours, thou son of Cronus, highest of the regnant,
He indeed and utterly fell by a fitting destruction:
So too perish all who dare like deeds among mortals.
But for a far better man my heart burns, clear-eyed Odysseus
Who, ill-fated, far from his loved ones suffers and sorrows
Hemmed in the island girt by the waves, in the navel of ocean,
Where mid the woods her home a goddess has made and inhabits,
Daughter of Atlas whose baleful heart knows all the abysses
Fathomless, vast of the sea and the pillars high on his shoulders
In his huge strength he upbears, that divide the earth and the heavens;
Atlas’ daughter keeps in that island the unhappy Odysseus

¹ the ² soul

On A Satyr and Sleeping Love*

Me whom the purple mead that Bromius owns
 And girdles rent of amorous girls did please,
 Now the inspired and curious hand decrees
 That waked quick life in these quiescent stones,
 To yield thee water pure. Thou lest the sleep
 Yon perilous boy unchain, more softly creep.

A Rose of Women†

Now lilies blow upon the windy height,
 Now flowers the pansy kissed by tender rain,
 Narcissus builds his house of self-delight
 And Love's own fairest flower blooms again;
 Vainly your gems, O meadows, you recall;
 One simple girl breathes sweeter than you all.

To Lesbia‡

O my Lesbia, let us live for loving,
 Suns can set and return to light the morrow,
 We when once has sunk down the brief light of living
 One long night must be slept and slept for ever.
 Give me kisses a thousand, then a hundred,
 One more thousand again, again a hundred,
 Many thousands of kisses, crowding hundreds —
 Kisses numberless like to sands on sea-shore,
 Burning Libya's sands in far Cyrene.
 Then the thousands confound and mix the hundred
 Lest some envious Fate or eye discover
 The reckoning of our love and kisses.

* Plato † Meleager ‡ Catullus

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Sri Aurobindo, on his return to India, started steeping himself in Indian Culture and began learning the Indian languages — Sanskrit, Bengali, Gujarati, Marathi, etc. At the same time he commenced translating from Sanskrit and Bengali. We find in his manuscripts a few lists enumerating the work he had done, judging from which many translations seem to have been lost. The translation of Kalidasa's *Meghaduta* in terza rima, is, we know for certain, irretrievable.

Most of the translations from the *Mahabharata*, the *Ramayana*, the *Gita*, Kalidasa, Bhartrihari and the mediaeval poets Bidyapati, Chandidas, Horu Thakur, etc. were done during Sri Aurobindo's Baroda period, 1893-1905. But Kalidasa's *Kumarasambhava* bears the date January 15, 1918. *The Book of the Assembly Hall* from the *Mahabharata* bears the earliest known date, the 18th of March, 1893, indicating that it was started exactly a month after he had assumed office in Baroda State.

Vidula which appeared in *Bande Mataram* in 1907 was translated about the same time.

Kalidasa's *Vikramorvasi* and Bhartrihari's *Century of Life* were published in book-form in 1911 and 1923 and were included in *Collected Poems and Plays* in 1942. *Vikramorvasi* has been published in Volume 7 of the Centenary Series (*Collected Plays*).

The first thirteen chapters of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's *Ananda Math* were translated and serialised in the *Karmayogin* in 1909. The national song, *Bande Mataram*, appears in this novel.

Songs of the Sea was translated at the request of the author, C. R. Das, and published in 1923 with his own prose translations. In 1942 it was included in *Collected Poems and Plays*.

The works of Tamil poets were translated with the help of Subramaniam Bharati and published in the *Arya* in 1914-1915.

Translations from the Greek belong to Sri Aurobindo's early period, while the poem from Catullus was done in Pondicherry.

During the 'thirties and 'forties Sri Aurobindo translated from Bengali a few poems of his disciples.

D. L. Roy's song *Mother India* was Englished in 1941.

The translations brought together in this volume are printed exactly as found in the manuscripts. Proper names are spelt as in the original copy.

Most of the translations here are of literary pieces. The translations of the Upanishads and Vedas are published in Volumes 10, 11, 12 of the present series.