

Sri Aurobindo Translations



VOLUME 5
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Translations

Publisher's Note

Translations comprises all of Sri Aurobindo's translations from Sanskrit, Bengali, Tamil, Greek and Latin into English, with the exception of his translations of Vedic and Upanishadic literature. The Vedic and Upanishadic translations appear in volumes 14–18 of THE COMPLETE WORKS OF SRI AUROBINDO. His translations of some of the Mother's French *Prières et méditations* appear in volume 31, *The Mother with Letters on the Mother*. His translations from Sanskrit into Bengali appear in volume 9, *Writings in Bengali and Sanskrit*.

The contents of the present volume are divided by original language into five parts. The dates of the translations are given in the Note on the Texts. They span more than fifty years, from 1893 to the mid-1940s. Less than half the pieces were published during Sri Aurobindo's lifetime; the rest are reproduced from his manuscripts.

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Part One

Translations from Sanskrit



Sri Aurobindo with students of the Baroda College, c. 1906

17

Selected Poems of
Bidyapati

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 ease my ^{heart} ~~love~~ of its piteous ^{heart} ~~harm~~?
O on my bosom once to hold
Her boundless beauty and manifold.

The first page of "Selected Poems of Bidyapati"

Section One

The Ramayana

Pieces from the Ramayana

1

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 Ixvaacou 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,
Ageing 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,
 Rama, my warrior son, by kingly birth
 And 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 the 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.

2

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 high-road
Ran through it spaciouly with sweet cool flowers
Hourly new-paved and hourly watered wide.
Dussaruth 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
 To see those orgulous high-built 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 tuskèd boar. Even such strong arms
Of heroes kept that city and in her midst
Regnant King Dussaruth the nations ruled.

3

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 Kaicayie's serving-woman, — nay,
A lesser thing than these. If any honours,

If any follows me, even that man
 Hushes when he beholds Kaicayie's son.
 How shall I in my misery endure
 That bitter mouth intolerable, bear
 Her ceaseless petulance. O I have lived
 Seventeen years since thou wast born, my son,
 O Rama, seventeen long years have 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
 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 toils
 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 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.

4

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
 Enriched with curious gold? Such are the high
 Symbols men lead before anointed kings
 Through streets flower-crowned. But thou com'st carless,
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 highborn soul, O firm religious mind,
 Be strong and hear me. Dussaruth, my sire,
 Whose royal word stands as the mountains pledged
 To Bharuth'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
Bharuth, 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 Bharuth 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 Bharuth, my dear brothers,
More than my life-blood dear, a sister's love
And a maternal kindness. Cross not Bharuth
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 mischief 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 nor 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 entreaty, for he feared
 Her dolour in the desolate wood; 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 soon-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 habitants 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 knowst, 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 Savitry
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,
Resignst 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 stormblast 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 knowst 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 shall 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 stream
 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 moonbright 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, 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,
These 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, highblooded lineage old
Thy purpose springing mates with the pure strain
Of Raghov'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 them
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.

An Aryan City

PROSE VERSION

Coshala named, a mighty country there was, swollen and glad; seated on the banks of the Sarayu it abounded in wealth & grain; and there was the city Ayodhya famed throughout the triple world, built by Manu himself, lord of men. Twelve leagues was the beautiful mighty city in its length, three in its breadth; large & clearcut were its streets, and a vast clearcut highroad adorned it that ever was sprinkled with water and strewn freely with flowers. Dasaratha increasing a mighty nation peopled that city, like a king of the gods in his heavens; a town of arched gateways he made it, and wide were the spaces between its shops; full was it of all machines and implements and inhabited by all kinds of craftsmen and frequented by herald and bard, a city beautiful of unsurpassed splendours; lofty were its bannered mansions, crowded was it with hundreds of hundred-slaying engines of war, and in all quarters of the city there were theatres for women and there were gardens and mango-groves and the ramparts formed a girdle round its spacious might; hard was it for the foe to enter, hard to assail, for difficult and deep was the city's moat; filled it was of horses & elephants, cows and camels and asses, crowded with its tributary kings arrived for sacrifice to the gods, rich with merchants from many lands and glorious with palaces built of precious stone high-piled like hills & on the house-tops pleasure-rooms; like Indra's Amarāvati Ayodhya seemed.

The Book of the Wild Forest

Then, possessing his soul, Rama entered the great forest, the forest Dandaka 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 & temperate sages graced those homes. The high of energy approached them unstringing first his mighty bow, and they beheld 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 Vydehie too with unfalling eyelids they gazed and Lakshmana; for they were things of amazement to these 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 high-souled and, learned in righteousness, said to him with outstretched upward 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 & is reverend to all. Of Indra's self he is the fourth part and protects the people, O seed of Raghu, therefore he enjoys noble & 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 desires of the senses, and 'tis thou must protect us always, ascetics rich in austerity but helpless as children in the womb."

Now when he had taken of their hospitality, Rama towards

the rising of the sun took farewell of all those seers and plunged into mere forest scattered through with many beasts of the chase and haunted by the tiger and the bear. There he & Lakshmana following him saw a desolation in the midmost of that wood, for blasted were tree & creeper & 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 hideousbellied, 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-smeared head of an elephant with its tusks he had stuck upon an iron spit and roared with a mighty sound. As soon as he saw Rama & Lakshmana & Sita Mithilan 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 Vydehie up in his arms and moved away and said, "You who wear the ascetic's cloth and matted locks, O ye whose lives are short, yet with a wife have you entered Dandak 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." Evilsouled Viradha speaking this wickedness Sita heard his haughty speech, alarmed she shook in her apprehension as a plaintain trembles in the stormwind. The son of Raghu seeing the beautiful Sita in Viradha's arms said to Lakshmana, 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 highsplendoured and nurtured in utter ease! The thing Kaikayie desired, the thing dear to her that she chose for a gift,

how quickly today, O Lakshmana, has it been utterly fulfilled, she whose foresight was not satisfied with the kingdom for her son, but she sent me, the beloved 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 Vydehie and that my father should perish and my own kingdom be wrested from my hands.” So Cacootstha spake, and Lakshmana answered him & his eyes filled with the mist of grief and he panted 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 had 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.”

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 Dandak woods.” And to Rama of unerring might Viradha made reply, “Java’s son am I, Shatahrada was my dam and Viradha am I called by all Rakshasas on earth.

The Defeat of Dhoomraksha

But in their lust of battle shouted loud,
Rejoicing, all the Apes when they beheld
The dreadful Rakshas coming forth to war,
Dhoomraksha. High the din of mellay rose,
Giant and Ape with tree and spear and mace
Smiting each other; for the Giants hewed
Their dire opponents down on every side,
And they too with the trunks of trees bore down
Their monstrous foes and levelled with the dust.
But in their wrath increasing Lanca's hosts
Pierced the invaders; straight their arrows flew
Unswerving, fatal, heron-winged; sharp-knobbed
Their maces smote and dreadful clubs prevailed;
The curious tridents did their work. But torn,
But mangled by the shafts, but pierced with spears
The Apes in act heroic, unalarmed,
Drew boldness from impatience of defeat;
Trees from the earth they plucked, lifted great rocks
And with a dreadful speed, roaring aloud,
Hurling their shouted names behind the blow,
They slew with these the heroes of the isle.
Down fell the Giants crushed and from their mouths
Vomited lifeblood, pounded were by rocks
And with crushed sides collapsed or by ape-teeth
Were mangled, or lay in heaps by trees o'erborne.
Some with sad faces tore their locks in grief,
Bewildered with the smell of blood and death
Some lifeless sank upon the earth. Enraged
Dhoomraksha saw the rout and forward stormed
And made a mighty havoc of the foe,
Crushing to earth their bleeding forms with axe

And javelin and mace oppressed or torn.
 Some helpless died, some gave their blood to earth,
 Some scattering fled the fierce pursuer's wrath,
 Some with torn hearts slept on one side relaxed
 On earth's soft bosom, some with entrails plucked
 Out of their bodies by the tridents died
 Wretchedly. Sweet twanged the bowstrings, lyres of war,
 The sobbing of the warriors' breath was time
 And with a thunder dull, battle delivered
 Its dread orchestral music. In the front
 Of all that war Dhoomraksha thundered armed,
 Laughing aloud, and with fast-sleeting shafts
 Scattered to every wind his foes. At last
 The Son of Tempest saw his army's rout
 Astonished by Dhoomraksha; wroth he saw
 And came, carrying a giant crag he came,
 Red-gazing, and with all his father's force
 At dire Dhoomraksha's chariot hurled. Alarmed
 Dhoomraksha saw the flying boulder come
 And rearing up his club from the high car
 He leaped. Down crashed the rock and ground the car
 To pieces, wheel and flag and pole and yoke
 And the forsaken bow. Hanuman too
 Abandoning his chariot through the ranks
 Opposing strode with havoc; trees unlopped
 With all their boughs for mace and club he used.
 With shattered heads and bodies oozing blood
 The Giants fell before him. Scattering so
 The Giant army Hanuman, the Wind's
 Tremendous son, took easily in his hands
 A mountain's mighty top and ran and strode
 Where stood Dhoomraksha. Roaring answer loud
 The mighty Giant with his club upreared
 Came furiously to meet the advancing foe.
 Wrathful the heroes met, and on the head
 Of Hanuman the weapon many-spiked
 Of dire Dhoomraksha fell; but he the Ape,

Strong in inheritance of might divine,
Not even heeded such a blow, but brought
Right on Dhoomraksha's crown the summit huge
And all his limbs were shattered with the stroke
And like a broken mountain they collapsed
Earthward, o'erwhelmed, in-smitten, prone. The Giants left,
Survivors of that slaughter, fled alarmed
And entered Lanca by the Apes pursued
And butchered as they fled. But from that fight
Victorious, weary, rested Hanuman
Amid his slaughtered foemen and engirt
With the red rivers he had made to flow,
Praised by the host, rejoicing in his wounds.

Section Two

The Mahabharata

Sabha Parva or Book of the Assembly-Hall

CANTO I

The Building of the Hall

And before Krishna's face to great Urjuun
Maia 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 Kuuntie's son:
What shall I do for thy sake?" And Urjuun,
"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."
Urjuun 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 Vaasudave
Pondered a while what boon were best to have.
At length he answered: "Let a hall be raised
Peerless, thou great artificer highpraised, —
If thou wilt needs do somewhat high designed, —
For Yudishthere 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 Pandove’s hall he made imperially.
 But first the heroes to the King repair,
 Just Yudishthere, 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 Pandove 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 Pandove’s hall.

But in the Khandav plain abode in ease
 Junnardun 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 Urjuun 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, swiftrushing, with the Bird for sign
And banner, sword and discus, bow divine
And mace round hung, and horses twin of stride,
Sugreve and Shaibya, went the lotus-eyed.
And in his love the monarch Yudishthere
Mounted, Daarui, the great charioteer,
Put quite aside. Himself he grasped the rein,
Himself he drove the chariot o'er the plain.
And great Urjuuna mounted, seized the white

Windbringer with the golden staff and bright
 And called with his strong arm the circling wind:
 And Bhema 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 Yudishthere's will o'erbores
 And forced return; then grappled to his breast
 Urjuun beloved. Greeting well the rest
 Religiously the monarch's feet embraced
 Govinda, but the Pandove 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 immortals' 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 horsehooves go,
 Ceasing at last to their own town again
 Silent they wend, the lion lords of men.
 So entered the immortal Yudishthere
 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 Daaruk and the hero Saatyakie.
 Swift as the great God's wingèd favourite he

Entered, and all the Yadove lords renowned
Came honouring him, with one the chief and crowned.
And Krishna stayed his father old to greet
And Ahuik and his glorious mother's feet
And Bullaraam, his brother. His own sons
He next embraced and all their little ones.
Last of his elders leave he took and went
To Rookminnie'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,
Urjuun, 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 Windusor,
Rich waste of fine material was left,
Wondrous, of stone a variegated weft
That for the mighty audiencehall was stored
Of Vrishapurvun, the truthspeaking lord.
Thither I wend and make, if yet endure
All that divine material bright and pure,
The Pandove's hall, a glory to behold,
Admirable, set with jewelry and gold
Taking the heart to pleasure. These besides
A cruel mace in Windusor 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 Bheme 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 northeastern edge of heaven where high
 Soars Mainaac hill into the northward sky
 From Coilas. Golden soar its ridges large
 And noble gems it stores and bright the marge
 Of Windusor. 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 Bhogiruth the bold
 Through tedious seasons dwelt, yearning to see
 Ganges, his selfnamed river Bhaagirothie.
 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.
 Nur and Naraian there and Brahma there
 And Hades and the Immoveable 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 Vaasudave,
 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 audiencehall
 The old Titanic stone marmoreal.
 All mighty wealth the servile giants guard,
 The Titan genius gathered and prepared
 His famous hall unparalleled, divine,
 Where all the jewels of the world combine.

To Bheme he gave that mighty mace, the shell
Godgiven called, whose cry unutterable
When from the great conch's ocean mouth 'tis hurled
Far borne, trembling of creatures fills the world,
To great Urjuuna. 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 comparison.
For neither Brahma's roof nor Vishnu's high
Might equal this for glorious symmetry.
No, not Sudhurma, Indra's council hall,
With Maia's cunning strove. At Maia's call
Eight thousand Helots of the Giant blood
Upbore the pile and dreadful sentries stood
Travellers on wind, hugebodied, 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 Yudishthere
 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 greatest of the Kuurus 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.

CANTO II

The Debated Sacrifice

* * * * *

* But when Yudishthere had heard
The sage's 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 not Right, but pondered how this thing
Might touch the peoples, whether well or ill.
For just was Yudishthere 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 Bhema's force and foreign battle quelled
 By the two-handed might of great Urjuun;
 Sahadave's cultured equity and boon
 Necoola'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; no 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 was pestilence 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 Yudishthere'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 neatherd 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 Cowrove; 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 selfcontrol 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 Yudishthere
Still pondered though he knew his puissance well.
Again he bade his hardy brothers tell
Their mind and priests high-souled and ministers:
With Dhaumya and Dwypaia 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 Yadove land in a swift-rolling car.
 Then sped the rushing wheels with small delay
 And reached the gated city Dwaraca,
 The gated city where Junnardun dwelt.
 Krishna to Yudishthere’s desire felt
 Answering desire and went with Indrosane
 Passing through many lands to Indra-Plain,
 Fierily passing with impetuous hooves
 To Indraprustha and the men he loves.
 With filial soul his brothers Yudishthere
 And Bheme 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,
 All reverently the courteous twins attend.
 But after rest in those bright halls renowned
 Yudishthere 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, yet do I 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 Raama, Jemadugny’s son, had slain
The chivalry of earth, those who were fain
To flee, left later issue to inherit
The name of Kshettriya and the regal spirit.
Of these the rule by compact of the clan
Approved thou knowest, and each highborn man
Whate’er and all the kingly multitude
Name themselves subjects of great Ila’s brood
And the Ixvaacuu house. Now by increase
The Ixvaacuu Kings and Ilian count no less
Than are a hundred clans. Of all most huge
Yayaaty 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 Jerasundha lifts his diademed brow

And Ila and Ixvaacuu 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 Shishupaal
 Owns singly nor disdains his lord to call
 But leads his warfare, and, of captains best,
 The puissant man and subtle strategist,
 Vuccar, the Koruush king, and those two famed
 Grew to his side, Hunsa and Dimbhuc named,
 Brave men and high of heart; and Corrusus,
 Duntvuccar, Meghovaahon, Corobhus,
 Great kings; and the wide-ruler of the west,
 The Yovun lord upon whose gleaming crest
 Burns the strange jewel wonderful, whose might
 Is like the boundless Ocean's infinite,
 Whose rule Norac obeys and Muruland.
 King Bhogadutt owns Jerasundh'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 Kuuntiewurdhun Puurujit
 Feels for thee as a tender father might.
 Chained by affection to thee is his heart
 And by affection in thy weal has part.
 To Jerasundh 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 Chédies, whose control
 Poundra and Keerat own, a mighty lord,
 King of Bengal and by the name adored

Of Poundrian Vaasudave. The Bhoja strong
To whom wide lands, one fourth of all, belong,
Called friend of Indra — he made tameable
Pandya and Cruth and Koysic by his skill
And science, and his brother Aacritie
Is very Purshuraam in prowess — he,
Even Bheeshmuc, even this high, far-conquering king
To Jerasundh 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 Jerasundha'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, Surasegn,
Shalwa, Petucchur, Kuuntie, Bhudrocar,
Suisthull, Kulind, Sucuitta. All that are
Of the Shalwaian Kings brother or friend,
Are with their leaders gone, nor yet an end:
The Southern Punctaals and in Kuuntie-land
The Eastern Coshalas. Their native north
Abandoning the Mutsyas have gone forth
And from their fear take southern sanctuary:
With them the clan Sunnyustopaad. Lastly
The warrior great Punctaalas terrified
Have left their kingdoms and to every side
Are scattering before Jerasundha's name.
On us the universal tempest came,
When Kunsu furiously crushed of old
The Yadaves: for to Kunsu bad and bold
The son of Brihodhruth his daughters gave
Born younger feminine to male Sahadave,
Ustie and Praapthie. 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 Ahuik's daughter, her
 The sweet and slender, gave to Ocroor, — then
 Made free from tyranny my countrymen.
 With me was Raam, the plougher of the foe;
 Our swords laid Kunsu and Sunaaman low.
 Scarce was this inbred peril crossed and we
 Safe, Jerasundh 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;
 Hunsu and Dimbhuc styled. These two uniting,
 Heroes, and Jerasundh 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 Yudishthere. Now there was slain
 By Raam in eight days' battle duelling
 One Hunsu truly named, a mighty King.
 'Hunsu is slain!' said one to Dimbhuc. Him
 Hearing the Jumna's waters overwhelm
 Devoted. Without Hunsu here alone
 He had not heart to linger, so is gone
 His way to death. Of Dimbhuc's death when knew
 Hunsu, 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 Jerasundha discontent
 With empty heart to his own city went.

The King being gone we in all joy again
In Mothura dwelt and our ancestral plain.
But she, the royal princess lotus-eyed,
Went to her father mourning; she, the pride
Of Jerasundh and Kunsu's wife, and cried,
Spurring the mighty Maagudh, 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.
Our endless riches' loose prolixity
Unportable by division we compressed
And with it fared sadly into the west.
The lovely city, fair Cuishusthaly,
With mountains beautiful, our colony
We made, the Ryevut 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 call 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 trumpet's sound
Wakes headlong lust of war. Thousands as many
Our race. Ahuik has hundred sons nor any
Less than a god. And Charudeshna, he
With his dear brother, hero Saatyakie,
Chucrodave, I, the son of Rohinnie,
And Samba and Prodyoumna, seven are we,
Seven strong men; nor other seven more weak,
Cunca and Shuncou, Kuuntie and Someque,
Anadhrishty, Somitinjoy, Critovurm;
Undhuc's two sons besides and the old King: firm
As adamant they, heroes energical.
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 Maagudh, Jerasundh, the mountain jaws
 Impassable behold. There free from cause
 Of fear, eastern or northern, Modhou's sons
 Dwell glad of safety. Lo, we the mighty ones,
 Because King Kunsā married, to the west,
 By Jerasundha utterly distressed,
 Are fled, and there on Ryevut, hill of kine,
 Find sanctuary from danger Magadhine.
 Therefore though all imperial gifts and high
 Vindicate thee, though o'er earth's chivalry
 Thou shouldst be Emperor indeed, nowise
 Shalt thou accomplish, King, the Sacrifice
 Great Jerasundha 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
 Mahadave 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 Jerasundha, 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," Yudishthere cried. "Lo now
A word no other heart might soar so high
As utter; yet thy brave sagacity
Plainly hath phrased it; nor like thee on earth
Another sword of counsel shall take birth.
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,
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.
I even with attempt hope not the crown
Of high supremacy to wear. Renown
Girds these and highborn mind; and so they deem
"Lo I or I am warrior and supreme",
Yet if by chance one better prove mid men,
It is but chance who wins the crown and when.
But we by Jerasundha's force alarmed
And all his mighty tyrannies ironarmed
Shun the emprise. O hero, O highstarred
In whose great prowess we have done and dared,
On whose heroic arm our safeties dwell
Yet lo thou fear'st him, deem'st 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 Jerasundha can be slain,

Urjuun or Bheme or Raama or combined.
 Thou, Késhove, in all things to me art Mind.”
 Out Bhema spoke, the strong man eloquent.
 “The unstrenuous king, unhardy, unvigilant
 Sinks like an anthill; nor the weak-kneed less
 Who on a stronger 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, Dhonunjoy, 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 been to history known,
 Maroutta, Bharut, Yuvanuswa’s son,
 Great Bhogiruth and Cartoverya old.
 By wealth Maroutta conquered, Bharut bold
 By armèd strength; Mandhata’s victories
 Enthroned him and his subtle soul and wise.
 By strenuous greatness Cartoverya bent
 The world; but Bhogiruth beneficent
 Gathered the willing nations to his sway.
 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 —
 And yet avail not to make solely great.
 Strong Jerasundha 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 Sheva'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 Maagudh 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 Yudishthere made answer passionately:
"Shall I, ambitious of imperial place,
Krishna, expose in my mad selfishness,
Upbuoyed 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 Yudishthere great Partha in the pride
 Of wonders selfattained, banner and car,
 And palace Titan-built and in the war
 Quiver made inexhaustible and great
 Unequalled 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 Kshettriya 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 Jerasundha'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 deem'st 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 Kuuntie's son and born of Bharut's race
What spirit should dwell, Urjuun'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 conceal, 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
 Grapple 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.”

CANTO III

The Slaying of Jerasundh

Krishna pursued. “Now is the call of Fate:
 Fallen is Dimbhuc, fallen Hunsu great;
 Kunsu is slain and all his host; the hour
 Is sighted when King Jerasundha’s power
 Must bow to death; yet not in violent war
 ’Tis conquerable nor all the gods that are,
 Nor the embattled Titans overwhelm:
 In deadly duel we must vanquish him.
 Conduct is mine, strength Bheme’s, and in the field
 Who is very victory stands here to shield.
 We will consume the Maagudh, 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 strenuous 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
Bheme and Urjuuna give." And the King cried,
"Achyuta, O Achyuta, never so,
O hero, speak, O slayer of the foe.
Thou art the Pandoves' lord, their refuge thou.
Govinda, all thou speakest I avow
Truth merely; whom thou guidest are not men
Fortune abandons. Nay, already slain
King Jerasundha 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,
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,
Vricoder: joined and made a third with you,
Famous and noble, nought is he may not do.
Well led the armed 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.
 Urjuun by Krishna led, Bheme by Urjuun;
 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 Pandoves twain,
 Went forth to Magadha of happy men.
 To Girivraj, the city of the hills,
 A nation of the fourfold 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
 The height by Brihadrutha's sons adored
 And all the people, one of peaks that stand,
 Delightful hills, Chytyuc, in Magadh land; —
 Thither they storming came. There Rishabha,
 The eater of forbidden flesh, to slay
 Came Brihadruth the King and slew and bound
 Three wardrums with its hide whose threatening sound
 Far borne through a whole month went echoing.
 These in his city placed the Maagudh King.
 Covered with dust of glorious blossoms there
 The drums hurled oft their thunders through the air.
 But now came storming to the Chytyuc wall
 The heroes and the wardrums broke and all
 Upon the rampart fell as if to smite
 The very head of Jerasundha's might:
 Chytyuc, 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 Jerasundh 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,
Snaatucs. 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 manyhued the mighty three
With wreaths and burnished earrings bright aflame
To Jerasundha's lordly dwelling came.
As lions of the Himalaya eye
A cattlepen, so they the palace high.
But on the Maagudh 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 rubbed 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 judged
Worthy of high guest-offerings, nowise grudged
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 answered him the Pandoves 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 placed
 They sojourned and the King with awe possessed
 Returned to his high mansion. But when night
 Was deep, went the strong arbiter of fight
 To those three twice-born; for his vow preferred
 Compelled him, through earth famous, when he heard
 Of Snaatuc Brahmins in his city bright
 To meet them even in the deep midnight.
 And they indeed with strange astonishment
 Dismayed 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 looked and scanned the King awaiting speech.
 Then to those lords concealed 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 Snaatuc, 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 Chytyuc 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, Kshettriya, Vyshya, all
Equal entitled are to Snaatuchood.
Vows personal, vows general, both are good.
But those the Kshettriya's majesty prepare,
To Kshettriyas 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 Kshettriya'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 Kshettriya 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 Jerasundh 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 Kshettriya who with causeless blame
 Lightly has taxed the innocent, he with maim
 Virtue curtails inheriting remorse:
 Be 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 Kshettriya virtue, Kshettriya 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 Jerasundha, claim
 And thou the world's great princes dost o'erwhelm,
 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 Shancara 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 Kshettriya race
And I am he alone.' Great witlessness
Is thine, O King, and error most unjust.
What Kshettriya 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. Véda 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, may be, far excels.
While these are hidden in the hand 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 Brihadruth, Cartoverya, Dumbhodbove,
 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 Hrishikésa styled;
 These are the Pandove heroes. Brother's child
 I to 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 Jerasundha puissantly:
 "Not without conquest I collect amain
 Princes; who is there penned my walls within
 And not in equal battle overthrown?
 This is the law and life to Kshettriyas 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 Kshettriya blood beats in my veins,
 And yet one Kshettriya 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 Jerasundha sighed
 Remembering great captains who had died,
 Cowshic and Chitrosane, (but other names

Men gave in converse with worldwide acclaims,
Hunsa and Dimbhuc calling), them that night
Recalled in 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 Maagudh Jerasundh, with Bhemosane
Chose battle. Wreaths, pigment of augury
Bovine and all auspicious gramary,
Medicaments beside that lighten pain
Or call the fugitive senses back again,
The high priest brought for Jerasundh and read
The word of blessing o’er the monarch’s head.

Virata Parva

FRAGMENTS FROM ADHYAYA 17

“Arise! arise! why sleepest thou, Bhemasena, like one that is dead? For how is he other than dead, whose wife a wretch has touched and lives?”

as a queen of beasts
Her sleeping lion in the trackless wood
Or a she elephant her mate, pressed Bhema
All to her bosom. Then as a sweetvoiced lyre
Exultantly to music swooning, grasps
Gandhara’s strain, with such a cry the pale
Panchalian called her lord. “Arise, arise,
Why dost thou sleep, O Bhema, like one dead!
Not other than dead is he whose wife the wretch
That touched, yet lives.”

Udyoga Parva

TWO RENDERINGS OF THE FIRST ADHYAYA

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

Vaishampayan continueth.

But the hero Kurus & 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 & Virata, old they and honoured of earth's lords, and Rama & Janardan with their father; now by the Panchala king was the hero Shini with the son of Rohinnie, but very near likewise to the Matsya king Janardan & Yudhisthere; and all the sons of Drupada, Bheme, Urjouna and the sons of Madravatie, and Prodyumna & 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 & shining robes, rich shone that senate of kings like wide heaven with its stainless stars.

“To all of you it is known how Yudhisthere 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 & austere their vow but for the six years & the seven they kept it, noblest of men, the sons of Pandu; and this the thirteenth year & 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 Duryodhan, just & glorious and worthy of great Kurus. For Yudhisthere 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 & with 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 desires 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 & unrighteous, for greed of their kingdom; yea all this is known to you utterly. Considering therefore their growing greed and the righteousness of Yudhisthere, 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 now 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 natheless ye deem these too weak in numbers for victory, yet would they all band together and with their friends at last 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, pureminded and careful man such as shall be an able envoy for their appeasement and the gift of half the kingdom to Yudhisthere.” This hearing, the just, expedient, sweet & impartial speech of Janardan, the elder brother of him took up the word, O prince, honouring the younger’s speech even greatly.

*

So the mighty ones of the Kurus & they of their faction performed joyously the marriage of Abhimanyu, and that night they rested but at dawn fared, pleased of heart, to the Council Hall of Virata. The Hall of the Lord of the Matsyas, opulent, curious with workings of pearl and the best of jewels, with seats disposed, and wreathed with garlands and full of fragrance, thither they fared, the Elders of the Kings of men. And of those that took their seats in the Hall, the first place was for both the Princes of the folk, even Virat & Drupad and those that were aged & revered among the Masters of Earth, and Rama and Janardan with their sire. Next to the King of the Panchalas sat the mighty one of the Shinis with the son of Rohinnie and very nigh to the Matsya King both Janardan and Yudhisthere, and all the sons of Drupad the King, and Bhema and Urjoon, and the sons of Madrie, and Pradyumna and Samba mighty in the battle and with the sons of Virata Abhimanyu. And all those heroes equal to their sires in prowess and beauty and strength, the princes, sons of Draupadie, sat on noble thrones curious with gold. High shone that opulent Place of Kings with the warriors there sitting in glittering ornaments and gleaming robes as heaven shines invaded by the clear bright stars. Then when those mighty ones had done with varied talk of general import they tarried in thought a moment, all those Kings gazing towards Krishna; and talk being over, spurred by the Madhav for business of the sons of Pandu the lion lords assembled hearkened to his word of import mighty and majestic.

Srikrishna spake. “Known is it to you all how Yudhisthere here was conquered by Subala’s son in the Hall of Dicing, beaten

by fraud, and his kingdom wrested from him and compact made of exile in the forest. Though able to win the Earth by violence yet the sons of Pandu stood firmly in the truth, for truth is their chariot, and for years six & seven all the severity of that vow has been kept by these first of men. And hardest to pass this thirteenth year, lo they have passed it undiscovered before your eyes, bearing intolerable ills, even as they had sworn, — that too is known of you all, — appointed to servile office in a house of strangers, mighty, in their own might, O King, they have won through all. Since so it is, ponder now what may be for the good of the King, the son of Righteousness, and the good of Duryodhan and of the Kurus & the Pandavas, and just also and right and for the honour and glory of all. For Yudhisthere the Just would desire not the kingship of the gods itself if with unrighteousness it came. But to lordship of earth he would aspire though even in some hamlet, so it went with justice and prosperous doing. For it is known to the Kings how his father's kingdom was torn from him by the children of Dhritarashtra and how by that false dealing he fell into great peril and very hard to bear; for neither was the son of Pritha overthrown in battle by the children of Dhritarashtra in the energy of their own might. Yet even so the King and his friends desire that these should not come to hurt; but what the sons of Pandu gathered with their own conquering hands by force done on the lords of land, this these mighty ones seek for, Coonty's sons and the sons of Madry. But all this is known to you aright, how these even when they were children were pursued to slay them with various device by those their foemen, dishonest & fierce and bent to rob them of their realm. Seeing how that greed of theirs is grown and looking to the righteous mind of Yudhisthere and looking also to their kinship form ye your separate minds and an united counsel. For ever have these made truth and honour their delight and wholly have they kept the compact, and now if they have dealing from the others otherwise than in truth and honour, they will slay the assembled children of Dhritarashtra. For when 'tis heard that these have been evilly dealt with by their cousins, the friends of Dhritarashtra's sons will gather to

protect the illdoers and they will oppose these with war, and they, opposed with war, will slay them all. And even if 'tis your mind that these by their fewness are not strong for victory, they will band themselves all together with their friends and yet strive for the destruction of the Dhritarashtrians. Neither do we know aright the mind of Duryodhan and what it is that he will do, and unknowing the mind of the foe, what can you decide that would be truly right to start upon? Therefore let one go hence, a man righteous, pure, well born and heedful, a fit envoy, for pacifying of Dhritarashtra's sons and the gift to Yudhisthere of half the kingdom."

Udyoga Parva

PASSAGES FROM ADHYAYAS 75 AND 72

But the mighty-armed Keshava when he heard these words of Bhema, packed with mildness, words such as those lips had never uttered before, laughing a little, — for it seemed to him like lightness in a mountain or in fire coldness, to him the Showrian, the brother of Rama, the wielder of the bow of horn, — thus he spake to Bhema even as he sat submerged with sudden pity, & woke the heat & flame of him with his words as wind the fire hearteneth.

* * *

But when Sanjaya had departed, thus spake the just king, Yudishthere, to the Dasarhan, the bull of all the Satvatas. “Now is that hour arrived of friends, O lover of thy friends; nor see I any but thee who may deliver us in calamity. For in thee reposing our trust fearlessly we challenge Dhritarashtra’s son with his councillors, knowing his arrogance to be but froth. For even as thou protectest the Vrishnis in all their calamities, so too the Pandavas claim thy guardian care; protect us from peril vast.”

Krishna sayeth. “Behold me, O great-armed, tell what thou hast to tell, since whatsoever thou sayest, O Bharata, I will do it utterly.”

The Bhagavad Gita

THE FIRST SIX CHAPTERS

Chapter I

DHRITARÂSHTRA

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 Pândav army marshalled in battle array, approached the Master and spoke this word.

“Behold, O Master, this mighty host of the sons of Pandou marshalled by Drupad's son, thy disciple deep of brain. There are heroes and great bowmen equal unto Bheme and Urjoona in war, Yuyudhân and Virâta and Drupad, the mighty car-warrior, Dhristakétou and Chékitâna and Kâshi's heroic king; and Purujit Coontybhôja and Shaivya, lion of men; and Yudhamanyu of mighty deeds, and hero Uttamoujas and Subhadra's son and the sons of Droupady, great warriors all. And they who are our chief and first, them also mark, O best of the twiceborn, — leaders of my army, for the reckoning let me speak their names, thou and Bheeshma and Curna, Cripa & Somitinjoy, Uswutthâman 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 Bheeshma guards the host; sufficient to its task is yonder strength of the foe & Bhema is their guard. Do ye then each stationed to his work stand up in all the gates of the war and Bheeshma, ever Bheeshma 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 warcry'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 and rushing sound arose. Then in their mighty car erect, their car with snowwhite steeds, Mâdhava &

the Pandove blew their divine shells, Hrishikesh on Pâñchajanya, on Dévadutta, godgiven, Dhanunjoy blew, and on his great shell from far Bengal blew Bhema Wolfbelly, the man of dreadful deeds, and on Anuntavijoy, boundless Conquest, Yudhis- there, the King, even Coonty's son, and Nacool & Sahodave on Sughosha Far-Sounding and Manipushpaca, Jewel-Flower. And Kâshi's King, that excellent bowman and Shikhandi, that great fighter and Dhristadyoumna and Virât and Sâtyaqy unconquered, and Drupad and the children of Droupady 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 & heaven reechoed with the clamour & the roar. Now as the Ape-bannered, the Pandove, saw the Dhritarashtrians at their warlike posts, so heaved he up his bow and even as the shafts began to fall spake to Hrishikésa this word, O King.

“Right in the midst between either host set thou my car, O unfallen. Let me scan these who stand arrayed & 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 dear will of Dhritarashtra's witless son.”

Thus, O Bharata, to Hrishikésa Gudakésa said, who set in the midst between either army the noble car, in front of Bheeshma 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 & uncles & brothers & sons and grandsons and dear comrades and fathers of wives and hearts' friends, all in either battle opposed. There when the son of Coonty beheld all these dear friends & kindred facing each other in fight, 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, my brain whirls and evil omens, O Késhove,

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 their 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 Madhusudan, 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 Janardana? Sin, sin alone would find lodging in us, if we slew these though our adversaries & foes. Therefore we do not right to slay the children of Dhritarashtra and their friends, for how can we be happy, O Madhove, if we slay our kin? Even though these see not, for their hearts are swept away by greed, error done in the ruin of one's 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 Janardan, for error done in the ruin of our house? When the family dwindles, 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 their race and the race itself to very hell; for the long line of fathers perishes and the food ceases and the water is given no more. By these their 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 righteousnesses of the race, in hell an eternal habitation is set apart, 'tis told. Alas a dreadful sin have we set ourselves to do, that from greed of lordship and pleasure we have made ready 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 & 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 II

SUNJOY

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 & the stress, O Urjoona, this weakness unheavenly, inglorious, beloved of unAryan minds? Fall not into coward impotence, O Partha; not on thee does that sit well; fling from thee the miserable weakness of thy heart; arise, O scourger of thy foes.

URJOONA

How shall I combat Bheeshma 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 & bliss when I slay these; bloodstained 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 face us in the foeman's van, they are Dhritarashtrians. 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.

SUNJOY

Thus Gudakésha to Hrishikésha; the scourger of his foes 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 & said:

KRISHNA

Thou grieveest for whom thou shouldst not grieve and yet speak-est 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 all 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 & 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 seed of Bharat. 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 He 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 & new raiment, so the embodied Spirit casteth away its worn out bodies and goeth to other & new casings. Him the sword cleaveth not, Him the fire cannot burn, Him water wetteth not and the hot wind withereth not away; indivisible, unconsumable, unmergible, unwitherable is He. He is for ever & 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 ever born or

ever dying, 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 thine own being, thou oughtest not to tremble, for than battle in a just cause the Kshatriya knows no greater bliss. Happy are the Kshatriyas, O Partha, who win such a battle to their portion; 'tis as though one came past by chance and found the door of Paradise open. Now if thou wilt not wage this just & 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 has 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 illwishers will speak of thee many unutterable words, disparaging thy might and thy greatness, than which there is no worse bitterness under the skies. Slain thou shalt conquer heaven, victorious thou shalt enjoy earth for thy kingdom, therefore, 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 victory & defeat, then gird thyself to the combat; sin shall not touch thee then.

Thus hath been declared to thee the mind that dwells in the way of Sankhya, hearken now to that which dwells in Yoga, to which being wedded thou shalt cast from thee, O Partha, action's binding chain. In this path no step once taken is lost, in this path thou shalt meet with no stumblingblock; 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 manybranching 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 word that giveth but the fruit of life's actions and is crowded with multifold ritual, aiming only at splendour & enjoyment & lordship, lo it hurrieth away his heart and causeth it to cling to lordship and pleasure and his mind is unfixed to God and cannot set itself on the rock of concentration. 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 a 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 in Yoga, awaiting success and failure with an equal heart; for 'tis such equipoise of the soul that is Yoga indeed. For far lower is action than Yoga of the Super-Mind; in the Super-Mind desire thy refuge; for this is a mean and pitiful thing that a man should work for success and rewards. The man whose Super-Mind is in Yoga casteth from him even in this world both righteousness and sin; therefore to Yoga gird thy soul; when thou doest 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 the sphere where suffering is not, neither any disease. When thy soul shall have voyaged to the other shore over the Chaos 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 Késhove, of him who is in Samadhi, he whose thought standeth on the settled understanding, what speaketh he and 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 is it said of him that the Reason hath taken his seat. He whose soul is not shaken in sorrows and in happiness hungereth not after their delight, he to whom fear and liking and wrath are forgotten things, he is the Sage the 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 a 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 Godseeking, though he have the soul that discerneth, they seize upon even his mind and ravish it violently away. Let a man 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 & passion are born; and passion's child is wrath; but out of wrath cometh delusion & disturbance of the brain and from delusion cometh confusion of the recording mind and when memory falleth and 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 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 along 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 only 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 & liveth; that in which all creatures wake & live, is night to the eyes of the seer. The waters enter into the vast, full & 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 casts 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 Godstate, 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 III

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 deed dire & fearful? '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 hero; the devotion of the men of Sankhya 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 mere 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 a hypocrite, but he 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 the 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 Coonty, with a mind free from the yoke of attachment. For with Sacrifice as their companion the Father, of old, created all these peoples 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 you 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 those 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 & ease are in the senses, O son of Pritha, liveth his life in vain. But for the man whose whole pleasure is in the Self and who satisfies his longing with the Self, yea who is content utterly with the Self, 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 or 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 Junac 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 her inevitable working, but the Spirit of man is deceived by the sense of separate existence and he sayeth 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. Most men are deceived by the modes of Nature, cling to the workings of these modes; these dull brains, these imperfect knowers, let not the perfect knower cause to swerve and stumble. Repose 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 & without carping follow ever 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 & every sense love and hate are there & 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 thy own life ill done than 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 Varshnéyan, as if forced to it by very violence?

KRISHNA

It is craving, it is wrath, the child of Rajoguna, Mode of Passion. Know him for the Fiend, the Enemy of man’s soul here upon

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 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 Bharats, 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 & 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 IV

KRISHNA

This Yoga I declared to Vivasvân, the Yoga that cannot perish; Vivasvân told it to Manu, Manu to Ixvaacou 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 ancient Yoga that I today have declared to thee because thou art my worshipper and lover and friend, for 'tis the noblest mystery of all.

URJOONA

Of these latter times is thy birth, O Krishna, of the high ancient time was the birth of Vivasvân; 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 & 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 from age to age. He who in this sort knoweth aright my divine birth and works, cometh not to rebirth 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 they made themselves holy by the austere energisms of knowledge, and became 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 in 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 fruit; he who really knows 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 that were done in old time 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 miswork 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 & undertaketh, and his works have been burned up in the fires of Knowledge, then it is he that the wise call the truly learned. He hath relinquished attachment to the fruit of his works, 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 has surrendered all sense of belonging, doing actions only with his body he receives no stain of sin: — well-content with the gains that chance & time may bring him, lifted above the plane of the dualities, void of jealousy, receiving success & failure alike as friends, though he do works, yet is he not bound by them: — leaving all heart clings behind him, a spirit released, a mind safe in its tower of knowledge, performing works for a sacrifice, all his works are swallowed up & vanish.

Brahman is his giving and Brahman is his sacrifice, Brahman casteth Brahman into the fire that is Brahman, by Samadhi of his works in Brahman unto Brahman he goeth. 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.

And some offer the hearing and all the senses into the fires of selfmastery and some offer sound and the other things of sense into the fires of the senses. And others offer into the Yoga-fire of a controlled Spirit that knowledge hath kindled with her hands all the works of the senses and all the works of vital breathing. And some make the sacrifice of their goods and some make a sacrifice of austerity. Some offer up their Yoga as a sacrifice, others the knowledge of the Veda; 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 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 & 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 pass over into 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 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, therefore in Me. Yea wert thou the vilest and most lewd in sin of all sinners, yet shouldest thou pass over to the other shore of Perversity in the ship of the Knowledge. 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 selfdevoted who has bridled

his senses, he wins 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 that 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, the child of Ignorance, lay fast hold upon Yoga, arise, O seed of Bharat.

Chapter V

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 to leave no doubt behind.

KRISHNA

Renunciation of works or Yoga in works, both of these 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 Sunnyasin, who neither hates nor desires aught, for the mind that rises above the dualities, O strong of arm, is easily and happily released from bondage. It is children who talk of Sankhya & Yoga as distinct & different, 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 without Yoga, O great of arm, renunciation is very difficult to arrive at and the sage that hath Yoga travelleth very swiftly 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 to it, "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 on his soul even as water on the leaf of a lotus. With their body, mind and understanding self and with the 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 falls 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 ninegated 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 & taketh its course. The Lord taketh to himself the sin of none neither accepteth He the righteousness of any; but Wisdom is clouded over with Nescience and 'tis by this that these living beings fall into delusion. But on all of those who by Knowledge have destroyed the nescience of the Self, Wisdom riseth like the sun and lighteth up that Highest Self of All. Then they perceive Him alone and are Self of Him and to Him consecrated in faith and all for Him, and the revolving wheel clutches them not in any more, because wisdom hath 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, all these the wise regard with equal eyes. Even in this 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 He 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 pleasant, he groweth not troubled when he tasteth bitterness, whose reason is firm & steadfast and he subjecteth 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, he finds in the Self, therefore his Self is made one in Yoga with Eternal Brahman & the happiness he tastes, does not cease or diminish. 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 hath Yoga, he is the happy man. That man is the Yogin whose bliss is within and his delight & ease are inward and an inner light illumines him & not this outer sun; he goeth to cessation

in Eternal Brahman, for he becometh Brahman. Cessation in Brahman falleth to those who are Rishis from whom all stain & darkness have faded away, who have cut doubt away from their hearts and are masters of Self, whose whole delight & work is to do good to all created things. Round the strivers after perfection, round the governed souls, who are delivered from the grip of wrath and desire, lo the Paradise of cessation in Brahman liveth all about them, who have got the knowledge of the Self within. He who shuts out the touches of outward things from his soul and concentrates sight between his eyebrows, making equal the outbreath and the inbreath as they move within the nostrils, master of his sense and mind and reason who utterly desireth salvation and 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 sacrifices and austerities, a mighty God who is the friend of every created thing, and knowing he travels to the Peace.

Chapter VI

KRISHNA

Who doeth the works he hath to do but dependeth [not] on the fruit of his works, he is the Sunnyasin and he is the Yogin and not he who lighteth not the daily fire and doeth not the daily ritual. Know this, O Pandava, that the thing which men call renunciation is nothing but Yoga, since no man becometh 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 hilltops. 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 Sunnyasin, that is the sitter on the hilltop of Yoga. Let a man deliver his soul by its own strength & let him not afflict his spirit to weaken it; for a man's self is its own & only friend and its own & only enemy. To that man his self is a friend who has conquered self by the Self, but when he is not in touch with 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 & cold, pleasure or pain, imperturbable in honour & disgrace. The Yogi whose soul is satisfied with wisdom and discernment, the immovable sitter on his hilltop and victor over his senses, is called the Yogin who hath the Yoga; and gold and gravel, sand or stone is all to him one substance. He who hath one heart for his lover and his friend and foeman and those who care not for him, who stand midway between liking & hating, for men he should love and men he should hate, yea & even his soul maketh no difference between the saint & the sinner, he is the truly great among men.

In a silent place let the Yogin gird his self to Yoga, solitary, governed in heart & spirit, devote his soul continually without desires, without the sense of belongings. In a pure & holy region let him set up his steady & unchanging seat, neither very high nor very low, with grass of cusha spread and a deerskin thereon,

and on that a robe. There with his mind directed to one point, with a rein on the workings of his heart & 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 & neck & body in one line & motionless and he shall keep his gaze fixed on the joining-place of his nostrils so that his eyes shall not wander over the regions; so steadfast in the vow of abstinence & purity with a glad & 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. Ever if he yoke himself so to Yoga with a governed heart, the Yogin reacheth that Peace in Me which is entire quietude. Yoga is not for the overeater neither can a man get Yoga by abstaining utterly from food, nor is it for him that is overgiven to sleep nor can one get it by waking always. But when a man eateth his food & giveth his pleasures to God and all his striving in his works & his sleep is for Him & his waking is for Him, Yoga cometh to that man [and] slayeth his sorrows. When the mind is wholly under government & stands well contained 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. That wherein the conscious heart ceaseth & is blocked in from its workings by constancy in the practice of Yoga, that wherein by the strength of the self the mind of man seeth the Self and is wholly satisfied in the Self, — where this inward Spirit knoweth that extreme & exceeding happiness which is beyond the reach of the senses & which the reason cannot grasp, and it cleaveth to it & moveth not from the truth of things, — that which when a man has won he cannot conceive of any greater gain, to which when he holds he is not moved therefrom even by the most sore poignant grief, that know 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 despond. He must abandon all the longings that are born of the imaginations of the Will nor keep

one back for his comfort, he must surround with his mind & force in from their delight the cohort of the senses; so with the understanding self held well within the grasp of Strong-Control he must cabin in the mind into the self and think of nothing at all. Whenever & to whatever side darts away the infirm & restless mind, thou must curb it from its journey to bring it back within the Self & in the Self 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 who ever 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 & 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 a Yogin becometh one with all beings & loveth Me in all creatures, though he live & move in all manner of activities, he liveth & 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 were his own self whether it be for happiness or whether it be for pain.

URJOONA

Nay, O Madhusudan, for the restlessness of man's mind I can see no sure abiding in this Yoga of oneheartedness 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 & hard to bridle, but by askesis, O son of Coonty, and by the turning away of the heart from its affections it can be caught & controlled. Very difficult of attainment is Yoga to the ungoverned spirit, so I hold, but when a man governeth himself & striveth by the right means Yoga is not impossible to attain.

URJOONA

When a man hath faith but cannot strive aright & his mind swerveth from Yoga and he attaineth not to success in Yoga, what is the last state of such a man, O Krishna? Doth he lose both this world & that other, doth 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

Partha, neither in this world nor in the other is there for that man any perdition; no man 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 men, in a family 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 & 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 men 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 to have most Yoga him who with his inner Self taking refuge in Me hath faith in Me & loveth Me & worshippeth.

APPENDIX I

Opening of Chapter VII

KRISHNA

When thou hast cloven to me with thy whole self, O Partha, taking refuge in me & practising Yoga, hearken how then thou shalt know me without doubt and without imperfection. For I will declare to thee without reserve the whole result of Philosophy & Science which when thou hast known there is nought else that is left to be known in this existence. Among many thousands of men hardly one striveth after perfection and of those even that strive & are spiritually whole, hardly one knoweth me without misprision.

APPENDIX II

A Later Translation of the Opening of the Gita

DHRITARASHTRA

In the sacred field, the field of the Kurus met together with will
to battle what did my people and the people of the Pandavas, O
Sunjaya?

SUNJAYA

When Duryodhana the King saw marshalled the Pandava host,
he approached the Teacher and spoke this word.

“Behold, O Teacher, this mighty army of the sons of Pandu
marshalled by Drupad’s son, thy disciple wise of brain.

Here are heroes, mighty bowmen, equals of Bhima and
Arjuna in the fight

Vidula

Vidula

This poem is based on a passage comprising four chapters (Adhyayas) in the Udyog-parva of the Mahabharat. 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.

I

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 heart 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 fieldmouse 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 firebrand 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 unswings,
 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 innumerable haste,
 And his life indeed is counted, for he reaps the earth with deeds
 And on friend and foe 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.

II

“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,
 Regions 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.

¹ “Sunjoy”, Sanskrit *sañjaya*, means “victory”.

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,
 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
Wreath 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 —

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, cessions 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."
 Out he rushed to desperate battle burning in his pride and might,
 As a noble warhorse 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.

Section Three

Kalidasa

Vikramorvasie
or
The Hero and the Nymph

Characters

PURURAVAS, son of Budha and Ila, grandson of the Moon, King of the world, reigning at Pratisthana.

MANAVAKA, a Brahmin, the King's jester and companion.

LATAVYA, Chamberlain of the King's seraglio.

CHITRARATH, King of the Gandharvas, musicians of Heaven.

GALAVA }
PELAVA } disciples of Bharat, Preceptor of the Arts in Heaven.

AYUS, son of Pururavas.

CHARIOTEER of Pururavas.

THE QUEEN AUSHINARIE, wife of Pururavas and daughter of the King of Kashi.

URVASIE, an Apsara or Nymph of Heaven, born from the thigh of Narayan.

NIPUNIKA, the Queen's handmaid.

CHITRALEKHA }
SAHAJANYA }
RAMBHA }
MENAKA } Nymphs of Heaven, companions of Urvsie.

SATYAVATIE, a hermitess.

A HUNTRESS.

GIRLS, attendant on the King; AMAZONS.

Act I

INVOCATION

He in Vedanta by the Wise pronounced
Sole Being, who the upper and under world
Pervading overpasses, whom alone
The name of God describes, here applicable
And pregnant — crippled else of force, to others
Perverted — and the Yogins who aspire
To rise above the human death, break in
Breath, soul and senses passionately seeking
The Immutable, and in their own hearts find, —
He, easily by work and faith and love
Attainable, ordain your heavenly weal.

After the invocation the Actor-Manager speaks.

MANAGER

No need of many words.

He speaks into the greenroom.

Hither, good friend.

The Assistant-Manager enters.

ASSISTANT

Behold me.

MANAGER

Often has the audience seen
Old dramas by our earlier poets staged;
Therefore today a piece as yet unknown
I will present them, Vikram and the Nymph.
Remind our actors then most heedfully
To con their parts, as if on each success
Depended.

ASSISTANT

I shall do so.

He goes.

MANAGER

And now to you,
O noble audience, I bow down and pray,
If not from kindliness to us your friends
And caterers, yet from pride in the high name
That graces this our plot, heedful attention,
Gentles, to Vikramorvasie, the work
Of Kalidasa.

VOICES

Help! O help, help, help!
Whoever is on the side of Heaven, whoever
Has passage through the paths of level air.

MANAGER

What cry is this that breaks upon our prologue
From upper worlds, most like the wail distressed
Of ospreys, sad but sweet as moan of bees
Drunken with honey in deep summer bloom,
Or the low cry of distant cuckoo? or hear I
Women who move on Heaven's azure stage
Splendid with rows of seated Gods, and chant
In airy syllables a liquid sweetness?

(after some thought)

Ah, now I have it. She who from the thigh
Of the great tempted sage Narayan sprang
Radiant, Heaven's nymph, divinest Urvasie,
In middle air from great Coilasa's lord
Returning, to the enemies of Heaven
Is prisoner; therefore the sweet multitude
Of Apsaras send forth melodious cry
Of pathos and complaint.

He goes.

*The Nymphs of Heaven enter, Rambha, Menaka,
Sahajanya and many others.*

NYMPHS

Help, help, O help!

Whoever is on the side of Heaven, whoever
Has passage through the paths of level air.

*Pururavas enters suddenly and with speed
in a chariot with his charioteer.*

PURURAVAS

Enough of lamentation! I am here,
Ilian Pururavas, from grandiose worship
In Surya's brilliant house returned. To me,
O women! say 'gainst what ye cry for rescue.

RAMBHA

Rescue from Titan violence, O King.

PURURAVAS

And what has Titan violence to you
Immortal done of fault, O Heaven's women?

MENAKA

King, hear us.

PURURAVAS

Speak.

MENAKA

Our sister, our dear sister!

The ornament of Eden and its joy!
Whom Indra by asceticism alarmed
Made use of like a lovely sword to kill
Spiritual longings, the eternal refutation
Of Luxmie's pride of beauty, Urvasie!
Returning from Cuvera's halls, O she

Was met, was taken. Cayshy, that dire Titan,
Who in Hiranyapoor exalts his house,
Beheld her and in great captivating hands
Ravished, Chitrlekha and Urvasie.
We saw them captive haled.

PURURAVAS

What region of the air received that traitor?

SAHAJANYA

North-east he fled.

PURURAVAS

Therefore expel dismay.
I go to bring you back your loved one, if
Attempt can do it.

RAMBHA

O worthy this of thee!
O from the Lunar splendour truly sprung!

PURURAVAS

Where will you wait my advent, nymphs of Heaven?

Nymphs

Upon this summit called the Peak of Gold,
O King, we shall expect thee.

PURURAVAS

Charioteer,
Urge on my horses to the far north-east;
Gallop through Heaven like the wind.

CHARIOTEER

'Tis done.

PURURAVAS

O nobly driven! With speed like this I could
 O’ertake Heaven’s eagle though he fled before me
 With tempest in his vans. How much more then
 This proud transgressor against Heaven’s King!
 Look, charioteer, beneath my sudden car
 The crumbling thunder-clouds fly up like dust,
 And the wheel’s desperate rotation seems
 To make another set of whirling spokes.
 The plumes upon the horses’ heads rise tall,
 Motionless like a picture, and the wind
 Of our tremendous speed has made the flag
 From staff to airborne end straight as if pointing.

They go out in their chariot.

RAMBHA

Sisters, the King is gone. Direct we then
 Our steps to the appointed summit.

MENAKA

Hasten,

O hasten.

ALL

Hasten, O hasten, come, come, come.

They ascend the hill.

RAMBHA

And O, will he indeed avail to draw
 This stab out of our hearts?

MENAKA

Doubt it not, Rambha.

RAMBHA

No, Menaka, for not so easily
 Are Titans overthrown, my sister.

MENAKA

Rambha,

Remember this is he whom Heaven's King,
When battle raised its dreadful face, has called
With honour from the middle world of men,
Set in his armèd van, and conquered.

RAMBHA

Here too

I hope that he will conquer.

SAHAJANYA

Joy, sisters, joy!

Look where the chariot of the moon appears,
The Ilian's great deer-banner rushing up
From the horizon. He would not return
With empty hands, sisters. We can rejoice.

*All gaze upwards. Pururavas enters in his chariot
with his charioteer; Urvasie, her eyes closed in terror,
supported on the right arm of Chitraklekha.*

CHITRALEKHA

Courage, sweet sister, courage.

PURURAVAS

O thou too lovely!

Recall thy soul. The enemies of Heaven
Can injure thee no more; that danger's over.
The Thunderer's puissance still pervades the worlds.
O then uplift these long and lustrous eyes
Like sapphire lilies in a pool when dawn
Comes smiling.

CHITRALEKHA

Why does she not yet, alas!

Recover her sweet reason? Only her sighs
Remind us she is living.

PURURAVAS

Too rudely, lady,
Has thy sweet sister been alarmed. For look!
What tremblings of the heart are here revealed.
Watch the quick rise and fall incessantly
That lift between these large magnificent breasts
The flowers of Eden.

CHITRALEKHA

Sister, O put by
This panic. Fie! thou art no Apsara.

PURURAVAS

Terror will not give up his envied seat
On her luxurious bosom soft as flowers;
The tremors in her raiment's edge and little
Heavings and flutterings between her two breasts
Confess him.

Urvasie begins to recover.

(with joy)

Thou art fortunate, Chitralekha!
Thy sister to her own bright nature comes
Once more. So have I seen a glorious night
Delivered out of darkness by the moon,
Nocturnal fire break through with crests of brightness
Its prison of dim smoke. Her beauty, waking
From swoon and almost rescued, to my thoughts
Brings Ganges as I saw her once o'erwhelmed
With roar and ruin of her banks, race wild,
Thickening, then gradually from that turmoil
Grow clear, emerging into golden calm.

CHITRALEKHA

Be glad, my sister, O my Urvasie.
For vanquished are the accursèd Titans, foes
Of the Divine, antagonists of Heaven.

URVASIE (*opening her eyes*)
 Vanquished? By Indra then whose soul can see
 Across the world.

CHITRALEKHA
 Not Indra, but this King
 Whose puissance equals Indra.

URVASIE (*looking at Pururavas*)
 O Titans,
 You did me kindness!

PURURAVAS (*gazing at Urvasie*)
 And reason if the nymphs
 Tempting Narayan Sage drew back ashamed
 When they beheld this wonder from his thigh
 Starting. And yet I cannot think of her
 Created by a withered hermit cold:
 But rather in the process beautiful
 Of her creation Heaven's enchanting moon
 Took the Creator's place, or very Love
 Grown all one amorousness, or else the month
 Of honey and its days deep-mined with bloom.
 How could an aged anchoret, dull and stale
 With poring over Scripture and oblivious
 To all this rapture of the senses, build
 A thing so lovely?

URVASIE
 O my Chitrlekha,
 Our sisters?

CHITRALEKHA
 This great prince who slew our fear
 Can tell us.

PURURAVAS

Sad of heart they wait, O beauty!
For with thy sweet ineffugable eyes
Who only once was blessed, even he without thee
Cannot abstain from pining. How then these
Original affections sister-sweet
Rooted in thee?

URVASIE

How courteous is his tongue
And full of noble kindness! Yet what wonder?
Nectar is natural to the moon. O prince,
My heart's in haste to see once more my loved ones.

PURURAVAS

Lo, where upon the Peak of Gold they stand
Gazing towards thy face, and with such eyes
Of rapture as when men behold the moon
Emerging from eclipse.

CHITRALEKHA

O sister, see!

URVASIE (*looking longingly at the King*)

I do and drink in with my eyes my partner
Of grief and pleasure.

CHITRALEKHA (*with a smile; significantly*)

Sister, who is he?

URVASIE

He? Oh! Rambha I meant and all our friends.

RAMBHA

He comes with victory. Urvsie's beside him
And Chitrakleha. Now indeed this King
Looks glorious like the moon, when near the twin

Bright asterisms that frame best his light.

MENAKA

In both ways are we blest, our lost dear one
Brought back to us, this noble King returned
Unwounded.

SAHAJANYA

Sister, true. Not easily
Are Titans conquered.

PURURAVAS

Charioteer, descend.
We have arrived the summit.

CHARIOTEER

As the King
Commands.

PURURAVAS

O I am blest in this descent
Upon unevenness. O happy shock
That threw her great hips towards me. All her sweet shoulder
Pressed mine that thrilled and passioned to the touch.

URVASIE (*abashed*)

Move yet a little farther to your side,
Sister.

CHITRALEKHA (*smiling*)

I cannot; there's no room.

RAMBHA

Sisters,
This prince has helped us all. 'Twere only grateful
Should we descend and greet him.

ALL

Let us do it.

They all approach.

PURURAVAS

Stay, charioteer, the rush of hooves that she
Marrying her sweet-browed eagerness with these
May, mingling with their passionate bosoms, clasp
Her dearest, like the glory and bloom of spring
Hastening into the open arms of trees.

NYMPHS

Hail to the King felicitous who comes
With conquest in his wheels.

PURURAVAS

To you, O nymphs,
As fortunate in your sister's rescued arms.

*Urvasie descends from the chariot
supported on Chitralekha's arm.*

URVASIE

O sisters, sisters, take me to your bosoms.

All rush upon her and embrace her.

Closer, O closer! hurt me with your breasts!
I never hoped to see again your sweet
Familiar faces.

RAMBHA

Protect a million ages,
Monarch, all continents and every sea!

Noise within.

CHARIOTEER

My lord, I hear a rumour in the east
And mighty speed of chariots. Lo, one bright
With golden armlet, looming down from Heaven

Like a huge cloud with lightning on its wrist,
Streams towards us.

NYMPHS

Chitrarath! 'tis Chitrarath.

CHITRARATH (*approaches the King with great respect*)

Hail to the Indra-helper! Fortunate
Pururavas, whose prowess is so ample,
Heaven's King has grown its debtor.

PURURAVAS

The Gandharva!

Welcome, my bosom's friend.

They clasp each other's hands.
What happy cause

Of coming?

CHITRARATH

Indra had heard from Narad's lips
Of Urvashie by Titan Cayshy haled.
He bade us to her rescue. We midway
Heard heavenly bards chanting thy victory,
And hitherward have turned our march. On, friend,
With us to Maghavan and bear before thee
This lovely offering. Great thy service done
To Heaven's high King; for she who was of old
Narayan's chief munificence to Indra,
Is now thy gift, Pururavas. Thy arm
Has torn her from a Titan's grasp.

PURURAVAS

Comrade,

Never repeat it; for if we who are
On Heaven's side, o'erpower the foes of Heaven,
'Tis Indra's puissance, not our own. Does not
The echo of the lion's dangerous roar

Reverberating through the mountain glens
Scatter with sound the elephants? We, O friend,
Are even such echoes.

CHITRARATH

 This fits with thy great nature,
For modesty was ever valour's crown.

PURURAVAS

Not now nor hence is't seasonable for me,
Comrade, to meet the King of Sacrifice.
Thou, therefore, to the mighty presence lead
This beauty.

CHITRARATH

 As thou wilt. With me to Heaven!

URVASIE (*aside to Chitrlekha*)

I have no courage to address my saviour.
Sister, wilt be my voice to him?

CHITRALEKHA (*approaching Pururavas*)

 My lord,

Urvsie thus petitions —

PURURAVAS

 What commands

The lady?

CHITRALEKHA

 She would have thy gracious leave
To bear into her far immortal heavens
The glory of the great Pururavas
And dwell with it as with a sister.

PURURAVAS (*sorrowfully*)

 Go then;

But go for longer meeting.

*The Gandharvas and Nymphs
soar up into the sky.*

URVASIE

Sister, stay!

My chain is in this creeper caught. Release it.

CHITRALEKHA (*looking at the King with a smile*)

Oh, yes, indeed, a sad entanglement!

I fear you will not easily be loosed.

URVASIE

Do not mock me, sister. Pray you, untwine it.

CHITRALEKHA

Come, let me try. I'll do my possible

To help you.

She busies herself with the chain.

URVASIE (*smiling*)

Sister, think what thou hast promised

Even afterwards.

PURURAVAS (*aside*)

Creeper, thou dost me friendship;

Thou for one moment holdest from the skies

Her feet desirable. O lids of beauty!

O vision of her half-averted face!

*Urvsie, released, looks at the King, then with a sigh
at her sisters soaring up into the sky.*

CHARIOTEER

O King, thy shaft with the wild voice of storm

Has hurled the Titans in the salt far sea,

Avenging injured Heaven, and now creeps back

Into the quiver, like a mighty snake

Seeking its lair.

PURURAVAS

Therefore bring near the chariot,
While I ascend.

CHARIOTEER

'Tis done.

The King mounts the chariot.

PURURAVAS

Shake loose the reins.

URVASIE (*gazing at the King, with a sigh, aside*)

My benefactor! my deliverer!
Shall I not see thee more?

She goes out with Chitrlekha.

PURURAVAS (*looking after Urvashie*)

O Love! O Love!

Thou mak'st men hot for things impossible
And mad for dreams. She soars up to the heavens,
Her father's middle stride, and draws my heart
By force out of my bosom. It goes with her,
Bleeding, as when a wild swan through the sky
Wings far her flight, there dangles in her beak
A dripping fibre from the lotus torn.

They go.

Act II

Scene. — *Park of the King's palace in Pratisthana. — In the background the wings of a great building, near it the gates of the park, near the bounds of the park an arbour and a small artificial hill to the side.*

Manavaka enters.

MANAVAKA

Houp! Houp! I feel like a Brahmin who has had an invitation to dinner; he thinks dinner, talks dinner, looks dinner, his very sneeze has the music of the dinner-bell in it. I am simply bursting with the King's secret. I shall never manage to hold my tongue in that crowd. Solitude's my only safety. So until my friend gets up from the session of affairs, I will wait for him in this precinct of the House of Terraces.

Nipunika enters.

NIPUNIKA

I am bidden by my lady the King's daughter of Kashi, "Nipunika, since my lord came back from doing homage to the Sun, he has had no heart for anything. So just go and learn from his dear friend, the noble Manavaka, what is disturbing his mind." Well and good! but how shall I overreach that rogue, — a Brahmin he calls himself, with the murrain to him! But there! thank Heaven, he can't keep a secret long; 'tis like a dewdrop on a rare blade of grass. Well, I must hunt him out. O! there stands the noble Manavaka, silent and sad like a monkey in a picture. I will accost him. (*approaching*) Salutation to the noble Manavaka!

MANAVAKA

Blessing to your ladyship! (*aside*) Ugh, the very sight of this little

rogue of a tiring-woman makes the secret jump at my throat. I shall burst! I shall split! Nipunika, why have you left the singing lesson and where are you off to?

NIPUNIKA

To see my lord the King, by my lady's orders.

MANAVAKA

What are her orders?

NIPUNIKA

Noble sir, this is the Queen's message. "My lord has always been kind and indulgent to me, so that I have become a stranger to grief. He never before disregarded my sorrow" —

MANAVAKA

How? how? has my friend offended her in any way?

NIPUNIKA

Offended? Why, he addressed my lady by the name of a girl for whom he is pining.

MANAVAKA (*aside*)

What, he has let out his own secret? Then why am I agonizing here in vain? (*aloud*) He called her Urvasie?

NIPUNIKA

Yes. Noble Manavaka, who is that Urvasie?

MANAVAKA

Urvasie is the name of a certain Apsara. The sight of her has sent the King mad. He is not only tormenting the life out of my lady, but out of me too with his aversion to everything but moaning.

NIPUNIKA (*aside*)

So! I have stormed the citadel of my master's secret. (*aloud*) What am I to say to the Queen?

MANAVAKA

Nipunika, tell my lady with my humble regards that I am endeavouring my best to divert my friend from this mirage and I will not see her ladyship till it is done.

NIPUNIKA

As your honour commands.

She goes.

BARDS (*within*)

Victory, victory to the King!
The Sun in Heaven for ever labours; wide
His beams dispel the darkness to the verge
Of all this brilliant world. The King too toils,
Rescuing from night and misery and crime
His people. Equal power to these is given
And labour, the King on earth, the Sun in Heaven.

The brilliant Sun in Heaven rests not from toil;
Only at high noon in the middle cusp
And azure vault the great wheels slacken speed
A moment, then resume their way; thou too
In the mid-moment of daylight lay down
Thy care, put by the burden of a crown.

MANAVAKA

Here's my dear friend risen from the session. I will join him.

He goes out, then re-enters with Pururavas.

PURURAVAS (*sighing*)

No sooner seen than in my heart she leaped.
O easy entrance! since the bannered Love
With his unerring shaft had made the breach
Where she came burning in.

MANAVAKA (*aside*)

Alas the poor
King's daughter of Kashi!

PURURAVAS (*looking steadfastly at him*)

Hast thou kept thy trust, —
My secret?

MANAVAKA (*depressed*)

Ah! that daughter of a slave
Has overreached me. Else he would not ask
In just that manner.

PURURAVAS (*alarmed*)

What now? Silence?

MANAVAKA

Why, sir,
It's this, I've padlocked so my tongue that even
To you I could not give a sudden answer.

PURURAVAS

'Tis well. O how shall I beguile desire?

MANAVAKA

Let's to the kitchen.

PURURAVAS

Why, what's there?

MANAVAKA

What's there?
The question! From all quarters gathered in
Succulent sweets and fivefold eatableness,
Music from saucepan and from frying-pan,
The beauty of dinner getting ready. There's
A sweet beguiler to your emptiness!

PURURAVAS (*smiling*)

For you whose heart is in your stomach. I
Am not so readily eased who fixed my soul
Upon what I shall hardly win.

MANAVAKA

Not win?

Why, tell me, came you not within her sight?

PURURAVAS

What comfort is in that?

MANAVAKA

When she has seen you,

How is she hard to win?

PURURAVAS

O your affection

Utters mere partiality.

MANAVAKA

You make me

Desperate to see her. Why, sir, she must be
A nonpareil of grace. Like me perhaps?

PURURAVAS

Who could with words describe each perfect limb
Of that celestial whole? Take her in brief,
O friend, for she is ornament's ornament,
And jewels cannot make her beautiful.
They from her body get their grace. And when
You search the universe for similes,
Her greater beauty drives you to express
Fair things by her, not her by lesser fairness:
So she's perfection's model.

MANAVAKA

No wonder then,
With such a shower of beauty, that you play
The rainbird open-mouthed to let drops glide
Graciously down his own particular gullet.
But whither now?

PURURAVAS

When love grows large with yearning,
He has no sanctuary but solitude.
I pray you, go before me to the park.

MANAVAKA (*aside*)

Oh God, my dinner! There's no help. (*aloud*) This way.
Lo, here the park's green limit. See, my lord,
How this fair garden sends his wooing breeze
To meet his royal guest.

PURURAVAS

O epithet
Most apt. Indeed this zephyr in fond arms
Impregnating with honey spring-creeper
And flattering with his kiss the white May-bloom,
Seems to me like a lover girl-divided
Between affection smooth and eager passion.

MANAVAKA

May like division bless your yearning, sir.
We reach the garden's gate. Enter, my lord.

PURURAVAS

Enter thou first. O! I was blindly sanguine,
By refuge in this flowery solitude
Who thought to heal my pain. As well might swimmer
Hurled onward in a river's violent hands
Oppose that roaring tide, as I make speed
Hither for my relief.

MANAVAKA

And wherefore so?

PURURAVAS

Was passion not enough to torture me,
Still racking the resistless mind with thoughts
Of unattainable delight? But I
Must add the mango-trees' soft opening buds,
And hurt myself with pallid drifting leaves,
And with the busy zephyr wound my soul.

MANAVAKA

Be not so full of grief. For Love himself
Will help you soon to your extreme desire.

PURURAVAS

I seize upon thy word, — the Brahmin's speech
That never can be false!

MANAVAKA

See what a floral
Green loveliness expresses the descent
And rosy incarnation of the spring.
Do you not find it lovely?

PURURAVAS

Friend, I do.
I study it tree by tree and leaf by leaf.
This courbouc's like a woman's rosy nail,
But darkens to the edge; heavy with crimson,
Yon red asoka breaking out of bud
Seems all on fire; and here the cary mounting
Slight dust of pollen on his stamen-ends
Clusters with young sweet bloom. Methinks I see
The infant honeyed soul of spring, half-woman,
Grow warm with bud of youth.

Good, I will cogitate. Disturb me not
With your love-moanings.

PURURAVAS (*his right arm throbbing; aside*)

Her face of perfect moonlight
Is all too heavenly for my lips. How canst thou then
Throb expectation in my arm, O Love?
Yet all my heart is suddenly grown glad
As if it had heard the feet of my desire.

*He waits hopefully. There enter in the sky
Urvasie and Chitralekha.*

CHITRALEKHA

Will you not even tell me where we go?

URVASIE

Sister, when I upon the Peak of Gold
Was stayed from Heaven by the creeper's hands,
You mocked me then. And have you now to ask
Whither it is I go?

CHITRALEKHA

To seek the side
Of King Pururavas you journey then?

URVASIE

Even so shameless is your sister's mind.

CHITRALEKHA

Whom did you send before, what messenger
To him you love?

URVASIE

My heart.

CHITRALEKHA

O yet think well,
Sister; do not be rash.

URVASIE

Love sends me, Love
Compels me. How can I then think?

CHITRALEKHA

To that
I have no answer.

URVASIE

Then take me to him soon.
Only let not our way be such as lies
Within the let of hindrance.

CHITRALEKHA

Fear not that.
Has not the great Preceptor of the Gods
Taught us to wear the crest invincible?
While that is bound, not any he shall dare
Of all the Heaven-opposing faction stretch
An arm of outrage.

URVASIE (*abashed*)

Oh true! my heart forgot.

CHITRALEKHA

Look, sister! For in Ganges' gliding waves
Holier by influx of blue Yamuna,
The palace of the great Pururavas,
Crowning the city with its domes, looks down
As in a glass at its own mighty image.

URVASIE

All Eden to an earthly spot is bound.
But where is he who surely will commiserate
A pining heart?

CHITRALEKHA

This park which seems one country
 With Heaven, let us question. See, the King
 Expects thee, like the pale new-risen moon
 Waiting for moonlight.

URVASIE

How beautiful he is, —
 Fairer than when I saw him first!

CHITRALEKHA

'Tis true.
 Come, we will go to him.

URVASIE

I will not yet.
 Screened in with close invisibility,
 I will stand near him, learn what here he talks
 Sole with his friend.

CHITRALEKHA

You'll do your will always.

MANAVAKA

Courage! your difficult mistress may be caught,
 Two ways.

URVASIE (*jealously*)

O who is she, that happy she,
 Being wooed by such a lover, preens herself
 And is proud?

CHITRALEKHA

Why do you mock the ways of men
 And are a Goddess?

URVASIE

I dare not, sweet, I fear
To learn too suddenly my own misfortune,
If I use heavenly eyes.

MANAVAKA

Listen, you dreamer!
Are you deaf? I tell you I have found a way:

PURURAVAS

Speak on.

MANAVAKA

Woo sleep that marries men with dreams,
Or on a canvas paint in Urvsie
And gaze on her for ever.

URVASIE (*aside*)

O sinking coward heart, now, now revive.

PURURAVAS

And either is impossible. For look!
How can I, with this rankling wound of love,
Call to me sleep who marries men with dreams?
And if I paint the sweetness of her face,
Will not the tears, before it is half done,
Blurring my gaze with mist, blot the dear vision?

CHITRALEKHA

Heardst thou?

URVASIE

I have heard all. It was too little
For my vast greed of love.

MANAVAKA

Well, that's my stock

Of counsel.

PURURAVAS (*sighing*)

Oh me! she knows not my heart's pain,
Or knowing it, with those her heavenly eyes
Scorns my poor passion. Only the arrowed Love
Is gratified tormenting with her bosom
My sad, unsatisfied and pale desire.

CHITRALEKHA

Heardst thou, sister?

URVASIE

He must not think so of me!
I would make answer, sister, but to his face
I have not hardihood. Suffer me then,
To trust to faery birch-leaf mind-created
My longing.

CHITRALEKHA

It is well. Create and write.

*Urvsie writes in a passion of timidity and
excitement, then throws the leaf between
Pururavas and Manavaka.*

MANAVAKA

Murder! murder! I'm killed! I'm dead! help! help!
(*looking*)
What's this? a serpent's skin come down to eat me?

PURURAVAS (*looks closely and laughs*)

No serpent's slough, my friend, only a leaf
Of birch-tree with a scroll of writing traced on it.

MANAVAKA

Perhaps the invisible fair Urvsie
Heard you complain and answers.

PURURAVAS

To desire

Nothing can seem impossible.

*He takes the leaf and reads it
to himself, then with joy,*

O friend,

How happy was your guess!

MANAVAKA

I told you so.

The Brahmin's speech! Read, read! aloud, if it please you.

URVASIE (*aside*)

The Brahmin has his own urbanity!

PURURAVAS

Listen.

MANAVAKA

I am all ears.

PURURAVAS (*reading aloud*)

“My master and my King!

Were I what thy heart thinks and knows me not,
Scorning thy love, would then the soft-winged breeze
Of deathless gardens and the unfading flowers
That strew the beds of Paradise, to me
Feel fire!”

URVASIE

What will he say now?

CHITRALEKHA

What each limb,

That is a drooping lotus-stalk with love,
Has said already.

MANAVAKA

You're consoled, I hope?
 Don't tell me what you feel. I've felt the same
 When I've been hungry and one popped in on me
 With sweetmeats in a tray.

PURURAVAS

Consoled! a word
 How weak! I con this speaking of my sweet,
 This dear small sentence full of beautiful meaning,
 This gospel of her answering love, and feel
 Her mouth upon my mouth and her soft eyes
 Swimming and large gaze down into my own,
 And touch my lifted lids with hers.

URVASIE

O even

Such sweetness feels thy lover.

PURURAVAS

Friend, my finger
 Moistening might blot the lines. Do thou then hold
 This sweet handwriting of my love.

He gives the leaf to Manavaka.

MANAVAKA

But tell me.

Why does your mistress, having brought to bloom
 Your young desire, deny its perfect fruit?

URVASIE

O sister, my heart flutters at the thought
 Of going to my lord. While I cajole
 And strengthen the poor coward, show yourself,
 Go to him, tell him all that I may speak.

CHITRALEKHA

I will.

She becomes visible and approaches the King.

Hail, lord our King.

PURURAVAS (*joyfully*)

O welcome, welcome!

He looks around for Urvasie.

Yet, fair one, as the Yamuna not mixed
With Ganges, to the eye that saw their beauty
Of wedded waters, seems not all so fair,
So thou without thy sister givest not
That double delight.

CHITRALEKHA

First is the cloud's dim legion
Seen in the heavens; afterwards comes the lightning.

MANAVAKA (*aside*)

What! this is not the very Urvasie?
Only the favourite sister of that miracle?

PURURAVAS

Here sit down, fairest.

CHITRALEKHA

Let me first discharge
My duty. Urvasie by me bows down
Her face thus to her monarch's feet, imploring —

PURURAVAS

Rather commanding.

CHITRALEKHA

She whom in Titan hands
Afflicted thou didst pity, thou didst rescue,
Now needs much more thy pity, not by hands

Titan, but crueller violence of love
Oppressed, — the sight of thee her sudden cause.

PURURAVAS

O Chitralekha, her thou tellst me of
Passionate for me. Hast thou not eyes to know
Pururavas in anguish for her sake?
One prayer both pray to Kama, “Iron with iron
Melts in fierce heat; why not my love with me?”

CHITRALEKHA (*returning to Urvasie*)

Come, sister, to your lord. So much his need
Surpasses yours, I am his ambassador.

URVASIE (*becoming visible*)

How unexpectedly hast thou with ease
Forsook me!

CHITRALEKHA (*with a smile*)

In a moment I shall know
Who forsakes whom, sister. But come away
And give due greeting.

*Urvasie approaches the King fearfully and
bows down, then low and bashfully,*

URVASIE

Conquest to the King!

PURURAVAS

I conquer, love, indeed, when thy dear lips
Give greeting to me, vouchsafed to no mortal
But Indra only.

He takes her by both hands and makes her sit down.

MANAVAKA

I am a mighty Brahmin and the friend
Of all earth's lord. O'erlook me not entirely.

Urvasie smiles and bows to him.
Peace follow you and keep you.

MESSENGER OF THE GODS (*cries from within*)
Chitralekha, urge haste on Urvasie.
This day the wardens of the ancient worlds
And the great King of Heaven himself will witness
That piece where all the passions live and move,
Quickened to gracious gesture in the action
Deposed in you by Bharat Sage, O sisters.
All listen, Urvasie sorrowfully.

CHITRALEKHA
Thou hearst the Messenger of Heaven? Take leave,
Sweet, of the King.

URVASIE
I cannot speak!

CHITRALEKHA
My liege,
My sister not being lady of herself
Beseeches your indulgence. She would be
Without a fault before the Gods.

PURURAVAS (*articulating with difficulty*)
Alas!
I must not wish to hinder you when Heaven
Expects your service. Only do not forget
Pururavas.

*Urvasie goes with her sister, still looking
backwards towards the King.*
O she is gone! my eyes
Have now no cause for sight: they are worthless balls
Without an object.

MANAVAKA

Why, not utterly.

He is about to give the birch-leaf.

There's — Heavens! 'tis gone! it must have drifted down,
While I, being all amazed with Urvasie,
Noticed nothing.

PURURAVAS

What is it thou wouldst say?

There is — ?

MANAVAKA

No need to droop your limbs and pine.
Your Urvasie has to your breast been plucked
With cords of passion, knots that will not slacken
Strive as she may.

PURURAVAS

My soul tells me like comfort.
For as she went, not lady of her limbs
To yield their sweets to me for ever, yet
Her heart, which was her own, in one great sob
From twixt two trembling breasts shaken with sighs
Came panting out. I hear it throb within me.

MANAVAKA (*aside*)

Well, my heart's all a-twitter too. Each moment
I think he is going to mention the damned birch-leaf.

PURURAVAS

With what shall I persuade mine eyes to comfort?
The letter!

MANAVAKA (*searching*)

What! Hullo! It's gone! Come now,
It was no earthly leaf; it must have gone
Flying behind the skirts of Urvasie.

PURURAVAS (*bitterly, in vexation*)

Will you then never leave your idiot trick
Of carelessness? Search for it.

MANAVAKA (*getting up*)

Oh, well! well!

It can't be far. Why, here it is — or here — or here.

*While they search, the Queen enters, with
her attendants and Nipunika.*

AUSHINARIE

Now, maiden, is't true thou tellst me? Sawst thou really
My lord and Manavaka approach the arbour?

NIPUNIKA

I have not told my lady falsehood ever
That she should doubt me.

AUSHINARIE

Well, I will lurk thick-screened

With hanging creepers and surprise what he
Disburdens from his heart in his security.
So I shall know the truth.

NIPUNIKA (*sulkily*)

Well, as you please.

They advance.

AUSHINARIE (*looking ahead*)

What's yonder like a faded rag that lightly
The southern wind guides towards us?

NIPUNIKA

It is a birch-leaf.

There's writing on it; the letters, as it rolls,
Half show their dinted outlines. Look, it has caught
Just on your anklet's spike. I'll lift and read.

She disengages the leaf.

AUSHINARIE

Silently first peruse it; if 'tis nothing
Unfit for me to know, then I will hear.

NIPUNIKA

It is, oh, it must be that very scandal.
Verses they seem and penned by Urvasie,
And to my master. Manavaka's neglect
Has thrown it in our hands.

Laughs.

AUSHINARIE

Tell me the purport.

NIPUNIKA

I'll read the whole. "My master and my King!
Were I what thy heart thinks and knows me not,
Scorning thy love, would then the soft-winged breeze
Of deathless gardens and unfading flowers
That strew the beds of Paradise, to me
Feel fire!"

AUSHINARIE

So! by this dainty love-letter,
He is enamoured then, and of the nymph.

NIPUNIKA

It's plain enough.

They enter the arbour.

MANAVAKA

What's yonder to the wind
Enslaved, that flutters on the parkside rockery?

PURURAVAS (*rising*)

Wind of the south, thou darling of the Spring,
Seize rather on the flowery pollen stored
By months of fragrance, that gold dust of trees.
With this thou mightest perfume all thy wings.
How wilt thou profit, snatching from me, O wind,
My darling's dear handwriting, like a kiss
All love? When thou didst woo thine Anjana,
Surely thou knewest lovers' dying hearts
Are by a hundred little trifles kept,
All slight as this!

NIPUNIKA

See, mistress, see! A search
In progress for the leaf.

AUSHINARIE

Be still.

MANAVAKA

Alas!

I was misled with but a peacock's feather,
Faded, a saffron splendour of decay.

PURURAVAS

In every way I am undone.

AUSHINARIE (*approaching suddenly*)

My lord,

Be not so passionate; here is your dear letter.

PURURAVAS (*confused*)

The Queen! O welcome!

MANAVAKA (*aside*)

Ill come, if 'twere convenient

To tell the truth.

PURURAVAS (*aside*)

What shall I do now, friend,

Or say?

MANAVAKA (*aside*)

Much you will say! A thief red-handed
Caught with his swag!

PURURAVAS (*aside*)

Is this a time for jesting?

(*aloud*)

Madam, it was not this I sought but other,
A record of state, a paper that I dropped.

AUSHINARIE

Oh, you do well to hide your happiness.

MANAVAKA

My lady, hurry on His Majesty's dinner.
When bile accumulates, dinner does the trick.

AUSHINARIE

A noble consolation for his friend
The Brahmin finds! Heardst thou, Nipunika?

MANAVAKA

Why, madam, even a goblin is appeased
By dinner.

PURURAVAS

Fool! by force you'd prove me guilty.

AUSHINARIE

Not yours the guilt, my lord! I am in fault
Who force my hated and unwelcome face
Upon you. But I go. Nipunika,
Attend me.

She is departing in wrath.

PURURAVAS (*following her*)

Guilty I am. O pardon, pardon!
O look on me more kindly. How can a slave
Be innocent, when whom he should please is angry?
He falls at her feet.

AUSHINARIE (*aside*)

I am not so weak-minded as to value
Such hollow penitence. And yet the terror
Of that remorse I know that I shall feel
If I spurn his kindness, frightens me — but no!
She goes out with Nipunika and attendants.

MANAVAKA

She has rushed off like a torrent full of wrath.
Rise, rise! she's gone.

PURURAVAS (*rising*)

O she did right to spurn me.
Most dulcet words of lovers, sweetest flatteries,
When passion is not there, can find no entrance
To woman's heart; for she knows well the voice
Of real love, but these are stones false-coloured
Rejected by the jeweller's practised eye.

MANAVAKA

This is what you should wish! The eye affected
Brooks not the flaming of a lamp too near.

PURURAVAS

You much misjudge me. Though my heart's gone out
To Urvasie, affection deep I owe
My Queen. But since she scorned my prostrate wooing,
I will have patience till her heart repent.

MANAVAKA

Oh, hang your patience! keep it for home consumption.
Mine's at an end. Have some faint mercy instead
And save a poor starved Brahmin's life. It's time
For bath and dinner! dinner!!

PURURAVAS (*looking upward*)

'Tis noon. The tired
And heated peacock sinks to chill delight
Of water in the tree-encircling channel,
The bee divides a crimson bud and creeps
Into its womb; there merged and safe from fire,
He's lurking. The duck too leaves her blazing pool
And shelters in cold lilies on the bank,
And in yon summer-house weary of heat
The parrot from his cage for water cries.

They go.

Act III

Scene I. — *Hermitage of the Saint Bharat in Heaven.*
Galava and Pelava.

GALAVA

Pelava, thee the Sage admitted, happier
Chosen, to that great audience in the house
Of highest Indra, — I meanwhile must watch
The sacred flame; inform my absence. Was
The divine session with the acting pleased?

PELAVA

Of pleased I know not; this I well could see
They sat all lost in that poetic piece
Of Saraswatie, “Luxmie’s Choice”, — breathlessly
Identified themselves with every mood.
But —

GALAVA

Ah, that but! It opens doors to censure.

PELAVA

Yes, Urvasie was heedless, missed her word.

GALAVA

How? how?

PELAVA

She acted Luxmie; Menaka
Was Varunie; who asking, “Sister, see,
The noble and the beautiful of Heaven,
And Vishnu and the guardians of the worlds.

To whom does thy heart go mid all these glories?" —
 Urvasie should have answered "Purushottam",
 But from her lips "Pururavas" leaped forth.

GALAVA

Our organs are the slaves of fate and doom!
 Was not the great Preceptor angry?

PELAVA

Yes;

He cursed her, but high Indra blessed.

GALAVA

What blessing?

PELAVA

"Since thou hast wronged my teaching and my fame,
 For thee no place in Heaven", — so frowned the Sage.
 Heaven's monarch marked her when the piece was ended,
 Drooping, her sweet face bowed with shame, and said,
 With gracious brows, "Since thou hast fixed thy heart
 Upon my friend and strong ally in war,
 I will do both a kindness. Go to him
 And love and serve him as thy lord until
 A child is got in thee and he behold
 His offspring's face."

GALAVA

O nobly this became
 Indra; he knows to value mighty hearts.

PELAVA (*looking at the Sun*)

Look, in our talk if we have not transgressed
 Our teacher's hour for bathing. Galava,
 We should be at his side.

GALAVA

Let us make haste.

They go out.

Scene II. — *Outside the palace of Pururavas, beneath the House of Gems. The terrace of the House of Gems with a great staircase leading up to it.*

The Chamberlain Latavya enters.

LATAVYA (*sighing*)

All other men when life is green and strong
Marry and toil and get them wealth, then, aging,
Their sons assume the burden, they towards rest
Their laboured faces turn. But us for ever
Service, a keyless dungeon still renewed,
Wears down; and hard that service is which keeps
O'er women ward and on their errands runs.
Now Kashi's daughter, careful of her vow,
Commands me, "I have put from me, Latavya,
The obstinacy of offended love
And wooed my husband through Nipunika.
Thou too entreat him." Therefore I linger here
Waiting till the King's greatness swiftly come,
His vesper worship done. It dims apace.
How beautifully twilight sits and dreams
Upon these palace walls! The peacocks now
Sit on their perches, drowsed with sleep and night,
Like figures hewn in stone. And on the roof
The fluttering pigeons with their pallid wings
Mislead the eye, disguised as rings of smoke
That from the window-ways have floated out
Into the evening. In places flower-bestrewn
The elders of the high seraglio, gentle souls
Of holy manners, set the evening lamps,
Dividing darkness; flames of auspice burn.
The King! I hear the sound of many feet,
Ringed round with torches he appears, his girls
Hold up with young fair arms. O form august
Like Mainak, when as yet the hills had wings,
Moving, and the slim trees along its ridge
Flickered with vermeil shaken blooms. Just here

I'll wait him, in the pathway of his glance.

*Enter Pururavas, surrounded by girl attendants
carrying torches; with him Manavaka.*

PURURAVAS (*aside*)

Day passes with some pale attempt at calm,
For then work walls the mind from the fierce siege
Of ever-present passion. But how shall I
Add movement to the tardy-footed night,
The long void hours by no distraction winged?

LATAVYA (*approaching*)

Long live the King! My lady says, "The moon
Tonight in splendour on the House of Jewels
Rises like a bright face. On the clear terrace,
My husband by my side, I would await
With Rohinie, his heavenly fair delight,
The God's embracings."

PURURAVAS

What the Queen wills, was ever
My law, Latavya.

LATAVYA

So I'll tell my lady.

He goes.

PURURAVAS

Think you in very truth for her vow's sake
My lady makes this motion?

MANAVAKA

Rather I deem
'Tis her remorse she cloaks with holy vows,
Atoning thus for a prostration scorned.

PURURAVAS

O true! the proud and loving hearts of women,
 Who have their prostrate dear ones spurned, repenting
 Are plagued with sweet accusing memories
 Of eyes that ask forgiveness, outstretched hands,
 Half-spoken words and touches on their feet
 That travel to the heart. Precede me then
 To the appointed terrace.

MANAVAKA

Look, my lord,
 The crystal stairs roll upward like bright waves
 On moonlit Ganges; yonder the terrace sleeps
 Wide-bosomed to the cold and lovely eve.

PURURAVAS

Precede me; we'll ascend.

They ascend to the terrace.

MANAVAKA

The moon is surely
 Upon the verge of rise; swiftly the east
 Empties of darkness, and the horizon seems
 All beautiful and brightening like a face.

PURURAVAS

O aptly said! Behind the peak of rise
 The hidden moon, pushing black night aside,
 Precedes himself with herald lustres. See!
 The daughter of the imperial East puts back
 The blinding tresses from her eyes, and smiles,
 And takes with undimmed face my soul.

MANAVAKA

Hurrah!

The king of the twice-born has risen all white
 And round and luscious like a ball of sugar.

PURURAVAS (*smiling*)

A glutton's eloquence is ever haunted
With images of the kitchen.

(*bowing with folded hands*)

Hail, God that rulest

The inactive night! O settler with the sun
For ritual holy, O giver to the Gods
And blessed fathers dead of nectarous wine,
O slayer of the vasty glooms of night,
Whose soul of brightness crowns the Almighty's head,
O moon, all hail! accept thy offspring's prayer.

MANAVAKA

Well now, your grandpapa has heard your vows;
You'll take it from a Brahmin's mouth, through whom
Even he may telepath his message. So,
That's finished. Now sit down and give me a chance
Of being comfortable.

PURURAVAS (*sitting down, then looking at his attendants*)

The moon is risen;

These torches are a vain reiteration
Of brightness. Ladies, rest.

ALL

Our lord commands us.

They go.

PURURAVAS

It is not long before my lady comes.
So, let me, while we yet are lonely here,
Unburden me of my love-ravaged thoughts.

MANAVAKA

They are visible to the blind. Take hope and courage
By thinking of her equal love.

PURURAVAS

I do;

And yet the pain within my heart is great.
 For as a mighty river whose vast speed
 Stumbles within a narrow pass of huge
 And rugged boulders, chides his uncouth bed,
 Increasing at each check, even so does love,
 His joy of union stinted or deferred,
 Rebel and wax a hundredfold in fire.

MANAVAKA

So your love-wasted limbs increase their beauty,
 They are a sign you soon will clasp your love.

PURURAVAS

O friend, as you my longing heaviness
 Comfort with hopeful words, my arm too speaks
 In quick auspicious throbs.

He looks with hope up to the sky.

MANAVAKA

A Brahmin's word!

*There enters in the air Chitraklekha
 with Urvashie in trysting-dress.*

URVASIE (*looking at herself*)

Sister, do you not think my trysting-dress,
 The dark-blue silk and the few ornaments,
 Becomes me vastly? Do you not approve it?

CHITRALEKHA

O inexpressibly! I have no words
 To praise it. This I'll say; it makes me wish
 I were Pururavas.

URVASIE

Since Love himself

Inspires you, bring me quickly to the dwelling
Of that high beautiful face.

CHITRALEKHA

Look, we draw near.
Your lover's house lifts in stupendous mass,
As it were mountain Coilas, to the clouds.

URVASIE

Look, sister, with the eye of Gods and know
Where is that robber of my heart and what
His occupation?

CHITRALEKHA (*aside, with a smile*)

I will jest with her.

(*aloud*)

I see him. He, in a sweet region made
For love and joy, possesses with desire
The body and the bosom of his love.

URVASIE (*despairingly*)

Happy that woman, whosoe'er she be!

CHITRALEKHA

Why, sweet faint-hearted fool, in whom but thee
Should his thoughts joy?

URVASIE (*with a sigh of relief*)

Alas, my heart perverse
Will doubt.

CHITRALEKHA

Here on the terraced House of Gems
The King is with his friend sole-sitting. Then,
We may approach.

They descend.

PURURAVAS

O friend, the widening night
And pangs of love keep pace in their increase.

URVASIE

Sister, my heart is torn with apprehension
Of what his words might mean. Let us, ourselves
Invisible, hear their unfettered converse.
My fears might then have rest.

CHITRALEKHA

Good.

MANAVAKA

Take the moonbeams
Whose pregnant nectar comforts burning limbs.

PURURAVAS

But my affliction's not remediable
With such faint medicines. Neither smoothest flowers,
Moonlight nor sandal visiting every limb,
Nor necklaces of cool delightful pearl,
Only Heaven's nymph can perfectly expel
With bliss, or else —

URVASIE (*clutching at her bosom with her hand*)

O me! who else? who else?

PURURAVAS

Speech secret full of her unedged my pangs.

URVASIE

Heart that left me to flutter in his hands,
Now art thou for that rashness recompensed!

MANAVAKA

Yes, I too when I cannot get sweet venison

CHITRALEKHA
What is it now?

URVASIE

I am
Before him, and he does not care!

CHITRALEKHA (*smiling*)

O thou,
All passionate unreasoning haste! Thou hast not
Put off as yet invisibility.

VOICE (*within*)

This way, my lady.
All listen, Urvasie and Chित्रलेखा are despondent.

MANAVAKA (*in dismay*)

Hey? The Queen is here?
Keep watch upon your tongue.

PURURAVAS

You first discharge
Your face of conscious guilt.

URVASIE

Sister, what now?

CHITRALEKHA

Be calm. We are unseen. This princess looks
As for a vow arrayed, nor long, if so,
Will tarry.

*As she speaks, the Queen and Nipunika enter
with attendants carrying offerings.*

AUSHINARIE

How does yonder spotted moon
Flush with new beauty, O Nipunika,
At Rohinie's embracings.

NIPUNIKA

So too with you,
Lady, my lord looks fairer than himself.

MANAVAKA

The Queen, my lord, looks very sweet and gracious,
Either because I know she'll give me sweetmeats
Or 'tis a sign of anger quite renounced,
And from your memory to exile her harshness
She makes her vow an instrument.

PURURAVAS

Good reasons both;

(*smiling*)

Yet to my humble judgment the poor second
Has likelier hue. For she in gracious white
Is clad and sylvanly adorned with flowers,
Her raven tresses spangled with young green
Of sacred grass. All her fair body looks
Gentle and kind, its pomp and pride renounced
For lovely meekness to her lord.

AUSHINARIE (*approaching*)

My husband!

ATTENDANT

Hail to our master!

MANAVAKA

Peace attend my lady.

PURURAVAS

Welcome.

He takes her hand and draws her down on a seat.

URVASIE

By right this lady bears the style

Of Goddess and of Empress, since no whit
Her noble majesty of fairness yields
To Heaven's Queen.

CHITRALEKHA

O bravely said, my sister!
'Twas worthy of a soul where jealous baseness
Ought never harbour.

AUSHINARIE

I have a vow, my lord,
Which at my husband's feet must be absolved.
Bear with me that I trouble you one moment.

PURURAVAS

No, no, it is not trouble, but a kindness.

MANAVAKA

The good trouble that brings me sweetmeats! often,
O often may such trouble vex my belly.

PURURAVAS

What vow is this you would absolve, my own?
Aushinarie looks at Nipunika.

NIPUNIKA

'Tis that women perform to win back kindness
In eyes of one held dear.

PURURAVAS

If this be so,
Vainly hast thou these tender flower-soft limbs
Afflicted with a vow's austerities,
Beloved. Thou suest for favour to thy servant,
Propitiatest who for thy propitiated
All-loving glance is hungry.

URVASIE

Greatly he loves her!

CHITRALEKHA

Why, silly one, whose heart is gone astraying,
Redoubles words of kindness to his wife.
Do you not know so much?

AUSHINARIE (*smiling*)

Not vain my vow,
That to such words of love has moved already
My husband.

MANAVAKA

Stop, my lord, a word well spoken
Is spoilt by any answer.

AUSHINARIE

Girls, the offering
With which I must adore this gentle moonlight
That dreams upon our terrace!

NIPUNIKA

Here, my lady,
Are flowers, here costly scents, all needed things.

AUSHINARIE

Give them to me.

*She worships the moonbeams with
flowers and perfumes.*

Nipunika, present

The sweetmeats of the offering to the Brahmin.

NIPUNIKA

I will, my lady. Noble Manavaka,
Here is for you.

MANAVAKA

Blessings attend thee. May
Thy vow bear fruit nor end.

AUSHINARIE

Now, dear my lord,
Pray you, draw nearer to me.

PURURAVAS

Behold me, love!
What must I do?
*Aushinarie worships the King, then bowing
down with folded hands,*

AUSHINARIE

I, Aushinarie, call
The divine wife and husband, Rohinie
And Mrigalanchhan named the spotted moon,
To witness here my vowed obedient love
To my dear lord. Henceforth whatever woman
My lord shall love and she desire him too,
I will embrace her and as a sister love,
Nor think of jealousy.

URVASIE

I know not wholly
Her drift, and yet her words have made me feel
All pure and full of noble trust.

CHITRALEKHA

Be confident,
Your love will prove all bliss; surely it must
When blessed and sanctioned by this pure, devoted
And noble nature.

MANAVAKA (*aside*)

When from twixt his hands

Fish leaps, cries me the disappointed fisher,
 “Go, trout, I spare you. This will be put down
 To my account in Heaven.”

(*aloud*)

No more but this
 You love my friend, your husband, lady?

AUSHINARIE

Dull fool!

I with the death of my own happiness
 Would give my husband ease. From this consider
 How dearly I love him.

PURURAVAS

Since thou hast power on me
 To give me to another or to keep
 Thy slave, I have no right to plead. And yet
 I am not as thou thinkest me, all lost,
 O thou too jealous, to thy love.

AUSHINARIE

My lord,
 We will not talk of that. I have fulfilled
 My rite, and with observance earned your kindness.
 Girls, let us go.

PURURAVAS

Is thus my kindness earned?
 I am not kind, not pleased, if now, beloved,
 Thou shun and leave me.

AUSHINARIE

Pardon, my lord. I never
 Have yet transgressed the rigour of a vow.

Exeunt Queen, Nipunika and attendants.

URVASIE

Wife-lover, uxorious is this King, and yet
I cannot lure my heart away from him.

CHITRALEKHA

Why, what new trick of wilful passion's this?

PURURAVAS (*sitting down*)

The Queen is not far off.

MANAVAKA

Never heed that,
Speak boldly. She has given you up as hopeless.
So doctors leave a patient, when disease
Defies all remedy, to his own sweet guidance.

PURURAVAS

O that my Urvasie —

URVASIE

Today might win
Her one dear wish.

PURURAVAS

From her invisible feet
The lovely sound of anklets on my ear
Would tinkle, or coming stealing from behind
Blind both my eyes with her soft little hands
Like two cool lotuses upon them fallen:
Or, oh, most sweet! descending on this roof
Shaken with dear delicious terrors, lingering
And hanging back, be by her sister drawn
With tender violence, faltering step by step,
Till she lay panting on my knees.

CHITRALEKHA

Go, sister,

And satisfy his wish.

URVASIE

Must I? well then,
I'll pluck up heart and play with him a little.

*She becomes visible, steals behind the King and covers
his eyes with her hands. Chitralekha puts off her veil of
invisibility and makes a sign to Manavaka.*

MANAVAKA

Now say, friend, who is this?

PURURAVAS

The hands of beauty.
'Tis that Narayan-born whose limbs are sweetness.

MANAVAKA

How can you guess?

PURURAVAS

What is there here to guess?
My heart tells me. The lily of the night
Needs not to guess it is the moon's cool touch.
She starts not to the sunbeam. 'Tis so with me.
No other woman could but she alone
Heal with her little hands all my sick pining.

*Urvsie removes her hands and rises to her feet;
then moves a step or two away.*

URVASIE

Conquest attend my lord!

PURURAVAS

Welcome, O beauty.
He draws her down beside him.

CHITRALEKHA

Happiness to my brother!

PURURAVAS

Here it sits

Beside me.

URVASIE

Because the Queen has given you to me,
Therefore I dare to take into my arms
Your body like a lover. You shall not think me
Forward.

MANAVAKA

What, set the sun to you on this terrace?

PURURAVAS

O love, if thou my body dost embrace
As seizable, a largess from my Queen,
But whose permission didst thou ask, when thou
Stolest my heart away?

CHITRALEKHA

Brother, she is

Abashed and has no answer. Therefore a moment
Turn to me, grant me one entreaty.

PURURAVAS

Speak.

CHITRALEKHA

When spring is vanished and the torrid heat
Thickens, I must attend the glorious Sun.
Do thou so act that this my Urvasie
Left lonely with thee, shall not miss her Heaven.

MANAVAKA

Why, what is there in Heaven to pine for? There
You do not eat, you do not drink, only
Stare like so many fishes in a row
With wide unblinking eyes.

PURURAVAS

The joys of Heaven
No thought can even outline. Who then shall make
The soul forget which thence has fallen? Of this
Be sure, fair girl, Pururavas is only
Thy sister's slave: no other woman shares
That rule nor can share.

CHITRALEKHA

Brother, this is kind.
Be brave, my Urvasie, and let me go.

URVASIE (*embracing Chित्रalekha, pathetically*)
Chित्रalekha, my sister, do not forget me!

CHITRALEKHA (*with a smile*)

Of thee I should entreat that mercy, who
Hast got thy love's embrace.

She bows down to the King and goes.

MANAVAKA

Now nobly, sir,
Are you increased with bliss and your desire's
Accrual.

PURURAVAS

You say well. This is my increase;
Who felt not half so blest when I acquired
The universal sceptre of the world
And sovran footstool touched by jewelled heads
Of tributary monarchs, as today

I feel most happy who have won the right
To touch two little feet and am allowed
To be thy slave and do thy lovely bidding.

URVASIE

I have not words to make a sweeter answer.

PURURAVAS

How does the winning of one loved augment
Sweet contradictions! These are the very rays
Of moonlight burned me late, and now they soothe;
Love's wounding shafts caress the heart like flowers,
Thou being with me; all natural sights and sounds,
Once rude and hurtful, now caressing come
Softly, because of thee in my embrace.

URVASIE

I am to blame that I deprived my lord
So long.

PURURAVAS

Beloved and beautiful, not so!
For happiness arising after pain
Tastes therefore sweeter, as the shady tree
To one perplexed with heat and dust affords
A keener taste of Paradise.

MANAVAKA

We have courted
For a long hour the whole delightfulness
Of moonlight in the evening. It is time
To seek repose.

PURURAVAS

Guide therefore this fair friend
The way her feet must henceforth tread.

MANAVAKA

This way.

PURURAVAS

O love, I have but one wish left.

URVASIE

What wish, my lord?

PURURAVAS

When I had not embraced thee, my desire,
One night in passing seemed a hundred nights;
O now if darkness would extend my joys
To equal length of real hours with this
Sweet face upon my bosom, I were blest.

They go.

Act IV

Scene I. — *The sky near the doors of the sunrise; clouds everywhere. Chitralekha and Sahajanya.*

SAHAJANYA

Dear Chitralekha, like a fading flower
The beauty of thy face all marred reveals
Sorrow of heart. Tell me thy melancholy;
I would be sad with thee.

CHITRALEKHA (*sorrowfully*)

O Sahajanya!

Sister, by rule of our vicissitude,
I serving at the feet of the great Sun
Was troubled at heart for want of Urvasie.

SAHAJANYA

I know your mutual passion of sisterliness.
What after?

CHITRALEKHA

I had heard no news of her
So many days. Then I collected vision
Divine into myself to know of her.
O miserable knowledge!

SAHAJANYA

Sister, sister!

What knowledge of sorrow?

CHITRALEKHA (*still sorrowfully*)

I saw that Urvasie

Taking with her Pururavas and love —
 For he had on his ministers imposed
 His heavy yoke of kingship — went to sport
 Amorously in Gandhamadan green.

SAHAJANYA (*proudly*)

O love is joy indeed, when in such spots
 Tasted. And there?

CHITRALEKHA

And there upon the strands
 Of heavenly Ganges, one, a lovely child
 Of spirits musical, Udayavatie,
 Was playing, making little forts of sand;
 On her with all his soul the monarch gazed.
 This angered Urvasie.

SAHAJANYA

O natural!
 Deep passion always is intolerant.
 Afterwards?

CHITRALEKHA

She pushed aside her pleading husband,
 Perplexed by the Preceptor's curse forgot
 The War-God's vow and entered in that grove
 Avoidable of women; but no sooner
 Had trod its green, most suddenly she was
 A creeper rooted to that fatal verge.

SAHAJANYA (*in a voice of grief*)

Now do I know that Fate's indeed a thing
 Inexorable, spares no one, when such love
 Has such an ending; O all too suddenly!
 How must it be then with Pururavas?

CHITRALEKHA

All day and night he passions in that grove
Seeking her. And this cool advent of cloud
That turns even happy hearts to yearning pain,
Will surely kill him.

SAHAJANYA

Sister, not long can grief
Have privilege over such beautiful beings.
Some God will surely pity them, some cause
Unite once more.

(looking towards the east)

Come, sister. Our lord the Sun
Is rising in the east. Quick, to our service.

They go.

Scene II. — *Pururavas enters disordered, his eyes fixed on the sky.*

PURURAVAS (*angrily*)

Halt, ruffian, halt! Thou in thy giant arms
Bearest away my Urvasie! He has
Soared up from a great crag into the sky
And wars me, hurling downward bitter rain
Of arrows. With this thunderbolt I smite thee.

*He lifts up a clod and runs as to hurl it;
then pauses and looks upwards.*

(*pathetically*)

Oh me, I am deceived! This was a cloud
Equipped for rain, no proud and lustful fiend,
The rainbow, not a weapon drawn to kill,
Quick-driving showers are these, not sleety rain
Of arrows; and that brilliant line like streak
Of gold upon a touchstone, cloud-inarmed,
I saw, was lightning, not my Urvasie.

(*sorrowfully*)

Where shall I find her now? Where clasp those thighs
Swelling and smooth and white? Perhaps she stands
Invisible to me by heavenly power,
All sullen? But her anger was ever swift
And ended soon. Perhaps into her heavens
She has soared? O no! her heart was soft with love,
And love of me. Nor any fiend adverse
To Heaven had so much strength as to hale her hence
While I looked on. Yet is she gone from me
Invisible, swiftly invisible, —
Whither? O bitter miracle! and yet —

He scans each horizon, then pauses and sighs.

Alas! when fortune turns against a man,
Then sorrow treads on sorrow. There was already
This separation from my love, and hard
Enough to bear; and now the pleasant days,
Guiltless of heat, with advent cool of rain

Must help to slay me.

(laughing)

Why do I so tamely

Accept addition to my pangs? For even

The saints confess, "The king controls the seasons";

If it be so, I will command the thunder

Back to his stable.

(pausing to think)

No, I must permit

The season unabridged of pomp; the signs

Of storm are now my only majesty;

This sky with lightning gilt and laced becomes

My canopy of splendour, and the trees

Of rain-time waving wide their lavish bloom

Fan me; the sapphire-throated peacocks, voiced

Sweeter for that divorce from heat, are grown

My poets; the mountains are my citizens,

They pour out all their streams to swell my greatness.

But I waste time in idly boasting vain

Glories and lose my love. To my task, to my task!

This grove, this grove should find her.

He moves onward.

And here, O here

Is something to enrage my resolution.

Red-tinged, expanding, wet and full of rain,

These blossom-cups recall to me her eyes

Brimming with angry tears. How shall I trace her,

Or what thing tell me "Here and here she wandered"?

If she had touched with her beloved feet

The rain-drenched forest-sands, there were a line

Of little gracious footprints seen, with lac

Envermeilled, sinking deeper towards the heel

Because o'erburdened by her hips' large glories.

He moves onward.

(exultantly)

Oh joy! I see a hint of her. This way

Then went her angry beauty! Lo, her bodice

Bright green as is a parrot's belly, smitten
With crimson drops. It once veiled in her bosom
And paused to show her navel deep as love.
These are her tears that from those angry eyes
Went trickling, stealing scarlet from her lips
To spangle all this green. Doubtless her heaving
Tumult of breasts broke its dear hold and, she
Stumbling in anger, from my heaven it drifted.
I'll gather it to my kisses.

He stoops to it, then sorrowfully,

O my heart!

Only green grass with dragon-wings enamelled!
From whom shall I in all the desolate forest
Have tidings of her, or what creature help me?
Lo, in yon waste of crags the peacock! he
Upon a cool moist rock that breathes of rain
Exults, aspires, his gorgeous mass of plumes
Seized, blown and scattered by the roaring gusts.
Pregnant of shrillness is his outstretched throat,
His look is with the clouds. Him I will question:
Have the bright corners of thine eyes beheld,
O sapphire-throated bird, her, my delight,
My wife, my passion, my sweet grief? Yielding
No answer, he begins his gorgeous dance.
Why should he be so glad of my heart's woe?
I know thee, peacock. Since my cruel loss
Thy plumes that stream in splendour on the wind,
Have not one rival left. For when her heavy
Dark wave of tresses over all the bed
In softness wide magnificently collapsed
On her smooth shoulders massing purple glory
And bright with flowers, she passioning in my arms,
Who then was ravished with thy brilliant plumes,
Vain bird? I question thee not, heartless thing,
That joyest in others' pain.

(turning away)

Lo, where, new-fired

With sweet bird-passion by the season cool,
 A cuckoo on the plum-tree sits. This race
 Is wisest of the families of birds
 And learned in love. I'll greet him like himself.
 O cuckoo, thou art called the bird of love,
 His sweet ambassador, O cuckoo. Thou
 Criest and thy delightful voice within
 The hearts of lovers like an arrow comes,
 Seeks out the anger there and softly kills.
 Me also, cuckoo, to my darling bring
 Or her to me. What saidst thou? "How could she
 Desert thee loving?" Cuckoo, I will tell thee.
 Yes, she was angry. Yet I know I never
 Gave her least cause. But, cuckoo, dost thou know not
 That women love to feel their sovereignty
 Over their lovers, nor transgression need
 To be angry? How! Dost thou break off, O bird,
 Our converse thus abruptly and turn away
 To thine own tasks? Alas, 'twas wisely said
 That men bear easily the bitter griefs
 Which others feel. For all my misery
 This bird, my orison disregarding, turns
 To attack the plum-tree's ripening fruit as one
 Drunken with love his darling's mouth. And yet
 I cannot be angry with him. Has he not
 The voice of Urvashie? Abide, O bird,
 In bliss, though I unhappy hence depart.

He walks on, then stops short and listens.

O Heaven? what do I hear? the anklets' cry
 That tell the musical footing of my love?
 To right of this long grove 'twas heard. Oh, I
 Will run to her.

(hurrying forward)

Me miserable! This was
 No anklets' cry embraceable with hands,
 But moan of swans who seeing the grey wet sky
 Grow passionate for Himaloy's distant tarns.

Well, be it so. But ere in far desire
They leap up from this pool, I well might learn
Tidings from them of Urvasie.

(approaching)

Listen,

O king of all white fowl that waters breed.
Afterwards to Himaloy wing thy way,
But now the lotus fibres in thy beak
Gathered by thee for provender resign;
Ere long thou shalt resume them. Me, ah, first
From anguish rescue, O majestic swan,
With tidings of my sweet; always high souls
Prefer another's good to selfish aims.
Thou lookest upward to the heavens and sayest,
"I was absorbed with thoughts of Himaloy;
Her have I not observed." O swan, thou liest,
For if she never trod upon thy lake's
Embankment, nor thou sawest her archèd brows,
How couldst thou copy then so perfectly
Her footing full of amorous delight,
Or whence didst steal it? Give me back my love,
Thou robber! Thou hast got her gait and this
Is law that he with whom a part is found
Must to the claimant realise the whole.

(laughing)

O yes, thou flyest up, clanging alarm,
"This is the king whose duty is to punish
All thieves like me!" Go then, but I will plunge
Into new hopeful places, seeking love.
Lo, wild-drake with his mate, famed chocrobacque,
Him let me question. O thou wondrous creature,
All saffron and vermilion! Wilt thou then
Not tell me of my love? Oh, sawest thou not
My Goddess laughing like a lovely child
In the bright house of spring? For, wild-drake, thou
Who gettest from the chariot's orb thy name,
I who deprived am of her orbèd hips,

The chariot-warrior great Pururavas,
 Encompassed with a thousand armed desires,
 Question thee. How! "Who? Who?" thou sayest to me!
 This is too much. It is not possible
 He should not know me! Bird, I am a king
 Of kings, and grandson to the Sun and Moon,
 And earth has chosen me for her master. This
 Were little. I am the loved of Urvashie!
 Still art thou silent? I will taunt him, then
 Perhaps he'll speak. Thou, wild-drake, when thy love,
 Her body hidden by a lotus-leaf,
 Lurks near thee in the pool, deemest her far
 And wailest musically to the flowers
 A wild deep dirge. Such is thy conjugal
 Yearning, thy terror such of even a little
 Division from her nearness. Me afflicted,
 Me so forlorn thou art averse to bless
 With just a little tidings of my love!
 Alas, my miserable lot has made
 All creatures adverse to me. Let me plunge
 Into the deeper wood. Oh no, not yet!
 This lotus with the honey-bees inside
 Making melodious murmur, keeps me. I
 Remember her soft mouth when I have kissed it
 Too cruelly, sobbing exquisite complaint.
 These too I will implore. Alas, what use?
 They will despise me like the others. Yet,
 Lest I repent hereafter of my silence,
 I'll speak to him. O lotus-wooing bee,
 Tell me some rumour of those eyes like wine.
 But no, thou hast not seen that wonder. Else
 Wouldst thou, O bee, affect the lotus' bloom,
 If thou hadst caught the sweetness from her lips
 Breathing, whose scent intoxicates the breeze?
 I'll leave him. Lo! with his mate an elephant.
 His trunk surrounds a nym-tree to uproot.
 To him will I, he may some rumour have

Or whisper of my love. But softly! Haste
Will ruin me. Oh, this is not the time!
Now his beloved mate has in her trunk
Just found him broken branches odorous
And sweet as wine with the fresh leaves not long
In bud, new-honied. These let him enjoy.
His meal is over now. I may approach
And ask him. O rut-dripping elephant,
Sole monarch of the herd, has not that moon
With jasmines all a glory in her hair
And limbs of fadeless beauty, carrying
Youth like a banner, whom to see is bliss,
Is madness, fallen in thy far ken, O king?
Oh joy! he trumpets loud and soft as who
Would tell me he has seen indeed my love.
Oh, I am gladdened! More to thee I stand
Attracted, elephant, as like with like.
Sovereign of sovereigns is my title, thou
Art monarch of the kingly elephants,
And this wide freedom of thy fragrant rut
Interminable imitates my own
Vast liberality to suppliant men,
Regally; thou hast in all the herd this mate,
I among loveliest women Urvasie.
In all things art thou like me; only I pray,
O friend, that thou mayst never know the pang,
The loss. Be fortunate, king, farewell! Oh see,
The mountain of the Fragrant Glens appears,
Fair as a dream, with his great plateaus trod
By heavenly feet of women. May it not be,
To this wide vale she too has with her sisters
Brought here her beautiful body full of spring?
Darkness! I cannot see her. Yet by these gleams
Of lightning I may study, I may find.
Ah God! the fruit of guilt is bounded not
With the doer's anguish; this stupendous cloud
Is widowed of the lightning through my sin.

Yet I will leave thee not, O thou huge pile
 Of scaling crags, unquestioned. Hear me, answer me!
 O mountain, has she entered then the woods,
 Love's green estate, — ah, she too utter love!
 Her breasts were large like thine, with small sweet space
 Between them, and like thine her glorious hips
 And smooth fair joints a rapture. Dumb? No answer?
 I am too far away, he has not heard me.
 Let me draw nearer. Mountain, seen was she,
 A woman all bereaved, her every limb
 A loveliness, in these delightful woods?

ECHO

Nearer, O nearer! Mountain-seen was she,
 A woman all bereaved, her every limb
 A loveliness, in these delightful woods.

PURURAVAS

He has answered, answered! O my heart, I draw
 Nearer to her! In my own words the hill
 Answers thee, O my heart. As joyous tidings
 Mayst thou too hear, mountain. She then was seen,
 My Urvasie in thy delightful woods?

ECHO

Mountain! mountain! mountain! She then was seen,
 My Urvasie in thy delightful woods,
 In thy delightful woods, delightful woods.

PURURAVAS

Alas! 'tis Echo mocks me with my voice
 Rolling amid the crags and mountain glens.
 Out on thee, Echo! Thou hast killed my heart.
 O Urvasie! Urvasie! Urvasie!

He falls down and swoons.

(recovering)

I am all weary and sad. Oh, let me rest

Beside this mountain river for a moment
And woo the breeze that dances on the waves.
All turbid is this stream with violent rain,
And yet I thrill to see it. For, O, it seems
Just like my angry darling when she went
Frowning — as this does with its little waves, —
A wrathful music in her girdle, — and see!
This string of birds with frightened clangour rise;
She trailed her raiment as the river its foam,
For it loosened with her passion as she moved
With devious feet, all angry, blind with tears,
And often stopped to brood upon her wrongs:
But soon indignantly her stormy speed
Resumed, so tripping, winding goes the stream,
As she did. O most certainly 'tis she,
My sweet quick-tempered darling, suddenly changed
Into a river's form. I will beseech her
And soothe her wounded spirit. Urvasie?
Did I not love thee perfectly? Did not
My speech grow sweetness when I spoke to thee?
And when did my heart anything but hate
To false our love? O what was the slight fault
Thou foundest in thy servant that thou couldst
Desert him, Urvasie, O Urvasie!
She answers not! It is not she, merely
A river. Urvasie would not have left
Pururavas to tryst with Ocean. And now
Since only by refusal to despair
Can bliss at last be won, I will return
Where first she fled from my pursuing eyes.
This couching stag shall give me tidings of her,
Who looks as if he were a splendid glance
Some dark-eyed Dryad had let fall to admire
This budding foliage and this young green beauty
Of grass. But why averts he then his head
As though in loathing? I perceive his reason.
Lo, his fair hind is hasting towards him, stayed

By their young deerling plucking at her teats.
 With her his eyes are solely, her with bent
 Lithe neck he watches. Ho, thou lord of hind!
 Sawst thou not her I love? O stag, I'll tell thee
 How thou shouldst know her. Like thine own dear hind
 She had large eyes and loving, and like hers
 That gaze was beauty. Why does he neglect
 My words and only gaze towards his love?
 All prosperous creatures slight the unfortunate!
 'Tis natural. Then elsewhere let me seek.
 I have found her, I have found her! O a hint
 And token of her way! This one red drop
 Of summer's blood the very codome was,
 Though rough with faulty stamens, yet thought worthy
 To crown her hair. And thou, asoka red,
 Didst watch my slender-waisted when she gave
 So cruelly a loving heart to pain.
 Why dost thou lie and shake thy windy head?
 How couldst thou by her soft foot being untouched
 Break out into such bloom of petals stung
 And torn by jostling crowds of bees, who swarm
 All wild to have thy honey? Ever be blest,
 Thou noble trunk. What should this be, bright red,
 That blazes in a crevice of the rocks?
 For if it were a piece of antelope's flesh
 Torn by a lion, 'twould not have this blaze,
 This lustre haloing it; nor can it be
 A spark pregnant of fire; for all the wood
 Is drowned in rain. No, 'tis a gem, a miracle
 Of crimson, like the red felicitous flower,
 And with one radiant finger of the sun
 Laid on it like a claim. Yet I will take it,
 For it compels my soul with scarlet longing.
 Wherefore? She on whose head it should have burned,
 Whose hair all fragrant with the coral-bloom
 I loved like Heaven, is lost to me, beyond
 Recovery lost to me. Why should I take it

To mar it with my tears?

A VOICE

Reject it not,
My son; this is the jewel Union born
From the red lac that on the marvellous feet
Was brilliant of Himaloy's child, and, soon,
Who bears it is united with his love.

PURURAVAS

Who speaks to me? It is a saint who dwells
In forest like the deer. He first of creatures
Has pitied me. O my lord anchoret,
I thank thee. Thou, O Union, if thou end
My separation, if with that small-waisted
Thou shouldst indeed be proved my Union,
Jewel, I'll use thee for my crown, as Shiva
Upon his forehead wears the crescent moon.
This flowerless creeper! Wherefore do mine eyes
Dwell with its barren grace and my heart yearn
Towards it? And yet, O, not without a cause
Has she enchanted me. There standst thou, creeper,
All slender, thy poor sad leaves are moist with rain,
Thou silent, with no voice of honey-bees
Upon thy drooping boughs; as from thy lord
The season separated, leaving off
Thy habit of bloom. Why, I might think I saw
My passionate darling sitting penitent
With tear-stained face and body unadorned,
Thinking in silence how she spurned my love.
I will embrace thee, creeper, for thou art
Too like my love. Urvasie! all my body
Is thrilled and satisfied of Urvasie!
I feel, I feel her living limbs.

(despairingly)

But how
Should I believe it? Everything I deem

A somewhat of my love, next moment turns
 To other. Therefore since by touch at least
 I find my dear one, I will not separate
 Too suddenly mine eyes from sleep.
(opening his eyes slowly)

O love,

'Tis thou!

He swoons.

URVASIE

Upraise thy heart, my King, my liege!

PURURAVAS

Dearest, at last I live! O thou hadst plunged me
 Into a dark abyss of separation,
 And fortunately art thou returned to me,
 Like consciousness given back to one long dead.

URVASIE

With inward senses I have watched and felt
 Thy whole long agony.

PURURAVAS

With inward senses?

I understand thee not.

URVASIE

I will tell all.

But let my lord excuse my grievous fault,
 Who, wretch enslaved by anger, brought to this
 My sovereign! Smile on me and pardon me!

PURURAVAS

Never speak of it. Thy clasp is thy forgiveness.
 For all my outward senses and my soul
 Leap laughing towards thy bosom. Only convince me
 How thou couldst live without me such an age.

URVASIE

Hearken. The War-God Skanda, from of old
 Virginity eternal vowing, came
 To Gandhamadan's bank men call the pure,
 And made a law.

PURURAVAS

What law, beloved?

URVASIE

This

That any woman entering these precincts
 Becomes at once a creeper. And for limit
 Of the great curse, "Without the jewel born
 From crimson of my mother's feet can she
 Never be woman more." Now I, my lord,
 My heart perplexed by the Preceptor's curse,
 Forgot the War-God's oath and entered here,
 Rejecting thy entreaties, to the wood
 Avoidable of women: at the first step,
 All suddenly my form was changed. I was
 A creeper growing at the wood's wild end.

PURURAVAS

Oh, now intelligible! When from thy breasts
 Loosening the whole embrace, the long delight,
 I sank back languid, thou wouldst moan for me
 Like one divided far. How is it then
 Possible that thou shouldst bear patiently
 Real distance between us? Lo, this jewel,
 As in thy story, gave thee to my arms.
 Admonished by a hermit sage I kept it.

URVASIE

The jewel Union! Therefore at thy embrace
 I was restored.

She places the jewel gratefully upon her head.

PURURAVAS

Thus stand a while. O fairest,
 Thy face, suffused with crimson from this gem
 Above thee pouring wide its fire and splendour,
 Has all the beauty of a lotus reddening
 In early sunlight.

URVASIE

O sweet of speech! remember
 That thy high capital awaits thee long.
 It may be that the people blame me. Let us,
 My own dear lord, return.

PURURAVAS

Let us return.

URVASIE

What wafture will my sovereign choose?

PURURAVAS

O waft me

Nearer the sun and make a cloud our chariot,
 While lightning like a streaming banner floats
 Now seen, now lost to vision, and the rainbow
 With freshness of its glory iridescent
 Edges us. In thine arms uplift and waft me,
 Beloved, through the wide and liquid air.

They go.

Act V

Scene. — Outside the King's tents near Pratisthana. In the background the confluence of the rivers Ganges and Yamuna.

Manavaka alone.

MANAVAKA

After long pleasuring with Urvasie
In Nandan and all woodlands of the Gods,
Our King's at last returned, and he has entered
His city, by the jubilant people met
With splendid greetings, and resumed his toils.
Ah, were he but a father, nothing now
Were wanting to his fullness. This high day
At confluence of great Ganges with the stream
Dark Yamuna, he and his Queen have bathed.
Just now he passed into his tent, and surely
His girls adorn him. I will go exact
My first share of the ointments and the flowers.

MAID (*within lamenting*)

O me unfortunate! the jewel is lost
Accustomed to the noble head of her
Most intimate with the bosom of the King,
His loveliest playmate. I was carrying it
In palm-leaf basket on white cloth of silk;
A vulture doubting this some piece of flesh
Swoops down and soars away with it.

MANAVAKA

Unfortunate!

This was the Union, the crest-jewel, dear
 O'er all things to the King. Look where he comes,
 His dress half-worn just as he started up
 On hearing of his loss. I'll go to him.

He goes.

*Then Pururavas enters with his Amazons of the Bactrian
 Guard and other attendants in great excitement.*

PURURAVAS

Huntress! huntress! Where is that robber bird
 That snatches his own death? He practises
 His first bold pillage in the watchman's house.

HUNTRESS

Yonder, the golden thread within his beak!
 Trailing the jewel how he wheels in air
 Describing scarlet lines upon the sky!

PURURAVAS

I see him, dangling down the thread of gold
 He wheels and dips in rapid circles vast.
 The jewel like a whirling firebrand red
 Goes round and round and with vermilion rings
 Incarnadines the air. What shall we do
 To rescue it?

MANAVAKA (*coming up*)

Why do you hesitate to slay him?
 He is marked out for death, a criminal.

PURURAVAS

My bow! my bow!

AN AMAZON

I run to bring it!

She goes out.

PURURAVAS

Friend,

I cannot see the bird. Where has it fled?

MANAVAKA

Look! to the southern far horizon wings
The carrion-eating robber.

PURURAVAS (*turns and looks*)

Yes, I see him.

He speeds with the red jewel every way
Branching and shooting light, as 'twere a cluster
Of crimson roses in the southern sky
Or ruby pendant from the lobe of Heaven.

Enter Amazon with the bow.

AMAZON

Sire, I have brought the bow and leathern guard.

PURURAVAS

Too late you bring it. Yon eater of raw flesh
Goes winging far beyond an arrow's range,
And the bright jewel with the distant bird
Blazes like Mars the planet glaring red
Against a wild torn piece of cloud. Who's there?
Noble Latavya!

LATAVYA

Highness?

PURURAVAS

From me command

The chief of the police, at evening, when
Yon wingèd outlaw seeks his homing tree,
That he be hunted out.

LATAVYA

It shall be done.

He goes out.

MANAVAKA

Sit down and rest. What place in all broad earth
This jewel-thief can hide in, shall elude
Your world-wide jurisdiction?

PURURAVAS (*sitting down with Manavaka*)

It was not as a gem

Of lustre that I treasured yonder stone,
Now lost in the bird's beak, but 'twas my Union
And it united me with my dear love.

MANAVAKA

I know it, from your own lips heard the tale.

Chamberlain enters with the jewel and an arrow.

LATAVYA

Behold shot through that robber! Though he fled,
Thy anger darting in pursuit has slain him.
Plumb down he fell with fluttering wings from Heaven
And dropped the jewel bright.

All look at it in surprise.

Ill fate o'ertaking

Much worse offence! My lord, shall not this gem
Be washed in water pure and given — to whom?

PURURAVAS

Huntress, go, see it purified in fire,
Then to its case restore it.

HUNTRESS

As the King wills.

She goes out with the jewel.

PURURAVAS

Noble Latavya, came you not to know
The owner of this arrow?

LATAVYA

Letters there are
Carved on the steel; my eyes grow old and feeble,
I could not read them.

PURURAVAS

Therefore give me the arrow.
I will spell out the writing.
The Chamberlain gives him the arrow and he reads.

LATAVYA

And I will fill my office.
He goes out.

MANAVAKA (*seeing the King lost in thought*)

What do you read there?

PURURAVAS

Hear, Manavaka, hear
The letters of this bowman's name.

MANAVAKA

I'm all
Attention; read.

PURURAVAS

O hearken then and wonder.
(*reading*)
“Ayus, the smiter of his foeman's lives,
The warrior Ilian's son by Urvasie,
This arrow loosed.”

MANAVAKA (*with satisfaction*)

Hail, King! now dost thou prosper,
Who hast a son.

PURURAVAS

How should this be? Except
By the great ritual once, never was I
Parted from that beloved; nor have I witnessed
One sign of pregnancy. How could my Goddess
Have borne a son? True, I remember once
For certain days her paps were dark and stained,
And all her fair complexion to the hue
Of that wan creeper paled, and languid-large
Her eyes were. Nothing more.

MANAVAKA

Do not affect
With mortal attributes the living Gods.
For holiness is as a veil to them
Concealing their affections.

PURURAVAS

This is true.
But why should she conceal her motherhood?

MANAVAKA

Plainly, she thought, "If the King sees me old
And matron, he'll be off with some young hussy."

PURURAVAS

No mockery, think it over.

MANAVAKA

Who shall guess
The riddles of the Gods?

Enter Latavya.

LATAVYA

Hail to the King!

A holy dame from Chyavan's hermitage
Leading a boy would see my lord.

PURURAVAS

Latavya,

Admit them instantly.

LATAVYA

As the King wills.

*He goes out, then re-enters with Ayus
bow in hand and a hermitess.*

Come, holy lady, to the King.

They approach the King.

MANAVAKA

How say you,

Should not this noble boy be very he,
The young and high-born archer with whose name
Was lettered yon half-moon of steel that pierced
The vulture? His features imitate my lord's.

PURURAVAS

It must be so. The moment that I saw him,
My eyes became a mist of tears, my spirit
Lightened with joy, and surely 'twas a father
That stirred within my bosom. O Heaven! I lose
Religious calm; shudderings surprise me; I long
To feel him with my limbs, pressed with my love.

LATAVYA (*to the hermitess*)

Here deign to stand.

PURURAVAS

Mother, I bow to thee.

SATYAVATIE

High-natured! may thy line by thee increase!

(aside)

Lo, all untold this father knows his son.

(aloud)

My child,

Bow down to thy begetter.

Ayus bows down, folding his hands over his bow.

PURURAVAS

Live long, dear son.

AYUS *(aside)*

O how must children on their father's knees
Grown great be melted with a filial sweetness,
When only hearing that this is my father
I feel I love him!

PURURAVAS

Vouchsafe me, reverend lady,
Thy need of coming.

SATYAVATIE

Listen then, O King;
This Ayus at his birth was in my hand
By Urvsie, I know not why, delivered,
A dear deposit. Every perfect rite
And holiness unmaimed that princely boys
Must grow through, Chyavan's self, the mighty Sage,
Performed, and taught him letters, Scripture, arts, —
Last, every warlike science.

PURURAVAS

O fortunate
In such a teacher!

SATYAVATIE

The children fared afield
Today for flowers, dry fuel, sacred grass,
And Ayus faring with them violated
The morals of the hermitage.

PURURAVAS (*in alarm*)

O how?

SATYAVATIE

A vulture with a jag of flesh was merging
Into a tree-top when the boy levelled
His arrow at the bird.

PURURAVAS (*anxiously*)

And then?

SATYAVATIE

And then
The holy Sage, instructed of that slaughter,
Called me and bade, "Give back thy youthful trust
Into his mother's keeping." Therefore, sir,
Let me have audience with the lady.

PURURAVAS

Mother,
Deign to sit down one moment.
The hermitess takes the seat brought for her.
Noble Latavya,
Let Urvasie be summoned.

LATAVYA

It is done.

He goes out.

PURURAVAS

Child of thy mother, come, O come to me!

Let me feel my son! The touch of his own child,
 They say, thrills all the father; let me know it.
 Gladden me as the moonbeam melts the moonstone.

SATYAVATIE

Go, child, and gratify thy father's heart.
Ayus goes to the King and clasps his feet.

PURURAVAS (*embracing the boy and seating him on his
 footstool*)

This Brahmin is thy father's friend. Salute him,
 And have no fear.

MANAVAKA

Why should he fear? I think
 He grew up in the woods and must have seen
 A mot of monkeys in the trees.

AYUS (*smiling*)

Hail, father.

MANAVAKA

Peace and prosperity walk with thee ever.
Latavya returns with Urvasie.

LATAVYA

This way, my lady.

URVASIE

Who is this quivered youth
 Set on the footstool of the King? Himself
 My monarch binds his curls into a crest!
 Who should this be so highly favoured?
 (*seeing Satyavatie*)

Ah!

Satyavatie beside him tells me; it is
 My Ayus. How he has grown!

PURURAVAS (*seeing Urvasie*)

O child, look up.

Lo, she who bore thee, with her whole rapt gaze
Grown mother, her veiled bosom heaving towards thee
And wet with sacred milk!

SATYAVATIE

Rise, son, and greet

Thy parent.

She goes with the boy to Urvasie.

URVASIE

I touch thy feet.

SATYAVATIE

Ever be near

Thy husband's heart.

AYUS

Mother, I bow to thee.

URVASIE

Child, be thy sire's delight. My lord and husband!

PURURAVAS

O welcome to the mother! sit thee here.

He makes her sit beside him.

SATYAVATIE

My daughter, lo, thine Ayus. He has learned
All lore, heroic armour now can wear.
I yield thee back before thy husband's eyes
Thy sacred trust. Discharge me. Each idle moment
Is a religious duty left undone.

URVASIE

It is so long since I beheld you, mother,

I have not satisfied my thirst of you,
And cannot let you go. And yet 'twere wrong
To keep you. Therefore go for further meeting.

PURURAVAS

Say to the Sage, I fall down at his feet.

SATYAVATIE

'Tis well.

AYUS

Are you going to the forest, mother?
Will you not take me with you?

PURURAVAS

Over, son,
Thy studies in the woods. Thou must be now
A man, know the great world.

SATYAVATIE

Child, hear thy father.

AYUS

Then, mother, let me have when he has got
His plumes, my little peacock, Jewel-crest,
Who'd sleep upon my lap and let me stroke
His crest and pet him.

SATYAVATIE

Surely, I will send him.

URVASIE

Mother, I touch thy feet.

PURURAVAS

I bow to thee,
Mother.

SATYAVATIE

Peace be upon you both, my children.

She goes.

PURURAVAS

O blessed lady! Now am I grown through thee
A glorious father in this boy, our son;
Not Indra, hurler down of cities, more
In his Jayanta of Paulomie born.

Urvasie weeps.

MANAVAKA

Why is my lady suddenly all tears?

PURURAVAS

My own beloved! How art thou full of tears
While I am swayed with the great joy of princes
Who see their line secured? Why do these drops
On these high peaks of beauty raining down,
O sad sweet prodigal, turn thy bright necklace
To repetition vain of costlier pearls?

He wipes the tears from her eyes.

URVASIE

Alas, my lord! I had forgot my doom
In a mother's joy. But now thy utterance
Of that great name of Indra brings to me
Cruel remembrance torturing the heart
Of my sad limit.

PURURAVAS

Tell me, my love, what limit.

URVASIE

O King, my heart held captive in thy hands,
I stood bewildered by the curse; then Indra
Uttered his high command: "When my great soldier,

Earth's monarch, sees the face that keeps his line
 Made in thy womb, to Eden thou returnest."
 So when I knew my issue, sick with the terror
 Of being torn from thee, all hidden haste,
 I gave to noble Satyavatie the child,
 In Chyavan's forest to be trained. Today
 This my beloved son returns to me;
 No doubt she thought that he was grown and able
 To gratify his father's heart. This then
 Is the last hour of that sweet life with thee,
 Which goes not farther.

Pururavas swoons.

MANAVAKA

Help, help!

URVASIE

Return to me, my King!

PURURAVAS (*reviving*)

O love, how jealous are the Gods in Heaven
 Of human gladness! I was comforted
 With getting of a son, — at once this blow!
 O small sweet waist, I am divorced from thee!
 So has a poplar from one equal cloud
 Received the shower that cooled and fire of Heaven
 That kills it.

MANAVAKA

O sudden evil out of good!
 For I suppose you now will don the bark
 And live with hermit trees.

URVASIE

I too unhappy!
 For now my King who sees that I no sooner
 Behold my son reared up than to my heavens

I soar, will think that I have all my need
And go with glad heart from his side.

PURURAVAS

Beloved,

Do not believe it. How can one be free
To do his will who's subject to a master?
He when he's bid, must cast his heart aside
And dwell in exile from the face he loves.
Therefore obey King Indra. On this thy son
I too my kingdom will repose and dwell
In forests where the antlered peoples roam.

AYUS

My father should not on an untrained steer
Impose the yoke that asks a neck of iron.

PURURAVAS

Child, say not so! The ichorous elephant
Not yet full-grown tames all the trumpetings
Of older rivals; and the young snake's tooth
With energy of virulent poison stored
Strikes deadly. So is it with the ruler born:
His boyish hand inarms the sceptred world.
The force that rises with its task springs not
From years, but is a self and inborn greatness.
Therefore, Latavya!

LATAVYA

Let my lord command me.

PURURAVAS

Direct from me the council to make ready
The coronation of my son.

LATAVYA (*sorrowfully*)

It is

Your will, sire.

He goes out. Suddenly all act as if dazzled.

PURURAVAS

What lightning leaps from cloudless heavens?

URVASIE (*gazing up*)

'Tis the Lord Narad.

PURURAVAS

Narad? Yes, 'tis he.

His hair is matted all a tawny yellow
Like ochre-streaks, his holy thread is white
And brilliant like a digit of the moon.
He looks as if the faery-tree of Heaven
Came moving, shooting twigs all gold, and twinkling
Pearl splendours for its leaves, its tendrils pearl.
Guest-offering for the Sage!

Narad enters: all rise to greet him.

URVASIE

Here is guest-offering.

NARAD

Hail, the great guardian of the middle world!

PURURAVAS

Greeting, Lord Narad.

URVASIE

Lord, I bow to thee.

NARAD

Unsundered live in sweetness conjugal.

PURURAVAS (*aside*)

O that it might be so!

(*aloud to Ayus*)

Child, greet the Sage.

AYUS

Urvaseian Ayus bows down to thee.

NARAD

Live long, be prosperous.

PURURAVAS

Deign to take this seat.

Narad sits, after which all take their seats.

What brings the holy Narad?

NARAD

Hear the message

Of mighty Indra.

PURURAVAS

I listen.

NARAD

Maghavan,

Whose soul can see across the world, to thee

Intending loneliness in woods —

PURURAVAS

Command me.

NARAD

The seers to whom the present, past and future

Are three wide-open pictures, these divulge

Advent of battle and the near uprising

Of Titans warring against Gods. Heaven needs

Thee, her great soldier; thou shouldst not lay down

Thy warlike arms. All thy allotted days

This Urvasie is given thee for wife

And lovely helpmeet.

URVASIE

Oh, a sword is taken
Out of my heart.

PURURAVAS

In all I am Indra's servant.

NARAD

'Tis fitting. Thou for Indra, he for thee,
With interchange of lordly offices.
So sun illumines the fire, fire the great sun
Ekes out with heat and puissance.

He looks up into the sky.

Rambha, descend

And with thee bring the high investiture
Heaven's King has furnished to crown Ayus, heir
Of great Pururavas.

Apsaras enter with the articles of investiture.

NYMPHS

Lo! Holiness,
That store!

NARAD

Set down the boy upon the chair
Of the anointing.

RAMBHA

Come to me, my child.

She seats the boy.

NARAD (*pouring the cruse of holy oil on the boy's head*)
Complete the ritual.

RAMBHA (*after so doing*)
Bow before the Sage,
My child, and touch thy parents' feet.

Ayus obeys.

NARAD

Be happy.

PURURAVAS
Son, be a hero and thy line's upholder.

URVASIE
Son, please thy father.

BARDS (*within*)
Victory to Empire's heir.

Strophe

First the immortal seer of Brahma's kind
And had the soul of Brahma; Atri's then
The Moon his child; and from the Moon again
Sprang Budha-Hermes, moonlike was his mind.
Pururavas was Budha's son and had
Like starry brightness. Be in thee displayed
Thy father's kindly gifts. All things that bless
Mortals, descend in thy surpassing race.

Antistrophe

Thy father like Himaloy highest stands
Of all the high, but thou all steadfast be,
Unchangeable and grandiose like the sea,
Fearless, surrounding Earth with godlike hands.
Let Empire by division brighter shine;
For so the sacred Ganges snow and pine
Favours, yet the same waters she divides
To Ocean and his vast and heaving tides.

NYMPHS (*approaching Urvasie*)

O thou art blest, our sister, in thy son
Crowned heir to Empire, in thy husband blest
From whom thou shalt not part.

URVASIE

My happiness
Is common to you all, sweet sisters: such
Our love was always.

She takes Ayus by the hand.

Come with me, dear child,
To fall down at thy elder mother's feet.

PURURAVAS

Stay yet; we all attend you to the Queen.

NARAD

Thy son's great coronation mindeth me
Of yet another proud investiture, —
Kartikaya crowned by Maghavan, to lead
Heaven's armies.

PURURAVAS

Highly has the King of Heaven
Favoured him, Narad; how should he not be
Most great and fortunate?

NARAD

What more shall Indra do
For King Pururavas?

PURURAVAS

Heaven's King being pleased,
What further can I need? Yet this I'll ask.

He comes forward and speaks towards the audience.

Learning and Fortune, Goddesses that stand
In endless opposition, dwellers rare

Under one roof, in kindly union join
To bless for glory and for ease the good.
This too; may every man find his own good,
And every man be merry of his mind,
And all men in all lands taste all desire.

In the Gardens of Vidisha
or
Malavica and the King

ACT I

Dramatis Personae

AGNIMITRA, King in Vidisha.

VAHATAVA, his Minister.

GAUTAMA, the Court jester.

HORODUTTA, Master of the Stage to the King.

GANADASA, Master of the Stage to the Queen.

MAUDGALYA, the King's Chamberlain.

DHARINIE, Queen in Vidisha.

IRAVATIE, a royal princess, wife of Agnimitra.

MALAVICA, daughter of the Prince Madhavsena of Vidurbha,
disguised as a maid in waiting on the Queen.

COWSHIQIE, a female anchorite, sister of Madhavsena's
Minister.

VOCOOLAVALICA, maid in waiting on the Queen, friend of
Malavica.

[COMUDICA, maid in waiting on the Queen, friend of Vo-
coolavalica.]

Act I

Scene I

Place. Outside the Hall of Music in the Palace grounds.

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 belovèd is one body and yet
The first of passionless ascetics stands;
Who in His eightfold body bears the world
Yet knows not egoism, may He from you
Dispel the darkness and reveal the light,
The paths of righteousness to reillumine.

And after the invocation the Manager speaks.

MANAGER

Here, friend.

Enter his Assistant.

ASSISTANT

Behold me.

MANAGER

Friend, the audience bid me
Stage for this high and jovial feast of Spring
The drama, Malavica and the King,
Plotted by Kalidasa. Therefore begin
The overture.

ASSISTANT

But, Sir, 'tis very strange.
Are there not classics old, are there not works
Of Bhasa and Saumilla, famous plays,
Great Kaviputra's name and more to match
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 learn, 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 track and walks
By others' seeing.

ASSISTANT

Well, Sir, you are the judge.

MANAGER

Haste then, for since with bended head I took
The learnèd audience' will, I have no ease
Till its performance, to which my forward mind
Speeds like yon maiden, Dharinie's attendant,
Light-footed to her royal mistress' will.

Exeunt. Enter Vocoolavalica.

VOCOOLAVALLICA

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
Here in this Hall of Music.

Enter Comudica, a ring in the palm of her hand.
Comudica,

What, have you taken to religion then
That you go sailing past me with an eye
Abstracted, nor one glance for me?

COMUDICA

What, you,
Vocoolavalica? I was absorbed
In the delightful jewel on this ring
Fresh from the jeweller's hands for our great lady.
Look, 'tis a Python-seal.

VOCOOLAVALLICA

O heavens, how lovely!
Well might you have no eyes for aught besides.
Your fingers are all blossoming with the jewel!
These rays of light are golden filaments
Just breaking out of bud.

COMUDICA

Sweet, whither bound?

VOCOOLAVALLICA

To the Stage-Master. Our lady seeks to know
What sort of pupil Malavica proves,
How quick to learn.

COMUDICA

O tell me, is it true
That Malavica by this study kept
Far from his eye, was by our lord the King
Seen lately?

VOCOOLAVALLICA

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

COMUDICA

How chanced it?

VOCOOLAVALICA

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?

VOCOOLAVALICA

Greetings;

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

COMUDICA

Marked you the words?

VOCOOLAVALICA

"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?

VOCOOLAVALICA

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?

VOCOOLAVALICA

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 the ring.

Exit.

VOCOOLAVALICA

Who comes out from the Hall
Of Music? Oh, 'tis Ganadas 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 vain-glory 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 meet, disparted 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
However various, gathers from the stage,
Rapt with some pleasing echo of itself,
Peculiar pleasure. Thus one self-same art

Meets in their nature's wants most various minds.

VOCOOLAVALICA (*coming forward*)

Obeisance to the noble Ganadasa.

GANADASA

Live long, my child.

VOCOOLAVALICA

My lady sent me here
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 improving seems
To teach her teacher.

VOCOOLAVALICA (*aside*)

Victory! I foresee
Iratie already conquered. (*aloud*) Sir,
The pupil gains his every aim of study
Of whom a Master says so much.

GANADASA

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

VOCOOLAVALICA

The brother of my lady in a womb
Less noble got, who for my lord commands
His watchful frontier fortress by the stream
Mundaquinie, Verosegn, 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 that Ocean-harboured shell
Empearls and grows a rareness.

VOCOOLAVALICA

Where is she now?

GANADASA

Tired with long studying the five parts of gesture
Yonder she rests; enjoying the cool breeze
Against the window that o'erlooks these waters,
There you shall find her.

VOCOOLAVALICA

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.

Exeunt.

Scene II

In a room of the Palace the King is seated with the Minister, Vahatava in attendance, Vahatava reading a letter. The attendants at some distance in the background of the stage.

AGNIMITRA

Well, Vahatava, what answers the Vidurbhan?

VAHATAVA

His own destruction.

AGNIMITRA

Let me hear this letter.

VAHATAVA

Thus runs his present missive: — In these terms
Your Highness writes to me, “Prince Madhavsén,
Thy uncle’s son, then journeying 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 prisoned. Thou, if thou regardest me,
Unbind him with his wife and sister straight.”
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. Yet if
Your Highness wills indeed to free my cousin,
Hear then my only terms. First from your dungeons

The Premier of the Maurya princes loose
And brother of my queen: this done, at once
Are Madhavsena's farther bonds excused."

AGNIMITRA (*angrily*)

How! dares the weakling trade with me in favours?
Knows he himself so little? Vahatava,
Command towards Vidurbha the division
That under Verosegn new-mobilized
Stands prompt to arms. I will exterminate
This man who rises up my enemy.
Vidurbha was my natural foeman first
But now grows such in action.

VAHATAVA

As the King wills.

AGNIMITRA

Nay, Vahatava, but what thinkst thou in this?

VAHATAVA

Your Highness speaks by the strict rule of statecraft.
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 Tuntra's author and his word
A gospel; we will seize this plea to set
Our war in motion.

VAHATAVA

I shall so give order.

*Exit. The attendants resume their places each in consonance
with his office. To them enter Gautama.*

GAUTAMA (*aside*)

Now can I tell the King that not in vain
He looked to me for counsel, when he said
“Gautama, know you not some exquisite cunning,
Whereby that face of Malavica by chance
At first beheld and in dumb counterfeit
With the dear life may bless my vision?” By this
I think I have planned somewhat worth the telling.

AGNIMITRA

Here comes my premier in another branch
Of politics.

GAUTAMA

I greet the King.

AGNIMITRA

Be seated.

Well, Gautama? What, was your wisdom’s eye
Busy with plan and purpose, has its roving
Caught somewhere any glimpse?

GAUTAMA

Ask me, my lord,

Of your desire’s accomplishment.

AGNIMITRA

So soon!

GAUTAMA

I’ll tell you in your ear, sir.

AGNIMITRA

Gautama,

Most 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
Turns to a nothing. 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!

Here is the flower on your good tree of counsel.

GAUTAMA

Nor will the fruit lag far behind.

Enter the Chamberlain, Maudgalya.

MAUDGALYA

The Premier

Sends word, Sire, that Your Highness' will ere now
Is set in motion. Here besides the great
Stage-Masters, Horodutt and Ganadasa,
Storming with anger, mad with emulation,
Themselves like two incarnate passions, seek
Your Highness' audience.

AGNIMITRA

Admit them instantly.

Exit Maudgalya and re-enter ushering in the Stage-masters.

MAUDGALYA

This way, high sirs, most noble, 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 its vast unresting surge
Stales never, but each changing second brings
New aspects of its grandeur to the eye
That lives with waves, even as this kingly brow
Each time I see it.

HORODUTTA

For 'tis no mortal greatness
But God's own glory in an earthly dwelling.
Thus I, admitted by this janitor
Of princes, led to the foot of his high throne
By one that in his eye and puissance moves,
Feel wordlessly forbidden by his glories
That force me to avert my dazzled gaze.

MAUDGALYA

Here sits my lord; approach him, worthies.

GANADASA AND HORODUTTA

Our sovereign! Greeting,

AGNIMITRA

O welcome, both! Chairs for these signiors.
What brings into the presence at this hour
Usual to study both the high Stage-Masters?

GANADASA

Sire, hear me. From a great and worshipped Master
My art was studied; I have justified
My genius in the scenic poms of dance;

The King and Queen approve me.

AGNIMITRA

Surely we know this.

GANADASA

Yet being what I am, I have been taxed,
Insulted, censured by this Horodutta.
“You are not worth the dust upon my shoes”; —
Before the greatest subject in the land
Thus did he scorn me.

HORODUTTA

He first began detraction;
Crying to me, “As well, sir, might your worship
Compete with me as one particular puddle
Equal itself to ocean.” Judge, my lord,
Betwixt my art and his as well in science
As in the execution. Than Your Highness
Where can we find a more discerning critic
Or just examiner?

GAUTAMA

A good proposal.

GANADASA

Most excellent. Attend, my lord, and judge.

AGNIMITRA

A moment’s patience, gentlemen. The Queen
Might in our verdict tax a partial judgment.
Were it not better then she too should watch
This trial? The most learned Cowshiqie
Shall give her aid too.

GAUTAMA

This is well-urged, my lord.

HORODUTTA AND GANADASA

Your Highness' pleasure shall command our patience.

AGNIMITRA

Then go, Maudgalya, tell Her Highness all
That here has chanced and let her come to us
With the holy Mother.

MAUDGALYA

Sire, I go.

Exit and re-enter with the Queen and Cowshiqie.

Approach,

My lady, Dharinie.

DHARINIE

Tell me, Mother,

What think you of this hot and sudden passion
Between the two Stage-Masters?

COWSHIQIE

Idly, daughter,

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

DHARINIE

'Tis so, but the King's favour weighs him down
Wresting preeminence to that other.

COWSHIQIE

Forget not

That you too bear the style of Majesty.
Think that you are an Empress. For if fire
From the sun's grace derive his flaming glories,
Night too, the imperial darkness, solemnizes
The moon with splendour.

GAUTAMA

Ware hawk, my lord the King.
Look where the Queen comes and with her our own
Back-scratcher in Love's wrestling-match, the learned
Dame Cowshiqie.

AGNIMITRA

I see her. How fair, how noble
My lady shines adorned with holy symbols
And Cowshiqie before her anchorite.
Religion's self incarnate so might move
When high Philosophy comes leading her
Into the hearts of men.

COWSHIQIE

Greeting, Your Highness.

AGNIMITRA

Mother, I greet thee.

COWSHIQIE

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

DHARINIE

Victory attend my lord.

AGNIMITRA

Welcome, my Queen.
Pray you, be seated, Mother; in this collision
Of two great masters, it is just that you
Should take the critic's chair.

COWSHIQIE

Your Highness seeks

To laugh at me; for who is the fond man
 Would leave the opulent, great metropolis
 To test his jewels in some petty village?

AGNIMITRA

No, no, you are the learned Cowshiqie.
 Then too the Queen and I are both suspect
 For partial judges.

GANADASA AND HORODUTTA

It is no more than truth.
 Unbiased is the learned Mother's mind;
 Her censure by defect and merit swayed
 Leaves no reserves behind.

AGNIMITRA

Begin debate then.

COWSHIQIE

The soul of drama in performance lies
 And not for tilting theories is a field.
 How says my lady?

DHARINIE

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

GANADASA

Her Highness must not dwarf me in her thinkings
 Misdemeing 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.

DHARINIE

But surely, Mother,

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

COWSHIQIE

Surely.

DHARINIE

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

COWSHIQIE

This. One man has art,
Another 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 inert or poor. In both who's perfect,
Him at the head we put of art's instructors.

GAUTAMA

Sirs, you have heard the Mother's argument,
The brief and marrow being this, that judgment
Goes by some visible proof of your instruction.

HORODUTTA

We both consent.

GANADASA

Thus then it stands, my lady.

DHARINIE

Then if a pupil brainless or inapt
Blur in the act the Master's fine instruction,
Reflects the blot upon her teacher?

AGNIMITRA

Madam,

So still 'tis judged.

GANADASA

For who, a block unworthy
Accepting, hews from it a masterpiece,
Shows the quick marrow of his genius.

DHARINIE (*aside*)

What more?

Too much already I give my lord the rein,
Feeding his eagerness with my indulgence.

(*aloud*)

Desist, desist, this is an idle movement
And leads to nothing worth.

GAUTAMA

Well said, my lady.

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

Indeed my lady's words
Lend themselves to no other fair construction.
To all which hear the just and sole reply.
That man, styled artist, who, of his mere wage
Careful or place established, censure brooks,
Most cowardlike withdrawing from debate,
To whom the noble gains of learning serve
Merely for livelihood, — that man they call
A hawker trafficking in glorious art,
No artist.

But your pupil, recently
Initiate, just begins to learn. Teaching
Yet inchoate, art of itself not sure
'Tis 'gainst all canons to make public yet.

Even therefore is my strong persistence, lady.

If it be so, unto the Mother both
Their show of fair instruction make.

Against all rule; for even with a mind
Omniscient in art it were a fault
To mount the judge's seat in camera,
Without assessors: the unaided judgment
Was ever fallible.

I am awake, fool,
And see, though you would to my waking eyes
Persuade me that I am asleep and blind.

*She turns in jealous anger her face from the King.
Agnimitra, motioning to Cowshiqie, points to the Queen.*

COWSHIQIE

Though it be moonlike bright, yet turn not thus
Thy face of beauty, child, from eyes that love,
For a nothing. Even o'er their subject lords
Fair women nobly bred use not to wield,
Causeless, a tyrant wrath.

GAUTAMA

Not causeless, lady.
The loyal mind must by whate'er device
Save its own party from defeat. You're lucky,
Good Ganadas, — rescued by woman's wit
Under this fair pretence of wrath! I see,
Good training always can be bettered, sirs,
And tutoring makes perfect.

GANADASA

Listen, lady,
Thus are we construed! Therefore must I deem
Myself cast off, disowned, discharged my place
Who, challenged in debate and confident
To show the skilful transference of my art,
Stand by my lady interdict.
(rises from his seat as if to go)

DHARINIE *(aside)*

What help?

(aloud)

The Master of his school is autocrat,
His pupils' sovereign. I am dumb.

GANADASA

In vain

Was I so long alarmed then; still I keep

My lady's favour. But since the Queen, my lord,
Has given her sanction, name the scenic plot
Whose rendering into studied dance shall prove
The teacher masterly.

AGNIMITRA

You rule here, Mother.

COWSHIQIE

Something still works within my lady's mind
Yet ireful-unappeased. This gives me pause.

DHARINIE

Apprehend nothing, speak. Always I am
Lady and absolute over mine own household.

AGNIMITRA

O'er these and over me too, dearest lady.

DHARINIE

Come, Mother, speak.

COWSHIQIE

I choose, my lord, the dance
They call the Dance of Double Entendre, complete
In four brief parts of lyric motion. Both
Shall so enact a single argument
And the gradations twixt these two shall best
Be judged of worse or better point by point.

HORODUTTA AND GANADASA

This we approve.

GAUTAMA

Let both your factions then
Make in the Theatre-Hall good scenic show
And when all's ready, send your messenger

To call us, or better the deep tambour's bruit
Shall draw us from our chairs.

HORODUTTA

We shall do so.

Ganadasa looks at the Queen.

DHARINIE (*to Ganadasa*)

Go and prevail! Think me not heart-opposed
Or careless of my Master's victory.

They are about to go.

COWSHIQIE

Stay! More to mark each studious grace of limb,
Movement and beauty, let the characters
Enter, not by their stage apparel cumbered,
But loosely robed as in their natural hours.
I speak this in my office as a judge
To both of you.

HORODUTTA AND GANADASA

We had done this, uncounselled.

Exeunt.

DHARINIE

My lord, my lord, in your affairs of State
Could you but show as deft a management,
As supple a resource, the realm indeed
Would profit!

AGNIMITRA

Let not your swift brain conceive
Misunderstanding merely; not of mine
Is this an acted plot. Ever we see
Equal proficiency in one same art
Breed jealousies emulous of place and justling
Each other's glory.

The sound of a tambour within.

COWSHIQIE

Hark, the overture!

To the deep Peacock-passion modulated
Twixt high and base, the tambour's rolling voice
Its melody half-thundrous measures out
To the exultant mind, that lifts itself
To listen. Hark! The peacocks cry, misled,
With rain-expectant throats upraised to heaven,
Thinking a reboant thunder-cloud's alarum
Is riding on the wind.

AGNIMITRA (*to Dharinie*)

We should be swift

To form the audience, madam.

DHARINIE (*aside*)

How has my lord

Forgot his breeding!

GAUTAMA (*aside*)

Softly ho! Too quick

A gallop and my lady puts the snaffle
Of disappointment on.

AGNIMITRA

I strive for patience,

But the loud tambour thunders haste to me;
It seems the passionate feet of my desire
As it descends to me with armèd tread
Sounding gigantic on the stairs of heaven.

Exeunt.

APPENDIX

A Fragment from Act II

GANADASA

My lord, the dance we show, epode and ode,
Strophe and antistrophe, in four parts
Of middle time compact — Sarmishta made,
Yayati's wife in the great olden days —
Of which the fourth last act let the Kind Sir
Give all his mind to hear.

AGNIMITRA

From high respect I owe
The great Stage-master I am all attention.

The Birth of the War-God

EDITORS' NOTE

In the first and third versions of this translation, Sri Aurobindo left some lines or parts of lines blank, apparently with the intention of returning to them later. Such incomplete portions are indicated by square brackets enclosing a blank of appropriate size.

The Birth of the War-God

STANZAIC RENDERING OF THE OPENING OF CANTO I

1

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
Measuring 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
 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 his low-hung plateaus' coolness won
 The Siddhas in soft shade repose, but run
 Soon glittering upwards by wild rain 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 the dangerous passing 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 crimson pages that with passion burn
 Where heaven's divine Circes pen heart-moving things.

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

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.

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

Himaloy's snows in frosted slabs distress
The delicate heels of his maned Kinnaris,
And yet for all that chilly path's unease
They change not their slow motion's swaying grace
[]

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 guardian love and kindly might.

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.

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

Weary with tracking the wild deer for rest
The hunter bares his forehead to the fay
Breezes which sprinkle Ganges' cascade spray
Shaking the cedars on Himaloy's breast,
Gambolling with the proud peacock's gorgeous-plumed
array.

16

Circling his mountains in its path below
The sun awakes with upward-glittering wands
What still unplucked by the seven sages' hands
Remains of the bright lotuses that glow
In tarns upon his tops with heaven-kissing strands.

17

Because the Soma plant for sacrifice
He rears and for his mass upbearing earth
The Lord of creatures gave to this great birth
His sacrificial share and ministries
And empire over all the mountains to his worth.

18

Companion of Meru, their high floor,
In equal wedlock he to his mighty bed
The mindborn 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.

The Birth of the War-God

BLANK VERSE RENDERING OF CANTO I

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 dwells 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 mid all his crowding gifts,
As faints in luminous floods the gloomy mark
On the moon's argent disk; 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 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,
 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,
 Faint oilless lamps, give light to see her 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 flutes
 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 pipe, tune-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 their 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 shamefast love, then hanging come
The convex 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,
 Nor felt the anguish of the lightning's bite.
 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 soulless 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 great 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 this 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 after-days 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,
 Heaven's silent path by Ganges voiceful made,
 Or 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
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 limned a red rose at every step
On the enamoured earth; like magic flowers
They moved from spot to spot their petalled bloom;
Her motion studied from the queenly swans
With 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. Well the rest
Might tax his labour to build half such grace,
Yet was that miracle accomplished. Soft

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 her 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
 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 bow 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 lustres of the moon. Her smile
 Parted 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

The mane of lions and the drift of clouds.
To clasp 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
Here 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.
She waited like an offering for the fire.
For to compel himself the divine mind
He dared not, but remained like a great soul
Which watches for the destined hour's approach
Curbing the impatience of its godlike hopes.
But he the spirit of the world, forsaken
By that first body of the mother of all
Nor to her second birth yet come, abode
Unwed, ascetic, stern, mid crowded worlds
Alone 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 he ceased; like sculptured marble still
To meditation turned he yoked his spirit;
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

Mid cedars sprinkled with the sacred dew
 Of Ganges. Softly murmuring their chants
 In strains subdued the Kinnar minstrels sang,
 On 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 hillside's flowers.
 On the white rocks compact of frozen snow,
 His great bull voicing low 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
 Built daily his eternal shape of flame
 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.
 Nor though to remote trance near beauty brings
 Its lovely danger, was that gift refused.
 Surrounded by all sweetness in the world
 He can be passionless who is creation's king.
 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 toil
 In the cool moonbeams from the Eternal's head.
 So had they met on summits of the world
 Like the still Spirit and its unwakened 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.

The Birth of the War-God

EXPANDED VERSION OF CANTO I AND PART OF CANTO II

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. Of such a strength
High-piled, so 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. Meru is near,
 The heavenly unseen height; like visible hints
 Of his great subtle growths of peace and joy
 Her musing woods arise; gems brilliant-rayed
 She bears and herbs on every mountain marge,
 Gifts of the mother to her mighty child.
 In such warm infinite riches has she 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 stain on the moon's argent disk,
 They have forgot his chill severity
 In sweetness which escapes from him on life.
 For as from passion of some austere soul
 Delight and love have stolen to rapturous birth,
 From iceborn waters his delicious vales
 Are fed. Indulgent like a smile of God,
 White grandeurs overlook wild green romance.
 He keeps his summits for immortal steps.
 The life of man upon his happier slopes
 Roams wild and bare and free; the life of gods
 Pronely from the unattainable summits climbs
 Down the rude greatness of his huge rock-park.
 As if rejecting glory of its veils
 It leaps 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 dim whisperings in the night.
 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
Betray 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,
They have kissed 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
When the strong forest-wanderer is lain
Twined with his love, marrying with hers his sighs,
Give light to see her joy those thrilled rocks keep
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 by and leave our hearts
Startled with hintings of a greater life.
The Kinnar passes singing in his glades.
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 by 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 slow motion's tardy rich appeal.
 She too in grottoed caverns lies embraced.
 Forced from the shamefast sweetness of her limbs
 The subtle raiment leaves her fainting hands
 To give her striving 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
 In glen and valley; or upon brown banks
 They lie close-bosomed of colour amorous.
 The smooth gold of their limbs by harder hues
 Stained curiously makes contrasts bright, to seize
 The straying look of some world-lover's eyes,
 As when Himaloy's metals flinging back
 Upon the hangings of the tawny heavens
 From glistened rocks their brilliant colourings
 Like an untimely sunset's glories sleep.
 Far down the clouds droop to his girdle-waist
 Holding the tearful burden of their hearts,
 Drifting grey melancholy through the air;
 There on the low-hung plateaus' wideness lain
 The Siddhas in soft shade repose, or up
 Chased by wild driving rain for refuge flee
 To summits splendid in the veiless sun.
 Earth's mighty animal life has reached his woods.

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 breezes and white gleamings leap:
Such candours 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
To the impartial refuge of their love
Out of the ordered cruelties of life,
He takes to 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 uncultured
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.

With equal rites he to his giant bed
 The mind-born child of the world-fathers bore.
 Mena, a goddess of devising heart,
 Whom for her wisdom brooding seers adored,
 The shapers of all living images,
 He won to shape in her his stable race.
 Their joys of love were like themselves immense.
 Then in the wide felicitous lapse of time
 The happy tumult of her being tossed
 In long and puissant ecstasies 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,
 Race of a cavernous and monstrous world,
 With strange eyes gleaming past the glaucous wave,
 And jewelled tresses glittering through the foam.
 Not that his natural air, who great had grown
 Amid the brilliant perils of the sun;
 From Indra tearing the great mountains' wings
 With which they soared against the threatened sky,
 Below the slippery fields the fugitive sank.
 His sheltered essence bore no cruel sign,
 Nor felt the anguish of the heavenly scars.
 They disappointed of that proud desire
 Mixed in a larger joy. It took not earth
 For narrow base, but forced the heavens down
 Into their passion-trance clasped on the couch
 Calm and stupendous of the snow-cold heights.
 Then to a nobler load her womb gave place.
 For Daksha's daughter, Shiva's wife, had left
 Her body lifeless in her father's halls
 In that proud sacrifice and fatal, she
 The undivided mother infinite
 Indignant for his severing thought of God.
 Now in a trance profound of joy by her
 Conceived, she sprang again to 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 she came as Fortune to a 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 unsated eyes
And 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
Which sailing come upon the wanderer wind
Amid the infinite sweets of honeyed spring
To choose the mango-flower's 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.
 At every step on the enamoured earth
 Her feet threw a red rose, like magic flowers
 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.
 And falling 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 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 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 would make, victorious in defeat,
His chains to bow 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
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 his marvels 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.
 His 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
 In crowded worlds unwed, ascetic, stern,
 Alone 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 strains 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 [] 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 low 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,
Then showering 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 summits of the world
Like the still Spirit and its unwakened 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.

CANTO II

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 Soul 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 suppliants 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 extended steps
To thee are casual footprints, thy small base
For luminous systems measureless to our mind,
Whose difficult toil thy light and happy smile
Sustains, O wide discoverer of Space.
To thee our adoration, triune Form!
Imagining her triple mood thou gav'st
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 drew this light of mind,
This mighty stirring and these failings dark.
In thee we live, by thee we act thy thoughts.
Thou gav'st 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,
Thou bor'st thy being, a Spirit who is Man.
All are thy creatures: in the meeting vast
Of thy swift Nature with thy brilliant Mind,
Thou mad'st 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,
 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 each 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 are born.
 They name thee Nature, she the mystic law
 Of all things done and seen who drives us, mother
 And giver of our spirits' seekings, won
 In her enormous strength, though won from her.
 They know thee 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 viewst 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, we bow, who from thy being came,
To thee in prayer. Is it not thou who prayst,
Spirit transcendent and eternal All?"
Then to the wise in heaven the original Seer,
Maker and poet of the magic spheres,
Shedding a smile in whose benignancy
Some sweet return like pleasant sunlight glowed,
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 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 powers dejected, frail?
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 pride.
Varoona's unescaped and awful noose
Hangs slack, impuissant, and its ruthless coils

Are a charmed serpent's folds; a child can smite
 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 sun-gods 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 snaky 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 ye come to me?
 What prayer is silent on your lips? Did I
 Not make the circling suns and give to you
 My 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
Stir 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 walk his garden-keepers and must fill
The branches with chaotic wealth of flowers.
Autumn and spring and summer joining hands
[] him with their multitudinous sweets,
Their married fragrances surprise the air.
Ocean his careful servant brings to birth
The ripening 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
And even great Indra sends him 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
And only by destruction and by pain
Feels in the sobs and tears of suffering things
A crude reality of [] force.

Notes and Fragments

Skeleton Notes on the Kumarasambhavam

Canto V

तथा समक्षं दहता मनोभवं पिनाकिना भग्नमनोरथा सती ।
निनिन्द रूपं हृदयेन पार्वती प्रियेषु सौभाग्यफला हि चारुता ॥१॥

1. Thus by Pinaka's wielder burning the Mind-born before her eyes baffled of her soul's desire, the Mountain's daughter blamed her own beauty in her heart, for loveliness has then only fruit when it gives happiness in the beloved.

तथा may go either with दहता or भग्नमनोरथा; but it has more point with the latter.

समक्षं. The Avachuri takes singularly जयाविजयाप्रत्यक्षं, i.e. before Jaya & Vijaya, her friends. The point would then be that the humiliation of her beauty was rendered still more poignant by occurring before witnesses. In this case, however, the obscurity caused by the omission of the names would be the grossest of rhetorical faults. समक्षं by itself can mean nothing but "before her (Parvati's) very eyes" अक्षणोः समीपं as Mallinatha rightly renders it.

निनिन्द found fault with, censured as defective.

हि. S [*Sukhavabodha-tika*] takes this as the emphatic हि (निश्चितं). It is more appropriate and natural to take it in the usual sense of "for", giving the reason or justification (Mallinatha) for her finding fault with her own beauty.

प्रियेषु loc. of object (विषये) "with regard to those loved"

सौभाग्य. The "felicity" of women consists in the love and welfare of those they love. Here only the first element is intended; so here = प्रियवाङ्मयं, the affection of the beloved.

इयेष सा कर्तुमवन्ध्यरूपतां समाधिमास्थाय तपोभिरात्मनः ।
अवाप्यते वा कथमन्यथा द्वयं तथाविधं प्रेम पतिश्च तादृशः ॥ २ ॥

2. By asceticisms she wished, embracing mind-centred meditation, to make her beauty bear its fruit of love; for how else should these two be won, such love and such a husband?

अवन्ध्यरूपतां literally the “unsterile-beauty of herself”. Notice the extraordinary terseness which Kalidasa has imparted to his style by utilising every element of pithiness the Sanscrit language possesses.

समाधिम्. The bringing (धा) together (सम्) and centring on (आ) a single subject of all the faculties; used technically of the stage of ध्यान, meditation, in which the mind with all the senses gathered into it is centred on God within itself and insensible to outside impressions.

तपोभिः. To translate this word “penances”, as is frequently done, is altogether improper. The idea of self-imposed or priest-imposed penalty for sin which the English word contains does not enter even in the slightest degree into the idea of तपः which implies no more than a fierce and strong effort of all the human powers towards any given end. According to Hindu ideas this could only be done to its best effect by conquering the body for the mind; hence the word finally came to be confined to the sense of ascetic practices having this object. See Introduction for the history & philosophy of this word.¹

वा “or” answering an implied objection. “She had to do this; or (if you say she had not) how else could she succeed?” वा in this use comes to mean “for” in its argumentative, not in its causative or explanatory sense.

अवाप्यते the present in its potential sense.

अन्यथा otherwise, i.e. by any less strenuous means. Cf. Manu quoted by Mallinatha

यद् दुष्करं यद् दुरापं यद् दुर्गं यच्च दुस्तरम् ।
तत् सर्वं तपसा प्राप्यं तपो हि दुरतिक्रमम् ॥

¹ This Introduction was not written or has not survived. — Ed.

तथाविधं प्रेम. Anticipating the result of the तपः. The love of Siva for Uma was so great that he made himself “one body with his beloved”, one half male, the other female. See Introduction for the Haragauri image.

तादृशः. Mallinatha glosses “i.e. Mrityunjaya; deathconquering (an epithet of Siva). For the two things desired of women are that their husbands should love them and that they should not die before them.” This may have been Kalidasa’s drift, but it is surely more natural to take तादृश of शिव’s qualities & greatness generally; “such a lord as the Almighty Lord of the Universe”, तादृशः जगदीशः Kv [*Kumarasambhava-vritti*].

निश्चयं चैनां तपसे कृतोद्यमां सुतां गिरीशप्रतिसक्तमानसाम् ।
उवाच मेना परिरभ्य वक्षसा निवारयन्ती महतो मुनिव्रतात् ॥ ३ ॥

3. But hearing of her daughter soul-compelled towards the Mountain-Lord towards asceticism endeavouring, said Mena to her embracing her to her bosom, forbidding from that great [vow of an] eremite.

C [*Charitrvardhana*] gives this verse as क्षेपक ; it could certainly be omitted without loss to the sense but not without great loss to the emotional beauty of the passage.

कृतोद्यमां. उद्यमः here in the sense of उद्योगः, preparatory action or efforts. Apte takes उद्यमः here in the sense of “exertion or perseverance”; the commentary [Kv] of “fixed resolve”, the sense in which Apte takes it in the [fifth] sloka. See under that sloka. The word really means “active steps”, “active efforts”.

मुनिव्रतात् a vow practicable only to a saint.

दुःखेष्वनुद्विग्नमनाः सुखेषु विगतस्पृहः ।

वीतरागभयक्रोधः स्थितधीर्मुनिरुच्यते ॥

“Whose mind is not shaken in sorrows, who has banished the craving for delight, who has passed beyond joy & terror & wrath, whose thought is calm & firm, he is called a saint.”

Bhagavadgita 2.56.

मनीषिताः सन्ति गृहेषु देवतास्तपः क्व वत्से क्व च तावकं वपुः ।
पदं सहेत भ्रमरस्य पेलवं शिरीषपुष्पं न पुनः पतत्रिणः ॥ ४ ॥

4. There are gods desired that dwell in homes; O my child, how alien is austerity from this body of thine; the delicate Sirisha flower may bear the footfall of the bee, but not of the winged bird.

मनीषिताः formed from मनीषा desire (मन् + इष् + आ) by the application of the passive suffix इतः = desired अभीष्टाः, अभिलषिताः. I do not understand on what principle of grammar the Avachuri followed by Deshpande takes this form as = मनोऽभिलाषदात्र्यः, “desired” taking the sense of “able” or “thought able to fulfil desire”. This is but one more instance of the blameable slovenliness of this commentary. Adopting this untenable rendering these commentators further suppose that the gods in the house are to be worshipped by Parvati for the purpose of gaining Siva as her husband. But it is difficult to see how other gods could give her the Supreme, and in any case मनीषिता can only mean “desired”, which renders this version impossible. But desired by whom? If by Parvati, we must suppose Mena to imagine her daughter aiming simply at making a good match in the celestial world. The sense will then be “Thou desirest a God in marriage; well, there are gods in our home whom thou canst win by easy adoration, while Siva must be wooed by harsh asceticism in the woods.” Or it may signify “desired generally, desired by others”, when it will have the force of desirable. This is supported by the later इयं महेन्द्रप्रभृतीनधिश्रियश्चतुर्दिगीशानवमत्य मानिनी & Siva Purana. I prefer therefore the latter interpretation.

गृहेषु. The plural may here be used in the sense of a great mansion. The old Aryan house seems to have [been] many-storied, each storey consisting of several flats; and in the palaces of princes and great nobles, it was composed of several wings and even separate piles of building. The female apartments especially formed a piece apart. Cf. the Siva Purana where Mena says

कुत्र यासि तपः कर्तुं देवाः सन्ति गृहे मम ।
तीर्थानि च विचित्राणि सन्ति किं न पितुर्गृहे ॥

“Wherefore goest thou forth to practise austerities; gods are there in my house and wondrous holinesses, and are there none in thy father’s mansion?” A similar rendering is also favoured by another passage of the same Purana.

इति स्वतनयावाक्यं श्रुत्वा तु पितरौ मुने ।
 ऊचतुर्दुःखितौ भूत्वा बाष्पगद्गदया गिरा ॥
 तस्मात् त्वं भक्तियुक्तेन पूजयस्व गृहे शिवं ।
 उ मा गच्छ वनं घोरं सर्वविघ्नास्पदं सदा ॥

It is perhaps a reminiscence of these lines that induces the Avachuri & Deshpande to render “Worship the gods in the house to gain Siva for husband”; but this is incompatible with मनीषिताः. If the Siva Purana then were Kalidasa’s authority, we should have no choice as to our interpretation, but I have tried to show that the Siva Purana and not Kalidasa was the borrower. It is possible therefore that the former may in borrowing have misinterpreted गृहेषु and that the word has a strictly plural sense. “There are gods desired that dwell in homes,” i.e. not like the undesirable & homeless Siva, who must be sought by austerity in wild woods and desolate mountains. The only objection to this rendering which certainly gives the best & most poetic sense, is that the contrast with Siva is implied and not expressed, while तपः immediately following seems to be opposed to household worship. But Mena under the circumstances would not venture openly to dispraise Siva; implied dispraise therefore is what we should naturally expect. Such suppression of the implied contrast, one term expressed & the other left to be gathered is not in itself unpoetic and might be expected in a work written under the strong influence of the elliptical & suggestive style of the Mahabharata.

The reading गृहेऽपि would of course leave no doubt; it confines us to our first rendering.

क्व . . . क्व. Again the characteristic Sanscrit idiom implying महदन्तरं “a far cry”. It is a far cry from your tender body to the harshness of ascetic austerities. Notice again the fine precision, the netteté of Kalidasa’s style; there are no epithets with तपः & वपुः, these being sufficiently implied in the contrasting क्व . . . क्व and in the simile that follows.

शिरीषपुष्पं. Cf. the Parvati-Parinaya परुषस्तपोविशेषस्तव पुनरङ्गं शिरीषसुकुमारम् । व्यवसितमेतत्कठिनं पार्वति तद् दुष्करमिति प्रतिभाति, a fine Vyasian couplet. “Harsh is this austerity of thy choosing; thy body again is tender as a Sirisha flower; yet iron firm is thy resolve, O Parvati; a hard thing truly this seemeth.” Who is here the borrower, if loan there has been?

पेलवं. The other readings कोमलं & पेशलं are less commendable & not supported by Mallinatha.

पुनः on the other hand, however.

इति ध्रुवेच्छामनुशासती सुतां शशाक मेना न नियन्तुमुद्यमात् ।
क ईप्सितार्थस्थिरनिश्चयं मनः पयश्च निम्नाभिमुखं प्रतीपयेत् ॥ ५ ॥

5. Thus though she urged her, yet could not Mena rein in her daughter's fixed purpose from action; for who can resist a mind steadfastly resolved on the object of its desire or a downward-moving stream?

ध्रुवेच्छाम्. The reading व्रतेच्छाम् is weak & श्रुतेच्छाम् absolutely without force. Neither is noticed by Mallinatha. The point of course is the unspeakable fixity of her resolve and not its object.

नियन्तुमुद्यमात्. The delicate etymological assonance is a fine survival of one of Kalidasa's favourite rhetorical artifices.

उद्यमात्. This word is variously taken in various contexts. S here renders by उत्साह, Apte by “fixed resolve” and Deshpande by “undertaking”, whereas Mallinatha consistently renders by उद्योग. It is as well therefore to fix its exact meaning. The root यम् meaning to put under a strain with उद् “up” in an intensive, implies the strain put on the faculties in preparing for or making a great effort. It means therefore “active effort or endeavour” or else “active preparation”. In this latter sense Apte quotes गन्तुमुद्यमो विहितः = Preparations to go were taken order for. In sloka 3 the dative तपसे having the same force as an infinitive leads us to prefer this meaning; “effort towards austerity” has no meaning [in] the context. I think in this sloka, it has as Mallinatha perceived, the same sense; Uma is still in the stage of preparation, & is not yet even ready to ask her father's consent. Effort or endeavour would therefore be obviously out of place.

Now these are the only two ascertained senses of उद्यम. The sense of उत्साह or undertaking cannot be established and is not recognised by Apte. That of “perseverance”, “fixed resolve” given to it by Kv in sloka 3 and by Apte here, seems to me equally without authority; I believe there is no passage in which उद्यमः occurs where it cannot be rendered by “effort, labour” or preparation. Here moreover M^r Apte is obviously wrong, for the sense of “fixed resolve” has already been given by ध्रुवेच्छाम् and Kalidasa is never tautologous, never expresses the same thing twice over in a line. Perhaps he intends us to take his next quotation, from the Panchatuntra, in this sense उद्यमेन हि सिध्यन्ति कार्याणि न मनोरथैः । But the opposite to मनोरथाः desires is obviously not “perseverance” but “effort”. “It is by active effort and not by mere desires that accomplishment is reached.” For a more detailed discussion of this subject see Excursus.²

पयश्च निम्नाभिमुखं water which has set its face towards descent. पयः the general is here obviously used for प्रवाह the particular.

प्रतीपयेत्. The commentaries take in the sense of “turn back”, most definitely expressed by S, पश्चात्कञ्चालयेत्. Mallinatha recognising that प्रतीपयेत् primarily means प्रतिकूलयेत् oppose, gives that sense & deduces from it प्रतिनिवर्तयेत्. Apte also quotes this passage to establish this sense of प्रतीपय. This of course is taking प्रतीपय = प्रतीपं कृ, प्रतीप being “reverse, inverted”, e.g. 2.25 अम्भसामोघसंरोधः प्रतीपगमनादिव (अनुमीयते) । But प्रतीप also & primarily means adverse, hostile, so प्रतीपयति = प्रतीपः भवति be hostile to, oppose. It might possibly be taken in this sense here, without Mallinatha’s deduction of “turn back”; the general nature of the proposition justifying the more general sense.

कदाचिदासन्नसखीमुखेन सा मनोरथज्ञं पितरं मनस्विनी ।

अयाचतारण्यनिवासमात्मनः फलोदयान्ताय तपःसमाधये ॥ ६ ॥

6. Once she, the clear-minded, by the mouth of her personal friend begged of her father not ignorant of her longing that

² This Excursus was not written or has not survived. — Ed.

she might dwell in the forests there to practise austerity and meditation until she saw fruit of her desire.

कदाचिद् . . . मनस्विनी once, at a certain time. कस्मिंश्चित्काले गते सति says V [Vatsavyasa]. It certainly means that; but that is not the precise shade of expression used by Kalidasa. कदाचिद् means “at a certain time”, and its full force is brought out by मनस्विनी. The commentators are all astray in their rendering of this word, even Mallinatha rendering स्थिरचित्ता while Avachuri & C give मानिनी & साभिमाना, meaning proud, ambitious which is ludicrously wrong. मनस्वी can mean nothing but wise, intellectual, a thinker. The wisdom of Parvati lay in her choice of a time, hence Kalidasa’s use of कदाचिद् which at first seems awkward & vague, but in relation to मनस्विनी takes force & body. The wisdom is farther specified by मनोरथज्ञं. The commentators take this as meaning “knowing of her desire to marry Hara”, but this was very old news to Himalaya & there would be no point in recording his knowledge here; V’s explanation “for he who does not know the desire, does not give his consent”, is inexpressibly feeble. मनोरथ means here not her desire for Siva, but her desire to practise austerity as a means of winning Siva. Parvati wisely waited till the news of this intention had travelled to her father and he had had time to get accustomed to it and think it over. If she had hastily sprung it on him, his tenderness for her might have led him to join Mena in forbidding the step, which would have been fatal to her plans.

आसन्नसखी. The Avachuri absurdly says तटस्थ, a mediating friend. Mallinatha is obviously right आसन्नसखी. A friend who is always near one, i.e. a personal or intimate friend. Cf. आसन्नपरिचारिका.

मुख. Mallinatha takes = उपाय by means of her friend & quotes Vishwa मुखं निःसरणे वक्त्रे प्रारम्भोपाययोरपि i.e. मुख means “issue”, “face, mouth”, also “beginning” and “means, expedient”. I do not see why we should not take the ordinary sense here.

तपःसमाधये. Mallinatha says तपोनियमार्थम्, and the commentators generally follow him. Apte also takes समाधि = penance

(meaning, of course, austerity), religious obligation (?), devotion to penance. I fail to see why we should foist this sense on समाधिः. There is none of the passages quoted by Apte in support of it which cannot be as well or better translated by concentration. Here we may take as a dwandwa compound “austerity & concentration” or even better in accordance with sloka 2 तपोभिः समाधये concentration to be gained by austerities. See Excursus.

अयाचत only Atmane having the middle sense “to ask for oneself”. Notice the skilful use of compounds in this verse getting its full value out of this element of the language, without overdoing it like Bhavabhuti & other late writers.

अथानुरूपाभिनिवेशतोषिणा कृताभ्यनुज्ञा गुरुणा गरीयसा ।
प्रजासु पञ्चात्प्रथितं तदाख्यया जगाम गौरीशिखरं शिखण्डिमत् ॥ ७ ॥

7. Then by her graver parent permitted, for pleased was he at a passion so worthy of her, she went to the peacockhaunted peak of the White Mother, famed afterwards among the peoples by her name.

अभिनिवेश is anything that takes possession of the mind or the nature, “passion”, “engrossing resolve”. The first seems to me more appropriate here.

शिखण्डिमत्. V considers this merely an ornamental epithet, expressing the beauty of the hill; but ornamental epithets find little place in the कुमारसंभव. Mallinatha explains “not full of wild beasts of prey”, which is forced & difficult to reconcile with विरोधिसत्त्वोज्झितपूर्वमत्सरं in sloka 17. The Avachuri is characteristically inane; it says “Peacocks are without attachment (सङ्ग = attachment to worldly objects), the sight of attachment breaks समाधि”; I have reared peacocks myself and I can assure the reader that they have as much “attachment” as any other creature.

I believe that this is a very beautiful and delicate allusion to the destined fruit of Uma’s journey & consummation of the poem, the birth of the कुमार, Skanda being always associated with the peacock. Kalidasa thus skilfully introduces a beautifying epithet without allowing it to be otiose.

विमुच्य सा हारमहार्यनिश्चया विलोलयष्टिप्रविलुप्तचन्दनम् ।
बबन्ध बालारुणबभ्रु वल्कलं पयोधरोत्सेधविशीर्णसंहति ॥ ८ ॥

8. In her irremovable resolve she put off the necklace whose restless string had rubbed off the sandal smeared and fastened on the bark tawny red like the young dawn though ever her high-swelling breasts rent its firm compactness.

विलोलयष्टि etc. The meaning conveyed is that the movements of the necklace had already rubbed off the sandal paste from her breasts which otherwise she would have had to refuse herself as being a piece of luxury incompatible with तपः. Some of the commentators take यष्टि as meaning “her slender figure”; “the necklace which owing to the restlessness of her slender body had rubbed off the sandalpaste.” But to take विलोलयष्टि = यष्टिविलोलता (चञ्चलाङ्गताया A) is very awkward and in any case it is extremely doubtful whether यष्टि: by itself could mean अङ्गयष्टि:. I should therefore reject this rendering which as far as significance goes one might perhaps prefer. If we take यष्टि in this sense, it is better to adopt the reading अहार्यनिश्चयाविलोलयष्टि:, understand not विलोलयष्टि: with J [*Jinasamudrasuri*] for that would be merely an ornamental epithet, but अविलोलयष्टि: “She put off her necklace, having rubbed off the sandalpaste, and her slender body forgot its swayings” i.e. the amorous beauty of motion attributed by the Kalidasian poets to beautiful women. प्रविलुप्तचन्दनं will be in this rendering an adverbial compound. The reading however has little authority.

बालारुणबभ्रु. Mallinatha curiously translates अरुण by अर्क sun; but अरुण means “dawn” and not “sun”; moreover the young sun is not tawny red unless seen through mist.

पयोधर [etc.] lit. “whose compactness is rent by the loftiness of her breasts”. The Avachuri is even more amazingly foolish than usual on this line. It construes अहार्यनिश्चया by आहारं त्यक्त्वा “abandoning food”, a rendering which makes one suspect the sanity of the commentator, and पयोधरोत्सेधविशीर्णसंहति by मेघोदयेन विस्तारितः समवायो यस्य, the close composition of which is spread out by the rising of the clouds; perhaps an unequalled instance of perverted scholastic ingenuity, though Mallinatha’s

interpretation of the Dingnagian stanza in the Meghadut runs it close. It is needless to say that उत्सेध & विशीर्ण will not bear the strained meanings put on them and that even if they could, Kalidasa's fine taste in the choice of words would never have employed such out-of-the-way expressions; he would have said plainly उदय and विस्तीर्ण. The sense arrived at by these unnecessary violences is the most prosaic, pointless and inept possible.

यथा प्रसिद्धैर्मधुरं शिरोरुहैर्जटाभिरप्येवमभूत्तदाननम् ।
न षट्पदश्रेणिभिरेव पङ्कजं सशैवलासङ्गमपि प्रकाशते ॥ ९ ॥

9. Even as her face was sweet with its fair-adorned tresses, so was it even with the ascetic's tangled crown; not set with lines of bees alone the lotus has splendour but also coated with moss.

प्रसिद्धैः. [C] strangely takes "famous". The meaning of course is "dressed & adorned" as opposed to the neglected जटा. प्रसिद्धौ ख्यातभूषितौ (Amara) "प्रसिद्ध means 'famous' or 'adorned'."

न षट्पदश्रेणिभिरेव. एव = alone, in its limiting sense.

Note the implied comparison, a favourite form in Sanscrit classic poetry.

प्रतिक्षणं सा कूतरोमविक्रियां व्रताय मौञ्जीं त्रिगुणां बभार याम् ।
अकारि तत्पूर्वनिबद्धया तया सरागमस्या रसनागुणास्पदम् ॥ १० ॥

10. The triple-plaited girdle of rough grass she wore — for her vow she wore it though every moment it caused discomfort, now first tied on reddened the seat of her zone.

कूतरोमविक्रियां. The turning of the hair on the body is used by the concrete Sanscrit for the sense of discomfort caused by the contact of anything rough & uncomfortable. The same symptom also denotes in other circumstances great sensuous delight.

व्रताय, here व्रतार्थम् with a view to her vow, for the sake of her vow.

अकारि the Passive aorist; notice this tendency of later Sanscrit towards passive constructions in past time, prevalent in prose (see the Panchatuntra passim) & breaking its way oc-

casionally into poetry. The ripe & mature style of the Kumarasambhava especially shows this tendency to approximate to prose construction. So also कृतोऽक्षसूत्रप्रणयी तथा करः.

विसृष्टरागादधरान्निवर्तितः स्तनाङ्गरागारुणिताच्च कन्दुकात् ।
कुशाङ्कुरादानपरिक्षताङ्गुलिः कृतोऽक्षसूत्रप्रणयी तथा करः ॥११॥

11. Her hand ceased from her lip from which the colouring was effaced and the ball all reddened with her breasts' vermillion and, its fingers wounded with the plucking of kusha grass, she made it a lover of the rosary.

निवर्तितः. Deshpande singularly supposes that this may mean formerly, i.e. always kept away from. Such a rendering, if possible, would be wholly out of place & meaningless. The difficulty as regards the first line is avoided by supposing it meant that her lip was naturally too red to need artificial colouring or that her maidens did the colouring for her. This is most jejune and artificial, nor has such a detail the slightest appropriateness in the context. As regards the ball it is explained that her hand was too tender to play with it!! This is not only jejune, it is laughable. Kalidasa could never have perpetrated such an absurd conceit. Even if there were no other objections the absence of a word indicating past time would dispose of the rendering; for निवर्तितः is the causal of वृत् with नि. Now the simple निवृत्तः means “cessation from प्रवृत्ति, i.e. from any habit of mind, practice or course of action; turning away from something it had been turned to”. निवर्तितः therefore obviously means “caused to cease from, turned from”. It cannot possibly have the sense of “never busied with”; but means “ceasing to be busy with”. Kalidasa is speaking in these stanzas of Uma putting off all her former girlish habits for those appropriate to asceticism; to suppose that he brings in matter foreign to the idea in hand is to suppose that he is not Kalidasa. And to interpret “She never used to colour her lips or play at ball and she now plucked kusha-grass and counted a rosary” introduces such foreign matter, substitutes non-sequence for sequence and ruins the balanced Kalidasian structure of these stanzas. Such commenting falls well under

Mallinatha's vigorous censure that the Muse of Kalidasa swoons to death under the weight of bad commentaries.

The poet's meaning is plain. Her hand no longer as before was employed in colouring her lip, she had put that away from her; neither did it play with the ball all reddened with the vermillion of her breast; for both the vermillion was banished from her breast and the ball from her hand; it was only used now to pluck kusha grass & count the rosary.

स्तनाङ्गरागाद्. Resolve the compound स्तन + अङ्गरागाद् the body-colour of the breast. For the toilette of women in Kalidasa's time see Appendix.³

अक्षसूत्र. String of beads, rosary. The use of the rosary, to this day a Hindu practice with devotees & pious women, is thus more than 2000 years old. The use of the rosary among the Roman Catholics is an unmistakeable sign of Hindu influence, as with the Hindus it has a distinct meaning, with the Christians none. See Excursus.

महार्हशय्यापरिवर्तनच्युतैः स्वकेशपुष्पैरपि या स्म दूयते ।

अशेत सा बाहुलतोपधायिनी निषेदुषी स्थण्डिल एव केवले ॥ १२ ॥

12. She who would be tormented by the flowers shaken from her own hair by her tumbling on some costliest couch, now lay with her fair soft arm for pillow sunk on the bare altar-ground.

पुष्पैरपि. Like the lady of the fairytale who was discovered to be a princess and no maidservant when she could not sleep all night for the pain of a single flower which had been surreptitiously introduced into her bed.

बाहुलतोपधायिनी. The appropriateness of the creeperlike arm rests in the rounded softness & supple willowy grace of the arm; it is the Indian creeper and not the English be it remembered, that is intended. There is therefore no idea of slenderness.

उपधायिनी. This is the verbal adjective (cf. दायिनी) from धा & उप in the sense of "lay upon", so lie upon. उपधाय वामभुजमशयिषि

³ This Appendix was not written or has not survived. — Ed.

Dk [*Dashakumaracharita*] 111, lay pillowed on her left arm. For the full form cf. Shak. 4 वामहस्तोपहितवदना (quoted by Apte) & numerous other instances.

निषेदुषी. S strangely construes “slept sitting on the bare ground”. It is obvious that she could not at the same time sleep sitting & sleep with her arm as a pillow; if we are to render निषेदुषी = उपविष्टा we must take with D following Mallinatha “slept pillowed on her arm and sat on the bare ground”; but this is not justified by the Sanscrit, the word being a participle & not as it then should be a finite tense like अशेत with or without च. Moreover the idea of sitting is foreign to the contrast between her former bed and her present, & therefore would not be introduced by Kalidasa. We must take निषद् in its primary sense of “sink down”, “recline”; it implies entire recumbence & is opposed to परिवर्तन in the first line. “She who was formerly restless on softest couches, now lay restfully on the hard bare ground.”

स्थण्डिले . . . केवले. केवले means without any covering, not merely of grass as some have it, but of either grass or any sheet or coverlet. The स्थण्डिल is the वेदिका, a level & bare platform of earth used as sacred ground for sacrifice.

एव emphatic.

पुनर्ग्रहीतुं नियमस्थया तया द्वयेऽपि निक्षेप इवार्पितं द्वयम् ।
लतासु तन्वीषु विलासचेष्टितं विलोलदृष्टं हरिणाङ्गनासु च ॥ १३ ॥

13. She while busied in her vow seemed to lay by as a deposit for after resuming her duet (of graces) in a duet (of forms), in the slender creepers her amorous movements & her wantoning glance in the hinds.

पुनर्ग्रहीतुं. Notice the strict supine use which is the proper function of the infinitive in Sanscrit. It has of course the dative force = पुनर्ग्रहणाय.

द्वयेऽपि द्वयं. The pair in the pair. अपि is here little more than emphatic.

निक्षेप. A deposit on trust.

The Line of Raghou

TWO RENDERINGS OF THE OPENING

To the Two whose beings are involved together like word with sense for the boon of needed word and sense, to the Parents of the World I bow, the God above all Gods, the Goddess Mountainborn.

Of little substance is my genius, mighty is the race that sprang from the Sun, yet would I fondly launch in my poor raft over the impassable sea.

Dull of wit, yet seeking the poet's crown of glory I shall win for my meed mockery alone, like a dwarf in his greed lifting up arms for the high fruit that is a giant's prize.

And yet I have an access into that mighty race, even through the door of song the ancient bards have made, such access as has the thread into some gem that the point of adamant has thridd.

Therefore though slender my wealth of words, yet shall I speak of the Raghous' royal line, to that rashness by their high virtues urged that have come to my ear.

They who were perfect from their birth, whose effort ceased only with success, lords of earth to the ocean's edge, whose chariots' path aspired into the sky;

They of faultless sacrifices, they of the suppliants honoured to the limit of desire, punishing like the offence and to the moment vigilant.

Only to give they gathered wealth, only for truth they ruled their speech, only for glory they went forth to the fight, only for offspring they lit the household fire.

Embracers in childhood of knowledge, seekers in youth after joy, followers in old age of the anchoret's path, they in death through God-union their bodies left.

Let only good minds listen to my song, for by the clear intellect

alone is the good severed from the bad; 'tis in the fire we discern
of gold, that it is pure or that it is soiled. 1-10.

*

For mastery of word & sense I bow to the Pair closewedded as
word to 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 that 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 & their chariots journeyed even to
the heavens, ever according to the ordinance they offered to the
sacrificial flame and honoured ever the suppliant with his whole
desire, they meted the punishment of the guilty by his offence,
their eyes were wakeful to the hour, riches they gathered only to
give and spoke little that they might speak nought but truth &
conquered only for glory, 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 & in their end
left by Yoga their bodies, — the tale of this 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.

The Cloud Messenger

FRAGMENTS FROM A LOST TRANSLATION

the hills of mist
Golden, the dwelling place of Faery kings,
And mansions by unearthly moonlight kissed: —
For one dwells there whose brow with the young moon
Lightens as with a marvellous amethyst —

*

Of Tripour slain in lovely dances joined
And linkèd troops the Oreads of the hill
Are singing and inspired with rushing wind
Sweet is the noise of bamboos fluting shrill;
Thou thundering in the mountain-glens with cry
Of drums shouldst the sublime orchestra fill.

*

Dark like the cloudy foot of highest God
When starting from the dwarf-shape world-immense
With Titan-quelling step through heaven he strode.

*

For death and birth keep not their mystic round
In Ullaca; there from the deathless trees
The blossom lapses never to the ground
But lives for ever garrulous with bees
All honey-drunk — nor yet its sweets resign.
For ever in their girdling companies. . . .

*

A flickering line of fireflies seen in sleep.

*

Her scarlet mouth is a ripe fruit and red.

*

Sole like a widowed bird when all the nests
Are making.

Section Four

Bhartrihari

The Century of Life

*The Nitishataka of Bhartrihari
freely rendered into English verse*

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.

SRI AUROBINDO

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 thinkst 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 dreamst 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.

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

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.

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 kingly 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.

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 mights and marvellous of the great,
Whose simplest action is yet vast with fate!

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.

Mainak

O child of the immortal mountains hoar,
 Mainak,² 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?

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.

² 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 Himalaya, took refuge in the sea.

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 no-wise 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 Brahman 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 gravers 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 Rainlark 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 rainlarks homage owe!
Hold you then back your showers, because your pride
By our low suings must be gratified?

To the Rainlark

O rainlark, rainlark, 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.
Fearst 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 Griefs

Seven griefs are as seven daggers in my heart, —
 To see a lake without its lilied 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 good, with chainless licence 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 giantlike 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 others' gifts 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 act, the lion's heart; proud looks
Unshaken in defeat, but modest-kind
Mercy when victory comes; 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 musing is the glory of the gaze;
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

Then is the ear adorned when it inclines
To wisdom; giving bracelets rich exceeds;
So the beneficent heart's deep-stored 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, blares 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 others' 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, here 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

Happiness 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

Brihuspathy¹ 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 Brihuspathy 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 rainlark'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 Karma¹

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

¹ 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.

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.

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
Swellst 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 fiercely,
 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 foeman 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 tabour, 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
 The noble lines 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 dwellest 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,
Hurled 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 thinkst 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.

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.

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

APPENDIX

Prefatory Note on Bhartrihari

BHARTRIHARI'S Century of Morals (Nitishataka), a series of poetical epigrams or rather *sentences* upon human life and conduct grouped loosely round a few central ideas, stands as the first of three similar works by one Master. Another Century touches with a heavy hand Sringar, sexual attraction; the third expresses with admirable beauty of form and intensity of feeling the sentiment of Vairagya, World-disgust, which, before & since Buddha, has figured so largely in Indian life. In a striking but quite superficial manner these brief stanzas remind us of the Greek epigram in the most masterly hands: Mimnermus, Simonides; but their spirit and the law of their internal structure relate them rather to a type of literature peculiarly Asiatic.

Classical Sanscrit literature, as a whole, is governed by an inner stress of spirit which urges it to a sort of lucid density of literary structure; in style a careful blending of curious richness with concentrated force and directness of expression, in thought and matter a crowded vividness and pregnant lucidity. The poet used one of the infinite harmonic variations of the four-lined stanza with which our classical prosody teems, or else the couplet called Arya, noble verse; and within these narrow limits he sought to give vividly some beautiful single picture, some great or apposite thought, some fine-edged sentiment. If a picture, it might be crowded with felicitous detail; if a thought, with pregnant suggestion; if a sentiment, with happy shades

Sri Aurobindo wrote this essay to serve as a preface to his translation of Bhartrihari's Nitishataka, called by him first "The Century of Morals" and later "The Century of Life". When he published the translation in 1924, he substituted the translator's note reproduced on page 314 for this more elaborate prefatory note, which is reproduced here as an appendix.

of feeling; but the whole must be perfectly lucid and firm in its unity. If these qualities were successfully achieved, the result was a Subhashita, a thing well said and therefore memorable. Sometimes the Subhashita clarified into a simple epigram, sometimes it overcharged itself with curious felicities, but the true type lay between the extremes. Similar tendencies are noticeable in the best Indian artwork in ivory, wood and metal, and even enter its architecture with that spirit which passed into the Moguls and informing new shapes of loveliness created the Taj. Many a small Hindu temple is a visible Subhashita in stone. In India of the classical times the tendency was so strong that poems of considerable magnitude like Kalidasa's *Race of Raghou* or Magha's *Slaying of Shishupala* are for the most part built up of stanzas on this model; in others there are whole passages which are merely a succession of Subhashitas, so that the account of a battle or a city scene affects us like a picture gallery and a great speech moves past in a pomp of high-crested armoured thoughts. A successful Subhashita of the highest type is for all the world as if some great ironclad sailing solitary on the limitless ocean were to turn its arc-light on a passing object; in the brilliant concentrated flood of lustre a small vessel is revealed; we see the masts, funnel, rails, decks, the guns in their positions, men standing on the deck, an officer on the bridge, every detail clear in the strange artificial lustre; next moment the light is shut off and the scene, relapsing into darkness, is yet left bitten in on the brain. There is the same instantaneous concentration of vision, the same carefully-created luminousness and crowded lucidity of separate detail in the clear-cut unity of the picture.

But the Subhashita is not peculiar to India, it pervades Asia. The most characteristic verse of China and Japan is confined to this style; it seems to have overmastered Arabian poetry; that it is common in Persian the Rubaiyat of Omar and the writings of Hafiz and Sadi would appear to indicate. In India itself we find the basis of the style in some of the Upanishads, although the structure there is more flexible and flowing, not yet trained to the armoured compactness of classic diction. Subsequently the only class of writing which the spirit of the Subhashita did

not invade, was that great mass of epic and religious literature which made its appeal to the many and not to the cultured few. In the Mahabharat, Ramayan and the Puranas we have the grand natural stream of Hindu poetry flowing abundantly through plain and valley, not embanked and banded by the engineer.

Kalidasa and Bhartrihari are the two mightiest masters of the characteristic classical style as it was at its best, before it degenerated into over-curiosity. Tradition tells us they were contemporaries. It is even said that Bhartrihari was an elder brother of Vikramaditya, Kalidasa's patron, — not of course Harsha of the sixth century to whom European scholarship has transferred the distinction, but the half-mythical founder of Malava power in the first century before Christ. To account for the succession of a younger brother, the old and common story of the fruit that changed hands till it returned disastrously to the first giver, is saddled on the great moralist. King Bhartrihari understood that his beloved wife was unfaithful to him, and, overwhelmed by the shock, fell wholly under the influence of Vairagya, abandoned his crown to Vikrama and sought the forest in the garb of an anchorite. The second stanza of the Century of Morals commemorates the unhappy discovery. But the epigram has no business in that place and it is doubtful whether it has a personal application; the story itself is an evident fiction. On the other hand the notion of some European scholars that Bhartrihari was a mere compiler of other people's Subhashitas, is not much better inspired. Undoubtedly, spurious verses were introduced and a few bear the mark of their extraneous origin; but I think no one who has acquired a feeling for Sanscrit style or is readily responsive to the subtle spirit in poetry can fail to perceive that the majority are by one master-craftsman. The question is for those to decide who have learned to feel the shades of beauty and peculiarities of tinge in words (a quite different thing from shades of meaning and peculiarities of use) and to regard them not as verbal counters or grammatical formations but as living things. Without this subtle taste for words the finer personal elements of style, those which do not depend on general principles of structure, cannot be well-appreciated. There are collections

of Subhashitas in plenty, but the style of Bhartrihari is a distinct style and the personality of Bhartrihari is a distinct personality. There is nothing of that infinite variety of tone, note, personal attitude—I do not refer to mere shiftings of standpoint and inconsistencies of opinion—which stamp a collection; there is one characteristic tone, a note strong and unmistakeable, the persistent self-repetition of an individual manner. All is mint of a single mind.

Bhartrihari's Centuries are important to us as the finished expression of a thoroughly typical Aryan personality in the most splendid epoch of Indian culture. The most splendid, not the best; for the vigorous culture mirrored in the epics has been left behind; the nobly pure, strong and humane civilisation which produced Buddha gives way to a civilisation a little less humane, much less masculine, infinitely less pure, yet richer, more variously coloured, more delightful to the taste and senses; the millennium of philosophy and heroism yields to the millennium of luxury and art. Of the new civilisation Kalidasa is the perfect and many-sided representative; he had the receptive, alchemistic imagination of the great world-poets, Shakespeare, Homer and Valmekie, and everything that was in his world he received into that alembic with a deep creative delight and transmuted into forms and sounds of magical beauty. Bhartrihari's was a narrower mind and intenser personality. He represents his age in those aspects which powerfully touched his own individual life and character, but to others, not having catholicity of moral temper, he could not respond. He was evidently a Kshatriya; for all his poetry breathes that proud, grandiose, arrogantly noble spirit of the old magnanimous Indian aristocracy, extreme in its self-assertion, equally extreme in its self-abnegation, which made the ancient Hindu people one of the three or four great peoples of antiquity. The savour of the Kshatriya spirit in Bhartrihari is of the most personal, intimate kind, not the purely poetic and appreciative delight of Kalidasa. It is with him grain of character, not mere mental impression. It expresses itself even in his Vairagya by the fiery and ardent, almost fierce spirit which inspires his asceticism,—how different from the fine quietism of the Brahmin!

But the Century of World-disgust, although it contains some of his best poetry, is not to us his most characteristic and interesting work; we find that rather in the Century of Morals.

This Century is an admirable, if incomplete poetic rendering of the great stock of morality which our old writers summarised in the one word Arya, — Aryan, noble. The word Arya has been thought to correspond very closely to the English idea of a gentleman, — inaccurately, for its conception is larger and more profound in moral content. Arya and Anarya correspond in their order of ideas partly to the totality indicated by the word, *gentleman*, and its opposite, partly to the conceptions knightly and unknightly, partly to the qualities suggested in an English mind by the expressions English and unEnglish as applied to conduct. The Aryan man is he who observes in spirit and letter the received code of a national morality which included the higher niceties of etiquette, the bold and chivalrous temper of a knightly and martial aristocracy, the general obligations of truth, honour and high feeling, and, crowning all, such great ideals of the Vedic and Buddhistic religion, — sweetness, forbearance, forgiveness, charity, self-conquest, calm, self-forgetfulness, self-immolation — as had entered deeply into the national imagination.

The ideas of the Century of Morals are not in themselves extraordinary, nor does Bhartrihari, though he had a full share of the fine culture of his age, appear to have risen in intellectual originality beyond the average level; it is the personality which appears in the Centuries that is striking. Bhartrihari is, as Matthew Arnold would have said, in the grand style. He has the true heroic turn of mind and turn of speech; he breathes a large and puissant atmosphere. High-spirited, high-minded, high of temper, keen in his sympathies, admiring courage, firmness and daring aspiration above all things, thrilling to impulses of humanity, kindness and self-sacrifice in spite of his rugged strength, dowered with a trenchant power of scorn and sombre irony, and occasionally of stern invective, but sweetening this masculine severity of character with varied culture and the old high Indian worship of knowledge, goodness and wisdom, such is the man who emerges from the one hundred and odd verses of

the Shataka. The milder and more feminine shades of the Aryan ideal he does not so clearly typify. We have often occasion to ask ourselves, What manner of men did the old Aryan discipline, uniting with the new Helleno-Asiatic culture, succeed in producing? Bhartrihari is at least one type of its products.

And yet in the end a doubt breaks in. Was he altogether of his age? Was he not born in an alien time and an evil day? He would have been better at home, one fancies, with the more masculine temper depicted in the Mahabharata. Certainly he ended in disgust and fled for refuge to ascetic imaginations not wholly characteristic of his time. He had lived the life of courts, was perhaps an official of high standing and seems to have experienced fully the affronts, uncertainties, distastes to which such a career has always been exposed. From the beginning stray utterances point to a growing dissatisfaction and in the end there comes the poignant cry of a thwarted life. When we read the *Century of Passion*, we seem to come near the root of his malady. As in the earlier *Century* he has subdued to the law of poetical form the ethical aspects of life, so now will he deal with the delight of the senses; but how little of real delight there is in this misnamed *Century of Passion*! Bhartrihari is no real lover, certainly; but neither is he a genuine voluptuary. Of that keen-edged honey-laden delight in the joy of the senses and the emotions which thrills through every line of Kalidasa's *Cloud*, there is no faintest trace. Urged into voluptuous experience by fashion and habit, this high and stern nature had no real vocation for the life of the senses; in this respect, and who shall say in how many others, he was out of harmony with the moral atmosphere of his times, and at last turned from it all to cry aloud the holy name of Shiva by the waters of the pure and ancient river, the river Ganges, while he waited impatiently for the great release.... But this too was not his vocation. He had too much defiance, fire, self-will for the ascetic. To have fallen in the forefront of ancient heroic battle or to have consummated himself in some grandiose act of self-sacrifice, this would have been his life's fitting fulfilment, the true end of Bhartrihari.

The edition followed in the main is that of Mr. Telang in the Bombay Sanscrit Series. The accepted order of the verses, although it admits a few gross errors and misplacements, has nevertheless been preserved. All the Miscellaneous Epigrams at the end have been omitted from the rendering;¹ and three others, the 90th which has crept in from the *Shakuntala* of Kalidasa, the 104th which is an inferior version of an earlier epigram and the 18th which has come down to us in a hopelessly corrupt condition. The 27th epigram occurs in the *Mudrarakshasa* but has been admitted as it is entirely in Bhartrihari's spirit and manner and may have been copied into the play. Some other verses which do not bear internal evidence of Bhartrihari's authorship in their style and spirit, have yet been given the benefit of the doubt.

The principle of translation followed has been to preserve faithfully the thought, spirit and images of the original, but otherwise to take the full licence of a poetical rendering. In translation from one European tongue into another a careful literalness may not be out of place, for the genius, sentence structure and turns of thought of European languages are not very dissimilar; they belong to one family. But the gulf between Sanscrit and English in these respects is very wide, and any attempt at close verbal rendering would be disastrous. I have made no attempt to render the distinctive features of Bhartrihari's style; on the contrary I have accepted the necessity of substituting for the severity & compact massiveness of Sanscrit diction which must necessarily vanish in translation, the greater richness & colour preferred by the English tongue. Nor have I attempted to preserve the peculiar qualities of the *Subhashita*; Bhartrihari's often crowded couplets and quatrains have been perforce dissolved into a looser and freer style and in the process have sometimes expanded to considerable dimensions. Lines of cunningly wrought gold have had to be beaten out into some tenuity. Otherwise the finer associations & suggestions of the

¹ *Sri Aurobindo included a series of "Miscellaneous Verses" in the final translation. — Ed.*

original would have been lost or blurred. I hold it more pardonable in poetical translation to unstring the language than to dwarf the spirit and mutilate the thought. For in poetry it is not the verbal substance that we seek from the report or rendering of foreign masterpieces; we desire rather the spiritual substance, the soul of the poet & the soul of his poetry. We cannot hear the sounds & rhythms loved & admired by his countrymen and contemporaries; but we ask for as many as we can recover of the responses & echoes which that ancient music set vibrating in the heavens of their thought.

Section Five

Other Translations from Sanskrit

Opening of the Kiratarjuniya

1. Appointed to know the dealings of the Kurus' lord with his people, conduct guardian of his fortune, the forest ranger garbed with the marks of the Brahmacharin came to Yudishthira in Dwaita wood.
2. Having made his salutation he turned to declare — and his heart hurt him not — to the enjoyer of the earth, earth conquered by his rival, for wellwishers desire not to speak pleasant falsehood.

Bhagawat

SKANDHA I, ADHYAYA I

1. On Him we fix our thoughts from whom are birth and being and death, who knoweth the chain of things and their separate truth, King and Free, who [to] the earliest seer disclosed the Veda through his heart, which even illuminated minds find hard to understand,

In whom like interchange of water, earth and light the triple creation stands free from falsehood, for by His inherent lustre He casts out always the glamour of the worlds,—to Him we turn, that Highest Truth of things.

2. Here shall ye find highest religion in which all trickery has been eschewed, here the one substantial thing that is utterly true, that hearts free from jealousy and wickedness may know, that is a fountain of blessing and peace, that is an uprooting of the threefold sorrow of the world,

In this holy Bhagawat that the great Thinker has made. When by its power even others can imprison the Lord in their hearts so soon, the fulfilled in nature who love to hear it shall seize Him the moment that they hear.

3. This is the fruit fallen from the tree of Veda which giveth men every desire, — come, all you that are lovers of God on the earth and sensible to His delight, drink from the mouth of Shuka the Bhagawat's delightful juice into which wine of immortality has been poured, drink and drink again until the end of things.

4. In Naimisha, field of the Timeless Lord, the sages, Shaunaka and the rest, sat down to millennial sacrifice for the bringing of the kingdom of heaven.

5. And one day at dawn the Wise Ones having cast their offerings into the eater of the sacrifice asked with eagerness of the Suta as welcomed in their midst he sat.

6. By thee, O pure of blemish, have the Traditions and Histories been studied, by thee recited, which are institutes of the Way of life,
7. Those that the Lord Badarayan knoweth, chief of the Veda Wise; and the other sages to whom these low things and those high are known.
8. Thou knowest it all, O gracious one, in its essential truth by Vyasa's grace; verily, to the loving disciple the Masters will tell even the secret thing.
9. What thou, O long of life, hast distinguished decisively in this book and in that to be utterly the best for men, we would have thee announce to us.
10. For thou knowest, O cultured soul, that usually in this age of the Kali men are short of days, poor in spirit, poor in sense, poor in fate, assailed by ills,
11. And numerous are the scriptures that have to be studied, full of multitudinous laws of conduct and divided into many parts, — therefore drawing out from them by thy thought whatever is the essence of all these, tell us as to men of faith that which makes the soul clear and glad.
12. And, O Suta, since thou knowest for what purpose the Lord, the Prince of the Satwatas was born to Vasudeva in Devaki's womb,
13. Be pleased to narrate it to our expectant ears, — whose descent into mortal life is for the bliss and increase of created things;
14. Whose name if one fallen into the dread whirl uttereth aloud even without his will, at once he is delivered therefrom, — the name of which Fear itself is afraid;
15. By dependence on whom, O Suta, the seers that follow the way of Peace purify by their first touch, but the waters of the mystic stream only after the soul has bathed in them often and long.
16. For who that longeth after purity would not listen to the glory destroying Kali's darkness of that divine Lord whose actions are adored by souls of virtuous fame?
17. Tell us, for we believe, his noble deeds hymned by illumined

seers when by reason of His world-sport He manifests His aspects in the world.

18. Then tell us the blessed incarnations of Hari when the Lord of Creation ordereth variously at His unfettered pleasure and by the play of His own Glamour, His sport in human forms.

19. We are not satiated however often we hear the mightiness of that most glorious Being, for at every step sweetness is added to sweetness for those who can feel its beauty when they hear.

20. High were the heroic deeds Keshava did with Rama for His aid and beyond mortal strength, for this was the hidden Lord disguised as a man.

21. Because we knew that Kali had come upon the world, we in this region holy to Vishnu have sat down to long sacrifice & leisure vast have we to hear of the Lord.

22. It is Providence then that has shown thee to us who desire to cross safe over the difficult Kali, destroyer of the purer energy in men, as appears a sudden pilot to those who would voyage through the difficult sea.

23. Say, when the Master of the Yoga, full of holiness, Krishna, armour of the Dharma, passed to His Divine Summit, with whom did the Dharma take sanctuary then?

Bhavani

(From a Sanskrit Hymn of Shankaracharya)

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!

Part Two

Translations from Bengali

Section One

Vaishnava Devotional Poetry

Radha's Complaint in Absence

(Imitated from the Bengali of Chundidas)

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?

Radha's Appeal

(Imitated from the Bengali of Chundidas)

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.

Karma

(Radha's Complaint)

Love, but my words are vain as air!
In my sweet joyous youth, a heart untried,
Thou tookst 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.

(From an old Bengali poem)

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)

Twenty-two Poems of Bidyapati

1

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.
Maadhuv, 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.

2

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 seedcities were they.
Their fair maturities now begin,
Now are they fruits-of-opulence twin.
Maadhuv, 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.

3

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.

4

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.
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.

5

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, Maadhuv, 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."

6

In elders' eyes she brooks not stay,
Half-clad no more her body but alway
She covers her most maidenly.
Yet with young girls when bideth she
Knowing her ripened child and budding may
They plague her with sweet mockery.
Maadhuv, 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 ways of a girl, the poet saith.

7

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.
Maadhuv, 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.

8

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 Lochima and the King.

9

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 enchantress 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 defence but half did cover
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?

10

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 Proyaga's waters
Long sacrificing might avail
At last to win her. Lover of Gocool's daughters!
Darling of Gocool! true thy tale.

11

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 highborn 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 on 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.

12

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.

13

The moonwhite maiden from her bath
Passing I saw from a woodland path.
From all sweet things she stolen had
Beauty in one fair girl arrayed.
Her tresses that her small hands wrung
A shower of faery water flung
As tho' a fan of beauty whirled
Carcanets with gems impearled.
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 hoarfrost 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.

14

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 thine heaven gave this wondrous maid.

15

O happy day that to mine eyes betrayed
Bathing the beautiful maid!
Drops like a carcanet of pearls
Fell from her cloud of showering curls.
Her lifted hands did harshly press
The lingering water from her face
That wore new luminousness
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.

16

Beautiful Rai, the flower-like maid
Risen from the river where she played
Saw under down-cast lids and shy
The lovely boy, dark Krishna named.
A highborn 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 full 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.

17

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 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 Sheva Singha Ruupnaraian my music
 And lady Lochima doth show.

18

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.

19

“’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 how 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.

20

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 champak 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 Brindabun anew is mirth

For the restored bloom of earth.
These are the season's sweets and these
The essence of the Spring's increase.

21

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 Ruupnaraian this rhythm of love.

22

Hark how round goes the instruments' sound!
With the sweet love wild
Of Gocool'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 twydrum's 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.

Selected Poems of Bidyapati

1

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 ease my heart of its piteous pain?
O on my bosom once to hold
Her boundless beauty and manifold.

2

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,
Faint with the sudden hands of Love.

3

Sweet and strange as 't were 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 glorious 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.

4

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.

5

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 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!
Mine eyes dwelt with her, yet could not reach,
Gazing, the bottom of desire.

6

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.
Ah 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.

7

Lotus bosom, lotus feet,
Justify, I charge thee, sweet!
Knowing the true love thou hast won
Wilt 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
Pearldrops 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?

8

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.

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 massèd midnight hung 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 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 Lochima, lady of Mithila city,
 And Sheva Singha the King, his friend.

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, Sheve 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.

11

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 that lyric voice.
Thy teeth make starlight, maiden choice!
And on the brow of the highborn girl
A vermeil drop and a shimmering pearl.
Hearken good counsel, beautiful maid;
Even in a dream be not afraid,
Spots has the moon, no beauty clear,
Stained is she, thou stainless, dear.

12

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 has 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,
But with the 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 leaves out no heart.

13

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 sad entreaty,
Pilgrim of honey thy lover, nor more
In maiden pride thy nectarous store
Deny. Alas! in thy rich bloom
The thirsty bee finds never a room.
O jasmine, save thy honey breast
He has forsworn all other rest.
On thee the sin, beautiful Rai,
Of the poor bee's death will surely lie.
O from thy lips the sweet boon give
Of heaven's honey and he will live.

14

A new Brindabun 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 Gocool strays
In new and freshly-blossoming ways.
 The groves upon Calindie's shore
 With his tender beauty bloom
 Whose fresh-disturbèd heart brims o'er
 With wild new-born loves 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 delighted to the grove,
 New hearts bringing.
For young the heir of Gocool is
And young his passionate mistresses.
 Meetings new and fresh love-rites,
 Lights of ever-fresh desire,
 Sports ever-new and new delights
 Set Bidyapati's heart on fire.

15

Season of honey when sweets combine,
Honey-bees line upon line,
From sweet blossoms honied feet,
Honied blossoms and honey sweet.
O sweet is Brindabun 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.

16

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.

17

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
The robe's light government, 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 though 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!

18

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 love'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 two lovers true.
Stolen love, how sweet it is!
Two brief words its only keys;
Murmur but these and thou shalt hold
Secret delights a thousandfold.
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.

19

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.

Selected Poems of Nidhou

1

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.

2

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.

3

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 for ever.

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.

4

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.

5

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.

6

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.

7

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.

8

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

9

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.

10

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.

11

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 lovers' 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.

12

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?

13

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 helplessly his slave.

14

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.

15

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?

16

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.

17

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 etching from its background 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.

18

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.

19

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 that life to save?"
 Dumbly this thought and this alone.

20

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 Horo Thacoor

1

(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?

2

(The soul catching a reflection of God's face in the river of the world,
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 moonbloom petals to the moon pay duty?

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

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

3

(The same)

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?

4

(The soul recognizes 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.

5

(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.

6

(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 neatherdess 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!

7

(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 hasting
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 Ganodas

1

(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?

2

(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.

3

(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.

4

- 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 snowwhite 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 cherish and thy perfect love.

5

(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.)

Neatherdess, 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 softness 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.

6

(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.

(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 darkhued 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 prisoner 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
And felt him round me like a flame.

Section Two

Bankim Chandra Chatterjee

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 twice 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
(*Translation in Prose*)

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 our heart, thou our 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,

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.

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

THE FIRST THIRTEEN CHAPTERS

Prologue

A WIDE interminable forest. Most of the trees are *sals*, 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 woodland 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."

Chapter I

IT WAS a summer day of the Bengali year 1176. The glare and heat of the sun lay very heavy on the village of Padchinha. The village was crowded with houses, yet there was not a man to be seen. Line upon line of shops in the bazaar, row upon row of booths in the mart, hundreds of earthen houses interspersed with stone mansions high and low in every quarter. But today all was 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 Kartik not a drop of rain fell; the grain in the fields withered and turned to straw as it stood. Wherever an 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, smallpox. The virulence of smallpox 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 smallpox 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 Padchinha, but today rich and poor were on one level. In this time of crowding afflictions his relatives, friends, servants, maidservants 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, Cassimbazar 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 the 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 aflame, 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 babla-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 waterjar in his hand and went out. A number of such jars were lying about the place.

Chapter II

MOHENDRA departed. Left alone with no one near her but a 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 waterjar. 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 III

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 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 today 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 corpselike 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 ghostlike 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 IV

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 far 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 farther 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, whitebodied, whitehaired, whitebearded, whiterobed, 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 whitebodied, whitehaired, whitebearded, whiterobed 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 V

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 daytime 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 whitebodied, whiterobed 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 VI

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, 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 is 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 VII

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 in the road a number of bullock-carts surrounded by a great company of sepoys.

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 cartloads 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 da-

coits, 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 sepoy 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 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 VIII

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 Padchinha to the town, Mohendra had been travelling from south to north, and it was therefore 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 came the arrest of a dacoit in the 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 sepoy 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 to the soldier who had put it there. In consequence, the sepoy bound Bhavananda, lifted him on to the cart and flung him down near Mohendra. Bhavananda at once recognised Mohendra Singha.

The sepoy again marched on, carelessly and with noise, and the creaking of the cartwheels 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 on 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 in 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 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 on 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 farther proceedings. Then with a cry of "Hari! Hari! Hari!" two hundred armed men surrounded the soldiery. The men 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's immediately formed into a square facing four ways and at a farther command of their captain lifted their guns in act to fire. At this critical moment someone 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 IX

MOHENDRA had descended from the cart, wrested a weapon from one of the sepoys 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 X

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 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 beaches 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 beaches 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!

Mohendra saw the robber as he sang shedding tears. 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 sepoys.”

“I have seen your rascal sepoys 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 their 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 Mussulman 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 Mussulman?”

“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 Mussulman?”

“Take this first;” said Bhavananda, “an Englishman will not run away even from the certainty of death. A Mussulman 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 Mussulman’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 Mussulman 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 XI

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, 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 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 Coustooobh 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. The 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 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 XII

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. The husband and wife, rested from fatigue, took their daughter in their arms and set forth in the direction of Padchinha.

But what way led to Padchinha, 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 some 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 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 shadow 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 shadow 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, one 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 at either side of him, I could not recognize, but I think they were women in 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 beautiful exceedingly. 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 flutelike 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 silence. Overhead the doyel began its clamour, the papia flooded heaven with its voice, the call of the cuckoo set the regions echoing, the bhringaraj 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 the 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 of 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, at last grew a little dull and feeble. Then Kalyani said to her husband, "What more? Sukumari has gone the way God called 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 farther, 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 the 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 herself to hear the words ringing out in the marvellous flutelike 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,

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 XIII

MEANWHILE there was a great commotion in 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 spearmen 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 live 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 waterjars 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 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, 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 sepoy; but the other three seized him from three sides and once more overpowered 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 farther attempt at escape followed the soldiers. When they had gone a little distance, Satyananda asked the sepoy, "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!

APPENDIX

A Later Version of Chapters I and II

CHAPTER I

It was the summer of the Bengali year 1176. The village of Podchinha lay oppressed under a tyrannous heat of the mid-summer sun. The village was packed with houses, but people were nowhere to be seen. Rows of shops in the bazaar, rows of booths in the market place, hundreds of clay houses in every quarter with here and there high and low terraced mansions; but today all was silent. In the bazaar the shops were shut; the shopkeepers had fled, one knows not where. It was market-day, but the market was not in swing, — begging-day, but the beggars were not out. The weaver had stopped his loom and lay weeping to one side of his cottage; the trader had ceased to ply his trade and sat weeping with his infant child in his lap; the giver had ceased to give; the teacher had shut up his school; even the little children had no force or courage left to cry. No passers-by were to be seen in the highway, no bathers in the lake, no human figures at the house-doors; there was not a bird in the trees, not a cow in the pasture; only in the burning-ground the dog and the jackal were abroad. One huge building whose great fluted pillars could be seen from far off bore a brave appearance as of a mountain peak arising out of this wilderness of houses. But today its splendour was a void thing, its doors shut, its rooms empty of human concourse, all its voices hushed, entry difficult even to the breezes. In a room within this building there was darkness at midday and in the darkness like twin flowers blooming in the night a young couple, husband and wife, were sitting plunged in thought. And in front of them sat the spectre of Famine.

The harvest of 1174 had not been good; so in 1175 rice was dear and the people suffered, but the Government exacted the taxes to the last fraction of a farthing. The poor paid and

ate only once a day. But in 1175 there was good rain and the people thought that Heaven had taken pity on them. The herdsman began again to sing in his gladness in the meadow, and the peasant's wife to tease her husband for a silver armlet. But suddenly in the month of Aswin Heaven turned away its face. Not a drop of rain fell through all Aswin and Kartik. In the fields the stalks dried up and became mere straw and wherever a field or two had borne its crop the officials bought it up for the troops. The people had nothing to eat. At first they fasted at one of their two meal-times, then they began to eat one half-meal a day, then to fast both morning & evening. Whatever little crop there was in the month of Chaitra never reached their mouths. But Mahomed Reza Khan, who controlled the collection of the Revenues and thought that he could now show himself a very Sarafray, increased at one leap the taxes by ten percent. Throughout Bengal a great noise of weeping arose.

People first took to begging, but soon there was no one to give alms. They began to fast; disease attacked them. They sold their cows, they sold plough and tool, they sold their seed, sold their houses, sold their plots of land. Then they began to sell their girls, then their boys, then their wives. In the end there was no one to buy wife, boy or girl. All were sellers; buyer there was none. For want of other food, men began to eat the leaves of trees, to eat grass, to eat weeds. The low classes & the wild people devoured dogs, rats and cats. Many fled the country. Those who fled perished of starvation in other lands; those who remained living upon uneatable things or not eating at all, began to fall ill and die of various maladies.

Disease had its high day; fever, cholera, consumption, small-pox raged. Small-pox was especially prevalent; there were deaths in almost every house. No one would give water to the sick, no one would touch, no one would treat the disease or tend the sufferer; when he died there was no one to dispose of the corpse; the bodies of the beautiful lay rotting uncared-for in their terraced mansions. For into whatever house the small-pox made its entry the inhabitants fled from it in terror abandoning the sick to their fate.

Mahendra Singh was one of the richest men in the village of Podchinha, but today rich and poor were on one & the same level. In this time of misery and disease his relatives and dependants, his serving-men, his serving-women, all were gone. Some had perished, others had fled. In all that populous household there was now left only his wife and himself and an infant daughter. It was they who were sitting in the darkened chamber.

The wife Kalyani rose from her reflections, went into the cowshed and herself milked the cow. Then she warmed the milk, gave her child to drink and went again to give grass & water to the cow. When she came back, Mahendra said, "How long can this go on?"

She answered "Not long, but let us continue as long as we can. Till then I will manage to keep things going; afterwards do you take the child to the town."

"If we must go in the end, why should I put you through all this trouble? Let us rather go now."

The two debated the question for a long time.

Kalyani asked, "Is there anything really to be gained by going?"

"Who knows? Perhaps the town is as solitary as this village and as empty of all means of subsistence."

"If we go to Murshidabad, Cassimbazaar or Calcutta, we may live. No, there is every reason why we should leave this place."

Mahendra replied, "This house has long been full of the stored up wealth of generations. All will be plundered by thieves."

"If they came to plunder now, could we two prevent them? Unless we live, who will there be to make use of this wealth? Come, let us at once shut up everything and go. If we live, then we can return and again enjoy life and riches."

Mahendra asked her, "Will you be able to walk all that way? The palanquin bearers are dead; where there are bullocks, there is no cartman; where there is a cartman, bullocks are not to be had."

"That need not trouble you; I shall walk."

In her heart she had resolved that if need be, she would fall down and die by the wayside, but these two must live.

Next day at dawn they took some money with them, locked all the doors, loosed the cows, took their child in their arms and started for the capital. At the time of starting Mahendra said "It is a difficult road and at every step of it robbers are wandering in search of their prey; it is well to go armed." He returned into the house and came back with gun, powder and bullets.

Kalyani, when she saw the gun, said to her husband, "Since you have thought of it, take Sukumari for a moment. I too will have a weapon with me." With this she put her daughter into Mahendra's arms and entered the house, Mahendra calling after her in surprise, "Why, what weapon can you carry?"

It was a little box of poison that Kalyani hid in her dress as she came. She had been provided for some time with this arm against any ill fate that might befall her in these days of adversity.

It was the month of Jyestha, and the heat was fierce & pitiless; the earth burned as with fire, the wind scattered its flaming breath, the sky was like a canopy of heated bronze, the dust of the road like sparks of flame. Kalyani began to perspire and walked on with difficulty and suffering; she sat down sometimes under a babul tree, sometimes in the shade of a date palm, sometimes she drank the muddy water of a dried-up pond. Mahendra carried the child in his arms and fanned it from time to time. Once they rested in the shade of a creeper-hung tree richly coloured with dark green leaves and fragrant with sweet-scented flowers. Mahendra wondered at Kalyani's power of endurance. He wet his robe and sprinkled water from a neighbouring pool on his own & Kalyani's face, feet and forehead.

Kalyani was a little refreshed, but both husband & wife were tortured with hunger. Their own hunger could be borne, but not the hunger & thirst of their child, so they began again to travel forward and making their way through the waves of fire arrived before evening at a hamlet. Mahendra was full of hope, for he expected that here he would find cool water to un parch the throats of his wife and daughter and food to sustain their

lives. But no, there was not a man in the place. Large houses lay empty; all the inhabitants had fled. After searching here & there for a while Mahendra made his wife and child lie down in a room while he himself went out and began to call loudly. There was no answer. Then he said to Kalyani, "Be brave and remain here alone by yourself, I will go and if there is a cow in the place, if Srikrishna takes compassion on us, bring some milk for us to drink." So saying, he took up an earthen waterpot in his hand, — there were a great many lying there, — and sallied out.

CHAPTER II

When Mahendra had gone, Kalyani, left alone with her little girl, in that solitary place, in that gloomy cottage, began to gaze around her and a growing terror took hold of her mind. No one anywhere, no human sound, only the cry of the dog & the jackal. She began to think, "Why did I let him go, we might have well borne the pangs of hunger and thirst a little longer." Then she thought to rise & shut all the doors, but not a single doorway had shutter or bar. As she was thus gazing fearfully around her, she saw something like a shadow in the doorway opposite. It looked like a man's form but hardly seemed to be human. Yet it was something like a man, withered, wasted, black, terrible that had come & stood in the doorway. A little while and the shadow seemed to raise an arm; a very long withered arm, all skin and bone, appeared to be beckoning to someone with its long withered fingers. Kalyani's heart in her dried up with fear. Then another such shadow, withered, black, tall, naked came and stood beside the first. Then another and another joined them, how many others. Slowly, silently they began to enter the room, the gloom-haunted cottage grew terrible as a midnight burning-ground. Those corpse-like phantom-like figures entered & stood in a circle round Kalyani and she half-swooned with her terror. Then the black emaciated men seized & lifted up the woman and her child and took them up out of the house, across the open fields into the thickness of a wood.

A few moments afterwards Mahendra returned carrying milk in the waterpot. He saw no one in the cottage; he searched here & there, he called first his daughter, & at last his wife by name, but he received no answer, found no trace.

Section Three

Chittaranjan Das

Songs of the Sea

I

O thou unhopèd-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 singst? 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 eves,
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 pourest 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
And 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 sweepst 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 floatst, 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
Singst 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 holdst 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 heavens 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 unfalteringly
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.

Section Four

Disciples and Others

Hymn to 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!

DWIJENDRALAL ROY

Mother India

1

Mother India, when Thou rosest from the depths of oceans hoary,
Love and joy burst forth unbounded, life acclaimed Thee in Thy glory;
Darkness fled before Thy splendour, light its radiant flag unfurled.
All acclaimed Thee, "Hail, O Mother! Fosterer, Saviour of the world!"
Earth became thrice-blessed by the rose of beauty of Thy feet;
Blithe, she chanted: "Hail, World-Charmer! Hail, World-Mother!
Thee I greet."

2

Damp from ocean's kiss Thy raiment, from its waves still drip Thy
tresses.
Greatness spans Thy brow, and flower-like lucent-pure Thy smiling
face is.
Sun and moon and stars go dancing through the vastness of Thy spaces,
While below mid ocean's thunders foam of waves Thy feet embraces.
Earth became thrice-blessed with the rose of beauty of Thy feet;
Blithe, she chanted: "Hail, World-Charmer! Hail, World-Mother!
Thee I greet."

3

On Thy brow the snow's corona, round Thy knees leaps ocean's spray;
Ganges, Indus, Brahmaputra, — pearlstrings for Thy bosom's play!
There in desert places dire and bright and bare in heat Thou blazest,
There mid garnered world-flung riches with Thy golden smile amazest.
Earth became thrice-blessed with the rose of beauty of Thy feet;
Blithe, she chanted: "Hail, World-Charmer! Hail, World-Mother!
Thee I greet."

4

Through the void Thy winds sweep clamouring mighty, tireless, huge
of wing,
Or Thy feet adored caressing low and long bird-murmurs sing.
Race of wild clouds thunder-hurling with their deluge-seas of rain,
Laughter of Thy groves and woodlands drunk with fragrance,
flowery-fain!
Earth became thrice-blessed with the rose of beauty of Thy feet;
Blithe, she chanted: "Hail, World-Charmer! Hail, Earth-Mother!
Thee I greet."

5

Peace surrounds men from Thy bosom, Thy sweet voice love's
blessing throws;
By Thy hand are fed earth's millions, from Thy feet salvation flows.
Deep Thy joy is in Thy children, deep Thy suffering's tragic night,
Mother India, great World-Mother! O World-Saviour, World's Delight!
Earth became thrice-blessed by the rose of beauty of Thy feet;
Blithe, she chanted: "Hail, World-Charmer! Hail, Earth-Mother!
Thee I greet."

DWIJENDRALAL ROY

The Pilot

In the dark without end
Who art Thou, O Friend?
 I am led as if by a hand:
But cannot see,
Nor reach to Thee,
 Nothing can understand.

To my eyes is given no light,
All seems everlasting night
 Thou only my comrade there,
 Helping my plight:
To rout the gloom
Thy star-lamp relume —
 Thy splendid vision reveal.

Pierced by the thorns of pain,
I ask again and again:
 “To what far alien realm
 This hard path?” but in vain!
Once let me hear,
Love’s lips grown near,
 Whisper to my appeal.

If Thou art here by my side,
In this heart-lost darkness wide
 Stretch out Thy hand
 My weary soul to guide.
Though infirm my clasp,
Loosen not Thy grasp:
 Hold me fast through woe and weal.

ATULPRASAD SEN

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 unlovely 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.

ANILBARAN ROY

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!

ARUNA

Lakshmi

At the mobile passion of thy tread the cold snows faint and fail,
Hued by thy 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, made 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

Aspiration

(THE NEW DAWN)

The rays of the sun clothe the blue heaven with beauty;
the dark masses of the Night are driven far.
There breaks from the lyre of the dawn a song of light and
felicity,
and the soul in its groves responds with quivering hope.

One whose hem trails over the dancing crests of the waters,
and touches them to ripples of musical laughter,
Comes chanted by the orient in hymns of worship,
and twilight on its glimmering tambour beats dance-time
to the note-play of the rays.

She whose absence kept Night starved and afraid in its shadows,
a vibrant murmur now are her steps on the horizon:
As in a saddle of sunrise the heart of tameless aspiration
rides to its meeting with this Queen of Light.

One who descends in her golden chariot to the garden ways of
earth to create her many rhythms of life,
her every voice now hails in a long cry of welcome:
The flowers toss on the swings of delight;
the goal beacons, the pathless riddle is dispelled for ever.

Loud sings the shining Charioteer, "Look up, O wayfarer;
vanquished is the gloom of ages:
the high tops are agleam with sheen of the jewelry of
sunlight.

The impediments are shattered, the bonds are broken;
Day's trumpets of victory blare the defeat of Darkness.

Ravine and lightless desert
are fertile with rain of light, O Pilgrim;
Earth's dust and gravel are transmuted into the glory of the lotus.
For the Dawn-Goddess has come, her hand of boon
carrying fulfilment."

DILIP KUMAR ROY

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 toward my heaven and greater home:
Thy far Eternity.

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

Faithful

Let leap, O Mother, Thy lightning-fire:
 The prisoned soul cries out for Thee.
Let youth's blue dream in the Blue aspire
 To Thy crystal-song of eternity.
The dungeon-walls that stifle the heart
Throw down: oh, let Thy avalanche-dart
Its thrill to our pilgrim life impart:
 Come with the voice of Thy hurtling sea.
Open life's floodgates with Thy Fire:
 The soul, clay's hostage, cries for Thee.

Beloved, I know Thy summit-psalm —
 A fecund pledge of Deep to Deep:
I know that Thy Beauty's beckoning calm
 Makes courage, answering, overleap
Despond's abysmal gulf below,
And stamp on its brow Thy golden glow,
Earth's eyeless caverns overflow
 With Thy liberating gleam: we reap
The harvest of Thy summit-psalm —
 Its fecund pledge of Deep to Deep.

Let sunrise bugle blare and cleave
 The coward clouds which woo the Night.
Flower-grace Incarnate! help me weave
 Thy amaranthine dream's delight.
Make listless life-blood feel Thy call,
Tingle to dare, defy the fall.
The earth-plane's cherished joys now pall,
 I long to climb Thy dangerous height:
Unsheathe Thy dazzling sun-sword — cleave
 The moaning clouds which woo the Night.

I am the elect of Thy scatheless Light:
 Let faith unfading keep soul-ground.
Let Thy trumpet call to Thy fiery flight,
 In Thy sun-campaign to face death-wound.
In a flash Thy blinding loveliness
With Thy Promise of Peak descends to bless,
Thy morning's legions slay Night's distress,
 In Thy diamond-sheen life's glory is found:
I am vowed to Thy zenith of flawless light —
 Faith vibrant keeps my soul's wide ground.

DILIP KUMAR ROY

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.

SAHANA

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!

JYOTIRMAYI

At the day-end

At the day-end behold the Golden Daughter of Imaginations —
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 fixed 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 a silent Dawn;
The ceaseless vibration-scroll of a hidden Sun
Creates within her, where all is a magic incantation,
A picture of the transcendent Mystery; — that luminous laughter
Is like the voice of a gold-fretted flute flowing from the inmost
heart of the Creator.

NIRODBARAN

The King of kings

The King of kings has made you a king,
Your sceptre gave, your throne of gold,
Men and fair maids 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,
My little wallet full of songs,
His azure heavens for my robe,
His earth, my seat, 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.

NISHIKANTO

Part Three

Translations from Tamil

Andal

Andal

The Vaishnava Poetess

PREOCCUPIED from the earliest times with divine knowledge and religious aspiration the Indian mind has turned all forms of human life and emotion and all the phenomena of the universe into symbols and means by which the embodied soul may strive after and grasp the Supreme. Indian devotion has especially seized upon the most intimate human relations and made them stepping-stones to the supra-human. God the Guru, God the Master, God the Friend, God the Mother, God the Child, God the Self, each of these experiences — for to us they are more than merely ideas, — it has carried to its extreme possibilities. But none of them has it pursued, embraced, sung with a more exultant passion of intimate realisation than the yearning for God the Lover, God the Beloved. It would seem as if this passionate human symbol were the natural culminating-point for the mounting flame of the soul's devotion: for it is found wherever that devotion has entered into the most secret shrine of the inner temple. We meet it in Islamic poetry; certain experiences of the Christian mystics repeat the forms and images with which we are familiar in the East, but usually with a certain timorousness foreign to the Eastern temperament. For the devotee who has once had this intense experience it is that which admits to the most profound and hidden mystery of the universe; for him the heart has the key of the last secret.

The work of a great Bengali poet has recently reintroduced this idea to the European mind, which has so much lost the memory of its old religious traditions as to welcome and wonder at it as a novel form of mystic self-expression. On the contrary it is ancient enough, like all things natural and eternal in the human soul. In Bengal a whole period of national poetry has

been dominated by this single strain and it has inspired a religion and a philosophy. And in the Vaishnavism of the far South, in the songs of the Tamil Alvars we find it again in another form, giving a powerful and original turn to the images of our old classic poetry; for there it has been sung out by the rapt heart of a woman to the Heart of the Universe.

The Tamil word, Alvar, means one who has drowned, lost himself in the sea of the divine being. Among these canonised saints of Southern Vaishnavism ranks Vishnuchitta, Yogin and poet, of Villipattan in the land of the Pandyas. He is termed *Perialwar*, the great Alvar. A tradition, which we need not believe, places him in the ninety-eighth year of the Kaliyuga. But these divine singers are ancient enough, since they precede the great saint and philosopher Ramanuja whose personality and teaching were the last flower of the long-growing Vaishnava tradition. Since his time Southern Vaishnavism has been a fixed creed and a system rather than a creator of new spiritual greatnesses.

The poetess Andal was the foster-daughter of Vishnuchitta, found by him, it is said, a new-born child under the sacred tulsi-plant. We know little of Andal except what we can gather from a few legends, some of them richly beautiful and symbolic. Most of Vishnuchitta's poems have the infancy and boyhood of Krishna for their subject. Andal, brought up in that atmosphere, cast into the mould of her life what her foster-father had sung in inspired hymns. Her own poetry — we may suppose that she passed early into the Light towards which she yearned, for it is small in bulk, — is entirely occupied with her passion for the divine Being. It is said that she went through a symbolic marriage with Sri Ranganatha, Vishnu in his temple at Srirangam, and disappeared into the image of her Lord. This tradition probably conceals some actual fact, for Andal's marriage with the Lord is still celebrated annually with considerable pomp and ceremony.

We give below a translation of three of Andal's poems.

To the Cuckoo

O Cuckoo that peckest at the blossomed flower of honey-dripping champaka 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 mansions and decorated
turrets; and leave me there.

Nammalwar

Nammalwar

The Supreme Vaishnava Saint and Poet

MARAN, renowned as Nammalwar (“Our Saint”) among the Vaishnavas and the greatest of their saints and poets, was born in a small town called Kuruhur, in the southernmost region of the Tamil country — Tiru-nelveli (Tinnevely). His father, Kari, was a petty prince who paid tribute to the Pandyan King of Madura. We have no means of ascertaining the date of the Alwar’s birth, as the traditional account is untrustworthy and full of inconsistencies. We are told that the infant was mute for several years after his birth. Nammalwar renounced the world early in life and spent his time singing and meditating on God under the shade of a tamarind tree by the side of the village temple.

It was under this tree that he was first seen by his disciple, the Alwar Madhura-kavi, — for the latter also is numbered among the great Twelve, “lost in the sea of Divine Love”. Tradition says that while Madhura-kavi was wandering in North India as a pilgrim, one night a strange light appeared to him in the sky and travelled towards the South. Doubtful at first what significance this phenomenon might have for him, its repetition during three consecutive nights convinced him that it was a divine summons and where this luminous sign led he must follow. Night after night he journeyed southwards till the guiding light came to Kuruhur and there disappeared. Learning of Nammalwar’s spiritual greatness he thought that it was to him that the light had been leading him. But when he came to him, he found him absorbed in deep meditation with his eyes fast closed and although he waited for hours the Samadhi did not break until he took up a large stone and struck it against the ground violently. At the noise Nammalwar opened his eyes, but still remained

silent. Madhura-kavi then put to him the following enigmatical question, "If the little one (the soul) is born into the dead thing (Matter)¹ what will the little one eat and where will the little one lie?" to which Nammalwar replied in an equally enigmatic style, "That will it eat and there will it lie."

Subsequently Nammalwar permitted his disciple to live with him and it was Madhura-kavi who wrote down his songs as they were composed. Nammalwar died in his thirty-fifth year, but he has achieved so great a reputation that the Vaishnavas account him an incarnation of Vishnu himself, while others are only the mace, discus, conch etc. of the Deity.

From the philosophical and spiritual point of view, his poetry ranks among the highest in Tamil literature. But in point of literary excellence, there is a great inequality; for while some songs touch the level of the loftiest world-poets, others, even though rich in rhythm and expression, fall much below the poet's capacity. In his great work known as the *Tiru-vay-moli* (the Sacred Utterance) which contains more than a thousand stanzas, he has touched all the phases of the life divine and given expression to all forms of spiritual experience. The pure and passionless Reason, the direct perception in the high solar realm of Truth itself, the ecstatic and sometimes poignant love that leaps into being at the vision of the "Beauty of God's face", the final Triumph where unity is achieved and "I and my Father are one" — all these are uttered in his simple and flowing lines with a strength that is full of tenderness and truth.

The lines which we translate below are a fair specimen of the great Alwar's poetry; but it has suffered considerably in the translation, — indeed the genius of the Tamil tongue hardly permits of an effective rendering, so utterly divergent is it from that of the English language.

¹ The form of the question reminds one of Epictetus' definition of man, "Thou art a little soul carrying about a corpse." Some of our readers may be familiar with Swinburne's adaptation of the saying, "A little soul for a little bears up the corpse which is man."

Nammalwar's Hymn of the Golden Age

'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. (1)

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. (2)

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. (3)

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. (4)

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. (5)

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. (6)

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. (7)

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. (8)

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. (9)

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. (10)

Love-Mad

The Realisation of God in all things by the Vision of Divine Love

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 friends 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.

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. (1)

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. (2)

Knowing, she embraces red Fire, is scorched and cries “O Deathless!”
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. (3)

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! (4)

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. (5)

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 Demoness' life through her
 bosom! (6)

In rising madness she raves, "All worlds are by Krishna made"
 And she runs after folk ash-smeared; 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. (7)

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. (8)

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. (9)

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? (10)

Kulasekhara Alwar

Refuge

*(Translated from the Tamil verses of
Kulasekhara Alwar, the Chera king and saint)*

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. (1)

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. (2)

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. (3)

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. (4)

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. (5)

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. (6)

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. (7)

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. (8)

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. (9)

Tiruvalluvar

Opening of the Kural

1

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 on 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.

2

Rain

1. If the heavens remain dry, to the gods here in Nature
How shall be given the splendour of worship?
2. If the heavens do not their work, in this wide world
Giving is finished, austerity ended.
3. The world cannot live without its waters,
Nor conduct be at all without the rains from heaven.
4. If quite the skies refuse their gift, through this wide world
Famine shall do its worst with these creatures.
5. If one drop from heaven falls not, here
Hardly shalt thou see one head of green grass peering.

Part Four

Translations from Greek

Two Epigrams

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.

PLATO

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.

MELEAGER

Opening of the Iliad

Sing to me, Muse, of the wrath of Achilles Pelidean,
Murderous, bringing a million woes on the men of Achaea;
Many the mighty souls whom it drove down headlong to Hades,
Souls of heroes and made of their bodies booty for vultures,
Dogs and all birds; so the will of Zeus was wholly accomplished
Even from the moment when they two parted in strife and in anger,
Peleus' glorious son and the monarch of men Agamemnon.
Which of the gods was it set them to conflict and quarrel disastrous?
Leto's son from the seed of Zeus; he wroth with their monarch
Roused in the ranks an evil pest and the peoples perished.
For he insulted Chryses, priest and master of prayer,
Atreus' son, when he came to the swift ships of the Achaeans
Hoping release for his daughter, bringing a limitless ransom
While in his hands were the chaplets of great far-hurling Apollo
Twined on a sceptre of gold and entreated all the Achaeans.
"Atreus' son and all you highgreaved armèd Achaeans;
You may the gods grant, they who dwell in your lofty Olympus,
Priam's city to sack and safely to reach your firesides.
Only my child beloved may you loose to me taking this ransom,
Holding in awe great Zeus' son far-hurling Apollo."
Then all there rumoured approval, the other Achaeans,
Deeming the priest to revere and take that glorious ransom,
But Agamemnon it pleased not; the heart of him angered,
Evilly rather he sent him and hard was his word upon him.
"Let me not find thee again, old man, by our ships of the Ocean
Either lingering now or afterwards ever returning,
Lest the sceptre avail thee not, no nor the great God's chaplets.
Her will I not release; before that age shall o'ertake her
There in our dwelling in Argos far from the land of her fathers
Going about her loom, ascending my couch at nightfall.

Hence with thee, rouse me not, safer shalt thou return then
homeward.”

So he spake and the old man feared him and heeded his bidding.
Voiceless along the shore by the myriad cry of the waters
Slowly he went; but deeply he prayed as he paced to the distance,
Prayed to the Lord Apollo, child of Leto the golden.

Opening of the Odyssey

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 dwelt 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 seated,
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!
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 the 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 soil of his country.
Yet not for all his words would the infatuate heart of Aegisthus
Heed that friendly voice; 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 in her dwelling mid woods and caves a goddess 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 part the earth and the heavens;
Atlas’ daughter keeps in that island the unhappy Odysseus.
Always soft are her words and crafty and thus she beguiles him.
So perhaps he shall cease from thought of his land; but Odysseus
Yearns to see even the distant smoke of his country upleaping.
Death he desires. And even in thee, O Olympian, my father,
Never thy heart turns one moment to pity, nor dost thou remember
How by the ships of the Argives he wrought the sacrifice pleasing
Oft in wide-wayed Troya. What wrath gainst the wronged keeps thy
bosom?

Hexameters from Homer

Down he fell with a thud and his armour clangoured upon him.

*

Down from the peaks of Olympus he went, wrath vexing his
heart-strings.

*

Down from the peaks of Olympus she went impetuously darting.

*

Silent he walked by the shore of the many-rumoured Ocean.

Part Five

Translations from Latin

Hexameters from Virgil and Horace

Horse-hooves trampled the crumbling plain with a four-footed
gallop.

*

Fiercer griefs you have suffered; to these too God will give
ending.

VIRGIL

Him shall not copious eloquence leave nor clearness and order.

HORACE

Catullus 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 light of living, —
One long night we must sleep, and sleep for ever.
Give me kisses a thousand and then a hundred,
One more thousand again, again a hundred,
Many thousands of kisses give and hundreds,
Kisses numberless like to sands on sea-shores,
Burning Libya's sands in far Cyrene.
Close confound the thousands and mix the hundreds
Lest some envious Fate or eye discover
The long reckoning of our love and kisses.

Note on the Texts

Note on the Texts

Fluent in English from his childhood, Sri Aurobindo mastered five other languages — French, Latin, Greek, Sanskrit and Bengali — and learned something of seven others — Italian, German, Spanish, Hindi/Hindustani, Gujarati, Marathi and Tamil. On numerous occasions over a period of half a century he translated works and passages written in several of these languages.

The present volume contains all Sri Aurobindo's translations from Sanskrit, Bengali, Tamil, Greek and Latin into English, with the exception of his translations from the Rig Veda and the Upanishads. (His Vedic and Upanishadic translations are published in volumes 14–18 of THE COMPLETE WORKS OF SRI AUROBINDO.) Sri Aurobindo's translations of some of the Mother's French *Prières et méditations* appear in *The Mother with Letters on the Mother*, volume 31 of THE COMPLETE WORKS. His translations of Sanskrit texts into Bengali are published in *Writings in Bengali and Sanskrit*, volume 9 of THE COMPLETE WORKS. Several of his other works incorporate translations. *Essays on the Gita* (volume 19), for instance, contains translations and paraphrases of many passages from the Bhagavad Gita. (The present volume contains an early literary translation of the Gita's opening chapters.)

The editors have arranged the contents of the present volume in five parts according to source-language. The pieces are published as Sri Aurobindo translated them, even if his ordering does not agree with the usual order of the original text.

PART ONE: TRANSLATIONS FROM SANSKRIT

Sri Aurobindo began to learn Sanskrit as an Indian Civil Service probationer at Cambridge between 1890 and 1892. He continued his studies while working as an administrative officer and professor in the Baroda state between 1893 and 1906. During this period he translated most of the pieces making up this part. His rendering of *Vidula* dates from the

period of his political activity (1906–10); some shorter pieces, mostly incomplete, date from his years in Pondicherry (1910–50).

Section One. The Ramayana

Pieces from the Ramayana. Sri Aurobindo translated these four passages sometime around 1900 under the heading “Pieces from the Ramaian”. They have been reproduced in the order of their occurrence in his notebook. The Sanskrit sources of the passages are as follows: “Speech of Dussaruth to the assembled States-General of his Empire”, Ayodhya Kanda, Sarga 2. 1–20; “An Aryan City”, Bala Kanda, Sarga 5. 5–22; “A Mother’s Lament”, Ayodhya Kanda, Sarga 20. 36–55; “The Wife”, Ayodhya Kanda, Sargas 26–30.

An Aryan City: Prose Version. Editorial title. Translated around 1912. Bala Kanda, Sarga 5. 5–15. This translation covers most of the same ground as the verse translation in “Pieces from the Ramayana”, which was done around a decade earlier.

The Book of the Wild Forest. Translated around 1912. Aranya Kanda, Sargas 1. 1–21, 2. 1–25, 3. 1–5.

The Defeat of Dhoomraksha. Translated around 1913. Yuddha Kanda, Sarga 52.

Section Two. The Mahabharata

Sabha Parva or Book of the Assembly-Hall. According to notations in the manuscript, Sri Aurobindo worked on this translation between 18 March and 18 April 1893. (He returned to India after passing more than thirteen years in England on 6 February 1893.) His original plan was to translate much of the Parva in twelve “cantos”. On the first page of the manuscript, under the heading “Translation / of / the Mahabhaarut / Sabhâ Purva / or Book of the Assembly-Hall”, he wrote an outline of the proposed work:

Part I. The Book of the Sacrifice

Canto I	The Building of the Hall.
Canto II.	The Debated Sacrifice
Canto III.	The Slaying of Jeresundh.

Canto IV.	The Conquest of the World.
Canto V.	The Interrupted Meedgiving
Canto VI	The Slaying of Shishupaal.

Part II. The Book of Gambling

Canto VII	The Grief of Duryodhun
Canto VIII	The Bringing of Yudishthere
Canto IX.	The Throwing of the Dice
Canto X	The Oppression of Drowpadie
Canto XI.	The Last Throwing of the Dice
Canto XII.	The Exile of the Pandoves

The division of the Parva into twelve cantos is Sri Aurobindo's own and does not correspond to any divisions in the Sanskrit text.

Sri Aurobindo abandoned this project before completion, leaving translations, in places rather rough, of only two cantos and part of a third. The first canto consists of Adhyayas 1–3 and part of Adhyaya 4, the second of Adhyayas 13–16 and part of 17, and the third of Adhyayas 20–22 and part of 23. (These are the Adhyaya numbers in the popular Gita Press edition [Gorakhpur], which corresponds reasonably well to the edition used by Sri Aurobindo for this translation. The corresponding Adhyayas in the Critical Edition [Poona: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute] are 1–4, 12–16 and 18–21.)

While revising his translation Sri Aurobindo wrote alternative versions of several passages. The editors have reproduced the later version whenever it was sufficiently well worked out for use; if not, they have reverted to the original version. Sri Aurobindo numbered the lines of his first versions of the three cantos, but did not revise the numbers after adding new lines.

Virata Parva: Fragments from Adhyaya 17. These two fragments were written on a single page of a notebook that can be dated to around 1898. The shorter, prose version covers part of the Sanskrit passage that is translated in the longer, poetic version, namely Virata Parva 17. 13–15 in the Gita Press edition or 16. 7–9 in the Critical Edition.

Udyoga Parva: Two Renderings of the First Adhyaya. The two versions of Adhyaya 1 of the Udyoga Parva were done separately around 1902

and 1906. Neither is quite complete. The first version omits Shlokas 8 and 9; the second omits the last verse.

Udyoga Parva: Passages from Adhyayas 75 and 72. These fragments from Adhyayas 75 and 72 (73 and 70 in the Critical Edition) of the Udyoga Parva were translated in this order around 1902. They occupy a page of the notebook containing the essay “Notes on the Mahabharata” (see *Early Cultural Writings*, volume 1 of THE COMPLETE WORKS OF SRI AUROBINDO). The first passage covers the first three Shlokas of Adhyaya 75 (the remainder of this Adhyaya is translated in “Notes on the Mahabharata”). The second passage covers Shlokas 1–5 of Adhyaya 72.

The Bhagavad Gita: The First Six Chapters. Sri Aurobindo translated these chapters of the Bhagavad Gita sometime around 1902. He used a text of the Gita published in Calcutta in 1301 Bengali era (1894–95), jotting down English renderings of a few verses in the book itself before translating the first six chapters in a notebook. A translation of the first three verses of the seventh chapter is reproduced in Appendix I from marginal notations in his copy of the book. Appendix II is a much later translation of the first three and a half verses of the Gita, found in a notebook used by Sri Aurobindo in 1927.

Vidula. This translation first appeared in the weekly *Bande Mataram* on 9 June 1907 under the title “The Mother to her Son”. The following note by Sri Aurobindo was printed above the text:

(There are few more interesting passages in the Mahabharat 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.)

Almost thirty-five years later Sri Aurobindo revised his translation for publication in *Collected Poems and Plays* (1942). At that time he struck out the above note and wrote the one reproduced on page 105.

Section Three. Kalidasa

Between 1898 and around 1903 Sri Aurobindo wrote several chapters of a planned critical study of the works of Kalidasa, the master of classical Sanskrit poetry. During the same period he translated two complete works by the poet—the *Meghaduta* and the *Vikramorvasi*—as well as parts of three others—the *Malavikagnimitra*, the *Kumarasambhava* and the *Raghuvansha*. A number of years later, in Pondicherry, he returned to Kalidasa, producing three different versions of the opening of the *Kumarasambhava*.

The editors reproduce these translations in the following order: first, the only surviving complete translation; next, the two that include at least one major section of the original text; and finally, notes and fragments.

Vikramorvasi or The Hero and the Nymph. Sri Aurobindo began this translation of Kalidasa's second drama, the *Vikramorvasi*, sometime around 1898. He had apparently completed it by around 1902, when he wrote an essay on the characters of the play. (This essay, "Vikramorvasi: The Characters", is published in *Early Cultural Writings*, volume 1 of THE COMPLETE WORKS.) Probably in 1911 Sri Aurobindo's translation was published by R. Chatterjee (presumably Ramananda Chatterjee, editor of the *Prabasi* and *Modern Review*) at the Kuntaline Press, Calcutta. A second edition was brought out in 1941 by the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry; the next year the

text was included in the same publisher's *Collected Poems and Plays*. **In the Gardens of Vidisha or Malavica and the King: Act I.** Sri Aurobindo wrote this partial translation of Kalidasa's *Malavikagnimitra* in Baroda, probably around 1900–02. A fragment from the beginning of Act II, translated at the same time, is published here in an appendix. **The Birth of the War-God.** Around 1916–18, Sri Aurobindo made three separate translations of parts of the first two cantos of Kalidasa's epic *Kumarasambhava* under the title *The Birth of the War-God*. The first rendering, which breaks off after the twentieth verse, is in rhymed stanzas. The second rendering is a translation of the first canto in blank verse; verses 7–16 were translated in a different order from the original. The third, expanded version includes several long passages that do not correspond to anything in Kalidasa's epic. It may thus be considered practically an independent poem by Sri Aurobindo.

Notes and Fragments

Skeleton Notes on the Kumarasambhavam: Canto V. Around 1900–02, while still living in Baroda, Sri Aurobindo produced this annotated literal translation of the beginning of the fifth canto of Kalidasa's epic. In it he cited the glosses of various commentators. These citations make it clear that he used the edition of Shankar Ganesh Deshpande: *The Kumara-Sambhava of Kâlidâsa (I–VI.) With the commentary of Mallinâtha* (Poona, 1887).

The Line of Raghov: Two Renderings of the Opening. Sri Aurobindo translated the first ten verses of Kalidasa's *Raghuvansha* independently on two different occasions, first in Baroda sometime around 1900–05 (he headed this translation “Raghuvansa”) and later in Pondicherry around 1912 (he headed this translation “The Line of Raghov / Canto I”).

The Cloud Messenger: Fragments from a Lost Translation. Sri Aurobindo translated the entire *Meghaduta* sometime around 1900. A decade later, while living in Pondicherry under the surveillance of the British police, he entrusted the translation to a friend, who (according to the received story) put it in a bamboo cylinder and buried it. When the cylinder was unearthed, it was discovered that the translation had been devoured by white ants. The only passages to survive are the ones

Sri Aurobindo quoted in his essay “On Translating Kalidasa” and in a letter to his brother Manmohan Ghose that was typed for use as a preface to the poem *Love and Death*. These passages are reproduced here in the order in which they occur in Kalidasa’s poem.

Section Four. Bhartrihari

The Century of Life. Sri Aurobindo began this translation of the *Niti Shataka* of Bhartrihari (sixth to seventh century) while in Baroda. He seems to have been referring to it when he spoke, in a letter to his uncle dated 15 August 1902, of “my MS of verse translations from Sanskrit”. Some of the epigrams were first published in the *Baroda College Miscellany*, presumably during the years he was a professor of English there (1898–1901 and 1905–06). A few others were published in the *Karmayogin* on 19 March 1910 and in the *Arya* in December 1917 and November 1918. The complete translation was preserved in the form of a forty-page typescript, preceded by an eight-page “Prefatory Note” (see below). In 1924 the translation was published by the Shama’a Publishing House, Madras.

Appendix: Prefatory Note on Bhartrihari. The typed manuscript of Sri Aurobindo’s translation of *The Century of Life*, then called “The Century of Morals”, included this “prefatory note” on the poet and his work. When Sri Aurobindo published *The Century of Life* in 1924, he discarded this note in favour of the brief translator’s note published here on page 314.

Section Five. Other Translations from Sanskrit

Opening of the Kiratarjuniya. Sri Aurobindo read the masterwork of the seventh-century poet Bharavi during the early part of his stay in Pondicherry. He wrote a literal translation of the first two Shlokas of the poem in the top margin of the first page of the book. This evidently was intended as an aid in his study of the poem and not as an attempt at literary translation.

Bhagawat: Skandha I, Adhyaya I. This translation of the first Adhyaya of the Bhagavata Purana was written in Pondicherry around 1912.

Bhavani. Sri Aurobindo's translation of the opening of this hymn, attributed to the eighth-century Vedantic philosopher and commentator Shankaracharya, is dated 28 March 1941.

PART TWO: TRANSLATIONS FROM BENGALI

Although born in Bengal of Bengali parents, Sri Aurobindo did not begin to learn the Bengali language until he was a young man. As a child he spoke only English and Hindustani. His father, then an ardent anglophile, did not allow Bengali to be spoken at home. When he was seven, Aurobindo was taken to England, where he remained for the next thirteen years. Selected for the Indian Civil Service and assigned to Bengal, he began the study of Bengali at Cambridge. Rejected from the service in 1892, he obtained employment in the state of Baroda, where he continued his Bengali studies. At this time he translated a number of songs by devotional poets who wrote in Bengali or the related language of Maithili. Between 1906 and 1910 he lived in Bengal, where he mastered Bengali well enough to edit a weekly journal in that language. At that time he translated part of a novel by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee. Later, in Pondicherry, he translated a few examples of contemporary Bengali poetry.

Section One. Vaishnava Devotional Poetry

Radha's Complaint in Absence. Sri Aurobindo published this "imitation" of a poem by Chandidasa (late fourteenth to early fifteenth century) in *Songs to Myrtilla* (c. 1898), his first collection of poems.

Radha's Appeal. This "imitation" from Chandidasa was also published in *Songs to Myrtilla*.

Karma: Radha's Complaint. This free rendering of a poem by Chandidasa first appeared in *Ahana and Other Poems* (Pondicherry: The Modern Press, 1915).

Appeal. This English poem is based in part on a song ("Divas til ādh . . .") in Vidyapati's *Padavali* (see the next item). The first stanza of the English follows Vidyapati's text fairly closely; the two stanzas that follow are Sri Aurobindo's own invention. It was first published in *Ahana and Other Poems*.

Twenty-two Poems of Bidyapati. Vidyapati (fourteenth to fifteenth century; pronounced “Bidyapati” in Bengali and so spelled by Sri Aurobindo) wrote in Maithili, a language spoken in north-east Bihar and Nepal, which is closely related to Bengali and other languages of eastern India. Mediaeval Maithili in particular is close to mediaeval Bengali, and Bengali scholars consider Vidyapati one of the creators of their own literature. Sri Aurobindo read Vidyapati’s *Padavali* as part of his study of early Bengali literature. (He used the text reproduced in an edition of *Prachin Kabir Granthabali* [Anthology of the Old Poets] published in Calcutta in 1304 Bengali era [1897–98].) Around 1898 Sri Aurobindo began to translate poems from the *Padavali* into English verse. He entitled his first selection, “Ten Poems translated from Bidyapati”. Later, in the same notebook, he added twenty-four more. Some years later he selected twelve of these thirty-four translations for inclusion in his “Selected Poems of Bidyapati” (see below). The twenty-two poems that he did not select are published together here under an editorial title similar to the title of his first selection of ten.

Sri Aurobindo gave titles to drafts of four of the poems in this series (13: “Radha”; 14: “After the bath”; 15: “Radha bathing”; 16: “Love’s Stratagem”) and three of the “Selected Poems of Bidyapati” (2: “Enchantment”; 12: “The Look”; 13: “The Bee & the Jasmine”). He wrote more than one version of some of the translations included in this section. Versions that differ significantly from the ones chosen for publication here are reproduced in the reference volume (volume 35). As Sri Aurobindo did not finalise his arrangement of these twenty-two poems, they are published in the order in which they occur in *Prachin Kabir Granthabali*.

Selected Poems of Bidyapati. Around 1900 Sri Aurobindo selected nineteen of his translations from Vidyapati (twelve of which had been drafted in the notebook mentioned in the previous note), and arranged them in an order that emphasises the dialogue between Radha and Krishna.

Selected Poems of Nidhou. Sri Aurobindo translated these twenty poems by the Bengali poet Ramnidhi Gupta (1741–1839), known as Nidhu Babu, sometime around 1900, using the same notebook he had used for “Selected Poems of Bidyapati”. He seems to have used texts of Nidhu Babu’s poems published in an edition of the collection *Rasa*

Bhandar (Calcutta, 1306 Bengali era [1899–1900]). He numbered his translations and then revised the order by changing the numbers in pencil. The editors have followed the revised arrangement.

Selected Poems of Horo Thacoor. Sri Aurobindo translated these seven poems by Harekrishna Dirghangi (1738–1813), known as Haru Thakur, around the same time as the selections from Nidhu Babu (see above), writing his fair copies in the same notebook. His source seems to have been *Rasa Bhandar* (see above). The notes above the texts are his own glosses.

Selected Poems of Ganodas. Sri Aurobindo translated these seven poems by the sixteenth-century poet Jnanadas (whose name he spelled “Ganodas”, as it is pronounced in Bengali) around the same time, and in the same notebook, as his selections from Nidhu Babu and Haru Thakur. His text appears to have been the *Prachin Kabir Granthabali* (see above under “Twenty-two Poems of Bidyapati”). The glosses are his own.

Section Two. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee

Hymn to the Mother: Bande Mataram. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee (1838–94) inserted his song “Bande Mataram” in the tenth chapter of his novel *Anandamath*. During the Swadeshi movement (1905–12) the song became a national anthem and its opening words — “Bande Mataram” (“I bow to the Motherland”) — a sort of battle cry. In the course of translating the first part of the novel (see below), Sri Aurobindo rendered the song in English verse, adding, in a footnote, a more literal prose translation. First published in the *Karmayogin* on 20 November 1909, the two renderings later were reproduced in *Rishi Bunkim Chandra* (1923), a pamphlet containing also an essay of the same name.

Anandamath: The First Thirteen Chapters. Bankim Chandra Chatterjee’s novel *Anandamath* (The Abbey of Bliss) was first published in 1882. A quarter-century later it gained great popularity as the source of the song “Bande Mataram” and as a masked revolutionary statement. A translation of the Prologue and the first thirteen chapters of Part I of the novel were published in the *Karmayogin* between between August 1909 and February 1910 over the name Aurobindo Ghose (Sri

Aurobindo). The chapters contain a number of unidiomatic expressions that make one wonder whether he was solely responsible for the translation. During the 1940s, a full translation of *Anandamath* was published by the Basumati Sahitya Mandir, Calcutta. A note to this edition states: “Up to 15th Chapter of Part I translated by Sree Aurobindo. Subsequent pages translated by Sree Barindra Kumar Ghosh.” Chapters fourteen and fifteen were certainly not translated by Sri Aurobindo, and are not included here.

Sometime during the early period of his stay in Pondicherry (1910–14), Sri Aurobindo made a handwritten translation of the first two chapters of *Anandamath*, apparently without reference to the *Karmayogin* version. This translation is published here in an appendix.

Section Three. Chittaranjan Das

Songs of the Sea. Sri Aurobindo met Chittaranjan Das (1870–1925) while both were students in England. Two decades later Das successfully defended Sri Aurobindo from the charge of conspiracy to wage war against the King in the Alipore Bomb Case (1909–10). In 1913, learning that Sri Aurobindo was in financial need, Das offered him Rs. 1000 in exchange for a translation of Das’s book of poems, *Sagar-Sangit* (Sea-Songs). Sri Aurobindo agreed and completed the translation, which eventually was published, along with Das’s prose translation, by Ganesh and Co., Madras, around 1923. Twenty-five years later Sri Aurobindo wrote of his rendering:

I was not . . . self-moved to translate this work, however beautiful I found it; I might even be accused of having written the translation as a pot-boiler, for Das knowing my impecunious and precarious situation at Pondicherry offered me Rs. 1,000 for the work. Nevertheless I tried to give his beautiful Bengali lines as excellent a shape of English poetry as I could manage.

Section Four. Disciples and Others

During the 1930s a number of Sri Aurobindo’s disciples wrote poems that they submitted to him for comment and criticism. On eleven

occasions he translated or thoroughly revised translations of poems in Bengali that had been sent to him in this way. During the same decade he translated three songs by Dwijendralal Roy and Atulprasad Sen. These fourteen translations are arranged here in the order of the poets' birth. Most were informal efforts; only "Hymn to India" and "Mahalakshmi" were revised for publication.

Hymn to India, by Dwijendralal Roy (1863–1913). Roy, a well-known playwright, was the father of Dilip Kumar Roy, a disciple of Sri Aurobindo (see below). Sri Aurobindo translated his *Bharata Stotra* on 16 February 1941. The next month the translation was published in the *Modern Review*, Calcutta, under the title "Hymn to India". A year later it was reproduced in Sri Aurobindo's *Collected Poems and Plays* under the title "Mother India". The editors have reverted to the *Modern Review* title (a literal translation of the original Bengali title) to avoid confusion with the next piece.

Mother India, by Dwijendralal Roy. In 1932 Sri Aurobindo thoroughly revised a translation by Mrs. Frieda Hanswirth Dass, a Swiss friend of Dilip Kumar Roy's, of Dwijendralal's song *Bharatabarsha*. Sri Aurobindo later wrote of this version as "my translation". Early typed copies of it are entitled "Mother India".

The Pilot, by Atulprasad Sen (1871–1934). Sen, a noted songwriter and singer, was a friend of Dilip Kumar Roy's. Dilip seems to have sent Sri Aurobindo a copy of this song, probably accompanied by his own or another's English translation, sometime during the 1930s. He later marked a typed copy of the present translation "by Sri Aurobindo".

Mahalakshmi, by Anilbaran Roy (1890–1974). In November 1935, Sri Aurobindo wrote of this translation (which he had apparently just completed):

Anilbaran's song is best rendered by an Elizabethan simplicity and intensity with as little artifice of metre and diction as possible. I have tried to do it in that way.

The translation was first published, under the title "The Mother", in *Gitasri*, a book of Bengali songs by Dilip Kumar Roy and Nishikanto. It was reprinted, under the title "Mahalakshmi", in Sri Aurobindo's *Collected Poems and Plays* (1942).

The New Creator, by Aruna (1895–1993).

Lakshmi, by Dilip Kumar Roy (1897–1980). Sri Aurobindo's handwritten copy of this translation is entitled "Mahalakshmi". It was published under the title "Lakshmi" in the poet's collection *Anami* (Calcutta, c. 1934), and under the name "Mahalakshmi" in his collection *Eyes of Light* (Bombay, 1948). In both books Sri Aurobindo was identified as the translator. The editors have used the title "Lakshmi" to distinguish this translation from the translation of Anilbaran Roy's poem (see above).

Aspiration: The New Dawn, by Dilip Kumar Roy. A copy of this translation in Sri Aurobindo's own hand exists. It was published in the poet's *Anami* (c. 1934). The poet later wrote that it "was originally translated by my own humble self in free verse which Sri Aurobindo corrected and revised later".

Farewell Flute, by Dilip Kumar Roy. This translation was published in the poet's *Eyes of Light* in 1948. There the translator was identified as Sri Aurobindo.

Uma, by Dilip Kumar Roy. Sri Aurobindo based this translation on one by K. C. Sen. Apropos of his work, he wrote:

Khitish Sen'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.

Two typed copies of Sri Aurobindo's translation exist, one entitled "Uma" and the other "Gouri". In the margin of one, D. K. Roy wrote: "This can be taken as Sri Aurobindo's translation. 99% is his."

Faithful, by Dilip Kumar Roy. The poet wrote of this translation: "The English version is a free rendering from the Bengali original by Dilip Kumar and corrected by Sri Aurobindo practically 90%."

Since thou hast called me, by Sahana (1897–1990). An early typed

copy of this poem is marked: “translated from Sahana’s song by Sri Aurobindo. 13-2-’41.”

A Beauty infinite, by Jyotirmayi (c. 1902–?) The poet’s sonnet was written on 2 January 1937 and submitted to Sri Aurobindo the next day. On 14 January Sri Aurobindo wrote this translation, prefacing it with the following remark: “I am inserting an attempt to put in English verse Jyoti’s sonnet translated by Nolini [Kanta Gupta].”

At the day-end, by Nirodbaran (born 1903). The poet’s sonnet was submitted to Sri Aurobindo on 17 February 1937. Sri Aurobindo wrote his translation as part of his reply of the next day. He prefaced it with the remark: “Well, let us put it in English — without trying to be too literal, turning the phrases to suit the Eng. language. If there are any mistakes of rendering they can be adjusted.”

The King of kings, by Nishikanto (1909–1973). An early typed copy of this translation is marked: “Translated by Sri Aurobindo from Nishikanto’s song. 7.2.1941.”

PART THREE: TRANSLATIONS FROM TAMIL

In connection with his research into the “origins of Aryan speech”, Sri Aurobindo made a brief study of Tamil in Pondicherry around 1910–12. A few years later the celebrated poet Subramania Bharati, who like Sri Aurobindo was a political refugee in the French colony, introduced Sri Aurobindo to the works of the mediaeval Vaishnava saints known as *alwars*, helping him translate some of their poems into English, and providing him with material to enable him to write prefatory essays on the poets. Bharati also may have helped Sri Aurobindo in his translations from the *Kural*.

Andal. Andal lived during the eighth century. Sri Aurobindo’s translations of three of her poems — “To the Cuckoo”, “I Dreamed a Dream”, and “Ye Others” — were published in the *Arya* in May 1915. They were preceded by the essay reproduced here.

Nammalwar. Maran, known as Nammalwar, lived during the ninth century. Sri Aurobindo’s translations of his “Hymn of the Golden Age”, and “Love-Mad”, along with an essay on the poet, were published in the *Arya* in July and September 1915.

Kulasekhara Alwar. Kulasekhara Alwar reigned in the Chera kingdom of south India during the eighth century. Sri Aurobindo's translation of his "Refuge" was published in the *Arya* in November 1915.

Tiruvalluvar. Composed by the poet Tiruvalluvar sometime during the early centuries of the Christian era, the *Kural* consists of 1330 verse aphorisms on the main aspects of life — ethical, practical and sensuous — divided into three parts made up of chapters of ten verses each. Around 1919, Sri Aurobindo translated the first chapter (in a different order from the original) and five aphorisms from the second chapter.

PART FOUR: TRANSLATIONS FROM GREEK

Sri Aurobindo began the study of Greek at St Paul's School, London. After winning a classical scholarship with the best Greek papers the examiner had ever seen, he continued his studies at King's College, Cambridge. He wrote the translations of Greek epigrams reproduced here in England or Baroda. The translations from Homer were done later, in Baroda and Pondicherry.

Two Epigrams. Sri Aurobindo's translations of these epigrams attributed to Plato (fifth to fourth century B.C.) and Meleager (first century B.C.) were published in *Songs to Myrtilla* (c. 1898).

Opening of the Iliad. Sri Aurobindo translated these lines from the Iliad in Baroda around 1901.

Opening of the Odyssey. Sri Aurobindo translated these lines from the Odyssey in Pondicherry around 1913. His manuscript is headed "Odyssey Book I".

Hexameters from Homer. These translations of four lines from the Iliad were written, below the original Greek lines, in a note-pad used by Sri Aurobindo in 1946 mainly for passages of his epic, *Savitri*. In a letter dictated in that year, he quoted these lines in a slightly different form to illustrate the use of repetition in the Homeric style.

PART FIVE: TRANSLATIONS FROM LATIN

Sri Aurobindo began the study of Latin in Manchester before entering school. He continued his studies at St Paul's and at King's College,

Cambridge. He did the translations reproduced here in Pondicherry in the 1930s and 1940s.

Hexameters from Virgil and Horace. Sri Aurobindo translated these three lines from the works of Virgil and Horace (both first century B.C.) in Pondicherry during the 1930s, using the same hexametric metre as the originals. The first line is a conflation of two lines from Virgil's *Aeneid*, Book 8, line 596 and Book 11, 875. The second line is also from the *Aeneid*, Book 1, line 199. The last is line 41 of Horace's *Ars Poetica*.

Catullus to Lesbia. Sri Aurobindo translated this lyric by the Latin poet Catullus (first century B.C.) in Pondicherry around 1942. Two versions of the translation exist among his manuscripts. The one reproduced here is the more developed.

PUBLISHING HISTORY

As mentioned above, the following works were published during Sri Aurobindo's lifetime: the three poems by Chandidasa and "Appeal" (c. 1898 and 1915); *Vidula* (in *Bande Mataram* in 1907); *Vikramorvasie* or *The Hero and the Nymph* (Calcutta, 1911; Pondicherry, 1941); *The Century of Life* (Madras, 1924); *Bande Mataram* and the chapters of *Anandamath* (1909 and subsequently); *Songs of the Sea* (Madras, 1923); Bengali poems by "Disciples and Others" (1934–1948); the selections from the Alvars (1914–15); and the Greek lyrics (c. 1898). Most of these works were reproduced in *Collected Poems and Plays* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1942). Most of the other translations appeared in books or journals between 1950 and 1970. All known translations were collected for the first time in *Translations* (Pondicherry, 1972). The present volume contains a few translations that have not previously been printed. All the texts have been checked against Sri Aurobindo's manuscripts and books and periodicals published during his lifetime.