



# THE RÁNI OF JHÁNSI

OR, THE WIDOWED QUEEN

PLAY BY

ALEXANDER ROGERS

AND HOMER DEVIL, REVISED

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

SIR EDWIN ARNOLD

R.S.B., C.B., &c.

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## P R E F A C E

I HAVE read with a pleasure and interest which I think many will share, this striking presentation of a famous episode of the great Indian Mutiny, in the form of an English drama. My friend, its very accomplished and well-informed author, Mr. Alexander Rogers, is a learned Oriental scholar, and has passed many years of good governmental service in Hindustan, so that he possesses the local and every knowledge necessary for such a task, and with these no inconsiderable practice and skill, witness his excellent translation from the poet Jami, of the 'Yusuf and Zulaikha,' and his large command of the poetry of Sâdi and its display in the pages of this play. It is the work of that most remarkable and great-hearted

## PREFACE

woman, the Rani of Jhansi, who in the time of the Mutiny played the part of an Indian Boudicca. Mahatta by birth and of the royal and warlike line of Shivaji, she was every inch a Queen; but, having a real or fancied complaint against the British Raj on account of her deceased husband's debts, which we compelled her to pay from the palace allowances, the high-spirited lady flung her angry heart and passionate nature into the scale against us in the memorable struggle, giving more trouble to the British arms, before she fell dead upon the field of battle, at Kotah-kherai, in the dress of a horse-soldier, than many of the boldest rebel chieftains. I, too, was in India in those troubled days, serving first the 'Compo Bahadur,' and afterwards the Queen: and I often heard Sir Hugh Rose—in later days as Lord Strathnairn—talk about the beautiful Princess who gave his column, hard work through those fierce and fire in the north-west. '*Mera Jhansi deng*' 'I will never yield up my city,'—and

## PREFACE

defiant answer to the Resident and General of the column, nor should we have won back Hydrabad, Calcutta, and Cawnpore so easily, if all our enemies had resembled this Leopardess of the Deccan. With true insight into her character and the temper of the times, this play, *The Rani of Jhansi*, works out very ably and attractively, in my judgment, the incidents of the period. It seems to me to contain, moreover, passages of a noble and appropriate elevation; and to convey the spirit of those angry and mournful days in a manner as successful as it is novel. The massacre of Europeans, which the proud Princess of Jhansi allowed,—nay! I am afraid I must say commanded,—at her capital city in the Joka Bagh, was unhappily with indelible shame a name other-illustrations; but the author has shown, with it, how irresistible were the emotions which hurried her, and how bitter was the conflict of both sides. I have no hesitation in adding the present production to the list of those which will derive from it, perhaps, a

## PREFACE

more just impression of the scenes and circumstances  
of the great Indian Mutiny than from works more  
copious and pretentious

EDWIN ARNOLD.

London, 22nd Decr. 1894.

## ERRATA

Page 13, line 18, *for* thou *read* you.

„ 16, „ 1, *for* that *read* Sirat.

„ 91, „ 16, *for* Sirat *read* Sirát.



THE F  
A D  
IN

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

THE RANI, Queen of Jhansi in 1857.

ANDERNA, } her two waiting-women.  
PAWARI, }

ELLEN MOREHEAD, wife of Surgeon-Majorly

FREDDY, } two Children.  
MAMU, }

A DAUGHTER OF VISNU.

SURGEON-MOREHEAD.

CAPTAIN SKINNER, Political Agent at Jhansi.

LIEUT. PURCELL.

MIRZA, Court Physician.

VISNU, Court Astrologer.

TWO MACHHARIAHS.

ATTENDANTS, SUDRYS, &c.

TWO PETITIONERS

SIR HUGH ROSE.

CAPTAIN LUTHER, R.D.

CAPTAIN DABRY, H.M.'s 86th County Deewar

HOOLAJIAN, } Privates, H.M.'s 86th Regiment.  
MIKI, }

THE RAO SAHIB, } Rebel Leaders.  
TANTIA TOPU, }  
NAYAB OF BANDA, }

TWO MAHARATTA NOMINATIONS.

SIR H. ROSE'S SERVANTS, BUDH, &c.

## A C T I

SCENE I. *A gateway in the fort of Jhānsī.*

*Enter VISHNU and MIRZA.*

MIRZA. Friend Vishnu, hast thou heard the Delhi news?

VISHNU. My time, my friend, is better, far, employed  
Than in the hearing of bazar reports,  
That raise inquiet in the calmer sense  
With which heav'n's mystic pages should be  
scanned

By one who would interpret their deep signs,  
And know the portents of the coming woe.

MIRZA. Does thy skill teach thee what the future  
brings?

This fiery comet that we see each night  
Light up the Western skies, and with its rays  
Reduce the common stars to impotence,—  
That with its blazing besom fain would sweep  
From its celestial path the feeble moon—  
Doth it foreshadow great and dire events?

## THE RANI OF JINNSI

VISUND. Ay doth it    Listen    From my earliest  
youth

Taught by my Guru, Vajrāth, in the caves  
Of famed Ajantā, where a hermit's life  
He lived apart from earth    bewildering scenes,  
I learnt to read the secret pages of the stars  
Night after night with the old sage I scanned  
Those dark unchanging depths, until each spark  
Impressed my brain as with a burning point,  
And made it in the semblance of a chart  
That seamen use to steer by in the night  
Then by the flashing meteors that athwart  
The blue empyrean shot we told the fate  
Of empires, fleeting, like themselves, away,  
And by the planets' stately-ordered march,  
Ranged with each other in conjunction firm  
Or set in opposition, we foretold  
The lot of mortals    Thus in order due  
The laws of divination have I learnt,  
From days of childhood upward, nor till now  
Witnessed such dire confusion.—Hic is Mais

*[Produces a scroll.]*

Opposed in seventh mansion of the Moon  
To hoary Saturn, whilst the comet's tail  
Obscures the setting of the evening star.  
Blurred is the Milky Way—The Pleiads' light  
Shone never yet so dimly.    And I saw  
But yesterday so clearly in the glass

ACT I. SCENE I

That has been lately purchased for the school  
The sun itself was covered o'er with spots  
Mirza. What purports this, then, in thy ancient  
lore?

Visnu. It purports war and misery and blood,  
Blood both of foreign and of native folk  
And here I see, oh horror! clearly drawn  
The trace of women's and of children's gore!

Mirza. The stars speak truly. Now, then, hear  
the news.

Four days ago in Meerut there arose  
A mutiny among the Sepoy troops  
To free their comrades from the hated jail.  
A military court had sent them to,  
There amidst felons of the deepest dye  
To ply a woman's task of spinning thread,  
Perchance through food prepared by outcasts'  
hands

Their caste to forfeit, and to be shut out  
From where good Hindoos go to, Indra's heaven  
Their task accomplished, a few houses burnt,  
They took the road to Delhi, for meanwhile  
The Meerut Europeans, terror-struck,  
Moved neither hand nor foot, but let them go.  
To Delhi come, they with the Sepoys there,  
All men of Oudh, in union brotherly,  
Replaced upon his fathers' ancient throne  
The captive Emperor those cursed Whites

## THE RANI OF JHANSI

So long with charitable doles had kept  
Immersed within the fortress—Thus restored,  
The Moslem rule shall once again take root,  
And from Hamid's Mount to Lar ka's Isle  
Again the Prophet's banner shall be spread  
To the glad winds of heav'n. This foreign yoke,  
That long has galled our necks, shall be cast off,  
And the Feringhis' rule for ever cease.

VISNU. And did the Whites in Delhi nothing, then?

MINZA. 'Twas little they could do. They were  
surprised

There is some talk of arsenal blown up  
By one who sacrificed himself, that so  
The stores laid up there might be all destroyed,  
Nor be made use of in our patriot war.

VISNU. And I believe it true. I know the race:

Men call them ignominious, and as far

As outward ceremony goes 'tis true.

But in their secret hearts there lies a will

That's more than outward service of the lip,

And leads them dauntless to heroic deeds.

Name but the name of duty, and the pulse,

Though it be raging like the torrent's flood,

Fed with the food of Himalayan snows,

Is in an instant stilled to infant's beat—

Steadied the hand and planted firm the foot,

But those who know the language of the eye

Can mark the spirit that is stirred within.

ACT I. SCENE I

MURZA. They say they fought like tigers brought to bay,

And women, circled by the howling mob,  
Knel down and prayed, and met their death  
with calm.

VISHNU. Oh woe ! Oh woe ! Too truly spoke the  
stars !

But they have spared the children ? Say but this,  
And we may yet hope that our country's doom  
Is still unspoken !

MURZA. Nay, they slew them, too,  
Thus be the cursed Káf is rooted out,  
And through the land by Islam's warring hosts  
May Allah's name be glorified ! Amen.

VISHNU. I see it written on this fearful scroll,  
How that the slaughter of these helpless babes  
Shall to the skies aloud for vengeance cry,  
And though for some brief time in Delhi's fort  
A puppet monarch wear great Akbar's crown,  
The sceptre, wielded in his palsied hand,  
Shall soon clude the old man's feeble grasp,  
And, falling to the ground, be no more raised  
Unfitted for the rule of men, themselves  
Held ever in the bonds of martial law,  
Hindoo and Moslem shall together strive  
To be supreme, and each shall jealous look  
To see the other shall no vantage gain.  
As easily may fire with water mix

## THE RANI OF JHANSI

As shall the so called palaces combine  
To benefit their country. From the sea,  
Meanwhile, the lightning will summon fast  
The thronging hosts of England. These shall come  
But with one heart and purpose of revenge  
Woe, woe to India till those days be past!  
Yet on the scroll I see a dawning light  
Pierce through the mist of blood with ray benign.  
But lo! a marvel! Not from Eastern skies  
This day is dawning, but in vivid streams  
Flash from the Northern skies the meteor lights.  
And, courseating gently wave on wave,  
Those hideous stains of blood conceal from view  
Minza Old man, thou wast! 'Shy!' the cry  
resounds.

The long-expected Mahdi comes to reign  
The 'True Believer's rule has come again  
Woe to the Kafirs, woman, man, and child!  
Strike for the Faith, and be not reconciled  
Fling wide the Prophet's banner o'er the land!  
Stand, brothers of the Faith, your sword in hand!  
'Allah-u-akbar!' be each Moslem's cry.  
And lead the Faithful on to victory! [Exit,

[VISUNO covers his eyes as if to shut out the  
prophesied scenes of horror.]



ACT I, SCENE II.

SCENE II. *An Officer's bungalow*

*Enter MOMENTY and VISHNU.*

MOMENTY. Come, Vishnu; let us sit where it is cool,  
Behind this Khakhra-tattie, for to-day  
I think the hottest we have had this year  
The crew sit on the trees with open beaks  
And gasp for air. Would we could have a storm  
To freshen up the atmosphere a bit,  
And stop the cholera we're sure to have  
If this great heat continues. But how now,  
My friend? You look distraught, and in your eyes  
I see that something has disturbed your mind.  
I hope that all is well at home. Your child?

VISHNU. Thank, to Prameshwar, after Him to you,  
My friend, and to your skill, my child is well.  
But you have truly read the outward signs  
Of a mind all at ease and troubled much.  
Ill news has come from Delhi which as yet  
Your papers have not told you, for 'tis strange  
How fast and truly native rumour flies.

MOMENTY. Ay so? I heard the wire towards the  
North

Was interrupted, but we only thought  
A tree had fallen on some jungle path  
And broken it. But tell me now the news.

VISHNU. The Sepcy regiments are in revolt.

### THE RANI OF JHANSI

They mutinied at Meerut first, and thence  
Went off to Delhi, where, the other corps  
Combining with them, they have now proclaimed  
The pensioned Emperor once more a King.  
MOBERLY. But there were troops at Meerut — Car-  
bineers,

Artillery, and staff. What did they do?

VISUNU. The details are not known, but this is sure —  
No European has been left alive  
At Delhi, where the frantic mob has spared it  
Nor age nor sex. Down to the youngest child  
They killed them all, and have our country's name  
Dragged down for ever to the vilest dust.

MOBERLY. Good God, how awful! What will happen  
next?

If the contagion spreads, good God! what next?

VISUNU. Listen, my friend. Perchance you may  
have seen

A plain of grass set fire to by a spark.

The flame once lit, and fanned by gentle breeze,  
It spreads in ever-widening circles round.

Naught checks its course, for when the grass is  
low

It creeps along in silence. Where a bush  
Stands in the way, a moment round the stem  
It lingers only till the wood grows warm.

Then with a sudden rush it leaps aloft  
And tops the highest branch till every leaf

ACT I. SCENE II.

Flows in an airy film towards the sky,  
And while one looks, the flame still creeps on,  
Another and another bush are burnt,  
And the devouring fire still passes on.  
So, mark my words, will be this mutiny.

MONSIEUR. But surely all the Sepoys are not false?

VISNU. There may perhaps in every regiment  
A faithful few be found, but what are they  
Among the many, as the leaven leaveneth  
In your own baker's loaves, who will be drawn  
Within the rising ferment?

MONSIEUR. Yet but hem!

What have they to complain of? Do the men  
Not know and trust their officers, with whom  
The older ones have mingled from their youth,  
Fought with them side by side against the foe,  
Shared in their triumphs, and in days of peace  
Joined in their lonely social pleasures, too?

VISNU. All this will not avail, for some through fear,  
Others because they will be led like sheep,  
Some through ambitious hopes, will follow those,  
The fanatics, who, Moslem or Hindoo,  
Believe the English mean to break up caste  
Have you not heard the tale that has been spread  
About the cartridges they say are smeared  
With cows' and swine's fat to defile the mouths,  
And outcast those who load them in their guns?  
I know it is not true, but when excuse

THE RANT OF JIHANS'

Is sought by people who would do a wrong,  
One pretext 's like another for their ends,  
And mighty tempests are not stayed by straws.  
MOBERLY. Our men have had them, and they know  
right well

They touch them only with their hands, not  
teeth,

And they have seen them made with common oil.  
VISHNU. All very well, my friend, but, as I said,

'Tis an excuse that 's wanted, good or bad  
Now hear me, friend. You saved my daughter's  
life,

And I would show my gratitude. Your wife  
Should leave this place at once. You needs must  
stay,

As 'tis your duty, and a brave man's post  
Is where his duty is. But let her go.

Ere long the road down-country will be closed,  
And then she could not go. Be well advised.

MOBERLY. Yet surely, Vishnu, 'tis not come to this.  
Our men will not betray us like the rest.

VISHNU. I know my countrymen, and you do not.  
Be well advised, and send your wife away.

MOBERLY. She would not leave me if I bade her go.

VISHNU. That is what half I feared, but let me try  
If I can not persuade her. Call her here.

[MOBERLY goes out and returns with ELLEN  
MOBERLY.]

## ACT I. SCENE II

VISHNU. Lady, my peace be with you ! Sit we down,  
 And let us reason of what is to be  
 You must have heard the news I brought you, news  
 That makes me hang my head for very shame  
 That India has such monsters amongst her sons,  
 That they should war on women and on babes !  
 The day draws on, is close at hand e'er now,  
 When Delhi's scenes in Jhānsā will recur.  
 Then will the arm of every Englishman  
 Be needed but to guard his precious life.  
 How much will it be stronger if he knows  
 That what he holds more precious than that life  
 Is not in peril ! Truly, stay not here,  
 That arm to render nerveless for the fray.

ELLEN M. [*taking her husband's hand*].

Hurry, speak not the word that bids me go.  
 Obedience is the duty of a wife,  
 And if thou speak it, I must needs then go.

Thank God. I see you cannot, and my post  
 Is with my husband. Vishnu, here I stay.

VISHNU. All honour, lady, to that great resolve,  
 Equalled alone by India's women, when,  
 By fire's dread anguish undeterred, they mount  
 Their husbands' funeral pyres, in Paradise  
 That they may tend them as they did on earth—  
 But one word more, my lips may hardly name  
 Dishonour !

ELLEN [*starting up*] That I fear not, come what may

### THE RANI OF JHANSI

A woman's hand is feeble, nor can cope  
With brutal violence, but it can move  
A pistol's trigger, that will quickly speed  
To her brave heart a messenger of death.  
And as the Sati mounts the funeral pyre  
In hope to tend her lord in Paradise,  
So can the Christian woman also die  
In sure and steadfast hope that she will meet  
In Heaven those she most has loved below.  
MOHENLY. Be calm, my love, be calm, and hope that  
yet

The evil hour may pass from us away.  
VISUNU. Sri Krishna grant it! May the Lord of all  
Hear our petitions when we humbly call;—  
Stretch forth in mercy now His mighty hand,  
Uplift the evil shadow from the land,  
That war and strife of races soon may cease.  
And Justice reign with universal Peace!

### SCENE III. *A room in the palace of the widowed* RANI OF JHANSI

*Enter RANI, ANPUNA, and PARVATI.*

RANI. Anpuna, that is stirring in my breast  
Which tells of changes in the course of Fate.  
For now three years and more I sit alone  
And brood upon my wrongs :—like caged beast,

### ACT I. SCENE III

Peace to and fro before my prison bars,  
 And long for freedom of the woods and streams,  
 For am I like a tiger, not confined  
 With bonds of penny, my former state  
 Brought down to level of the common herd  
 Of citizens of Shansi, and the name  
 Of my dead lord Gangadhar brought to shame  
 By payment of his debts from that small dole  
 Thrown by these Englishmen with proud contempt,  
 As they would throw a dry bone to a dog?

Yes! There is something in the air. I hear  
 That through the country have mysterious cakes  
 Been passing secretly from hand to hand,  
 These have a hidden purport, boding ill  
 To those who now the country hold enslaved.

ANURNA. It was but now that Vishnu Bhat was here,  
 He says the stars foretell much coming woe.  
 The brilliant comet, which now night by night  
 Spans half of heaven with its fiery tail,  
 Portends a revolution, which shall end,  
 When blood on all sides has been freely poured,  
 But in the dawning of a brighter day,  
 Though what that day shall bring he sees not yet.

*Enter a MESSENGER.*

MESSENGER. Peace to the Presence! There stands now  
 without  
 An old Fakir, of grave and godly men,  
 Who with the Presence seeks an interview.

### THE PART OF HANSI

RANI Let him approach. Perhaps he brings us news  
[Enter Messenger, who returns with a Fakir.]

FAKIR There is no God but Allah, and of Him  
The Prophet is Mohammed. Peace on all!  
I come from Hindusthán but what I speak  
Is not intended for the common ear.

RANI These are my confidential women. Speak,  
And fear not what thou sayst will pass beyond  
The walls of this old palace which, with ears  
Erect as those of panthers on the watch  
To hear the footsteps of their coming prey,  
Await the telling of some thrilling tale.

FAKIR From Delhi am I come, and in this garb  
Thou seest one of noble birth and race,  
A Syád of the Syáds, Allah's slave,  
Who bear the hardships of a toilsome road,  
In Allah's service, for our Holy Faith,  
For half a century the Káfirs' rule  
Tramples on Islám, and our holy law  
Is set aside as Delhi's worthless throne,  
To which all nations in wide Hindusthán  
Once humbly bent the knee, has been set up  
In a Museum in the Káfirs' land,  
For gaping fools who go to see the sight  
To scoff and jeer: 'Here sat the great Mogul!  
We Musalmáns are dust beneath the feet  
Of these accursed Islanders. Hindons  
Must ever contemplate with bitter hate



## ACT I. SCENE II

The eaters of the cow, who in their pride  
 Admit them only to the lowest berths  
 The ancient Princes of the land they seek  
 On pretexis frivolous, with lying words,  
 To oust from their dominions and their thrones.  
 Thou knowest well what has been Jhānsi's fate  
 Oudh is the last, and now their cup is full.  
 We have stirred up the army to revolt  
 By well-concocted tales of deep-laid schemes,  
 To make the Sepoys outcast with the fat  
 Of swine and cows, that they perforce must taste  
 In biting cartridges to load their guns.  
 At Meerut and at Delhi all the troops  
 Have mutinied, and have proclaimed the King  
 The Emperor of Hindustān again.  
 The other regiments will follow soon,  
 And from the farthest corners of the land  
 The hateful brood of serpents, women, men,  
 And children even, soon shall be destroyed.  
 Then shall the people of the land once more  
 Regain their own and be no more oppressed.  
 Be ye, then, also ready to strike home,—  
 When the day comes to show of what you're  
 made.  
 Their European regiments are few  
 And widely scattered, thus of little use.  
 But even if they fight, he who in war  
 With unbelievers falls shall after death

## THE BANI OF JHANSI

Traverse Al S. S. C's bridge without a pause,  
And be admitted straight to Paradise,  
And Hindoos all shall Indian Heaven gain.

RANI. Sri Krishna grant it! Be it so! Amen!

ANUPNA. Nay, let us reason now the matter out  
Can we forget those bitter days of old  
When Hindoos were converted by the sword?  
If Moslem rule shall be restored again,  
What will the fate of the Mahrattas be?  
Will not this terror lurk in Hindoos' hearts,  
Like a dread phantom haunting e'en their sleep,  
And make them lukewarm towards the Moslem's  
Raj?

Again, are all the Moslems of the land  
In bonds of brotherhood so firmly knit  
That for their Faith they must make common  
cause?

Think you that Hyderabad and Salár Jung  
Will willing join to turn the English out?

PARSU. He may be doubtful, but within the State  
Are others who would gladly hold his place,  
And there are emissaries there at work.

ANUPNA. How will it suit the great Mahratta  
States,

Sindia and Holkar and the Gaikavar,

That Delhi's rule should be renewed? Were they,

When Aurangzeb was Emperor, better off

Than they do find themselves 'neath British rule?

### ACT I. SCENE III.

RANI. In such a cause shall even women fight,  
 And be as those whom Saadi thus describes:  
 'I am not one whose back thou seest in the day  
 of strife,  
 But in the midst of dust and blood am one who  
 stakes his life.'

ANPurna. I counsel prudence in affairs of State,  
 That one should well consider ere one acts  
 Have we not heard again what Saadi says?  
 'Ere in the wise man's sight no hero is  
 Who with mad elephants doth strife maintain.  
 He is in verity a valiant man,  
 Who, though he's angry, speaks no word again.'

PARSI. Throw caution to the winds! The die is  
 cast!

The day for dallying is gone and past  
 High raise the standard of the Moslem faith!  
 Allah-u-akbar Let us fight till death!  
 Who unbelievers slays in mortal strife  
 Shall live with Huris to eternal life! [Exit.

RANI. Anpurna! Yes, I feel the die is cast—  
 Long, like the storm-tossed mariner at sea,  
 Who through the darkness of o'erhanging skies  
 For days no sun has seen, nor moon nor stars,  
 By which to set his course upon the chart,  
 And hails the breaking of the clouds at last,  
 I, too, have patient watched for coming light,  
 To lead me to my vengeance on my foes

### 'THE KANT' (A) JIHANSI

This Sepoy mutiny shall be my light !  
As yet it flickers faintly, but in time  
Shall as the glorious noonday sun shine forth  
And as the seed lies hid in earth's dark womb  
Until it feels the glow of genial warmth,  
And then to active being starts, and grows  
A goodly tree, with roots deep down in earth,  
And leaves and flowers in the upper air,  
To yield mankind its fruit in season due,  
This plant shall soon o'ershadow all the land,  
And empire broad and wide shall be its fruit.  
I shall be Queen of Jihansi once again !  
No more shall cows be slaughtered. Siv's fanes  
Shall be restored and Brahmins shall be fed  
Awake ! Awake ! Anpurna ! Hail the day !  
ANPurna My child, I held thee in my loving  
arms

When, weary of the world, thy mother went  
To Paradise, to dwell for ever there.  
I nursed thee through an infant's griefs and  
ills,  
And as my own have cherished thee till now.  
Hear when I speak, then, and regard my words,  
These English are not children who will go  
When thou dost bid them. All their faithful  
hearts

Are one towards each other, and one word  
Of that mysterious god their wires convey

ACT I. SCENE III.

With more than lightning's speed athwart the  
earth

Will prompt to instant action and resolve

RANI. Ha! I had forgotten! Let it be thy task,

My trusty Párvati, to see this wire

Is cut at once, and, should it be repaired,

Let it be cut again, that so the god

May ride no longer on his lightning steed

PÁRVATI. I go, my lady. Nor shall jackal's foot,

Prowling in darkness for his feathered prey

Press on the grass more tightly than shall mine

When I, enveloped in my widow's dress,

Shall like a crone support my tottering limbs

In seeming search for samples as I roam

See now, no sooner shall the lightning god

Have mounted on his steel than he shall fall,

And sport in godlike fashion on the earth.

Ha! ha! I think I see his godship now!

RANI. Go, madcap girl. The day has not long passed

When I, too, in thy laughter could have joined.

But now my thoughts must be full filled with plots

And stratagems and wiles, that I abhor.

ANPUNNA. Again I raise my warning voice—How dare I

Have any of our Native Powers stood

Against these Englishmen? I know thy thoughts,

But thinkest thou a woman's weakly arm

Can root them out, or that a woman's voice

Can in the counsels of the land infuse

## THE RANI OF JHANSI

Such unity and patriotic force

That creed shall join with creed, and race with race

To hurl them headlong backwards to the sea?

RANI. Nay, those we've here already in our hands

Shall have a shorter journey to the grave!

ANPurna. Thou wouldst not kill the women and  
the babes?

RANI. The cobra's brood would be by them increased!

ANPurna. Oh, say not so! Hast thou forgotten this,

How in the crisis of that dire disease,

The smallpox, that thou hadst three years ago,

When even we were driven to despair,

And thought thy days were numbered, who it was

That nursed and tended thee, and risked her life

To save thee?

RANI. Ay, but I was then a Queen

Would she have done it in my low estate,

A humble pensioner of British rule?

ANPurna. It was not only those of noble birth

That she befriended. Hers was 'Dharm' indeed!

And hast thou, too, forgotten that brave youth,

Whom thou thyself didst see rush through the  
flames,

When others stood amazed, to snatch from death

The offspring of a Mhar, a helpless child,

That brief delay would sure have burnt alive?

RANI. No, no! That scene I never can forget

Not Krishna's nor could Kama's form divine,

ACT I. SCENE III.

Clothed in the garb of Svang above, compare  
With that young hero's noble figure, when,  
Amidst the frantic shouts of thousands there,  
Amidst the fearful benedictions poured  
Upon his head by those whose child he'd saved,  
He stood in silence, but his trembling lip  
Showing the deep emotion of his soul,  
And then, saluting to the crowd, went off.  
Then when I sent for him, and half abashed,  
With look of admiration ill concealed,  
Scarcely dared to utter half of what I felt,  
He with bewitching grace and noble words  
Replied: 'It was but duty that I did.'  
Anuradha, say no more, or thou wilt soon  
Turn me from thoughts of vengeance. Nay,  
be gone!  
I will not hear! Now must the deed be done.  
I crush all pity in my burning breast:—  
But in dire vengeance can my mind have rest  
Nor war nor bloodshed shall my soul restrain;  
I must and will be Jhansi's Queen again!

SCENE IV. *The RANI's room, as before. The RANI  
sitting alone.*

RANI. Events are moving. Every post brings in  
News that more regiments have mutinied.



## THE RANI OF JHANSI

O, but all too soon for me!  
Vulture in the air.

So it see my victim dying inch by inch,  
But with just force sufficient in his limb  
To make it danger us for me to swoop  
And tear his entrails — Ha! he cannot move, —  
The death-stain up even now comes quickly on,  
Whilst I, securely sailing round and round,  
In airy circles, watch his dying throes.  
My emissaries in the lines report  
The Sepoys ready, and my time draws near  
The Agent, trusting fool, is lulled to sleep  
By my soft woman's blandishments. I know  
He trusts me fully and believes me staunch,  
Staunch! Loyal! Why should I be staunch to  
them

Who do me but dishonour, and who grudge  
The charitable pittance they me do  
Out of the revenues of great estates  
That they have seized by force, on the pretence  
That I am childless! Could I not adopt?  
No, no! The morsel was by far too sweet  
E'er to escape their avaricious claws.  
A helpless woman only 'twas, they thought,  
They had to deal with. From my wretched  
dole

For debts of State Gangádhari left behind,  
The misers still must fetch them money back.



ACT I. SCENE I.

Suckers of dead flies they may well be called !  
 But yet, I am alone ! What can I do ?  
 The old retainers of the State are gone,  
 And I am here alone without a friend.  
 Is there no way in which to get them back ?  
 I have it ! I must feign a woman's fear  
 Of these said Sepoys, for my own defence  
 Must beg the Agent I may be allowed  
 Some of the older men to summon back  
 To guard the person of their former Queen.  
 Aha ! I hear his carriage wheels ! He comes !  
 Now may the gods the cunning of the fox  
 Bestow upon me, that with deepest guile  
 I may ensnare him ! Beating heart, be still !

*Enter MAC-BEARIAN, ushering in the POLITICAL  
 AGENT, whom the RANI receives with well-feigned  
 cordiality.*

Captain, I hope I see you well to-day ?

AGENT. Quite well in body, lady, not in mind.

I hope, however that I find you well.

RANI. Yes, to Mahádeo I may render thanks.

Have you fresh tidings in those dreadful days ?

I trust these Ráshas in the human form,

Whom fellows of our race we cannot call,

Have done no further mischief. How my heart

Grieves for your people in their hour of woe !

AGENT. The awful tale of murder still proceeds,

We here in Jhánst are supremely blessed

### THE RANI OF JHANSI

In that our troops are faithless, and in you,  
Lady, we've one who pities and deplora's  
The vile excesses of these worse than fiends.

RANI. You give me credit for a woman's heart,  
But how are you so certain of your men?  
Will the example of the troops elsewhere  
Not lead them also to betray their salt?

AGENT. Lady, it cannot be, for certain spies,  
Sent down from Delhi here to feel their pulse,  
To see if they will join the mutineers,  
Surrendered by themselves, are now in jail.

RANI. So far, so good. But I mistrust them yet.  
The men are all from Oudh, and of one caste,  
The seeds a parent thistle sows around,  
Cannot as scented roses grow and bloom.  
To us Mahattas they are just as strange  
As to you English. Would it not be well  
If we had Sepoys, too, of other castes,  
Mahattas, Rajputs, even low-caste Bhils,  
That have no ties in common with these men?

AGENT. Lady, your fears are groundless. All the  
men

Have sworn that they will not betray their salt,  
Although their brothers in the other corps  
Should call them traitors to their country's  
cause

The Risaldar of cavalry, a man of birth  
And rank in his own country, came to me

ACT I. SCENE I.

A few days since, and swore on the Korán  
That he and all his regiment were true  
RÁNA Oaths go for little where the heart is false.  
But should there come, perchance, an evil day,  
What would become of me? They know full  
well

That I have ornaments and jewels here,  
And we Mahrattas are but strangers, too  
Some of the old retainers of the Court  
I still could gather round me, and with these  
To guard my person I should be content.  
Captain, you know that since my husband's death  
I have been hard'y treated, and I know  
That though it is your duty to uphold  
The acts of your superiors, yet your heart  
Is far too generous to quite approve  
What they have done to a poor widowed queen.  
Yet I am loyal. Is it much to ask  
That I may summon here some few old men,  
My husband's old retainers, to protect  
Me and my women if the worst should come?  
AGENT. Lady, I will not say you may, but write  
To Government to-day to say how safe  
We here in Jhánas are, and, lady, you  
Afford a bright example in the land.  
RÁNI. This is an act of kindness, gracious sir,  
I cannot think that I deserve, but yet  
Will try to merit to my dying day.

# THE RANI OF JUANSI

AGNES. Lady, I take my leave.

RANI.                                In well, kind friend.

Commend me to your wife and all at home.

17th Avenue.

Alas, that driven by a cruel fate

I must descend to stratagem: I hate!

But yet I cannot stop nor hold my hand

Until the stranger's driven from the land :—

Until Mahadeo's temples I restore,

And reign in Jhānsi as its Queen once more.

## ACT II.

SCENE I *The interior of the fort in which the Europeans of the station have taken refuge. Officers on guard on the wall and ladies and children below. Momenly and ELLEN sitting hand in hand on a heap of rubbish.*

ELLEN. Hark, the end is near. God give me strength  
To meet it as an English woman should!  
Your brother-officers were from the first  
Infatuated with their men. They thought  
That natives' oaths were binding as their own.  
And yet I cannot blame them, for as boys  
They had all joined the regiment, as men  
Had known no other home but with the corps.  
The men had shared their sorrows and their joys,  
And seemed to look upon them as their friends  
That from such men such evil should arise  
Was past all comprehension and conceit.  
They could not think them false, and so it came  
That when two days ago the fort was seized

### THE RANI OF JHANSI

By that one company, they still believed  
In the hip-loyalty the others showed,  
And were not undeceived until the mob  
Came from the town with that petulious Queen,  
And shot the Captain and young Taylor down  
The cavalry were riding up and down  
In search of others, but by great good luck  
We came before them here and shut the gates.  
Here for a time at least we may be safe.

MONTAGU. You feign a hope, dear wife you do not feel.  
Their shot can hardly touch us here, 'tis true,  
And yesterday our sporting rifles told  
With such precision on the rebel ranks  
That they'll not venture on a close attack,  
But see how few we are. When all are told,  
We do not number more than thirty men,  
And what provisions have we? [*Shots are heard.*]

HA! What's that?

[*Runs to a sally port at the back of the fort, and shortly returns.*]

All of our foes are not outside the walls.  
Two of the Khidmatgars that Skeno let in  
To help the ladies in their menial tasks  
Have turned out traitors. Down there at the gate  
Powys just now discovered them at work  
To let the rebels through the sally port  
And shot one fellow dead, whereon his mate  
Turned round on Powys and has cut him down.

ACT II. SCENE I.

He has not lived to tell a boasting tale,  
For Burgess shot him, and the trenchant pair  
Are down there gleefully lying side by side  
Pewys is badly cut but he may live  
I must go wait upon him down below  
And while I go, you, Ellen, must stay here,  
Employed in uncongenial task alone.  
They say up there the bullets are too small  
And do not fit the rifles.

ELLEN. I have gloves  
Here in my pocket, now of no more use.  
I'll cut them up and wrap them round the balls,  
My poor kid gloves, some of Dent's Paris best!  
To think they should be used for killing men!  
Go, Harry, to your duty. Kiss me first.  
Perhaps our last embrace. Have mercy, God!  
*[Momentarily kisses her and exits]*

This is no time for weakly woman's tears,  
Yet they may stretch the leather. Let them flow!  
Flow tears, stitch fingers lest my heart should  
burst.

*[A cannon shot is heard. ELLEN starts.]*  
Those are not field guns No! I know the sound  
Of heavier artillery---Alas!  
If they can batter down the walls, the end  
Is close at hand. God protect us now!

*[Another shot.]*  
Yet how is this? I hear no crashing stone.

### THE RANI OF JHANSI

OFFICER *[shouts]* Then shot are falling short! Humah!  
Humah!

ELLEN Thank God for that Their ammunition's  
bad!

Two children run in, frightened

BOY. O Mrs. Mobey! Dere dose naughty men,  
Dey get big guns and shoot us all to dead.

ELLEN. Hush, Freddy dear, and run and tell mamma  
The guns are bad and will not hit us here.  
Let Mabel stay with me She will be good  
Come, Mabel, darling, come and sit by me,  
And hold my scissors while I sew these balls.  
Look, here's a biscuit that I brought from  
home,

And you have had no breakfast, have you, love?

MABEL. Yes. Mummy gave me little piece of bread,  
But naughty cow would give no milk, she said;  
So I had water. That was not so nice.

ELLEN. Alas, poor child! To-morrow may be worse.  
Where are the dollies, Mabel, that you had,  
And dressed up all so nicely in your house?

MABEL *[pulls an old doll with an arm off out of her pocket.]* I've got dis poor old Dolly only left,  
And she has lost one arm! Poor sing! poor sing  
Freddy and I were playing to pretend  
Dose naughty men did shoot it off with guns.  
Please, Mrs. Mobey, ask de docto' come  
And give my poor old dolly 'noder arm.



ACT II. SCENE I.

ELLEN Yes, Mabel dear, we'll try to make it new.

But what became of all the other dolls?

MABEL Papa did say dose rough y men would come

To kill us all, and we must run away

We had no time to bring de oder dolls;

And when I said my prayers dis morning here,

I pray'd to God to keep de oder dolls.

ELLEN And God will no doubt do so, darling child,

And we must ask Him to take care of us.

Where did you sleep last night, then, Mabel dear?

MABEL Mummy was on de floor aganst de wall,

And I and Freddy were in Mummy's arms.

I like to sleep in Mummy's arms, but then,

You see, poor Mummy could not sleep herself

ELLEN O God! O God! Where is it all to end?

This terrible suspense is worse than death.

*Enter MORLEY.*

I see bad news, dear Harry, in your face.

MORLEY Bad news, indeed! That last shot that  
you heard

Has killed poor Gordon. Happy fate for him!

We have just held a council, and agreed

That two Enasi n clerks shall in disguise,

For which their dark skins fit them well, proceed

To Gwallor and Nágod, to seek for help.

I doubt if they will get there, but they say,

I fear too truly, that we all are doomed,

And they may just as well die there as here.

## THE RANI OF JHANSI

We begged them not to go but drowning men  
Will catch at straws to buoy them in the waves,  
And of ourselves we could not think alone.  
But of the woman and the children too,  
Who are here with us in this dreadful strait  
MABEL. Oh, Doc or Mobery, do look at my doll  
Will you make dolly a new arm for me?  
MONKLEY. Has your poor dolly, Mabel, lost its arm?  
I'll see if I can't mend it. Run away  
To Mummy now, and tell her not to cry.  
*[Four or five Officers and others come, to meet, and  
then rises to go.]*

THOMAS ORRISON. No, Mrs. Moberly, do not you go  
We all of us are in such dreadful case  
That we have need of course of the best.  
And you have borne yourself so bravely here,  
A better counsellor we could not have.  
Andrews and Scott and Purcell all advise  
That we should try the Rani, and propose  
To go to her and ask to be allowed to go,  
All that are here, escorted by her men,  
To any British post that she may name.  
We have some treasure here, and this may bribe  
The Sepoy mutineers to move away,  
And leave her in possession of the place.  
And we can say that if she should agree,  
No doubt when British rule shall be restored,  
The favour she may now bestow on us

ACT II, SCENE I.

Will meet a certain and a great reward,  
And we can blast 'em, now that they're afraid  
To come too near our rifles, and they find  
The guns they have no of so little use.  
Against these solid walls, that we're prepared  
To blow ourselves and all the treasure up.  
Now, Doctor, give us your advice in this  
Mourning. I know but one man in this cursed town  
Who would hold out a finger in our need,  
And that is Vishnu, the star-reading priest.  
If they can find him, he may do some good.  
I doubt the Rani. She has cruel wrongs  
With which to charge us. She can not forget.  
But by good fortune and a Higher Aid  
I saved the daughter of this Vishnu Bhat  
In sickness that the native Vaidy made worse.  
If he would to the Rani plead our cause,  
It might have some effect. If not, I fear--  
PORCELL. I have some hope of her. You know the fire  
From which I managed to pick out that child?  
She thanked me for it in such gracious words,  
And as she spoke her tears were in her eyes  
There must be some good in her.

ELLEN. Oh, beware!  
She was a pensioner, and is a Queen;  
And women's fancies are like butterflies,  
That flit from flower to flower without a cause.  
To praise your bravery one moment's whim,

## THE RANI OF BHANSI

The next night lead her to repulse late  
That you should hand a low outcast child  
Do not expose your lives on such a chance,  
Of success from without there may be hope,  
But here the Sepoys and the nob alike  
Are crazed, thirsting for our very blood  
As never banish but for his prey.

PURCEL. We hope by going with a flag of truce,  
Which even naked savages respect,  
That we may do you all some good. If not,  
We court misfortune for ourselves alone.

ELLEN. The prayers and benedictions of us all  
Wait on your hasty venture, noble men!  
We'll watch your progress till the blinding tears  
Obscure our vision with their mournful film,  
But ere you venture forth, one moment stand,  
And let us each put up a silent prayer  
To Him above, who can alone protect.

*[All stand in silent prayer, and the three then go off,  
after shaking hands with those remaining.]*

SCENE II. *The public audience-hall of the palace.*  
*The RANI sits on a raised dais, surrounded by*  
*Courtiers, Sepoys, etc. Behind her, two attendants*  
*with the fly-whisks of State.*

FIRST MACE-BEARER. Hail to the Queen, the generous,  
the good!

ACT II. SCENE II.

SECOND MAHARAJA. The generous, the kind, great  
Queen we hail,  
Her at whose feet the timid and the proud  
That justice seek which always there is found.

*Enter MIRZA.*

MIRZA. Auspicious ruler of this ancient fort,  
The star of Jhānsi now without a cloud  
On the horizon of these troubled times  
Is rising unobscured. The heavy guns  
We yesterday unearthed were in the night  
Placed in the battery beyond the tank,  
And soon then deadly hail will batter down  
The wall of that small fort in which those swine  
Have taken refuge and do us defy. [*Shouts heard.*]  
The gates of hell already open wide  
To swallow up the unbelieving crew:  
For death's dark angel has his sword prepared  
To strike them down.

RANI. Let some one bring us news  
Of how the siege progresses. These brave men,  
The Sepoys that these Englishmen have trained,  
Now that no officers will lead them on,  
Skulk under shelter, and dare not attack  
The miserable few that stand at bay,  
Like lions in the toils, I grant them this  
Oh that a few Mahrattas still were left,  
Heroes that Sivaji was proud to lead!  
Before to-morrow's dawn that wretched fort

## THE RANI OF JILANSI

Would have been stormed and wrested from the  
foe.

If scaling-ladders should not be at hand,  
What matter? On each other's brawny backs  
They would have scaled the ramparts, and torn  
down

The flag still flaunted in our coward face.  
There are not thirty men within the walls,  
And yet your guns and your five hundred men  
Dare not attack them.

*[Shouts of the mob are heard.*

*What are all these shouts?*

Go, Mirza, quickly to the gate and see.

*[He goes out and returns with SCORR, ANDREWS, and  
PUNCELL. The mob try to follow, but are kept  
back by the attendants. The RANI is agitated,  
and covers her face with her dress.*

RANI. Why have ye left your comrades in the  
fort

To come and whine for mercy for yourselves?

PUNCELL. Lady, we come not for ourselves, nor  
thoughts

Of meekly yielding fill our craven hearts.

RANI. Not Krishna's beauty could be more divine.

*[Aside.*

PUNCELL. We are all soldiers, lady, and can face  
Death in such shape as duty calls us to.  
But some of us have wives and little babes

AT THE SEVEN ELEVEN.

We men would live, if honour should allow,  
Though to dishonour all would death prefer.  
You think you have us in a trap like rats,  
But even rats, you see, when driven to bay,  
Will turn and bite, and we have ample teeth  
To make these Sepoys pay us due respect  
But for the helpless ones whom we protect,  
We men would sally forth to do or die,  
Despite the numbers, but we now desire  
That you should give us escort to Nagod,  
To save our wives and children. You must know  
We have some hoard of treasure in the fort:  
This you will have in hand, wherewith to bribe  
This wretched crew of traitors to their suit  
To move away, and leave you Shânst free.  
RÂNÍ And what, young sir, if we refuse your  
prayer?

PUNCELA. Then, lady, we can all together die.  
The station magazine will be blown up,  
And with our lives will go your silver hoard  
To the four winds of heaven. On the town  
And on its people then will fall the wrath  
Of these your butcher ministers

*[Sepoys rush at them with cries of 'kill! kill!']*

RÂNÍ, I have would speak with you in private.  
Come!

*[As the RÂNÍ beckons him into another room, the mob  
rush at ANDREWS and SCOTT and carry them off]*

## THE RANI OF JHANSI

SCENE III. *The RANI private room. She comes in with PURANI.*

RANI [*in silence*] See now, I lay my modesty aside,  
That we may look into each other's eyes.  
Although I am a woman, in my vein  
The blood of Sivaji, Mahatta blood,  
Course with raging and tempestuous flow,  
And through the stormy beating of my heart  
With its red wave incarnadines my cheek  
Thy blood is noble, too. I had the proof  
When thou to save an outcast's worthless life  
Endangered at thine own without a grudge.  
Then let me save thee; else, thou now art  
doomed.

PURANI Lady, I fear not that we all are doomed.  
It was but with a faint hope of success  
I ventured on my errand here to-day.  
The world spoke of you as revengeful, hard,  
As thirsting for our blood in any case,  
But I had seen the lustre of your eyes  
Bedimmed with film of sympathetic tears,  
And knew they welled up from a woman's heart.  
Oh I could you see the children in the fort,  
With barely food to eat & woe women there,  
Accustomed, as yourself, to easy beds,  
Trying to sleep upon the cold damp earth,  
Holding their wretched infants in their arms



ACT II, SCENE III.

'To keep them from the veering on the ground,  
You would indeed be moved to gracious tears.  
RANI *impatiently*. Leave them alone. Speak only  
of thyself.

PURCELL. Nay, that were selfish and unlike a man  
You have known sorrow, lady, for yourself.  
And have a heart to feel for others' woe.  
Bethink you, too, of what a gain it will be  
When you are freed of all these blood-stained fiends,  
And Queen of Jhansi rule alone once more.  
Their only aim is plunder, as you know.  
Who Jhansi rules is no concern of theirs.  
They will have money, if not what there is  
Of treasure in the fort, then from the town.  
Will you not save your own in saving us?

RANI. I cannot save them, but would fain save thee.  
In this my palace thou art safe: outside—

*[Shouts of 'Kill! Kill!' heard.]*

Listen! The mob are howling for their prey.

PURCELL. I must return to those I left behind.

RANI. There thou canst do no good. Oh! stay  
with me!

PURCELL. Shall I, then, base forsake my people's  
cause?

RANI. Thou canst not reach them now. The mob,  
enraged,

Will seize upon and tear thee limb from limb.

Oh! be persuaded! Stay in safety here.

## THE RANI OF JEANSE

Be thou my comfort, my guide, my friend,  
 Save me from the world, save me from myself!  
 I feel that wild passion surge within  
 But thou canst soothe and calm my tortured  
 breast.

PURCELL. O lady, save my friends, and I will stay.

RANI. I cannot say, I would not if I could!

PURCELL. Then my last word is spoken—Farewell,  
 life,

If I may save it but with my disgrace.

Your form & love, y, lady, to the eye,

And what a man might for himself desire,

But not the lust of beauty shall seduce

An English gentleman from doing right.

Whatever may befall me, I must go,

And more in sorrow for yourself than me. [Exit.

RANI. Great Rām. He saves faith to certain death!

[She sinks down in a faint, as cries of 'Kill him!

Kill him!' are heard from the mob outside.

ANURNA and PÁRVATÍ enter, and find her  
 lying.

ANURNA. Sir Krishna! O Parameshvar, what is  
 this?

Our well-loved mistress lying on the ground!

Not dead? Oh, say not dead, but only in a faint.

PÁRVATÍ. Her eyes now open slowly to the light!

RANI! Beloved mistress—We are here!

[The RANI looks round in a half-stupefied state.

ACT II. SCENE III.

RÂNA. Oh I did I dream, or was it but too true  
 That horrid scene that passed before my eyes?  
 I saw him stand, as does the gaily bear  
 When the dogs close upon him, with the slain  
 Heaped up around him, proud and unsubdued,  
 The lightning flashing from his noble eye,—  
 Glancing defiance at the craven crowd,  
 That dared not close upon him, till a shot  
 Struck full his manly breast and laid him low.

*[Shouts heard outside.]*

Oh, horror! It is true, and he is dead,  
 And they will throw his body to the dogs.  
 No! That they shall not! Go, Anpurna, go,  
 And bid them bury him with due respect,  
 Just as they would a hero of their own.  
 He that shall injure but a single hair  
 Upon that noble head shall answer me  
 With his own life, as if he should pollute  
 With sacrilegious feet Mahádeo's shrine.  
 And list, Anpurna! Do thou loose with care  
 The golden ring his little finger bears,  
 Henceforth in jewelled casket it shall rest,  
 A sad memento near my widowed heart.  
 And when they lay his body in the ground,  
 There let my household troops parade, and fire  
 Three parting volleys o'er his lonely grave;  
 So shall his spirit know that after death  
 I paid him honour as I did in life. *[ANPURNÂ goes.]*

### THE RANI OF JHANSI

Come, Parvati, thy arm, and let us go  
Down to the temple. There the holy song  
Still praises with sacrificial chant prolong  
There on the Lingam shall the ghac be poured,  
In many forms shall Krishna be adored.  
Hem! hem! Mahadeo! Do thou balm impart,  
And soothe the sorrows of an aching heart!  
*[They go out.]*

SCENE IV. *The public audience-hall, as before. RANI  
and attendants seated.*

*Enter MINZA.*

MINZA. Most gracious Queen The English still  
hold out,

And such is their Satanic skill with guns  
That not a man can dare to show his head  
Above the ramparts where our cannon stand  
For fear a bullet instant pierce it through,

RANI. What are our guns, then, doing? What I hear,  
Is that but futile thunder, empty noise?

And is their lightning but like summer's flash,  
That for an instant only lightens up

The clouds with brilliancy, and then is gone?

MINZA. I heard the gunners say the balls were  
small,

And though they wrap them round with tow and  
cloth,

ACT II. SCENE IV.

Will not fly straight, nor can they hope with such  
To batter solid walls of brick and stone.

RANI. We must to stratagem, then, have recourse;  
For I am like a hound that's held in leash,  
And strain my bonds to yearning to be free  
I hate these English and would have revenge  
For all the wrongs they've done to me and mine.  
For them, however, I need only wait  
Till thirst and hunger force them to submit.  
They have but scant provision in the fort,  
Neither of food or water, and are there beset  
So close and fast, they cannot more procure  
But with these Sepoys here I am not free,  
And they will not go off without a bribe.  
I must have money. That is in the fort,  
To be by stratagem or force procured.  
Now, Mirza, is the time for ready wit,  
Go to these English with a flag of truce,  
And tell them all the lies thy brain can hatch.  
Spare not for protestations or for oaths.  
Tell them I hate these Sepoys and their ways,  
But that for want of cash they will not go.  
Bid them without a fear come here to me  
With wives and children. I will send my men,  
My own retainers, to escort them here.  
I will protect them till the Sepoys leave;  
Then they shall go to Gwallior, or where'er they  
wish.

### THE RANT OF JUANSI

Tell them I want their treasure, not themselves.  
Give thy imagination wings to fly  
To highest realms of fancy and romance  
Tell them thou art thy sworn to the Court,  
And knowest well my wishes and desires.  
That, power once regained, I am content,  
And that of vengeance I have not a thought.  
Go! Do my bidding with the utmost tact,  
And thou shalt have a village as reward  
Minza Upon my head and eyes be the command!  
No fox more wily in his midnight prowl  
Than I shall be in doing this behest [Goes out.

SCENE V. *The interior of the fort, as before. Officers assembled with the AGENT, MONTREY, and TAIEN.*

MONTREY. Captain, just now I overhauled our stock  
Of water and provisions, and I find  
That we have just sufficient for a day.  
AN OFFICER. Our ammunition, too, is running short.  
The lead has all been melted into balls,  
And every rifle has but twenty rounds.  
AGENT. No ray of light breaks on our hopeless  
case.  
Our messengers towards Nágoc that went  
Already have, I fear me, met their doom,  
And Andrews, Scott, and Parcell do not come.

ACT II, SCENE V.

Why can have happened? Has the flag of  
truce  
Not been respected? Have they killed them  
too?

MODERLY. I have already told you that I trust  
None of the hateful crew but Vishnu Bhat  
From Rám downwards to the lowest Mhá  
This mutiny has turned the heads of all.  
They think the English rule has passed away,  
To be no more established in the land,—  
Deceived victims of a frenzied few,—  
And fearful vengeance on their heads will fall.

ELLEN. And we, alas! meanwhile are helpless here,  
OFFICER *[above on the rampart]*. A man approaches  
with a flag of truce.

AGENT. There may be hope, then. He may bring  
us terms.

Shall we admit him on the chance, my friends?

SEVERAL VOICES. Yes; let us hear what he may have  
to say.

*[An Officer goes to the gate, and returns with Minza.]*

MINZA. I come, a willing messenger of peace.

We, Doctor Sáhib, have already met,  
And, being brothers in the healing art,  
Have learnt to know each other and respect  
These dire events that every day occur  
Grieve to the Queen, my mistress, and myself  
Deep cause for sorrow, for to us ourselves,

### THE RANI OF JHANSI

As well as you, these Sepoys are no friends.  
Their thoughts are not our thoughts : their bloody  
ways

Abhorrent to our tender hearts, which pour  
The smoke of rage from out our burning breasts,  
But we are helpless—With no well-trained force  
Wherewith to keep them in restraint, no arms  
Such as the muskets you yourselves have placed  
In their relentless hands ; we cannot act.  
Their aim is plunder, there can be no doubt ;  
And if we had the treasure in the fort,  
They might be easily induced to go  
And march to Delhi, where they all collect.  
But till this fort shall fall into their hands  
They will impose upon us for their pay,  
Or live at easy quarters on the town.  
The Rani bids me say she has no wish  
To injure you who are imprisoned here.

AGENT. Where are our friends, then—whom we  
lately sent

To ask for escort to some British post ?

MINZA. The three are in the palace, honoured guests,  
Safe from the fury of the maddened mob,  
The scum of Jhansi, who, with nought to lose,  
Seek but an opportunity to loot.  
We would not let them venture to return,  
Lest they should meet with mischief by the way,  
And we would also save you if we could.



ACT II. SCENE V.

The Rani has her throne and, quite content,  
Seeks not for blood nor vengeance for the past  
But till the Sepoys leave the place, herself  
Feels not established firmly in her seat  
If you will but surrender her the fort,  
She with the treasure will buy off the troops  
And send them off to Deth, while yourselves,  
Your wives and little ones, she will protect  
Till peace returns, or till some chance occur,  
Through which in safety you may go elsewhere.  
AGENT. What pledge have we that she will keep  
her word?

We have all heard what has occurred else-  
where;—

How the most solemn promises and oaths  
Have all, as worthless things, been set aside,  
And those who trusted in them been betrayed.

MINZA. Alas, too true! But those who were for-  
sworn

Were common soldiers, and not men of birth  
The Rani is a Queen, and heir of Kings.

ELLEN. And a Mahratta too. There is a tale,

A tale you Moslems may recall to mind,

How Sivaji, her ancestor, once lured

A trusting general to a treacherous death,

And in a feigned embrace of amity

Into his entrails drove the tiger's claw.

Might your own Afzalkhan's fate not be ours?

## THE RANI OF JHANSI

MIRZA *produces a Koran*

On the Koran itself I lay my hand,  
The holiest of books in Moslem eyes,  
And swear no fraud nor treachery is meant  
And what I say is pure, unsullied truth.  
It is the treasure that we want, and this  
Not for the money's sake, but that therewith  
The Sepoys may be bribed to go away.

MOHENLY. Would Vishnu say the same if he were  
here?

MIRZA. That would he, surely Not an hour ago  
I met him, and he then bewailed your fate—  
Your aimless obstinacy, too, he blamed.  
He knew there was no water in the fort,  
And that the scant provision you had brought  
Must soon come to an end, though for a time  
You might be able to defend yourselves.  
Come, then, my friends, for I will call you friends,  
Be well advised, and trust the Rani's word  
And my most solemn oath, and save yourselves,  
Your wives and children, while there yet is time.  
A little longer you may hold this fort,  
But when your ammunition and your food  
Are both exhausted, and the end has come,  
Think you the pent-up fury of the troops  
Will leave one soul among you still alive?

AGENTS. Too true, alas! My friends, what can we  
do?

ACT II. SCENE V.

MORRIS. Though we are doomed, yet I myself  
prefer

To die a soldier's death with arms in hand,  
To being butchered by a howling mob.

But there are others whom we must consult

Go to the other ladies Ellen. See

When you have told them all, what they may say.

Give them no hope, but tell them truly all.

[ELLEN goes.]

[To AGENT, *aside*. Do you believe this man,  
Skene, when he says

That our three friends are in the palace, safe?

AGENT. What could the fellow gain by telling lies?

I never trust a Native on his oath,

If he can benefit by being false,

But here I cannot see what he can gain.

MORRIS. I cannot trust him. If he had been true,

Would he have thought of bringing the Korán

Ready to swear by? Nor can I believe

He has seen Vishnu, as he says he has.

That message never came from Vishnu's lips.

AGENT. But true or false, what is there we can do?

MORRIS. I would die, fighting to my latest breath.

AGENT. But if they took the fort by assault,

As when our ammunition's done they must

How would they treat the women and the babes?

MORRIS. As they will treat them now, if we give in.

All will be food to-morrow for the dogs.

## THE RANI OF JHANSI

AGENT. Good God, forbid! But see, there comes  
your wife.

Now we shall know what all the others say.

ELLEN. All now for going on the Rani's terms,

If by to-morrow's noon comes no relief,

To go or stay, in either way is death:

In one starvation, slow and lingering pain,—

And in the other quick and sudden end.

Whichever comes, in God's hands are we all.

AGENT. What say you, friends? Shall we accept  
the terms?

THE REST. Agreed, agreed. We all can die but  
once.

AGENT [to Minza]. Go. Tell Her Highness we  
accept the terms.

A white flag, hoisted up above the gate,

Will show that we are ready. God above,

He will be Judge, if you should prove us false.

MINZA. May Heis seize me if I tell a lie!

The Rani's own retainers shall be here

To guard you from the fury of the mob,

And take you to the palace,—never fear.

*[Is taken to the gate.]*

ELLEN. The die is cast. O Harry, I despair!

This our last night let us consume in prayer.

We shall behold one earthly sorrow more,

Ere death conveys us to the boundless shore.

Yes, there with friends united,

ACT II. SCENE VI.

To be ever with the blessed,  
Where the wicked cease from troubling,  
And the weary are at rest.

SCENE VI. *Part of the Johan Bagh, where the Europeans have been massacred.*

VISHNU. The deed I dreaded, then, has come to pass,  
And they are dead, all dead, all foully slain  
By these demonic countrymen of mine !  
What had the women, what the children, done,  
That on them, too, such vengeance should be  
wreaked ?

O thou Divaspati ! O Lord of light !  
Canst thou benignly shed thy beams divine  
On such a land as this, life-giving rays  
Bestow on mortals of such dev'lish kind ?  
Nature around is ever fair and bright  
The dark umbrageous trees, the tender grass,  
The flowers many-hued that deck the groves,  
The waters rippling with eternal smile,  
The stars above in their unmeasured depths,  
The fair moon moving in its placid path,  
All, all are eloquent of peace and rest,  
And each, in mute obedience to the will  
Of the Great Lord of all who gave them birth,  
Excels the other in abounding praise.  
Yet man, established at creation's head,

## THE RANT OF JIANGSI

Endow'd with reason for a better way,  
 In place pre eminent above the beast,  
 Not with mere manhood to meet his path,  
 Must sink below the level of the brute,  
 That in its fiercest mouth will not destroy  
 The tender offspring of its special race.  
 O fair-faced women, with your prattling babes,  
 Your homes that brightened as with ray of sun,  
 Well did the demons make their work complete,  
 Nor left you here alone on earth to mourn  
 Your husbands dead, your homes made desolate!  
 And well for you, ye men, that in your death  
 Ye were not severed from all best ye loved,  
 But trod together with them those dark ways  
 That lead, I doubt not, to the Christian's Heaven.  
 We who in India's Paradise believe  
 We gain eternal rest, and are absorbed  
 In Deity itself, need not begrudge  
 Their final rest to those of other creeds,  
 Nor think the Great Creator has no room,  
 No heavenly mansions to provide a place  
 For all his creatures, of whatever race.

*[A groan is heard under a bush.]*

Sri Krishna! Was not that a groan I heard  
 Beneath the bushes? Are not all, then, dead?

*[Looks and finds ELLEN dying.]*

ELLEN. The end is near. Oh, let me die in peace!  
 My husband beckons from the farther shore.

ACT II, SCENE VI.

Where he has gone before me 'There' is light,  
While here 'tis very dark--a hazy film  
Lies thick before my eyes and dims my sight  
And I see others, too, upon the shore,  
Mabel and other children that were here,  
And they are beckoning, all of them, to me.

VISHNU. I cannot understand her language well,  
Yet it would seem she wanders in her mind,  
And thinks she sees some vision far away.

O Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva, true God,  
Thou lookest down upon the deeds of men,  
And markest which are evil, which are good,  
And thou wilt visit for this hideous crime  
Yet I would fain her life might be preserved,  
Lady, look up and see. I am a friend.

ELLEN. I know you, Vishnu. Yes, you are a friend,  
But it is all too late to save my life,  
Nor would I live. 'Tis better, fain, to die.  
But give me water, for I choke with thirst.

*[He gives her water.]*

I thank you, Vishnu, for this kindly deed.

O God, have mercy on me! Yes, I come! *[Dies.]*

VISHNU. Now, lady, may I close thine eyes in  
peace!

O wretched country, may this fearful sin  
Be now not laid too heavily on thee,  
But may they bear it who have done the ill.  
Alas! Too truly have the stars foretold

THE RANT OF JUANSI

These deeds of blood, which now must run their  
course

Un til the days appointed have fulfilled,  
And kâsh, bloody wounds, had have of us,  
The cup of vengeance to the low chiefs.  
But these poor corpses I must not leave here  
To be a prey to a clean dogs and birds  
They shall be duly laid in another earth,  
Though I with Mahomed hands should dig their  
grave

*Enter Mirza, on rhearing him.*

Mirza, Nay, that they shall not! Let the dogs and  
crow

Go on their Kâsh flesh! Let vultures foul  
Pick out their unbelievers' eyes, and rend  
Their loathsome Christian bodies limb from limb!  
Vishni Mirza, beware, nor tempt me now too far.  
You Moslems think you have the upper hand,  
And when the English go, will be supreme.  
But there are Hindoos still, who bear in mind  
The days when you converted them by force,  
And spread your van religion by the sword.  
We Hindoos have while under British rule,  
Enjoyed the privileges of our castes,  
And found no let or hindrance, nor have we  
To Mussulmans or others given offence,  
And we Mahrattas will not now submit  
To Mussulman intolerance and pride.



ACT II. SCENE VI

Minza. Why Delhi's throne was humbled in the dust,  
Before these Káfirs came, was but from this,  
That we your idol-worship had all sweet.  
But now I say the time for this is gone.  
Prevail shall Islám's Faith, and that alone  
Your 'Honi! Mahádai.' shall no longer sound  
'Alláh-u-akbar' to earth's farthest bound  
Shall rise in shout triumphant to the sky,  
And win for Allah's name the victory!

Vicary. The stars spoke truly. Now must caste  
With caste  
And creed with creed still strive, until at last  
Britain's just rule we have once more again,  
And universal tolerances bear reign.  
Welcome to all will be the happy day  
When each shall worship in his ancient way.

## ACT III

SCENE I. *The audience-hall in the fort of Juhansi.*  
*The RANI sitting in state*

FIRST MACE-BEARER Hail to the Queen, the generous,  
the good!

SECOND MACE-BEARER. The generous, the kind, great  
Queen we hail,

Her in whose justice rests the world in peace,

And from whose presence malefactors flee!

Is it the royal pleasure that the poor

Who have requests to make approach the throne,

In person their petitions to make known?

*[The RANI nods]*

FIRST MACE-BEARER *[proclaims]*,

Ho! Ye who suffer from injustice here,

To you is open now the royal ear!

Approach with confidence and state your case;

Ye shall have justice from the royal grace.

*[Petitioners come in with written petitions, which are  
handed to a reader, who looks over them, and after  
saluting to the Queen, calls out—]*

Bāpu bin Lakhman, is he present here?

*A man steps forward.*

ACT III SCENE I.

This person, may it please the Presence, says  
 A year ago his father Bakhman died,  
 And left, to be divided by his sons,  
 But two in number, two substantial fields,  
 According to the custom of the caste.  
 As these were not allotted them by name,  
 They were to take them on the cast of dice.  
 One only of the fields contained a well,  
 And this this person's brother gained by lot.  
 But now the fields were watered by the rain  
 No dispute occurred, but now the time  
 Has come to use the water of the well,  
 A crop in this hot weather to produce,  
 His brother has forbidden him to draw.  
 Green fodder for his cattle he must have,  
 For all the dry he stored has been consumed,  
 For if his cattle die, the Sirkár's rent  
 Cannot be paid. He prays, then, that the  
 well  
 May by both brothers now be jointly held,  
 Each drawing water in his proper turn.  
 VANI. Summon the brother, so that we may hear  
 What each side has to say. Injustice thus  
 May be avoided, and the right be done.  
 We would that 'neath our rule our subjects all  
 Should live secure with equitable laws  
 For should the balance turn aside the least,  
 The one way or the other, then our rule

## THE RANI OF THANSE

Would stink in all men's nostrils, and our folk  
Might wish the British flag were back again.

PETITIONER'S Brother steps forward.

Thou art the brother, then. Now tell thy tale,  
And see thou speakest truly, else the scourge  
Shall leave its tell-tale marks upon thy back,  
And thou upon an ass parade the town,  
That men may know what is a liar's fate.

BROTHER. O giver of our daily bread, behold  
The lots were fairly cast, and fate decreed  
In thy slave's favour. What more  
said?

For 't is the poet in the Gulshan:

'A monarch's favour he need never seek

Who does not know the fitting time to speak,

Until the time for words beforehand thou hast  
seen,

To saying foolish things do not thyself demean.'

RANI. Fellow, thy tongue is ready. Hear again  
What in another place the poet saith:

'Waste not thy time on one of worthless kind,  
For in the seed thou canst no sugar find.'

Therefore give over talking, and reply

To what we ask thee. 'Thou said well of time,

We take it, waters always both the fields.

When lots were cast, was any contract made

That he who gained the field wherein a well  
Should keep the water of it for himself?

ACT III. SCENE I.

PETITIONER. Nay, giver of our bread, it was not so.

Such foolish compact I would never make.

BROTHER. 'What fault, thou lord of former favours,  
hast thou seen,

That in thy sight thy slave thou lookest on as base?

He sees our faults and yet our daily bread pro-  
vides;—

Mercy and goodness thus in God we trace.

Thus saith the poor Sandi, gracious Queen.

But thou dost not answer. Thus we give decree:

Well henceforward shall divided be,

Each brother shall in turn the water draw.

This be recorded in our courts of law.

MACE BEARER. Justice is done—and now the high  
decree

In Jhansi's archives shall recorded be.

[PETITIONER *mithdrams*.

ATTENDANT. There comes e'en now a messenger in  
haste;

With news of great importance. He has seen

Our foes assembled to attack the fort.

Horse, foot, artillery, they come in troops,

And leading them there comes that valiant Chief,

Before whom Sagar both and Garbhakot

Have fallen prostrate down, nor has the Pass

Of Madanpur delayed his conquering march.

And from another side there comes the force

Chanderi's mighty fort could not hold back.

## THE RANI OF JHANSI

RANI. What were the troops that took Chanderi then?

ATTENDANT. O Queen, I hear that from Bombay they came,

Both Whites and Bombay Sepoys in the force.

RANI. Mahrattas are among them, then, I fear.

O miserable Hindusthan, whose sons

Join with the stranger to bind fast the yoke

That he had fixed upon our coward necks,

Which with our heart's blood now we try to wash.

Yet will not we despair! Our walls are strong,

Our ammunition plentiful, and store.

Of grain in plenty we have laid us up,

And there may yet be time before they come

To raise up obstacles 'gainst their attack

Send out a hundred men to cut the trees

In all the gardens that surround the town,

And would give shelter to a coming foe,

Or hide their movements from us. Man the walls

With all our bravest. Nor let women fear

To risk in Jhansi's cause their very lives.

Let it be loud proclaimed throughout the town,

If we are conquered by the brutal foe

There's no hope left for mercy for us all

And lust and butchery will rage unquenched.

The women and the children of the brood

We rightly spared not when the men were slain.

This they will call a grievance, nor will sex

ACT III. SCENE I.

Nor age restrain them when they seek revenge,  
 Up, and be doing, then! By day and night,  
 Your Queen will be among you, fully armed,  
 To be all ready to repel the foe,  
 And listen. If ye see their Chief advance,  
 As is their custom, to inspect the fort,  
 To ascertain the points in our defence  
 Where he can best assail us, spare him not  
 Fly cannon shot and bullet on him fast,  
 And if the sky itself death's arrows flung,  
 To perdition he be hurled.  
 And as he moves along from point to point,  
 Let our best marksmen follow, that at least  
 He have no leisure to observe at ease.  
 Double our Sepoys' pay, and give out word  
 That he who in our glorious cause may fall,  
 His wife and children that he leaves behind  
 Our treasury their living shall provide.  
 Look to the Southern bastion, Mirza, thou,  
 And thou, brave Siva, be the North thy care.  
 See well thou emulate the warlike deeds  
 Of thy own namesake, Sivaji the Great.  
 The East let Balá, Anáji the West,  
 Have in their warlike, patriotic guard  
 The inner fort our bodyguard will hold,  
 Their General and leader we ourselves.  
 And lastly, let the gods be all adored,  
 In Mahádeo's temples ghee be freely poured,—

## THE RANI OF JHANSI

Brahmins be constant day and night in prayer  
That the great gods have Jhansi in their care,  
So shall then mighty names be ever praised  
Ho! each one to his work! Dabár is raised.

SCENE II. *Sir Hugh Rose's camp before Jhansi.  
Native sentry pacing before the General's tent.  
Enter Sir H. Rose and Staff-Officers. Jhansi  
seen in the distance.*

SIR HUGH    Brandy and soda, gentlemen, all round.  
This is a hard day's work we've had, indeed.  
It is as well we did it, though, for now  
I think I see my way clear to begin.  
There will be two attacks, the right and left.  
The right shall be the first brigade's the left  
Must Stuart and his Bombay troops conduct.  
To form a breach we have not many guns.  
The town, we find, almost surrounds the fort.  
We see the central tower where we stand.  
'Tis only through the town we can attack  
The citadel itself. The way to do  
Will be to breach the Eastern bastion first,  
Where there's no flanking tower to support  
The point where we shall storm it. All the guns  
But two Lightreens must send shell night and day  
Into the town itself to keep alive  
The terror of the people, and, may be,



ACT III. SCENE II.

SOME of the houses, too, to set on fire.  
The Two Lighteens must do the breaching work.  
Upon the point to aim at we agree,  
Do we not, Captain Fuller?

FULLER. Yes, Sir Hugh.

Just in that angle by the Mamelon.  
They can't depress the cannon from the fort  
To beam upon it, and upon the left,  
As you remark, there is no flanking tower.

SIR HUGH How long will't take us to effect a  
breach?

FULLER Why, that depends, of course, upon the  
wall,

Upon its thickness and upon other things.  
Its builders may have scamped their work inside,  
As some of our contractors do, if they be allowed.  
I've not been quartered here myself, nor seen  
The place reduced to scale upon a plan.

But one of my subordinates, I find,

Was quartered here some years ago, and says,

From what he recollects, the outer wall

Must be some ten or twelve feet thick, at least.

If so, and if the wall is solid through,

A fortnight is the least that we can count.

SIR HUGH Well, so, then, we will reckon and  
arrange

The roads are open in our rear, that's good,

And Sindia and Phari will provide

## THE RANI OF JHANSI

Fodder for cattle and green stuff for us.  
You see how cunningly the country round  
The Rani here has burnt and rendered waste.

SENTRY [*challenges*]. Hoo kum durr?

TROOPER [*advancing*]. I am g!

SENTRY. Pass, Frang! Al hel!

[TROOPER salutes and hurries a note to the GENERAL.  
SIR IVAN. Ha! This is better than I thought  
'twould be.

Our Bombay cavalry are close at hand,  
And will be here to-night. Macpherson ~~see~~  
Orders are issued to surround the town  
With cavalry detachments, to prevent  
Communication from without, and stop  
The garrison from making their escape,  
If they are so inclined. That flaming flag  
Upon that tall white tower seems to bid,  
However, high defiance to us all  
And if what of the Rani's said is true  
She means to fight us to the bitter end.  
They say she's young and pretty, but a fiend,  
And fiend she must be, too, by all accounts,  
For Jhansi's tragic scene was of the worst  
That ushered in this mutiny and war.  
But now in talking let's not waste our time;  
We've work enough for many days for all.  
Positions for our batteries are fixed.  
You, Captain Fuller, will allot to each

# ACT III. SCENE II

Sappers sufficient to construct them all.  
 As soon as possible. To serve as guard  
 A company of Native troops at each  
 Will bivouac, supported in the rear  
 As each commanding officer directs.  
 Let the artillery enjoy their rest  
 In peace to-night. 'twill be perhaps the last  
 That we can give them for some time to come.  
 So, fare you well, but mind at six o'clock  
 That all commanding officers must come  
 With the full details of their several corps,  
 And let the commissariat attend,  
 That I may know the state of our supplies.

*[Officers salute and retire. Enter PRIVATE  
 HOOLAHAN of the 86th Regiment, holding a  
 Native by the back of the neck, and shaking  
 him.]*

Sir HON. Hallo, my man! And what are you  
 about?

Why have you seized that fellow by the neck?

HOOLAHAN *[saluting with his left hand, and holding  
 on with his right]*.

Och, General, and was it this spalpeen

Yer Honour asked about, the wretched baste?

Och, and I found him, sure, behind the hedge.

And when I asked him what he was doing  
 there,

He answered 'Boostie'! Like his cursed cheek!

## THE RANI OF JHANSI

SIR HUGH. Why, Bhisti means a water-bearer, man,  
And that's exactly what he is, perhaps  
Is any one within, there? Butler! Boy!

[SERVANT comes out.

Here, ask this fellow who he is, and what  
He meant by skulking there behind the hedge.

[SERVANT and NATIVE talk.

SERVANT. Please, Master, fellow say him water-man;  
He water give to twenty-four Bombay,  
And go to visit Paltan twenty-five.  
He got one brudder there, he Bhisti too.  
Dis sojer man he see him come along,  
And *pukkerao*'s him by his neck and bring.  
Dis sentry know him who he is, he say.

SIR HUGH. Then ask the sentry who the fellow is.

[*They converse.*

SERVANT. He Bhisti company of grenadier  
Of Bombay Paltan twenty-four, he say.

SIR HUGH [to Hoolahan]. I think, my man, you  
have been rather rash,

So we must caution him and let him go.

Boy, tell him to be careful where he goes,

And bring some beer and give this soldier some.

You'd better tell me what's your name, my man.

Hoolahan. Is it no name yet Honour's General  
wants?

And since it's Patrick Hoolahan, from Cork

[SERVANT gives him beer. He salutes and continues,

ACT III. SCENE II.

Here's to yer Honour General's health and life,  
And may he live for ever and a day!

SIR HUGH. Thanks, Pat. Are you all right now  
in your tents?

HOOAHAN. We're pretty aisy, thank yer Honour,  
too.

Muskeeters touch us up a bit at night,  
And snakes and scorpions is a few about.  
But all me Company is broths of boys,  
And if yer Honour tells us where to go,  
They'll go and do it, sure and safe enough.

SIR HUGH. Well, Pat, you see the flag that's flying  
there,

On that white tower up above the fort?  
When we have stormed it, as I hope we shall  
A short time hence, I'll give you ten rupees  
If you will cut it down and bring it here.

HOOAHAN. B Company'll do it for yer Honour's  
sake,

And woe betide them Nayguns when we do.

*[Salutes and goes off.]*

SIR HUGH. How many will be left to tell the tale,  
Who can foretell? And yet, of what avail  
Is fruitless asking what the future brings?  
A soldier's thought of sublunary things  
Goes scarce beyond the day: his sleep at night,  
His food by day, his watch, sometimes a fight,  
By way of fierce excitement, make his round.

### THE RANI OF JHANSI

For us of higher rank must cares abound,  
The cares of others, not our own alone  
That noble fort, that massive pile of stone,  
That flows upon us all so grimly there,  
With banner floating in the tranquil air,  
We must subdue. But, hark ye! at what cost  
Of human woe. How many will be lost,  
How many maimed with loss of joint or limb!  
How many now bright fortunes must be dim!  
How many an orphan's wail and widow's cry  
Must rise in anguish to the pitying sky!  
And yet it must be done, to show the land  
Safe England's honour in her children's hand,  
And though by treachery and distard blow  
They laid a few defenceless creatures low,  
Great-England's arm can reach across the wave  
To smite the smiter and her realm to save.  
So now to work! I've no more time to waste;—  
Events are crowding in relentless haste.  
My mind's still active, though my body's sick:  
I may have time to finish, if I'm quick  
With Jhānsi taken, and with Kālpī won,  
Then shall I feel my heavy task is done  
Death or a peerage is for me in store.  
I'll do my duty. Man can do no more.

ACT III. SCENE III

SCENE III. *The ramparts of Jhānsi. Men working at the guns, women bringing food and ammunition. As the RANI and her women enter a shell flies over them.*

ANPurna. Rām, Kīshna, Paibhu ! There's another shot !

How long, dear mistress, will you risk your life  
Amidst war's horrors in this fruitless way ?

RANI. Speak for thyself, Anpurna. Seest thou not  
How our mere coming stimulates the men  
To fierce endeavour to beat back the foe ?  
For if they see their well-loved Queen exposed  
To the like dangers as themselves, their hearts  
Beat with responsive pulses in the cause  
Of home and country. Then no craven-fear  
Palsies their nervous hands, nor doth the eye  
Quiver, as flashes from the distant gun,  
The lightning prelude to the deadly shot.  
But why shouldst thou, my poor Anpurna, come  
To where thou art so very ill at ease ?

ANPurna. The Queen of Jhānsi must not walk alone  
Without her waiting-women at her side.

RANI. Why, how now, Pārvatī ? The sparkling jests,  
That used to fall from off thy laughing lips,  
Like crystals bursting from a bubbling fount,  
Have disappeared, as if an earthquake shock  
Had changed the current of their hidden source.

## THE RANI OF JILANSI

The smiles that wreathed thy mouth in days of yore  
Are withered as the leaves upon the oak,  
Upon the hills behind us, soon I hope,  
Once more to burgeon with the hush of spring,  
As the bright sun of our enduring hope  
Mounts Northwards in the sky of our desire.  
PÁRVATI. The satellite that, as the moon revolves  
Around the earth, reflecting but the light  
That from its surface glows, has in itself  
No innate source of vivifying heat.  
Our earth our mistress, we are but her moon,  
And when the earth is overcast with clouds,  
As is the royal mind with mists of care,  
How can the satellite shine brightly forth?  
RANI. No cloud, but has its silver underneath,  
As poets say. Though now we cannot see  
Through cannon's smoke and the dark fogs of war,  
The wind of victory will waft away  
Those clouds of horror, and the bright blue sky  
Of fortune open out. But who comes here,  
Leading a youthful widow by the hand?  
Ah! it is Vishnu.

*Enter VISHNU, leading his daughter.*

Vishnu, is it peace?

VISHNU. Lady, I have no words but peace for men,  
For they are mostly blindly led by fate,  
Except the few who, fore-ordained to ill,  
Defy the precepts that the gods have taught.



ACT III. SCENE III.

RANI. Art we among the number, then, that thou  
Hast not come near us for these many days?  
But who's this child thou leadest by the hand?

VISUNT. A widow like yourself, my only child,  
One whom the gods it pleases to afflict  
With double portion of our human woe.

RANI. A Hindoo widow's is a piteous lot,  
But her's, I fear, is more. Is she not blind?

VISUNT. Alas! yes; blind—A splinter of a shell,  
That burst before its time, from our own guns,  
First struck one eye, and then the other died,  
From sympathy, it may be, for its mate  
But we have saved her life; the gods be thanked!  
Now to Mahádeo's temple are we bound,  
To render there the tribute of our praise.

RANI. Poor child, thou hast indeed a double share  
Of earthly evil, but thy father's kind,  
As many fathers are not to their widowed girls.

DAUGHTER. "Kind" is a word of very little worth  
To tell the deep emotions of the heart,  
For he is next to an immortal god,  
On earth abiding for the weal of men.  
My being's author, earlily sálace sole,  
I call him Father, comprehending all.

VISUNT. Hush, hush, my child, and render not to man  
What should be given to the gods alone.

RANI. And what now, Vishnu, do the stars foretell?  
Shall we be prosperous in this our siege,

### THE RANI OF JHANSI

Or shall we fail in driving back the foe,  
Who shall fair Jhansi level with the dust?

VISHNU. Still the same tale of misery and woe,  
For as the comet disappeared in space,  
Fainter and fainter growing, so the light  
On India's horoscope that faintly shone  
Has paled its hue before the Northern glow  
That gradually overspreads the sky.

RANI. What is this Northern glow that thou hast  
seen?

Is it a specious phantom of the brain,  
Or doth it presage any earthly force?

VISHNU. Heav'n's mystic page reveals no earthly  
names,

But Capricorn and Water-bearer, both  
In right ascension and conjoined, have shown  
Troops water-borne from England, and the Goat,  
That climbs the mountains, points to Nepaulose.  
Did not the stars speak truly as to them?  
Lucknow has fallen. The Mahratta Chiefs,  
Holkar and Sindia, with the Nizam,  
Best know their interest in being still.  
What have we left? With Kalpi for our base,  
This and a few small petty States at most,  
Are all the Peshwa's nephew can command,  
With Tanja at their head, to carry on  
The dwindling war that lately spread its tolls  
All over Northern India and in Oudh.

### ACT III. SCENE III

From Rájputana and from far Madras,  
From Bombay, Agra, and from Hydrabad,  
Troops are converging, while still Gwalior stands,  
A lordly beacon for the gathering hosts.

RANI. That is our plague-spot in a healthy frame.  
Had we but Gwalior, we'd defy the world!

*Enter MIRZA hurriedly.*

MIRZA. O Queen, I bring good news. A mighty force,  
With Tántia at its head, is close at hand,  
And, in its thousands steadfast marching on,  
Will soon envelop in its deadly fire  
This puny army now before our walls.  
Between this fortress and that flaming arc  
They must indeed true salamanders be  
Who can escape the roasting that in hell  
Is now prepared for unbelievers' souls.

RANI. This is, indeed, good news. Now, Vishnu,  
say,

Are the stars always right? Good people all,  
Your toils are almost done. To-morrow's noon  
Shall see us in possession of their camp,  
With goodly spoil for those who win it first,  
But one night more! Now send your shot and  
shell

As thick as rain-drops in their very midst.  
Let them not close their weary eyes for fear  
Of instant death, that so to-morrow's dawn  
May find them nerveless for the coming fray.

## THE RANI OF JHANSI

PEOPLE *shout*. 'The victory's the Queen's! The Queen! The Queen!

*[A shot strikes the blind girl, who in falling is supported by Vishnu, while the others gather round.]*

DAUGHTER. I cannot see thee, father, but thy arms  
Are still around me, as I sink to rest

Rām, Rāni, my father! Grieve no more for me,  
For Indra's Heaven opens as I die. *[Dies.]*

VISHNU Thus severed lies my only tie to earth!  
O child beloved, who from thy earliest days  
Hast been my refuge from the carking cares,  
And stern necessities of daily life,  
Now art thou gone, and I must face the world  
A solitary being. Would thy fate  
Were mine as well, that I, too, might depart,  
And pass for ever to a Brahmin's rest!

RĀNI What can console thee, Vishnu, for thy loss?  
I fear no consolation I can give.  
The poor child's obsequies shall be performed  
With all the pomp that Jhānsi can provide,  
For she has died a martyr to the cause.  
The choicest sandalwood the palace holds  
Shall be her funeral pyre;— perfumes the best  
From farthest Chin and Aaby the Blost,  
I give, her holy body to ancient  
Learned in Vedas Brahmins I appoint  
To utter *mantras* and unite in prayer,

ACT III. SCENE IV.

The gods for her reception to prepare.  
But now must I continue on my way,  
To tell the good news of the coming day,  
That day a day of safety that shall be,  
And of her foes shall render Jhānsi free.

SCENE IV. *The field of the battle of the Betwa*     Sir  
                                 *Huoh Rose and Staff standing.*

Sir Huoh. Give me your counsel, gentlemen     The  
                                 hour

Is highly critical. In front the fort,  
With thousands of defenders unsubdued,  
Who, if our efforts we relax, at once  
Will sally forth and penetrate the camp,—  
And in our rear an overwhelming force,  
Led by the only General they have.  
We stand, in fact, between two raging fires,  
Which, if we wait and look, will surely close,  
And in their dire embrace enfold us all.  
I think with Orientals, as with dogs,  
The boldest action is by far the best.  
Advance to meet them and they will recede :  
If we draw back, then like to yelping curs,  
Who think retreat is due to fear alone,  
They will come snarling, snapping, nearer still.  
Our batteries must not relax their fire,  
Lest the beleaguered force should sally forth.

## THE RANI OF JIANSI

There's work enough to-day for every man,  
And even invalids must leave their beds  
To share the dangers of a stirring day.  
Officers, Forward, then! Forward! We are all  
prepared.

SIN HUAN I see that Tánth has a twofold line.  
Go, then, to Stuart Let the first brigade  
First make a turning movement to the left,  
The second line to threaten on its flank,  
Half the artillery and the dragoons  
Will charge the left wing of the foremost line,  
While with the other half I charge the right.  
The infantry will towards its centre move.  
When on the right and left they see them flinch,  
Then let the infantry advance and charge.  
But let our fire not slacken in the front.  
See how already on the outer walls  
The demons leap and think they've won the day.  
Now, each one to his post! God save you all!

*[All salute and move off.]*

SCENE V. *Another part of the field Hoolaitan and  
others in pursuit of the enemy.*

Hoolaitan. Och, thin, be jipers, but it's mighty  
hot!

*[A huge crowd the hall.]*

And I'm not sorry for to hear that same.

*[The jungle in front is seen to be on fire.]*

ACT III. SCENE V

Them Naygurs' legs is longer than I thought  
As if our purgatory wouldn't do,  
They make believe to have another here  
They've set the blessed glass on fire below,  
To stop us catching them too quick. Hallo  
Hurrah! There goes the cavalry and guns,  
Right through the bushy jungle. That's the  
way!

They'll catch 'em up before they've gone too far.  
Well, Mike, ye spalpeen, have ye had enough?  
And is it thirsty that ye are, me boy?

MIKE. Thirsty! Be japers, I could drink the sea.  
Give me some water, Pat, for love of God!

[HOOAHAN hands water-bottle.]

HOOAHAN. Would hard, me son: the bottle's nearly  
dry,

And I would like a little drop meself.

MIKE. Mighty convenient, here's a shady tree,  
Where we can sit till the assembly sounds.

[Sit.]

HOOAHAN. Well, Mike, how many Naygurs have ye  
shot?

MIKE. Truth, Pat, that's more than I can say at all.

I always try to aim into the brown,

And think I winged a few of them, at last.

HOOAHAN. I had a better bit of luck than that  
There was three Naygurs got the Captain down,  
And he'd not long to live, ye may be sure.



## THE RANI OF JIHANSI

I stood and shot one fellow through the jaw,  
So he let go of that, and then the next  
I spitted like a turkey-cock to roast,  
The third was thinking two was quite enough,  
And wanted to be off, but then I says:  
'Aisy, me honey' and I tipped his head  
A real shillagh touch, and knocked him down.  
Mike More power to yer elbows, Pat, me boy!  
That was a mighty lucky hit for you.

*[Assembly sounds, and men run together, with]*  
CAPTAIN DARBY.

DARBY. Bravo, my men! We've done the trick  
to-day

There's no mistake in that. Here, Hoolahan!  
Poor Corporal McPhin has just been shot,  
And you can take his place for having saved  
My life just now, when I was almost done.  
I'll speak for your promotion by and by.

HOO LAHAN. More power to yer elbow, Captain dear,  
And won't I write home by the post to Cork,  
And sure they'll drink yer health and many more.

DARBY. Here comes the General. Attention, men!

*[They close their ranks. The General and  
Staff enter.]*

SIR HUAN. Well done and bravely all, my men, to-day!  
We had but fifteen hundred in the field,  
When all were counted in the two brigades,  
While they'd as many thousands at the least.



ACT III, SCENE V.

We've captured every gun they had in front,  
And soon I hope to see the rest brought in  
By the Dragoons in triumph, if they're up  
In time to catch them ere they cross the stream.  
I can trust Pettijohn to do his best.  
I hope not many, Captain, of your men  
Are hit?

DARBY. One Corporal, I know, Sir Hugh  
Has been knocked over, but I think the rest  
Of my own Company, at least, are safe.

SIR HUGH. So far so well. I think I see a face  
I know among them. Hoolahan my man;  
Have you been catching Bhists lately, man?

HOOLOHAN. Och thin, ye General's Honour, worse  
the luck!

Ye caught me thipping in a stupid thriek

DARBY. He has done better far, Sir Hugh, to day.  
Three of the blackguards had me down, and soon  
Joan Eighty-sixth its Darby would have lost,  
When Hoolahan came up and shot one dead,  
And bayoneted one. The third one's head  
Cracked like a nut beneath his rifle's butt.

I've promised him promotion for his pluck

SIR HUGH. And he deserves it well. But don't forget  
To bring me, Hoolahan, the flag you said  
B Company would fetch me from the fort  
March them back, Captain, to the camp at once,  
And let them rest a bit.

Sir

is

## THE RANT OF JIJANSI

HOOIAHAN.                      And now, me boys,  
Let's give the General a parting cheer,  
And may he live for ever and a day !  
*[Men cheer and are marched off.]*

SIR HUGH. Did I not tell you, gentlemen, before,  
That Eastern troops are like a pack of eels?  
If you go at them straight, their tails curl down  
Between their legs, and they will run away.  
But if you halt and hesitate, they come  
Nearer and nearer, and still snap and snarl,  
The honours of the fight are Stuart's own  
That flank march of the first brigade was grand,  
And when the enemy's first line fell back,  
Stuart's attack in flank achieved the day.

CHURCH OF ST. PAUL. Sir Hugh, you take no credit to yourself.

Yours was the head that planned, the rest were hands,

That your wise orders merely carried out.

Sin Hugh    No matter that    I praise where praise is  
                 due

Now let us go—Our horses are at hand.  
Our task is not accomplished yet—The fort  
Still grimly frowns upon us, and that flag  
Still flaunts defiance to us in disdain  
But now the shouts that greeted the advance  
Of Tâtin, their ally, have died away,  
Their spirits surely cannot be so good.

# ACT III. SCENE VI.

I fancy, from what Fuller said to-day,  
The breach will soon be fit to storm. Meanwhile  
We must not let them rest in peace, nor yet  
Their spirits to recover time afford,  
But pour in shot and shell like summer hail.  
No chance of succour left, their hearts will fail  
Our countrymen and women's blood aloud  
Cries out for vengeance on the blood-stained crowd  
Within those walls, nor must it cry in vain  
If Britons' valour Shánsi can regain.

SCENE VI *The breach before daybreak. The RÁNI,  
ANPURN, and PÁRVATI, sheltered behind a buttress.*

RÁNI. Párvati, I feel convinced the end is near.  
With impetuous gods what can be done?  
Ghee has been lavished freely on the shrines,—  
Brahmins by hundreds have been daily fed,  
And food in plenty given to the poor.  
Aid from without was vain. We fondly hoped  
That Tántia Topi's trained and valiant force  
Attacking from behind, while we in front  
Deluged that hateful camp with cannon shot,  
Would the besiegers' force have overcome.  
But vain our expectations, gods in wrath  
Must have fought for them. How could else  
Their puny army ever have opposed  
Those swarming thousands, nor one moment cease

## THE RANI OF JHANSI

That missile torrent that they shower on us?  
That was a moment of intensest joy  
When rank on rank we saw them sweeping on,  
Their standards fluttering in the morning breeze,  
Horse, foot, artillery, in grand array,  
Their right and left wings far and wide outstretched  
Our foes in fiery circle to embrace  
And when with terror and dismay we saw  
Those little companies of horsemen charge  
Into the midst of thousands, though our friends,  
Our hearts must give them a full meed of praise  
For daring valour. Even now, I see  
As it were, single storm-encountered barks  
So bravely buffet the opposing waves,  
'And by the exercise of seaman's craft  
O'ercome and bind them to their stubborn will.  
Then, when to save the remnant of his host  
Our wily General invoked the aid  
Of fire to check their progress, all in vain,  
What grander spectacle was ever seen  
Than that fierce dash of horsemen and of guns  
Straight through the billows of a fiery sea?  
Then, Párvatí, a chill unbidden crept  
Through all my limbs, and curdled up the blood  
In the most coy recesses of my frame.  
I felt within me that my country's cause  
Could not for long withstand the onset fierce  
Of warriors such as these, and thought again,

ACT III, SCENE VI.

Shall we be able to withstand their shock,  
And hurl them backwards when they storm the  
breach?

So now I come myself, to see, at least,  
If all is ready here; for when they come,  
Which will be shortly, there's no room to doubt.  
Hast thou not noticed since our friends withdrew  
How fast and fierce their batteries have fired,  
As if our spirits to damp further still,  
And shake our fibres with continued fear?

*[A shot is heard.]*

Now for some moments we are safe, I think,  
Come, let us forward and inspect the breach.  
A heap of ghastly ruins! Dost thou think  
That they will be so bold as venture up,  
When we with missiles ply their serried ranks,  
And throw them backwards on each other's  
heads?

ANPurna. Did they at Delhi not do equal deeds?

White though their skins, no Rákshas half as black  
When in their fury they assault their foes.

PÁRVATI. Had we not better place some barrier here,  
To check them should they ever gain the top?

A palisade, or something of the sort.

RANI. Thy wit is sharp. It must be done at once,  
Mace-bearer! Ho, where hast thou hid thyself?  
Art not ashamed to leave thy Queen alone  
With none but women round her for a guard?

## THE RANI OF JHANSI

MACC-NEARER. I thought the Presence might have  
secret things

To tell her women ; thus I came not near.

*A shell flies across.*

SRI KRISHNA, PARBHU ! That was very near !

If I am killed, what will my children do ?

Who give my wife and them their daily bread ?

RANI. Thou art a coward, Nusoo ! Call me here

Balá bin Ganpat, who commands this side.

*Enter VISHNU.*

Why, Vishnu Pandit, what dost thou do here ?

Thou art a man of peace and not of war.

VISHNU. The gods have taken, lady, all I had

On earth to care for, and I wander forth

By day and night where thickest is the fire,

In hope some friendly shot may take me, too.

Yet though men fall and perish at my side,

The partial bullets pass me ever by.

The stars foretell a crisis. Blood-red Mars

Rose when the moon had sunk behind the hill,

And cast a lurid ray upon the plain,

Paling the morning star, while other signs

Of evil augury are seen around.

I have seen signs of movement in the camp :

The storm may be at hand at any time.

RANI. And should it come think'st thou that I  
would flinch,

Or not take active part in the defence

ACT III, SCENE VI.

Oh that which is my own, whilst others fought  
And gave their lives a sacrifice for me?

VISHNU Lady, I know that in that woman's breast  
There dwells the daring spirit of a man,  
And Jhansi's only General's her Queen.  
But 'tis a General's duty to control,  
To organise his forces, and effect  
Such combination of the several parts  
That all the total may efficient be.  
In a man's body move not hands or feet  
But through the central guidance of the head.  
Then be advised. Retire within the fort.

MADE-BEADAH Yes, Presence, with the escort of your  
slave.

ANTRUNA You'd be an escort, Nusoo, that a dog  
That barked would from your senses scare out-  
right?

We'll be the escort. Get you gone! Go home!  
*Enter BALA.*

RANI I take thy counsel, Vishnu, and will go.  
But, Bala, set at once above the breach  
A palisade erected, stout and strong,  
Such that your muskets may between its bars  
Shoot down the stormers if they dare advance,  
And if they higher mount, may hold them back.  
Now, Nusoo, lead the way, if craven fear  
Have not yet paralysed thy ancient knees.

*[Goes out with women.]*

## THE RANI OF JHANSI

VIJAYU. Bala, farewell! I go to pray the gods  
To have us in their keeping, for the stars  
Predict me clearly that the city's doomed.  
Prepare thy best defence. I have land-grenades  
To shower down upon the coming foe.  
Open the fires of hell upon their ranks,  
Nor spare the pistol and the musket-shot.  
We must defend the city with our lives,  
Although the strife be useless in the end.  
For last year's slaughter of the innocent  
The gods must punish, nor will tamely leave  
To merely human vengeance here below.

*[Firing heard.]*

Hark! hark! The time is come. Call up thy  
men.

That's at the Western bastion. They will come  
Up here, too, in their hundreds. Be prepared.  
I may not fight against them for the vow  
I registered in Heaven, when my child  
Was healed of sickness by a doctor's skill.  
The gods may be propitious yet. Farewell!

*[Goes out.]*

BALA. He may be right. The firing still goes on.  
That is the sound of musketry I hear,  
And not the cannon we have heard of late,  
And they have left off firing at the breach  
Come, brothers, come! Prepare to give your  
lives



ACT III. SCENE VI.

*[Defenders swarm in to defend the breach. CAPTAIN DARBY, accompanied by HOO LAHAN, MIKI, and other stormers, forces them back.]*

HOO LAHAN. That was a mighty pretty tussle, thin, ava!

That fellow's musket there was on my head,  
And all the little brains that Pat I is got  
Would soon have been in little smithereens,  
But I was wide awake and caught his arm,  
And prodded from below beneath his ribs.

DARBY. Well done, old Eighty-sixths! We've won the breach,

But that's not all that we shall have to do.

The rocket-tower party are not in;

I hear them still below there, fighting hard.

Form up, my boys, and take them in the rear

Turn to the left and sweep the ramparts clear.

Help up our comrades till they all get in;

We've got the palace and the fort to win.

We're in the city, and by all the powers

We'll say in no time that the rest is ours!

*[Charge off to clear the ramparts.]*

## ACT IV

SCENE I. *A room in the fort at night. The RANI and her attendants, with VISINU, MINZA, and others assembled in council.*

RANI. All that brave men could do, my friends, was done,

Right valiantly was every post maintained,  
And inch by inch was each position held,  
But that the gods against us fought, the day  
Would surely have been ours, and Jhānsi free.  
I had but seen white officers before,  
And knew their lofty spirit, but had thought  
The common men were of inferior caste,  
Who might be daunted by the fear of death,  
But not an instant did those demons swerve,  
Though fire encircled them at every step,  
And by their weight of body drove our men  
Backwards and backwards till they took to flight.  
They had a watchword, too, which when one spoke,  
His fellows seemed to give redoubled strength.

ACT IV. SCENE I.

VISHNU. Lady, I heard the cry, and wondered not  
That it should nerve each arm, and move each  
heart.

With fierce excitement of pulsating blood.  
It was the cry of vengeance for the slain:  
For men, their brothers, treacherously killed,  
Brought to surrender by perfidious oaths,  
No sooner sworn than broken, and yet more  
For women massacred, and helpless babes  
Murdered before their dying mothers' eyes.

ANURANA. Oh woe! Oh woe! Alas, the hideous  
deed!

MINZA. And thinkest thou that there is any sin  
In breaking faith with Kafirs? Would again  
I had the chance to do such righteous work  
Then would Al Shah's bridge no terror have,  
And on the other side would Hithis wait  
To welcome me to Paradise beyond.

VISHNU. It is a demon doctrine, coined in hell!  
Why, Allah's called the Merciful, the Good,  
And would he countenance such things as this?

MINZA [*drawing his sword*]. And dar'st thou vilify  
the Moslem faith,  
Dog of a vile Hindu?

RANI. Hold, we command.  
Does, then, our Presence earn such slight respect  
That ye must here on points of doctrine strive,  
And quarrel while our foes are at the gate?

# THE RANI OF JHANSI

MIRZA. I sheath my weapon now, but let him care  
How he provoke me overmuch again,  
He need not draw his horoscope afresh.  
RANI Peace, Mirza, and thou, Vishnu, be thou  
dumb!

How can a house divided ever stand?  
I called ye here to counsel not dispute,  
What has been done is past beyond recall,  
But think not that terrific scene's effaced  
From memory's tablet. Often in my dreams  
I see those butchered forms before me lie,  
In ghastly rows that I am forced to count  
One after other, and to mark with blood,  
Until I sicken at the sight, and cry  
Most piteously for mercy, finding none,  
And start up shuddering as with chill of death.

PÁRVATI. Lady, be comforted. Not your command  
Enjoined the butchery. You only wish  
Was to induce them to give up the fort.

RANI A stricken conscience is not calmed with words,  
My Párvati. Remorse comes e'er too late  
I must even bear it as I may. And now  
"My country, not myself, I have to save.  
The town is in their hands, but still this fort  
May bid them long defiance, till our friends  
From Kálpi and elsewhere can come to aid.

VISHNU. Cherish not, lady, more delusive hopes.  
The Ráo in Kálpi has enough to do.

## ACT IV

To hold his own, for g  
 Like vultures swoop in  
 Come troops from Rájput  
 Bombay, Madras, as well  
 And though some petty  
 Are unsubdued, from Kir  
 Is driven out a fugitive,  
 Sindia in Gwálior is th  
 Tánlia by this time ha  
 To risk a further triu  
 And soon in Kálpi will  
 And not be able to esc  
 RÁNI I fear me he's no  
 Of active warfare th  
 Would I were there to  
 We still have courage  
 MIRZA. Then, why not go  
 RÁNI. I go to Kálpi! M  
 We are all here belag  
 How could I leave the  
 MIRZA. To get away is no  
 They think that, now t  
 So perpendicular the fi  
 They need not keep u  
 Out on the plain there  
 There is a secret passag  
 That has been long dis  
 Could follow, yet throu

## THE RANI OF JHANSI

Is easy. Let us fly this very night,  
And make our way to Kālpi to the Ráo.

RÁNI. And leave my faithful servants to be killed?  
Ungrudgingly then best blood have they shed,—  
Eleoie all, exposed themselves to death;  
And shall their leader leave them to their fate?  
No! Better were it to give up the fort,  
Surrendering on promise of our lives,  
Which they would grant us to attain their ends.

MIRZA. But what then, lady, of our country's cause?  
The Náná Sáhib has gone we know not where.  
The Ráo himself has no more taste for war.  
The Molvi's forces are too far away  
To be of use, and Lantia's late defeat  
Has so far prejudiced his former fame,  
That men his leadership no longer seek.  
What leader is then left but Jhansi's Queen?

RÁNI. If I surrender, I have honour still,  
But if the innocent I now forsake,  
And leave them to the mercy of the foe,  
In after ages who will not revile  
And curse the memory of her who fled,  
And, like a shepherd heedless of his flock,  
Gave up her lambs to the devouring wolf?

MIRZA. The garrison and all may well escape.

RÁNI. What of the people in the town? Are they  
To count for nothing, for they cannot go?

VISUNU. Fear not their safety, lady, or the town's.

# ACT IV. SCENE I.

Not common robbers are these Englishmen,  
 Who come for plunder and then pass away.  
 They strike for empire torn away and lost,  
 And, this recovered, understand not full well  
 Their wisest policy is to protect,  
 And not to harry those, despite themselves  
 Who through their rulers are involved in war.  
 I will be sure that they have no harm.  
 I will go early to the English Chiefs  
 And tell them what has happened. They will then  
 Take due precautions to protect the town.

RANI. Alas, alas! I fear it must be so.

But we must hide our movements. Let the lights  
 Be all kept burning, and the sentries pace  
 Each on his beat with hoarse and strident cry  
 Anpurna, Párvati, will ye, too, come  
 To exile with your Queen in male attire  
 For thus alone can we with safety go?

BOTH WOMEN. Even in death we part not with our  
 Queen

RANI. I can but give you thanks. A warrior Queen  
 Has no more costly presents to bestow.  
 Farewell for ever, ye ancestral halls!  
 Your Queen must go to where her duty calls.  
 O royal fortress and O kingly tower,  
 O princely audience hall and private bower,  
 O shrine, our household gods wherein do dwell,  
 Your Queen must bid you all for aye farewell.

## THE RANI OF JHANSI

In midnight vision, waking dream, each scene  
Of bygone joys the witness that has been,  
Impressed in lines unfading on my heart,  
May in my exile help to soothe some smart,  
To calm some anguish of a burdened breast  
But for its country's cause that I can would rest,  
Passed through the cleansing fire to mortals given,  
Pure and unsullied into India's Heaven,  
That cause still beckons forward to the field  
Of high emprise, nor can I tamely yield  
To foreign bondage, till I sure y know  
My aim, my wisdom, can no further go.  
And though a certain, sad foreboding tells  
These heartfelt words will be my last farewells,  
My spirit stirs and prompts me to the fight,  
Where I may battle for the true and right, —  
One blow for freedom strike with courage high,  
And should it not succeed, still honoured die!  
Now let us go and don our male attire—  
We reassemble at the sally port.                    *! Go off.*

SCENE II. *A room in the fort at Kdipi. The RANI,  
the RAO SHAH, TANTIA TOPI, the NAVAN OF  
BANDA, and others assembled in council.*

RAO. Thou art thrice welcome, sister, in these days  
Of evil fortune and declining wealth,



# ACT IV. SCENE II

And though a fugitive thou comest here,  
 Yet art thou welcome for the good advice  
 That thou canst give us in this time of ill,  
 Not less than for the prowess of thy arm,  
 Worth many thousand soldiers to our cause.  
 For we have heard of Jhānsi's stout defence,  
 And how thou day and night didst pace the walls  
 Instilling life into the drooping hearts  
 Of all within, so that each nerveless arm  
 Fresh vigour gained, and even women dared  
 Expose themselves to danger and to death  
 With equal courage with the bravest there.  
 I say, then, welcome to thee once again

RANI. A woman's arm is frail, yet may her heart  
 Beat for her country with heroic pulse.  
 A fugitive and suppliant I come,  
 Indeed, a beggar, for, with Jhānsi gone,  
 Nor home nor wealth nor influence are left.  
 But I have still a heart, and, as thou say'st,  
 An arm to combat with my deadly foes.  
 I bring not many troops, but the Navāb  
 Has still a portion of his forces left.  
 And if to adverse fate we now oppose  
 A stern and daring front, who can foretell  
 What in the future's fruitful, pregnant womb  
 Of fortune's favours may be left us still?  
 No. Now nothing can be done. In Kālpī safe  
 Yet for a time may we abide. The rain

### III RANI OF JHANSI

Will shortly top a' movement - e he read  
And men will rally to us if we stand  
And as a heaving rock heaves back the waves  
'That idly dash themelves against our base  
TÂNIA. Some waves with splashing may not be  
content,

But fretting constantly may undermine  
Hard rocks, until these totter to their fall  
Think not that Rosamunda sits  
'Tis but the tiger crouching for his spring,  
RÂO. Where will he spring? O beld of evil omen,  
say!

TÂNIA. At Kalpi here, ay at once very thout  
Lucknow has fallen you must recollect,  
And soon the army the ice may hurry down  
To join their hands with his, and hem us in

RÂO. I see no false alarm that Tânia gives,  
And our best strategy's to cause delay,  
'To budge the time until the rain may fall  
The fiery arrows of our Indian sun  
Strike down more Europeans than ourselves,  
And thus delaying has a double aim  
'Were it not better to lay down the rule  
'That till the sun is high up in the heav'n  
We give no battle to an English force?

RÂO. This shall be done at once, but 's that all  
That can be thought of to procure delay?

RÂO. I would not we should meekly fold our hands

ACT IV SCENE II

And now we at our enemy's good time  
Give me an army with the which to fight,  
And I will then oppose him on his way,  
And from our last resource could hold him off.  
Jhánsl is lost, but while a single drop  
Of blood flows in my veins, it shall be shed  
To give me my revenge upon the thieves  
That stole my patrimony and my throne,  
And drove me out in outcast of the world  
RÁO. Wilt thou then, Tántia, again go forth  
And seek for vengeance on thy hated foe?  
TÁNTIA. Yes, though a lion stood across my path  
But once against each other have this Rose  
And I been pitted— Though I lost the day,  
It was because I fought him on a plain,  
Where we could find no shelter from their guns  
I know a strong position on the road,  
Which we can fortify against attack,  
And there to fight us he will never dare  
RÁO. What is this strong position thou wouldst  
hold?  
TÁNTIA. Just south of Kínch— Shielding the village  
front  
Are woods and gardens, and along the line  
Are temples, each within a wall enclosed.  
I will throw up entrenchments to defend  
The whole of these, which, bound together  
thus,

### THE RANI OF JHANSI

As by a solid ramp, can not be breached,  
And he will hardly venture to attack.

RAO. What think'st thou, Rani of our General's  
plan?

RANI. It is the best that we can do, perhaps,  
But at the same time be not idle here.  
'The place is strong, but make it stronger still.  
'Throw up entrenchments where the mullahs end  
On this side loop-hole all the temple walls,  
Let chosen leaders all the ground inspect,  
'That if a battle spread to these ravines,  
'They may know where to plant their ambushes,  
And take advantage of the earth itself.  
In a sould ought be ever left to chance,  
But all be looked to with a present care,  
Lest when a battle's lost one lie a reproach,  
'If only this or that thing had been done,  
How different the issue would have been!  
Or haply one's own conscience should torment  
For things neglected in a righteous cause.  
In Jhansi must be force some days remain  
To rest and settle for a new campaign.  
Then shall we hear once more the trumpet's  
sound,

The measured tramp of footmen on the ground,  
The roll of timbal and the cannon's whirr,  
The brazen drum and horrid clash of steel,  
The tramp of elephant, the shout of war,

# ACT IV SCENE III

Cast back by gliding, shadowy forms  
 The sword will flash its message to the sky  
 And kindle madame in the woman's eye,  
 Stir up the eager pulses of his heart  
 In battle's frenzied game to bear a part,  
 And, on his war-steed bounding with delight,  
 Risk life and honour in the doubtful fight.  
 Then where in headlong charge the squadrons  
 meet

Strike down the foe and cry, 'Revenge is sweet!  
 Rao To-morrow there shall be a grand review  
 Of all our troops, and we will then decide  
 Who shall remain, and who shall go to Kunch.  
 Meanwhile this lot, which a' the lot contains,  
 Is thine, my sister, to command at will.  
 Look on all here as if it were thine own [Go off]

SCENE III. *The battle-field of Kálpi. The RÁNI in  
 male attire, with ANPURNÁ, PÁRVATÍ, and attend-  
 ants. Enter the RAO, PÁNSA TORI, and the  
 NÁSH OF BANDA.*

RAO. Misfortune on misfortune still pursues  
 Our wretched enterprise. Here had we thought  
 At last to foil our foes, and gaining time,  
 Reorganise our army, and unite  
 Its scattered parts in one harmonious whole

### THE RANK OF TIANNA

What more could we have done than what we  
did

All our arrangements of the best, our men,  
Brought up by stealth to close up on their ranks  
So that we almost took them by surprise  
Rushed as to victory complete and sure  
When but a handful of those demons white  
Led by an officer they say was Rose,  
Charging upon them put them all to flight,  
As sheep are scattered by an evening wolf  
Why did our men such cowards as to flee?

TANNIA Because they have no officers to lead  
The men, like children, have been taught to  
walk

In leading-strings by mothers, left alone,  
Their legs will not support them, and they fall.  
The native officers are far too old.  
Effete old men, they all have lost the dash  
By which brave men to victory are led  
Not can a skilful General supply  
The place of officers of lower rank.

RAO When I learnt English in my younger days,  
I heard a proverb that they often use—  
'Discretion is the better part of valour,' and thus, 'Tán in, my friend,  
'Thou'st aptly learnt—Perhaps thou'st never seen  
How in the crisis of a stubborn fight  
An English General will lead his men

ACT IV. SCENE III

in person, by his good example, tried  
That they may take fresh courage, and protect  
Their plucky leader in his venturous charge

TÂNIA. A great deal of the battle, too, to-day  
Himself the Rao has witnessed — For I saw  
His standard fluttering gaily on a hill  
Well out of reach of shot, and whence escape,  
If things went wrong, was easy to achieve  
RAO. Call'st thou me coward? Who the first to  
bring

The tidings of our sad defeat did bring?

It was a rapid deed that bore thee then

TÂNIA. Pity thou had'st not ridden it to-day

Thou mightest then have seen the battle more!

RANI. For shame — for shame — for very shame  
forbear,

Nor let these mimic hear the wordy war

Ye pelt each other with now all is vain.

RAO. Shall then, a base born son like him upbraid

A Brahmin, and the Peshwa's nephew, too?

TÂNIA. Great Peshwa he, whom murder first raised  
up

Upon a fancied throne, thy' fell to dust

At the first blast of evil fortune's wind

Where has he fled away? Where hides he now,

The wretched fugitive, his weary head?

My fighting is at least in open war

RANI. I say again — I forbear for very shame

### THE RAVEN OF JULIA

Omra: Why prove coward when thy Chiefs  
Demand themselves our lives and souls,  
Whilst thou art telling 'n thy high estate,  
And needest every arm and every hand  
Of all thy best and wisest potent sons  
To save thee now from ruin and disgrace  
Are not my burdens greater but thine yours?  
Who has, like thee, lost what he had home and throne,  
On others' charity abroad to roam?  
Why should I fight but that my country's call  
Prompts me to action to redress her wrongs?  
Peace, then, I say, between your biting tongues  
All is not lost, believe me, yet a while.  
I have betought me on another plan  
That may redeem our fortunes in the end.  
There is one traitor to his country's cause,  
Whom I have special reason to accuse  
Had it not been for Sulla, the force  
That conquered Thauri would have had no grass  
Nor fodder for their cattle, nor had straw  
Been found on which the men could lie to rest.  
This gudge I owe him therefore, and would fain  
Seize on his fortunes and repay him thus.  
Navai: Seize upon Gwalior! Hast thou seen the  
place,  
To talk so lightly now of seizing it?  
Rani: I have not seen it, but have heard men say  
It is the strongest fort in Hindusthan.



ACT IV. SCENE II.

RÁO. How wouldst thou seize it, then? With it a  
sally,  
And heavy guns and overwhelming force.  
It could not be accomplished now by us,  
At whose first movement toward the place would  
come

Swarming on every side the English troops  
And hem us in between the fort's line  
And of the guns that they would plant in rear?  
RÁNI. Listen with patience. We need none of these  
Collect our scattered forces, and advance  
Straight as we can, without an hour's delay,  
Direct on Gwálon, where we know the troops  
Are disaffected, as were those last year,  
Who all revolted when the war broke out.  
I hope that when they see our force arrayed,  
Ev'n if they do not join they'll not oppose.  
Sindia will flee, and with the fortess garrison  
We may again defy the world in arms.

Such is my scheme. Though bold, I hold it sure  
NAYÁN. A masterpiece of strategy—Success  
Must surely follow such a skilful move

RÁO. I doubt me much if it wèrè well to place  
All on the hazard of a single throw

RÁNI. What wilt thou do, then? Whither flee?  
Jhánu and Kápi gone, what stronghold's left  
Where we can fly to hide our helpless heads?  
Our scattered troops will not again collect,

### THE RANI OF JHANSI

Unless to some such virtue we can point  
In every place the English arms prevail,  
And they will hunt us down like very dogs  
There will be nought but men die and 'tis disgrace  
To help us to escape their deadly rage  
You who have slept upon luxurious beds,  
Fed with the best of viands clothed in silk  
And shod with velvet, lest the slightest ail  
Should chafe your tempers, think what that would  
be

Coarse garments, straw to lie on, if not earth,  
Split peas a luxury, you 'd food the grain,  
Cast as an alms into the beggar's bag,  
Would take their place. With such what were  
Life worth?

RÂO A gloomy picture truly dost thou paint.  
What think'st thou, Tántia, of the Rani's plan?

TÂNTIA It is a hardy venture at the best,  
And does not brook delay, if 'tis to be;—  
E'en in the jungle here the trees have ears,  
And wind may waft words where they should not  
reach

To-morrow's dawn should see us on our way,  
And I must seek our troops throughout the night;—  
As sheep without a shepherd now they stray  
Forcing our marches, it will take three days,  
And if meanwhile the English hear the news,  
They'll follow as a hound upon the track of deer

ACT IV SCENE III

Thus Sindia may find courage to resist,  
 And so hold out until they come to aid,  
 RAO. Will you Naváb, too, join this enterprise?  
 NAVÁB. Willing I follow where the Ráni leads,  
 For I, like her, no longer have a home,  
 And would not yet assume a Lakh's garb.  
 RAO. Then we are all agreed — The die is cast  
 Our greatest venture, as it is the last!  
 Pray, then, the gods to lend their kindly aid.  
 And now, as we have much to do, to bed!  
 RANI. To bed, forsooth! The day for that is gone  
 Thy couch to-night is grass, thy pillow stone,  
 Parched like thy food, which thou with me canst  
     share,  
 Served in the palace of the open air.  
 Beneath this spreading tree my maids and I  
 Will stretch our limbs, our canopy the sky,  
 Whose twinkling beacons, sparkling ever bright,  
 To make our simple toilets serve for light  
 Come, Párvati, Anpurna, let's to sleep,  
 It sleep we may. Dear child, how I could weep  
 That thou thy tender limbs upon the ground  
 Must lay for rest, while dangers thicken round  
 Would ye would leave me ere it be too late,  
 Leave me alone to battle with my fate  
 ANPURNA. No, Queen and Mistress, that can never be.  
 Without thee life is death, death life with thee!  
 PÁRVATI. Rest safely, lady, rest in loving arms.

## THE RANI OF JHANSI

Rest safe from foes and from war's vain alarms,  
Whilst that they give thee strength the gods we  
    prayer  
To bear the burden of the coming day.

*[They sleep]*

SCENE IV. *The audience-hall in the fort of Gwalior.*  
*The RANI, RAO SAMB, TANHA TOPI, NAVAN or*  
*BANDA, and others seated*

RANI. Said I not so, my friends? A brazen front  
Opposed to fortune brings it clinging back  
To cower at the handy feet of those  
Who have the courage to withstand its might.  
See now what we have done. By our despatch  
We stole a march upon the English Chief,  
And baffled all his calculations, too.  
A spy has just come in with a report  
That he had made arrangements to disperse  
His army into quarters here and there  
In different directions for the rains.  
But as a flash of lightning from the blue  
Would awe astonish and perplex the mind,  
So has our sudden counter-march confounded  
And brought perplexity into his camp.  
What will he say, then, when he hears the news  
That this grand fort and town are in our hands?

ACT IV. SCENE IV.

PANU Astonished he may be, but not perplexed  
He will but wait to rearrange his force  
And get me ammunition for his guns,  
To follow us in close and hot pursuit.

RÁO. The fort is strong, and he may knock it vain  
For entrance, for without a lengthy siege  
His guns would fail him in such heavy work.

RÁO. He may procure him more. The lightning wire,  
Which their great art has stretched the country  
through,

is still available to summon aid

But I have heard that Rose gives up command,  
And soon returns to England. If 'tis true,  
We may have respite till another comes.

TÁNTRA. The deadly cobra when he casts his kin  
No less a deadly cobra will remain.

When he has heard this news he will not go

RÁO. Then it behoves us to be on our guard  
He is not one who slumbers at his work,  
We should take counsel how to cause delay  
The rainy season is now close at hand,  
And when it once commences, heavy guns,  
That would be wanted to besiege this fort,  
Could not be brought. Meanwhile each passing  
day

Tells with its tropic heat upon his men.

Let us, then, share the duties of the time.

Let us proclaim the Peshwa's rule ;—the Ráo

THE RANI OF JHANSI

See to preserving order in the town,  
Tantia command the forces in the fort,  
Whilst I have those outside and in the field  
There are four noblemen imprisoned here,  
Who will befriend us if we let them loose,  
And send them out to levy troops to fight.  
Stint not the treasure we have found, but give  
Freely to those who give us timely aid  
Seek out among the nobles of the court  
Some one whom Minister we may appoint  
To bear the burden of affairs of state.

RÁO. One thing at once. Now let us see the men  
Whom Sindia has imprisoned. Who is there?

*ATTENDANT enters.*

Go to the jailor, with this signet ring:  
Bid him release and send his prisoners here.

*[Goes.]*

RÁNI. Meanwhile, I'll make acquaintance with the  
men

Of Sindia's army, that is now on our own,  
And learn from them the country round about it,  
To find the places that we may entrench  
Upon the route, or otherwise defend,  
As British forces come here to attack.

RÁO. Good sister, go, and Krishna give thee aid.

TÁNIA. And I will make inspection of the fort,  
To see what guns are planted, and what more  
We may require to perfect the defence.

ACT IV, SCENE IV.

To see what ammunition there may be,  
And look to stores of food and fodder, too.  
RAO. Do what is needful to the Peshwa's cause,  
And spare no money, for we have enough  
[TANCIA goes. ATTENDANT comes in with four  
MARRATTA CHIEFS.

Welcome, Sudars, to liberty once more.  
In jail already you have heard the news  
That that arch-traitor to his country's cause,  
And your oppressor, Sindia, has fled,  
His army vanquished by the Peshwa's troops,  
Who now possess his city and his fort.  
We deem it fortunate at such a time  
To find in Gwallor such well-tried friends  
To help us to administer the realm.  
Here we propose to concentrate our strength,  
Ruling our people with a righteous rule;  
Deep in the soil expanding now our roots,  
Draw from the air above and earth below  
Such nourishment as may suffice to build  
The goodly structure of a fruitful tree,  
'Neath which the natives may resort for rest  
When they are wounded with the galling yoke  
Of foreign laws unsuited to their kind.  
And now the task that we assign to you  
Is to enlist new levies for our force,  
Reduced by hardships and the lot of war.  
Say, are ye willing to incur the risk?

### THE RANI OF JHANSI

1st SIRDAR. I answer for myself. I am prepared,  
To wreak me vengeance on my hated Chit,  
To rush through flames, to dive the brim deep,  
To brave all danger, and defy even death.  
THE RANI. So are we all. But put us to the test.  
RAO. Then be prepared, my friends, to start  
once,

And bring as many men as you can find.  
The treasury shall give you all you need  
For your expenses, and to pay the troops.

*Re-enter RANI.*

These are the nobles, whom we now send forth  
To levy forces in the Peshwa's cause.

RANI. Krishna be with you then, my friends. Fare-  
well. *[They go.]*

All the experienced men that I have seen,  
Men of advancing years, and skilled in war,  
All point to Kotah ki Serai, a place  
Not far from this, upon the Antri road,  
As one where we might make a dogged stand  
Low wooded hills embrace a narrow pass,  
The only thoroughfare that leads to this  
And through this pass there runs a deep canal,  
Close by the road, and not a pace more room.  
With infantry and guns up on the hills,  
No hostile force could ever pass along.  
There will I post myself to meet the force  
I hear from Jhansi now is on the way.



ACT IV SCENE V

Farewell, my friend — I must no longer stay.  
Welcome both sleepless nights and days of toil,  
Our wary enemies if we may foil. [Go off.]

SCENE V. *The field of battle of Kotah la Souri*  
*Enter ANURNA, PARVATI, VISHNU, and MIRZA.*

ANURNA. I watched the battle from on yonder hill  
Till I felt faint with fear and hid my face,  
The sight too ghastly to behold unmoved.  
I saw her ever foremost in attack,  
And when they forced us backwards from the pass  
She was the life and soul of the retreat.  
Ever maintaining order in the ranks,  
She held them all together and opposed  
To the fierce foe a still unbroken front  
But as the fight approached, the envious smoke  
Concealed her and I saw no more her form.

PARVATI. No lover ever watched for her he loved  
With half the longing of my eager gaze,  
Fixed on her supple form, as sword in hand  
She moved now here, now there, and with a word  
Strengthened the failing and urged on the brave  
To deeds of double daring and renown.  
But when the crowd swept past in eager flight,  
She was no longer there. Alas, alas!  
Is she still here, or can she have escaped

### THE RANI OF JHANSI

Through some dark jungle path? O Vishnu, see,  
Look in the bushes round for what I dread,  
And yet must long for with a fearful heart  
VISHNU. Hope ever for the best. It may be yet  
That dust and smoke but hid her from our eye,  
And she was carried onwards with the crowd,  
And even now is in the fortress safe.

PÁRVATI. Sir Kri ma, grant it may be so! But  
search.

She may be lying wounded here, perhaps,  
With no one near to wet her dying lips,  
Or whisper comfort in her dying ear.

MIRZA. Come, Vishnu, join me in the mournful task,  
Which Allah grant may fruitless be and void.

ANURON. Párvati, sister, how I fear the worst!

Only last night I had a troubled dream

I was in Jhānsi on a moonlit night

Upon the highest tower. As I sat

And gazed upon the fleecy clouds that swept

Up to the zenith from the western sky,

Gangádhara stood before me, clothed in robes

Of saffron hue, such as the Brahmíns wear

In worshipping the gods, and as he passed,

He whispered to me as he pointed up:

‘I’m lonely there above among the gods.

Bid her come to me.’ When I asked him

‘Whom?’

He pointed down to where our mistress slept,

ACT IV. SCENE V.

And waved his heavenly arm and floated up  
 And soon was lost to sight among the clouds  
 I started from my sleep in fright, and looked,  
 Rejoiced to see her lying on her bed  
 In slumber, calm and peaceful as a child  
 To day I begged her not to go to fight,  
 But in her winning way she gently smiled,  
 And called me 'silly thing!' as I went her way.

*VISHNU and MIRZA searching about, find the RANI's  
 body, and bring it forward ANURNA and  
 PARVATI scream, and kneeling down try to raise  
 her.*

PARVATI. Râta, Krishna, Parbhu. Say not she is  
 dead!

Oh! well-loved Queen, 'tis Pârvati! Look up.

MIRZA 'Tis useless, Pârvati. Her soul has fled.

ANURNA. Alas, alas! My grief's too deep to weep.

My burning eyelids have dried up the fount  
 From childhood's day till now that overflowed  
 At any slight emotion, and my tongue  
 Cleaves to my mouth as parched with summer  
 heat.

PARVATI O Queen, beloved mistress, loving friend,  
 In whose affection from my youth till now  
 No change I've seen, and in whose sun my path  
 My joyous feet have ever walked in light,  
 Shall that warm breast in which my tender limbs  
 Nestled as bird beneath its mother's wing,

### THE RANI OF JHANSI

Chilled by the wintry blast of g'ory death  
No longer hold me in its sweet embrace  
Must those bright eyes whose rays of heavenly  
light

Flashed the indulgence of the soul within,  
Paling their beacon fires below on earth,  
Shine but above among immortal gods?  
Had ye such envy to our mortal race,  
Ye deities, that ye for some few years  
Could not delay to take her to yourselves?

MIRZA. I mourn her less as woman than as Queen.

Is there a patriot now left us here  
That can our country's arms lead in war,  
Or in the council-chamber with advice  
Guide our bewildered statesmen in the right?  
Who will compose the ever-jarring chords,  
Struck by unskilful hands and timeless ears,  
To the grand air of national accord?  
Who shall restrain the Moslem in his zeal,  
That he may not o'erstep the bounds of caste,  
But with the Hindoo aim at common ends?  
All this she did, and none as she can do.

VISHNU. The stars against her in their courses  
fought,

Nor could the influence of adverse fate  
Be counteracted by a mortal's will  
According to her lights she acted well,  
And thus we give her honour in her death.

# ACT IV. SCENE V

With due religious rites should she be burnt  
 Here on the field where she so nobly died.  
 'Twere better that the English should not know  
 That Jhansi's Rani troubles them no more.  
 Yet who comes here, our

[Rises and holds his hat  
 and Mike. The  
 the charge.

HOOAHAN. Would land, I  
 but a praste!  
 He hasn't nothing that

Oh! that's it, is it? —  
 But it's a woman 'bat

[  
 VISHNU. 'Tis Jhansi's Rani  
 HOOAHAN. Och, thin, Mi  
 luck

Wid that same bit of n  
 She was the biggest so  
 Pace to her sowl, poor  
 I'd pay for masses for  
 Only she's got a praste  
 We must be going pac  
 Let's give her a 'P'isi

ANDUNA. Sri Krishna ne  
 VISHNU.

## THE RANI OF JHANSI

They do but honour to the noble dead.

They, too, as soldiers, know a soldier's worth.

[Hoolahan and Mike go off]

MINZA. The hour grows late, and we must use  
despatch

To get all ready for your solemn rites.

There is a stream hard by where you can wash

And other wise prepare, and I will go

To bring you sandalwood and sweet perfumes,

And oil and ghee that shall excite the flames.

I will but tell the mournful news and come.

VISNU. I thank you, Minza. Let the Brahmins  
come,

To sing the holy chant, repeat the prayer

That wafts her spirit to the upper air,

Pure through the holy, sanctifying flame,

On earth to live but in a martyr's name.

What though unhonoured by the blatant trump,

And shouting crowds, and with no royal pomp,

We raise her on the pyre, the mournful sound

Through India's weeping plains shall echo round.

'The Queen of Jhansi's dead!' Mourn loud,  
mourn long,

But sing her ever in the poet's song,

Each creed, each caste, in chorus joining in:

'Ho! Jhansi's Queen and India's heroine!'

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### THE RANI OF JHANSI

MIRZA. I sheath my weapon now, but let him care  
How he provoke me overmuch again,  
He need not draw his horse-scope afresh.

RANI. Peace, Mirza, and thou, Vishnu, be thou  
dumb!

How can a house divided ever stand?  
I called ye here to counsel, not dispute,  
What has been done is past beyond recall,  
But think not that terrific scene is effaced  
From memory's tablet. Often in my dreams  
I see those butchered forms before me lie,  
In ghastly rows that I am forced to count  
One after other, and to mark with blood,  
Until I sicken at the sight, and cry  
Most piteously for mercy, finding none,  
And start up shuddering as with chill of death.

PÁRVATI. Lady, be comforted. Not your command  
Enjoined the butchery. Your only wish  
Was to induce them to give up the fort.

RANI. A stricken conscience is not calmed with words,  
My Párvati. Remorse comes e'er too late  
I must e'en bear it as I may. And now  
"My country, not myself, I have to save."  
The town is in their hands, but still this fort  
May bid them long defiance, till our friends  
From Kálpi and elsewhere can come to aid.

VISHNU. Cherish not, lady, more delusive hopes.  
The Ráo in Kálpi has enough to do



ACT IV. SCENE I.

To hold his own for gathering quickly round,  
 Like vultures swooping on their dying prey,  
 Come troops from Rájputána and from Oudh,  
 Bombay, Madras, as well as Hydrabad  
 And though some petty chiefs in Rájstán  
 Are unsubdued from Káwáth's Náwab  
 Is driven out a fugitive, and still  
 Sindia in Gwálor is then firmly.  
 Tántia by this time has no spirit left  
 To risk a further trial of his skill,  
 And soon in Kalpi will the Ráo be caught,  
 And not be able to escape his foes.

RÁNI. I fear me he's no stomach for the work  
 Of active warfare that is wanted now.  
 Would I were there to rouse him, and to show  
 We still have courage to maintain our cause!

MIRZA. Then, why not go? Why, lady, linger here?

RÁNI. I go to Kálpí! Mirza, art thou mad?  
 We are all here beleaguered round about  
 How could I leave the fortress if I would?

MIRZA. To get away is now the easiest time.  
 They think that, now they have us safely trapped,  
 So perpendicular the fortress walls,  
 They need not keep up such a careful watch.  
 Out on the plain there, open to the North,  
 There is a secret passage underground  
 That has been long disused, and but a few  
 Could follow, yet through this escape for us