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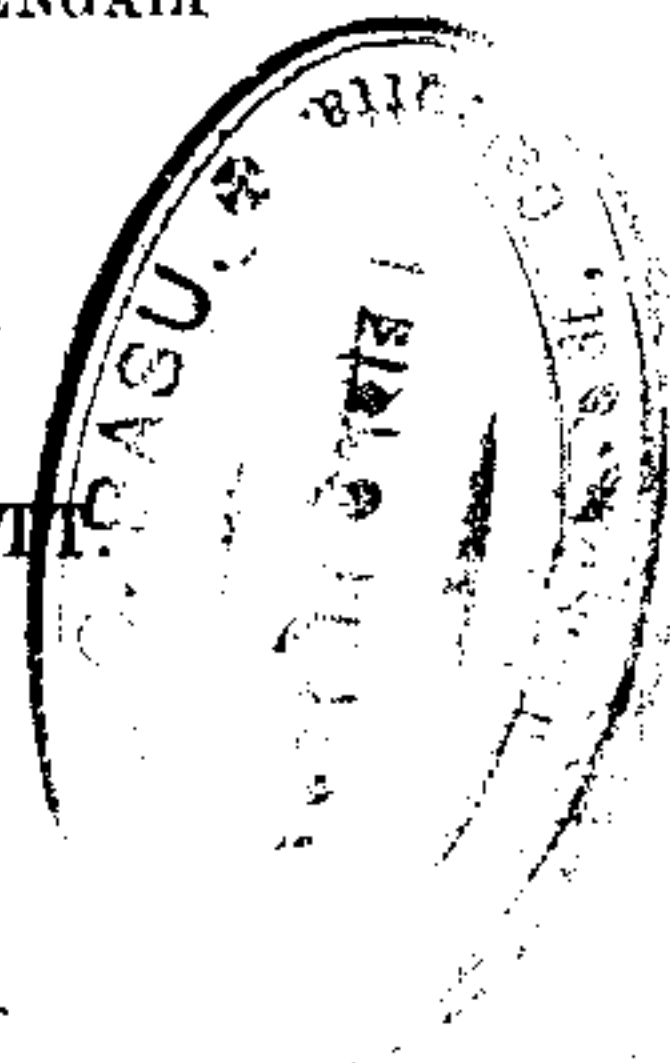
RATNAVALI:

A DRAMA IN FOUR ACTS,

TRANSLATED FROM THE BENGALI

By

MICHAEL M. S. DUTTA.



CALCUTTA:

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY N. ROY, AT THE BANGABASI
PRESS, 38/2, BHOWANICHARAN DUTTA'S STREET.

1904.

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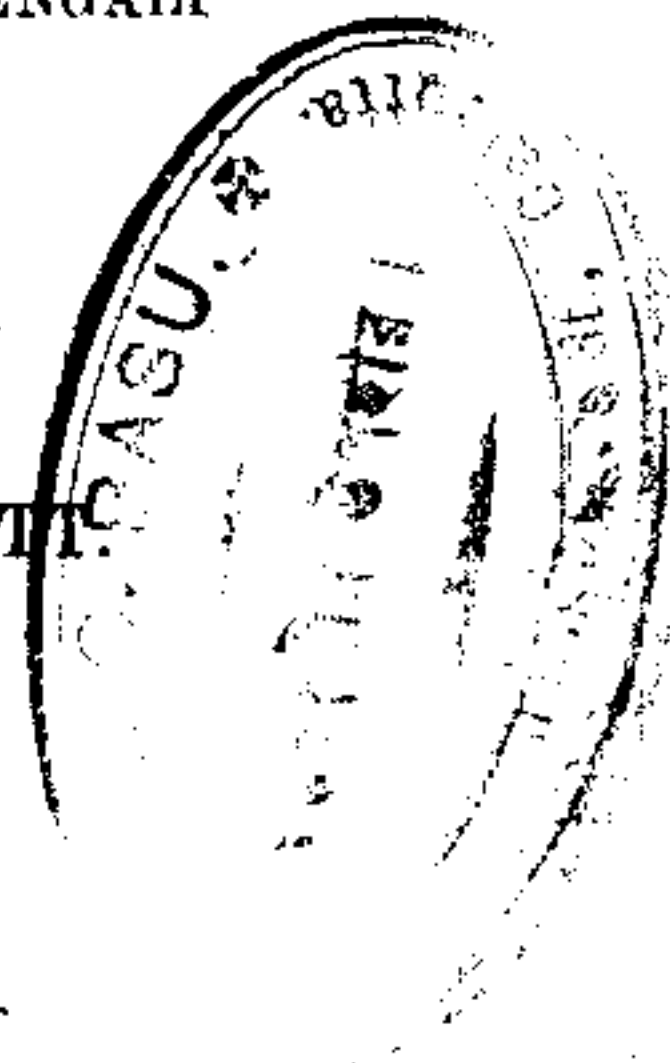
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(LIMITED.) NO 1, WESTON'S LANE, COSSITOLLAH.

1858.

RATNAVALI.

(*DRAMA.*)

P R E F A C E.

THIS is a rare book. For stray copies of which fabulous prices were hitherto demanded. It was first published in the year 1858 and the new generation, it seems, has forgotten even the name of this book. It is a masterpiece, if we may be allowed the expression, in the English language, handled by a master hand. The author whose name has now become a household word among the Bengalees and who is known as the greatest of the Epic and Lyric poets in modern Bengali literature, and whose fame as a great genius resounds through the length and breadth of India, is no other than our dear Michael Madhusudan Dutta. Few people knew that Madhusudan could write with the same facility and penmanship, and with the same poetic inspirations English poems and dramas, as he did in the field of the Bengali dramatic and epic literature. It is a matter of regret, that his English books have been suffered to remain unpublished for a long time. So we have published this book as a reprint from the first edition and we hope lovers of English literature, poetry and prose, and the devoted followers and admirers of Madhusudan will eagerly read the book and profit by it.

PUBLISHER.

28th August, 1904.

Bangabasi Office,
Calcutta.

ADVERTISEMENT.

If the reader will look into *Wilson's Hindu Theatre*, he will find an elegant prose version of a Sanscrit Drama, called the "Ratnavali," and ascribed to Sri Harsha Deva, an ancient King of Cashmere. Though the Bengali Poet borrows largely from his Sanscrit predecessor, he cannot, strictly speaking, be called a translator. He has engrafted much novel matter on the old stock, and may fairly challenge the honor due to an original writer.

The accomplished brothers, who now represent the honorable family of Paikparah, wish to open their elegant private Theatre with the Bengali "Ratnavali," and they have done me the honor of selecting me to render the work into English for the use of such of their friends as do not possess a sufficient knowledge of our language either to follow the actors with accuracy, or to enjoy the beauties (if there be any) of the Drama thoroughly. I do not know now if I have succeeded in interpreting the thoughts of my author with spirit and fidelity, but I trust that my sins—whether of commission or omission—will not be visited upon him.

The friends who wish that our countrymen should possess a literature of their own, a vigorous and independent literature, and not a feeble echo of everything Sanscrit, will rejoice to hear that a taste for the Drama is beginning to develop itself rapidly among the higher classes of Hindu society. I am fully convinced that the day is not far distant, when the princely munificence of such patrons as the Rajahs

Paikparah will call into the field a host of writers who will discard Sanscrit models and look to far higher sources for inspiration.

M. M. S. D.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEN.

UDAYANA.....	<i>King of Vatsa.</i>
YOGANDHARAYANA.....	<i>Minister.</i>
VASANTAKA.....	<i>The King's Companion.</i>
VABHĒRVYA.....	<i>A Messenger.</i>
VIJYA VERMA.....	<i>An Officer.</i>
VASUBHUTI.....	{ <i>Minister to King of</i> <i>Singhala.</i>

WOMEN.

VASAVADATTA.....	<i>Queen.</i>
RATNAVALI.....	{ <i>Princess of Singhala; but</i> <i>known as Sagarika.</i>
KANCHANMALA.....	<i>Queen's Gentlewoman.</i>
SUSANGATTA.....	{ <i>Queen's gentlewoman and</i> <i>Sagarika's Friend.</i>
MADANIKA AND CHUTALATIKA...	<i>Dancing Women.</i>

A MAGICIAN, WARDER, &c.

SCENE:—*The Capital of the Kingdom of Vatsa.*

TO THE RAJAS

PERTAUB CHUNDER SINGH

AND

ISSUR CHUNDER SINGH

BAHADURS,

This Translation

UNDERTAKEN AT THEIR REQUEST)

IS

MOST RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

BY THE

TRANSLATOR.



RATNAVALI.

PRELUDE.

SCENE.—*The Stage.*

Enter ACTOR.

Act. Genius and Taste to-night in this bright hall
Have met to grace the Muse's Festival !
My heart misgives me as I look around,
I tremble as I tread the hallow'd ground.
Can I, with feeble hand, with feebler tongue,
Strike the sweet lyre and raise the voice of song ?
Lo! as a dwarf I stand, with up-lift eyes,
Longing to pluck the moon adown the skies !
But e'en keen Ridicule forgets to sneer,
When heavenly Genius, graceful Taste are near :
And as a suppliant to them I fly—
If they but smile on me, no other meed seek I.

[*Pauses.*]

But enough ; such late repentance begets no
fitable fruit. I see the audience eagerly expects
performance of Ratnavali. [*Looks around.*] Ah !
a noble, a brilliant assembly ; and here I have a
golden opportunity offer'd me to win fame and fortune.
Why not ? This drama is the production of Sri Harsha

Deyas—one of the brightest of our wits—~~frank~~
~~gentle~~ ~~sees~~ in the airy summit of the Mount of Poes
 I see before me the truest judges of histrionic skill
 and the love-adventures of the King of Vatsa
 sweet and romantic. What need I more? Let
 hasten the preparations. [*Looking at the Tiring-ro.*
and raising his voice.] What ho, come hither, f
 gentlewoman!

Enter ACTRESS.

Actress. Did my lord call?

Act. Did thy lord call? See'st thou not th
 illustrious assembly? Wilt thou sing them one
 thy charming songs?

Actress. What song, my lord?

Act. The choice rests with thee, beloved.

Actress. I'm bound t' obey my lord.

[*Sings.*]

SONG.

"The soft breezes of the South fan the blooming
 flowers of the Vacula: the bee wanders forth to steal
 honey from the golden chalice of each blossom: the
 Kokila trills its merry note from the groves: the
 Bhrimanga, with its bride, roves from bow'r to bow'r
 In this season of gladness, the God of the flowery bow
 wounds with his keen shafts the bosom of the lo
 lorn maiden. Alas! who can soothe her sorrows!"

Act. O, how sweet! The melody of thy voice
 my beloved, ravishes my heart! How—O, how can
 I sufficiently reward thee!

Actress. Reward me? I pray you, my lord, check me not. [*Ironically.*] Do I not owe my lord what I possess—all? But such is my fate! There are many husbands that are never weary of showering gifts on their brides—their happy brides! But you, my lord——

Act. What say'st thou? Have I not given thee jewels? Thou thyself, sweet, art as a golden creeper that adorn'st the earth with thy living beauty! Why should she lack jewels, who is a precious jewel herself!

Actress. Ah! my lord hath a marvellous store of sweet words, but they are—words only.

Act. Words only? Tell me, have I not given thee jewels of exceeding great value?

Actress. Nay, these that I wear, were bridal gifts from my dear parents.

Act. Look at the beautiful NECKLACE* thou wear'st.

Actress. Where? I see it not, my lord!

Act. Ha! ha! 'Tis of such wondrous, such exquisite workmanship, that thine eyes cannot see it!

Actress. O, then, my lord means the drama, which has been named the NECKLACE! A rare jewel indeed!

Act. Yea, a most rare jewel, the brightest the world can show! Look at this illustrious audience, how they rest! See'st thou not how eagerly they long to

This is a Play on the word *कङ्कणी*—the name of the Drama. *कङ्कणी* literally means a necklace.

behold thy glorious NECKLACE? Delay not, I
thee, beloved, to gratify them.

Actress. As my lord commands.

Act. Hasten thou the preparations.

Actress. I obey.

[EXEUNT.]

END OF THE PRELUDE.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*Before the Palace.*

Enter YOGANDHARAYANA.

Yogandha. Did my ears deceive me? Who
it that pronounced the name of Ratnavali? Is
secret then no longer a secret? [*Pauses.*] But t
can scarcely be. The maiden still shares the sa
privacy of the Queen. When I presented her to
Majesty, I said :—"This maiden, gracious lady ! h
been rescu'd from the dark and wild billows of
sea. Cherish thou the orphan cast away on
shores!" As I told my tale, methought the Que
brow sadden'd, and she eyed the stranger with ter
pity. From that day hath the maiden dwelt with
good Queen, and Her Majesty hath named
Sagarika, the ocean-born. Perchance, it was s
other Ratnavali whose name reached my ears.

What pass. 'Tis the will of Providence has brought
 maiden here. [*Looking forward.*] Ah! there
 sits our noble King with Vasantaka. What
 beauty, what beauty, sit on his brow! Art thou the
 glorious god whom the glad earth adores to-day, come
 consecrate by thy gracious presence thine own
 festival? But I must begone now. Affairs of
 moment call me away.

[EXIT.]

Enter KING and VASANTAKA.

King. [*Sitting down.*] Well, friend, is not this
 truly the season of gladness? There is no foe-man
 who disturbs the peace that reigns in my wide king-
 dom; my throne is pillar'd by the wisest counsellors:
 my subjects are everywhere happy, there is nothing
 to cloud the sun-shine of their prosperity: and see,
 sweet spring now clothes the earth with beauty!
 And with so gentle, so sweet a bride as Vasavadatta,
 and with a friend, faithful as thou, I'm indeed a
 happy Prince! I tell thee, this is not the feast of
 Kandarpa—no; 'tis a feast in honour of the happy
 wedding—Udayana!

Vasant. Nay, my lord! This feast is neither
 mine nor Kandarpa's. Look at this son of a poor
 Brahmin! [*Pointing to himself.*] This feast is in
 honour of—of thy Grace's humble servant! And in
 good sooth, my lord, the man is not altogether un-
 worthy of the homage. He, who enjoys thy Majesty's

friendship—thou, the mightiest of Monarchs—is happiest of men! But see with what pomp celebrate the festival.

King. The good citizens welcome the sweet season right merrily, Vasantaka! See, what clouds of perfumed vermillion powder dim the rays of the

Vasant. But look this way, I beseech thee, lord—this way.

King. I see Madanika and Chutalatika. How gracefully do they dance as they approach. Excellent!

Enter MADANIKA and CHUTALATIKA.

SONG.

There's glory in the forest-bow'r :

Lo! soft and green leaves deck each waving spray!

Glad Nature greets this vernal hour

With blooming flow'rs and many a sylvan lay!

On beauty's ears there softly steal

The fondly whisper'd vows of kneeling love:

And brightly beaming eyes reveal

Thoughts sweeter than sweet music from above!

The winged shafts now fly around,

The shafts that wound the heart yet do not slay:

Thou trembl'st, maiden! at the sound—

Ah! woe is thee—thy love is far away!

King. How sweetly they sing! Their song entrances my soul!

Vasant. Ha! ha! If a dull air like that comes to thee with such rapture, what would'st thou do,

lord, if thy royal ears drank the melody of this voice ! Methinks 'twould melt thy soul, as the song of Shiva melted the hushed soul of Vishnu ! Wilt thou that I join yond' band of revellers and discourse sweet music ?

King. Thou may'st, Vasantaka. But wilt thou not mar the harmony ?

Vasant. Mar the harmony ? Fear not, my royal lord ! I go. [*Goes among the musicians and dances like a clown.*] What say'st thou, King ? I pray thee, observe this light and graceful dance. [*Capers about.*] The fairest daughter of Cashmere would gladly learn it if she could !

King. Thou danc'st with marvellous grace, my friend, but prithee, sing us a song.

Vasant. [*To the women.*] I entreat ye, ladies, teach me this sweet ditty.

Madan. Go to, thou meddlesome fool ! This is no ditty. 'Tis a musical mode* full of passion.

Vasant. Gramercy ! Who is full of passion—who is angry, Madanika !

Madan. Thou art, indeed, a fool ! Said I not 'twas a musical mode full of passion—an impassioned musical mode, and no ditty ?

Vasant. Ah, so thou did'st, i' faith. But tell me, does your music fill a fellow's belly ?

Madan. Beshrew thee ! Is music meat and drink ?

*It is impossible to preserve the joke in a translation. The fun rests on the double use of the word वीज.

Vasant. Then 'tis a profitless art, and I'll none of it. Let me rather return to the King.

[*Offers to go.*]

Chutal. Nay, that thou shalt not do before thou hast sung us a song.

[*They pull him about.*]

Vasant. [*Runs to the King.*] Let not the King's Majesty believe that I fled from two weak women! How lik'st thou my dancing, my lord?

King. Ha! ha! 'twas excellent, i' faith!

Chutal. [*Approaching the King.*] My gracious lord, Her Majesty the Queen commands—I—
[*hesitates*] I crave your Grace's royal pardon! Her Majesty the Queen entreats—

King. Nay, my fair Messenger! See'st thou not 'tis the gay season of spring? I tell thee—the words "Her Majesty commands" fall far more sweetly on mine ears. Prithee, do not blush. What commands Her Majesty the Queen?

Chutal. My lord, the Queen celebrates this day the feast of Madana in the Makaranda Garden, and she prays your Majesty would grace the festival with your royal presence. She craves this favour—

King. Nay, my gentle friend! 'Tis I am beholden to her Grace for a favour in that she hath remembered me. Commend me to the Queen, fair lady! and tell her I will not fail her Grace. I follow

Vasant. Shall we find aught there to appease hunger with?

King. Despair not, my hungry friend! [*To the women.*] We follow you, fair ladies!

Women. As the king commands.

[*EXEUNT MADAN and CHUTAL.*]

King. Come, my friend!

Vasant. I wait upon your Grace.

[*EXEUNT.*]

SCENE II.—*The Makaranda Garden.*

Enter KING and VASANTAKA.

King. How beautiful is this bow'r! See, on every side a thousand flow'rs are blooming joyously and breathing the sweetest perfumes; the choristers of the grove people the air with melody; and yet thou hear'st the soft hum of the roving bee. O, how this scene, so fair, so beautiful, so lone, fills my heart with unutterable delight! Why art thou silent, Vasantaka!

Vasant. Silent? Because—I love not to talk folly, my lord! What beauty find'st thou in this lone wilderness? That there are some pretty flowers here and there I do not deny; but what of that? Ah! if thou wert to see the splendours of a confectioner's saloon at the dear hour of even-tide, the

delicious sight would tempt thee to forget the world! O!

King. It would—thee! Where is Her Majesty the Queen? Mine eyes seek her in vain.

Vasant. O, thou art exceeding eager to meet the Queen to-day. Pray, have patience, my lord.

King. 'Tis for thee, I seek her. When Her Majesty cometh, wilt thou not have the consecrated rice, the sweet plantains?

Vasant. I begin to share thy Grace's impatience. Why cometh she not?

*Enter QUEEN and KANCHANMALA, followed by
SAGARIKA at a distance.*

Queen. Tell me, Kanchanmala, where grows the Asoka tree, under whose solemn and sacred shade I must worship the god? The hour is nigh at hand.

Kanchan. Please it your Grace to follow me. The tree thou seek'st grows yonder, but I pray thee, royal lady! look at that Jasmine plant. They say the King practises a thousand charms to cause it to bear flowers out of season.

Queen. I remember. Is that the plant?

Kanchan. Yea, sweet lady! The Asoka tree grows beyond it. Let us advance.

[They walk forward.]

This is the sacred tree, my Queen. 'Tis here must thou worship the god.

Queen. Then give me the offerings.

Sagar. [*Coming forward.*] Here, royal lady, here are the offerings.

[*Gives the Queen flowers.*]

Queen. [*Seeing SAGARIKA and aside.*] Confusion! What has brought her here? There is danger in her presence. I would not for the world the King should see her. What shall I do? [*Pauses.*] She must be sent out of the garden before his Majesty enters. [*Aloud.*] Ah, my Sagarika! My thoughtless maiden! What brings thee here? Know'st thou not that we celebrate to-day the feast of Madana? 'Tis a day of careless mirth. Where hast thou left my talking bird? Ah! 'tis a wild, a restless creature. Perchance, 'tis already lost. Go, I pray thee, run back to the palace, if indeed it be not too late, and see how my darling fares? Why delay'st thou?

Sagar. As the Queen commands. [*Goes at a little distance.*] Her Majesty's fears are groundless. Ere I left the palace, I gave the bird to Susangatta. Why should I hurry my steps back? Let me see if they celebrate the feast of Madana here with as much pomp as in my own land. Let me cull sweet and fresh flowers and worship the deity in this solitude and kneel a solitary votary at his altar.

[EXIT.]

Queen. Where are the offerings, Kanchanmala?

Kanchan. Here, madam!

Vasant. There, my lord, there is the Queen with her gentlewoman.

King. Thanks. Let us approach her.

[They approach the Queen.]

Worshipp'st thou, beloved, the revered Kandarpa? Good. O, how beautiful thou look'st! Methinks, I see before me the divine Rutti in all the glory of her heaven-born beauty!

Queen. My lord is welcome. I pray your Grace to be seated on this throne. I have offered my vows at the shrine of Kandarpa: let me now worship thee, sweet lord of my bosom!

[Offers the King garlands and perfumes.]

Re-enter SAGARIKA behind a tree.

Sagar. Is the solemn hour past? Have I idled too long in the midst of those flowers? But who could part from such sweet friends and leave them! Is the ceremony over? *[Looks around.]* Ah! there is the Queen breathing her vows at the altar of the god. What! Is that the image of Kandarpa? In my father-land, this divinity is worshipped as a spirit, but here I find 'tis otherwise. O, let me adore him in this silent solitude! Smile on me, thou god of the flowery bow! May'st thou be ever propitious to me! *[Offers flowers.]* Ah, let me gaze on the glorious beauty of the god again! How strange! What secret charm in the image of the god so ravishes my eyes that it saddens me to turn them away from

it? No. I must not linger here. Should the Queen see me, she would chide me for disobedience.

[*Is about to go.*]

Queen. Come, Vasantaka! Let me offer thee food.

Vasant. Thanks, gentle lady! No sacrifice is complete without food being dealt out bountifully to Brahmins!

King. Is the ceremony over, beloved!

Sagar. Ha! Is that then the King? Methought 'twas the image of Kandarpa thron'd under the sacred shade of yond' venerable Asoka, and o'er-canopied by its green leaves and ruby-like flow'rs! What manly beauty! Never have these eyes dwelt on a nobler form! I could gaze on him for ever! How happy is the lot of her who has been wedded to such a husband! Ah, was I not destined for his bed by my loving parents? But the stars that shone on my birth, willed not that I should be so blessed, and 'tis folly to repine at fate. Let me gaze on him once more. Yet wherefore? O, fie! I but purchase pain! Let me be gone. Should the Queen see me here—— I tremble to think of it!

[*Exit.*]

A SONG BEHIND THE SCENES.

How sweet is this sun-set hour—

Each grove resounds with Nature's vesper hymn!

But the sad Lotus veils her face :
She mourns the absence of her bright-eyed love.
The moon-beams play on the rippling waves,
They drink sweet honey from the golden cup
Of the Kumudini. O, the hour of joy !
Sweet hour of joy !

King. Ha ! Is the sweet hour of even-tide
come ? See, in the festive worship of Madana, we
have forgotten our solemn vesper duties. Away to
the palace.

[EXEUNT.]

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*A Garden with a Pavilion.**Enter SAGARIKA, with drawing-paper, pencil, &c.*

Sagar. O, hush, thou poor heart! Why throb-
 b'st thou thus? Why long'st thou for that which
 can never be thine? Seek'st thou thine own undoing?
 Alas! does a dwarf, when, in the madness of his
 heart, he lifts up his hand to pluck the bright moon
 from her throne in the far depths of the heavens,
 grasp the desire of his soul? Bend thee to the will of
 Destiny! Sigh'st thou to behold him, who, though
 but once seen, hath wrought thee such woe? O, fie!
 Hast thou no shame? O, thou cruel, thou ungrateful
 heart! Thou art mine, and ever hast thou dwelt
 with me in fond communion; and yet thou forsak'st
 me now for another! But slavery is thy dow'r, and
 'tis Love forges the chain thou long'st to wear! O,
 thou God of Love! how passing wondrous are thy
 ways!

SONG.

Hear, Lord of Rutti! hear my humble pray'r:

It ill besëems thee, thou

A spirit ever gay and ever free—

To torture thus the heart of maiden fair,

To cloud the sun-shine on her brow,

When like a chainless cataract of flame,
Shiva's consuming wrath upon thee came—

Why left it thee

Thy wanton, ah! thy wanton cruelty!

Lo! Heaven and Earth, and all the realms below,
Dread the keen shafts wing'd from thy flow'ry bow!

O, can'st thou with such shafts—so dire—

Kindle in youthful hearts the raging fire

Of wild Desire?

Ah! Lord Kandarpa! hast thou no pity? But
how can'st thou know sweet pity? Thy joyous spirit
dwells in no bodily tabernacle. Alas! how can'st
thou pity souls imprisoned in earthly tenements? As
the ire of Shiva consumed thee to ashes, so lov'st thou
to consume others! [*Sighs.*] Ah, perchance the
hour of my death draws near! Let it come.
[*Looking at the paper.*] Can I draw now? My hand
trembles so. I must try. I must thus woo forget-
fulness for my sorrows.

[*Draws.*]

Enter SUSANGATTA with a bird in her hand.

Susang. This is the new garden and this the
pavilion. 'Tis her Majesty's wish that I should give
this bird to Sagarika. But where is she? Nepunika
told me that she met her walking with sad and slow
steps towards this garden. Perchance the thoughtless
truant is wandering among the flow'rs; but let me
see if she be within this pavilion.

[*Approaches the pavilion and
sees SAGARIKA within.*]

Ah, there she is—but, lo! with what soul-absorbing attention does she bend over that paper. Let me watch her from behind. [*Goes behind and peeps.*] I see she has drawn the portrait of our King. Why should she not? The royal swan never disports itself but on the limpid waters of the pool whereon the lotus loves to enthrone itself!

Sagar. I've shrined his lov'd image on this paper. But, alas! tears dim my eyes—I see him not. [*Wipes her eyes and starts on seeing SUSANGATTA.*] Ah, my sweet friend! come and seat thee by me.

Susang. Why hid'st thou that picture? Prithee, show it to me. [*Takes the picture.*] Who is this? Tell me, I entreat thee, Sagarika!

Sagar. 'Tis no mortal, Susangatta! As the Earth adores in this sweet season of spring the God of Love, my idle pencil has traced his image as it haunts the dreaming heart!

Susang. O, thou hast painted the god with marvellous skill, with exquisite taste; but thy picture is incomplete, Sagarika! 'Tis not in solitude that Madana loves to smile. Let me wed him to his fair Rutti. [*Takes the pencil and draws a likeness of SAGARIKA.*] There—how beautiful!

Sagar. [*Angrily.*] O, fie! That is my likeness!

Susang. Nay, frown not, my gentle friend! As thou hast limned Madana, so have I limned Rutti! Deem'st thou me a stranger, Sagarika? 'Tis unkind of thee. I tell thee 'tis not meet that thou should'st

Sagar. [*Blushing and aside.*] Ah! she sees it all. [*Aloud.*] Thou know'st all, dear friend! There is nothing hid from thee. But, oh! publish not my shame to others!

Susang. Thy shame! What shame? Is it strange that such a maiden as thou—so young, so beautiful—should long for such a lover as our noble King? But banish thy fears, my sweet! Thy secret shall lie deep buried in this bosom.

Sagar. Alas! my gentle friend, thou know'st not what unuttered pangs rend this unhappy bosom! Ah, me! whither shall I go? Whither find rest?

[*Throws herself on the ground.*]

Susang. Patience, my Sagarika! O, I pray thee, be of comfort. Why vex'st thou thyself thus? Let me bring thee the soft cool leaves and fibres of the lotus. When thou reposest on them, and I fan thee with a lotus leaf, thy fevered heart will find rest.

[*Brings lotus leaves.*]

Sagar. Why fann'st thou me with the lotus leaf? Ah! why offer'st thou me the lotus fibre? Why sprinkl'st thou water over me? My sorrowing heart would not be comforted! My sweet friend! thou troubl'st thyself in vain. Alas! this stricken soul is sick unto death!

When thou, O, maiden! lov'st, and lov'st in vain,

'Tis Death alone can heal thy bosom's pain!

Susang. Confusion ! The Queen's precious bird has flown away. 'Tis indeed a singular bird, for, look you, my friend, whatever it hears, it fails not to learn ; and whatever it thus learns, it takes a mischievous delight in repeating to all that come near it. It has heard thy sad story, Sagarika ! What will chain its restless tongue ? But let me follow the wild wanderer. Repose thou here, till I bring back the captive to its cell.

[EXIT.]

Sagar. [*Raising herself.*] I must follow her. Stop, Susangatta ! Alas ! I can scarcely move. Why comes this faintness over me ? Ah ! when the heart is fevered and restless, strength forsakes every limb. Alas ! my sad heart ! Why, oh ! why los'st thou thyself thus for another ?

SONG.

Long'st thou, sad heart !
To wear Love's flow'ry chain ?
Alas ! thou dream'st
Of happiness in vain !
Know'st thou not love below
Is, full, ah ! full of woe !

To sigh, to weep,
While the world mocks thy tears—
Hopes sweet yet false,
And dark and cruel fears—
A lover's portion these,

Ah ! let me follow Susangatta ! There is no rest for me here !

[EXIT.]

SCENE II.—*The same.*

Enter KING and VASANTAKA.

Vasant. What then ?

King. What then ? Is it true that my favourite Jasmine has been flow'ring to-day ?

Vasant. Flow'ring ?

King. What will not the power of a holy sage effect !

Vasant. What means your Grace ?

King. Come, let us behold the marvel with our own eyes.


Vasant. I obey.

King. Walk thou first.

Vasant. [*Goes a little way, turns back suddenly, and laying hold of the King.*] Fly, O, fly, my lord !

King. Wherefore, thou fool ? Why star'st thou thus ?

Vasant. Gracious God ! These eyes have seen a fearful sight—yea, a harrowing sight ! [*Breathing hard.*] 'Twas my good angel restrained my steps. Had I proceeded an inch further, this poor head should have been cruelly torn off these shoulders. Heavens ! and this is Tuesday, and the hour—noon !



King. What mutter'st thou, sirrah! Hast thou seen a ghost?

Vasant. Yea, my lord! a most hideous ghost!

King. Where is this ghost of thine?

Vasant. Look there, my lord! on yonder tree. O, mark its feet; are they not twisted backward?

King. [*Advancing.*] Where? I see no ghost here. I only see a bird perched on yonder tree.

Vasant. What—a bird, a mere bird?

King. Yea, my brave heart! 'Tis a little bird and not—as thy fears painted it a hideous ghost!

Vasant. Ha! ha! And so 'twas a little bird that unnerved thee, as if a legion of devils were grinning at thy royal heels! O, fie!

King. Go to, thou fool! But, hush, the bird speaks. List!

Vasant. The bird, my lord, softly whispers:—"Give food to this poor Brahmin." O, give him food!"

King. That monstrous belly of thine aye craveth food, food, food! That dream'st of nought save food!

Vasant. Let me then listen more attentively. [*Listening.*] What the bird saith, my lord, is verily a mystery to me: I comprehend it not.

King. What sayeth it, Vasantaka?

Vasant. It saith:—"O, fie! that is my likeness." "Nay, frown not, my gentle friend! As thou hast limned Madana, so have I limned Rutti!" Such are

King. [*Thoughtfully.*] Perchance some ove-sick maiden traced on paper the aye-remembered image of the happy youth that reigns in her bosom, and, lest prying eyes should penetrate the fond secret of her heart, named the picture 'Madana'; but some friend, divining her inmost thoughts, drew her own likeness by the side of her beloved; and then, perchance, the maiden, still loath to betray her tender feelings spoke thus with seeming anger.

Vasant. Verily—a passing lucid commentary on a most mysterious text, thou profoundest of scholiasts!

King. Nay, I'm no scholiast, friend! But, hush! hark again.

Vasant. [*Listening.*] The little creature, my lord——

King. What sayeth it, thou fool?

Vasant. It saith:—"Why fann'st thou me with the lotus-leaf? Why offer'st thou me the lotus fibre? Why sprinkl'st thou water over me? My sorrowing heart would not be comforted! My sweet friend, thou troubl'st thyself in vain! Alas! this soul is sick unto death!" Do you hear, my lord?

King. Yea, my friend! I pray thee, listen again.

Vasant. The bird now begins to chant the Vedas as if it were a twice-born professor of the mystic lore!

King. How?

"When thou, O maiden ! lov'st, but lov'st in vain,
 'Tis Death alone can heal thy bosom's pain !"

King. Ha ! ha ! So the little bird is chanting the Vedas, thou most erudite of Brahmins !

Vasant. Not the Vedas ? What is it then, my lord ?

King. Why—thou fool ? 'Tis a simple distich wherein a love-lorn maiden, in despair, woos death !

Vasant. By my faith ! I thought the bird was chanting solemn verses from the Vedas ! Ha ! ha ! ha !

[Claps his hands and laughs.]

King. [Looking up.] What hast thou done, thou fool ! Thy unseasonable mirth has frightened the little bird away. Ah, 'twas a sad and yet a sweet tale it was telling !

Vasant. What call'st thou sweet, my lord ? There is a bird in my house discourses infinitely more sweet things !

King. I doubt it not. But go and see whither thou hast driven away our feathered friend.

Vasant. I saw it winging its way towards yond' pavilion : let us seek it there—— [They both go towards the pavilion : VASANTAKA enters first and picks up the picture.] Here's a treasure, a marvellous rich treasure, i'faith ! Wilt thou that I show it thee, my lord ?

Vasant. Here's a wondrous picture: what wilt thou give me, an I show it thy Grace?

King. [*Snatching the picture.*] Why—this is my own portrait, and by its side I see a sweet maiden. O, how charming! Never have these eyes beheld such resplendent beauty! O, can she be a daughter of earth? Methinks when Brahma moulded this glorious face, his own lotus sighed and veiled itself in humbled pride!

Vasant. Dost thou gaze on thine own portrait with such rapture, my lord?

King. [*Musingly.*] Is this the fair maiden of whom the bird spake? Perchance she loveth me, and hath limned my portrait on this paper and her friend hath traced her own sweet image by my side! Ah! whither shall I find her?

Vasant. How now? Art thou entranced, my lord? Dost thou dream?

King. [*Starting.*] Eh! what say'st thou?

Vasant. I say doth the contemplation of thine own picture so ravish thy heart?

King. Nay, friend! but, prithee, look at this lovely maiden.

Vasant. Ha! I've seen that face before. Is not this Sagarika, a sweet lady I lately beheld in the train of the Queen? But look you, my lord! she is concealed like a priceless gem from the thievish eyes

Enter SUSANGATTA and SAGARIKA at a little distance.

Susang. Where is this bird? But since we cannot find it, let us enter and take away thy picture.

Sagar. As thou wilt, Susangatta!

[They both come forward.]

Susang. Methinks I hear a voice: perchance the King is in the pavilion. Hark! dost thou not hear voices?

[They listen unperceived.]

Vasant. How passionately dost thou gaze on that portrait, my lord!

Susang. *[Aside to SAGARIKA.]* Confusion! What I feared has come to pass, Sagarika! The King has seen the picture.

Sagar. O, how will this end?

Susang. How will this end? Fear not, my gentle friend, but listen to what they say.

Vasant. What spell has bewitched those royal eyes? May the gods avert that they should leap out of their sockets!

King. Go to, thou fool! Hast thou ever seen such a sweet maiden? O, can the earth bear so glorious a flow'r?

Susang. *[Aside to SAGARIKA.]* Dost thou hear?

Sagar. Nay, Susangatta, he only praises thy painting: hear thou him.

Vasant. Tell me, my lord, why are the eyes of

King. [*Musingly.*] The bird has told all!

Susang. Dost thou hear, Sagarika! that silly bird has wantonly revealed thy cherished secret.

Vasant. Lov'st thou this maiden, my lord? Long'st thou to possess her?

Sagar. [*Aside.*] O, hush thou my heart! What will the King say? If those lips should utter "Nay"—then welcome, Death! Life to me can no longer be aught save a grievous burthen!

King. Long I to possess such a treasure? O, can she be a daughter of earth? The sight even of her pictured beauty ravishes my eyes and steals away my heart.

Susang. [*Aside to SAGARIKA.*] Who would not envy thy lot?

Sagar. [*Angrily.*] What lot?

Susang. What lot? Go thou to him thou seek'st: lo! there he stands.

Sagar. [*Still angrily.*] Whom seek I?

Susang. [*Smiling.*] The picture, to be sure!

Sagar. Thou mock'st me, Susangatta! Let me be gone.

[*Offers to go.*]

Susang. Nay, do not go. I shall get thee thy picture.

Sagar. I stay for thee here.

[*Gazes on the King fondly, SUSANGÄTTA goes up to him.*]

King. [*Concealing the picture.*] Ah, fair gentlewoman! whence com'st thou? Knoweth Her Majesty the Queen, that I stay for her Grace in this pavilion?

Susang. Yea, my lord. Her Majesty knoweth that thy Majesty is in the pavilion, and soon will she know how pleasantly thou whil'st away thy time here in the contemplation of that exquisite picture!

Vasant. My lord, 'tis a cunning jade that *Susangatta*. There is nothing impossible for her. Be wise in time, I say—silence that saucy tongue of hers.

King. [*Taking her hand.*] My sweet friend, breathe not a word of this to the Queen, I implore thee.

Susang. I but jested, my lord! Implore me not. This is no news for the ears of Her Majesty!

King. My good maiden, let me crave thy acceptance of this trifle.

[*Offers a ring.*]

Susang. Nay, good my lord! I covet not such a gift as this. I know not how, but I have offended my dear friend *Sagarika*, and she frowns on me. Unite thou us again in the sweet bond of friendship. I shall deem the reconciliation a far nobler gift, and truly worthy of thy Grace's royalty.

King. What? Is *Sagarika* thy friend?

Susang. There, my lord! I know not how to tempt her to enter.

King. [*Sees SAGARIKA. Aside.*] Ah, 'tis she! O, how beautiful! [*Aloud.*] I do envy thee, Susangatta, in that thou hast so sweet a friend! Her radiant beauty surpasses all that this earth can show!

Sagar. [*Agitated and aside.*] There standeth the lord of my bosom!

[*Stands with her eyes fixed on the ground.*]

Susang. My lord, she is as good as she is beautiful!

King. I doubt thee not, Susangatta! O, who could believe that the Maker would shrine a vile and a base heart in a temple of such sweet, such living beauty?

Sagar. [*Angrily to SUSANGATTA.*] Call'st thou this the getting back of the picture? 'Tis not meet that I should stay here longer.

[*Offers to go.*]

King. Nay, be not angry, sweetest lady!

Susang. My lord, 'twas she that drew thy Grace's portrait on this paper. I found her alone in this pavilion, gazing on thine image with eyes that moved not, and seemed fixed on thee, as if by a spell! And 'twas I that in sport enthroned her by thy side.

King. [*Aside.*] Does she then truly love me? [*Aloud.*] O, leave us not, fair lady! O, walk not I

pray you, on this dull, hard earth. Will it not pain those feet that are softer than the lotus?

Susang. Take thou her by the hand, my lord, and soften her proud, angry heart!

King. [*Aside.*] Ah, that is what my heart longs for! [*Aloud.*] Believe me, dear Susangatta! I am ready at thy bidding, and for thy dear sake, to fall even at her feet!

[*Takes SAGARIKA'S hand.*]

Susang. See'st thou not, Sagarika, how His Majesty humbles himself before thee for me? Dost thou still nurse thy anger? O, fie!

Sagar. [*To SUSANGATTA.*] Would thou wert lying dead at my feet!

King. Nay, gentle lady! speak not in such harsh, unkind accents to thy friend: they become thee not. I pray thee, rather turn thy wrath on me and let me hear thee speak. The music of that voice must aye be sweet to these ears.

Vasant. This, indeed, is no uncommon anger. She is as full of ire as a——hungry Brahmin!

Susang. Prithee, cease, Sagarika! What would'st thou more?

Sagar. Begone! Never speak to me again!

Vasant. Gramercy! Here is a second Queen Vasavadatta!

King. Eh! What? Where, where is the Queen Vasavadatta?

Where is the Queen, sirrah?

Vasant. Does my lord dream? Where is the Queen Vasavadatta?

King. Aye—where is the Queen, thou fool?

Vasant. [*Aside.*] Ha! ha! And so I've marr'd thy sport. [*Aloud.*] My noble lord, hast thou taken leave of thy royal senses? Did I say to thy Grace that the Queen was here?

King. Said'st thou not "Here is the Queen Vasavadatta?"

Vasant. Nay, my lord! But when I saw how haughtily that Sagarika rebuked her companion, with what a queen-like waive of her hand she bade her begone, I said, "Here is a second Queen Vasavadatta!"

King. Ah, thou wretch, thy folly hath dissolved the spell! [*Sighs.*] Heighho! Shall I ever look on that beautiful face again?

Enter QUEEN and KANCHANMALA at a little distance.

Queen. Where, Kanchanmala, where is the Jasmine plant that has been flow'ring out of season?

Kanchan. It grows near yonder pavilion, lady!

[*They walk on.*]

King. [*Sighs.*] Heighho! When, O, when again shall I gaze on that lov'd face!

Kanchan. My gracious Queen, methinks His Majesty, the King, is in the pavilion. Perchance he stays for thy Grace.

Queen. Let us enter then.

[*They enter.*]

King. [*Making signs to VASANTAKA to conceal the picture in his clothes.*] Ah! my beloved, I've lingered here for thee, and eagerly have these ears watched for the music of thy steps.

Queen. Thanks, sweet lord! Has then the Jasmine plant truly borne flow'rs at this season?

King. Let our own eyes judge, beloved! The flow'r-bed is near.

Vasant. My gentle lady, that Jasmine is not the only flow'r that blooms for my lord, the King!

King. Eh, what saith the fool? Silence, sirrah! This way, my beloved!

Queen. Patience, dear lord! Come, Vasantaka! Be not afraid, but tell us what other flow'r blooms for His Majesty, the King?

Vasant. [*Confused.*] I crave your Majesty's royal pardon—I mean—Roses and Lilies and——

King. Will my beloved share my walk to the bow'r wherein the Jasmine plant grows?

Queen. Nay, my lord, I seek no other proof: your Grace's looks plainly tell me that the flow'r is——indeed blooming!

Vasant. Ha! ha! ha! Said not your Majesty that the Jasmine would never bloom out of season? And now—the victory is ours! Ha! ha!

[*Jumps up and capers about; the picture falls out; KANCHANMALA picks it up*

Queen. [*Aside.*] This is the King's portrait; but who is this by his side? Confusion! Have I then labour'd in vain to avert this calamity? Has the King then seen her? Ah, he already loves her! How fondly has he painted her image to grace his side! [*Aloud.*] This, my lord, is your Majesty's portrait; but, I pray you, who is this——lady?

King. [*Confused.*] Believe me, my love, the pencil that traced these features was guided by fancy—mere fancy: 'tis no living woman!

[*The Queen appears thoughtful.*]

Vasant. I swear by my sacred thread, His Majesty speaks the truth!

Kanchan. Why look'st thou sad, sweet lady?

Queen. How my head aches! Help me to retire, Kanchanmala!

King. Must I say "Forgive me?" Must I add, "I shall not do this again," or—"I am not to blame?" What vile crime stand I accused of, that I should thus speak in the language of supplication, of penitence? Dost thou, sweetest——

Queen. Forgive me, my lord! O, how my head aches! Follow me, Kanchanmala!

[*EXEUNT QUEEN and KANCHANMALA.*]

King. Thou fool! this is thy doing! Why did'st thou discover the picture to her?

Vasant. Pooh, think'st thou, my lord, the Queen knoweth aught of the mystery that lieth hid in this paper ?

King. I scarce dare doubt it.

Vasant. What aileth thee, my lord ?

King. Go to, thou fool ! Thou know'st her not. She is a daughter of the proud House of Prodyotta. But follow me to the palace. I must see that thy folly works no further mischief.

[EXEUNT.]

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*A Garden.**Enter KING—alone.*

King. Night and day—they come and they roll away, but they bring me no change! How often doth memory recall that hour, when I first heard the sweet and sad story of my beloved rehearsed by the talking bird: when I saw that record of untold love—the picture in the pavilion: when these ravished eyes gazed on the glorious beauty of that peerless maid! How heavily doth leaden-footed Time move onward now! Ah! thou restless heart, thou that art so unsteady, can Madana aim his shafts at thee? And tell me, if there be but five arrows in the quiver of the god, how does he wound such countless multitudes? Alas! alas! I mourn not for the pangs that rend this bosom. Ah! 'tis for thee, for thee, my Sagarika, that this soul faints with anguish. The Queen, I fear me, hath grown suspicious: the poison of jealousy hath been mingled with her thoughts. O! am I then—I, who would gladly resign life itself for thee—am I then destined to make thee miserable?

Enter VASANTAKA.

Vasant. Ha! ha! I bring news for the King that, methinks, will sound sweeter to the royal ears than the tidings even of the fall of Kausala—the beautiful kingdom he so much covets! [*Approaching.*] My noble lord!

King. Ha! My Vasantaka! I pray thee, tell me how thou hast sped! O! shall I ever again behold that loved face? O! will that happy day ever dawn on me?

Vasant. My lord, I've devised a plan that will, like a potent charm, soon bring thy beloved to thy embrace. But who, think'st thou standeth before thee? Lo! here is [*affectedly*] Vrihaspatti* himself! And what is there, great King, that he cannot compass?

King. Well, my Vrihaspatti, tell me what thou hast done? Doth the Queen know aught of thy plan?

Vasant. The Queen? Ha! ha! The Queen, my lord, and I speak with due reverence, is but a weak woman: ev'n thou thyself could'st not comprehend my wonderful plan.

King. Is it then so far past my poor comprehension?

Vasant. I spoke but in jest, my lord.

King. Come then, expound the mystery unto me, my Vrihaspatti!

Vasant. I sought the chamber of Susangatta, and told her a most piteous tale. O, I laid hot siege to her! And though for a time the cunning jade lent me but a cold ear, my entreaties, my sighs, my tears, at last melted her heart. When the shades of evening curtain the earth, thy beloved Sagarika will meet thee in the Madhavi pavilion, in the attire of the Queen, and to blind the eyes of observation the more, Susangatta herself will follow the disguised maiden as Kanchanmala, the Queen's familiar. Here is a noble devise, my lord!

King. Thou hast done well, my friend! This can lead to no unpleasant discovery. Thy zeal truly merits reward. I pray thee, wear this trinket for me.

[*Gives him a ring.*]

Vasant. May it please you, my lord, that I seek her who is the partner of my woes and weal, and gladden her eyes with the sight of this precious jewel!

King. Tut, man! Wilt thou never cease to rave about that wife of thine? 'Tis time we should seek the Madhavi pavilion. See'st thou not the dark shades of eve are gathering fast around us?

Vasant. Where, my lord? This lingering light will not desert the earth for a good long hour yet. Ha! ha! Think'st thou the blessed Sun will quicken his steps homeward, because thou long'st for the friendly gloom of night?

King. Nay, but look around thee, Vasantaka! The sun-light has faded away and gone. I tell thee, the Lord of Day hath sought his evening bow'r, and bequeathed his fierce heat to those unhappy lovers that are doomed to sigh in solitude!

Vasant. Let us then wend our way to the Madhavi pavilion, my lord!

King. I follow thee with eager steps.

[*They walk—the King stops.*]

Vasant. How now, my lord? What meaneth this?

King. We've forgotten the—the evening-worship of the gods!

Vasant. Ha! ha! The evening-worship of the gods? I pray thee, my lord, trouble not thy royal soul with such unseasonable thoughts.

King. O, fie, that were a sin!

Vasant. Think'st thou, my lord, thou could'st tame that wildly beating heart of thine to the solemn quiet of devotion?

King. Nay, Vasantaka—'twere a dire sin to neglect such a duty.

Vasant. O! then let the sin be on this head. Proceed on, I pray you, for the hour grows late.

[*They walk.*]

King. How dark! Methinks the world has grown black as the heart of the wicked, and our eyes

me dream that my sweet Sagarika, like a radiant star, is beaming on my path to guide my steps to happiness !

[EXEUNT.]

SCENE II.—*The Madhavi Pavilion.*

Enter KING and VASANTAKA.

Vasant. This is the Madhavi pavilion : may it please you, my lord, to rest thyself here. Let me go forward to watch for the welcome steps of thy beloved.

[*Goes forward.*]

King. [*Sitting down.*] Shall I then clasp her in these longing arms ? O, delightful thought ! But even in this hour of sweet hope and joy, this heart is not unhaunted by fears. Should the Queen chance to discover all—O ! I tremble at the very thought ! What an alternation of joy and misery ! The heart of the lover is as the beam of the scale : now high, now low : now hope exalts it : now despair depresses it !

Enter QUEEN and KANCHANMALA.

Queen. I can scarce credit it, Kanchanmala ! I pray thee tell me truly. Do the lady Vasantaka

and the baggage Susangatta, intend to introduce that Sagarika to the King in our own proper attire?

Kanchan. 'Fore God, madam, that is the simple truth!

Queen. Who could believe that Susangatta capable of such daring treachery!

Kanchan. O, thou know'st her not, sweet lady! There is cunning enough in that woman to overreach a score of—attorneys!

Queen. Ah, well! I've been sadly deceived in her, most sadly. But let us see how matters will end.

[*They go forward.*]

Vasant. [*Mistaking KANCHANMALA for SUSANGATTA.*] Ah! Susangatta, thou'rt welcome: but prithee, why com'st thou alone? Where is thy fair friend?

Kanchan. There.

[*Points to the Queen.*]

Vasant. [*Approaching the Queen.*] Aye, there she is! What a marvellous change. I could swear 'twas the Queen herself! 'Tis a miracle thou hast wrought, friend Susangatta! Know, the King will reward thee with a most royal hand. Behold this precious jewel! He hath bestowed it on me as an earnest of favours yet to come.

Queen. [*Aside to KANCHANMALA.*] Do I dream ?
Can this be true ?

Kanchan. Doubt'st thou still, dear, dear lady ?

Vasant. [*Approaching the King.*] My lord, I
bring thee thy beloved. How wilt thou reward
me ?

King. O ! good my friend, thou mak'st me thine
for ever. Thou giv'st me my life back again ; but
welcome, thou fair maiden ! This, indeed, is the
sunniest hour of my existence ! Lo ! Thy face is
fair and glorious as the full moon ; thy hands soft
and beautiful as the water-lily ; and thine eyes shame
even the lotus ! O, I could gaze on thee for ever !

Vasant. Ha ! ha ! ha ! 'Tis as dark as the
sunless regions Below, my lord ! How then can
thine eyes see what thy tongue describes so
rapturously ?

King. Her radiant image, Vasantaka, is pictured
on my heart. 'Tis there I behold her by the golden
light of love ! But, O, my beloved, thou art welcome
to this fond bosom !

Queen. [*Aside to KANCHANMALA.*] My God !
How often hath this man breathed the fondest vows
to me, and protested with passionate warmth that
the world held not one-half so dear to him as myself !
And now——

Kanchan. Alas, my Queen, thou know'st not
how wicked and vile men are !

Vasant. Come, fair Sagarika, speak to the King.
His Majesty's poor ears are ever irritated by the

harsh and jarring accents of the Queen. Soothe thou them with the soft melody of thy voice.

Queen. [*Aside to KANCHANMALA.*] What! Do I then address the King in harsh and jarring accents, Kanchanmala?

Kanchan. Why listen'st thou to that lying babbler, my gentle lady? Remember his words, and we shall make him rue the hour he gave them utterance!

Vasant. Why art thou so silent, my lord? Methinks thou forgett'st even to breathe.

King. How beautiful! Methinks I see the golden light of dawn on the orient hill!

Vasant. 'Tis the moon, my lord, mounting the heavens in unclouded splendour.

King. We want not the moon to-night, Vasantaka! The face of my beloved is brighter than the moon; it dispels the clouds of sorrow that rest on my soul; and my heart blooms joyously as the water-lily, and my ears long to drink the honied melody of the voice of my love. O, speak to me, sweetest lady!

Queen. [*Discovering herself.*] My lord, am I then Sagarika? Does her image so fill your Grace's heart? Hath her charms so bewitched your Grace's senses that, in all that stand before you, you see her and her only?

King. [*Aside.*] Confusion! 'Tis the Queen, and not Sagarika. [*To VASANTAKA.*] What hast thou

Vasant. What have I done? I'faith, I've undone myself! Think you, my lord, the Queen will ever pardon me and forget the language I've uttered? O, I'm lost!

King. My beloved, I've sinned grievously against thee. Can'st thou forgive me?

Queen. Nay, my lord, 'tis I should crave your royal pardon, in that I've dared to interrupt you in this happy hour!

Vasant. My gentle lady, conscious guilt makes this tongue loath to utter aught save prayers for pardon. But I entreat thee to lend me thy gracious ear. The King hath offended thee—but 'tis his first offence. Forgive him, and I dare swear, he shall not sin again. Thou, royal lady, thou that art so good, so sweet——

Queen. So good, aye, and so sweet too! Ha! ha! Do not my harsh and jarring accents ever irritate the ears of the King?

King. Can'st thou forgive me?

[*Kneels.*]

Queen. Rise, my lord, I pray you—I seek not such homage. I leave you to pursue your pleasures. Follow me, Kanchanmala.

[*EXEUNT QUEEN and KANCHANMALA.*]

Vasant. [*Aside.*] Thank God, the plague is gone. The woman fell upon us like a sudden tempest!

King. O, can'st thou not forgive me!

Vasant. Ha! ha! What mutter'st thou, my lord? The Queen hath vanish'd in a storm. Lo! thou criest in a wilderness, and no one heareth thee!

King. Ha! Gone! [*Rising.*] Hath she then left me in anger?

Vasant. In anger! Let us thank our stars that she did not slay us on the spot, and leave us behind the wrecks of what we were—food, my lord, for carrion crows!

King. Beshrew thy mirth! Is this a time to jest? [*Pauses.*] 'Tis a foul wrong I've done her, and she hath a proud, feeling heart. I tremble lest passion should arm it against its own peace. A fond heart can scarce brook such a cruel wrong! Why smil'st thou, sirrah? What know'st thou of love?

Vasant. What do I know of love? Have I not a comely and fond woman that calleth me her lord? Do I not at times vex her confiding soul by little amorous irregularities? When I fall on my knees, my lord, what a sweet smile of forgiveness plays on her lips! But let that pass. Think'st thou, my lord, the Queen will spare poor Sagarika?

King. Alas! I fear me, jealousy will fill her heart with bitter and wild wrath against the unhappy maiden!

[*They enter the pavilion.*]

Enter SAGARIKA at a distance, in the dress of the Queen.

alas! whither shall I bend my steps? My fatal secret has been cruelly revealed to the Queen, and is whisper'd about in the palace, and every one frowns on me. Ah, death is more welcome than disgrace! Why shun'st thou me, O death? When the tumultuous waves of the sea overwhelmed my bark, why did'st thou not seal these eyes in eternal sleep, and hush for ever the beating of this unhappy heart? Did Providence snatch me from the dark and surging waters of a stormy sea, to cast me in the midst of this darker sea of troubles?

[*Weeps.*]

SONG.

O fie, O fie!

Weird Hope deceiveth ever:

Sorrow follows joys that never

Bloom, but as they bloom they die!

O fie, O fie!

Love on earth is but a dreaming—

A meteor-star on the heart beaming—

A phantom, yea, a mockery!

O fie, O fie!

Lov'st thou, maiden? Thou art wooing,

Bitter grief—thine own undoing:

Cease, ere thou hast learnt to sigh!

Vasant. Why art thou silent, my lord? This is no time for idle regrets.

King. Thou say'st true, my friend!

Sagar. [*Still weeping.*] O, my beloved parents ! Ye that cherished my infancy with such fondness. Alas ! I sink in a sea of trouble. Do ye, too, abandon your hapless child ? And thou, my friend, Vasabhuti ! and ye, my dear, dear companions ! But the waves of the ocean roll over ye—murmuring ceaseless dirges over your watery biers ! Alone ! Great God I am all alone in this wide, wide world, so full of darkness to me ! O, thou Earth ! they call thee the mother of all ! Let me find repose on thy bosom ! I can bear no more ! A King's daughter,—and what is my sad condition ? I am a slave ! But though a slave, I was happy ! But why did cruel destiny lead my steps to the Feast of Madana ? Why did it teach me to covet that which could never be mine ? Why did I paint that fatal picture ? Why—O, why did I yield to the evil counsel of Susangatta ? But why complain ? Thou alone, O Death ! art my refuge ! But how to seek thee ? [*Pauses.*] Ha ! I see an Asoka tree. Its long spreading boughs invite me.

[*Goes forward.*]

King. A truce to thought ! I must seek the Queen's apartments, and strive to soothe her wounded feelings !

Vasant. Hush, my lord, I hear the sound of coming feet.

King. Perchance 'tis the Queen. Ah ! methinks she relents, and remembers how I abased myself and fell at her feet.

Vasant. Stay here, my lord; and let me go forward and see.

[*Goes forward.*]

Sagar. This is the Asoka tree. Ah! and here I see a creeper that will help me to put an end to my miseries. [*Takes up the creeper and weeps.*] O, great God! And was it for this that thou mad'st me a woman, and gav'st me a heart, whose longings I could not control! Alas! What are my sins? But, perchance, I offended thee grievously in a former state of existence! But hear me, Lord, before I die! O, send not this unhappy soul again among men, in the guise of a woman; or—if thou will'st it so, give me not, O! give me not a heart that spurns control; or that may covet what it could not obtain! This, Lord, this is my last prayer! (*Twists the creeper round her neck.*) Alas! My parents! Where are ye? O, can ye see how the child ye love, perishes!

SONG.

In silence and sorrow,
To droop and to pine,—
In Life's young morrow,
'Tis thine, 'tis thine!
The hopes thou did'st cherish,
Are wither'd and gone:
Like them must thou perish—
And perish—alone!

Vasant. Here is a strange vision, my lord!

King. What say'st thou, sirrah?

Vasant. I say, if these eyes deceive me not, there is a woman about to hang herself under yonder Asoka tree.

King. Perchance it is the Queen, Vasantaka!

Vasant. The Queen, my lord?

King. I pray thee, run thither and save her if thou can'st.

[VASANTAKA goes forward.]

Vasant. O horror,—alas! 'tis the Queen herself! My lord, my lord——

King. [*Rushing up and taking the creeper from SAGARIKA.*] My beloved, what meaneth this? Know'st thou not, that in destroying thyself, thou destroyest me also? O, fie! doth this become thee?

Sagar. [*Aside.*] 'Tis the King. Ah! thou fond heart, art thou so soon again reconciled to life? Is it no longer a sad burthen to thee? But let me die—'twere a happiness even to die in his presence! [*Aloud.*] I pray the King to unhand me. Death alone can save me from calumny and disgrace—and I am here to seek that death!

King. Ha! My Sagarika! Have I then saved thy precious life? Ah, why should'st thou die—thou, so young, so beautiful, so lov'd! Come hither, Vasantaka. This is not the Queen, but my sweet Sagarika! Ah, it rains, though there be no clouds!

Vasant. Yea, my lord! But pray God that a hurricane in the likeness of the Queen may not

Re-enter QUEEN and KANCHANMALA at a distance.

Queen. I've done ill, Kanchanmala. My lord knelt him at my feet, and yet I minded him not. Let us seek him again. Ah! who knows what anguish my silly anger hath caused him? Let us seek him.

Kanchan. This anxiety, lady, is worthy of thy gentle heart! I follow my Queen.

[*They go forward.*]

Sagar. Unhand me, I pray you, my lord! Why should you offend the Queen for so unhappy a wretch as I. Let me die.

King. Nay, sweetest, till I cease to breathe, thou art mine!

Kanchan. Methinks I hear the voice of the King under the Asoka tree.

Queen. Let us conceal ourselves, and form an unseen audience for his Grace.

Kanchan. As the Queen commands.

[*They conceal themselves.*]

Vasant. See'st thou not, fair Sagarika! the King loveth thee more than life itself! And I swear to thee that I shall ever be thy friend. What needst thou fear?

Queen. [*Aside to KANCHANMALA.*] Gramercy! Kanchanmala! Do you see that worthless baggage, Sagarika?

Kanchan. I do, my lady! What brazen impudence?

Sagar. Why does the King wish to deceive a poor maiden with false vows of love?

King. Call'st thou these false vows, beloved? Where then is truth to be found? I tell thee that, though I speak to the Queen in the language of love; press her to my bosom; kneel to her when offended; yet thou, thou alone possess'st my heart.

Queen. [*Coming forward.*] This is past endurance! Do you speak the truth, my lord?

King. [*Aside.*] Confusion! She is here again! [*Aloud.*] My beloved! thou can'st not blame me. Her attire deceived me, and I came hither to fold thee in these arms!

Queen. Hast thou no shame, thou base deceiver?

King. I have not merited such cruel words. [*Kneels.*] But I crave forgiveness on my bended knees.

Queen. Rise, my lord! This hypocrisy will serve you no longer, or if you love kneeling, I commend you to her who alone possesses that heart!

King. [*Aside.*] She has heard all. What more can I say? [*Aloud.*] I swear on mine honour I was deceived.

Vasant. 'Fore God, madam, His Majesty speaks the truth, for I swear——

Queen. Thou forswear'st thyself, thou base wretch! Thou art a precious Brahmin, O, a most precious Brahmin!

Vasant. I swear, most gracious Queen, we were deceived by her appearance. We thought thou wert about to act the part of hangman towards thine own august self! If thou believe me not, look at that creeper.

Queen. Here, Kanchanmala, bind me that knave with this creeper; yea, and this impudent baggage too.

Kanchan. As the Queen commands.

[*Binds VASANTAKA.*]

Vasant. O! O! Have mercy, fair ladies, on this son of a poor Brahmin—yea, a very poor Brahmin!

Kanchan. Ha! ha! ha! How now, friend Vasantaka, where is the precious jewel, the earnest of favours yet to come? Ha! ha! ha!

Sagar. O, cruel fate! And did'st thou twice snatch me from the jaws of Death for this?

[*KANCHANMALA binds her.*]

What have I done to merit thy ill-will?

Kanchan. I obey my wronged mistress.

[*EXEUNT QUEEN and KANCHANMALA, leading
SAGARIKA and VASANTAKA.*]

King. Such, indeed, is the reward of unhol-
passion! It neither looks before nor behind, but
rushes on to destruction. I fear me, I have offended

the Queen past all forgiveness. I know not how to rescue the fair maiden whom my folly hath placed in so perilous a situation ; or to help that poor fool Vasantaka ! But let me seek the palace : I may yet save them.

[EXIT.]

END OF ACT III.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*A Chamber in the Palace.**Enter KING.*

King. Heighho! And yet I know not why I should sigh. The Queen at last relents, and there is peace betwixt us. Ah, 'tis a peace I've won with no light labour. I've sworn countless oaths: I've pray'd scores of times a day: and these knees have grown hard with kneeling! The very minions of the Queen were set against me, and 'twas no easy matter even to propitiate those saucy jades. But her own tears have at last quenched the flames of wrath in the Queen's breast! Howbeit, there is peace betwixt us, and yet—can I be happy? From the hour that these eyes first lighted upon her heavenly face, love hath shrin'd the beautiful Sagarika's image in this heart, as in a temple! Whither has she fled? And, alas! who is there to whom I can unfold the sorrows that burthen this bosom? My poor Vasantaka! The Queen's resentment keeps him immured in some secret cell. Heighho! The solitude of this chamber sorts well with the

Enter VASANTAKA, with a necklace in his hand.

Vasant. The Queen's Majesty hath been graciously pleased to set me free from my bonds to-day; and I've well nigh forgotten my late sufferings, for I've been feasted right royally. I must now seek my good lord, the King. And yet—these melancholy tidings—how shall I bear them to him? I feel as if my feet refuse to move forward. O, how cruel thou art, thou Queen! [*Seeing the King.*] Ah! there sits my noble friend. How sad he looks. Shall I accost him? My noble lord!

King. Ha! My Vasantaka! Hast thou then softened the obdurate heart of thy gaoler, and broken thy chains? O, thou art thrice welcome, my friend! But why look'st thou so sad? Art thou in love with captivity, that thou sigh'st because thou art free? *Speak.*

Vasant. I grieve, my lord—

King. How now? What meaneth so ominous a prelude? Wherefore dost thou grieve? What news of my Sagarika?

Vasant. Alas! my lord, this tongue dare not frame the story of her sad fate.

King. Say'st thou of her sad fate! Does she then live no longer?

Vasant. Such, my lord, is the dismal report

King. [*Weeping.*] Alas, my beloved! The gentle flower of modesty! The living temple of beauty! Art thou then lost to me? Shall I then

never again gaze on that face, fairer than the moon ;
 never again hear the melody of that voice, sweeter
 than honey? O, my cruel soul! Why linger'st
 thou here? Hear'st thou not that the spirit of the
 glorious maiden, that, in the pride of youth, walked
 the earth like the Queen of Beauty, hath wing'd its
 flight far away? The world grows dark to me!

[*Faints.*]

Vasant. Alas! alas! the King hath fainted. *
 Help! help! O, my lord, rise, I pray thee!

King. [*Recovering.*] Whither hast thou fled, my
 beloved?

Vasant. I beseech your Grace to have patience.
 O, be of comfort, good my lord! Perchance, thy
 beloved still lives. 'Tis reported abroad that the
 Queen hath banished her to Avanti.

King. There, Vasantaka! There it is!
 Think'st thou the Queen, in her fury, hath spared
 her life? O, thou know'st not how jealousy stings
 the heart to madness! Alas, thou cruel Queen!

Vasant. Hush, my lord! These are words e'en
 Echo must not hear!

King. Thou say'st true. I cannot shed a tear,
 but I tremble lest I should betray myself! Alas!
 What misery is mine!

Vasant. My lord, this necklace belong'd to
 Sagarika. I pray thee, preserve it as a relic of her.
 It will soothe thee in thy hours of sorrow.

King. [*Taking the necklace.*] Give it to me,

Vasataka! O, let me press it to this sad heart! Methinks 'tis unhappy, because it no longer encircles that lovely neck! O, I share thy voiceless grief, for like thee, I, too, have lost her!

Vasant. My lord, when Queen Sita was stolen away by Ravana, 'twas thus that Rama gave vent to his grief! But the Poet tells us that the bereaved hero had lost his—senses too!

King. Compar'st thou me to him, at whose bidding the tumultuous waves of the sea bowed and were chained? And I; alas, even these tears that flow for my Sagarika, I cannot bid them cease! But tell me, friend, whence gott'st thou this lovely necklace?

Vasant. 'Twas given me by Susangatta as a gift from Sagarika.

King. [*Looking at the necklace attentively.*] This necklace is of rare beauty—of exceeding rare beauty! Methinks thou wilt not find stones as precious and as beautiful as these in all my kingdom. How came Sagarika to possess so priceless a necklace?

Vasant. I know not, my lord! O, I remember me. I did once question Susangatta how her friend became mistress of so invaluable a necklace: but the cold reply was, that whenever pressed to gratify the longings of curiosity, Sagarika would only lift up her eyes towards Heaven, heave profound sighs and weep! Methinks, the maiden, my lord, comes of some high and royal house.

King. Well, wear thou this necklace, so that these eyes may gaze on it, whene'er thou com'st before me. Wert thou to entrust it to me, sleepless jealousy would soon rob me of it.

Vasant. As thou will'st, my lord.

[Puts on the necklace.]

Enter WARDER.

Ward. Victory to the King! The brave Verma prays admittance into the Presence Chamber. He is the bearer of glad tidings for my lord the King.

King. *[Aside.]* What tidings can gladden this heart, except they be of my beloved? *[Aloud.]* Let him be admitted.

[WARDER goes out and returns with VERMA.]

Ver. May victory ever sit on the banner of the King! The General Roumanna has conquered in battle the enemies of the King!

King. What! Is then the kingdom of Kausala mine?

Ver. Even so, my lord!

King. O, this is a happy day! *[Aside.]* And yet the news of the conquest of this kingdom falls but coldly on my ears! Methinks this heart is dead within me: and yet must I clothe my visage in the smiles of joy! *[Aloud.]* Tell me, brave Verma, how the battle was fought, and how won?

into the enemy's country like a mountain torrent, and sat him down at the gate of the Capital.

King. What then ?

Ver. Then the King of Kausala, accepting the proud challenge, came forth in gallant array to combat your Grace's soldiers.

King. And then——

Vasant. O, horrible ! Can'st thou listen to such tales of murder and blood-shed without trembling, my lord ?

King. Tut, man, have I a cowardly soul like thine ? But, I pray thee, proceed, my brave Verma !

Ver. Then, my lord, rose the din of battle, then flashed swords in the light of the sun, and there burst forth, from among the clouds of combatants, a rapid rolling stream of blood ! The bravest Knights smote the earth, and then there rose a cry of wail from all around !

King. O, thy tongue cannot keep pace with the eager impatience of my heart ! What then, my Verma ?

Ver. 'Twas then, my noble lord, that your Grace's brave Captain descended from his stately war-elephant, and singling the King of Kausala from among his splendid chivalry, severed his head with a tremendous blow of the scimitar.

King. By the God of battles, 'twas bravely done, noble Roumanna ! How fought the Lord of Kausala ?

Ver. My lord, the King fought him like a lion,

King. All praise to him, whose valour even his deadliest enemies love to praise! What then, my Verma?

Ver. My gracious lord! When the King was slain, the once splendid army vanished like mists: those that could not run crav'd mercy, and yielded themselves prisoners of war.

King. What else could they do?

Ver. Having set his brother over the prostrate kingdom, as your Grace's Lieutenant, the brave Captain now retraces his steps homeward, with his victorious army, and I've been sent forward to greet your Highness with the glad tidings, my liege!

Vasant. Ha! ha! ha! Is then the kingdom of Kausala thine at last, my lord? O, joy!

King. Who waits there? Let Yogandharayana reward Verma for the glorious news he hath brought us from the army!

Ward. As the King commands.

As the WARDER and VERMA go out, enter

KANCHANMALA with a Magician.

Kanchan. My lord, here is a magician from the kingdom of Her Majesty's father, and the Queen prays you, my lord, to witness his marvellous feats.

King. [*Aside.*] Alas! Is this a time for idle mirth! My poor heart yearns for its lost treasure! But the knave is the Queen's creature, and I must not receive him with disfavour. [*Aloud.*] I pray you, fair gentlewoman! commend us to the Queen,

and tell her we crave her graceful presence in this chamber, to share with us the sport she hath provided us.

Kanchan. The Queen, my lord, is here.

Enter QUEEN.

King. Ah, welcome, beloved !

[They sit down.]

Now, sir magician, show us thy art.

Mag. As the King commands.

*[The MAGICIAN beats a little drum,
chants mysterious verses, and
various apparitions pass
before the audience.]*

King. This is truly marvellous. Can it be that those are the blessed gods brought hither by mighty enchantment ?

Queen. Ah, my lord, this wonder-working man comes from my native land ! Hath your grace ever seen the like of this ?

King. Never !

Enter WARDER.

Ward. Victory to the King ! An old man hath accompanied Vabhervya from Singhala, and seeks admission into the Presence Chamber.

King. From Singhala ? Let him be introduced.

Ward. As the King commands.

Queen. [*Seeing VASUBHUTI at a distance.*] I pray you, my lord, look there—that is Vasubhuti, the Prime Minister of His Majesty, the King of Singhala, my noble uncle. Your Grace knoweth the reverend man. 'Tis meet he should be greeted with honourable distinction. Let the magician withdraw for a while, we have much to question the Minister about.

King. As thou wilt, beloved! I pray you, sir magician, bestow this place upon us a while, and rest thyself.

Mag. As the King commands. I've many wonders yet to show.

[EXIT.]

*Enter VASUBHUTI and VABHERVYA, accompanied
by the WARDER.*

Vasu. Health and happiness to your Grace!

King. Your Excellency is welcome! I pray you be seated.

Vasant. Here is a seat for your Reverence!

[*Points to a seat.*]

Vabher. I salute my King!

King. Ah, my good Vabhervya! Thou, too, art welcome. 'Tis many a day since I saw thee last.

Vabher. Duty called me away from the presence, your Grace.

Queen. I pray your Excellency to tell me how fares His Majesty, the good King, my uncle?

Vasu. [*Looking up.*] Alas! maiden——

Queen. Why doth your Excellency sigh and look sad? I beseech you, tell me how fares my royal uncle?

King. Is the Lord of Singhala well? You weep, my lord! I entreat, I command you not to conceal from us the cause of your sorrow!

Vasu. Alas! alas! My memory shudders to recall the horrors I've seen! But I must not disobey your Grace. Perchance your Grace hath heard that my royal master had a daughter, a maiden as beautiful as she was gentle and virtuous—sweet, great King! as a dewy flower at early dawn! 'Twas prophesied of her, that whoever should wed the royal maid, should subdue all the kingdoms of the earth. Your Grace's Minister, the venerable Yogandharayana, having heard of this from some seer, sent an embassy to my royal master, to demand the fair hand of the Princess on your Grace's behalf, but at first, the King would lend no favourable ear to the proposal, for he feared 'twould offend his dear and royal niece, your Grace's august consort.

King. [*Aside.*] 'Tis strange Yogandharayana should do all this without my privy! [*Aloud.*] Proceed, I pray you, my lord.

Vasu. But your Grace's Minister, anxious to remove the scruples of my royal master, caused it to be reported to him, that the good Queen had perished

in the flames of a burning palace. The melancholy tidings grieved the Lord of Singhala, and he bewailed the fate of his royal niece with becoming sorrow. 'Twas then that he ordered me to convey the royal maiden to your Grace's court, and to wed her to your Grace as another precious pledge of amity and good will towards your Grace's royal house and kingdom.

King. And then——

Vasu. In an hour we deemed auspicious, the Princess bade adieu to her fatherland, and embarked for your Grace's kingdom, with a splendid and numerous retinue, and I joined the merry bridal band at the bidding of my lord, the King.

King. Proceed, I pray you, my lord!

Vasu. The majestic ship flew over the pathless waste of waters merrily, and from afar we beheld the lofty mountains of your Grace's kingdom like dark clouds slumbering on the bosom of the sky. But suddenly the Heavens grew black, and the wind came rushing like an angry spirit, lashing the waves to fury, and alas!—overwhelming the fated bark.

Queen. O! great God! And did the cruel ocean swallow the good ship with its precious freight? O horror! [*Weeping.*] Alas! my fair cousin, I mourn thy untimely end, thou blossom of beauty!

King. Alas! 'tis a melancholy tale. But how did your Excellency escape the hungry waves?

Vasu. Vabhervya—the companion of my misfortune—and myself floated on the dark surging

which your Grace's valiant Captain, Roumannâ, in his march to Kausala, rescued us. But, alas! why have I escaped the horrors of so cruel a death? O, it would have been a thousand times better for me if I had perished with the rest! How shall I return to my native land? How bear this heart-rending tidings to my bereaved King?

[Weeps.]

Queen. [Weeping.] I thank God that your Excellency hath escaped, but, alas! my hapless cousin. O, cruel Fate, could'st thou not spare her?

King. Alas, my beloved, thy tears flow in vain! Who can resist what Fate ordains? Look at his Excellency, the venerable Minister of thy royal uncle: the waves that now murmur over the graves of his companions, bore him in safety to an island, as if they were his minions. They bowed to a Will more potent than man's!

From behind the stage. Water! water! Bring water! The palace is on fire!

King. How now? What tumult is that——

From behind the stage. The palace is on fire! O, 'tis a terrific fire! How fiercely it burns! O horror! Our sweet Queen will perish in the flames.

King. Gracious God! My lords and gentlemen, follow me to the rescue of the Queen—Her Majesty. [Seeing the Queen.] My own sweet love! O, art thou by my side?

Queen. [Weeping.] Help! help! O, help, my lord!

King. Fear not, my gentle one, lo! I'm with thee!

Queen. Alas! 'Tis not for myself I plead. The unhappy maiden Sagarika is confined in my Oratory! Alas!—

King. Fear not, I go to save her.

[*Offers to go.*]

Queen. O, my lord, plunge not in the midst of the flames!

Vasant. [*Laying hold of the King.*] Nay, my lord, that were madness.

King. Unhand me, fellow! Must she perish in the flames? She, whose life is dearer to me than mine own? A plague upon thy impudence!

[*Pushes him off and runs out.*]

All. My lord! My lord!

[*All follow the King.*]

SCENE II.—*The Queen's Oratory.*

SAGARIKA *discovered manacled.*

Sagar. Gracious God! How fiercely the flames rage around! Have the gods then sent them to release me from this my prison, and to medicine me to forget the sorrows of my heart? I welcome them, for I care not a jot for life! Ah, how the flames

But will Death, that shunned me on the dark ocean,
and whom I woo'd in vain under the Asoka tree, in
the garden, clasp me now in its embrace! Let me
then fix my thoughts on him, the sweet lord of my
soul, and die.

Enter KING.

King. [*Embracing SAGARIKA.*] Fear not, fear
not, sweet lady! Here is help. I've rushed through
the fiery deluge to thy rescue.

Sagar. [*Aside.*] Do I dream? Is this the
sweet lord of my bosom now standing before me?
Or is it fancy that cheats my senses? No! It is
he! Alas! my lord, why is your Grace here? I do
beseech you, sire, leave me to my fate, and, O, save
your precious self!

King. Nay, gentle maiden! If thou perish'st,
I perish with thee!

Sagar. Leave me, I do entreat you sire, to perish
in the flames—'tis death alone can——

King. [*Looking around.*] How now? The fire
no longer burns! Was it the creation of enchant-
ment?

*Enter QUEEN, VABHERVYA, VASUBHUTI, VASANTAKA,
KANCHANMALA, and SUSANGATTA.*

All. Where, where is the fire?

King. [*Releasing SAGARIKA from his embrace.*]
Aye, where? Do we dream? Are we mad? Or—

Vasant. My lord! Methinks 'twas that rogue of a magician produced this delusive fire.

King. Thou say'st true. [*To the Queen.*] Here, madam, is your Sagarika.

Queen. Mine indeed! I thank your Grace.

Vasu. [*Aside to VABHERVYA.*] I pray you, my good friend, look at that maiden. Is not she Ratnavali, our sweet Princess?

Vabher. The resemblance is most marvellous. The King's Grace will, perchance, remove your Excellency's doubts.

Vasu. I pray your Grace, sire, to tell me who this fair maiden is?

King. 'Tis more than I can do, my venerable friend! Your Excellency must address yourself to the Queen.

Vasu. If it be known to your Grace, madam, who this fair maiden is, I pray you to favour me with the recital of her story.

Queen. She was presented to me by the Minister Yogandharayana as a friendless stranger who had been shipwrecked and cast by the waves on our shores. That is why I call her "Sagarika." I know no more.

Vasu. Shipwrecked and cast on these shores! [*Pausing and looking at VASANTAKA.*] My good friend! I pray you, tell me whence gott'st thou the precious necklace thou wear'st?

Vasant. 'Tis hers, may it please your Reverence!
[*Points to SAGARIKA.*]

Vasu. I need no better proof. She is, indeed, the sweet child for whom I have wept since that fatal day! [*Approaching SAGARIKA.*] My Ratnavali! O, my beloved child! I never thought these eyes should behold thee again!

Sagar. [*With astonishment.*] What! Is this the Minister of my dear father? Alas! You see me in a wretched condition! Was I born to suffer all this misery! And how is it my parents have never thought of me! O, my parents!

[*Faints.*]

Queen I pray you, lord Ambassador, is this then my royal cousin, Ratnavali?

Vasu. Yea, madam! This is the Princess, your Grace's cousin, and 'twas her we lost in the pathless wilderness of the sea.

Queen. [*Approaching SAGARIKA and touching her.*] My Ratnavali; behold in this thy cruel persecutor a repentant and loving cousin. Alas! I knew thee not, my more than cousin, mine own sweet sister!

King. Is this maiden the daughter of the puissant King, my noble ally and friend, Vicramavahu?

Vabher. May it please your Grace, this is the Princess whose fair hand your Grace's Minister sought on your behalf.

Vasant. Said I not she came of some Royal

Vasu. Rise, my charming Princess, and embrace the Queen—thine august cousin ! Her Grace greets thee with loving courtesy.

Sagar. [*Recovering.*] My soul shrinks from the very thought of encountering the Queen. O, I've done her a foul wrong, and yet——

Queen. [*To the King.*] Alas ! My lord, I've treated her with wanton cruelty, but 'tis the Minister hath wrought me this shame by his silence. I pray your Grace to remove those manacles—they rebuke me.

King. I hasten to obey thee.

[*Takes off the chain.*]

Enter YOGANDHARAYANA at a little distance.

Yogan. [*Aside.*] The pride of the mighty King of Kausala hath been laid low, and his wide and rich provinces are ours : but why should not all this be when the fair Ratnavali dwells under this roof ? The maiden shares the privacy of the Queen. But now that the venerable Vasubhuti hath arrived, this very day must she be espoused by the King with due splendour and rejoicing. And in wedding her, our Monarch must wear the crown of a glorious and mighty Emperor. I've toiled, and toiled for the weal of this realm, and yet I tremble as I approach its Sovereign ? But I'm a servant, and 'tis the Majesty of power that awes me. [*Drawing near,*] Health and happiness to my royal liege !

King. Ah, my sage friend ! And so thou hast presented this fair lady to the Queen without breathing a syllable to me.

Yogan. My gracious lord, I crave your Grace's pardon. But your Grace hath heard the story of this royal maiden, and thereon I build my hopes of forgiveness. I waited but for the arrival of the venerable Vasubhuti.

King. 'Twas then at thy bidding that the magician kindled that delusive fire.

Yogan. Yea, my lord. I knew the royal maiden was a captive in the Queen's Oratory, and I invited the art of magic to bring you all together.

King. I forgive thee freely, my good and venerable friend. [*To the Queen.*] And now, madam, here is your royal cousin. What would you with her ?

Queen. Your Grace should be brief and plain, and say—"I pray you, give her to me."

Vasant. Her Grace sayeth well. Why let thy tongue belie thy heart, my lord ?

Queen. Come hither, my fair coz ! Alas ! thou look'st sad ! I've caused thee much woe. But be happy now and for evermore. [*Adorns SAGARIKA with her own jewels.*] [*To the King.*] Accept this precious gift from me, my lord.

King. I take her as a gift from thee, my beloved, and I shall ever value her for thy sake !

[*Takes SAGARIKA's hand.*]

Queen. For my sake then be it, my lord! But I pray you, to treat her tenderly. She's a stranger in this realm.

Vasant. [*Aside.*] Ha! ha! Your prayer, madam, is superfluous!

Vasu. Those gracious words, royal lady, become your Grace well!

King. Is not she, beloved, thy cousin? Can I cease to love her?

Vasant. Come, let us feast right merrily; for this is, indeed, a happy day for our lord the King! The kingdom of Kausala is his, and he embraces his beloved Ratnavali, and with her he becomes the Sovereign of the Earth. O happy day!

[*Capers about.*]

King. My happiness is indeed complete.

Yogan. What more can I do to pleasure the King?

King. What more, my good and venerable friend! And now my prayer to God is—that the Earth may be bathed with refreshing showers, that my subjects may enjoy unalloyed happiness, and that wickedness and sin may be rooted out of my kingdom!

[*EXEUNT.*]

END OF ACT IV:

EPILOGUE.

Enter ACTRESS.

Actress. If our poor efforts, gentles, have to-night
Yielded this noble audience some delight,
Won but a single smile, a single nod
Of kind approval, then, fair sirs, we've trod
This stage not all in vain! Our task is
done :
The meed ambition sigh'd for we have won!
We seek no higher praise, we sought it not,
Then let our imperfections be forgot!
Good night! And joy be with you—each
and all—
And may we often meet in this bright hall!
[EXIT.]

THE END.



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