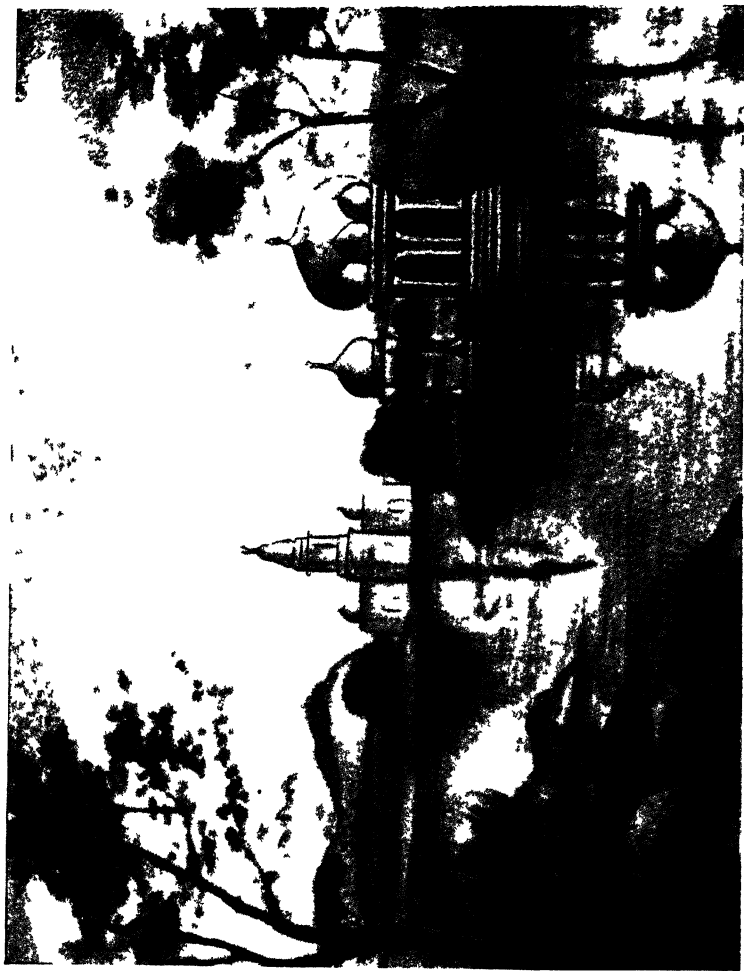


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*And slumbering lakes like mirrors clear reflect in waters deep
The carved walls of temples,*

POEMS OF MEWAR

BY

S. O. HEINEMANN

1921

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INTRODUCTION.

The idea of putting the legends of Mewar into verse occurred to me many years ago, when living in Udaipur, and the first to be attempted was that which appears last in this collection :—"The Curse of Mewar."

For some years this remained the only one done, until I was persuaded by some friends to make an effort to complete the series. Their appreciation of that poem, and their subsequent praise of others as they were written, inspired me to continue. Being friends they were at times candid, and by their criticism frequently helped.

One especially, who not only listened with marvellous patience, but also took infinite trouble to correct the many spelling errors, in the typed copies, has done more to encourage and help me than I can ever express my gratitude for.

With the exception of "The Curse of Mewar," which, though founded on fact, does not follow the recorded history in detail, the stories have been kept as near to history as possible. The whole are based on that charming work of Miss Gabrielle Festing, "The Land of The Princes" published by Messrs. Smith Elder & Co. in 1904.

Her book is founded on Col. Tod's "Annals of Rajasthan," the standard history of Rajputana.

Miss Festing's language is in itself so poetical that many lines in these verses are simply transcript from her book, for which I trust she will forgive me.

In the text I have used phonetic spelling of the proper names, as any other form would make the reading of the verses difficult for those who have not lived in Rajputana.

For the better understanding of these legends, it may be best to give a short account of the Sesodia Rajputs, who form the people of Mewar.

These Rajputs are of the "sovereign" or "Kshatriya" caste of the Hindus. This being the second of the three main divisions or castes. The first being the "Brahman" or priestly caste, and the third the "Vaishya" or trader caste.

The ruling family of Mewar are also held to be the direct descendents of Râmâ, the hero of the Ramayana, who was himself descended from Surya, the Sun-God. In this way the Mewar Rajputs are named the "Suryavansi" or "Children of the Sun." The Rana of Mewar is also termed "The Sun of the Hindus," and is by right of birth "The Viceregent of Shiv on Earth."

The pride, which the Mewar Rajputs display in their lineage, the purity of which they were ever at pains to maintain, is shown throughout their legends and history, and still exists.

The story of such a race of men, whose attributes were unswerving loyalty to their creed, unquenchable love for their country, high courage, contempt of death, and respect for womanhood, is one that must inspire admiration and respect, and in this spirit have I ventured to write these Poems of Mewar.

S. O. H.

1919.

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THE STORY OF BAPPA.

I once Chief Bard of the old Mori Prince,
Who, years ago, on Chitor's hill did reign,
Tell of the coming of great Bappaji;
And how that fort he from this Prince did gain.
The Mori Prince was old, his eyes were dim,
When first this Bappa as a stranger came
Unto his court, and as the Prince was wont,
He turned to me enquiring of his fame;
And I, standing before him, truthful told
Of all that happened in the days of yore,
For well I knew the story of those times,
Deep versed was I in all such ancient lore.
Eh! thus I spoke:—"Oh! Hail most mighty Prince!
"Thou askest of thy servant, who this man
"Bappa may be? And what his birth and fame?
"And I, thy bard, will tell thee all I can.
"First know, Oh Prince! that in the ancient days,
"There lived a clan of Rajputs in the west,
"Near unto Dwarka where bold Krishna dwelt
"When demon hosts had Muttra town invest.
"This clan tracing its line from Rama claim
"Surya himself as the primeval sire
"Of all their kings. in pride of birth and race
"They almost unto Godship did aspire.
"There mid their fertile plains they cities built,
"With fairy palaces of hewn stone, and crowned
"The walls with chhatris, while deep chujjas cooled
"The rooms at midday, and without around

"Fair gardens, full of flowers, fruit, and trees,
 "A pleasing fragrance cause, and 'neath the shade
 "No sun-sent heat could trouble, there fountain's play
 "Wooded gentle sleep, like soothing song of maid.
 "Thus then they lived in luxury and ease
 "For many years, until a sudden foe
 "Swept from the North, and with o'erwhelming force,
 "Crushing resistance, caused their overthrow.
 "The Rajput armies beaten in the field,
 "The Rajput Prince himself in battle slain,
 "His pregnant wife flees to the far-off hills,
 "Where she, unknown, awaits in hope her pain.
 "Up in the very heart of those wild hills,
 "She in a cave gave birth unto a son,
 "Who growing older, thus will pure blood tell,
 "Ruled all his playmates in their sport and fun.
 "Then after years have passed they him elect
 "As head of all their tribe, and he became
 "By petty wars ruler of all around,
 "Which deeds alone his princely birth proclaim.
 "Later, when stronger grown, he thence returned
 "Back to the land his fathers held before,
 "And there collecting the old Rajput clan
 "On their oppressors waged successful war.
 "Once more the clan their ancient lands obtain,
 "And honoured by his race "The Cave-born" so
 "Founds a new dynasty, which took the name
 "Of Gohils; and this much of them we know,
 "That while two centuries had waxed and waned,
 "They in that land held undivided sway,
 "Though not in peace, since many foes they fought
 "Until there came another evil day.

"Then once again their armies shattered fell,
 "Then once again the male line was reduced
 "Unto the unborn child the flying Queen
 "At the appointed time in woe produced
 "At sacred Nagda, where a Brahmin priest
 "Took pity on her, and beneath his roof
 "Was born her child, this Bappa, who became
 "The village goatherd. Thus the princely youth
 "Unknown dwelt in safety, until one day.
 "By such mischance as do the Gods on high
 "Cause to effect the working of their will,
 "The village maidens playing did espy
 "This prince of goatherds sleeping 'neath a tree,
 "Dreaming grand dreams of sovereignty and power,
 "Though he as yet, (the secret still was hid),
 "Knew not his birth nor yet his birthright's dower.
 "The maidens wake him, and propose that he
 "Shall with them play, beneath the grateful shade
 "Of this old tree, outside the sun was hot,
 "For coolness they his leafy realm invade.
 "But what to play at first they cannot tell,
 "The space is small, no room to rush nor run,
 "So they hold counsel how to pass the time
 "And finally decide the greatest fun
 "With least exertion to themselves will be
 "To play at marriage with this comely boy,
 "He to be bridegroom, they each one a bride,
 "So to this pastime they proceed with joy.
 "Lately had been the season when they saw,
 "Many fine weddings, so each maiden knows
 "Full well each rite, and thus in childish play
 "Each one in turn with him doth now propose

"To carry through in detail every form
 "They had in earnest but so lately seen,
 "So he consenting, innocent as they,
 "The game begins and each with serious mien
 "Becomes his bride, until they one and all
 "To him are married ; then tiring of the play,
 "They leave him there not wotting what they've done
 "And to their homes all joyous run away.
 "But what to them was but a childish game
 "Was fraught with deeper meaning than they knew,
 "And what had been the pastime of an hour,
 "Full soon they came in bitterness to rue.
 "For since with such exactness did each maid
 "The sacred rites unthinkingly enact,
 "They had become, (their parents later found),
 "Each one the wife of him in solemn fact.
 "Then was the parents' anger greatly raised,
 "Against the youth, whom they a goatherd thought,
 "And had become the husband of their maids,
 "Nor did they deem that he the deed had wrought
 "In innocence, but that he schemed thereby
 "To rise in honour and their equal be,
 "So fearing for his life this hapless youth
 "Compelled by them, to ancient Arh did flee.
 "There then in hiding he some time remained,
 "Until his mother dying had revealed,
 "No longer fearing trouble from his foes,
 "His princely birth so long by her concealed.
 "Thus he in honour back to Nagda came,
 "Where, so a rumour runs, he did receive
 "A wondrous sword within the shrine of Shiv,
 "And many men this story now believe.

"And since he cometh now to claim thee kin,
 "As kin he is indeed by birth to thee,
 "I will relate how came he by this sword,
 "Even as it was lately told to me.
 "Thus then it happened :—When as a herdsman he
 "Daily drove out the village kine,
 "'Twas noticed that one special cow
 "Was always dry at evening milking time.
 "At first 't was thought that he unfaithfully
 "Had filched the milk, but yet no thief was he,
 "And watching found that this sagacious beast
 "Wandered away nor with the herd would be.
 "So following her he spied her by a shrine,
 "Wherein a sacred hermit, by penance and by fast,
 "Was striving to obtain redemption from
 "His sins, and would the earth-born fetters cast.
 "And by his piety and prayers at last attain
 "To that estate wherein the fleshly lusts
 "No longer form a hindrance to make sure
 "The future life in which each being trusts.
 -"There stood the cow, and from her udders free
 "Of mortal touch gushed forth the milky stream
 "Into a natural basin formed of snow-white stone,
 "Wherein it lay a pool of frothy cream.
 "Bappa then roused the hermit from his trance,
 "And bowed before him, sacred in his eyes,
 "While he with his inspired wisdom, heaven-sent,
 "Knew to what power that young boy would rise.
 "Thus daily to the grove the youth repaired
 "Unto that shrine, and from the holy saint
 "Learned all the mysteries of Shivite lore
 "And with the sacred rites became acquaint.

"There, once when thunder rent the air
 "And darksome clouds concealed the coming dawn,
 "He saw a vision of the awful wife
 "Of Shiv, Bhavani, on her tiger borne.
 "But in her hands great gifts for him she held,
 "A lance, a bow, a quiver filled with darts,
 "And girt about him, a most wondrous sword,
 "Fashioned by Vishwakama's heavenly arts.
 "This craftsman of the Gods who once began
 "The marvellous image of Jaganath to make,
 "Which still unfinished is, since by no mortal skill
 "Can it resemblance of the dread God take.
 "This wondrous sword, thus wondrously received,
 "All men believe to him who bears it 'gainst his foe
 "Makes victory certain, nor matter it
 "What are the odds, defeat he cannot know.
 "Tiring of idleness he cometh now
 "To thee great Prince, that he may honour seek
 "Beneath thy banner, and against thy foes,
 "Therefore I counsel ye his help bespeak,
 "Not since he comes with armies at his call,
 "But since men say the Gods for him do fight,
 "Hence it were better as a friend he came,
 "Than as a foe we suffer their despite".
 Then said the Prince :—"Oh Bard ! thou speakest well
 "Thou who in truth good counsel ever spake
 "To me thy Prince, who doth in thee repose
 "Unerring trust. Do thou this message take
 "To this man Bappa, and this chain of gold
 "As a fit gift to him whose line is sprung
 "From Rama's seed, and by whose princely side
 "That God-made sword was by a Goddess hung.

"Thus shalt thou speak :—The Mori Prince doth send
 "Unto his kinsman Bappa, having heard
 "Of all his fame, and lineage, and birth,
 "And all the trouble by the Prince incurred,
 "This chain as some slight mark of his esteem
 "And friendship, and in welcome would delight
 "Him to receive in Durbar as a friend,
 "With all the honour that to him is right".

Leaving his presence I this message took
 To Bappa, and as he courteous rose
 To greet me, he to my eyes displayed
 His form and person in a kingly pose.
 How shall I tell of him or him describe ?
 Suffice to say that God-like did he seem,
 His frame well-knit, his head with pride erect,
 While high ambition from his face did gleam,
 No halting coward he, 't was plainly seen,
 That his the fate it was all men to lead,
 No turning from the task he'd once begun,
 His to command, not his of men to plead.
 Such then was Bappa when at first he came
 To Chitor's hill, and listening to my counsel sage,
 The Prince gave him command of all his men
 So that he might victorious campaigns wage,
 Thus Bappa having been in honour great received,
 The older nobles of the land and race,
 In jealousy of this young untried youth
 Refused to fight, the common foe to face,
 If he should hold supreme command, and they
 Declared that rather than beneath him fight,
 They would give up their lands unto the Prince,
 From whom they held them under feudal right.

And thus they spoke in Durbar, unashamed,
 "If this young stripling is worthy of the trust
 "That thou, our Lord, has now on him bestowed,
 "Let him in single conflict repel the thrust
 "Of these our foes, and let us see the truth
 "Of all these stories of his most wondrous sword.
 "For if indeed he can our foes repel,
 "Then are we willing to look on him as Lord".
 "Oh! Prince!" cried Bappa, "Thou hast with bounteous hand
 "Bestowed on me gifts and honour, and repose
 "Faith in my truth; I now to thee would prove
 "Thy faith well-founded; I will against thy foes
 "Lead mine own men, nor will I ask the help
 "Of these thy Lords, who will not deign to fight
 "Under my banner, although their forebears fought
 "Beneath the same, and mine by birth the right
 "It is to flaunt this Sun-faced banner still.
 "And trusting in the help of Shiv will I
 "See it again in triumph reflect the Sun-god's light.
 "Or else upon the battle field will die".
 So spake Bappa and heedless of the odds,
 Prepared for battle, girt with his heaven-sent blade,
 Yet though he trusted in the God's portent,
 He careful preparations for the battle made.
 This seeing and by his lofty words impressed,
 The other Chiefs their jealousy o'ercame,
 They followed him, and 'neath his banner won
 The fight that was his primal right to fame.
 Triumphant he returns to Chitor's frowning fort,
 And in the presence of the Prince all men acclaimed
 His leadership and strategy, and thus was he
 For his innate proclivities proclaimed

The chosen leader of those very Chiefs, who had
 Refused to serve beneath him, and as reward
 The Prince his daughter gave to him as wife;
 The first fruits of his God-given arms and sword.
 Later the Mori Prince, now spent in years,
 Feeble becomes, and ever growing hordes
 Of enemies threaten the outlying lands
 Of his dependents and his feudal Lords.
 So do they meet and settle 'mongst themselves
 That a more vigorous Chief must o'er them reign,
 To save their states and by a crushing blow
 Beat back the foe and so some respite gain
 From frequent inroads by the petty bands,
 That harass those who are too weak to fight,
 And free them from the trespass they inflict,
 By stronger action and acknowledged might.
 They cannot from among themselves find such a one,
 As will be free from some malicious hate,
 For each with each has ever held some feud,
 Born by disputes over some neighbouring state.
 Thus they in conclave, mistrustful of themselves,
 Decide that Bappa, who alone is free
 From any petty jealousy, nor holding lands,
 Can be depended on to deal in equity;
 And while in any question 'mongst themselves
 Will hold no brief for this one nor for that.
 Had proved himself a leader strong and bold,
 And by his victories had confidence begat
 In all the clansmen, and thus to him would flock
 An army strong confiding in his skill,
 And so alone he by his alien birth,
 Would all the needs of these grave times fulfill.

He chosen therefore by the state at large,
Bappa deposed his uncle and became
The Rawal of the Sesodia Rajput clan,
And from a cowherd rose to lasting fame.
For many years on Chitor's hill he reigned,
And by his daring did his state extend,
Victorious ever, his clan in peace remained,
For no one dared his power to offend.
Yet ever restless, he at last went forth.
Leaving his wives, his children, and his throne,
Leading an army to the furthest West,
Over deserts where the sand is blown,
And far beyond unto the northern hills,
He ever conquering held beneath his sway,
The Lords of Ispahan, Kashmir, Iran,
And Kafristan, who did him homage pay.
There from the daughters of these Kings he raised
The sons, who later in their life became
The forebears of the numerous Pathan tribes
Who yet in legends honour Bappa's name.
When age crept on and every pleasure cloyed,
He wandered forth, leaving his sumptuous court,
To the Mount Meru, the sacred hill that soars
Beyond the clouds, and there in penance sought
That peace and content that alone obtains
In contemplation of the Gods' diviner power,
With chastening of flesh, fasting, and prayers,
Prepared himself for life's last dreaded hour.
There then he died; and so the legends hold,
That when men wrangled if his body should
Be burned or buried, according to their faiths,
They found but flowers where his body stood.



*He wandered forth
To the Mount Meru the sacred hill that soars
Beyond the clouds and there in penance sought
That peace
With fasting and prayers,*

THE FIRST SACK OF CHITOR.

From a level plain surrounding a lonely hill stands bold,
Crowned by its ruined temples and palaces of stone.
In majesty and splendour it seems like pride enthroned,
In wondrous isolation, so haughtily alone.
This hill, the hill of Chitor, upon whose frowning brow
Reposed the Chiefs of Mewar, in it we find the same
Strong rugged independence, faith in its innate strength,
The virtues and misfortunes that brought to Mewar fame.
So still, a mighty monument of all the glorious past,
It stands today in steadfast strength as in the days gone by
It stood, when 'gainst its rocky sides the human waves were hurled,
And thrown back like ocean spume is hurtled to the sky.
Three times the hated Moslem has sacked that hill of yore,
Defiled its sacred temples, and wreaked his wanton will,
Yet though in desolation its streets are silent now,
The Mewar Chiefs are flaunting their Sun-faced banner still.
Throughout the long dark ages their honour bright they kept,
Nor bowed their knees in homage, nor maids to Delhi sent;
Driven from out their fortress, bound in their hills to hide,
In want and tribulation, this knowledge their content.
In memory ever curséd is by the Rajputs held
The name of him, Ala-ad-din, whose treachery and lust
Brought him from out his northern home with all his arméd host,
To rape the virgin fortress, and betray the Rajput trust.

Full seven hundred years have passed
 Since was that deed of shame
 Done, but ever yet is heard
 The curses on his name.
 And this is now the story,
 Whose truth is known to all
 How did that Rajput fortress
 Before his armies fall.

Fair stood the hill of Chitor, with palaces bedight,
 And slumbering lakes, like mirrors clear, reflect in waters deep
 The carven walls of temples, and scented gardens fill
 The air with perfumed breezes, and on the hillside steep
 The grey ape swings where the creepers cling, the peacocks
 strut and preen,
 The streets are gay with laughter, and children voices shrill
 Speak of a land of plenty, where peace and virtue reign,
 With nought of pain and sorrow, or thought of coming ill.
 There in this beauteous city the Rana Lakshman ruled,
 Under the expert guidance of Ratna-Singh the bold,
 Who had for his one consort Padmini, who had come
 From far Ceylon, where in the bygone days of old
 Great Rama, from whom this clan descends,
 Waged vengeful war against the Demon kings,
 Who had by cunning arts fair Sita filched
 From out his palace on their demon wings.
 So beautiful was she, all men aver, that none
 In all the land of Ind could with herself compare.
 Her raven tresses finer than finest silk, her oval face,
 Her speaking eyes, her little nose and mouth, the pair

Of soft firm globes of which her breast was formed,
 Her swelling hips, her well shaped legs and feet,
 Formed an entrancing whole, while was her mind
 As matchless as her body, and as is meet
 A perfect nature within a perfect shrine
 Was throned, and by her deeds and life
 Shewed forth that nature, and by example spread
 A cleansing influence Such then was Ratna's wife.
 And over all the land her fame was known,
 And all men talked of her, bards sang her praise,
 Until at last her name became to mean
 The highest form of womanhood. Now in those days,
 There lived in Delhi in the Moslem court
 Ala-ad-din, a proud and lustful Prince,
 And though a general consummate in war
 From vilest trickery he would never wince,
 If by such means he could his ends attain.
 He having heard of fair Padmini's fame,
 His wanton passion fills him with desire,
 Raising an army he unto Chitor came.
 Seeing the strength of that still virgin fort,
 He thought 't were better not to risk his fate
 By force of arms, but sought within his mind
 How he by treachery could his passion sate.
 So this fair message he to Ratna sent :—
 "Oh ! Mighty Prince, from Delhi's city far I come
 "Having heard of all the virtues of your clan,
 "For verily of these no men are dumb,
 "But ever hold your chivalry and truth .
 "As an example, while your just and equal laws
 "Seem as a model for other states, your skill in arms
 "Have won our praise, although well versed in wars,

"I come to gain by friendly intercourse
 "Some inspiration, and most fain would see
 "How much there is of truth in all these tales,
 "Which have extolled your Rajput courtesy.
 "Moreover I have heard throughout the land
 "Most wondrous stories of your most perfect wife,
 "And I can scarce believe the truth of them,
 "So many falsehoods are so often rife.
 "I would not dare to ask of you to prove
 "Their truth or falsehood by showing me her face
 "But if I might through many mirrors glance
 "It would not bring on her the least disgrace.
 "For now I feel that being near at hand,
 "I cannot leave until my mind 's at rest,
 "So therefore pray you as a friendly deed,
 "Give ear to me, and grant me my request."

Now Ratna hearing all the Prince had said,
 And being himself so upright and so true,
 He never thought an evil thought of him,
 Nor deemed that he would any false deed do,
 So unto him he sent word in reply,
 That showed his courtesy and guileless mind,
 Which were the very traits Ala-ad-din
 Had hoped, with vileness in his heart, to find.
 Thus ever does one find the vile and base
 Work on the nobler natures that they meet;
 Vulture does not on vulture prey,
 Nor tigers grumble over tiger's meat.
 Thus Ratna thinking no ill, in friendly wise,
 Sent word that he would honoured be
 To receive the Moslem Prince in state,
 And let him all the sights of Chitor see.

Moreover if he wished he would consent
To let him through reflecting mirrors gaze
On her who in his Princely courtesy,
He had deemed worthy of his Princely praise.
Now Ala-ad-din rejoiced that he had found
A way to gain his ends without recourse
To that uncertain hazard cast,
Which had been his had he resolved on force.
The fort so strong, he would have been at loss
Had he attacked, nor could he spy
The place of weakness, unless he viewed
The inner works, and should assault he try
And he be worsted, there was all the way
Far back to Delhi, where hostile clans would rush
Upon his broken force in fury wild,
In hopes the hated Moslem foes to crush.
But now in honour should he to Chitor come,
He would be able as a friend to see
All their defences, and thus plan out
Through their vain trust a way to victory.
Also counting upon the Rajputs' courtesy,
He might, by chance, brave Ratna bind
In his own camp and him a hostage hold.
Such were the workings of his treacherous mind.
And so before he started up the hill,
He placed an ambush at the lower gate,
So should Prince Ratna lead him down,
As was becoming to his Princely state,
He could surround him and for his life demand
His beauteous wife, as ransom for the Chief.
Thus did he judge a Rajput woman would
Succumb to him to save her country grief.

In truth he fathomed the Rajput faith and trust,
For they in welcome did receive him there,
And led him round the ramparts, showed him all,
Not dreaming they their ruin did prepare,
And finally in view of his request,
Padmini stood unveiled before a glass,
From which the vision of her matchless form
Through other mirrors to his eyes could pass.
He gazed upon her beauty and was filled
With burning passion, and his lustful mind
Saw naught but her voluptuous figure,
Being to all her chaster virtues blind.
He longed her lips, her cheeks, her eyes,
With burning kisses, with burning lips to press,
With lusting hands to fondle hidden charms,
Her pulsing breasts, and silken skin caress.
He could not note, nor see, her mind sublime,
Her modest looks, nor yet her courage strong,
That shone around her, nor did he deem
That she would rather die than suffer wrong.
Full of this lustful fire he then the hill descends,
And with him Ratna, as a Rajput should,
Comes to the lower gate, where hidden from his sight,
The treacherous ambush for him waiting stood.
Even while speaking fair words as in farewell,
Ala-ad-din made sign, armed men spring forth,
And seize on Ratna, though unarmed is he,
He with his hands kills three there in his wrath.
Yet over-powered, bound, he's led away
Into the camp and cast into a tent,
While Ala-ad-din with passion all aflame,
This hideous message to the Rajputs sent.

Meanwhile Padmini in her palace white,
 That stands surrounded by a rock-bound lake,
 Awaits her husband in the evening cool.
 That he some respite from affairs may take
 She had arranged some singing girls should soothe
 His troubled mind, and soft-toned music's swell
 Rejoice his heart with Rajput melodies,
 And cast about him true love's dreamy spell.
 Yet while she waited, troubling thoughts arose :—
 Why did he tarry? Could evil men conspire
 To do him wrong? And now her loving heart
 Was racked in doubt, she hardly dare enquire
 What caused her lord to stay so long away,
 And while her heart was thus in turmoil cast,
 A messenger the steep approach ascends
 To tell the tale of what below had passed.
 Then are all men aroused, the walls are lined,
 Each in his place on the defences stands,
 While swords are sharpened, Chiefs ride around,
 Each one in charge of his own feudal bands.
 Now from beneath is heard the herald's call,
 Who comes from out the Moslem camp below,
 And led by guards into the Durbar Hall,
 He to the Chiefs does this base message show :—
 "Oh, Chiefs of Chitor! I midst my army hold
 "Great Ratna Singh, and as a hostage he
 "Remains, until you send within my camp
 "His wife Padmini; for I would have her be
 "Companion of my bed, and to my harem add
 "Another flower, where yet no Rajput lies.
 "Should she consent my concubine to be
 "Her husband may return; if not he dies

"By slowest tortures, and my army strong
 "Will crush you down, and Chitor's city sack,
 "Taking by force his wife and bring her
 "Bound as a prisoner, from her palace, back.
 "Then having had my pleasure of her, will I cast
 "Her forth to be the plaything of my host,
 "Until a thousand Moslems may acclaim
 "That they have had their will of her, and boast
 "Throughout the land of all their wild debauch.
 "Then worse than any harlot of the town,
 "Stripped of her clothing will I drive her forth
 "Tied to a sweeper, her hideous shame to crown."

Such was the message that vile traitor sent
 To those who had him in all honour met,
 And in the hearts of those great Rajput Chiefs
 The fire of hate by his base words was fet.
 Padmini, noble woman that she was,
 Fearing that any hurt might yet descend
 On the defenceless head of him she loved,
 Prayed they would her to Ala-ad-din forthsend.
 For hidden in the falling creases of her gown
 She had a dagger sharp, and knew that she
 Could by its bright and pointed blade
 Against the Moslem save her chastity.
 So thus she spake, when from the Durbar sent,
 Her uncle Gorah to her palace came,
 And told her all that Ala-ad-din had said,
 Hiding no word, though trembling at the shame,
 That had been put upon the Sun-got clan,
 By one who even dared to think that they
 Would save the life of one of their great Chiefs
 By letting her for him the wanton play.

"Oh, Gorah ! Thinkest thou that though I came
 "Into his tent, or lay upon his bed,
 "That he would ever have his will of me,
 "Unless indeed he fouled my body dead ?
 "A Rajput woman can defend her fame,
 "And true to death and e'en beyond I trow
 "I should be found to him my Lord, my love,
 "And death I'd welcome could I but save him now.
 "For he thou knowest holds our banner high
 "Above the head of that young boy our King,
 "And by his chivalry and strength and will,
 "Can be relied for us to victory bring.
 "How can I think of peril to myself ?
 "While he in peril in that camp is held.
 "Better allow me as his ransom go,
 "So that the Moslems be by him repelled."

But Gorah by no loving fears upset,
 Sees now a way the Moslems to defeat,
 For in his mind, he had decided how
 He can by strategy their treachery best meet.
 So satisfying her untr tranquil mind,
 He to the other Chiefs his plans forthshows,
 And they, like every Rajput ever is,
 Thirsting to fight these hated Moslem foes,
 Rejoice to think their blades will be unsheathed
 In furious fight against this wanton Prince,
 So eagerly accept his plan, with loud acclaim,
 Their raging minds being easy to convince.
 The plan was this, that Gorah laid before the Chiefs,
 In burning words, as he before them stood :—
 "My brother Rajputs of the bold Sesodia clan !
 "Ye've heard the insult that this devil lewd,

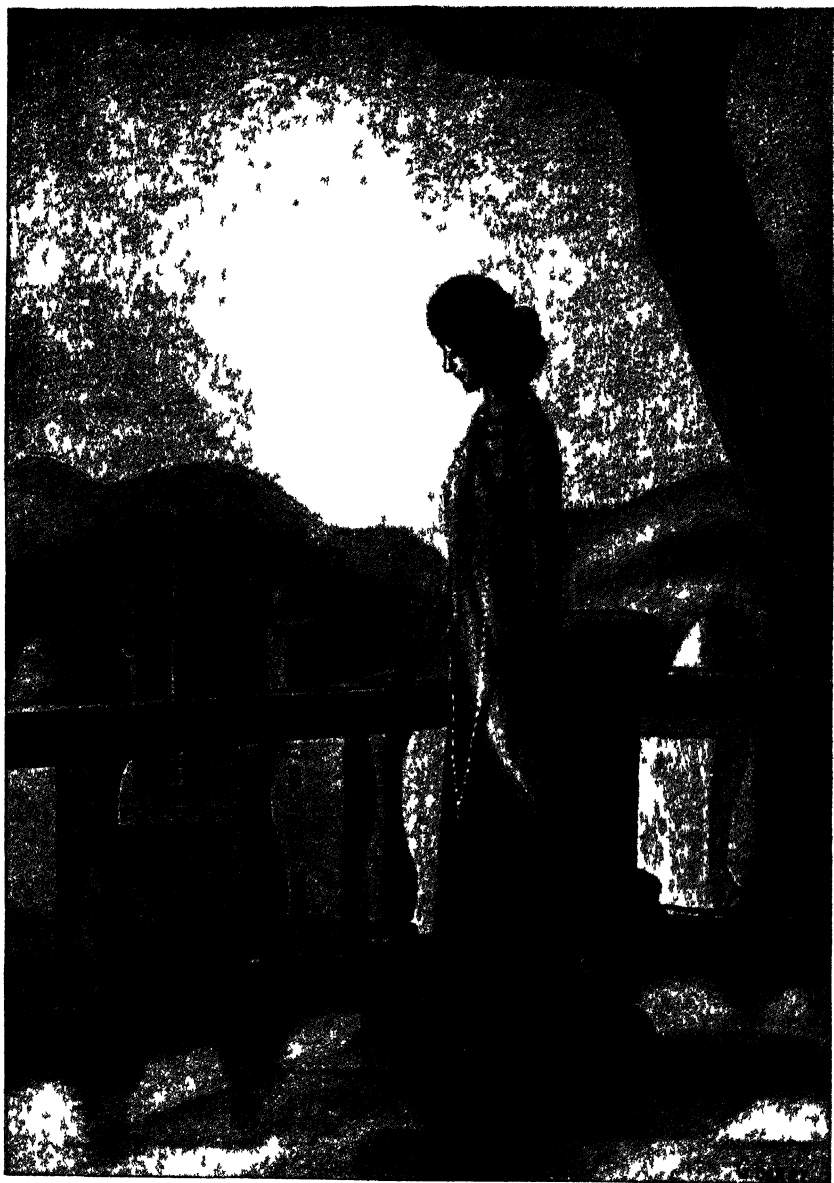
"Camped now without our gates, has offered to our race,
 "The choice to leave great Ratna in his hands or send
 "To him Padmini to become the sport
 "Of his vile lust. May the great Gods defend
 "Us from the thought, that we such vile demands
 "Could ever grant, or that our meanest slave
 "Should serve his purpose ; would we not rather die
 "Than all our clan by such ill deeds deprave ?
 "Yet should we chance our all in open fight,
 "With him prepared, our smaller force would be
 "Crushed by his strength, and we would fail
 "To gain our end, and set sage Ratna free.
 "So I propose that we an answer send
 "Seeming to grant his insolent demand,
 "And that Padmini should in state arrive,
 "A willing sacrifice for her adopted land.
 "In palanquins with closely covered sides
 "We will our finest fighting men conceal,
 "And all their bearers wear beneath their robes
 "Their swords and daggers, clad in armoured steel,
 "Thus will we enter far into his camp,
 "Where at a signal will our blades spring forth
 "To hack and hew, and crush this swinish herd,
 "To give them knowledge of the Rajput wrath.
 "Further will I as kinsman lead the van,
 "And further to deceive the Prince will take
 "My nephew Badal, though young as yet is he
 "His life and all in such a fight to stake."

So 't was decided, and this humble answer sent
 To Ala-ad-din, who holding all men light
 Could not appreciate the Rajput's finer mind,
 Thought they were fearful and afraid to fight.

"Oh, Mighty Prince! Who hold within your hand
 "The Regent of our clan, and with o'erpowering force
 "Threaten our lands, we have no hope to save
 "His life and them, should you once have recourse
 "To arms; therefore we can but humbly accede
 "To your demands, and will Padmini send
 "Down to your camp, but we this favour crave
 "That ere within your harem she may wend
 "You will permit her once to see her Lord,
 "To say farewell; and she may come to you
 "Accompanied by her maidens, who were wont
 "The menial tasks about her home to do."

Ala-ad-din thinking soon to gain
 His own desires, this petition grants,
 And by his answer in the Rajput breasts
 More burning deadly hatred of him plants.
 "Yea, let him have a space so brief as this,
 "That he may knowing once again her charms,
 "Add but more fuel to all his hell-fire pain,
 "Knowing this night she lies within my arms.
 "For what care I if other men have sipped
 "Wine from the cup, so long as I may find
 "In it refreshment, and may slake my thirst,
 "For by my baser lust I will remind
 "Her of the purest joys she knew when she
 "First gave herself a bride in chastity,
 "And every token of my passion's heat shall be
 "A burning sword to wound her memory."
 By such his answer did he show contempt
 For these the men he deeméd now so base,
 That they would purchase peace at such a price,
 As would besmirch their honour, bring disgrace

Upon the name of Rajput, and the Sun-got clan
Would be forever clouded by the shame
Of this transaction, and would indeed become
Unfit to own bright Surya's shining name.
Fair shone the moon that night, the plain below,
Whereon the camp fires of the Moslem army flecked
The silken darkness, with a thousand flickering gleams,
Was dimly seen as eastern seas bedecked
By phosphoric lights on some calm stilly night.
The soldiers' chants were borne upon the ear,
The nautch's music, where the nobles lay,
While sometimes came a woman's cry of fear,
Telling of some poor victim rudely caught
By those rough soldiers, and forced by them to play
The wanton for them. But up upon the hill
The Rajput soldiers armed them for the fray.
There stood old Gorah, with Badal by his side,
Watching and ordering all with quiet mien;
Yet in his flashing eye, his quivering lip,
His burning passion 'gainst the foe is seen.
The palanquins in seven rows are ranged,
A hundred in each row, while six men stand
As bearers for them, clad in saffron robes,
Two men as guards are placed on either hand,
The cream of all the clan, in armour bright,
Await the order in the chairs to mount,
The coloured curtains, which these men will hide,
Are raised in readiness, and you may count,
To look as gifts being taken to the Prince,
A hundred horses saddled, led around,
The grooms picked horsemen are, their weapons hid,
Are really that a body-guard be found



*Before the sun arose, Padmini, who had watched
The preparations from her palace fair
Came forth, and like a goddess seems*

For Ratna Singh when he released may be,
Shall ride for Chitor, while with loud acclaim,
Brave Gorah's men behind him on the plain
Shall take revenge for insults to the name
Of fair Padmini, and shall wash in blood
The land defiled by the unhallowed tread
Of the vile Moslem host, and if the Gods decree
Leave on the field their Prince among the dead.
Thus in the silent watches of the night,
The Rajputs armed them for the coming fight,
While far below the hated Moslem force,
Revelled in pleasure, wanton, lewd, and coarse.
After the setting moon had sunk beneath
The far stretched plain, and in a lightening sky,
The stars had faded, and the amber tints,
Of early dawn painted the restless clouds on high;
Before the sun arose, Padmini, who had watched
The preparations from her palace fair,
Came forth, and like a Goddess seems,
Hiding from all her aching heart and care.
Then as the Rajputs gazed upon her standing there,
The light of high endeavour in her eye,
And on her lips a smile of faith and trust,
They felt it easy for her life to die.
And as the sun's first amorous fingers touched
The topmost pinnacles of the temple, tower, and dome,
While on the plain the dawn mist heaved and fell,
Like milk-white billows fringed with roseate foam;
She spake to them, and as some silver bell
Her voice re-echoed, and over all the throng
Swift silence fell, naught but the harness clink
Is heard, a horse's neigh, a creaking leather thong.

"Oh Gorah-ji! My uncle and my friend,
 "And thou young Badal, splendid in thy youth,
 "And Rajput Chieftains, Men of all the clans,
 "Who prove yourselves heroes in very truth,
 "I stand before you in the morning light,
 "Before you start on this most glorious quest,
 "To thank you from my heart for your emprise,
 "That will my husband from dread torture wrest.
 "Ye know that I would die a thousand deaths
 "To save him from one single moment's pain,
 "And ye I envy, ye who have the right
 "To fight for him on yonder mist-hid plain.
 "To those returning will be known the joy
 "Of certain knowledge of their own success;
 "For well I know not one will come again
 "To prove a poltroon or defeat confess.
 "But those, alas, who will return no more,
 "Know thou that ever in my heart thou'lt find
 "A place of honour, kept for those brave men,
 "Dead on the field, yet living in my mind.
 "I will not insult you, men of the Sun-got clan,
 "By asking you to strive your best to save
 "My husband Ratna, well do I know each one
 "Will prove a hero, or find a hero's grave."
 By now the sun risen above the plain
 Dispels the mists, and as she ceased to speak,
 Formed round her head a glorious aureole,
 And as an omen, which all men are wont to seek,
 It seemed as if she had personified
 The sun-faced banner, and all men acclaim
 Her shining face, as she before them stood
 Put even Surya's brilliant light to shame.

Then from the hearts of every man arose,
In one accord, a low-voiced cry,
That they would do her will, and Ratna save,
Or on the bloodstained plain still fighting die.
Ere yet the sun had to its zenith rose,
Through opened gates, with slow and measured tread,
Passed a procession, seven hundred litters closed,
Like as a funeral of illustrious dead.
But though each man wore on his face the look
Of bitter grief, his eyes cast to the ground,
Yet in their hearts they did rejoice that they
A way to free their Prince from death had found.
And did one look with keen and watchful eye,
One then had seen a wandering hand to press
A hidden weapon, or 'neath their saffron robes,
The hilt of some keen dagger soft caress.
Gorah and Badal in the van proceed,
Until at last Ala-ad-din's camp they reach,
And with that Princé, with humble mien,
Crave to be given a few moments speech.
Ala-ad-din not wotting of their plans,
Grants them an audience and doth send
For Ratna, that he may Padmini see,
And quickly all his lustful longing end.
Then is the palanquin in which he thinks
The Princess rests, borne within a tent,
Wherein the captive Ratna, sad at heart,
Knows not what is beneath the curtains pent.
He knows Padmini's all unselfish love,
And fears that she has overcome advice,
And given up herself that she may be
His ransom, as a willing sacrifice.

But as the silken curtains draw aside
 He sees within a kinsman of his clan,
 Who in swift urgent whispers now relates
 To him, expectant, all old Gorah's plan.
 A swift exchange :—and in the litter he
 Is carried forth, while in the tent remains
 The man, who represents Padmini's self,
 Heedless of all his future torture pains.
 Now Ala-ad-din not done with treason yet,
 Has no intent to let this Ratna free,
 But plans to hold the husband and the wife,
 That he may of his lewdness witness be.
 For he considers should the husband watch
 'T will be but adding to his passion's zest
 To feel that he is looking on while she
 Is in his arms in lustful embrace pressed ;
 To know that helpless he must look and see
 Him strip her form, and gloat upon her charms,
 While wanton hands shall toy about her flesh,
 His passion to excite, e'er satisfaction calms.
 So as the litter passes from the tent,
 He orders that his men shall block the way,
 Thinking that none are there to thwart
 His trickery, or bid his henchmen nay.
 But at the word, the litters spue the horde
 Of Rajput warriors, the grooms alert
 Spring on their horses, litter men cast off
 Their saffron robes, appear as swords-men girt,
 Then as about great Ratna horsemen ride
 Fast to the fort, the Rajput battle cry
 Rings to the sky, and with a sudden rush
 The Rajput soldiers at the Moslems fly.

Taken unawares the Moslem host,
 Retreats before the furious onslaught till
 The Chief is safe, though sad to miss the fight,
 Once more ensconced upon the fortress hill.
 Below, the tide of battle ebbs and flows,
 The Rajputs glorying in the bloody fray,
 Striving that they may by the Prince's blood
 Wash all the insults to their clan away.
 But 't is ordained although they fight
 With more than human strength and godlike hate,
 Never beneath their swords his body falls,
 Such was not written in his book of fate.
 At last the greater numbers of their foes begin
 To tell against their ever thinning ranks,
 And Moslem horsemen, riding north and south,
 Threaten them on their unprotected flanks.
 Still fighting, undismayed, they're forced before
 The ever-coming hordes, back to the lower gate,
 Where watching comrades on the frowning walls
 For their return with anxious feelings wait.
 The remnant now within the walls is led,
 The gates reshut, and eager hands outstretched
 To help the wounded who can stagger still,
 While for the worst are swinging litters fetched.
 That night, when it is ascertained,
 Who, fallen in the fight, return no more.
 The gloomy pyres were in their honour raised,
 That to the Gods their free-born souls might soar.
 The wives of these in "suttee" would rejoin
 Their husbands in those worlds beyond their ken,
 Nor does the Rajput women dread the fire
 More than the sword is dreaded by the men.

So dressed in bridal robes, with jewels adorned,
 The new made widows follow to the pyres
 The wife of Gorah, who now leads the van,
 When seeing Badal she of him enquires
 News of her Lord, from him who wounded sore
 Comes yet to pay respect unto the name
 Of his dead uncle, beside whose side he fought,
 And had returned alive, but without shame.
 "Oh Badal! Ere I go hence to those fair happy lands,
 "Where I shall join your uncle and my Lord,
 "Tell me the tale of how he bore himself;
 "What was the harvest of his scythe-like sword?"
 Then answered Badal:—"Mother like a reaper he
 "Cut through the host, the dead about him lay
 "Like stalks of corn upon the bloodstained field,
 "And I a humble gleaner followed him, to slay
 "No man remained; until an arrow shot from far behind
 "Struck him. A bed of honour for himself he spread,
 "A Prince his pillow, thus lay he down, he sleeps,
 "A rampart round him of the Moslem dead.
 "And who may tell of those great deeds he did,
 "He left no foe to dread nor praise him, so
 "Let thy mind rest, in honour doth he lie,
 "Happy upon the battle-field to go."
 Then smiled the widow on that honoured boy,
 Whose wounds relate the part himself did play,
 Saying:—"Farewell, I must not tarry now,
 "For fear my Lord should chide my brief delay."
 So spake the wife of Gorah, making sign
 She steps upon the pyre, all wives obey
 Her signal and each in appointed place
 Pass to their lords, while conches sound and bray,

To drown the groans of those who watch beneath.
 The flames spring up and close around their heads,
 The smoke ascends and hides them from the sight,
 E'en as a curtain round their marriage beds.
 Next morn at dawn, the watchmen on the walls
 See in the Moslem camp unwonted stir,
 For Ala-ad-din, had found the Rajput thrust
 So serious that lest he should worse incur,
 Decides to strike his camp and start away
 On his long march to Delhi, being in fear
 That on his depleted forces others come
 To take him helpless in his weakened rear,
 So thus the Rajput sacrifice had been
 Not all in vain, since by their prowess they
 Had driven off the Moslem from their land,
 And gained a peace to last for many a day.

Ever in Mewar is in honour known
 The name of Gorah, while young Badal grown
 To man's estate is ever held to be
 The pattern of the Rajput chivalry.

After this bitter time long years of peace
 Reigned in the country, and the Rana grew
 To manhood, 'neath brave Ratna's watching eye,
 And from his precepts inspiration drew.

Ratna, no longer Regent, still remained
With fair Padmini in his palace white,
And helped the Rana in affairs of state,
Showing the way to cipher wrong from right.
While Padmini by her virtuous life,
Showed an example to all Rajput maids,
Thus did they live in mutual help and trust
Through peaceful times for nearly two decades
The Rana Lakshman now to man's estate attained,
With twelve fair sons, each one well trained to fight,
Fears naught, when all the stories he is told
Of Ala-al-din and his accurséd spite,
Against the Hindoo clans, and how he crushed
His subject rulers, ground them to the dust
By over-burdening taxes, and would take
Their virgin maids to pander to his lust.
For Ala-ad-din by dastard deeds and base
Had slain his uncle, and on his throne placed,
By his disgusting life and wanton ways
Had the Imperial rule in Ind disgraced.
Yet was his power such, his wealth so large,
That no one dared his mandates to refuse,
For was his might so great, that men preferred
Their money rather than their lives to lose.
Yet deep within his vile and lustful heart
The image of Padmini still held sway,
And ever in his mind he sought to find
Some means to carry that sweet prize away.
Now finally, when he had beaten down
All rebels in his kingdom, he conspires
To risk again his fortunes in a war,
That he may gain his long delayed desires.

Doubling the taxes on his subject clans,
He raised an army, mercen'ry but brave,
Promising should they victorious be,
And by their prowess Mewar lands enslave,
Then for their pleasure should the Rajput maids
Be given them as booty of their swords,
And as their slaves for any menial task,
They would be masters of the Rajput lords.
Thus in the knowledge of o'erwhelming strength,
Al-ad-din from Delhi marches forth
To wreak his vengeance on his former foes,
Who met his treachery with righteous wrath.
Once more before the hill of Chitor on the plain,
The Moslem camps are scattered far and wide,
While close within the battlemented hill,
The Rana Lakshman and his Chieftains bide.
At first the Rajputs laugh the Prince to scorn ;
The Virgin fort upon her throne of rock
Had many enemies defied, and had withstood
Many attacks, assaulting foemen's shock.
But Ala-ad-din, remembering all he viewed,
In those past days, when, as a friend he posed,
The Rajputs had to him their ramparts shown,
And all their strength and weakness then disclosed,
Knew that outside the eastern gate arose
A smaller hill, Chitoria is its name,
And by its help his new attacking force
The valour of the Rajput Chiefs o'ercame.
This hill he saw would prove to be
The key of the defences, and he gave
Orders for it to be still further raised,
And to increase the output of each slave

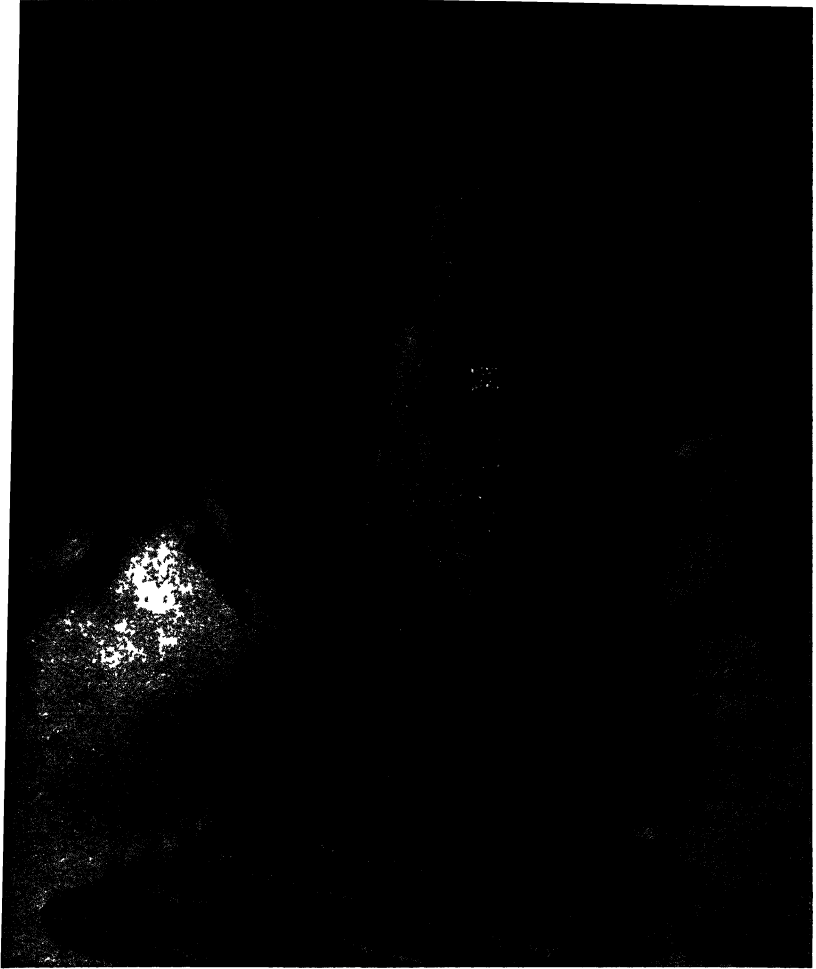
For every basketful of earth they throw
 He paid a copper coin, but ere the end,
 In his impatience, so slow it seemed to grow,
 He golden coins for copper coins would spend.
 Towards the end the mound in height attained
 Its present form, and he could thereon place
 His slings, and mangonels bring to bear
 On the defences, and batter in the face
 Of those great walls, and missiles throw among
 The Rajput forces, waiting the attack,
 Which often times; all heedless of their fate,
 They had by valour, shouting, driven back.
 Closer and closer crept the hated foe,
 The stocks of grain and foodstuffs slowly melt,
 Weaker and weaker the defenders grow,
 And amongst all the pinch of want is felt.
 Through all the summer heat, when parched and dry,
 The land in gasping spasms seems to lie,
 The Rajputs on that burning rock hold forth,
 Against the Moslems, pouring from the north.
 When the dry heat and burning dust-winds die,
 And soothing rainstorms wash the sundried plain,
 Yet in the night-time from the sodden earth
 The moisture rises, and one turns in vain
 From side to side to gain a breath of air;
 The Rana tossing on his sleepless bed,
 Brooding upon the ruin he foresees,
 Hears in the darkness close beside his head
 A voice resounding awful in its tones,
 And this it murmurs in a ceaseless call :—
 "I am thirsty, I am thirsty."
 Up then he starts and by the lamp upon the wall

He sees before him a gigantic form and dread ;
 The incarnation of the Goddess of Chitor ;
 The guardian of the city. Then he calls to her :—
 "What dost thou want ? What wouldst thou more ?
 "Hast thou not drunk enough of Rajput blood ?
 "Have I not given thee a thousand slain
 "Of Delhi's host, their corpses rotting lie
 "Below our walls out on the blood-drenched plain ?"
 To him the awful voice like thunder hurled,
 Replies again :—"The blood of Kings I fain would drink,
 "And if this city is my throne to remain,
 "And not in dreaded desolation sink,
 "Let twelve, who wear the Rana's diadem,
 "Bleed for Chitor, that I may have my fill
 "Of royal blood, then may it be that I
 "Will in this city dwell. What is it that ye spill
 "The blood of thousands, and the barbarous foes
 "Lie on our plains, defiling all the earth
 "With buried bodies ? Royal blood alone can slake
 "My burning thirst, and that of Rajput birth.
 "Therefore of thy house I bid twelve Princes be
 "Placed one by one upon the Gadi, above his head shall wave
 "The Rana's chowri, three days shall he be owned as Lord,
 "Then on the fourth leading a sortie find his grave."
 The awful voice in echoing silence died,
 The vision faded, and a sudden blast
 Caused the lamp's flame to flicker up and fail,
 While in the Rana's heart the deepest gloom is cast.
 Through the close night upon his bed he lay
 Waiting for dawn, that all too slowly came,
 Dreading the dark, yet dreading more the day
 Racked by a thousand fears he knew but could not name.

When the first streaks of earliest dawn appear,
Lighting the heavens for the new-born day,
The weary Rana rises from his bed,
To face his fate, his hair of sudden grey,
Not fear had caused the whiteness to appear,
But the demand of the dread Goddess who
Knowing the Rajput's patriotic heart
Was certain he her awful will would do.
Thus ere the sun had risen o'er the plain,
He calls his Chiefs to Durbar and relates
The message of the Goddess, while they all
Shrink from the sacrifice her thirst dictates;
Except his sons, who eager for the fray,
And all too willing give their life, their all
For this their land, and on the battle field
In dedication for their city fall.
The eldest standing forth demands that he
As first-born shall be first to lead the way,
And in the sorties 'gainst o'erwhelming odds
Be the first victim of the price they pay.
Thus is it settled, since none may hesitate
To feel full confidence in what the Goddess said,
So on the Gadi he, the first, is set,
The Sun-faced banner waves above his head,
Three days in Chitor as the Rana he
Holds court, then on the fourth leads out
His chosen band in saffron death-robcs clad,
Shouting in death the Rajput deathless shout.
So cometh it to pass that one by one
The Rana's sons, in order of their birth,
Reign for three days, upon the fourth proceed
To sacrifice their lives, they hold as worth

Only so far as for the country's weal
 Their span shall be ; until but one remains,
 Fair Ajit-Singh, the Rana's favourite son,
 Born from a Princess of the Marwar plains.
 Then spake the Rana :—"I am growing old,
 "My life is darkened by these days of woe,
 "Therefore, my son, I now command that thou
 "Far from this doomed fortress swift shall go,
 "And I as twelfth of those the Goddess asks
 "Shall, when in safety I have heard thee come,
 "Lead forth the remnant of our fighting men
 "To make the total of that bloody sum."
 At first the Prince protests the 't is his right
 To die as died his brothers for their land.
 But wiser counsel of the elder Chiefs
 He finds himself unable to withstand.
 So in the night, when all is dark and drear,
 Sad, sad at heart, he makes his lonely way
 With some few men, who bidden by their Lord,
 Are sent with him, although they fain would stay.
 Now ere the Rana leads the last sortie,
 Dread preparation on the hill is made,
 That never a woman shall remain behind,
 When the grim fort the Moslem hosts invade.
 Far 'neath the palaces in caverns dark
 Are heaped great heaps of brushwood keen to burn,
 And so that suffocating smoke may rise,
 Are fresh green leaves and tender fronds of fern.
 Padmini, still held leader, now collects
 The women round her, children, maids, and wives,
 Instilling in them dread of virtue's loss
 Greater than dread of losing thus their lives.

But ere she leads them forth, she once again
 Speaks to brave Ratna, bowed in tearless grief,
 Seeking by cheering words to comfort him,
 And bring to his near breaking heart relief ;
 "Oh, Ratna Singh ! My only Lord and love !
 "I pass before you to that land where we
 "May live again, in yet more perfect bliss
 "Than we have known in our humanity.
 "Sweet is the thought to me that I shall be
 "There ready waiting, when on yonder plain,
 "Circled about by foemen, you will lie,
 "Your body only resting 'mongst the slain,
 "While your brave spirit, immortal, will ascend
 "And find me there, nor will ye wait as most,
 "Until the pyres are lit and flames send forth
 "The female soul to meet her husband ghost.
 "May the Gods pity, and thou, my Lord, forgive
 "Me who hast drawn the lustful Moslem foe
 "Down on our lands, to scourge it for my sake,
 "And bring upon our city deathless woe.
 "Gladly would I have been the sacrifice
 "To save my land and thou from all this pain,
 "Yet had I given myself to him in sin
 "Could we have ever looked on men again
 "With pride, should we not have rather hid
 "Our eyes in shame, and walked with humble mien,
 "A race of outcasts, lower in our sight
 "Than any pariah, in our souls unclean ?
 "I know that Ratna, the good, the brave,
 "Would not have had this blot upon our race,
 "Yet do I often deem the Gods more kind
 "Had been, had I not had so fair a face.



*With head erect, and slow and stately tread,
She leads the way, in all her jewels decked,
Down to the hideous caverns of the dead*

"But of what use are all these vain regrets,
 "Our fates are written by a hand more sure
 "Than ours, and though we suffer now
 "Perchance our ills some future ills may cure,
 "And our example of a steadfast mind,
 "Holding to virtue, no matter what the cost
 "May prove incentive to others yet unborn,
 "So still in losing we may not have lost."
 Her words ending, proudly she turns about,
 With head erect, and slow and stately tread,
 She leads the way, in all her jewels decked,
 Down to the hideous caverns of the dead.
 Once entering in, the fires quick are lit,
 The openings closed, so that the smothering smoke
 May quicker stifle, may those brave women give
 A quicker death, benumbing ere they choke.
 Their women safe from hated Moslem touch,
 Then men put on their armour for the fight,
 Knowing that they shall die that day, but see
 Yet in defeat the victory of right.
 So doth the Rana lead his men from out
 The gates of Chitor, shouting as they rush,
 E'en as a torrent in its wrath doth pour
 And opposition to its passage crush,
 Yet as a torrent pouring in the sea
 Is overwhelmed, lost in its broad bounds,
 So is the Rajput force at last o'ercome,
 And naught is heard save those sad gruesome sounds
 Of groaning wounded, the shrieking of a horse,
 The panting sobs of hardly drawn breath;
 While over all the greedy vulture soars,
 Being drawn thither by the sight of death.

Ala-ad-din, the Rajputs overcome,
The city lying at his mercy, rushed
Up the steep roadway eager to obtain
Padmini as the victim of his lust.
The dreary years of waiting now are past,
And in his mind he planned a captive she
Should be led forth, into his camp below,
Where he at last could all her beauty see.
Not through reflecting mirrors would he view
Her form, as in the ne'er forgotten days,
But face to face, while she obeying him,
For him alone her every charm displays.
At last would he her naked body press,
At last his hands her silken skin caress,
Then by her beauty all his passion waked
In satisfaction would his lust be slaked.
So to the hilltop with no one to withstand
He finds his way, and to her palace hies.
But all is still, no women in the courts,
As there he seeks his long-desired prize.
Each room he searches, all is in its place,
But never a sign of her he seeks is seen.
The grey ape swings where the creepers cling,
The peacocks strut and preen.
Then from some crack, where smoke breaks forth,
The fetid scent he smells;
And on his mind breaks forth the truth,
Ringing to hope death's knells.

Wild with the fury of his unquenchéd lust,
He wreaks his vengeance on the lifeless stone,
Breaking the images, defiling sacred fanes,
Yet leaves Padmini's palace, sanctified, alone,

Full seven hundred years have passed,
Since was that deed of shame
Done, but ever yet is heard
The curses on his name.

*THE STORY OF HAMIR,
and
THE RECOVERY OF THE SWORD OF BAPPA.*

In the peaceful days, after Gorah's ruse
Had driven from the gates the Moslem horde,
And on the hill of Chitor all men lived
In peace with Laksman as their Prince and Lord,
Ursingh, his eldest son, a Prince well-known
For uprightness and kindness to those,
Who were beneath him in the social scale,
Though dreaded was he by his country's foes,
Had happened on one day to sally forth,
With other nobles to hunt a noted boar,
Which had much damage done to standing crops,
In the well-watered lands about Chitor.
After much riding through thick undergrowth,
That was upon the rushing river's side,
This monster boar broke back into a field
Of standing maize, and in its midst did hide.
The stalks grew high, so that no one could view
The hidden beast, and foolishness 't would be
To try to ride him cut from those high crops,
Where if one rode no distance could one see.
So did the Prince and those about him look
To find some men, who would as beaters drive
Their quarry for them into the open fields,
Where each with each might with their lances strive
To gain the honour of first spearing him,
As is the custom still with those who hunt
The savage boar, the prince of all the wild,
Who fights so dauntless to his dying grunt.

But though they looked around no one they saw,
Save a lone damsel on a platform raised,
Who watched the field, to drive away the kine,
That otherwise would on the crops have grazed.
Though meanly dressed, a sturdy maid was she,
With comely face, a figure well defined,
Her clear bright eyes looked calmly on the world,
Showing her nature and her fearless mind,
Seeing the quandary in which the Prince was placed,
She said :—"Shall I your quarry drive for you?"
The Prince, astonished at her question bold,
And wondering also what she meant to do,
Agreed, and watched her, as she plucked
A stem of maize, and sharpening the point,
Went to her platform, where with quick deft hands,
She fashioned it, and tested every joint.
Then gazing in the thickness of the maize,
She poised the weapon, as a javelin held,
And with a graceful movement hurled it forth
To where, she raised, the panting boar beheld.
So true her aim, she pierced him through the eye,
And her frail weapon sinking into the brain.
Killed the wild beast, though many a spear had need
To redden ere they killed him on the plain.
Now many a Prince had been with anger roused
Had any dared to tamper with his sport,
But not Ursingh, who admiration felt
For one who had this wondrous weapon wrought.
For even as the boar had by her skill been slain,
Pierced by the point of her home-fashioned dart,
So had the subtle power of her eyes
Wounded the Prince in his untroubled heart.

For through his eyes into his inmost soul
 Had penetrated, humble though her mien,
 The glory of her presence, and was killed
 All bestial thoughts, all wish for love unclean.
 Such is the wondrous power, none can explain,
 That one soul may upon another cast,
 Until in union, they no longer twain,
 Find in pure joy, all other joys surpassed.
 Later again, when in the evening time
 The Prince returned from hunting, her he saw,
 Carrying upon her head a jar of milk,
 Two kids she led, that skipped her feet before.
 Now of his train a merry youth aspired
 To hustle her, to see if she would loose
 Either the kids, or from her head upset
 The jar of milk. She, quick to see his ruse,
 By deftness of her hands, so small yet strong,
 Twisted the strings, the frightened kids drew taut
 About his horse's legs, so that the youth,
 His horse o'erthrown, on to the ground was brought;
 While all serene, as if no trouble had
 Her path beset, she moves upon her way,
 Her jar of milk unspilled upon her head,
 The kids assured, about her, fearless play.
 Then did the Prince and all his retinue
 Laugh at the trouble of that merry youth,
 Who had, by his own action, brought
 The joke against himself in very sooth.
 But by the maiden's action was the fire
 Of Ursingh's interest waked to greater flame,
 And yearning for her, he from her demands
 Knowledge of where she lives, and whence she came.

Now in those days should any Prince enquire
 Where any maiden dwelt of low degree,
 All would have thought that in his lust would he
 But seek her out his concubine to be.

Now she, who would not such a shameful life
 Live, though she be a ruling Prince's wife,

Answered :—"I live within a village nigh,

"The apple of my Rajput father's eye.

"He of the Moon-born clan, though poor,

"Holds virtue, honour, all other things before,

"Nor bows the knee to any man who's born,

"Though on his brow the royal mark is worn".

The Prince, who had no evil thoughts of her,

Was struck by her high courage, which could say

Such words to him, who had no need to sue,

If he the wanton was prepared to play.

And to her answered not as Prince to slave,

But as an equal speaks to one whose birth

Is such that courtesy demands

The equal treatment of one of equal worth.

"Oh! Maiden, do not take my words as such

"As should upon your cheeks have raised a blush,

"But ask your father to my palace fare,

"That I may in all honour meet him there.

"For I would fain your Rajput father see,

"Who is the sire of such wondrous progeny,

"A maid, so fair, so calm, so dignified,

"So full of honour, bravery, and pride."

Next morn the old war-worn Rajput came

Unto the Prince, and sitting by his side,

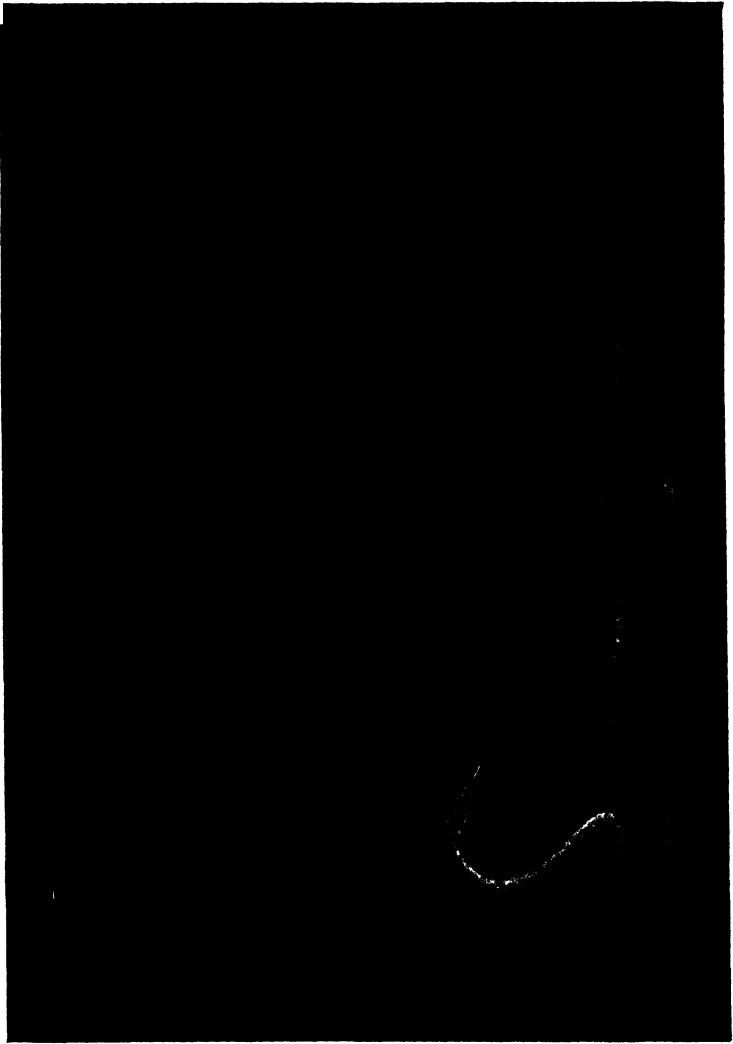
Listened in patience, while the Prince declared,

He wished his daughter as his honoured bride.

But the old man, not heeding all the love
That did the Prince inspire, nor deeming that he meant
That he would wed this humble maid, but would
Hold her a plaything, in his zenana pent,
Refused to give his daughter to the Prince,
Nor did he fear to answer in this wise,
Holding that his life was as of little worth
To her fair honour in his Rajput eyes.
For well he knew, that many a man would take
His life and then his daughter apprehend,
To be the captive of his lustful love,
When there was none her virtue to defend.
Not such the love that did Ursingh inspire,
Who, than most men, a purer code of honour held,
And would not dream to do so vile a deed,
That would have love from out her heart expelled.
So did he let her father go his way,
Nor did he chafe at this his bold reply,
But hoping yet his pride to overcome,
Did not forget, nor let his passion die.
The father to his lowly cabin come,
Relates the story to his wife, but she
Chid him, and rated him as foolish,
For in her eyes no greater honour could there be
Than to be joined, be it in any way,
To this great Prince, who would in time be set
Upon the Gadi, ruling all the land,
And by her daughter might a King beget.
So she commands him, loath though he may be,
To return to Chitor, and to humbly crave
Forgiveness for his presumptuous words,
And offer up their daughter as a slave.

Crushed and abashed, the Rajput now returns,
 And speaks the words, that he in pain was taught,
 Unto Ursingh, but he, who saw his woe,
 Knew how his mind with trouble drear was fraught,
 So raising him beside him, there he placed
 The Rajput as his equal, and he said :—
 “Fear not, my Father, I would not take from thee
 “Thy daughter, save as my honoured bride to wed.
 “I hold her honour higher than the skies,
 “And I would never dare to touch her hand
 “Save that she gave it me, in honour bound,
 “And love, by love in her, by love was fanned”.
 Thus did Ursingh this stalwart maid obtain
 To be his bride, and mutual love inspired
 Such joys for them, that all the years they lived
 No thought had one but what was most desired
 By the other, and so they lived and grew
 Their love more strong, a faithful mate to each,
 Both only lived that by their love they might
 True happiness to one another teach.
 And by the blessing of the Gods on high,
 A stalwart son was born unto the twain,
 In whom the parents’ purest virtues were
 Shown to the world, reborn in him again.
 Thus did they live in tranquil love and peace,
 Until that fateful day, when once again
 The hated Moslem, in his lustful pride,
 Camped with his army on the verdant plain.
 The tale is told of how the Goddess cried
 For blood of Princes, in her awful thirst.
 And as was right for him of primal birth,
 Ursingh to die was doomed to be the first.

His sorrowing wife, to join her Lord again,
 Mounted the pyre upon the rocky hill,
 First giving charge of young Hamir her son
 To Ajit-Singh, his parents' place to fill.
 Now when at last no hope remained to save
 Chitor from Ala-ad-din's marauding host,
 And Laksman sent his sorrowing son away,
 He, who had loved young Hamir by far the most,
 Of all the children of his daring sons,
 Placed upon Ajit this his last demand;
 That should he prove worthy, he should upon the throne
 Of Mewar, the Sesodia clans command.
 To far Kailwarra, girt about with hills,
 Ajit with his two sons and Hamir hie,
 While, prior to the Rajput sortie, all
 The women-folk of Chitor troop to die
 With fair Padmini in those gruesome vaults,
 That are beneath the palaces carved out
 Of living rock, by every being shunned,
 Guarded by some great snake to keep intruders out.
 Now after Ala-ad-din had sacked Chitor,
 And, plundering, had marched his hated army back
 To Delhi, he had as Governor at Chitor set
 The Hindu Muldeo, the Rajput clans to rack
 With heavy taxes, holding in his name
 The ravaged hill, but in the far off hills
 Ajit proclaimed as Rana dwelt secure,
 Though sadness drear his mind and bosom fills.
 There, with his uncle's sons, Hamir was taught
 The use of arms, and, by his uncle's deeds,
 Learned all the chivalry the Rajputs prize,
 And often forays 'gainst petty Chieftains leads.



.....in those gruesome vaults,
That are beneath the palaces carved out

Thus in the hardy mountain life he learns
The tactics of the skirmish or the ambush laid
Against a stronger force, or how pursuit
Could best be baffled, and in these displayed
An aptitude unwonted for his years,
And ever did he show to fear contempt,
Not heeding odds, but trusting in his skill
To foil his foe, whatever he attempt.
Now many mountain Chiefs and robber clans
Scouted a Rana, who had not any throne,
Nor would they to him any taxes pay,
Nor as an overlord to them would own.
Among such Chiefs was one, as Moonja named,
Who most offensive led repeated raids
Against the Rana in the Kailwarra lands,
Stealing the cattle and carrying off the maids.
Ajit, against him leading his own band,
By chance was wounded by a thrown lance
Cast by this Moonja, and to avenge this blow
He gave his sons and nephew this their chance.
But both his sons when asked, replied to him,
That they could never hope his foe to slay,
If he himself had failed to drive him back,
When first he came, or his approach delay.
Now Ajit finding that his sons were loath
To strike a blow in honour for their house,
Turned then to Hamir, who though a stripling still,
Was filled with valour, cunningness, and nous.
Thus did the youth reply, well pleased that he
Had been requested, by his uncle dear,
To strike this blow against the common foe.
Failure he feared, but death he did not fear.

"My uncle, if I succeed, expect me soon,
 "But if I fail, you ne'er will see again
 "My face before you. Either I conquering win,
 "Or else my body lies, dead, on the bloody plain."
 So went he forth, his uncle sad, but proud
 Of him, who though no offspring of his own
 He loved as such, who had by words and deeds,
 The semblance of his martyred parents shown.
 Scarcely a week had passed, when shouts of joy
 Welcome the youth within Kailwarra's gates,
 Unto the palace quickly does he ride,
 Where racked by bodings his wounded uncle waits.
 "Behold your foe," he cried, and at his uncle's feet
 He cast the head of Moonja, bleeding still,
 For he by prowess had the bandit Chief o'ercome,
 And did his promise to Ajit-Singh fulfil.
 His uncle, gladder at the sight of him
 Safely returned, than of his fallen foe,
 Embraced the lad, there in the Durbar Hall,
 And speaking thus, that all the Chiefs might know,
 Said :—"Surely 't is written on thy brow that thou
 "Shalt be the Lord of Mewar, therefore in this gore
 "I make the "Teeka", of sovereignty the mark,
 "Upon thy forehead. May thou, strong in war,
 "Retrieve the Kingdom, and on Chitor's hill
 "Revive once more the glory of our clan,
 "And so I deem 't will be, since as a youth
 "Thou hast already proved thyself a man."
 When Ajit, worn out by years of strife,
 Died in these mountain fastnesses, Hamir became
 The Rana of Mewar, and by his daring deeds,
 Showed himself worthy of a ruler's name.

The feudal Chiefs he calls about himself,
And by swift raids and inroads 'on the plains
Against all those who cringed beneath the yoke
Of Moslem conquerors, he at length obtains
Ascendency over all, who fain would see
The Sun-faced banner wave once more on high
On Chitor's towers, and would drive the Moslems out
From all the land, and Delhi's power defy.
Stronger and stronger did his force become,
Until the Moslems feared his name, nor dared
Attack him in the hills, he knew so well,
And had against invading foes prepared.
Now placed at Chitor by Ala-ad-din
Was this Muldeo, a Hindu Chief by birth,
Yet did he hold it for the Moslem King,
A man whose honour was of little worth ;
But yet supported by the Emperor's strength,
And situated in that fortress hill,
Hamir could not o'ercome him with the force
At his disposal, although he wreak his will
On the lush plains, and harry Moslem bands,
Journeying upon the roads to Delhi, or some town
Where they would taxes gather, but such attacks
Gained him adherents, while he gained renown.
So much he harassed Muldeo by his raids,
That he at last sought out some way to gain
Influence over Hamir, by other means than force,
And thus a plan was matured in his brain.
This plan, however, for him proved to be
His own undoing, for by it did he lose
The Fort of Chitor, that was so hardly won,
Himself the victim of his subtle ruse.

While Hamir thus was daily stronger growing,
 And Rajput warriors flocked beneath his sway,
 Muldeo sent to him a courteous word,
 Asking that he might wash this feud away.
 Proposing that, to bind them with a bond,
 Hamir should wed his daughter at Chitor,
 Thus should their houses joined together be,
 And they would stay this never-ending war.
 Now when this message came, the Chiefs declare
 That treachery is hid in Muldeo's mind,
 And should Hamir dare venture on the hill,
 Muldeo sought to have him there confined.
 But Hamir ever bold, and wishing much
 To see the state in which the fortress lay,
 Would heed no warning, that would keep him back,
 And being determined, to the Chiefs did say :—
 "Oh Rajput Chiefs ! Who now acknowledge me
 "As Rana of the Sun-got clan, but yet who reigns
 "Without a capital, a roving life and wild
 "Among the hills, or ravaging the plains ;
 "My mind is set upon our ancient home,
 "And if I venture not, how may I win
 "The city of my fathers, touch again
 "The sword of Bappa, unless I see within
 "Those frowning walls, learn how I may attack
 "With best success, see all Muldeo's strength,
 "Where is his weakness, if all men are his ?
 "And to gain this, I 'll go to any length.
 "Should he attempt to stay me, when I come,
 "My sword and those of my well-trusted band
 "Will carve a way to freedom, or we die ;
 "Though yet again no evil may be planned.

"Therefore I go, a chosen few with me
 "Will enter in the fort, and come what may,
 "Be it honour or death we there shall meet,
 "'T were cowardly for me to stay away.
 "I would not ask you, Rajput Chiefs, to hold
 "In honour one, who cowardice had shown,
 "Who feared, lest danger come to him or his,
 "To make attempt to take again his own.
 "If I refuse this offer could I look
 "The meanest Rajput straight between the eyes?
 "Worse far for me to live dishonoured thus,
 "Than take the chance of torture, for one dies
 "But once, but if one lives disgraced
 "A thousand deaths one knows. While yet again
 "If I this hazard take, and the great Gods are kind,
 "I may our sacred city for the Sun-got clan regain".
 Thus did he speak, his Chiefs still feared for him,
 But knew they could, nor would, not him hold back
 In this his venture, so with some well-tried friends
 He starts away, along the rocky track,
 That leads from out Kailwarra t'wards the plains.
 So riding fast, but yet at such a speed
 As would not over-tax the horses, lest at last
 He found that he should all their swiftness need;
 For should he find that treachery was meant,
 And was attacked, his weaker force must try
 To cut their way through their encircling foes,
 And on their horses' speed and staunchness then rely
 To baffle the pursuit, and thus regain
 The sanctuary of their rocky mountain glen,
 Which none but they, who living in their midst,
 The pathways to, nor situation ken.

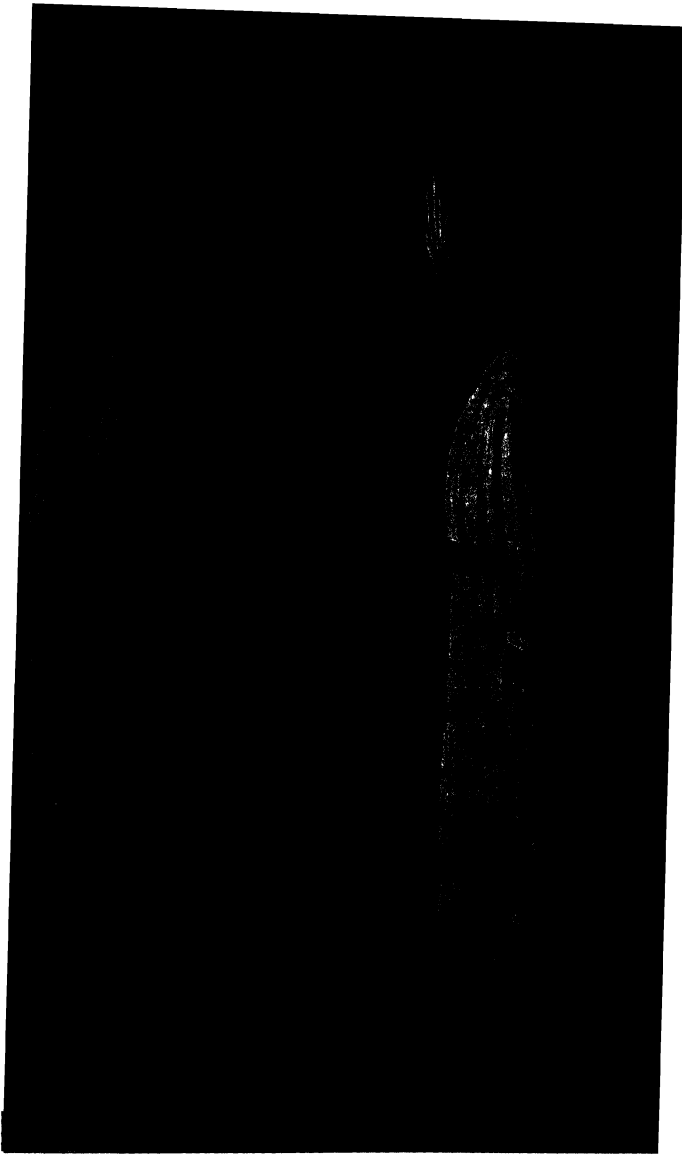
At evening time, lit by the dying sun,
 He sees again, cut clear against the sky,
 The hill of Chitor, that ever in his mind
 He longed to hold, or failing, for it die.
 For as a lover, yearning for the maid,
 That has usurped his being and his mind,
 Hamir had yearning worshipped from afar
 The city of his fathers and his kind.
 That night he camped below upon the plain,
 And sleepless spent the night, that he might gaze
 Upon the wall-capped hill, where he had spent
 His early years in childhood's happy days.
 Somewhere about him, where scented flowers grew,
 His father's blood had sanctified the soil,
 When wild with fighting lust, he stricken fell,
 Surrounded by the lurid battle moil.
 While up above upon the moon-lit heights,
 His mother's body e'en now resting lies
 Among the ashes of those women true,
 Who would not live to be the conqueror's prize.
 So sanctified for him each tree and stone
 Voiced for him there some memory or tale
 Of ancient chivalry. The rushing stream
 Sang those soft melodies that could not fail
 To him remind of those sweet cradle songs,
 His mother murmured, when in childhood he
 So small, so weak, dependent on her strength,
 Gauged not her love in its sublimity.
 When early dawn had given place to day,
 Hamir a message to Muldeo sent,
 To tell him that the bridegroom had arrived,
 And on the plain without had pitched his tent.

And that he waited until the time he heard
When should his entrance to the city be,
So that all things could ready be prepared,
As suited to a Rana's dignity.
Not long he had to wait, his man returned,
Though no one from the city with him came,
As should in courtesy, have been the case
To one of Hamir's noble rank and fame.
But though no sign of honour nor respect
Was shown the bridegroom, yet the answer sent
Was smoothly worded in itself, and he
Did not the boldness of his enterprise repent.
How be it still his followers warning gave,
Lest he should find, that once within the gate,
He be, himself, shut in, a prisoner caught,
And cautioned him, 't were better far to wait
Below upon the plain, until Muldeo sent
Some noble, they as hostage there might hold
For him, when he within the city went.
But Hamir would not listen, ever bold,
He now impatience felt at every brief delay,
That kept him from the city which he deemed
Worth every risk, whether it be of life,
And without which, of little worth life seemed.
His camp was set in order, sentries guard
All the approaches, while further pickets hide
To watch the roads and early warning give,
Should any danger from the hill betide.
Spare horses ready saddled, tethered stand,
Each man his armour wears, while on his horse
Is carried fodder, food for man and beast,
Should they to flight, outnumbered, have recourse.

Thus every prearrangement having made
Against surprise, or any treacherous ruse,
He dons, above his polished shirt of mail,
A linen robe, that hangs about him loose,
Save where as customary his kamarband
Is tightly bound and fastened round his waist,
Over a cap of steel, made strong though light,
His gaily coloured pugaree is placed.
Then mounting on his horse attended by
A score of trusty horsemen, whom he knows
Can be depended on to fight unto the end,
If by some treachery the need to fight arose,
He starts away, and riding through the gates,
All open for him, at a slow and steady pace,
He comes once more upon the tower-crowned hill,
Into the city of his clan and race.
Yet there he finds no sign of joy nor mirth,
The folk no holiday attire wear,
No cheering crowds are standing in the streets,
No clang of bells, no sound of trumpet's blare.
Up to the palace, through the streets he rides,
And even in his mind misgivings come,
Seeing no marriage preparations there,
The courtyards silent, save for their usual hum.
Above the palace gate no marriage emblem hangs,
No laughing maidens pelt him there with flowers,
No beggars sue for gifts about the doors,
No Brahmin priest a blessing on him showers.
His men askance, look first this way and that,
Fearful of treachery to him they hold as Lord,
While restless fingers tighten on the reins,
Or loosen in the scabbard, quietly, their sword.

But Hamir will not listen to their fears,
And from his horse dismounting, enters in
The Durbar Hall, where Muldeo is found,
Surrounded by his Chiefs and kith and kin.
No sign of treason does Muldeo show,
Nor yet rejoicing, as he Hamir greets,
And in the place of honour by his side
The bridegroom, as is right, he courteous seats.
No explanation of the welcome strange is given,
And, as a guest, bold Hamir would not ask,
For such a question would to all have seemed,
As taking his complacent host to task.
There in the Durbar Hall, brought at her father's sign,
The bride appeared. So closely veiled was she
By draperies, that Hamir's anxious eyes could not
Discern her form, yet this indeed could see,
That low was held her head, her footsteps slow,
As if reluctantly she had been made
To be a party to this betrothal, and in his mind
He wondered if some hidden plan was laid
To trap him by this marriage, yet would not he,
At the last moment turn away, nor show
That any doubts within his mind had come,
Though wary still, lest, by some dastard blow,
Muldeo might remove him from his path,
Seeking a chance to take away his life.
With the scant ceremony of binding shawls,
A Brahmin priest, now made them man and wife.
No conches blow, no singing girls acclaim,
The marriage over, no gay procession leads
The bride and bridegroom to their room in state,
No one the Brahmins and the beggars feeds,

Only within a simple litter tightly shut,
 The bride amongst her husband's train is led
 Down the steep pathways, to his war-worn tent,
 No handmaids with her, alone in silence dead
 So strange the whole proceedings, Hamir still
 Fears that some hidden motive lies
 Under this seeming friendship, and careful is
 To set a guard to ward against surprise.
 Then having done all things that needful be
 For safety of his followers, he went,
 In trepidation, though no foe he fears,
 Into the dimness of the bridal tent.
 Now there, at last alone together as they be,
 He feared that some entrapment in his wife was laid,
 And dreaded lest, unveiled, he then might find,
 Since no attempt upon his life was made,
 That he had wedded some deformity;
 In face or form, unfit to be a wife,
 Yet bound to him by strict religious rites,
 To be the horror of his future life.
 With trembling hand the nuptial veil he raised,
 And gazed astonished on her form and face,
 For there before him was a woman shown
 Comely and fair, endowed with every grace.
 Yet was her figure bent as though in shame,
 The lovely face was darkened in despair,
 While from her glorious eyes the tears poured forth,
 The very picture of one crushed by care.
 Hamir, astounded, not knowing what to think,
 Speaks to her thus, who sunk upon the ground,
 Grovels before him, heedless in her shame,
 Her veil withdrawn, her silken hair unbound :—



.....who sunk upon the ground,
Grovels before him, heedless in her shame,
Her veil withdrawn, her silken hair unbound

"What meaneth this? Why are we wèdded thus.
 "Without all ceremony? No mirth, no feasts,
 "No laughing maids, no decorated streets,
 "No chanting bards, no beggars, and no priests,
 "As is befitting to thy rank and mine?
 "And why shouldst thou be now bent down in grief,
 "Thy shoulders shaken by thy heaving sobs,
 "While tears themselves seem not to bring relief?"
 "It means," she cried, "that foully tricked and shamed
 "Thou hast, my Lord, by this Muldeo been,
 "Tied by the sacred marriage bond to me,
 "Who am a widow, accurséd and unclean."
 When Hamir heard these words, in blank dismay,
 He sank upon the couch, by this o'ercome;
 For did the very depths of this disgrace
 Engulf his mind in waves of anguish dumb.
 For to the Rajput mind all widows should
 Die on their husband's funeral pyre,
 Or give themselves to fasting, renouncing all delights,
 If by some chance, they may escape the fire.
 The very name of "widow" as abuse is used,
 Her presence thought ill-luck on all to bring.
 The thought of being bound to such a one
 More dread than death. to which no shame would cling.
 While thus o'ercome, the Rana sits morose,
 She speaks again, in broken accents low :—
 "My Lord! Ere yet thou crush me in thy wrath,
 "This too I fain would dying have thee know :—
 "True 't is that I a widow am, but yet a maid,
 "For still within my nurse's arms was I,
 "When on the battle-field my husband, yet unseen,
 "Met there his fate, doomed by the Gods to die.

"For Muldeo, my father, had when I was born
 "Betrothed me to this man, that he might gain
 "His help in battle, when raging round this hill
 "Ala-ad-din did every effort strain
 "To overcome the prowess of those men, from whom
 "Thou art descended, and by thy birthright's dower
 "Thou too shouldst reign upon yon frowning hill,
 "Wielding the sceptre, rehabilitate in power.
 "Why dost thou not slay me where I lie,
 "Although I know thy bright unsullied sword
 "May not be stained with my accurséd blood
 "Yet all for thee I willingly had poured
 "Each single drop, could I have saved thee from
 "This deep disgrace, nor had I felt the pain
 "As now is rending my too loving heart,
 "Had I by torture, ere this day, been slain.
 "But pardon me, my Lord, for guiltless still am I
 "Trapped by my father, unknowing what he planned.
 "And when I saw thee in the Durbar Hall,
 "So fine, so strong, so noble, and so grand,
 "Then did my heart with rapture cloud my mind
 "Until I knew not what was done nor said,
 "Nor did I really understand it all,
 "Until I saw our undorned marriage-bed.
 "But should thy goodness spare me, this I swear,
 "I will avenge thee on my father vile,
 "Who fearing thee in battle on the field,
 "Has sought to shame thee, in his shameless guile.
 "And though a woman I, and weak of arm,
 "I'll show to thee a way, by which thou may
 "Regain the city of thy fathers for thy clan
 "To hold again beneath thy Rajput sway"

At these bold words, Hamir himself aroused,
While she, who as her burning words were said,
Stood now erect, high courage in her eyes,
Her arm outstretched in passion, o'er her head,
Looked like an outraged Goddess calling down
The vengeance of the Gods on those who planned
To cast a slight, or bring disgrace upon
One who in honour should have ruled the land.
He gazes at her, wondering at the sight
Of her great passion, on her upturned face,
No longer pleading, but with a fearless mien,
Demanding to wash out their joint disgrace.
And also in the calmness of her brow,
He felt that wisdom sheltered there within,
And knew her of all baseness to be innocent,
The unwitting agent of her father's sin.
For since no signs of marriage had there been
She knew not what was in her father's mind,
And as a lamb to slaughter is unknowing led,
She had been to his future actions blind.
Nor when within the Durbar Hall she saw
Hamir upon the seat of honour placed,
Did she discern the hateful treachery,
That would have him, by wedding her, disgraced.
Therefore he felt no rancour 'gainst herself,
But by her courage and her words impressed,
Also, may be, her beauty worked a spell,
If all the truth may clearly be confessed.
He spoke to her in courteous words and kind,
Telling her, that for her he had no blame,
But asked the object of Muldeo's ruse,
To bring him there, and cover him with shame.

This then she said :—"Now in my mind I think,
 "My father's object was to take your life,
 "But knowing well he could not have success
 "Against your force in any open strife,
 "He sought to get you here, that he might hold
 "You as a prisoner, where by birth you should
 "Be ruling now. But 'gainst this plan of his
 "Some of the Chiefs, in honour firm, withstood.
 "For know ye not, that many now repent
 "Their servitude unto the Delhi King,
 "And, if a chance should offer, gladly would
 "The Emperor's yoke from off their shoulders fling ?
 "So fearing lest these men should with you side,
 "If he attempted any open force,
 "He sought again another way to find,
 "And to this plan, intriguing, had recourse.
 "For knowing well your boldness and your pride,
 "He knew that you would come, and held
 "That when you knew the status of your bride
 "All caution from your mind would be expelled ;
 "Thus, mad with rage, your weaker force you'd fling
 "Against the fortress, where his men await
 "Your speedy coming, and every rampart held,
 "Fore-doomed, you'd rush to your appointed fate.
 "Now this I counsel, if my woman's wit may lead
 "My Lord, in this our mutual enterprise,
 "That you with guile shall guileness meet,
 "And your just wrath in friendly-wise disguise.
 "Now as a bridegroom, by accustomed right,
 "You may demand a gift, nor can he dare
 "Refuse your plea, but do not ask nor sue
 "For jewels or horses, for which most men would care,

"But ask of him his counsellor, Jal the Mehta, who
 "Holds greatest power over all his Chiefs,
 "And also is a friend of me and mine,
 "Moreover by his help our present griefs
 "May be revenged, for by his influence
 "We may gain over waverers to our side,
 "And strengthening thus our hands once more regain
 "Yon fortress hill on which your thoughts abide."

Hamir consented, seeing well her plan,
 And the next day to Muldeo sent salaams,
 Praising his wife, declaring how content
 He was to find her full of hidden charms.
 Muldeo, when this message to him came,
 Much disappointment felt, nor understood,
 Why Hamir had no shame nor anger shown,
 As in his heart he fondly hoped he would.
 Also as dower with his bride he asked
 For Jal the Mehta, and Muldeo guessed
 His plans miscarried, yet nothing could he do,
 Although by bodings was his mind oppressed.
 So Hamir with his bride and councillor new
 Rode to Kailwarra, knowing that the day
 For action was not yet, but as he left
 Vowed to bring Chitor, sometime, beneath his sway.
 Two years passed by, while Hamir daily learned
 The heights and depths of woman's love, and drew
 Fresh inspiration from the Rani's selfless life,
 And ever stronger still his forces grew.
 For the sage Jal, by embassies and bribes,
 Among Muldeo's men worked in the dark,
 To shake their loyalty; so was a smouldering fire lit,
 Although above was seen no smoke nor spark.

Yet underneath the seeming quietness,
Each man but waited for the clarion call
To arms, when Hamir should himself proclaim,
And vengeful on the hated Moslems fall.
Thus then they wove the meshes of their web,
While Muldeo, ignorant, thought Hamir forgot
His treachery, and living thus in peace
Condoned his action, contented with his lot.
Now when at last their plans completed were,
A messenger in Muldeo's court appeared,
Saying the Rani wished to bring her child,
That he before her household God revered
Might be laid down, so that the Brahmin priests
May give him blessings in that holy shrine.
Muldeo absent, on some expedition gone,
His son no reason saw that he decline
This mild request, so when the Rani came
Escorted by a bodyguard, and with her brought
Old Jal the Mehta, he no hindrance raised,
But gave her welcome to the ancient fort.
Once there with Jal, she quickly set to work
To fan the smouldering fire now to flame,
So that all might be ready on the day,
When Hamir's forces against the city came.
And not in vain she worked, for scarce a moon
Had waxed and waned, when suddenly appeared
Before the hill, great Hamir in his pride,
While those within his Sun-faced banner cheered.
Through open gates manned by the men suborned,
He rides in triumph, the Rani by his side,
Honoured by all, who well her prowess know,
She, who had left a shamed unhonoured bride.

Once more the Sun-faced banner waves on high,
 Once more the Mewar Rana Chitor holds,
 Once more by all the feudal Chiefs acclaimed,
 His power and grace the regained lands enfolds.
 For many years Hamir in peace did reign,
 Strengthening all his prowess now had won,
 Blessed by the loving wisdom of his wife,
 And by the veneration of his son.
 Yet when he first the ravaged city conned,
 He found the spoiler's hand had everywhere
 Wrecked and destroyed the carven temple walls,
 Stripped all the palaces, leaving all things bare.
 Little he recked the loss of jewels or gold,
 But for one heirloom long he sought in vain,
 The sword of Bappa, by Vishwakarma made,
 That he had sworn with Chitor to regain.
 He could not deem the Goddess, who had given
 This heaven-forged blade, would suffer it to be
 Worn by those, who slaughter sacred kine,
 Cursed by all men for their impiety.
 Therefore he poured forth supplications to the Gods
 Upon the "Tiger's Mount" near by Chitor,
 Entreating Charuni Devi, Goddess of the bards,
 To teach him where he should for it explore.
 At last o'ercome by praying, falling in a trance,
 The sweet-voiced Goddess appears before his eyes,
 Telling him that which he seeks to find,
 In the dread vaults below the palace lies.
 These vaults, in which the daughters of Chitor
 Had sacrificed their lives to save their fame,
 Were shunned by every being, haunted by
 The spirits of the dead, while some proclaim

That witches and demons wander in the dark,
 And a great snake, half woman, bars the way
 In those drear depths, so loathsome and so dread,
 Unlit for ever by the light of day.
 Still Hamir was undaunted, should he fear,
 Who many odds had faced when still a lad,
 Be it ghost or serpent, witch or demon, he
 Determined was, for there the Goddess had
 Declared the sword to be, and to regain
 That blade; he would a thousand dangers face,
 For dying in attempts to gain one's own
 Is never held to be a man's disgrace.
 Down, down, down, into the heart of the earth.
 In awful darkness, determinedly he moves,
 Groping his way, his stumbling footsteps fall,
 Not knowing whether that which his foot strikes proves
 To be the ashes of his mother or the maids
 Of his own house, not if the shapes that flit and fly
 Past him are bats, or hideous demons who
 Would stay his way, nor let him pass thereby.
 At length the passage widens, and he sees
 A lighted fire, far in the distance dim,
 To which he hastens, there in the flickering gloom
 He sees a sight that almost sickens him;
 About the fire foul shapes their orgies hold,
 The sorceresses, half woman and half snake,
 Crouching around a steaming caldron black,
 They terrible, their horrid feast partake.
 "What dost thou here, O mortal man?" cried one,
 "And by what right hast thou disturbed our feast?"
 The others grumbling, gnash their snake-like teeth,
 Uttering low growls, as an annoyed wild beast.



About the fire foul shapes their orgies hold,

"I come not to disturb your feast", Hamir replies,

"I come to claim mine own, great Bappa's blade

"That by Bhavani was given to our line,

"And by the Gods in their own forges made".

More terrible the faces of the hags become,

As dimly in the flickering firelight seen,

They sign to him to raise the caldron lid,

Not knowing what their hideous doings mean,

Yet he obeys, no hesitation shows,

And looking in the depths he shuddering sees,

That which had been indeed enough

• To make the blood of any mortal freeze.

Horribly smiled the Serpent-women as they filled

A dish and placed it in the Rana's hand,

Bidding him share with them their feast,

Ere yet the sword to him they may remand,

Sickened, revolted at this awful test,

Still Hamir eats all that they gave him there,

Then from the dark recesses of the cave

The sword is brought, and handed to his care.

Back through the darkness, stumbling on his way,

Gasping and dizzy, the cold sweat on his brow,

Hamir runs forth into the light of day,

Holding the God-sent sword of Bappa now.

THE STORY OF PRINCE CHONDA
and
RANA MOKUL.

For many years, after Hamir had died,
 His son continued all the work he did,
 Making the name of Mewar brightly shine
 As being of the hated Moslems rid.
 Then after he was gathered to the Gods,
 The Rana Lakha carried on the feud,
 Wrestling many districts from the sway
 Of the old Delhi Emperor, Mahmud,
 Now to the Rana Lakha had been born
 Two sons, of whom the elder was renowned
 For bravery and honour, and his name,
 Chonda, amongst the Rajput clans redounded.
 The younger's name was Ragoodev, and he
 Was noted for a nature sweet and kind,
 Handsome of face, beloved by all was he;
 Two finer sons were hard indeed to find.
 Now was the Rana's strength so great
 That all the other Rajputs sought to make
 Alliance with him, lest in enmity
 He should their outer-lying cities take.
 So thus it happened that the Marwar Chief
 Rinmull, an embassy to Chitor sent,
 Laying before his feet the usual gifts,
 That with a marriage offer ever went.
 This marriage offer was for Chonda meant,
 But yet before the Rana's feet was laid,
 The cocoa-nut and other gifts that came,
 As if to him the offer had been made;

And he, amused at the mistake, looked down
 Upon the offering, and smiling grimly, said :—
 “Take up thy gifts, I trow thou meanest not,
 “That I, a grey-beard, should now a marriage-bed
 “Prepare for Princess Hansa. Therefore before my son,
 “Prince Chonda, let the cocoa-nut be placed
 “For ’t were more fitting youth should join to youth,
 “Than youth by age in marriage be debased.”
 A harmless joke this seemed, but to the Prince,
 Punctilious of his honour, it appears
 A shameful thing, nor would he deign
 To take the bride, when of the jest he hears,
 For in his mind the very hint that she
 Might be his father’s wife, forbade him to
 Be joined in wedlock to her now with dignity,
 Although her father’s power well he knew
 Therefore so scrupulous his nature was,
 That he refused the marriage gifts to take.
 And nothing, that the angry Rana said,
 Could make the Prince his stubbornness forsake.
 “Wilt thou no reason hear?” The Rana cried,
 “Can we insult a friendly Chieftain thus,
 “And send to him the marriage gifts again,
 “Because thou, senseless, make so great a fuss
 “About a jest that any, but a fool,
 “Would take as such, and know thou well,
 “That such a slight upon the Marwar Rao
 “Will plunge our country into dread war’s hell?”
 But still obdurate did the Prince remain,
 The Princess Hansa he would never wed,
 E’en though the Rajput country was
 Enblanketed by countless Rajput dead.

At this the Rana, furious with his son,
 Swore he himself would then the Princess take,
 And if by her to him a son was born,
 He would him Rana over Chonda make.
 To this the Prince, with haughty words, declared
 Himself agreeable, he would all claim forego
 To any son the young Princess might bear,
 And for him fight and true allegiance show.
 So thus it happened, that the Princess came
 As bride to Lakha, from the Marwar plains,
 And though as Rani did she hold her court,
 Ever and ever in her heart remains
 Anger against the Prince, who had refused
 Her hand in marriage, though by no word nor deed
 Did he forget respectfulness to show,
 Which as his father's consort was her meed.
 So time passed on. She did a son bring forth,
 To whom the name of Mokul-Singh was given,
 And ever did the Rana keep in mind his vow,
 Although the fault by him had been forgiven.
 When Mokul still was but a little child;
 Some Brahmin priests from ancient Gya came,
 Seeking an audience of the Rana, told
 Stories of how their city's sacred fame
 Had been defiled, how Mullahs sacrifice
 The sacred kine, how Delhi Nawabs reign
 Within the gates, how wanton Moslem hands
 Destroy the images in Shiva's holy fane.
 Now as Viceregent of great Shiv on earth,
 An honour handed down from Bappa's day,
 The Rana Lakha, though mindful of the odds,
 Prepares an army to break the Moslem sway.

In times before he had withstood the strength
 Of Delhi's Emperor in the open field,
 Yet had he little hope in this endeavour
 To find the Fates to him would victory yield.
 And knowing that defeated he would die,
 Rather than as a fugitive return,
 He sought to set all things in order meet.
 For when those waiting should his passing learn.
 Thus ever mindful of his ancient oath,
 And by the Rani Hansa urged thereto,
 He sends for Chonda, proud and haughty still,
 Yet ever to his word and honour true.
 Thus to the Prince, the destined Rana speaks :—
 "My son thou knowest how I vowed to thee,
 "When thou refused the marriage gifts to take,
 "That should the Rani ever bear to me
 "A son, he should above thy head become
 "The Mewar Rana, when at last am I
 "Gathered unto the Gods; now do I start
 "Upon a venture where perchance I die,
 "And ere I go, I now would ask of thee,
 "If thou wilt honour in my death my vow,
 "And let young Mokul rule here in my stead,
 "The royal "teeka" marked upon his brow "
 Then Chonda answered :—"Father, why insult
 "Me with such words, did I not answer thee
 "That I was ready my heritage to lose,
 "And to thy son a loyal vassal be.
 "Therefore by right the Mewar throne is his,
 "Let the Sun-banner shine above his head,
 "Let the umbrella be unfurled for him,
 "Should thou our father rest among the dead.

"I will be first his title to proclaim,
 "And as his guardian, watchful guide his way
 "Until he come of fitting age to hold
 "The sword and sceptre in his lawful sway."
 The Rana was delighted thus to find
 His son was ready to make good his word.
 With mind at rest, he goes upon his quest,
 From which he would not be by fears deterred.
 The Moslem forces, by numbers overcome
 The valour of the ' Children of the Sun,'
 And stricken on the field the Rana dies;
 The sacred city still remains unwon.
 When first the news to waiting Mewar came,
 That Rana Lakha lay upon the field,
 Prince Chonda governed in his brother's name,
 And regent powers in all the land did wield.
 His seat was ever placed by Mokul's side,
 His sign, the lance, was seen on every deed
 Below the Rana's, the Mewar rising sun.
 He did the forces into battle lead,
 And all men loved him, so wise his rule and just,
 Though ever were his orders in the name
 Of Rana Mokul, so upright was his mind,
 That never did he any honour claim.
 But in the heart of Hansa yet remained
 The spite and venom of a woman scorned;
 Youth bound to age, love's transports all unknown,
 Had been her fate, which ever still she mourned.
 And he the cause of this her arid life,
 Who might have made it as a garden fair,
 Ne'er looked towards her as his father's wife,
 Nor seemed her vain regrets to feel or share.

Thus she, who felt she could have found with him
 Those heights and depths of love of which she dreamed,
 Knew only love to hate of him had turned,
 And for his downfall in her mind she schemed.
 With subtlety she murmured to the other Chiefs :—
 “ ’T was well for him to put himself beside
 “The Rana Mokul, gaining through his name
 “Honour and power ever far and wide.
 “Yet this devotion to his brother’s cause
 “Served as a cloak to cover his design
 “To snatch the throne from his trusting ward,
 “When he should all his power undermine.”
 Yet was the trust of other Chiefs so great
 In Chonda’s honour, known through all the land,
 That all her guileful murmurs sterile fell
 Like putrid seed. No matter how she planned,
 She could not shake their well-conceived ideas,
 Nor their clear minds with hate like hers imbue.
 No matter how she intrigue, twist the truth,
 Still were her efforts futile, since men knew
 That Chonda’s mind no meanness could endure,
 And in their faith of him, they held that he,
 No matter what the Rani whispered in their ears,
 Could not be guilty of such infidelity.
 But when to Chonda’s ears these murmurings came,
 He felt the sullyng-breath of slander dinged
 The brightness of his honour, which he held
 Should never be by any chance infringed.
 So knowing it were waste of breath to speak
 With any woman jealous of her child,
 He then determined Chitor’s hill to leave,
 And all his power in the land resiled.

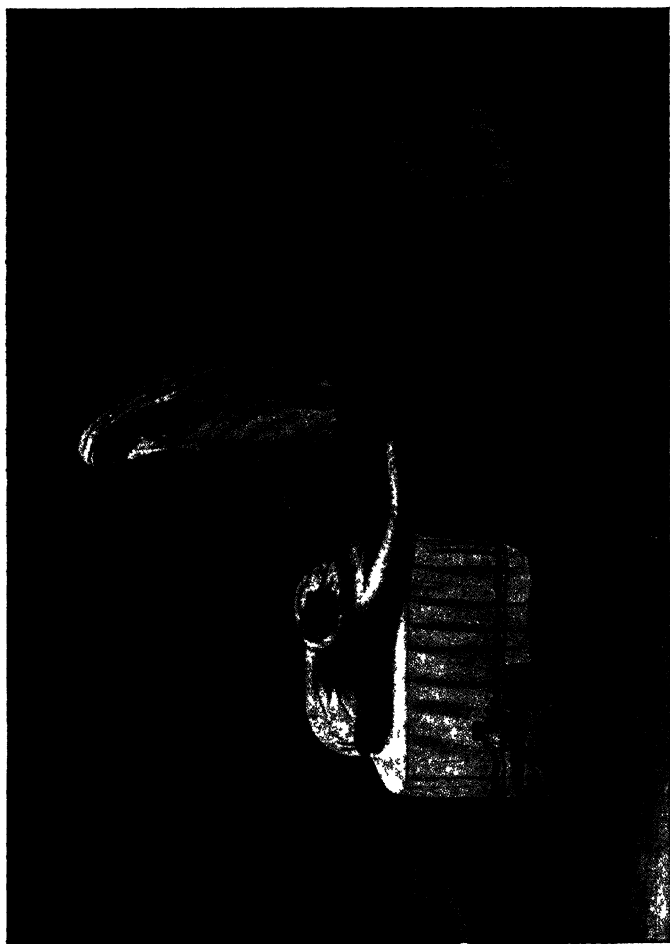
Then handing to her all authority,
He from his brother's court himself withdrew,
Riding away with scarce two hundred men,
His clansmen, to his person tried and true.
Once rid of Chonda, the Rani to her side
Calls her own kith from Marwar's arid plain,
And they, her brothers and her father, hoped
Advantage from her kinship now to gain.
The old Rao, Rinmull, found a pleasant home
In Chitor's palaces, nor wished to see
The sand-swept deserts of his heritage,
Now living in her court of trouble free.
Slowly her brothers, one by one, usurped
All posts at court the Mewar nobles held,
And though men murmured, yet by fear
Was open action against the Rani quelled,
For no one cared their lands or life to risk
For Mokul's sake, a child whose tender age
Precluded him from fending for his own,
Should they against the Rani warfare wage.
Thus did it seem that none would lift a hand
To guard the interests of this helpless child,
But all men watched with hatred in their hearts,
The courts of Mewar by Marwar Chiefs defiled.
Yet still within one person's heart there lay
Undying faith and love that brooked no slight
On Rana Mokul, his foster mother's, who
Was ready for her charge to scheme and fight
Her ever-ready eyes watched Rinmull close
Lest he should ever dare usurp the power
Of him she loved, more jealous of his rights
Than his own mother in this his evil hour.

Now so it happened, that upon one day,
Rao Rinmull sat upon the Rana's throne
Holding his royal grandson on his knees,
Until the child, of sudden, weary grown,
Struggled away to play upon the floor,
But still the Rao sat on, the Sun-disk gleamed
Above his head, and all men saw the deed,
And wondered, what within his mind he schemed.
The nurse, however, raging in her heart,
Into the Rani's presence flung herself and cried,
With bitter words, she could not now repress,
Since she had seen her darling set aside,
And slighted in his court by this low brood,
Who filled the country with their locust hordes,
And stripped the lands, usurped the claims;
Of all the older trusted Mewar Lords.
At last the Rani now her folly saw,
And feared the power which her father held,
But yet upbraided him, that he should dare
To do this deed, that every one beheld.
But Rinmull answered roughly, cautioning her,
'T were better silent to become and bear
All that he and her brothers cared to do,
Or by her tongue she might worse fates prepare
For her young son, and she might find,
That not his throne but his life were lost,
If by her actions he should after know,
That she had any of his wishes crossed.
Just at this time the news was brought,
That Ragoodev, the gentle and the kind,
Had been struck down by the servants of the Rao,
And fear and terror settled in her mind.

Through her own fault her brothers filled
All offices of state, their clansmen held
The walls of Chitor, throughout the fertile plains
The Mewar Chiefs by her had been expelled.
Then as a crown of infamy and shame,
Her father, lustful in his hoary age,
Demanded from among her private suite
A free-born maiden. his passion to assuage ;
And she in fear had dared not to refuse
To give this damsel of the royal clan
Like any common slave or dancing girl,
Bought by a price, the toy of any man.
Desperate now with terror and with shame,
Forgetting all her pride and hatred, in her fear,
She sent a message to Chonda, praying him
In her distress her humble plea to hear.
For only on his strength and goodness now
Could she with any faith or hope rely
To save the throne of Mewar for her son,
And Rinmull's power and wantonness defy.
Her messengers no answer brought themselves,
But soon a few of those, who had set out
With Chonda, came to Chitor saying they
Were weary of his service, without doubt
'T were better far on Chitor's hill to live
A peaceful life, their wives and children round,
Than in the wilderness to ride and fight,
Without a home, to sleep upon the ground,
To never know wherefrom a meal will come.
To starve and thirst, to suffer cold and heat,
Not knowing whether as the nighttime fall
They will a friend or foeman waiting meet.

So no one troubled when they listless came
Within the palace, as in days of yore
They wandered in and out, nor did they think
They messages to Rani Hansa bore.
For in this wise had Chonda thought to send
Word to the Rani to be stout of heart,
For he was coming back to stand beside
The Rana Mokul; yet before he start
She should accustom every one to see
The Rana riding round upon the plain,
And visit villages and temples round about,
But more especially Gosoonda's sacred fane.
There at the "Feast of lights," a feast should be
Given to all, who come from far and near,
And on that night he would in succour come
To brush away her haunting dread and fear,
She, trusting in his word, caused all to be
As he had ordered, countless lamps were made,
And preparations for the sacred feast,
The Rana daily riding was displayed
To all and sundry, every Chieftain vied
To have the honour to his escort be,
Whenever he returned from off the plain,
A mark of honour and of courtesy.
At last the day arrives and wanes to night,
The lamps are lit on palaces and cot,
But though the Rani's faithful servants look
The face of Chonda they discover not.
Homeward at last with drooping heads they ride,
Having fulfilled the Prince's least behest,
But yet no sign of him they see nor hear.
Has he forgotten, or defeated in his quest

O'ercome by Rinmull left them to their fates?
For if he fail them then all hope is dead,
And Mewar 'neath the heel of Marwar will
Remain, all thought of freedom ever for them fled.
Now as they slowly to the lower gateway come
The sounds of horses at the gallop break
The stillness of the night, and turning they
See forty horsemen speeding in their wake.
The leader, poorly dressed but strongly armed,
Makes signal to the Rana as he passed,
By which those watching, all their senses strained,
Know that Prince Chonda comes to them at last.
As gate by gate the leader seeks to pass,
"Who cometh here?" the gateway warders cry,
To which he answers, at the feast he chanced,
And was an escort granted to supply
To Rana Mokul to his palace door;
The warders satisfied, the men pass through
Gate after gate, until the last is reached,
Whence on the plain the dawn-light brings to view
A larger force, crossing the river ford,
With spear heads glinting, and with armour bright,
Whereat suspicion rises in the minds
Of Rinmull's men at this unwonted sight.
Finding no hope by strategy to gain
A further entrance the leader draws his sword,
And in another moment echoes forth,
The battle-cry of Chonda for his Lord.
Adherents flock around on every side,
Sick of the Marwar rule, so long oppressed,
And eager now the yoke to throw aside
And see their wrongs in tyrants' blood redressed.



... .. Upon his bed he lies,
By opium lulled to more than natural sleep,
While at his side the Rajput woman stands,

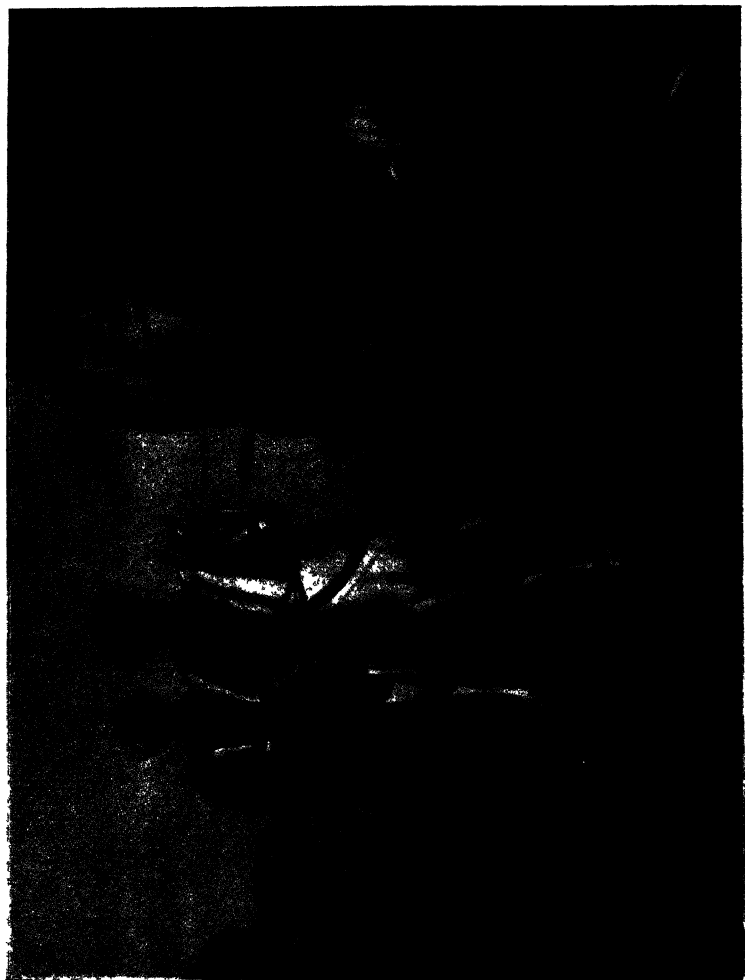
The Marwar Princes taken by surprise
Are soon o'er-powered, although they do resist.
The guardians of the gates are slain, the gates flung wide
To the main body approaching through the mist.
But what of Rinmull, whose place is at the head
Of his own force? Does he a coward hide?
Or as a fugitive, before the vengeance fall,
Back to his strongholds to the northward ride?
Not such his fate. Upon his bed he lies,
By opium lulled to more than natural sleep,
While at his side the Rajput woman stands,
Nursing within her outraged bosom deep
Her hatred of him, who had brought her shame,
Waiting the time, of which some hint she knows,
When she can vengeance take on him who is
The author of her misery and woes.
Listening, she hears the clamour on the walls,
And rising with the Rao's own turban bound
Him to his bed, until naught but a knife
Could set him free, while everywhere resound
The heavy tramp of feet, the clash of arms,
The shout of Chonda's men, the wounded's moan.
At last he wakes, he sees around his bed
The faces of his foemen, while he lies alone.
His head still clouded by the drug, he tries
To raise himself, but vainly does he strive,
His victim had her work too deftly done,
Though every moment does his strength revive.
The bed still fastened, clinging to his back,
A desperate struggle brings him to his feet,
And glaring round about him for a sword,
He anxious is his glowering foes to meet.

No weapons are there lying near to hand,
But a brass basin standing on the floor,
Which cumbered as he was he snatches up
And hurls among them, making for the door
But ere two steps are taken, pierced he falls
By many swords, all eager to efface,
By his warm blood, his wanton lust and pride,
Which had upon the Rajputs brought disgrace.
Thus was Chitor of grasping aliens purged,
And Rana Mokul, saved from base designs,
In peace remains with Chonda by his side,
Whose loyalty now, not e'en the Queen maligns.
So till the age of manhood did he grow,
Taught by his brother all a ruler's arts ;
Then when at last he comes to man's estate,
Chonda no longer needed, to Mundore fort departs.

THE STORY OF RANA KHUMBA.

Among the nobles at Rana Mokul's court there were
Chacha and Maira, two brothers these, the sons
Of Mokul's grandsire, yet their mother was
No legal wife, a bondmaid; so the legend runs,
The daughter of a village carpenter; her face
Had pleased the Rana in the ancient days,
And though low-born he loved her well and made
Their offspring nobles, and in other ways
Sought to make light the stigma on their lives,
But they were ever watchful for affront,
Or some allusion to their mother's birth;
For always do the children bear the brunt
Of the prenatal actions that their parents do.
And this well-known to the courtiers made
A weapon which could wound them to the quick,
If ever any one such spitefulness displayed.
Now Rana Mokul on an expedition gone
Against a clan of robbers in the hills,
Was one day sitting 'neath a grove of trees,
Where grateful shade the fertile valley fills.
About him lay his courtiers, in repose,
When he espied a tree, that seemed as strange,
Standing alone upon a rocky hill,
The outpost of the greater mountain range.
He thoughtless turned to one, who by him sat,
And asked its name, but he with hidden spite,
Feigned ignorance, but suggested that
Chacha and Maira could tell all trees at sight.

Unwottingly the Rana turned and asked :—
“Uncle, what is the name of yonder tree?”
Whereat the brothers thought he cast a slur
Upon their birth and new-born dignity.
Rage fills their hearts, that thus before the court,
The Rana chose to hint their lineage low,
And vowed, that ere another day had past,
They would their vengeance for the insult know.
The sun still tinged the heavens with his light,
When at his prayers the Rana was attacked
By his two uncles, lusting for his blood,
And into pieces by their swords was hacked.
His son Prince Khumba, was but still a youth,
Yet in this crisis proved himself a man,
Showing a readiness and forethought, which has made
His name more noted than any of his clan.
Khumba now called Rao Joda to his aid,
A Prince of Marwar, who had been
One time the foe of Chonda, but by birth
Was brother to the Rana Lakha’s queen.
He now forgetful of the bygone feud,
Responded to the call, and sent a force,
Under his son’s command, a thousand men,
The pick of all his infantry and horse.
Thus did the Rana with the help he sent
Chase through the land the murderers of his sire,
Driven from place to place upon the plain
They cannot hope to stand against his ire.
Further and further amongst the hills they flee,
Until they come to Ratakote the strong,
A fortress on a mountain peak, where they
Hope by its strength their being to prolong,



*Hard on the brother's track, the avenging Princes came,
Making their way among the passes in the hills;*

Here in the fort they stayed, preparing for a siege,
 Not deeming that by any quick attack
 Could it be taken, impregnable it seemed,
 And hoping that, some other troubles calling back
 The Mewar Rana and the Marwar Rao,
 They would be forced to raise the siege, and they
 Left unmolested on the rocky hill,
 Find opportunity themselves to steal away.
 Hard on the brother's track, the avenging Princes came,
 Making their way among the passes in the hills;
 When they were met by one, who cried aloud
 To them for justice for his unjust ills.
 The Rana halting, bid him tell his tale;
 Whereon the man, his head bowed down in grief,
 Sobbed forth his plaint, the very telling which
 Seemed to his mind to bring some slight relief :—
 ‘My name is Soojah, of the Rajput Chohan clan,
 ‘The father of a daughter, tall and fair;
 ‘Yet by the veiled wishes of the Gods
 ‘Unblessed by any stalwart son or heir.
 ‘Age creeps upon me, my arm grows weak,
 ‘My hair turns grey, my eyes are dim of sight,
 ‘No more can I, as in the days of yore,
 ‘Hold now my own in open strife or fight.
 ‘So did it happen in one of their forays,
 ‘Chacha and Maira my fair daughter spied,
 ‘And seizing her, have carried her away
 ‘To Ratakote, me, helpless, they defied.
 ‘There in their fort, they knowing me so weak
 ‘Without a son to venge a sister's shame,
 ‘Have cast dishonour on my house and clan,
 ‘Dragged in the dust an old and honoured name.

"E'en now I journey to the Rana's court,
 "To crave his help to wash away the stain,
 "For well I know a way by which he may,
 "Unknown, entrance to the fortress gain.
 "Disguised, within the walls I've laboured there,
 "When the defences they would stronger make,
 "So might I see where best assault could be,
 "If ever on them could I vengeance take.
 "The crags are steep, the climb will be
 "Dangerous and desperate, but on one side
 "'T is possible to scale the rocky hill,
 "If he should let me there his forces guide.
 "And once upon the level, where the walls
 "Rise from the rock, no difficulties remain,
 "Since do the inmates, in their blindness, trust
 "The beetling rocks that rise from out the plain."

The Rana, grieving for the father's wrongs,
 Rejoiced to find a guide, who now could show
 The strength and weakness of this fortress, which
 Was limned against the dying sunset glow.
 So turning to him, he proclaimed his name,
 And swore that vengeance for this rape should be
 Given to him, who suffered greater loss,
 In that they smirched his Rajput dignity.
 Cunningly their plans were laid, no chance
 Was taken, all was prearranged,
 A special band was chosen for the climb,
 The sign and countersign to be exchanged,
 When once within the fort, they flung the gates
 Wide to the others of the assaulting force;
 While down below picked horsemen stationed were,
 Lest the besieged to flight should have recourse.

Soojah to lead should first the pathway climb,
The Marwar Prince should follow then below,
While Khumba with the others would remain,
Until they signals from the fortress show.
Dark was the night, the thunder crashed,
The lightning glistened on the rain-swept stone,
The tempest raging seemed itself to strike
The fortress with such hatred as their own ;
But still they climb where never living thing
Save a wild goat, it seemed could find a rest
For searching feet ; where might an eagle perch,
Seeking a place of safety for her nest.
Yet making use of every bulge and crack,
Clinging with hands and feet, the Rajputs crawl,
Not one may speak, nor ask for help nor give
Direction, lest on the surrounding wall
A sentry hear, so silently and slow,
In single file, they nearer and nearer creep
Up to the fort, their hearts with vengeance wild,
Eager the harvest of their foes to reap.
When at the summit of that awful crag,
Soojah, about his final length to rise,
Saw, on the level with his steel-clad head,
Two balls of fire, gleaming in his eyes ;
There crouched a tigress, watching o'er her cubs,
But naught could now the stricken father stay,
Were it a tigress or a demon in her shape,
That would him from his purpose turn away.
Silent he touched the Prince to show
The waiting menace, lying in their road,
Who, clinging to a rock, his dagger plunged
Into her side from which her life blood flowed,

In death-born spring, she hurtles down the side,
 Crashing the rocks, into the plain below.
 Surely the sentries, standing at their posts,
 Will hear the noise, descry the coming foe?
 Yet was the night so rough, the rain so chill,
 That thinking none could scale the hillside steep.
 The sentries, sheltering from the tempest's rush,
 Had left their posts, and all unvigile sleep.
 No one has heard the foemen's coming, but a maid,
 Vile Chacha's daughter, by the thunder woke,
 Hears a dull sound, as striking rock to rock
 The tigress falls; and to her father spoke:—
 "Father! I hear a sound, a falling stone
 "Out in the darkness. Dost thou deem
 "Our foes are coming? Fear fills my heart,
 "And in yonder lightning's beam
 "I thought I saw the semblance of a man
 "Upon the ramparts, clad in mail."
 But Chacha answered:—"Sleep again my child,
 "No foeman living ever yet could scale
 "Those rain-washed rocks, on such a night as this.
 "The man thou sawest would our sentry be,
 "So fear no more, let slumber close thine eyes,
 "In trusting faith in our security."
 So did the murderers unsuspecting sleep,
 Their watchmen faithless to their irksome trust,
 While retribution nears their fated heads,
 The satisfaction for their bloody deeds and lust.
 Suddenly on every side is heard,
 The war-cry of the Rana in the fort,
 The renegades too late themselves have found,
 By their own laxness, by young Khumba caught.

The garrison too late their arms snatch up,
The gleaming swords appear on every side,
While more and more seem rushing to the fray,
Pouring upon them from the gates flung wide.
The Rao and Soojah, foremost in the strife,
Press on to where the brothers stand at bay,
Such is the power by their hatred given,
That none can stay them on their corpse-strewn way.
At last the father before the ravager arrives,
His arm to youthful vigour by his fury nerved,
His blazing eyes to Chacha's heart proclaim
The fate that he so richly has deserved.
Turning he flees, with Maira by his side,
But vengeance follows quickly in their wake,
Through pillared halls with many a twist and turn,
Yet from their heels pursuit they cannot shake.
Cornered at last like dying rats they turn,
But more than human strength old Soojah fills,
Who with a shout upon vile Chacha falls,
In whose warm blood is washed away his ills.
The Marwar Prince beside him Maira slays,
By one swift thrust ; they let them bleeding lie,
Unloved in life, of bastard blood and low,
Unmourned by any in their death they die.
Thus at a moment was at once avenged,
The murder of a Rana, and the shame
Of a poor Rajput maiden washed away,
In death of those who royal descent could claim.
Thereafter Khumba, having justice dealt
To these his father's murderers, he set
Himself to reign with wisdom and with strength,
Nor did he Joda's timely help forget.

Now at this period, the Delhi Empire was
 Rent by sedition, by Timur late attacked,
 Who had descended from Afghanistan,
 And towns and villages had burned and sacked.
 Like a river in flood from the hills he came,
 Sweeping all before him on the Northern plain,
 Crushing all that stood before his way
 For one dread year, till he returned again
 Wading through blood that he himself had spilt,
 Back o'er the land with rotting corpses heaped
 To snatch at kingship, and royal power claim.
 Leaving ungarnered the harvest he had reaped.
 The Delhi King, his forces broken up,
 A puppet was, an Emperor but in name,
 While in the provinces his regents sought
 To snatch at Kingship, and royal power claim.
 At Jaunpur rose the "Kingdom of the East,"
 In Gujarat a faithless Rajput reigned,
 The Deccan, already broken from his rule,
 An independent kingdom now remained.
 Malwa, which once a Hindu realm had been,
 Now from a province to a self-ruled state
 Was under Mahmud, isolated, held,
 Who sought by conquest his power to inflate.
 Against his neighbours successful war he waged,
 Defeating one by one the upstart Kings,
 Jaunpur, the Deccan, and Gujarat he took,
 And Ajmer city 'neath his sway he brings.
 Then allied to the treacherous Rajput who
 Filched Gujarat from out the Emperor's hands,
 He cast his eyes on Mewar, lusting for
 Their strongholds standing midst their fertile lands.

But Khumba, watching all, the menace knows,
 And calls about him all his vassal clans,
 And treaties makes with other neighbouring Chiefs,
 Insuring for them protection of their lands.
 Then about his person he collects
 An army trained, and well-equipped for war,
 A hundred thousand men, both horse and foot,
 And numerous elephants, a countless store
 Of all munitions, of javelins and darts,
 Of food and grain. The elder men he trains
 For garrisons to man his line of forts,
 That stand about to guard the Mewar plains.
 And knowing well the value of surprise,
 He does not wait himself to be assailed,
 But into Malwa leads his well-found force
 And over Mahmud in the field prevailed.
 Thus did a bard describe the victory and the rout
 Of Mahmud, and the Rajput who had stained
 His honour first as Delhi's vassal low,
 And then from treachery had not refrained.
 "Like the sun in his splendour, our Rana appears,
 "To rule o'er the earth without terror or fears ;
 "From out of the darkness, when murder had shed
 "The gloom of the night as his father lay dead,
 "He rose in his glory, and chasing the night
 "Spread over the country the blessing of light.
 "Though youthful his age, like an old man he thought,
 "And revenge for the murder on his uncles he wrought.
 "The justice of heaven he showed on the earth,
 "And Mewar was filled with rejoicing and mirth,
 "For all neath his banner felt safe since his mind.
 "Was ever so upright, so bounteous, and kind.

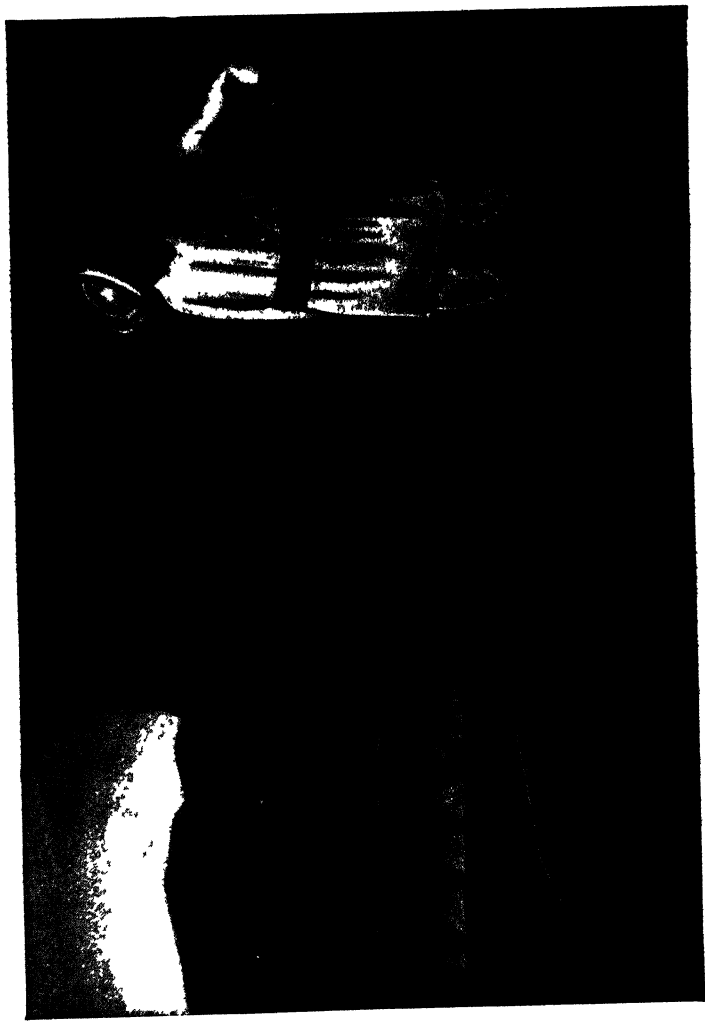
"But yet though in peace he was wishful to reign,
 "To the training of arms he did not refrain;
 "Well knowing the truth, that the blessing of peace
 "Would come the more surely with his power's increase.
 "So thus when proud Malwa his lands did desire,
 "Thinking that them he with ease could acquire,
 "He found Khumba ready, whose hosts were led forth,
 "Resplendent in peace, relentless in wrath.
 "His Surya-faced banner reflecting the light,
 "Himself clad in armour, untarnished and bright,
 "His horsemen and footmen in countless array
 "As the sands of the desert, now haste to the fray.
 "The sunlight reflecting the light from each shield,
 "Shows the forces of Khumba to Mahmud revealed,
 "While the war-cry of Mewar like thunder rolls deep,
 "As to waken the dead from their infinite sleep.
 "The clash of their arms as the armies engage,
 "In the lust of the battle, which but death can assuage,
 "Rings up to the heavens where Surya rides,
 "And watching the struggle at noon-height abides,
 "Great Khumba is ever to be found in the van,
 "His sword dripping blood, that in rivulets ran
 "Round his feet from the slain he had struck to the ground
 "With the great sword of Bappa, in legend renowned.
 "The blood-covered plain as a sunset-lit lake,
 "Dotted with rocks the semblance did take,
 "With great islands formed by the elephants dead,
 "Black ere the last beams of daylight has fled.
 "So swift was the onslaught, that Mahmud gave way,
 "Till his Rajput reserves rushed into the fray,
 "The forces of Khumba are checked and fall back
 "Before the fresh strength of the allies attack.

"Now Khumba stands forward and calls to his side
 "The pick of his army to stem the wild tide
 "Of incoming foemen, who threaten to break
 "Through the midst of his line where all is at stake;
 "Responding, the men of Mewar stand out,
 "The sun-faced banner above them they flout,
 "With their ruddy-stained swords they charge on the foe,
 "The prowess of Rama, their father, they show,
 "Their horses loud neighing, they shout in their pride,
 "As they hurtle to battle their Rana beside,
 "Like a storm from the heavens, of sudden set free,
 "They burst on their foes, who before them now flee.
 "Their swords flash like lightning in summer displayed
 "On the edge of the heavens, as herding dismayed
 "The cohorts of Mahmud fall fast on the plain,
 "Already encumbered by ramparts of slain.
 "The Rana, still leading, before Mahmud appears,
 "Encircled by horsemen, protected by spears,
 "But naught can withstand the Rana's attack,
 "As a pathway before him his chosen men hack,
 "Till all but surrounded, proud Mahmud, abased,
 "Surrenders himself, his honour disgraced.
 "His force without leaders, melts away as the mist
 "Is thrust from the earth that the Sun-god has kissed.
 "Triumphant the Rana returns to Chitor,
 "The news of his triumph fast speeding before,
 "In every village and town on his way
 "Rejoicing is heard from the men 'neath his sway,
 "While behind like a thunder-cloud hiding the sky,
 "The far-seeing vultures to their waiting feast fly."

Mahmud defeated, his Rajput ally slain,
The Rana Khumba back in triumph came.
Yet though his captive had aggressor been,
Him would he not humiliated shame,
But treating him, within his guarded walls,
More as a guest than as a captive, he
Showed by this graciousness unto his foe
His mind unspoiled by ignobility.
While six moons waxed o'er Chitor's hill
Mahmud remained, repenting of his greed
For power, which had led him to aspire
To crush to earth the war-like Mewar breed.
Watching, within their fort, their simple lives,
Their hate of luxury, and vices that impair
Their manhood strong, how with the common men
The nobles all the campaign rigours share,
He learned the reason, they had always held
Themselves undaunted by any adverse fate,
And though defeated, by numbers overcome,
For the reaction were content to wait;
How never, holding honour as their pride,
Had they bowed down beneath the Moslem yoke,
Nor ever would their hatred of the race
Of Ala-ad-din, the ravager, revoke.
Thus did it come to pass, that in his mind
Was born respect for these his former foes,
And when at last release to him is given,
'T is as an ally that he proudly goes.
No ransom does the noble Khumba ask,
Nor tribute take in money or in land,
But heaped with gifts in honour he departs,
This one who had such bitter vengeance planned.

By this forbearance was Khumba well repaid,
 When with Mahmud as ally, he defeats
 The Emperor's force, that had attacked his state,
 But back to Delhi, broken up, retreats.
 In token of his victories in the field
 The Rana raised a tower on the hill,
 The crowning glory of the wondrous piles,
 That all the beetling crest of Chitor fill.
 Carved with an imagery of countless Gods,
 Of dancing girls, of horsemen clad in mail,
 Ten years it took to fashion stone by stone;
 No mind can grasp, and all descriptions fail
 To limn the magic of those carven stones,
 Each one a masterpiece, while does the whole
 Form by conjunction of these superbities
 A living emblem, seeming graced with soul.
 Each morning by the eager sun caressed,
 It wakes to life, in bold magnificence;
 While in the evening, pink in the sunset glow,
 It seems to blush in virgin innocence.
 Fit token of a victory, cleanly gained,
 For half a thousand years it has proclaimed
 The honour of the Rana, who has been
 "The Architect of Mewar" fitly named.
 For not alone this masterpiece displays
 His preternatural taste, but many temples too
 He did erect, while on the wide-spread plains
 Great forts he built, where'er his power grew.
 For fifty years great Khumba reigned,
 Renowned for wisdom, justice and for power,
 Loved by the clans, who thrived beneath his rule,
 But feared by those, who from his strength must cower.

Raimul, his eldest son, he sent away
 To rule his further outerlying states,
 While in his court a dastard son he keeps,
 Who for his father's death, impatient, waits.
 Thinking within his heart, that he may snatch
 The throne ere his brother can return
 To claim his own, and holding Chitor's fort,
 He all attacks could by its stoutness spurn.
 Long did he wait, but yet his father lived,
 While did his lust for wealth and power grow,
 Yet since all men old Khumba dearly loved,
 He could not dare his loathsome hopes to show.
 Still secretly, to such a depth did sink
 The vile disease of his unbridled greed,
 He sought some way by which he might obtain
 That which he could not take by open deed.
 So 'mongst the lewd companions of his vice,
 The panders to his avaricious aims,
 He looks for one, who will not shun to do
 To death the Rana, whom all the land proclaims
 More as a father, ruling by their love,
 Strong in their faith of him, who justice gives,
 Whose noble life, immortalized in stone,
 Still in the annals of his country lives.
 O'ercome by promises of untold wealth,
 A drunken bard consents to do his will,
 And with a dagger plunged into his back,
 Does the most famous Mewar Rana kill.
 His father dead, the murderer swiftly seized
 The fortress, but could not allegiance gain
 From Mewar nobles, who to Raimul held,
 Camped with an army on the circling plain.



*O'ercome by promises of untold wealth,
A drunken bard consents to do his will,
And with a dagger plunged into his back,
Does the most famous Mewar Rana kill.*

By bribes and bounties scattered all around,
 He tried to hold the power in his hands,
 Thinking that others, like himself, might be
 Tempted from honour by the gift of lands.
 At last defeated by Raimul's strength he flees
 With terror stricken to the Delhi court,
 And there a humble suppliant he comes
 To beg and pray for succour and support.
 Before Buhlol, first of the Lodi Kings,
 Shaking with fear, he cringing to him pleads,
 Adding by this, the crowning infamy
 'To all the blackness of his darksome deeds.
 Thus does he whimper, he a Rajput bred :—
 "Oh mighty Emperor! First scion of thy race,
 "I from my Kingdom by my brother driven,
 "Crave now before thee for thy help and grace.
 "If thou wilt deign to help me in my need,
 "And from my brother's hatred save my life,
 "Then will I bring for thee beneath thy sway
 "The lands of Mewar, and will give as wife
 "To thee my daughter, born of the Sun-got clan,
 "The first of all that race to honour find
 "As bed-mate to a Moslem Delhi King,
 "Thus we by wedlock will our treaty bind."
 Buhlol, this vileness heard, his disgust veiled
 For such a one of honour's thoughts bereft,
 And did he watch him with a scornful eye,
 As from the audience fawningly he left.
 But Surya in the heavens, looking down,
 Behind a thunder cloud withdraws his face,
 Unwilling in his anger to be a witness to
 This vile dishonour to the Sun-born race.

Nor would the Gods allow an infidel,
A cow-slaying Moslem, a Mewar maid to wed ;
Thus as the traitor left the palace gate,
Their true-aimed lightning struck the dastard dead.
A blackened corpse defiles the marble stair,
But not his name the annals of his land.
Nowhere among those lustrous names is found
That of this creature, who its downfall planned,
Only below the name of Khumba may be seen
The words, "The Murderer" these noble names among,
The title of the basest of the race,
That from the seed of Rama's loins has sprung.

THE EXPLOITS OF PRITHI RAJ.

The Rana Raimul, who had driven out
The vile murderer of Khumba, reigned in peace
For many years ; though border raids
Prevented him his army to decrease.
Thus by the constant forays in the hills,
The march and counter-march across the plains,
The prowess and endurance of his force
Ever at the highest pitch remains.
Now to the Rana three stalwart sons were born,
Sanga, the eldest, of nature strong and sure,
One who would not to needless danger run,
Careful his way to clearly see before.
The second, Prithi Raj, impetuous was,
But was he fashioned in a God-like mould,
Upright and tall, with clear and sparkling eyes,
Fearless, adventurous, in all things over-bold,
Not ever reckoning opposing odds,
His name a byword through the country ran
For gallantry and courage, and he became
Noted for feats of arms ere yet a man.
Jaimul, the third, a wanton in his heart,
Was ever ready the stronger side to take,
Not his the character to lead the van,
But as a parasite to follow in the wake.
Knowing his own strength, bold Prithi Raj despised
His brother Sanga's even-balanced mind,
And in the vanity of popular acclaim
Was to his more reliant virtues blind.

Thus did he deem himself more fitted to
 Succeed his father on the Mewar Throne,
 Longing to lead the Rajputs in the field,
 And in his heart the evil seed was sown
 Of malice and envy 'gainst his brother, who
 By right of birth this regal honour claimed.
 And often did he declare that fate
 Had meant for him to be the Rana named.
 Once in his brother's presence did he speak
 All that he felt with arrogance and pride,
 To which his brother Sanga, from envy free,
 To him, with seeming want of will, replied :—
 "Brother, thou sayest, that the fates have meant
 "That thou shouldst rule, and I the vassal be,
 "Therefore now let the all-knowing Gods decide,
 "And let us stand by their august decree.
 "Although I am the eldest born, will I
 "My birthright and my privilege forego,
 "If in the answer to our mutual pleas
 "The Gods their preference for thee may show.
 "Upon the "Tiger Mount" a priestess dwells,
 "Who daily with our patron Goddess holds
 "Dread intercourse, she asked, may truly speak
 "Of these the powers which our destiny enfolds.
 "Therefore before her let us trusting come,
 "And ask who 't is that do the fates decree
 "To be the ruler of the countless Mewar towns,
 "When shall our father to heaven transported be"
 To this agreeing the three brothers start,
 To find what they can from the priestess glean ;
 Accompanied by their uncle Soorâjmul,
 Who had a witness to their converse been.

A rock-strewn hill, rising above the plain,
 Formed by some freak in nature's playful mood,
 Like to a tiger crouching o'er his prey,
 Clear cut against the dying sunset stood.
 The "Tiger Mount", while ensanguined seemed
 The marble temple, resting on its brow,
 Carved with a thousand marvellous twisted shapes,
 In front the Shivite "lingum" and his cow.
 Slowly the steep incline footworn, they climb,
 The uncle leading, Jaimul in the rear,
 Prithi Raj, his noble head erect,
 To tempt the fates no wavering has nor fear.
 Sanga with solemn face but steadfast tread,
 Behind him follows, contented to abide
 By what the righteous Gods on high should deem
 The best for Mewar in their knowledge wide.
 Empty they find the temple when they come,
 Within the precincts a solitary light
 Shines on the image of the Goddess, while
 All else is shrouded in the shades of night.
 Far, far below they hear upon the plain
 The lowing cattle returning to their byres,
 The tinkling of some far-off temple bell,
 Their escorts' voices round their cooking fires.
 But all around them on the sacred hill
 The list'ning silence, that they seem to feel,
 Casts over them a fear of coming ill,
 Hid in the future the Goddess may reveal.
 Gathering within the priestess' deserted cell,
 They wait her coming, in silence and in dread,
 Sanga upon a panther's skin reclines,
 Jaimul and Prithi Raj upon her bed.

No sound of footfall breaks upon their ears,
 No rustling drapery her presence tells,
 As suddenly before them she appears,
 An unseen light the darksome gloom dispels.
 Majestic, stately, clad in flowing robes
 Of spotless white, her visage whiter still,
 Her raven hair unbound, her fixed set eyes
 The hidden mysteries of the future seem to fill.
 "Sons of the Rana, resplendent in your mail,
 "What of the Goddess is it that ye seek,
 "Tearing aside the veil of destiny,
 "In your defiance? The Goddess bids ye speak.'
 Prithi Raj, ever the first to lead,
 Answers for all :—"Oh Priestess we demand
 "Knowledge, if 't is thy deity's desire
 "That I or Sanga should her clans command.
 "Now thou her priestess, mouthpiece of her will,
 "Tell to us waiting, what in the future lies."
 To which the priestess, turning from Prithi Raj,
 Denoting Sanga with pointing hand replies :—
 "The panther skin the throne of Princes is,
 "E'en as thou now upon its folds recline,
 "So shalt thou sit upon the Mewar throne,
 "The noble leader of a noble line.
 "And thou his uncle," to Soorâjmul she turns,
 "Shalt after many wanderings Lordship find,
 "Where thou shalt see a mother for her young
 "Fending against the opponent of her kind.
 "And thou, Jaimul, shalt thy full measure earn
 "For all thy deeds, and in thy death receive
 "The recompense and payment thou deserve;
 "Thy name dishonoured on the earth ye leave.

"Thou Prithi Raj, a roving life shalt lead,
 "Thy home the mountains and thy roof the sky;
 "Ever adventure seeking, ye shall find
 "No peace on earth, yet not in battle die.
 "Thy deeds and exploits ever will remain
 "The inspiration of bold adventurous youth,
 "The pattern of a wild untamed Chivalry,
 "The model of unswerving faith and truth.
 "Yet shalt thou never on the throne be set,
 "Nor lead the Mewar armies in the field,
 "Nor o'er thy head the Sun-faced banner fly,
 "The sword of Bappa never mayst thou wield."

Impetuous ever, wild with blasted hopes,
 Prithi Raj, in madness, draws his sword
 To slay his brother, whom the Gods decree
 Shall be hereafter Mewar's chosen Lord,
 But Soorâjmul between the brothers steps,
 The priestess flees in terror from the cell,
 While in the darkness, echoing around,
 The sounds of strife from out the temple well.
 Far from the "Tiger Mount" a holy sanctuary stands,
 Thereby the Rahtore Beeda, on his way,
 His war-horse bridled ready for the road,
 A moment only lingers there to pray.
 When as he tarries, testing girth and strap,
 A breathless fugitive up to him rides,
 Bleeding and wounded, while his horse
 Exhausted stands with sweat-wet heaving sides.
 Bent in the saddle, ghastly to behold,
 He cries to Beeda :—"Helpless thy help I pray
 "I am Sanga, Rana Raimul's son and heir,
 "Whom now my envious brothers seek to slay.

"Jaimul with twenty horsemen follows fast,
 "My horse exhausted fails beneath my weight,
 "Therefore I crave thy fresh one at thy hand,
 "So I may fly before it is too late."
 E'en as he speaks, upon the horizon wide
 A cloud of dust rising, Jaimul displays,
 Who, thinking Prithi Raj was stricken down,
 Seeks Sanga's life, himself in power to raise.
 The Rajput Beeda, loyal unto the clan,
 Hands to spent Sanga his freshly saddled horse,
 Helping him up, his bleeding wounds he binds,
 Pointing to him his best and safest course.
 Standing before the doorway of the shrine,
 Jaimul, now coming, sees the panting steed,
 And thinks to find within the wounded Prince,
 Seeking the rest he must so sadly need.
 Leaping from out the saddle, his blade he draws,
 But Beeda stays him, standing in his way;
 "Whom dost thou seek?" The Rajput of him asks,
 "Within this shrine, where I am wont to pray?"
 Jaimul, the liar, answers:—"Stand aside,
 "I seek my brother, usurper of my throne,
 "That I in slaying him may regain peace
 "And the enjoyment of that which is mine own."
 Still does the Rajput, knowing well the truth,
 Stand in his path, his cleanly sword unsheathed,
 Saying:—"In yonder fane my guest remains,
 "My hospitality to him I have bequeathed,
 "So only across my body shall ye gain
 "Admittance there to harm a welcome friend,
 "Whom by the laws of Rajput courtesy,
 "It is my right and duty to defend."

These words he speaks, that by the brief delay
 Sanga, fast riding on a hidden track,
 May safely gain the harbour of the hills,
 While here he holds his murdering brother back.
 Placing himself with back against the door,
 Beeda the trusty holds the Prince at bay,
 Till overcome by numbers, at last he falls
 Dead in the blood-bespattered dust to lay.
 Jaimul springs forward, open thrusts the door,
 Thinking to find his brother safe within,
 Eager he looks, but only round about
 The carven images upon him seem to grin.
 Hunting around in every nook and cell
 No sign he finds of him he seeks to slay,
 And knows too late the Rajput's subterfuge
 Has saved his brother, speeding fast away.
 His horses tired, his men now weak with wounds,
 Pursuit is hopeless, nor can he in the night,
 E'en now fast falling, find over yonder hills
 The tracks by which Prince Sanga took his flight.
 Therefore outwitted, raging in his heart,
 Back to Chitor he slowly wends his way;
 While Sanga, fearing for his life, remains
 Disguised and hidden in exile long to stay.
 But Prithi Raj was not, as Jaimul hoped,
 Upon the "Tiger Mount" within the temple slain,
 Though sorely wounded, with Soorâjmul,
 Had near to death within its precincts lain.
 Now when recovered sufficiently to ride
 He came to Chitor, heedless of the ill
 That he had done by driving Sanga out,
 Thinking himself his brother's place to fill.

But Rana Raimul, who had held Sanga dear,
 Upbraided him, that he should ever dare
 To think that he, the younger son, should live
 The royal "teeka" on his brow to wear.
 "Thou who hast almost cost to me the life" he cried,
 "Of this my firstborn, and my rightful heir,
 "Driving him out, that now in fear he roams,
 "Thou too an exiled life shall like him share.
 "Since thou of strife and battle are so fond,
 "Get ye from hence, live by the strife ye love,
 "No bed beneath thee, but the sun-burnt rocks,
 "Ceiled by the sky thy sleeping head above."
 So Prithi Raj from Chitor driven out,
 Fares far away, in exile now to seek
 His fortune; as the Vikings' sons of yore
 Sought them upon the ocean rough and bleak.
 But ere he leaves, before the Gods, he vows
 Not to return, save having done some deeds,
 That shall to him bring honour in the land,
 Or till his father for his coming pleads.
 The rising sun from out the Eastward shines
 Upon him riding slowly through the gates,
 Down the steep pathway, early in the morn,
 Proud, independent, scornful of the fates.
 Behind him following, five trusty horsemen ride,
 All that are willing his banishment to share,
 Brave men and true, not minding what befall,
 Be it good fortune or death that waits them there.
 Like him adventurers, free from all fear,
 Willing their all upon a chance to stake,
 Asking no more, than every day shall be
 A hazard which from life's dice-box they shake.

Now in the time when "the Murderer" held
Sway upon Chitor, and Raimul sought his own,
The outer lying provinces by Khumba won
Seeing the power of Mewar weaker grown
By inward strife, sought to cast off their yoke,
And in revolt their Governor overthrew,
And independence claimed. Among the rest
Was Godwar, where a Meena Chieftain flew
His banner, styling himself, in arrogance,
The Lord of Godwar. Bands of reivers swept
Down from the hills, wherein his stronghold lay,
And ever at bay the Mewar forces kept.
Seeking adventure, Prithi Raj decides
To crush the power of this Meena Chief,
And in the restoration of the Mewar rule
To the adjoining lands bring some relief
From frequent inroads and unjust demands,
Imposed upon them by this robber horde,
Who did not hesitate to force their will
Upon those weaker with a drawn sword.
So faring forward, he to Godwar comes,
Followed by his ever trusty five
Though scarce had they the value of a meal
To keep their horses and themselves alive.
But Prithi Raj upon his finger wore
A ring of value, which when his money spent
He seeks to barter, that he may lodging gain
And so unto the merchant Ojha went.
Now Ojha, though unrecognised by him,
Some years before had sold this very ring
To Prithi Raj, thus did he seeing it,
Know who it was that did this jewel bring.

Therefore having to him made known
His name and lineage, the Prince confides
To him his purpose in the Godwar state,
And why disguised he through the city rides.
Old Ojha, having heard the Prince's tale,
Declares that he by strategy may gain
The overthrow of this bold Meena Chief,
If patient he will for some days remain.
Settling to act upon the older man's advice,
The Prince, concealing both his rank and name,
Took service in the forces of the Chief,
And by his prowess soon was known to fame.
So thinking him but some adventurer wild,
Ready to fight for any who could pay,
The Meena placed him in his bodyguard,
Not knowing what within his bosom lay.
To all appearance a loyal guard was he,
Thus when it chanced a holiday took place,
When all the bodyguard for sanction asked
To homeward go, as often was the case,
To see their wives and children, Prithi Raj
No difficulty with the others found to get
Leave of absence, yet his five Rajputs left
Within the castle, where no guard was set.
Without the city walls himself ensconced,
Upon his war-horse, he by the roadside waits,
Clothed in his mail, his lance at rest,
With watchful eyes he scans the city gates.
Ere long he hears the hoof-beats of a horse
Galloping wildly through the ill-paved streets,
Another moment, he from his ambush sprung,
The Meena Chief upon the open meets.



the dust

Yet ere he charges the Chieftain turns
 To flee towards the mountains in the East,
 While Prithi Raj, behind him riding fast,
 Sees inch by inch the interval decreased.
 Mile upon mile, over rough and smooth,
 The horses thunder in that race of death,
 Down through the nallahs, through the jungle thick,
 Like steam behind them flows the hard-drawn breath.
 Back looks the Meena, yet no hope can find,
 The Rajput's horse is gaining stride by stride,
 The space between them every time he looks
 Slowly becomes at every turn less wide.
 Now he can see beside his horse's flank
 The blood red nostril of the straining steed,
 Creeping towards his girths, well does he know
 'T is useless now to trust his horse's speed.
 Coming at last to some more open ground,
 He quickly wheels, as does a boar at bay,
 Finding no further use in hopeless flight,
 Turn upon those who chasing him would slay ;
 No coward nor mean opponent now opposed
 Great Prithi Raj, there in the jungle thick,
 One who had ever held his frontlet high,
 Well versed in arms, and every warlike trick.
 Yet no one saw, and thus no one can speak
 Of what occurred, what thrust and counter-thrust
 Were interchanged, how did this one and that
 Gain a brief mastery, while the dust
 Rose in a cloud about them, which panting lungs
 Drew in between their tightly clenched teeth,
 Stirred by their trampling horses' restless feet,
 All sign of verdure crushing underneath.

No one can speak of what was never seen,
 Only these things, of all that happed, are known,
 The blood-smeared ground, ploughed up in strife,
 Whence Prithi Raj, sore wounded, comes alone ;
 The Meena's body, covered by dinted mail,
 Lying beside his war-horse, also dead,
 Tells the result, while veiled from prying eyes
 Are all the actions, which to this ending led.
 Meanwhile, within the city, Prithi Raj's men,
 Who had attacked and driven out the Chief,
 Seized on the castle, manned the city walls
 With those who sought from Meena rule relief.
 Thus when returning, Prithi Raj declared
 His name and clan, in acclamation loud
 The populace were eager to cast off
 The burden under which they long had bowed.
 Thus did he gain the Godwar province back,
 And, in the Rana's name, left Ojha there
 To govern as the Rana's deputy,
 While he departed on his quest to fare
 For more adventure. Better he loved to hear
 The larks above him sing, than mice to squeak
 In close roofed rooms ; better the moon to watch,
 And list at night-time while the night-winds speak.
 A short time after bold Prithi Raj had won
 The Godwar province and surrounding Mewar land,
 His brother, Jaimul, marriage proposals sent,
 Seeking the Bednor Raja's daughter's hand.
 Her name was Tara-bhai, "Sister of the Stars,"
 Whose fame and beauty were for all to know,
 Scorning the purdah's screen, she, like a man,
 Could fling a lance, could wield the sword and bow,

Tame the wild war-steeds, enter in the fight
 A born leader, whom all men were fain
 Should lead them trustful in her strength
 And wisdom that would for them victory gain.
 Her father, from his city Thoda driven
 By Lilla, who from Afghanistan o'er ran
 The plains of India, with a marauding host,
 Dwelt now in Mewar working out a plan
 To regain Thoda from the Moslem rule,
 Left in her hands the fashioning of her life,
 Content to take as son-in-law the man
 To whom she chose to give herself as wife.
 Therefore when Jaimul's proposals came,
 She who was filled with loyalty replied :—
 "Only to him who Thoda can regain
 "Will I consent to give myself as bride."
 Jaimul then vowed this Thoda to retake,
 Though in his mind, false as the words he spoke,
 He thought that after marriage he could find
 Some way his spurious vow to then revoke.
 Not his the nature to adventure seek,
 Or hazard all to gain a wished-for prize,
 Cunning and trickery more pleasing seemed
 Than honest fighting in his craven eyes.
 The Raja, ignorant of baseness such as his,
 As a prospective son-in-law and honoured guest
 To Bednor asked him, that together they
 Could plan the campaign as they thought it best.
 Once come to Bednor Jaimul there sees
 Fair Tara-bhai, since she the purdah spurns,
 And for her person in Jaimul's heart
 A bestial passion, lit by her beauty, burns.

Trusted, a guest, affianced to the maid,
 Jaimul more freedom, than is wont, is given,
 Within the palace going where he wills,
 Until by passion he to madness driven,
 Forgetting all save his debased desires,
 He dares to enter where the Princess lies
 At dead of night, unconscious of all ill,
 Her secret charms exposed before his eyes.
 His lust-hot hands upon her person placed,
 Apprise her of this dastard insult deep,
 As with a frightened shriek she throws them off,
 So rudely wakened from her virgin sleep ;
 The outraged father hears his daughter's cry,
 With drawn sword he rushes to her aid,
 And by one anger-driven stroke
 The recreant, dying, for his shame has paid.
 When to the Rana's court the tidings came
 Of Jaimul's death, and some would urge on him
 Revenge, the upright Rana to them speaks :—
 "We should our honour by dishonour dim
 "Were we to show by any deed or act
 "Countenance of the insult which he placed
 "Upon the maid, his own affianced wife,
 "Who in disgracing was himself disgraced.
 "One who could thus all laws of decency,
 "All rights of guestship, all honour of a bride,
 "Forget, is better dead than living, he
 "Has earned the payment for which his deeds applied.
 "Shall we ourselves his vile dishonour share,
 "By seeking with our power to requite
 "The death he by his own dishonour earned,
 "And with the just-raged father seek to fight ?

"Should we not rather honour him whose sword
 "Swept from his path the reptile who would dare
 "To strike at that most sacred attribute of life,
 "His daughter's honour, a father's holiest care?"
 Thus were the words the inspired priestess spoke
 Upon the "Tiger Mount" to first fruition brought;
 And lonely, sonless, was the Rana left,
 Hapless within the splendour of his court.
 When Prithi Raj heard of his brother's death,
 He too felt shame that his own kith and kin
 Had loathsome sought his maiden bride to drag
 Into the wallow of debauching sin.
 And as is ever so, some men there were,
 Whose filth-filled minds could not perceive
 The spotless purity of her who dared
 Unveiled, the glances of all men receive,
 Cast on her character, so was their wont,
 By subtle nods and smiling lips,
 A hideous slur, considering such as she
 The fitting butt for their disgusting quips.
 Not openly would such as they have dared
 To lightly speak of the Princess' name,
 So did it happen that no one could requite
 Their lecherous slander, or defend her fame.
 Now Prithi Raj, whose own chivalrous mind
 No evil thought of her who had been hurt
 By the low actions of his brother, sought
 Some way these lying rumours to avert.
 Sooner would he have cut out with his sword
 The tongues of those, who such vile rumours spread,
 But since no one stood boldly forth to speak,
 He could not vengeance wreak upon their head.

So to remove all question from her name,
 He speeds to Bednor, there to ask her hand,
 Treating her with all courtesy,
 As would befit the purest in the land.
 Yet when he came, and saw her standing there,
 He knew, by intuition, the rumours lies;
 Never could any vicious glances gleam
 Out of such pure, straight-forward, honest eyes.
 Though first he came only to make amends
 For evil done, a lover he remains,
 Feeling before her all unworthy to
 Take what he knows can only cure his pains.
 And Tara-bhai, when of his coming she
 Had heard, felt anger that his mind should dare
 To deem that need there was, in any way,
 To reinstate her honour by his care.
 Thus when he came, in haughty mood she stood
 Ready to meet him, but refuse his suit.
 Till seeing him, her heart's wild pulsing left
 The words unsaid; her lips love-trembling mute.
 Only at last, when as a suppliant he,
 Unused to beg, with longing in his eyes,
 Asks that she honour him, unworthy, as his wife,
 She, will-o'erpowered, answers in this wise:—
 "Oh Prithi Raj! Dost thou this question ask,
 "Feeling a duty to wash out the stain
 "Cast on mine honour by thy brother's deed,
 "The offspring of a vile uncleanly brain?
 "For shouldst thou even in thine inmost heart
 "Dream of dishonour in thy thoughts of me,
 "Rather would I an outcast live my life,
 "Than bind myself in wedlock pure with thee."



...when as a suppliant he,
Unused to beg, with longing in his eyes,
Asks that she honour him, unworthy, as his wife

To which he answered, gazing in her face,
 His eyes with trust and rapture wholly filled,
 Showing the truth of all the words he spoke,
 So that her last dread fear by faith was killed :—
 "Oh Tara-bhai ! the stars in heaven on high
 "Shining down through the darkness of the night,
 "Are not so pure, so spotless in their spheres
 "As is thy soul in virgin pureness white.
 "One look upon thy noble face so free
 "From all deceit, thy true straight-forward eyes,
 "Sufficient is to drive away all thought,
 "That any guile within thy person lies.
 "Too good, too fair I feel, myself, thou art
 "To bind thyself to me a wandering blade,
 "Without a home, or rooftree o'er my head,
 "Shelter at night, at noon a grateful shade.
 "Yet is my love insistent that it cries
 "To thee for mercy, and my wounded heart
 "Calls for the healing, that thou alone can give,
 "The cause and healer of its aching smart."
 Tara-bhai of his true love convinced,
 Even as did her heart desire to be,
 Turns then to him, remembering her vow,
 And answers thus with grave simplicity :—
 "Prince of my heart ! No more than this I ask ;
 "To live my life with thee, where e'er thou roam,
 "For where thou art, in sun, or heat, or cold,
 "There, there will be my palace and my home.
 "Yet ere I wed thee, promise thou wilt free
 "Our city Thoda from the Moslem swine,
 "That I, being faithful to my virgin oath,
 "May wedded to thee trust in faith to thine."

O'er-joyed, triumphant, Prithi Raj replied :—

“I swear upon a Rajput's faith that I

“Will Thoda take, and drive the Moslems out,

“Or on the battle-field my corpse will lie.”

Thus trusting each the other, were they wed,

Happy in love that did their hearts inspire ;

But did they tarry not in nuptial bliss,

Forgetting Thoda in their love's desire.

It was the day when pious Moslems mourn

The martyrdom of Ali's fated sons ;

The bier was placed in Thoda's paven square,

With Mullahs teaching how the legend runs.

Thronging around the bier the people stand,

While from a balcony upon one side, placed high,

The Afghan governor upon them looks,

Well noting all, with quick and watchful eye.

There in the crowd, three pilgrims he detects,

Who different seem in gait to those about,

Their covered heads, their faces all but hid,

Breeds in his mind a question, and a doubt.

“Who are those men ?” he asks,

But ere the words have left his lips,

A bow-string twangs, a hissing arrow sounds,

Rising on high ere down on him it dips.

Lifeless he falls, confusion bursts around,

As the strange pilgrims prove themselves to be

The bride and bridegroom, and one of those who had

Helped Prithi Raj the Godwar lands to free.

Hither and thither rock the frightened crowd,

While to the city gates they cut their way,

But here an elephant their pathway bars,

Too great a beast with only swords to slay,

Yet does the blade of Tara heavenward gleam,
 And the poor beast in madness turns aside,
 Its bleeding trunk before them quivering lies,
 In one stroke severed through muscle, flesh and hide.
 Behind them through the gates the Afghans pour,
 A raging throng, disordered, leaderless,
 Only to find the Rajput cavalry
 Drawn up and ready into their midst to press.
 By panic stricken, surprised, they show no fight,
 Pierced by the Rajput lances, cloven by Rajput swords,
 Trodden like grass beneath the horses' hoofs,
 'Is crushed and broken Lilla's Afghan hordes.
 The crescent from the battlements is torn,
 Thoda restored to Bednor, and the oath
 Of Tara-bhai and Prithi Raj fulfilled,
 Sworn separately, yet discharged by both.
 Hearing of this disgrace on Moslem forces wreaked,
 The Ajmer governor prepared to make attack
 On Prithi Raj, thinking thereby to gain
 The stronghold Thoda for his Emperor back.
 But Prithi Raj, well versed in warlike arts,
 Knowing the value of a swift surprise,
 Whereby an often seeming weaker force,
 Which, in their strength, its enemies despise,
 Is able by a sudden stroke to win,
 That which by caution it would certain lose,
 By hurried marches casts himself upon
 The Ajmer force, unready; thus he hews
 His way before him, breaking their unformed ranks,
 Ere their reserves could gather for the fray;
 Thus did it happen that his banner flew
 On Ajmer's fort before the close of day.

Meanwhile the lonely Rana in the fort
Of Chitor grieves, Jaimul dishonoured, dead,
Sanga a fugitive in exile hides,
No man knowing where he lays his head ;
Only Prithi Raj, his fame on all men's lips,
Brings lustre to the name of Mewar by his deeds,
And in the lonely father's heart a voice
For him, the outcast of his anger pleads.
So burying the past, the Rana sends
To Prithi Raj a message of recall,
Praying that he will come again
To Chitor, ere to him as must befall
The end of all men, so that when he dies
A son may present be to close his eyes,
And, as is meet, light first the funeral pyre,
Whereon his mortal body resting lies.
Prithi Raj himself no rancour for his exile feels,
Knowing the justice of his father's act,
Willing for reconciliation, would long before
Have come again, save for his sworn pact.
But though to Chitor, to his father's court,
He now returns in honour to declare
His own allegiance to the Rana he
Wills not to stay for long inactive there.
The luxury of palaces beside the lakes,
The scented gardens, and the pomp of state,
Have no attractions in their magnificence,
Either for him or his adventurous mate.
Not silken robes nor costly jewels to wear,
Soft down-filled cushions to recline upon,
Please Tara-bhai, more happy in the saddle hard,
Clad in the mail she ever loves to don.

The only scents her nostrils long to breathe
 Those of the dawn-wind, and the camp-fires reek,
 Ever beside her husband in the fray,
 Where'er he goes adventure's chance to seek.
 So to the Western borders of Mewar they go,
 Where stands a lonely fortress, Komulmer,
 The massive walls built on a rocky hill,
 The battlements about it tier on tier
 Rising to where the summit of all is crowned
 By the "Cloud Palace" glittering in the sun,
 White in the noontide, but at evening tinged
 By sunset pink, when Surya's race is run.
 Here Prithi Raj and Tara-bhai remained
 For several years, renowned for all their deeds,
 Breaking up robber bands, dispensing law
 According to the country's rough and ready needs.
 Ever the Rajputs to their banner flocked
 From every clan, and men of every grade;
 Their swords to heavenward ever brightly shone,
 By strong men dreaded, their task the weak to aid.
 Yet not always were their swords thus drawn
 To help the weak or to redress a wrong.
 Ever were Prithi Raj's men prepared
 To chance a tilt, nor mattered it how strong
 The opposition. Theirs the will to fight
 Whate'er the odds, so long as in the van
 They saw their leader, resplendent in his strength,
 Seeming to them more as a God than man.
 The story still is told of how he went
 To Chitor once, and found the Rana sat beside
 Some officer of Malwa, whom, as a Moslem, he
 Deemed as an enemy, in his wild Rajput pride.

So when this man out of the presence went,
 He took his father for his act to task,
 In thus allowing one of alien faith
 Beneath the shadow of his throne to bask.
 " 'T is well for you," the Rana made reply,
 "To talk thus loudly, since you are well known
 "To be a mighty capturer of kings,
 "But I prefer to hold what is mine own,
 "And live in peace with those my neighbours, who
 "Respect my frontiers, whatever be their creed,
 "And not insult those who come to me,
 "And thus the land to needless war-fare lead."
 Prithi Raj to him made no reply,
 But gathering about him a few wild blades,
 Riding from Chitor in the dark of night,
 The Malwa territories at once invades.
 The Malwa Raja, expecting no attack,
 Was camped amongst his followers and lords,
 His dancing girls and eunuchs in his train,
 For him diversion from his work affords.
 Thus resting in the evening coolness he,
 Surrounded by his courtiers, watched a nautch ;
 The light-clad women, posturing with their limbs,
 Mimic the actions of some lewd debauch.
 Suddenly about his tent is heard
 The clash of arms, a wild uproar,
 While Prithi Raj strides in and seizes him
 And, from his followers midst, away him bore.
 When from their torpor his courtiers awoke,
 Which by his sudden action Prithi Raj had caused,
 They mounted hastily in hot pursuit,
 But when at call uncertainly they paused ;

For Prithi Raj, his dagger in his hand,
 Swore, that should any of them venture near,
 He would the Raja stab unto the heart,
 But if they left him, no need they had for fear,
 His life was safe; he only took their Prince
 To touch the feet of Rana Raimul, then
 After the homage paid, he would return
 Free under escort of his chosen men.
 Not daring now to risk their Raja's life,
 Behind they followed to below Chitor,
 Ready to wreak their vengeance, if ought occur
 Other than that which this wild Rajput swore.
 The grey-haired Rana in his palace sat,
 When Prithi Raj into his presence dashed,
 Hailing before him, bewildered and afraid,
 The Malwa Raja, his hands behind him lashed.
 "Send for your friend," Prithi Raj exclaimed,
 "And let him tell you, whom I have with me,
 "That he may know, what ever is the meed
 "Of Rajput honour and Mewar dignity."
 When the Malwa officer before them came,
 Astonished and dismayed, he recognised
 The Malwa Raja, as a captive held
 By these the Rajputs whom he had despised.
 Some days the Raja was at Chitor kept,
 But honoured by the Rana as a guest,
 And leaving had the tale explained to him,
 Treated the exploit as a daring jest.
 Such rash wild exploits were to Prithi Raj
 The joy of life, since he adventure sought,
 Heedless of odds, or what the outcome be,
 So long as they some zest to life had brought.

But later there arose for him a task
 More serious than these petty escapades,
 The capture of a weakly fended fort,
 The crushing of some trivial border raids.
 His uncle Soorâjmul, who ever in his heart
 Had cherished up the oracle's portent,
 Which ordained for him Lordship in the land,
 To hasten which he having his intent,
 Broke in rebellion against the Rana with
 His kinsman Sarungdeo, and the Malwa King
 Still nettled by the affront upon him placed,
 Promised to him assisting force to bring.
 Ravaging and pillaging, they seized on lands,
 Before the Rana could his force collect,
 Scattered in peace-time o'er his dominions wide
 The outlying frontiers to, from raids, protect.
 Thus did it happen, when the Rana rushed
 His forces up to battle 'gainst the three,
 Wounded himself, his loyal troops began
 Before the rebels with broken ranks to flee.
 But Prithi Raj, to whom the Rana sent
 Urgent appeal, galloping across the plain,
 Throws in a thousand men, who turn the tide,
 Encouraging the troops with hope again.
 For every man throughout the countryside
 Has heard his prowess and his valour told,
 Thus does his name the loyal troops inspire,
 While on the rebels fear of him takes hold.
 Still even yet, so even balanced were
 The opposing forces, neither would give way,
 Thus as the night-time bade a truce for all,
 Each on their arms for light awaiting lay.

Now Prithi Raj, careless as ever, strolls
 Across the intervening space between
 The near placed camps, into his uncle's tent,
 Where lying on a couch he may be seen,
 Having his wounds attended by a leech,
 But seeing who before him in the doorway stands,
 He leaps away, seizing his bloodstained sword,
 Though spent is he, with weak and trembling hands.
 But Prithi Raj, with reassuring smile,
 Asks of his health, to which he makes reply :—
 "Quite well, my child, since you I see again,
 "Ready as ever in danger's face to fly."
 "Yet does your welcome with a drawn sword
 "Seem strange, my uncle, dost thou so receive
 "One who in eagerness to pay to you respects
 "Did even without eating dinner leave?"
 Thus spoke the Prince, his uncle knowing well
 His fearless spirit, in manner like replies,
 Asking that he will with him forthwith sit,
 And share whatever his camp-fare supplies.
 So did it happen that side by side,
 The erstwhile enemies together sat,
 Taking their food from off the common dish,
 Joking together in a friendly chat.
 "To-morrow you and I will end our fight"
 The nephew says, as he arose to go.
 "Yea verily, my child," the uncle calls,
 "Come early lest some other strike a blow
 "That shall deprive us of a glorious fight.
 "With all the joyousness of equal odds,
 "Our swords and lances eager to fulfil
 "The hidden mandates of the watching Gods."

Next day the battle was renewed afresh,
 But were these two not fated then to meet.
 The Rana's forces, now reformed again,
 Upon the rebels bring at last defeat.
 Soorâjmul and Sarungdeo flee,
 Driven from every post to which they cling ;
 Far in the forest depths they refuge take,
 Deserted by the fickle Malwa King.
 Here as a stronghold they a stockade make,
 Thinking their traces for a time were hid,
 When on a sudden came the clash of arms,
 Loud in its noise the calm of night amid.
 "This must be Prithi Raj," his uncle shouts,
 Snatching his weapons whence they ready lay ;
 E'en as he spoke, the Prince among them leaped,
 His sword upraised the older man to slay.
 But Sarungdeo cast himself between
 Uncle and nephew, and pleaded in this wise :—
 "To Soorâjmul, exhausted as he is,
 "Although your might he valiantly defies,
 "One buffet now more than a score would seem,
 "And would ye have his blood upon your hands,
 "He who in former days directed them
 "Teaching them skill? He at your mercy stands.'
 But interposing Soorâjmul declares :—
 "Only unto my nephew would I yield,
 "Whom in the bygone happy days I taught
 "The sword and buckler and the lance to wield.
 "But stay the fight, what matter if I die,
 "My children have the Rajput blood and will
 "Find other leaders, but if thou should be slain,
 "Who in the land is there thy place to fill ?

"Who will defend our fortress of Chitor ?

"Who keep the Sun-faced banner flying free ?

"Should I in any way thy death effect,

"Shamed would I be for all eternity".

The Prince by this appeal being touched,

Commanded that a truce should then be made,

And peacefully their forces side by side,

That night together in the stockade stayed.

"Whatever were you doing, Uncle, when I came ?"

Asked Prithi Raj, as seated by his side,

They converse held, ere to their beds they went.

"Just talking nonsense," Soorâjmul replied.

"But how could you so careless be with me

"Hard on your tracks and following fast ?"

"What could I do ?" the harassed uncle asked,

"No resource left me, and come to this at last,

"Who once had been a power in the land,

"An exile in the forests, with no place

"To rest my head, no home, no joy,

"Save what I got by hiding my disgrace."

Next morn Prithi Raj with Sarungdeo went

To offer sacrifice within a temple near,

And while away, his uncle Soorâjmul,

Being overcome by some mysterious fear,

Flees for his life, far to the South he went,

Beyond the Mewar borders, where he felt

His life was forfeit, wandering up and down,

Where never yet had any Rajput dwelt.

There in some region, desolate and wild,

He saw a she-goat her suckling kid defend

Against a wolf, and then remembering

The prophecy, discerned his journey's end.

There did he stay, subduing local tribes,
 And built a town, Deola, by him named,
 The Chiefs of which as Mewar allies are
 Forever in the Mewar legends famed.
 This rebellion having now been quelled
 Prithi Raj to Komulmer returned ;
 But shortly after, that his brother lived
 And hoped to marry, he the rumours learned.
 He therefore, still desiring to become
 The Mewar Rana, proposes to pursue
 His elder brother, when another call
 Turns him away upon an exploit new.
 His sister had some time before been wed
 To the Sirohi Prince, and Mount Abu
 Had been her dowry ; though honour was her right,
 Most unkind treatment from the Prince she knew.
 An opium drinker, in his drunken bouts,
 He would illtreat her, dray her from her couch,
 Leaving her to pass the hours of night
 Upon the floor, in fear of blows to crouch.
 Treated more like a harlot than a queen,
 His gross indecencies made to endure, \n
 She calls her brother to deliver her,
 And take her to her father's home once more.
 The Sirohi Prince in drunken slumber lay
 Upon the bed, his wife, distraught with shame,
 Lies on the floor, her body quivering still
 From insults offered, that no one can name,
 When there appears a figure tall and strong,
 Standing beside the Princess, helmetted and mailed,
 'T is Prithi Raj, who answering to her call,
 The palace walls at midnight dark has scaled.

A drawn dagger in his hand is poised
 Above the sleeping Prince, ready to slay
 The husband who all honour's laws could shun,
 And insult on a Mewar Princess lay.

But seeing death so near her husband, she
 Relents towards him, fearing may be the fire,
 That is the dower of the Rajput wives,
 Who join their husbands on the funeral pyre.
 So does she stay bold Prithi Raj's hand
 Ere yet he strikes, while sobered now by fright,
 The Prince awakes, in terror at the scene,
 That now confronts him in the dead of night.

Prithi Raj however will not give
 His life unless he does a penance do,
 Placing upon his head, bowed to her feet,
 Before her brother, the Princess' shoe.
 No greater punishment could be enforced,
 Humiliated in his consort's eyes,
 Yet must he do it, hiding well his hate,
 That deep within his vile bosom lies.
 The penance over, Prithi Raj embraced
 His sister's husband, feeling no ill will,
 Now he had expiated for his deeds,
 That did her mind with so much loathing fill.
 So did he, as a guest, consent to stay,
 Where he had entered, as a foe, by stealth,
 Being royally entertained, and shown
 All the indulgence of Sirohi's wealth.
 The husband in his actions now displayed
 Friendship, and Prithi Raj as usual looked
 For no deceit, nor harboured in his mind,
 That never of itself had malice brooked.

Thought that any treachery was hid
Behind this seeming comradeship, so he
When leaving, took as parting gift some sweets,
For which Sirohi was noted far to be.
But as he came towards bleak Komulmer,
He felt his heart-strings fail, in agony
He halted, sending word for Tara-bhai
From out the fort he hardly now could see.
Straining his eyes toward the distant hill
Down which she must towards him hastening come,
He lay beside the temple of Mâhâ Dev,
Racked by a torment, yet in anguish dumb.
“Why does she tarry? Surely yon bright speck,
“Shining upon the incline steep, is she,
“Like as a star from out the heavens dark,
“Clad in her mail at last she comes to me.”
Fixed were his eyes upon that longed-for form,
Hasting towards him o’er the rock-strewn space,
But ere she came the poison had let down
The veil of death before his anxious face.
There was his pyre raised, beside the shrine
Of Mâhâ Dev, by many a reverent hand,
The resting place of one by all men loved,
While close around the downcast warriors stand.
At last all is prepared, their Prince’s body placed
High on its throne of wood and by his side
Fair Tara-bhai, come to her last bridal bed,
In life his comrade, in death his willing bride.

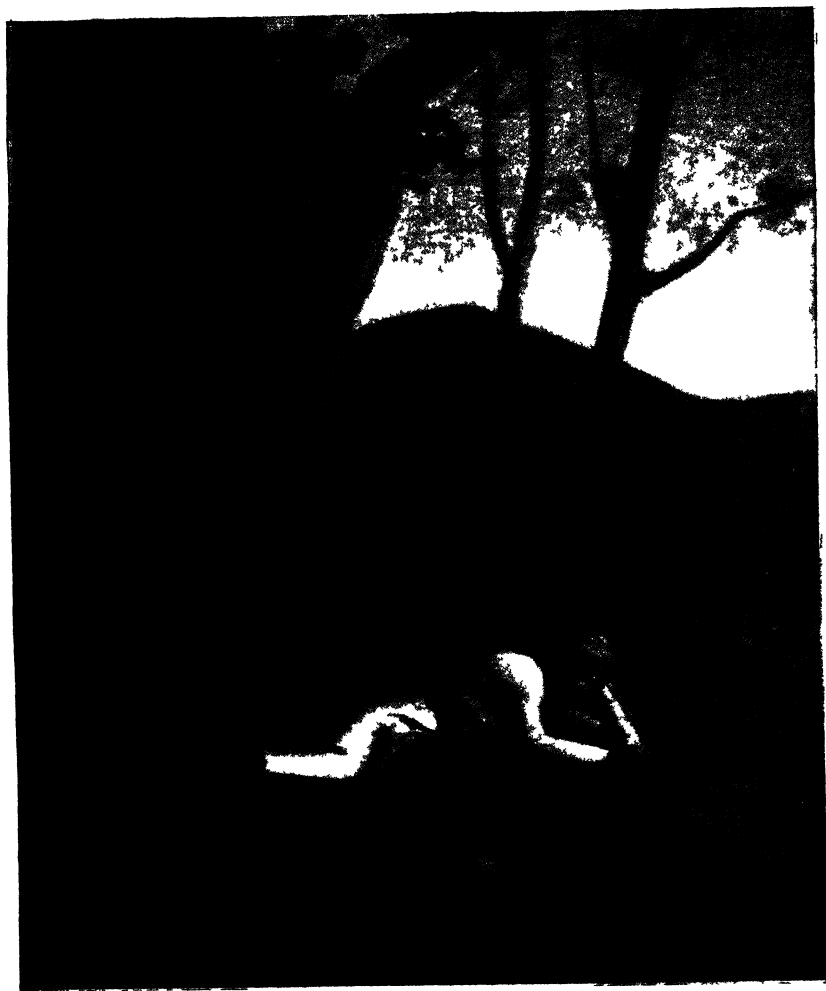


*their Prince's body placed
High on its throne of wood and by his side*

THE STORY OF SANGA RANA.

In some far corner of the Mewar hills
There lived a tribe of peasants, whose sole wealth
Was just a herd of goats, some buffaloes,
Their cooking pots, their garments, and their health.
But as is often to be found the case amongst the poor,
Though poor themselves, they never would refrain
To help another, should one chance to be
In parlous state, in hunger, thirst, or pain.
So when the headman, one day, a young man found
Wandering, ill-clad, half starving, in the fields,
Yet anxious to an honest living earn,
If any one to his petition yields,
Engaged him as a herdsman, though his wife
Snorted contempt, saying that largesse to
Brahmins and beggars might the great gods please,
But why find work for feckless fools to do?
Not any one could herd the buffaloes,
Save those who had from babyhood them known,
These could in childhood drive the bulls and cows,
Unmanageable to older men, full grown.
True were her words, the savage brutes,
Who yet would let some child who scarce could crawl
Drive them or ride them, here and there at will,
Would not obey this stranger herd at all.
In a few days the good man finding him,
As he thought, too stupid the herds to tend
Sent him to help within the house, he wishing still
To prove himself to be the stranger's friend.

But here, however, he no better fared,
As told to watch the cakes baking beside the fire,
He with his mind far from them wandering,
Forgot to turn them, thus he earned the ire
Of the good-wife who saw her food and toil
Wasted by the carelessness of one who seemed
Idle and lazy, ready the cakes to taste,
But let them burn, while he half sleeping dreamed.
The stranger heard all these reproaches cast
On him, and sadly left the peasant's hut.
He did not look an idle drone, but he
Could not the logic of her tongue rebut.
He was not tall, though very strongly built,
His frame more for endurance seeming fit
Than active movement, while his face appeared
Ever to be by sober reasoning lit.
His clothes were poor, no arms had he,
As every Rajput carries when abroad,
Never from his threshold moving far
Without the curved and sharp-edged Rajput sword.
Yet did he not appear of peasant class,
His fair complexion seemed to place him where
The richer men, living in shaded halls,
Are not exposed to burning sun and air.
Sanga, for he it was, had wandered far
From that lone shrine, where Beeda gave his life,
Passing through many straits before he came
To be the servant of a goatherd's wife.
There had he hoped in sanctuary safe to hide
From his will brother, since no one would look
For him the Rana's son as peasant's drudge,
But he had failed as herdsman and as cook,



*While he reclines at ease
When o'er his head, a Cobra spreads his hood
Upon the serpent's waving crest alights
A little bird, which chatters loudly there*

Where should he go, without arms and food,
Without a friend in all his native land,
By the ambition of his brothers cursed,
His home at Chitor by their rancour banned ?
But as he wandered sad and desolate,
Some horsemen passing suddenly prostrate
Themselves before his ill-shod tired feet
Giving him homage as if of high estate.
They who had seen his eyes, though one destroyed
By a wound given in the temple brawl,
Knew him as Sanga, the future king to be,
Ready to follow him whatever now befall.
They, in the service of the Srinagar Chief,
Consent to keep his secret lest his life
Be harassed by his brother Prithi-Raj
Well known ever to look out for strife.
Therefore they with them to the Chieftain took
Sanga, whom they provide with arms and horse,
Where he enrolls himself among the men,
Who formed the nucleus of his warlike force.
For many moons he joined in the forays,
The trusty Rajputs were ever by his side,
Ready to ward off danger from their Prince,
Or o'er the passes to act for him as guide.
Upon one day, after a long and wearing ride,
It happened that they halted 'neath a tree
To food prepare, under the grateful shade,
And Sanga rested, since now no need that he,
Who once had failed so woefully as cook,
Should try his hand, his Rajputs lit some wood
Busying themselves, while he reclines at ease,
When o'er his head a Cobra spreads his hood.

Upon the serpent's waving crest alights
 A little bird, which chatters loudly there.
 A passing goatherd stops before group,
 His eyes in wonder on the picture stare,
 Throwing himself upon the ground, he cried :—
 "Hail, Hail to him who on a throne will sit.
 "Told by the chattering of yonder bird I know,
 "What in the never-lying book of fate is writ,
 "And he, who lies beneath the Cobra's hood,
 "Is born a Prince and will to Kingship rise,
 "His name resplendent through the mist of time
 "Shall shine in glory before yet unborn eyes.
 "His grace and power will to millions bring
 "Peace and contentment, though at last betrayed
 "By his own kind, he will defeated know
 "The pain of failure, though living undismayed.'
 Sanga, who still had no desire to declare
 His lofty birth, well knowing Pritbi-Raj
 Would, if he learned his hiding place, attempt
 His life to take, his power now grown large,
 Denied his birth, but still the goatherd stands
 By what he said, declaring that he knows
 The language of the birds and beasts, whose voice
 Only the truth may to the world disclose.
 The Srinagar Chieftain having heard the tale,
 Taxed Sanga as to what the truth might be,
 And guaranteeing him against his foes,
 Learned from his lips his birth and high degree.
 Thus seeing in him a future ally strong,
 One who could make or mar his destiny,
 He promised too his daughter then to give
 In marriage to this stranger, so that he

Being bound by ties of blood and friendship might
 In later times a sure protection prove
 To him who now protection gives, and thus
 A future danger from his path remove.
 Through all this talk the rumour spread around,
 That this poor Rajput was not what he seemed,
 And midst the haze of many stories wild
 The real facts of Sanga's history gleamed.
 So that at last there came to Prithi-Raj,
 Now at the height of all his power and might,
 The news that Sanga lived, about to wed,
 Still laying claims to Mewar as his right.
 So e'en as Sanga feared, Prithi-Raj prepared
 To crush his brother, ere he could collect
 Sufficient forces to withstand his thrust,
 Or to some further place escape effect.
 But as already told, another call
 Turned Prithi-Raj from his ambitious aims,
 And poisoned by the treachery of his host,
 In death relinquished all his hopes and claims.
 Sanga his brothers dead, having no more to fear
 Their cruel spite, to Chitor now returns,
 Where broken-hearted, weary Raimul lives,
 The spark of life within him barely burns.
 Old, worn out by all the cares of state,
 Well-meaning, kindly, only wanting peace,
 Yet ever doomed to live a life of war,
 He looks with longing for a quick release.
 Not long now does he for his death await,
 Close on the heels of Prithi-Raj he goes
 To that Valhalla, where his forbears sit
 Beside the Gods. And in his place arose

A different type of Rana, Sanga known
 Sometimes as Singram "The Lion of Battle" he
 Shows not only to Rajasthan but far and near
 A ruler risen to enforce his sovereignty.
 Marwar, Amber, Ajmer, and Boondi flock
 Beneath his banner, at his battle call,
 From the Malwa plains to the lofty Abu scars
 He reigns as sovereign paramount of all.
 In eighteen battles did he forces lead
 Against the Moslems, Delhi and Malwa both
 Did he defeat. Stretching his boundaries wide,
 Until to meet him were all generals loth.
 Legend explains his conquests in this wise,
 Seeing that almost more than human was his skill
 In leading men, in knowing where to strike,
 Whether attack or defence would his purpose fill.
 Once, 'tis said a certain Deoji or lesser God
 Passing on to revenge some impious deed,
 To Chitor came, disguised, his godship hid,
 A beggar's welcome seeming but his meed,
 But Sanga seeing him and mindful of the days
 When he had wandered as an exile poor,
 Treated him kindly, feeding and clothing him
 As though a guest he welcomed at his door.
 Thus, as the Deoji was leaving, he revealed
 His status, and to Sanga then presents
 A precious talisman, within a bag contained,
 To hang upon his breast, which so prevents
 His enemies to gain against him victory,
 So long as it shall be above his heart,
 But should it ever slip behind his back,
 Then would its power and all its charm depart.

This sacred talisman for many years availed
 Against the Hindoo Chieftains and the Moslem Kings
 Sanga his frontiers ever and ever further pressed,
 Filled with the lust of conquest, conquest brings.
 But when before his might it almost seemed
 No man was born to stand, One Whom some "Allah" call,
 And others "God," and many more by various names,
 But Who above supreme looks down upon them all,
 Turned a new page in that grim book of Fate,
 Wherein is writ the destiny of men,
 Of Kings and Emperors, the peasant and the Prince,
 Of States and Lands, hidden from mortal ken.
 The Sultan Ibrahim, last of the Lodi Kings,
 Ruled now at Delhi, cruel and haughty he
 Had alienated all his nobles, and revolt
 Seethed through the land incessantly.
 The Afghan Governor of Lahore, himself a Lodi Lord,
 Having revolted, sought for war-like aid,
 From far Kabul, thereby unwittingly,
 Change in the whole course of history made.
 Zahiruddin, more oft as Babar known,
 "The Lion Hearted" from the North descends,
 Born of the race of Timur, and of Chinghiz Khan,
 The blood of victors in his body blends.
 Across the river Indus does he bring his force,
 Seizing Lahore, deposing the unfaithful lord.
 Saying that such an one a menace was
 To his communications; so was a just reward
 Paid to the dastard who would bite the hand
 Of him who fed him, and Babar led
 Further t'wards Delhi his twenty thousand men,
 Himself as ever riding at their head.

At Panipat, beside the Jumna's stream,
 Where four times has the fate of India hung
 As in a balance, he Ibrahim's force met,
 A hundred thousand 'gainst his twenty flung.
 There he, a careful general, his force entrenched,
 Letting the Delhi King his strength expend
 In bloody onslaughts on positions which
 Impossible to capture, yet were easy to defend.
 Thus did the opposing forces more equal grow,
 His men exalted by the toll they took,
 While did the enemy each day lose heart,
 Counting their dead, their faith in Ibrahim shook.
 Seizing the moment when their wavering ranks
 Recoiled from some futile assault, he strikes
 By flank attacks upon their right and left,
 His Turkman cavalry with blood-dipped pikes
 Ride through their masses, reforming in the rear
 Charge once again, while mounted bowmen pour
 A rain of arrows into their reserves,
 The infantry attacking them before.
 Ibrahim himself among the slain,
 His forces break into a rabble, flee,
 Rolled back, as surging waves upon a rock-bound shore
 Broken and baffled are flung into sea.
 So were the Lodi forces 'gainst his trenches crushed,
 Then after driven in their headlong flight
 Into the unheeding Jumna stream,
 Babar himself doth of the day thus write :—
 "The sun had mounted to spear-high when first
 "The onset started, until the midst of day
 "The battle lasted, then the opposing force
 "Broken and routed like mist wreaths fade away."

That Delhi's forces failed before the Kabul King,
 Astonished no one of the Hindoo clans;
 They both were infidels, slayers of sacred kine,
 Let them contend while Rana Sanga plans.
 Better to let them waste themselves in strife
 Against each other, thus who conquers will
 More easily be overcome by Rajput arms,
 Ready as ever their hireling troops to kill.
 So while around the Delhi throne was waged
 A royal battle did the Rajput clans
 Together form "The League of Princes" who
 Prepared to crush the hated Moslem plans.
 All looked to Sanga, Rana of Mewar,
 As leader of the Rajput blood and kind,
 Who should before him drive the accursêd ones,
 As chaff is driven before the summer wind.
 Not loth to take the burden on himself,
 "The Lion of Battle" prepares for his last fray,
 Summoning his army from far and near,
 Reviewing them in all their vast array.
 Eighty thousand horsemen, fitly clad,
 Seven great Rajas, nine Raos and other chiefs
 Bearing the title of Rawal and Rawat,
 Five hundred elephants, and vast reliefs
 Of men to follow to reinforce the line,
 Followers and servants, baggage-men and slaves,
 Together form his main attacking force
 Drawn from the plains and mountain robber caves.
 Among a medley force such as this was
 Rose of necessity many petty spites.
 Chiefs, who although ready to Sanga serve,
 Yet watched lest any should usurp their rights.

Jealous of one another, yet more jealous still
 Of any privilege that they by birth might claim,
 Ready to fight or die so long as they were sure
 Their place in battle fitted to their fame.
 Thus was the Rana's task no easy one
 To see that none should suffer an affront,
 Lest by some small mistake made in the camp,
 He lose an ally in the battle's brunt.
 Such was the motley force great Sanga led,
 To crush the levies of the Afghan King,
 And by defeating him once more again
 The country under Hindu regime bring.
 Now Sanga, as his practice ever was,
 Strikes the first blow, by marching to the North,
 Knowing the Afghan force unready is
 From their encampment yet to issue forth.
 Near-by Biana's fortress town he halts.
 Some men being sent this stronghold to besiege,
 Being the furthest Southern town to hold
 The Delhi Emperor as their Sovereign liege.
 Babar in haste his army quick prepares,
 Meanwhile detachments to Biana sends,
 Hoping thereby to raise the siege and free
 His leader who for him the town defends.
 But Sanga falling on this vanguard breaks
 It up ere yet it came before the fort,
 Annihilating all but just a few,
 Who flee to Delhi, where they tidings brought.
 Of all the numbers, who follow Sanga's wake,
 How were they different from the hireling hordes
 Of Ibrahim, who feared their lives to stake,
 Since courage with their natures ill accords,

Knowing that only living could they gain
The prize they fight for, and not caring aught
For whom they fight, if but the leader pays
The price for which their succour may be bought.
But these wild Rajputs, who care not how
Death comes to them, if on the battle field,
Charging, tempestuous, in the face of death,
Are never known to any man to yield.
These men indeed, who know no fear, but love
The clash of arms, the smell of dripping blood,
Whose horsemen, like a river's rush in spate,
Pour o'er the plain in wild resistless flood.
Such men as these could not be held in scorn,
With such a leader, only can one hope
By expert generalship or overwhelming force
With this great league effectively to cope.
So Babar hearing, great precautions took,
Knowing full well, should he defeated be,
With no reserves behind, he then would lose
All hope of Empire, and be forced to flee
Back to the North, with foes on every side,
Leaving the loot and plunder he had gained,
Thankful indeed if with his very life,
Sanctuary within the mountains he obtained.
Therefore about him did he now collect
A force before unthought of in its strength,
With guns and mortars, and a vast array
Of baggage wagons, stretching miles in length.
Old Sanga, having this detachment driven
Away to Delhi, to Kanwaha goes,
Where he entrenches on the rolling plains,
While on his flank the "Yellow River" flows.

There did it happen that one day when he
 Was bathing, as his wont, in this cool stream,
 The talisman, that Deoji had given,
 He found no longer on his breast to gleam.
 By some mischance, though what he never knew,
 It had slipped round and lay upon his back,
 Therefore, believing that his doom was writ,
 He fears the approaching forces to attack ;
 Thus did he give to Babar time to camp
 Behind a rampart, fashioned in this way,
 The baggage wagons, ammunition vans, and such,
 He chained together, while between them lay
 Deep trenches dug, and gun positions set
 Where was his ordinance in rows emplaced
 While everywhere, where cavalry might charge,
 Withes and posts were tightly interlaced.
 So did it happen that face to face they lay,
 Each one the other watching, knowing well,
 That in defence was safety, and the foe,
 Who first attacked, would but his death-roll swell
 Verily could any one have looked
 Upon those armies drawn up on the plain,
 And on their leaders, they would then have seen
 As fine a sight as ever seen again.
 On one side, Sanga, a hoary warrior, who
 Had spent his day in warfare and in strife,
 Who had already lost an eye and arm,
 Although his frame was instinct yet with life,
 Bearing the marks of eighty honoured wounds,
 A born leader, who had learned his trade
 In the wild hills and trusted now by all
 From Chief to soldier, men of every grade

Behind him was the flower of Rajasthan,
 Tried warriors who had stood in sport and fray
 By him, and ardent youths burning to win
 Perpetual honour, and again display
 All the traditions of the Rajput race ;
 The dauntless courage, and unbending pride,
 Taught to woo death, e'en from their cradle time,
 As they would woo a sought-for maiden bride.
 Knowing a warrior's last sleep indeed should be
 Upon a couch formed of his slaughtered foes,
 Trusting the Gods to welcome them with joy,
 When o'er death's river their fearless spirit goes.
 Upon the other side, Babar, a King
 Ere yet the hair had grown upon his lip,
 A lifelong exile from his father's home,
 Ready the dregs of life's full cup to sip.
 Twice had he sat upon the throne of Samarċund,
 Where had his ancestors before him reigned,
 Twice driven thence in friendless exile he
 Had turned once more and Kabul city gained,
 There had he waited for his star to rise,
 And lead him on the conquest or the grave,
 Ready to sieze on any chance that came,
 That might his path to honoured Kingship pave,
 E'en now of middle age, in prime of strength,
 He lived on horse-back, and could example show
 To all in hardiness, a soldier first,
 Yet as a poet and writer still we know
 His name, and from his writings may be found
 His trust in God, yet still no bigot he
 Could in his enemies, who worshipped other Gods,
 Good qualities and upright virtues see.

No brave nor more honourable foe
 Could Rana Sanga anywhere have faced,
 And in the outcome of the coming fight
 Victor or vanquished neither be disgraced.
 On either side it was a holy war
 The Rajputs confident "Bhavâni" will
 Lead them to victory against the men,
 Who break her altars, and her temples fill
 With hosts of aliens, men who had defaced
 The sacred images, slain devoted kine,
 Defiled the virgins, gives to the Gods,
 Forced on the priests the wit-expelling wine.
 And Babar's army, called upon their God
 To help them crush the idol-trusting foe,
 Who steeped in ignorance, reviled the name
 Of the one God, Who hid, they did not know.
 For fourteen days and nights the armies stayed
 Facing each other, neither daring to advance,
 Fearing, so strong the opposing ramparts seem,
 To risk their all on such a fateful chance.
 Babar's men no patriotic feeling know,
 And longing think of their cool mountain home,
 Hating the heat and stifling dust-swept plains,
 Treeless, unbroken save by some far mosque dome.
 So do they murmur, and demand of him,
 That he shall lead them back, from whence
 He brought them with the promises of wealth,
 Or end at once this waiting in suspense.
 The Rana Sanga would new allies find
 But Babar knew, that if he turned to flee,
 In all the clans, who fearing now his strength,
 Would if retreating, cut his lines behind.

And if he fight and fail, what hope had he?
 Save that of death, and better to his mind
 It seemed to be, to try some peace to make,
 And in the Rana a true comrade find.
 What were the terms he offered, and what befell
 That they were not accepted, no one knows.
 But do the Rajputs in their annals say
 That where the "Yellow River" flows
 Was to be set the northern boundary line
 Between the lands of Mewar and the King,
 And that the Rajputs never should be asked
 For any tribute to Delhi's court to bring.
 Babar himself no mention ever makes
 Of any treaty, and events would show,
 That Sanga was betrayed by one he sent
 To be the envoy to his honoured foe.
 No other way of safety finding now,
 Babar the Rajputs to attack designs,
 But ere he makes that final hazard cast,
 He calls his leaders and the choice defines,
 Striving within their down-cast hearts to raise
 The old-time spirit of fanatic verve,
 That by their trust in God and God's reward,
 He might their souls with heedless courage nerve
 So doth he speak to them, his eyes ablaze
 With holy fervour, the Koran in his hand,
 Looking, indeed, the leader that he was,
 Filled with an inspiration true and grand.
 "Princes and soldiers: Every man who comes
 "Into this world must some day pass away;
 "For God alone immortal and unchanging is,
 "And He alone our destiny can sway.

"He who sits down to taste the feast of life,
 "Must end by drinking up the cup of death,
 "Each man who breathes the air of life must know
 "There comes a time when he shall have no breath.
 "All of us at the hostel of mortality
 "Must one day leave this house and face
 "The unknown road, but rather let us go
 "With honour on us than tarry in disgrace.
 "With fame though I die, I am content,
 "Let fame be mine, though life be spent.
 "In giving us this destiny, the God most high
 "Has gracious been, in that if we should die,
 "We fall as martyrs, if the chance of wars
 "Gives to us victory, we triumph in His cause.
 "So let us swear with one accord, by His great name,
 "That we will never to our endless shame
 "Turn back from death, nor in the battle stress
 "Shrink till our souls have found their happiness
 "In that fair heaven, where fair Houris wait
 "The warrior souls, triumphant over fate."

His words vibrated through the very heart of those
 Who heard him speak, and one and all they seized
 The Koran from him, swearing on the book,
 To die or conquer, as the All-knowing pleased.
 Throughout the army did the infection fly,
 Caught by the meanest soldier, all became
 Eager to meet their Rajput enemies,
 Calling on Allah His power to proclaim.
 So was the advance now resolved upon,
 And Babar when his force in line was set,
 Galloped before them encouraging each man,
 Urging them all their vows not to forget.

Thus dawned the day, wherein the fate of Ind
And other lands, the destinies of men,
As yet unborn, hung in the balance scale,
Held by the hands of those who did not ken.
At first it seemed, despite the talisman,
That Sanga still the victory would gain,
For never had the Emperor's army faced
A Rajput charge, as once upon the plain,
Without defences, line upon line of horse
Dashed down upon them. With opium reddened eyes
Their swords and lances dripping blood, yet seem
To flash like lightning, while about them rise
Thick clouds of dust, the Rajput battle cry
Re-echoing from the River's deep cut banks,
In wildest tumult do the raging Rajputs pour,
Wave upon wave upon the Moslem ranks.
Back to their trenches flung, the Moslems hold
The Rajput's assault, by defences stayed,
While do the Moslem guns by steady fire
The Rajput flankers severely enfilade.
For hours now the battle ebbs and flows,
E'en Rajput valour could not these trenches take,
Nor yet the guns strike terror in their hearts,
Nor lakes of blood, their thirst for bloodshed slake.
Babar at last to flanking columns sent
Orders to wheel and charge in Mongul style,
The matchlock men, and centre of his force,
Advance and fire, the Rajputs to beguile.
But at this moment, does the traitorous Chief,
Who led the Rajput van-guard turn about,
Leaving the Rajput centre broken through;
Changing a victory to a hideous rout.

Caught in the rear, outnumbered and betrayed,
 The Rajput army wavers e'er it breaks,
 Penned into corners, raked by shot and shell;
 The Moslem at his leisure vengeance takes.
 Some few escaped. The Rana, wounded sore,
 Carried away by followers, yet breathes,
 But many more fell where they stood and died,
 Fighting till death their anguished mind relieves.
 There on a little hill, Babar has piled,
 O'er looking that red shambles on the plain,
 His "Tower of Victory", formed of a thousand heads
 Cut from the bodies of the Rajput slain.
 Crippled in body, but Lion-like as e'er,
 Sanga refused to shelter in Chitor,
 Ordering the gates still open to remain
 Till as a conqueror he should come once more.
 His palace now a tent upon the field,
 Until he should have wiped away the stain
 Of his defeat, and crushed the Moslem power,
 Then, then alone would he return again.
 Even could the remnant of the clans
 Have gathered now, led by their women-kind,
 Since they and children now alone remained
 Of many a princely house indeed behind,
 The dauntless Rana, who had suffered much,
 Was fated ne'er again to battle ride.
 Within a year, a broken-hearted man,
 The greatest of the Mewar Ranas died.
 Would that his offspring had liker been to him
 Then might the Rajputs have retrieved their loss,
 And Chitor now in glory still have stood,
 Nor been a heap of broken stone and moss.



*No clan no house of all of Rajasthan,
But mourned the loss of some brave son, whose bones
Lay whitening the dreary desert plains,*

THE SECOND SACK OF CHITOR

Drear were the years that followed that sad day,
When Rana Sanga, forsaken by the Gods,
Betrayed by one he had esteemed and loved,
Was crushed at Kanwaha by overwhelming odds.
No clan no house of all of Rajasthan,
But mourned the loss of some brave son, whose bone:
Lay whitening the dreary desert plains,
Where still at night the wanderer hears the moans
Of stricken wounded, and the spirit foes
Rising again rejoin in bloodless fight,
Charging once more on bone-white phantom steeds
Seen dimly by the flickering star-shine light,
While over all the tower of grinning skulls
Looks down from that small hill, and views
The ghostly armies from their vantage coigne,
As night by night the deathless fight renews.
Deathless indeed the Rajput spirit is,
Deathless their hate of their marauding foes,
Deathless their valour in their country's cause,
Deathless beyond their human beings close.
Yet in those years that followed did it seem,
The Rajput women would be left in peace
To rear up sons, who would avenge their loss,
Since for a time did hostile in-roads cease.
So costly had this fight to Babar been,
That though victorious, still he had sustained
Such punishment, that he dare not to attempt
To enter through the gateway he had gained

Into the country of the Rajput Chiefs ;
But with a broken force crept back once more
Unto his fortress on the Jumna banks,
Unable yet to pluck the fruits of war.
There did he only live a little while,
Leaving his son Humayun on the throne,
A gallant, courteous youth, revered by all,
And for his kindly nature ever known ;
Too scrupulous and too emotional was he
To rule the scattered Empire, that his fates
Had given him, and so in many parts
Usurpers rose, forming new petty states.
Thus were his hands from outside conquest tied,
And Rajasthan was left a while to bind
Her wounds, and by slow degrees reform
The martial spirit of the Rajput kind.
The children, whom the warriors marching forth
Had left behind beneath their mother's care,
Grew up to manhood, by the mothers taught
Their duty to their country in despair.
These noble minded women with their aching hearts,
Concealing all the anguish that they knew,
Thinking only how they best may teach,
The offspring of the men whose loss they rue.
The young wife from whose bridal bed had gone
The hardly-known husband of her youth,
Brings forth his child in sorrow but instils
In him a suckling, her own Rajput truth.
With such examples, and the knowledge of
The past traditions of their clans and race,
A new-born generation comes to strength,
Determined never their birthright to disgrace.

Still was the land by troubles yet beset,
 And Rana Rutna, who now filled Sanga's place,
 Though having all his father's qualities,
 Found difficulties awaiting him to face.
 First did his father's widow, Jâwâhir-bhai
 Plot to place Bikrâmâjit, her son,
 Upon the throne in his half-brother's stead,
 And sought from Babar help to see it done.
 But Babar, at the time, had other things
 To do, than pander to a woman's pride.
 What mattered it to him, which one should reign
 In Chitor's fort, and Mewar fortunes guide?
 The time would come, when he, or his dear son,
 Would raise an army and the Rajput clans
 Bring in subjection 'neath his Empire's rule;
 Such were indeed his own ambitious plans.
 So did her plot to raise her son then fail,
 But ever did she watch that she might glean
 Some hope to win, and in her intrigues deep,
 She wielded power as Sanga's widowed Queen.
 Now also had it happened, Rutna had,
 When yet a boy, betrothêd been
 To the young daughter of the Amber King,
 Although as yet the maid he had not seen.
 But for some reason when he had attained
 Unto his manhood, and on the Gadi set,
 He did not claim his bride, who had become
 Of fitting age for children to beget.
 Her father, not wishing to expose himself
 To a rebuff, would not a message send
 To Rutna, who as bridegroom should have come
 To claim his bride, yet did he apprehend

That if he came not, then disgrace would fall
 On him her father ; so as all had private been,
 He gave her to the Rao of Boondi, who
 Not knowing aught had sought her as his Queen.
 This action raised a bitter sense of wrong
 In Rutna's heart, although himself to blame,
 Yet as so often is, he thought himself
 To have been slighted, by insults put to shame.
 Rao Soorâjmul of Boondi, who in fact
 Was innocent of any least offence,
 He most of all considered as his foe,
 Without all reason or reasonable pretence.
 Such hatred grows, and many little acts
 Fanned it to flame, until the Rana slew
 His rival at a friendly hunting meet,
 But then received from him his death-blow too.
 Thus did his want of courtesy and thought
 Lead him to anger, unworthy and unjust,
 And in the end, to get his fit reward,
 For murdering one in his unrighteous thrust.
 Ratna now dead, Jâwâhir Bhai obtained
 Her wish, and Bikrâmâjit is on the Gadi set ;
 But by his insolence and want of tact,
 He did but troubles and illwill beget.
 Treating his nobles with contumely,
 He killed their ligeance to his sovereign power,
 Consorting with the basest company,
 He forfeited his birthright's honoured dower.
 All Rajput chronicles deny him any good
 Qualities, as should a Mewar Rana show,
 Yet even he was not so wholly bad,
 Although his tastes seem always mean and low.

With grooms and wrestlers did he spend his days,
His nights in debauch, drinking to excess,
Yet were not these the faults that caused his fall,
But what indeed showed forethought, and success
Might have been his, had he but tact to lead,
Where he would drive those, who may not be driven.
Thus had he only known how to rule,
His sordid tastes might still have been forgiven.
He had divined the days of chivalry,
The mad wild charge of horsemen in the field,
Could not against entrenchments lined with guns,
Again the victory to the Rajputs yield.
He saw artillery and matchlock-men
Could stand against the wildest bravest host
That only trusted in their gleaming swords,
And cavalry; the Rajput's chiefest boast.
Conservative in all their thoughts and ways,
The Chief despised these later-day ideas,
Thinking that in his forethought he but showed
A craven mind warped by low living fears.
Thus when he purposed infantry to raise,
No one would deign to lead his men on foot,
And when he explanations gave to them and showed
The disadvantage to which their men were put
When pitted 'gainst quick firing guns and men,
They all replied, that they would rather die
Falling from off their horses, as became
Their Rajput honour, than in the dust to lie
Shooting a gun at others hid away,
Not knowing when nor whence their death might come.
To argue with such men quite hopeless seemed,
So he before them to his plans was dumb.

Unable to coerce his Chiefs against their will,
And wanting tact and influence to lead
Such men as they, his very forethought did
Nothing but turmoil make, and sowed the seed
That later grew, watered by his low life,
To open revolt, splitting up his state
Into a heterogeneous mass of clans,
Who all defied him, joined by a common hate
Of him their Rana, who now seeing that
No help from them could he expect in need,
Engaged about him mercenary troops,
Low men who fought to satisfy their greed.
These men collected anywhere or how,
Moslems and Jats and aboriginies ;
To them it mattered not how they should fight
So long as payment came to them with ease.
To draft such men into a Rajput force,
And ask the Rajputs to beside them fight,
Was such an insult, that a Rajput could
Ne'er stand from any, whatever be his right.
And when moreover this hot-headed youth
Treated with honour this low hireling brood,
Consorting with them in their drunken brawls,
Sharing their vices, and their unclean food,
All honour that his Kingship brought to him
Was broken, and an outcast appeared
To all the Chiefs, who scorned his sovereignty,
Nor was his might and power by them feared.
On every hand rebellious clans arose,
About the Chiefs the Rajput manhood flocked,
Until the Rana was a ruler but in name,
His laws defied, and his officials mocked.

Bands of wild reivers from the mountains swept
 Down to Chitor, and carried off the herds
 Grazing outside the very walls and laughed
 Taunting the Rana in these scoffing words :—
 “Ho ! Ranaji, Rajput without a horse,
 “Bring forth your army to protect you now,
 “Can your slow-footed infantry not save
 “For you at least a suckling calf or cow,
 “Surely their matchlocks and fire-belching guns
 “Can strike from far and cavalry defeat,
 “If not, Oh Ranaji, where will ye find
 “Food for yourself and hirelings, to eat ?”
 Such turbulence and anarchy gave hope
 To Mewar’s enemies that they might pay
 Back old scores upon this kingdom that had been
 Foremost to stand in their victorious way.
 First among these, Bahadur Shah, the King
 Of Gujrat, who lately had attached
 The Malwa lands from Delhi’s Empire weak,
 A plot against the Mewar fortress hatched ;
 Remembering how a former Malwa Prince,
 Confined a prisoner, had at Chitor left
 His crown behind him, how another had
 Been carried off and from his men bereft
 Had forced been, to cringe before the throne
 Of Mewar, that also in the sight
 Of his own envoy ; these insults now he felt
 He could wipe out with his avenging might,
 Now that the Rajput clans had cast away
 Allegiance to their rightful feudal Lord.
 Thus did he hope to gain from their disray
 What he could never gain in their accord.

So did he a great force collect to march
 Against the Rana, who it happened then
 Was camped within the Boondi territory,
 Surrounded only by his hireling men.
 Whate'er his vices, yet as Sanga's son,
 He lacked not courage when it came to war,
 Therefore he readily prepared himself
 To meet his foeman ere he reached Chitor.
 But scarcely any force at all had he,
 His hirelings loth to fight a losing fight,
 And as for Mewar nobles, they would not deign
 To follow one who did their prowess slight.
 Let his foot-soliers with their guns and noise
 Protect him now in this his time of stress,
 They would in Chitor fend for the posthume son
 Born to old Sanga by the young Princess
 Of Boondi, and in him hoped to find
 A Rana, whom brought up beneath their care,
 Would when of age to rule uphold their state,
 And all Bikràmâjit's misrule repair.
 Thus he the Rana defenceless in the field,
 Flees to the hills to hide away in shame,
 While in his Capital, his feudal Chiefs,
 Who did by birth descent from Surya claim,
 Seek to defend the fort, sacred to them
 And hallowed by the Rajput blood which laved
 Each rock and stone, while tombed within its vaults
 Reposed the bodies of those women who had saved
 Their chastity, the Rajput virtue's dower,
 By frightful deaths, these who had been the wives
 Of their forbears example to them showed,
 Their honour was more precious than their lives.

There on the hill were gathered for defence,
 All the great Chiefs from far and near;
 The Chondawats, despite their loss in Sanga's rout,
 Mustered in strength from round about Ajmer
 Some twenty Chieftains brought their dole to fight;
 The Rao of Abu came, crossing the hills,
 Evading hostile ambush in the night,
 And there in death his destiny fulfills.
 Bold Arjuna, the Rao of Boondi, true
 To old traditions, put by his blood feud now,
 Knowing it was the time when private wrongs
 Before the nation's jeopardy must bow.
 From far Deola, came young Bagh-ji, who
 Was born of Soorâjmâl, from Mewar driven
 By Prithi-Raj, when during Raimul's reign
 The country had been by his plotting riven.
 He reinforcements brought, while other Chiefs
 Of highest rank all confident, declare
 The rock-enthroned Goddess will protect
 Her home and them, in defence, fighting there.
 But soon they found their bravery was vain
 Against the guns, they mockingly had spurned,
 For round their ramparts was there placed,
 Bahadur Shah's artillery, and they learned
 Their ancient implements, the crossbow and the stones
 Fung by their ballistas, could not compete
 With his attacks, balls fell upon their heads,
 While mines upheaped the earth beneath their feet.
 Arjuna thus, who held the danger post,
 Facing Chitoria, met there a wondrous fate;
 The murderous moles had burrowed 'neath the wall,
 While he and his were watching at the gate,

Not knowing aught of what beneath them passed;
 When suddenly the thunderous roars proclaim
 A mine as fired, through air dense black with dust
 And smoke, the bearer of this honoured name
 Was seen upon a massive rock to soar,
 High in the heavens, still holding in his hand
 His drawn sword, and all men watched
 Him thus depart to far Nirvana's land.
 His Hara warriors share with him his fate,
 And shattered fell the ramparts, while without
 The surging foes rush forward to the breach,
 Thinking to seize the corpse-bestrewn redoubt.
 Under cover of quickly firing guns,
 They mount the incline, clamber o'er the stones,
 Not heeding in their impetuous attack
 The cries of wounded, or the dying's groans.
 But faster still forward defenders rush,
 The Chandâwâts hurl themselves into the fray,
 Holding the advancing Moslems there in check,
 While others close the breach and save the day.
 Foiled was this effort but by the price they took
 The Moslems weakened by such attacks the force
 The Rajputs mustered till the time arrived
 When they knew not to what have recourse.
 No hope of reinforcements did there seem.
 Nor any one to raise the siege for them without,
 Nought seemed for them to do but fighting die,
 Shouting aloud the Rajput battle-shout.
 Jâwâhir-bhai, though in the past she erred
 By plotting with the infidel to win
 The throne for Bikrâmâjit now wipes
 Away the stain of this her former sin.



*through air dense black with dust
And smoke the bearer of this honoured name
Was seen upon a massive rock to soar,
High in the heavens, still holding in his hand
His drawn sword,*

Ambition now for her or her's
 Is all forgotten in her fond resolve
 To save Chitor and Mewar honour which
 Before she, heedless, would for her hopes involve.
 Coming from out the seclusion of her home,
 Donning bright armour, with weapons in her hand,
 She leads a sally from the western gate,
 And dies an offering for her adopted land.
 But courage such as this though filling men
 With wonder could not hope to stay
 The rising tide, as closer and closer drew
 The besieging army, while ever night and day
 Their cannon balls battered the crumbling walls,
 Their mines upraised huge lengths of ramparts,
 Thinner and thinner grew the fending line,
 While in their hearts the hope of help departs.
 Now Kurnâvâti, the young widowed queen
 Of Sanga Rana, who had born to him
 Udai-Singh, after he had passed away
 Beyond the range of earthly vision dim,
 The mother of this child, whose future state
 Was causing men so gloriously to die,
 Sought in her mind some method which might save
 At least her child for future Lordship high.
 A Boondi Hara, she knew no fear but fain
 Would with her brother Arjuna too have shared
 Death in the fight, or on her husband's pyre
 Followed her lord to palaces prepared
 By waiting God's for those strong men from earth,
 Who, victors still in death may deathless live
 With them the Gods, who knowing all men's minds
 See but their triumphs and their faults forgive.

Yet had she been denied such deaths to die,
 The future mother must, by law's decree,
 Tarry behind her lord that she may bear
 The child her lord in life has caused to be.
 And as a mother, until the time shall come,
 When grown in strength, the child shall want no more
 The mother's help and loving watchful care,
 She may not strive to open death's closed door.
 No hope there seemed in sallies from the gates,
 No help from any of the stricken Rajput clans,
 So in her mind with deep and subtle art
 In desperation she thus for respite plans.
 Among the Rajputs still an ancient custom holds,
 Whereby upon a certain holy day a woman can,
 Be she a damsel behind the purdah hid,
 Form an alliance with a chosen man.
 Upon this day if she a bracelet sends
 To him she chooses, be it of gold or silk
 Or even only just a simple thread,
 A Peacock's feather twisted in that ilk,
 And he accepts the gift and in exchange
 Sends back a bodice, as the custom so demands,
 He then becomes her "Râkki-band" and thus
 Is made her champion, bound by her commands,
 Whate'er she ask, although it may involve
 Risk of his life, or fortune, he must give
 Though still may be he ne'er will see her face,
 Yet her blood-brother must he ever live.
 Within the shaded precincts of the women's wing
 Of the old palace, Kurnâvâti wove
 Of silk and spangles a bracelet, while without
 The hard-pressed Rajputs with the Moslems strove.

Having long heard how young Humayun was
 Famed for his courtesy, sensitive and kind,
 Honouring, although a Moslem, other faiths,
 She thought in him a champion now to find,
 Thus, having finished this her bracelet, she
 Called to her presence one whom she might send
 As messenger to Delhi's palace far,
 Trusting the Emperor might to her succour lend.
 Thus did she give her orders to the man :—
 "Go hence, and make your way at dead of night
 "Through those our enemies encamped around,
 "Seek thou no combat, but by hasty flight
 "Ride to the Emperor, and giving him my gift,
 "Say by this token is he as brother bound
 "To Kurnâvâti, Rani of Mewar,
 "'Pent in her palace, which treacherous foes surround.'
 Long was his ride, and weary was his quest,
 Humayun was not in his Delhi palace met,
 Nor yet among the roses planted in
 The Agra gardens, but by cares beset
 In far Bengal was crushing with his might
 The rebel armies of some usurper, who
 Claimed there the Kingship. Ever onward pressed
 The Rani's servant, while ever in him grew
 His fear for Chitor, knowing well that all
 Depended on his speed for if delayed
 Then would the stark hand of famine break
 The Rajput forces, by foemen undismayed.
 At last he finds the Emperor, and lays down
 His gift before him, and his message speaks :—
 Humayun touched by this appeal with joy
 Asks of him waiting what the Rani seeks ;

"For herself nothing does Kurnâvâti ask"
 He makes reply, "But only for her child
 "Does she implore her brother now to give
 "Protection from those who have your rule resiled."
 Chivalrous and kind of heart Humayun starts
 Back from Bengal, to march to Chitor's aid,
 But ere he comes, too slowly did he march,
 The Rajputs had their final sortie made.
 For while the messenger was speeding on his quest,
 The Rajputs, waiting in Chitor, had found
 No peace nor rest, ever through night and day
 The noise of guns, and bursting mines resound.
 And Kurnâvâti, watching t'wards the North,
 Feels in her heart her dying hopes demise,
 Straining her eyes, till night-time covers all,
 For that relief on which her hope relies.
 But never does a hanging dust cloud show
 Where far away a marching army treads,
 Nor yet at night-time does a flickering light
 Show where they camp upon their earthen beds.
 Days pass to weeks, the weeks to months and still
 No sign appears, no word that help may come,
 While all around she sees the end approach,
 The hopeless looks, the very children dumb,
 The pinch of famine enters every home,
 The limits reached, and the Chiefs decide
 That all is lost and nought remains for them
 But to rejoin their brothers who have died.
 Bravely and calmly had they prepared themselves
 Knowing full well that no more could be done ;
 Udai-Singh was smuggled out to raise again
 The hallowed banner of the flaming sun.

Dry wood above the magazine was placed,
 Where Kurnavati led their women-kind,
 Then as their bodies crashed towards the sky,
 Poured from the breaches, by foemen undermined,
 All that remain, the last survivors now
 Of all the Rajputs who have gathered there,
 Rushing upon the Moslems fighting still
 With ten-fold strength in this their mad despair.
 Great was the mourning over all the land,
 No clan but had its Chieftain slain among
 The thirty thousand Rajputs, who had given
 Their lives ere Chitor from their hold was wrung.
 And thirteen thousand women too had sought
 Death on that pyre so hastily prepared,
 That they in chastity might meet their lords,
 With whom in life they had life's dangers shared.
 Two weeks alone Bahadur Shah held court
 In Chitor's wreck, midst dying and the dead,
 When news was brought that Humayun comes,
 Too late to succour those already sped
 On that far journey whence no mortal strength
 Could now recall them, and his chivalrous mind
 Felt the pain of remorse since had he failed
 Her who had hoped in him a champion strong to find.
 Bahadur Shah himself is now besieged
 In that grim fort, while out upon the plain
 Humayun's troops foraging for themselves,
 Prevent his men to gather any grain.
 Thus do provisions daily shorter grow,
 And he foresees defeat awaiting him,
 Therefore a dastard to the very end
 He steals away, when clouds the moonlight dim,

Leaving his army leaderless and faced
By death by famine, or like himself to crawl
Away from Chitor, leaving all the spoils behind
Into the hands of Humayun's troops to fall.
Humayun now Bikrâmâjit replaced
Upon the throne to rule upon the hill,
Thinking by girding him with his own sword
To make of him a puppet to his will.
Not so the fates decreed, Humayun soon
A landless fugitive the country roams,
While Bikrâmâjit, murdered, reposes 'neath
The sun-cast shadow of his palace domes.

THE COMING OF UDAI-SINGH.

Sorrow and trouble, adversity and woe,
May noble natures chasten and refine,
But natures base no power on earth can change
Save but their own congenital decline.
The finest steel through hell-hot flames must pass
Ere yet it gains the temper that it needs,
But baser metals melt away to dross,
When touched by fire ; so one finds the deeds,
Of those who have adversity endured,
Show forth their natal nature and proclaim,
Whether or not their hearts though tried are true,
Or filled with baseness, proved by trouble's flame.
Thus Bikrâmâjit no lesson learned
In his adversity, but clearly shows
His nature had no fineness to obtain
Profit from out the furnace of his woes.
Replaced at Chitor, his Chiefs again he treats
With the same rudeness as had been his way,
When first he took the place of Ratna Singh,
Till all men murmured, unruly neath his sway.
Yet did they bear with him, since none they knew
Whom they could now upon the Gadi place ;
Young Udai-Singh was but a little child,
And many troubles were there still to face.
No time was this for a young child to rule,
Their forces broken and their country poor,
Strong hands were needed and a virile mind
The Rajput power and vigour to restore.

Bikrâmâjit seeing their outward show
 Of fealty to him, not knowing in their minds
 Their hate of him, bound by their patriotism,
 By his own act the snapping bonds unbinds.
 Daily more arrogant his bearing grows,
 Heaping upon them insults in his pride,
 Until at last the final climax comes,
 Which none can brook, whatever may betide.
 In full assembly about his Gadi sat
 The Chiefs of Mewar, each within his place
 According to the rank and titles that he bore,
 The purest blood of all the Rajput race.
 Among the rest, grey-bearded, full of years,
 There sat the ancient Srinagar Chief,
 Who in the past to Sanga in his need
 Had given freely, comfort and relief;
 Yet this young Rana, unheeding of his years,
 Nor yet of all his friendship in the past,
 Enraged against him for some trifling cause,
 The crowning insult on the Chieftain cast.
 Before the eyes of all, in full Durbar,
 To such a pitch had his vain madness grown,
 He struck the Chief a blow, a dastard act
 That none could ever pardon or condone.
 With one accord the Nobles, glowering, rise
 To leave the hall, wherein one of their kind
 Had been thus treated by their hated Lord;
 And one speaks out the thoughts in every mind :—
 “My brother Chieftains, hitherto have we
 “But smelt the blossom, but now are we compelled
 “To taste the fruit. Shall we like slave-born bear
 “The whip-strokes of the scourge above us held

"By this low-living misbegotten sot,
 "Who knows no honour, nor any honour shows
 "To age or birth; have we not seen enough
 "To know the fruit that from the blossom grows?
 "Two sons of Sanga have on the Gadi sat,
 "And one is dead, finding his just reward
 "In death, for sullyng a Rajput blade
 "By using it as an assassin's sword.
 "The other now, e'en as he did before,
 "Would split the country into helpless petty states
 "To be the spoil of the proud Delhi King,
 "Who for our downfall ever watchful waits.
 "The blood of Sanga has been tried and found
 "Wanting, alone remains his youngest child,
 "But can a babe be trusted now to rule,
 "In times like this, so strenuous and so wild?
 "Let us appoint a Regent, who may hold
 "The power for him, until the years reveal
 "If he shall prove a worthy son of him,
 " "The Lion of War," and bring to Mewar weal".

Loudly the nobles these brave words acclaim,
 And Bikrâmâjit is from the throne displaced,
 Unfit to rule, a prisoner he is held,
 By his own Chiefs, his Ranaship disgraced.
 In Komulmer, the fortress in the hills,
 Where Prithi-Raj with Tara-bhai held sway,
 Whose names renowned for deeds of chivalry
 Are even now as household words to-day;
 There dwelt his son, not born of Tara-bhai,
 But of a bond-maid, Bunbeer was his name,
 And him they summoned for his father's blood,
 Although his birth was still a birth of shame,

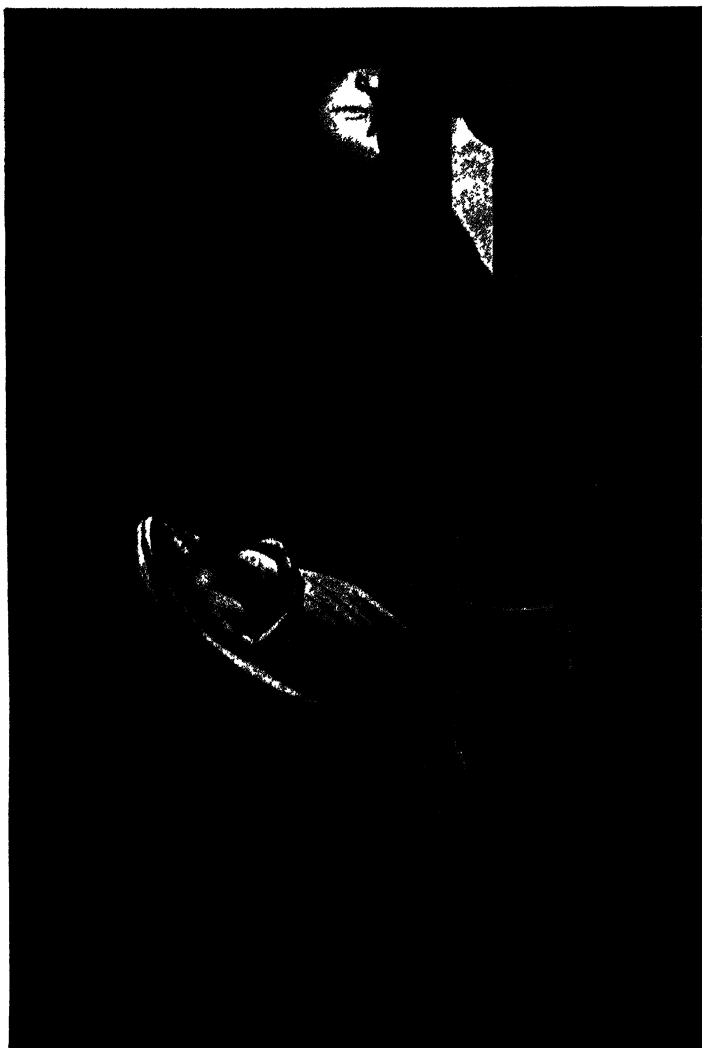
To act as Regent, trusting neath his rule,
 Mewar might gain sufficient time to rise
 Again resplendent as in the former days,
 When ruled by Khumba, the warlike and the wise.
 His blood precluded him from being set
 Upon the Gadi, since as a bastard he,
 Could not, they thought, dare to aspire
 To regal honours and royal dignity.
 Thus did they see no danger in their choice,
 As had there been, if were his blood more pure,
 Trusting the recognition of his shame
 Would guard against ambition's fateful lure.
 Meanwhile young Udai-Singh, unconscious of
 The intrigues that were woven round about,
 Played in the Rana's palace, ate and slept,
 Not worried ever by any fears or doubt.
 After his mother Kurnâvâti died,
 Bereft of hope of saving for her son
 The fort of Chitor, and by her virtuous death
 Reunion with her waiting Lord had won,
 He had been guarded by a foster nurse
 With her own child, a boy of equal years,
 And in her heart she took him as her own,
 Knowing for him a mother's hopes and fears.
 Punna her name, "The Diamond", and as is
 The diamond clear, translucent to the light,
 So was her love for her young charge as dear
 And precious as the stone, it shone as bright.
 Ever she watched with tender boding care
 The orphan child, she'd suckled at her breast,
 Feeling again, in memory, his baby lips
 Against her bosom in trusting weakness pressed.

She who had given of herself for him,
 When yet a babe, was now content to give
 Her very life, if that the price should be
 That she must pay, that this young child might live.
 Sad was this faithful woman's heart, when first
 She heard Bikrâmâjit had regained once more
 His throne, and in his prior right of birth
 Her charge supplanted as Rana of Chitor.
 Therefore she watched with eagerness the trend
 Of every movement, list'ning to each word,
 Spoken or whispered, of his o'erweening pride,
 Through which he had enduring hate incurred.
 Thus did she hear the murmuring that rose,
 Note the black looks upon each Chieftain's face,
 And secretly, by softly spoken hints,
 Tried by her intrigues, the Rana to disgrace.
 Seeking throughout to guide the mounting wave
 Of insurrection so that on its crest
 Young Udai-Singh, unknowingly upheld,
 Should Kingship from his elder brother wrest.
 So when that fatal day, Bikrâmâjit
 So far forgot himself that every Chief,
 No longer hiddenly but openly, cries out
 Against his rule from which they seek relief,
 She in the palace heard and strove to gain
 Allegiance for the child, she held so dear,
 And did indeed so much at least attain,
 That only as a Regent was Bunbeer
 Appointed, and thus the Gadi left
 Vacant until such time as one might know
 How Udai-Singh, at last to manhood grown,
 Would prove himself, and by his actions show,

Whether he were like Rana Sanga strong and true,
 Or like his brother vicious in his mind,
 Unworthy from the nature of his life
 To be their lord and ruler of their kind.
 Yet did this raising of Prithi-Raj's son
 Cause her disquiet, remembering that he,
 Through lust of Kingship, drove his brother out,
 Forced for his life in secrecy to flee.
 What if his son should have inherited
 His father's vices, even as it seemed
 He had the qualities, by which men hoped
 To see their country from its loss redeemed?
 Should he for power and greatness too aspire,
 Would he dare leave the sons alive
 Of Rana Sanga, when he so easily
 Could their removal from his path contrive?
 Once they were dead no one could claim
 More right by birth than, though a bastard, he
 Could do, and in the very strength
 Of his position would it easy be
 For him to crush all opposition to his rule,
 Quenching rebellion ere its smouldering burst
 Into fierce flame, and by acknowledged might
 Leave malcontents to try to do their worst.
 Fearful poor Punna increased her vigilance,
 Ready to shield if need be with her life,
 The child she loved, dreading that he may fall
 The victim of some hired assassin's knife.
 Bunbeer, now leader of the Rajput clans,
 Holds sway at Chitor, Rana but in name,
 While Bîkrâmâjit, deposed, within his palace kept,
 Still may the title, but not the power claim.

Thus as a prisoner he lives the life
 More suited to his nature, free to sate
 His appetite for filthy orgies and debauch,
 Free from the cares of Kingship or of State.
 Stronger and stronger do Bunbeer's hands become,
 His nature venturous, he, by force of arms,
 Repels attacks, and quells unruly bands,
 Which had before been wont to raise alarms;
 Thus bringing safety to the countryside
 He gains adherents, and a fighting force
 Ready to do the bidding of the man
 They hold as full of power and resource.
 No longer now does he the power sway
 As servant of the Chiefs, who to him gave
 This power, that, he guided by their will,
 Could by their aid the lands of Mewar save.
 No longer now does he their wishes heed,
 Ready to force his orders should they be
 In opposition to him, and they repent too late
 Their raising him, low-born, to Regency.
 And Punna in the palace hears and fears
 The increase in his insolence, and waits
 With dreading heart, knowing, alas, full well,
 The thirst for power the taste of power creates,
 Young Udai-Singh had taken his repast,
 Upon his wonted couch, he sleeping, lay
 Sunk in oblivion, while watching by his side
 Kind Punna sat, her child not far away
 Sleeps also on his bed of lowlier make,
 As suited to one of his own estate.
 And so she waits, wondering in her heart,
 What may be written in the fast-closed book of fate.

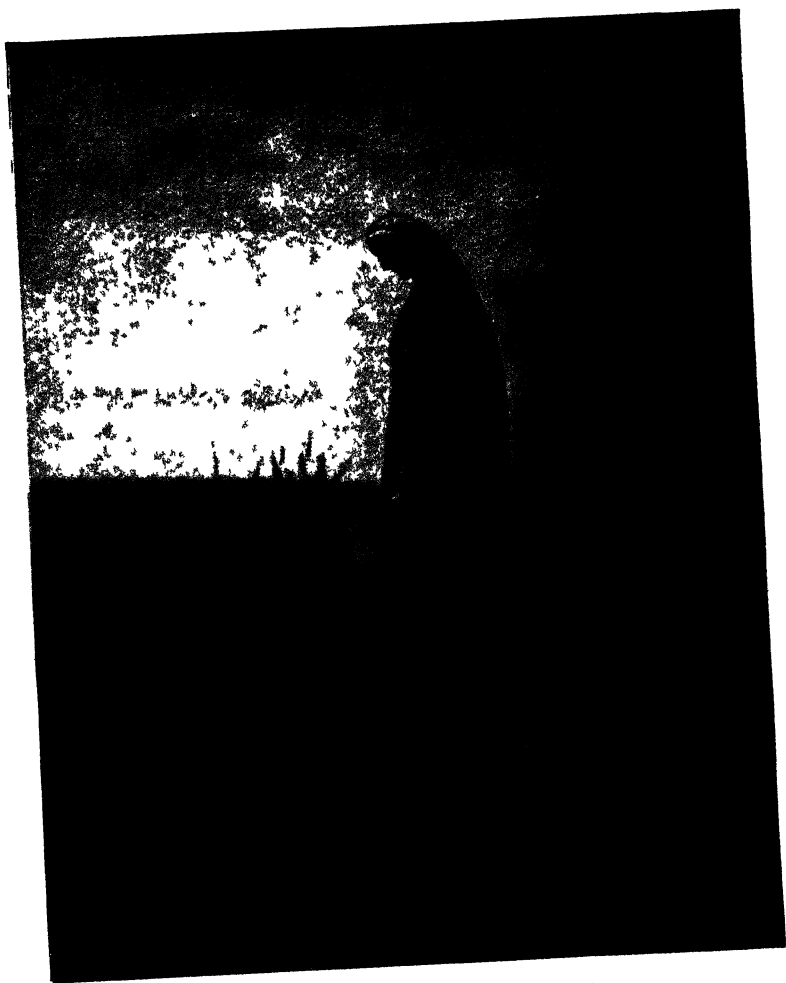
The night speeds on, while from without is heard
 The noise and clamour of the wild debauch,
 Where Bîkrâmâjit, in drunken ecstasy,
 Enjoys the lewdness of an unclean nautch.
 Further the murmur of the city sounds,
 While ceaselessly the sentries' measured tread
 Tells where the men of Bunbeer's force
 Guard those within. Still by the Prince's bed
 She sits and waits, slowly the noises die,
 First is the sleeping city's murmur stilled,
 Then later does the revelry decrease,
 And night is with a waiting silence filled;
 Yet ever still, but adding to the hush,
 The sentries' pacing breaks upon the ear,
 Telling of watchful eyes that do not sleep,
 Now passing further, now approaching near.
 And Punna waits; the flickering lamp flame waves,
 The moonbeams move about the floor and wall,
 A stray dog howls, the hunting jackals cry,
 The hooded owls to one another call.
 And Punna waits; suddenly a cry,
 Rings through the palace, piteous, intense,
 Then over all again, like as a funeral pall,
 Comes back the silence and suspense.
 But Punna waits no longer; well she knows
 That wild cry claimed the Rana's dying breath,
 Struck in his drunken stupor, he had found
 Requit for his living deeds in death.
 The time had come; ambition's lust had driven
 Bunbeer to murder, to sweep from out his way
 The rightful heirs to Chitor, so that he
 Could, now in power, hold undivided sway.



*Snatching her own-born son from off his bed,
She laid the Prince in his place, sleeping, there,*

One dead, the child alone alive remained,
And Punna knew that now the die was thrown,
Blood called for blood, and only by more blood
Could the blood-taker claim the crown his own.
What could a feeble woman do to thwart
The murderer's power? How now to save the life
Entrusted to her, ere she passed away
By Kurnâvâti, Rana Sanga's wife?
Short was the time, e'en now she thought
She heard the tread of footsteps on the stair,
Snatching her own-born son from off his bed,
She laid the Prince in his place, sleeping, there,
A moment more, their clothing interchanged,
Her child appears as Udai-Singh asleep,
Then blowing out the light she fainting falls,
O'ercome by anguish far too great to weep.
The dawn wind blowing through the open door
Restores her senses, and she knows the worst,
Her own child slain, stricken in the place
Of Udai-Singh, the foster-child she nursed.
Who worries now at this poor woman's grief?
Yea, she may take her child away and go,
The Prince is dead, no foster mother now
Is wanted for him who will never know
The need of food, nor any watchful care,
Already is his funeral pyre raised,
The wood and spice, in order meet, prepared
Ready to be by flaming torches blazed.
So does the Prince disguised as Punna's son
Go from Chitor with her who for him gave
More than her life, well knowing only thus
Could she succeed his precious life to save.

Her mother's heart, though loving him indeed
 Almost as much as had she known the pain
 Of bearing him, (that pain that seems to wake
 A changeless love that may not sleep again,)
 Mourns for her child, whom she had willing given.
 As Mewar women through all time have done,
 To be the sacrifice for land and race,
 The famed Sessodias, begotten of the sun.
 Bowed down with grief, alone, save by her side
 A helpless child, the faithful Punna fares
 Forth on a pilgrimage, the end whereof
 She does not know, and hardly even cares,
 Save that she find some shelter for the Prince,
 Where he may grow in safety, till the day
 Shall come when he to manhood having grown,
 May drive the murderer from his throne away.
 Mile upon mile over the dust-strewn plain,
 Through thorn-filled thickets does she pass,
 With only just a bundle-full of clothes,
 A cooking pot, a lota made of brass.
 Clothed in poor clothing, while the Princely child
 Wears but a dhoti and a jacket small
 Torn and tattered, and his tender feet
 Shoeless remain, thus are they thought by all
 To be but wanderers journeying on their way
 To their far home, and in some humble cot
 Of peasants nightly do they welcome find,
 Being pitied by them for their harder lot.
 Thus wandering on do they at last arrive
 At Deola, where reigns the youthful son
 Of Baghji, who had given his life
 On Chitor's hill, when did the hill slopes run



*Mile upon mile over the dust-strewn plain
Through thorn-filled thickets does she pass*

With streams of gore, there surely did she think
 Would be a welcome for the Prince for whom
 The ruler's father gladly shed his blood, \n
 Leading his men, unflinching to their doom.
 But when the Chieftain heard the nurse's tale
 And learned the status of the way-worn boy,
 He feared to give them shelter lest Bunbeer
 Hearing thereof should by his might destroy
 Him also as the harbourer of one
 Whom he had cause to fear, so did he send
 Them forth again. So onward must they go
 Since none would dare the upstart to offend.
 At Dongarpur a like reception waits,
 The wanderers when they come, and in despair
 They turn again to those wild mountain tracts,
 To wander 'mongst the Bhils, who harbour there ;
 Those small wild men, who have inhabited.
 The mountain valleys from before the day
 When Bâppâ rose to power, and they still
 Their pristine manners and courage yet display.
 They do not fear Bunbeer in far Chitor,
 For well they know no army e'er could thread
 Their pathless maze, but lose themselves upon
 Some frowning hill, or rock-strewn river bed.
 Therefore although no shelter could they give,
 Living in caves and roughly fashioned shacks,
 Yet did they help them, giving of their best,
 Acting as guides upon the mountain tracks,
 Forming a guard about the helpless twain
 Against wild beasts, for which they had no dread,
 (Living among them, e'en do they tigers scorn,)
 They on their way the worn out travellers led.

Seeing no hope of harbour with his clans,
 The cunning Punna, seeking for the child
 Some place of refuge, where he may remain,
 Other than in those mountains waste and wild,
 Thinks in the very heart of Bunbeer's lands
 No one will seek for him, that he would slay ;
 So having settled on this daring plan,
 To Komulmeer she makes her tedious way.
 Now, when to Chitor Bunbeer had been called,
 He had not placed a Rajput in command,
 Fearing that if one of that war-like race,
 Were put in power he might in time demand
 Allegiance to himself from all the clan
 Against Bunbeer ; (thus do the vicious dread
 An equal vice in others, trusting none,
 Their want of trust by their own falseness fed.)
 So did he place in power, one Assa Sah,
 A member of the merchant caste, a Jain,
 In whom he thought, not being a fighting man,
 He could, with safety, perfect trust recline.
 His faith precluded him from taking life,
 And steeped in commerce, he might, by
 His knowledge, so enrich his state, that he
 Would to his master extra strength supply.
 Now Assa Sah, a man of peace, was known
 Throughout the land for justice and revered
 By all who knew him, for the faith he held
 In all the actions of his life appeared ;
 Not his the kind, that doth a faith profess,
 Yet by their actions on it cast disgrace ;
 Thus all men honoured him although he was
 One of the Vaishya caste and race.

His heart had grieved, when he had heard
 The deeds by which his master, Bunbeer, gained
 The ruling power, yet knowing well his strength,
 Silence regarding these, his thoughts, maintained.
 One day, when he with his old mother sat
 Within the fort, a message to him came,
 Saying a woman wished to speak with him,
 Although she gave not any cause or name.
 Now 't was his wont to hear both great and small,
 Not as some men who think their dignity
 Is lessened by allowing lowly ones,
 To come within their close propinquity.
 So did he call her to him and he saw
 A woman, weary from some journey long
 Yet was her mien such as could well command
 Respect and honour; for did her spirit strong
 Show in her bearing, the carriage of her head;
 For do the virtues of the heart and mind
 Proclaim themselves, even as vices low
 Leave on the face their own impress behind.
 Beside her was a child, sturdy and strong,
 With clean-cut features, and light-coloured skin,
 Such as one nowhere finds in peasant folk,
 But those who live the palace courts within.
 Strange seemed the pair and Assa Sah
 Felt in his mind that here before him stand
 Not any ordinary way faring ones
 But those who were some power in the land.
 Therefore he asks in courteous wise of her,
 Why 't is from him an audience that she seeks;
 Then doth brave Punna, who indeed it was,
 Answer his questions, and thus to him she speaks :

"Oh, Assa Sah, thou who all men declare
 "To be a lover of justice and of truth,
 "One who holds fidelity and faith
 "More highly than thy life in very sooth ;
 "I lay upon thy knees the sacred life
 "Of thine own Sovereign, Rana Sanga's son,
 "To guard and save from thy vile master's hate,
 "Who has by double murder his Ranaship begun.
 "I, who have sacrificed my flesh and blood,
 "Given the child I brought into the world,
 "Knowing and loving it ere yet it drew
 "The breath of life, or had itself uncurled
 "Within my womb ; I, who have given this,
 "Ask now of thee protection for thy King.
 "So that in after days, thy present deeds
 "May to thee honour and more glory bring."

So saying she who had so much bestowed
 Without reward, save such as may be gained
 By knowledge of a sacred trust fulfilled,
 All of the story to Assa Sah explained
 And he, by questions, of the truth convinced
 Was more perplexed, and in his heart dismayed,
 Loyalty and honour bade him help the child,
 Yet of Bunbeer was he, at heart, afraid.
 He had no love of battle, like the men
 Of Rajput blood, and did he justly feel,
 This was their duty, not his of other race,
 Their Prince in danger to fend for and conceal.
 If his own Chiefs had feared to guard his life,
 Or even harbour him within their states,
 Then why should he, the servant of Bunbeer,
 Now take the risk of aiding one he hates ?

Meanwhile the child, not heeding all the talk,
 Gazing around with wondering open eyes,
 Attracted first by this and that he sees,
 All of a sudden Assa's mother spies.
 She who had listened to this story strange,
 And in whose mother's heart response awakes,
 That none can know, who have not ever known
 The pain and joy that motherhood partakes,
 For that poor woman whose loyalty had been
 So self-effacing, splendid, and supreme.
 She, who for years had had no child to hold,
 Save but in memory or perchance a dream,
 Looking at Udai-Singh, whose thin pinched face,
 Road-weary feet, with dust and dirt engrained,
 Spoke of the wearying marches o'er the hills,
 Felt for his sufferings, and by them constrained
 To clasp him in her empty arms, and hold
 Him there, close-pressed against her heart
 To guard him from all ill, and know again
 The pleasures that of motherhood are part.
 Such thoughts as these reflected in her eyes,
 Drew the young boy, by nascent knowledge led,
 Close to her side, where wearied out he lays
 Upon her lap his sleep-bemuddled head.
 No prayers of Punna could have had effect
 Such as this trusting action of the child,
 For now a partisan he gains who will
 Guard him forever, in that woman mild.
 She, reading now the trouble in the mind
 Of Assa Sah, who knows not which should be
 His line of action, holding still the Prince
 Speaks in the wak'ning of her maternity :—

"My son, why dost thou hesitate in this ?
 "Is not this boy the Rana Sanga's child ?
 "Our rightful Rana, would ye too cast him out
 "To roam again among the mountains wild ?
 "Who is Bunbeer, that thou should hold to him
 "Rather than loyalty to the rightful heir ?
 "Nought but a bastard, who usurps the power,
 "A murderer, who does not infants spare.
 "Loyalty and faith, which I have ever taught,
 "Should be thy guide in this embarrassment,
 "For surely will the Gods reward thee, if
 "Thou prove but true in trials they have sent,
 "But if thou fail, and pandering to thy fears
 "Drive out this child upon the road again,
 "How can ye loyalty and honour claim
 "Since ye thyself from giving it abstain ?
 "Let us then take the Prince, if need be, hide
 "His birth and status, till the time arrive,
 "When grown to manhood, he may claim his own
 "And all the might of his own house revive.
 "Meanwhile he may as thine own nephew live
 "Within our house, so treated with respect
 "Beneath our care, and none will ever know
 "His lineage or royal blood suspect."

She finished speaking, waiting for her son
 To answer her, while her soft hands caressed
 The tired head of the now sleeping Prince,
 Content to find a haven on her breast.
 Not long she waited for her son's reply,
 Since Assa Sah to all her words agreed,
 For had the loyalty of his own mind but wished
 Another voice its righteous cause to plead,

So Udai-Singh within the palace stayed,
 Passing as Assa's nephew, and endeared
 Himself by all his childish winning ways
 To those about him, yet Assa Sah still feared
 That should brave Punna, being a Rajput, stay
 As nurse to him, who seemed a Jain by birth,
 People would wonder, and word might spread about
 Until Bunbeer should all the truth unearth.
 Therefore the noble woman, wishing still
 Nought but the best for this her foster child,
 Bids fond farewell to him, whom she had nursed,
 And to his new-found friends her rights resiled.
 Bitter her grief, who childless now must live,
 Her own child dead, and he, for whom he died,
 A mother's sacrifice, so loyally given,
 Also removed, no longer by her side.
 Yet did she live not far away from him,
 Hidden though watching, ever ready there
 If troubles came to risk her life again,
 And into exile again with him to fare.
 But all men thought upon that fatal night
 'T was Udai-Singh, who perished by the sword,
 His body burnt upon the funeral pyre,
 And Bunbeer reigned in Chitor as their Lord.
 Had any guessed that Udai-Singh remained
 Alive, no one would still have thought to seek
 The fugitive in Bunbeer's own estate,
 Where he could vengeance on the guardians wreak.
 From childhood unto boyhood did he grow,
 While Assa's mother, with maternal care,
 Watched over him, and Assa to him taught
 The art of ruling, and so did prepare

Him for the state that he some day might hold,
When once again he came into his own,
To rule in Mewar as was his destiny,
Seated upon his father Sanga's throne.
Meanwhile Bunbeer for seven years held sway
At Chitor, and each day more hated grew
By all the Chiefs for his high arrogance,
Failing to treat them with the honour due
To their positions, yet did they all endure,
Not seeing where they might another find,
Who could by birth or right have filled his place,
Since by his murders had he left behind
None of the royal house, who now could claim
The Ranaship and with acknowledged right
Lead all the clans again to drive him out,
And his ill deeds in his own blood requite.
Low-born and raised to power did he show
The traits the low-born raised to power display,
Seeking to hide the vileness of his birth
By the vain glory of prodigal array ;
And did the slave-girl mother's vices live
Again in him, fit outcome of her spawn,
She, who had sold her body for a price,
Lived in the child she had in whorelock born.
No Chief dare offer the courtesy to him
Of bed or board, for fear that drunken he
Should with the viciousness of his low mind
Outrage some Rajput maiden's chastity.
Even in Chitor, no maid remained
Or virtuous wife, since all had fled,
Save but the outcasts and the harlots, who
For hope of gain were to the city led.

Yet notwithstanding all the vice and lust
 He had indrawn from his low mother's breast,
 His father's prowess in the field was his
 To hold the lands his avarice oppressed.
 So for his strength the nobles of the State
 His arrogance and pride at least endure,
 Since though himself they hate, yet do they see
 In him alone the power to ensure
 Their country from the inroads that they fear
 From Moslem neighbours, so for their country's weal
 They one and all within his palace meet,
 Showing respect they yet can never feel.
 Now in the days, when Mewar Ranas were
 Of purest blood, which no one could surpass,
 A practice rose, by which the Rana could
 Show honour to the Chiefs of his own race and class,
 By passing to them, at the banquet spread,
 Pieces from his own plate, but even then
 This usage was by many customs hedged,
 According to the rank and status of the men.
 For such an one as Bunbeer, whose low birth
 Was known to all, to feign respect to show
 To his great Chiefs, by customs such as this,
 Did but their indignation cause to grow.
 Such arrogance appearing in their eyes,
 That he would equal birth with Bâppâ claim,
 Thus casting slurs upon their great progenitor,
 Making them also sharers of his shame.
 So did it happen when the Chandâwât Chief
 The proudest noble of that birth-proud race
 Was offered food from Rana Bunbeer's plate
 He looked upon the honour as disgrace.

Well is it known that not an one must touch
 A Rajput's honour or a Rajput's wife,
 Since are they ever in defence of them
 Ready to risk their fortunes and their life.
 So when this insult to the Chandâwât Chief
 Was given, all men sat with bated breath,
 Wondering if within the banquet hall
 They would be witness of the Rana's death.
 But though with rage the Chieftain's heart was filled
 Yet did he not the Rana deign to slay,
 Holding that having eaten of his salt
 Honour forbade him nature to obey.
 Yet did he call to witness in his wrath
 The other Chiefs, the insult to their kind,
 Though of a truth there was no need for him
 To of the Rana's baseness them remind.
 "My brother Chiefs, that which from Bâppâ's hand
 "Had been an honour to the noblest one
 "In all the land, is but an insult from
 "The hand of this slave-woman's bastard son.
 "Shall we submit to insolence like his,
 "Who apes the customs of our God-got Kings,
 "Yet by the vileness of his bastard blood,
 "Disgrace upon the throne of Mewar brings?
 "Rather let Mewar perish, honoured still,
 "Split into clans, o'errun by Moslem hordes,
 "Than suffer longer with this murderer,
 "The slayer of our country's rightful Lords."
 Indeed it seemed that this the end would be,
 Since who by right could knit the warlike states
 Into a homogeneous whole, but one
 Born to the Kingship, ordained by the fates.

Not a Chandâwât, who the Rathores hate
 Nor any ruler of a foreign race ;
 All under Bâppâ's seed would gladly join,
 But to no other would themselves debase.
 Now at this time, when all seemed lost,
 And Mewar's need was crying to the Gods,
 Those Gods that seemed indeed to be asleep,
 And caring nought about poor human clods,
 It chanced that the old Sonigurra Chief
 Descendent of the Hindoo Muldeo, who
 Had sought to trick Hamir in former days,
 And learned his treachery full well to rue,
 Chancing to pass through Komulmeer espied
 Young Udai-Singh, now a young stripling grown,
 Whose face and nature seemed not to display
 The attributes a merchant's son would own ;
 So gazing on him with suspicious eyes,
 He notes his bearing, and by some small sign
 Sees a resemblance to Rana Sanga's self,
 Distinct to him, though what, could not define.
 Now Assa Sah, who loved the youth and knew
 How Bunbeer's rule was doomed, and Mewar's need,
 Fearing no longer Bunbeer's murderous spite,
 To tell the story of the Prince agreed.
 Once told, like fire through the prairie grass,
 It spread the hopeless Mewar lands throughout,
 Lighting with hope the hearts of all who heard,
 So glad to hear, they were too glad to doubt.
 From far and near the joyous Chieftains flock
 To Komulmeer and hear brave Punna's tale,
 How she had saved the sacred life for them,
 When they themselves did their own Rana fail.

Thus did she speak, standing before them there,
 Still finely built, though now well-spent in years,
 The mark of deathless anguish in her eyes,
 Telling of days and nights consumed in tears.

"Ye Rajput Chiefs, ye waverers, behold!

"Your Rana, whom your Rajput chivalry

"Could not, or would not, in his need protect

"From yon slave-born bastard's devilry.

"Thou of Deola, and thou of Dongarpur

"Hide ye away each one thy fickle face,

"Can ye, who dared renounce brave Sanga's son,

"Stand now before him unheeding of disgrace?

"Yea, it was left to aboriginies, wild Bhils,

"To guard your Rana for you, dastards, when

"Ye lacked the courage even to extend

"The shelter that you offer lesser men.

"And here in Komulmeer, Bunbeer's own fort,

"Alone he found a loyal man and true,

"Not of the Sun-got clan nor Rajput race,

"To be reproach to such a spawn as you.

"Eh! now your master, whose bastard feet you licked

"Would feed the dogs, that have about him fawned,

"And you would bite, being driven wholly mad,

"Thinking your honour by his complaisance scorned.

"In ancient days the Rajputs noted were

"For loyalty, but now it seems that they

"Are neither faithful to great Bâppâ's seed

"Or e'en to him that they appoint to sway

"The destinies of Mewar. Selfseekers, Panders.

"I, a woman of that old Rajput race,

"Feel now that title, ('t was an honour once,)

"To be for me a title of disgrace".

Thus did she speak, while silent sat the Chiefs,
Knowing within their hearts the sense of shame,
Having no answer to the scornful words
That from the loyal-hearted woman came.
Humbled, they craved the pardon of the Prince,
Beseeching him to trust them once again,
And take upon himself the sovereignty,
Swearing for him the throne to regain.
So Udai-Singh was then by all proclaimed
Rana of Mewar, and about him flocked
All the great chiefs, who Bunbeer in his pride
Had so insulted, their very birth-right mocked.
The Chief of Sonigurra, who had first
Discerned in him the likeness to his sire,
Offered his daughter as wife to Udai-Singh,
Seeking thereby fresh honour to acquire.
Now when Muldeo, his forefather, tricked
Hamir into a marriage that had seemed
Disgraceful to him, he had in his first wrath
Declared a curse, which never was redeemed,
Upon those of his blood, who should contract
A marriage with Muldeo's hated strain,
Holding the outcome of their nuptials would
Bring to Mewar disaster in their train.
So did some Chiefs counsel, that the Prince
Refuse the offer, but others were that held,
The Sonigurra Chief too powerful
To have his marriage offer thus repelled.
And in the present time, when allies strong
Were needed to uphold the Rana's sway,
Even great Hamir would himself have shrunk
To risk the chance of turning friends away;

THE COMING OF AKBAR -
AND
THE THIRD SACK OF CHITOR.

During the time, when Mewar had been riven
By wild dissensions, plots, and murderings,
Troubles had risen in the further east,
And clamour through the Delhi Empire rings.
Scarce had Humayun left Bikrâmâjit
Upon the throne of Chitor, when he heard
Of new uprisings in remote Bengal,
To which attention he had long deferred.
Such was his character, though chivalrous and true,
He had no stable object, and was moved
By sudden impulse, yet so slothful he,
That all too late his very virtues proved
His own undoing, for these virtues led
Him into enterprises, in themselves most good,
Yet did his sloth prevent him in the end
Fulfilling them, as first he planned he should.
Too late to save Chitor, although he left,
When he came from Bengal, his work half done,
He had to start again to that far place,
Relinquishing the spoils which he had won.
Malwa and Gujarat arose again
To power ere he hardly had gone forth,
While Bikrâmâjit his independence claims,
Not fearing him or his avenging wrath.
Pitted against him in these Eastern lands,
Was a strong man, by name Sher Khan,
Who coveted the luscious Bengal plains,
Himself like Babar coming from 'Afghan.

At first Humayun against his forces gains
 A victory, and drives him to the North,
 But having done so does not follow up
 The vantage gained, not willing to go forth,
 But to remain in indolence and ease,
 Seeking to gratify his passion's taste
 With the soft-bosomed maidens of Bengal;
 Debauching those who hold themselves most chaste.
 Indeed Bengal, the men not fighting men,
 Had caused to rue the lusty north-men's stay,
 For should a father or a husband strive
 To save their women, the ravager would slay
 The man opposing, and would gain his ends,
 Seizing the women, passed them from man to man,
 Till being sated, they would cast them forth;
 And lust and murder through the country ran.
 No woman safe, their hoarded savings filched,
 Their cattle killed, their sacred fanes defiled,
 They cursed the day, that brought to their fair land,
 These Afghan soldiers, so uncouth and wild.
 Meanwhile Sher Khan, in generalship adroit,
 Seized all the roads to Delhi in the rear,
 Cutting Humayun from his far-off base;
 His vices now were doomed to cost him dear.
 His brothers, Hindal and Kumran, no help
 Sent to him stranded, but on Agra seized,
 Leaving no hope for him but to discover
 Some way by which Sher Khan may be appeased.
 Thus to a shameful peace, by circumstances driven,
 A truce is ordered, while the Chiefs collate
 The terms by which agreement may be made,
 While on the plain the opposing armies wait.

Humayun chivalrous, who treachery abhors,
 Thinking no evil, no evil apprehends,
 Thus does he let his army fraternise
 Even as if they camped beside their friends.
 But was Sher Khan formed in a different mould,
 Not his to waver, if the end he sought
 Could to his mind by vilest treachery
 Be for himself with lesser outlay bought.
 Verily should Humayun yet command
 An army weak, he could a nucleus make,
 Through which he might, by adding to its strength,
 Later, revenge upon its victor take.
 Therefore when all was almost settled he
 Struck in the night the unsuspecting force,
 Butchering most of Humayun's men
 While still asleep, the others had recourse
 Only to flight; Humayun too, himself
 Pursued across the sacred Ganges fled,
 Saved by a miracle from a watery grave,
 Fast on his way to Agra's palace sped.
 Another year in preparations spent had passed,
 When once again "Sher Khan the Strong" he meets,
 But with his hireling troops ere blows are struck,
 Abandoned by them, he from the field retreats.
 Thereafter as an exile does he roam the land,
 With his young wife Hamida, who endured
 A thousand troubles in these weary days,
 When she alone was faithful to her Lord.
 Through Rajasthan, where did he try to gain
 Allies in Marwar and in Jessulmer,
 But did the Rajputs remembering Chitor
 Unsaved by him, when he was still so near,

Refuse all help, and sought indeed to take
This Moslem Emperor, now no longer dread,
That they by slaying him might make
A sacrifice for their illustrious dead ;
Through the dry deserts, waterless and piled
With hills of sand updriven by the wind,
Humayun flees ; his followers decrease,
Leaving a track of whitening bones behind.
Driven mad by thirst, some see the mirage gleam
Before their eyes as cool unending lakes,
That ever just beyond their reach remain,
Mocking the thirst it taunts but never slakes.
And all the time Hamida followed him ;
Beneath her heart another being lay,
Upholding her in that drear desert flight
To, by endurance, her mother-love display.
With bursting eyeballs, blistered feet, and cracked
Lips, from which lolled their hideous swollen tongues,
With panting breath in painful spasms drawn
Through burning throats from sand-cut aching lungs,
The remnant comes to Umarkot, a fort
Poor in itself, yet seeming in their minds
A Paradise, after that awful desert Hell,
And from its Raja kindly treatment finds.
Thus does Hamida in that lonely fort
Bring forth her child, whose name has rung
Throughout the world, Akbar, the Great, and Good,
The praise of whom a thousand bards have sung.
Humayun later, after years of wandering,
Regained his throne, and in Delhi died,
Slipping upon his marble palace stairs,
Leaving the Empire for his son to guide.

Akbar, a boy of thirteen years, became
 Emperor of Delhi, and for his graces praised,
 While in far Komulmeer young Udai-Singh
 Of equal age to Ranaship is raised.
 No greater contrast could one ever find
 Than twixt these twain, Akbar the Great,
 Born of a father wanton and unwise ,
 Yet with a mind and nature so innate
 With every virtue, gracious, strong, and bold,
 That he was named :—"Of Kings the King"
 "Shadow of God", and even to this day
 His laws and statutes honour to him bring.
 While Udai-Singh, born from Great Sanga's loins,
 Son of the bravest king, above whose head
 The sun-disk waved, whose mother was
 Fair Kurnâvâti, also finely bred,
 Showed nought in life but cowardice and sloth,
 As ne'er a Rajput of the royal seed
 Had ever shown, utterly contemptible,
 He brought dishonour to Great Bâppâ's breed.
 The years pass on ; Akbar to manhood grown,
 First knits the states that homage to him pay,
 By equal laws, into an Empire loyal,
 Content to live beneath his liberal sway.
 Then, so does preternatal influence act
 Upon the mind of men in after life,
 He seeks revenge on those whose deeds had caused
 His mother anguish, Humayun's faithful wife ;
 She who, while he in embryo had been,
 Was driven forth into the desert wild,
 Enduring all, helped by that wondrous love
 That women bear for their yet unborn child.

So does he march with overwhelming force
Against Marwar, whose Rao had tried to slay
His father, when he a suppliant had come
For help and succour, in his need, to pray.
Before he reached to Marwar's far confines,
Through the rich lands of Amber state he passed,
Where did the craven Raja homage pay,
And by this deed was first to be outcaste,
For not content to bow his head before
A Moslem king, he did his daughter give
To be his wife, thereby defiling her
Doomed like a harlot a shameful life to live.
Vile though the act, a leniency it gained
For other Rajputs, who allegiance show
To Delhi's throne, since to such subject clans
Did Akbar ever graciousness bestow.
Free to observe their Hindoo forms and rites,
No tax was levied on these alien states
For pilgrimages, nor were their fanes defiled,
As under other Emperors had been their fates.
Yet some remained, who would not bow the knee
To Moslem Lords, whatever be their gain,
And Udai-Singh was one of those who did
From base allegiance with the King refrain.
Not strength of will nor valour was the cause
For this his action, but sheer indolence,
And vain stupidity, that nought could move,
Puffed up with pride, and wanting any sense.
No longer now by wiser guardians led,
He ruled the land, but was himself the slave
Of a fair woman, his mistress, and to her,
In his unhallowed love, all thoughts he gave.

Ah ! truly strange indeed is woman's love,
So often given to a worthless man ;
Seeing in him with love-blind eyes
Virtues, which no other being can.
Such was this case, the woman fair,
And finely bred, not of the wanton breed,
That live to satisfy the lust of men,
And bring forth bastard children of their seed.
Not such was she, she, of the Vaishya caste,
Had played with him in by-gone childhood's days
In Komulmer, not wotting of his birth,
And loved him for his kind and gentle ways.
Not knowing aught of passion or desire,
She oft with him, while childish games they play,
Not fearing, in her guileless modesty,
Her face and figure before him would display.
No evil thought had she, but in his mind
Temptation with occasion did conspire
To the vile deed of so entrapping her
As to give ease to his malign desire.
So trusting him, she was the sacrifice
To his raw passion, herself still innocent,
Though later learning the ill that he had done,
For love of him with shame was yet content.
She did not care how base his deed had been,
How he had played with, filched, her innocence ;
Herself she gave, her honour, and her life,
Sufficient was his love as recompense.
Cast from her home, she could not be his wife,
As caste laws hindered any such bond,
So as his mistress, she now remains to live,
And to his every mood and wish respond.



*At length without upon the plain appears
The Camp of Akbar, clear above his tent,
High above all, the golden crescent gleams;*

And he too loved her, as much as such a man
Could love, since he, alone in her, could find
One who would worship him, ready to see the good,
And be to all his baser living blind.
So did he set the victim of his sin
Higher than all, when he in Chitor ruled,
Nor was the selfish passion of his love
For her by years of satisfaction cooled.
Such was his state, while Akbar's power
Daily grew stronger, and Malwa overthrew,
Whose fleeing ruler foolhardy Udai-Singh
Welcomed at Chitor, and so the vengeance drew
Of Akbar on him; yet he supinely lay
Within his palace, not attempting to
Gather his forces, or any movement make,
While day by day nearer the Moslems drew.
At length without upon the plain appears
The camp of Akbar, clear above his tent,
High above all, the golden crescent gleams;
His guns towards Chitor their threat'ning mouths present.
Yet Udai-Singh does still no action take,
The Chieftains murmuring, askant may look,
The soldiers grumble, yet their Rana will
No interruption of his pleasure brook.
But was his mistress heavy in her soul,
Loving her Lord, she could not bear the thought.
That others looked with glowering eyes on him
Shirking his duty to defend the fort.
Therefore she urges him with loving words
To stir himself and don his regal mail.
Though deep within her woman's bosom, fears
For him, the man, her anxious heart assail.

"Oh ! Lord of Mewar, King of my life and love,
 "Beyond thy gates the hated Moslems spread
 "Their camp around, and all men look to thee
 "To lead them forth, but waiting to be led,
 "To strike the infidel, who dares to raise
 "His banner 'gainst thy Kingship and thy might,
 "Therefore, although this task for thee I dread,
 "Gird thou thyself, as champion of the right.
 "Son of Great Sanga, girt with Bâppâ's sword,
 "Thine arm shall crush this upstart in thy wrath,
 "Therefore thy gleaming armour quickly don,
 "And lead thy legions into battle forth".

But Udai-Singh, lost to all sense of shame,
 A coward too, does to this call respond
 In words, which make her loyal and faithful heart
 With deepest anguish for himself respond.

"Light of my eyes, I want no state to rule,
 "No throne on earth, no royalty, nor power,
 "These have been thrust on me, against my will,
 "Being my portion and my birthright's dower.
 "Rather would I recline with thee in peace,
 "Far from this strife, this clash of arms and mail,
 "Dreaming away the hours by some fair lake,
 "Where nought our love-dream ever could assail.
 "What do I care for Mewar or the race?
 "Only I live, when gazing on thy face,
 "Tasting the nectar of thy burning lips,
 "Watching and noting all thy woman's grace.
 "Mad would I be to risk my life and bliss,
 "The hours with thee, thy passion-waking kiss,
 "To lead these Rajputs into battle grim,
 "And chance a lifetime in thine arms to miss.

"No, if they want to fight let others lead,
 "The great Chandâwât, full of warlike pride,
 "Or Sonigurra, who has forced on me
 "The cursêd favour of an unloved bride.
 "I will not lead, nor do I care to fight,
 "My life is thine, and only while I live
 "Will men condone thy sin of loving me,
 "And honour to thee as my mistress give,
 "But if I die, what is there left for thee
 "But as an outcast in thy shame to hide,
 "The willing leman of a bygone king
 "Thou may'st not follow like his loveless bride?
 "For thee no Suttee's death upon my pyre,
 "Only a life dragged out in shame and woe,
 "Therefore for thy sake, and mine own desire,
 "Do I refuse into this fight to go".

The coward spake, masking his fear with love,
 But in her heart the shameful truth she knew,
 Knowing that never a single thought for her
 Within his mind at any moment grew.
 Although she loved him with a love intense
 She knew his faults, yet loved him just the same,
 Forgiving all, even as she at first
 Had pardoned him for luring her to shame.
 But did she hate that other ones should know
 The depths to which her loved one now had sunk,
 A Rajput fearful in the foemen's face,
 A dastard Rana, lacking pluck or spunk.
 Thus seeking, with her woman's facile wit,
 How she could hide from others his disgrace,
 She determined, selfless to the end,
 That she herself would take the Rana's place.

For this conspiring, she caused the word
To pass around, the Rajputs would attack
The Moslem force at night-time, unawares,
And by surprise drive them to Ajmer back.
Drugging the Rana with opium-tainted wine,
She dons his armour, hiding her fair face
Beneath a visor, while above her head
The sun-disk waves; then moving to the place
Where, all expectant, chiefs and soldiers wait,
She mounts a war-horse, leading in the van
In solemn silence, and all men think,
That Udai-Singh has proved himself a man.
Once through the gates upon the level plain
She leads them forward t'wards the sleeping camp.
Lit by the moonlight in the distance dim,
As if the Gods on high had held a lamp.
Nearer and nearer, silently they ride,
The sun-disk ever showing them the way,
As on the golden rays from Surya's face
The moon-beams seem to linger and to stay.
Then with a sudden shout and sword upraised
She throws them forward in a Rajput charge,
Yelling the Mewar battle cry aloud,
Re-echoing from the hidden river's marge.
Surprised and taken unawares Great Akbar's force
Breaks in disorder, hither and thither thrust,
Fleeing before, what in the moonlight seem,
Unceasing numbers, countless as the dust.
Fear in their minds, behind the Rajput blades,
In headlong flight they do not stay to think,
Pressing away, with many a backward glance,
Until they pass the Chambal river's brink.



*The Rajput leader's helmet falls, her waist-long hair
Streams far behind her riding in the van,*

Out of the bounds of Mewar do they halt,
 But dare not face the Emperor they have left ;
 So to their homes in fear they slip away,
 Leaving their master of his force bereft.
 But in the press and turmoil of the strife
 The Rajput leader's helmet falls, her waist-long hair
 Streams far behind her riding in the van,
 Like to a banner in the rushing air.
 The Chiefs and soldiers in amazement gaze
 On her fair face, resplendent in the glow
 Of dawn's first light, that she most fain would hide,
 Seeing they now her love's disgrace must know.
 The victory won, she turns her horse's head
 Back to Chitor, in sadness and in gloom,
 But ere she reaches to the lower gate
 A chance-fired shot seals this brave woman's doom.
 Struck in the breast, she feels her life blood flow,
 But staunching it, she rides into the town,
 Then at the very palace gate she falls ;
 Lifted by tender hands they lay her down
 Upon her bed, the armour from her stripped,
 Discloses to their eyes the fatal wound,
 While Udai-Singh, aroused from drunken sleep,
 Comes to her side ere yet in death she swooned.
 Gazing upon him with her love-lit eyes,
 She clasps his hand to her poor bleeding breast,
 And speaks to him a loving last farewell
 Before she goes to her long dreamless rest.
 "Oh ! Udai-Singh, for thee, for whom I gave
 "So willingly a woman's priceless dower,
 "For thee I die, but failed thee in the end,
 "Seeking to hide that thou thyself didst cower

"Within the palace, when without the gate
 "The Moslem forces collected for the fray.
 "And now I leave thee, light of all my life,
 "For that hereafter, where the priesthood say
 "I now must suffer for my sin on earth,
 "For sin they deem my love for thee to be,
 "Yet for the joy it gave to thee am I
 "Willing to burn in Hell eternally.
 "But do I think the pitying Gods on high
 "Will not condemn me for my having given
 "Myself to thee, since by themselves was sown
 "The seed of love, which in my heart has thriven.
 "Lord of my life! Death's darkness round me falls,
 "My eyes grow dim, still feasting on thy face,
 "Ere now I go on my fast-cooling lips
 "Thy farewell kiss as love's last token place."
 There in his arms, lip locked to lip, she died,
 Her bright eyes gleaming with undying love,
 Unhallowed but by selflessness sublime,
 Than loveless wedlock far indeed above.
 Crushed by his loss, degraded in the eyes
 Of all his Chiefs, since she, who tried
 Had in the very trying sadly failed,
 His sloth and cowardice from all to hide,
 The Rana, who not by her sacrifice
 Could raise himself, nor inspiration draw
 From her example, to now show himself
 A worthy scion of the name he bore,
 Flees to the hills, back to lone Komulmer,
 But there each stone and stream but him reminds
 Of her now lost, and conscience—stricken he,
 No peace nor rest in this wild fastness finds.

Chitor deserted by its Rana, yet sacred still
 Remains to all of the Sessodia race,
 Who join together there for its defence,
 Ready for it the Emperor's wrath to face.
 There in the fort were gathered once again
 Historic names, whose forbears had before
 Faced from the selfsame walls the Moslem hosts,
 Ever against the Rajputs waging war.
 Jaimul of Bednor, Putta of Kailwa,
 An offshoot of the old Chandâwât clan,
 Deola's heir, the son of Dongarpur,
 So as of yore the famous roll-call ran.
 Brave men these Chiefs, leaving their own estates
 To guard the city of their coward Prince,
 Knowing full well the odds 'gainst which they fought,
 Yet from that test not one there was to wince.
 Not long they waited, ere Great Akbar came,
 With guns and men, countless they seemed to be,
 Their tents and lines stretching across the plain
 Into the distance as far as eye could see.
 And in the midst a tall white tower stood,
 Fashioned of limestone thirty feet 't was raised,
 From which at night, lighting the camp around,
 A flaming beacon from its summit blazed.
 Slowly but surely did wise Akbar work,
 Not his the policy of wild attacks,
 But the more subtle means that saved his men
 The bloodshed witnessed in the former sacks.
 Artificers and workmen, builders, masons, smiths,
 Summoned from Delhi and cities far away
 Worked in his trenches, burrowing hidden mines,
 Building great towers, toiling night and day.

Closer and closer were the trenches dug,
And covered ways built upwards t'wards the fort,
Under whose shelter the charges for the mines
Could be, in safety from all missiles, brought,
And ever did the guns pour forth their shot and shell,
Their thunder echoing from the rock-faced hill,
While does the smoke, a dense and acrid fog,
Each undulation in the valleys fill.
The gallant Rajputs shut within the fort
Watch from the ramparts each day the foeman crawl
Nearer and nearer, while reinforcements take
The place of those lying dead beneath the wall.
Slowly but surely do those covered ways
Approach more nearly, ever the mines explode
Further within the battlements, meanwhile
Old superstitions do their hopes corrode.
Deserted by their Rana, none remains,
Who may by right the Sun-faced banner fly,
Therefore they fear "The Mother" too has left
Them there alone, in helpless case to die.
She who demanded twelve of royal birth
To quench her thirst for blood, will not content
Remain within her city, when none of Bâppâ's breed
To risk their lives are willing to consent.
Yet, though they feel the hopelessness of all
Their valour, still not one of all those there
Think of surrender, ready e'en now to die,
So that they shall their forbears honour share.
As is no Rana leading in their midst,
The old Chandâwât Chieftain takes his place,
Holding command over all other clans,
Being a scion of the royal house and race.

Too by hereditary right 't is his to hold
 The "Suraj Pol", the new-born Sun-god's gate,
 Through which at dawn-time does his shining light
 First enter in and darkness dissipate.
 There at his post the greyhaired Chief expires,
 A mine exploding neath the bastion high,
 From which the débris and the mangled flesh
 Crash down upon the attackers waiting nigh.
 The old Chief dead, upon young Putta falls
 The task to guard the breach now made,
 And for his youth, and his anxiety
 For his young bride, his mother is afraid
 Lest, thinking of the future joys life holds,
 He may demean the honoured name he bear,
 Therefore his bride and she in armour clad,
 Decide with him his life or death to share.
 And would one wonder, had the youth held back,
 A lad not fully yet to manhood grown,
 Married to one, the fairest in the land,
 For two short months he'd held her as his own?
 One on each side of him these women fight
 Without the breach, and with him fighting fall,
 While hastily behind the others toil
 To close the breach, yet gaping in the wall.
 Not all in vain their sacrifice, they hold in check
 The Moslem onrush on the slope, whose drains
 Run full with blood, as they with water do,
 When Indra's clouds pour down refreshing rains.
 The wall repaired the foeman beaten back,
 The clan brings in their dying and their dead,
 Among the last the son and mother lie,
 The fair young wife, though wounded in the head

Still lives, insensible, but does her handmaids' care
 At last restore her, and she seeks to die
 Upon the pyre raised for her husband dead,
 So to be with him with the Gods on high.
 Yet even this is now denied to her,
 For does she carry hidden in her womb
 Another life, whose span though yet unborn
 She may not shorten by a suttee's doom.
 Jaimul of Bednor next by right of birth
 Holds the command, inspiring all with hope,
 Tireless, resourceful, ever seeming to
 Be able with the hardest task to cope.
 Word of his valour passed from man to man,
 Throughout the forces of the Moslems ran,
 So that Great Akbar even of him heard,
 And did respect him, as the high-minded can
 Respect the virtues even of their foes,
 While striving still to overcome or slay
 The men they honour, for honour honour knows,
 Though from its purpose turning not away.
 Now 'mongst the various artifices made
 By Akbar was a tower strong and high,
 From which though sheltered from all hostile shot,
 He could beyond the battlements espy ;
 There was he wont to watch assaults, or view
 At night-time all the movements in the fort,
 Firing often from his favourite gun,
 Which he had from a "Frankish" gunsmith bought.
 One evening, at the time of evening prayer,
 The Emperor sat upon his tower tall,
 Long armed and sturdy, with his matchlock held
 Ready his eyes upon the shattered wall,

E'en as a hunter watching o'er a kill
 Waits for a tiger coming to the bait,
 So Akbar sits, not knowing who may be
 The Gods will send according to his fate.
 At last a light appears upon the bastion wrecked,
 Showing Jaimul of more than usual size,
 Giving directions to others hidden still,
 Though can the Emperor hear their low replies.
 A quick-fired shot, the Rajput falls,
 Wounded yet living, pierced through both his legs;
 Yet still, though broken, he no respite asks,
 Only for vengeance on his foeman begs.
 But he is dying, only kept alive
 By his own will, unwilling thus to die
 Upon a bed, while others on the slopes
 Of Chitor, on a couch of foemen lie.
 Therefore there being now no hope to save
 The sacred hill, they light the funeral pyres
 For all their women, lest any one should be
 The victim of the conqueror's vile desires.
 High blazed the flames, lighting each tower and fane,
 Dense over all the smoke pall rose and fell,
 Sparks floating forth and dying out,
 A smothered groan, a wild heart-piercing yell,
 Relate to all the world the tragedy sublime
 Played on the hill again, as it had been
 Played, when first Ala-ad-din had sought to stain
 The Rajput honour with his lust unclean.
 And Akbar, watching from the plain below,
 Knows all too well what signify those fires;
 And Jaimul, fretting pain-racked on his bed,
 For one last stroke against his foes conspires.

Calling the remnant of those valourous Chiefs
 To one last council, haltingly he speaks
 His last command, which none would dare deny,
 While in their nostrils their women's burnt flesh reeks.
 "Chieftains of Chitor, men of the Sun-got clan,
 "Deserted by the Rana, and by his sin bereft
 "Of dread Bhavâni's help in this our war,
 "No more for us than this at last is left,
 "But that we may as Rajputs fighting die,
 "Holding our honour, for all times to see,
 "As bright and stainless as 't was handed down
 "To us unsullied by our ancestry.
 "No other death-bed does a Rajput ask
 "Than that he forms of his own slain foes,
 "Even as Gorâh-ji in by-gone days
 "On yonder plain was fain to seek repose.
 "We the last remnants of the Sessodia clan,
 "Dare not and will not in our death disgrace
 "Our fathers and our mothers, but display
 "In us, their sons, the glory of our race.
 "E'en now our foemen, drawn to the light
 "Of our death-beacon, gather at the gate,
 "And shall we Rajputs tardy hosts appear
 "By bidding them for their death banquet wait?
 "Nay, let us don our saffron tinted robes,
 "And open wide the gates, with them partake
 "Of that mad orgy of a bloody feast,
 "Till gorged with slaughter, we sleep and do not wake.
 "And I, who cannot walk nor yet can ride,
 "But will not miss with you this glorious end,
 "Since can my arm still wield my trusty sword,
 "Will down the slope be carried by my friend,

" "Kâllâ, the Strong", upon whose mighty back
 "I, being strapped, will add to his my hands
 "So double headed with four arms shall we
 "Reap double harvest from the Moslem bands.
 "For this I vow, that none shall take my place
 "Of honour in the forefront till I die,
 "The right to lead the bravest of the brave,
 "Foremost of all to shout our battle cry,
 "And now, my brothers, we waste but time with words,
 "Let us all vow by the great name of Shiv
 "To die this day as Rajputs, that our fame
 "Shall, through the ages, deathless, ever live."

Supported by his kinsman and his friend,
 Around him, grim-faced, do the Chieftains stand,
 He and they all there dedicate their lives,
 Their final offering to their Mother-land.
 When Akbar's forces, eager with the lust
 Of victors for the plunder they have earned,
 Rush to the fort, lest by a brief delay
 Some of the fruits they hope for should be burned,
 Upon the slope within the lower gate
 They meet the Rajputs, rushing sword on high,
 While in the van, Jaimul, upon the back
 Of Kâllâ-ji, calls forth their battle cry.
 No mountain torrent from the rain-swept hills
 E'er rushed so madly over rock and stone,
 As did that human saffron-coloured spate
 Pour o'er the débris, from the walls down-thrown.
 Glorious the battle, that now raged
 Hither and thither, in the trodden mud,
 While ankle deep, in crimson pools they fought,
 The close air filled with reek of human blood.

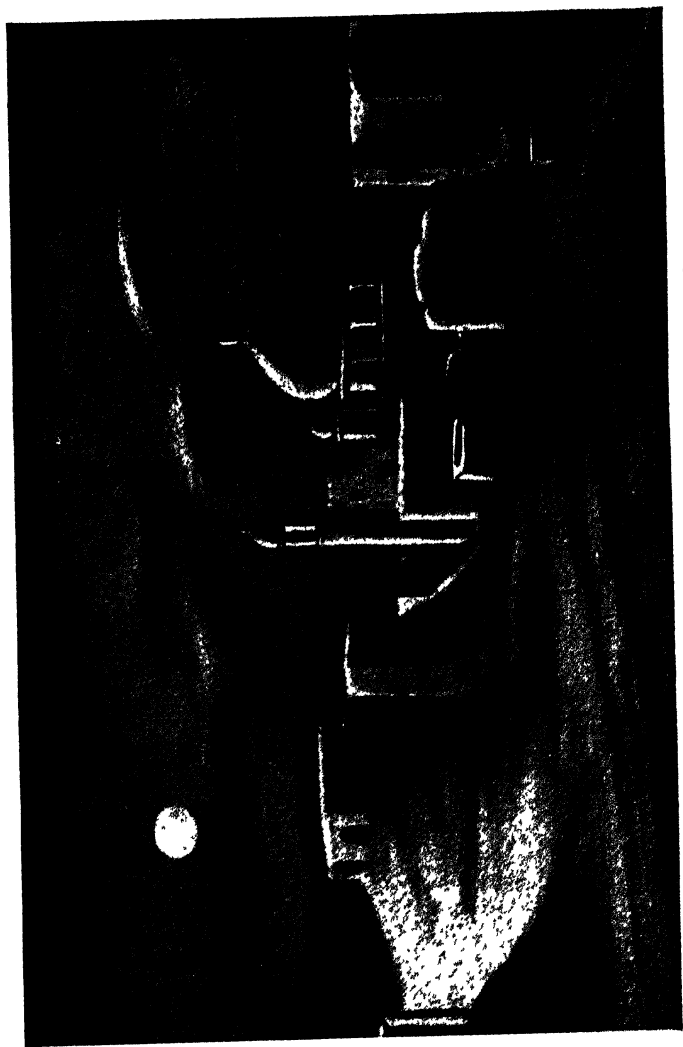
Yet inch by inch, over their fallen foes
And friends, who form a rampart of the slain,
The Moslems move, no Rajput driven back,
Only in killing do they this headway gain.
Still, numbers tell, slowly resistance dies,
As none remain, who can in death them stay,
Till o'er a roadway of the heaped-up dead
Into the sacred fort they make their way.
Cloudless the sky on that hot day in May,
When Akbar entered the predestined place,
While, brazen-faced, Great Surya looks down
Upon the relics of his shattered race.
But what a triumph for the "King of Kings"
A ruined city, by shot and shell laid waste,
Crumbling bastions, breached and broken walls,
The shrines and temples by his men defaced.
And all around heat-rotting corpses lie,
Brave men unburied and unburnt remain,
While permeating all the tainted air,
The stench of burning flesh bids all refrain
From seeking in deserted palaces or cots
The wives and children of the Rajputs, who
Protect their women first, before they die,
In life and death to old traditions true.
Thus died the glories of that wondrous fort,
Fit emblem of her strong and upright race,
Which e'en in ruins though she still remains,
Yet tells of deeds, which death nor time deface.

THE PASSING OF UDAI-SINGH
AND
COMING OF PERTAP-SINGH.

Cities rise and cities fall, some time resplendent,
Then debased, falling to ruin, left to time's decay,
Pass as their builders, whose monuments they were,
Into oblivion, their traces swept away.

Yet still some names of cities and of men
Live through all time, though time has wrought
Death and destruction, and with those names
Imagination, by their history taught,
Repopulates, in visions, the wide streets,
Thronged with their crowds, rebuilds again
The ruined palaces, from out whose lofty gate
The Ruler issues, followed by his train,
While clear upon the ear the temple bells
Jangle and clash, while over all is shed
The glamour of romance, no sordidness appears
In this rebirth by vagrant fancies bred.
The Taj, fair monument of an Emperor's love,
Garden surrounded by the Jumna's stream,
So pure and splendid in its stateliness,
Does by some mystic power in it seem
Almost to live, to breathe that depth of love,
Which does itself mysteriously enfold
The heart and life, so beautiful divine,
Into the dreams of those who it behold.
The gorgeous splendour of the Divan-i-khas

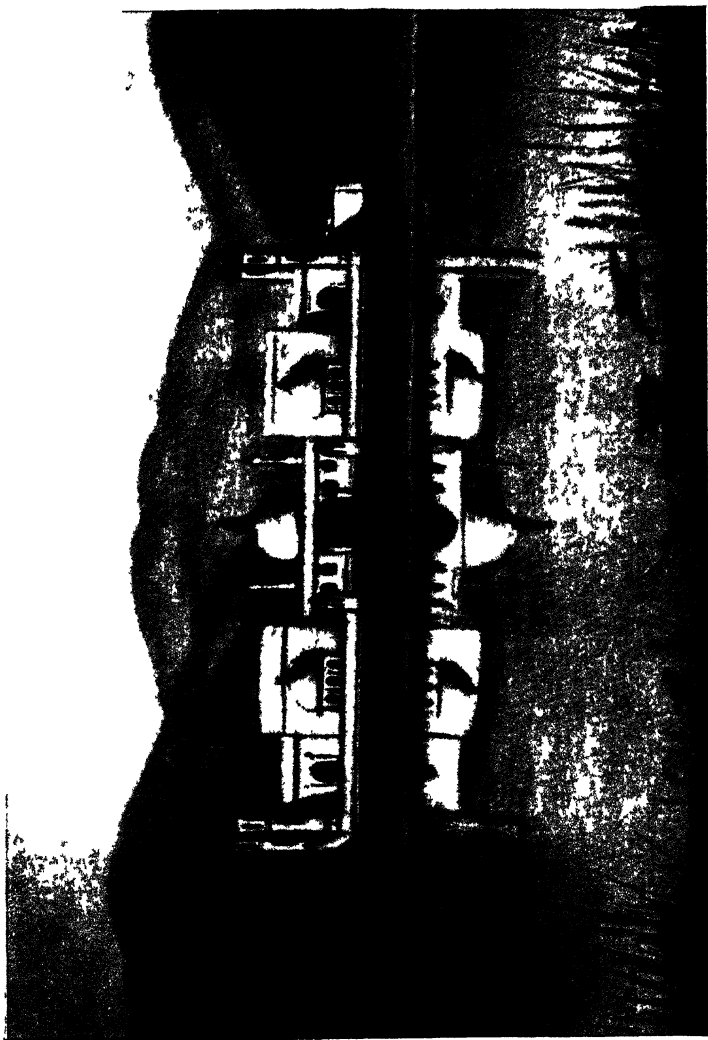
In Delhi Fort, inlaid with stones, adorned with gold,
 Where o'er the archways an inscription runs,
 Writ by a hand presumptuous and bold :—
 "If Paradise upon the earth there be,
 " 'T is here, 'T is here," while onward still
 The royal apartments, the marble baths, recall
 The glories of the Kings, who once did fill
 That palace with the riches of the East,
 Holding their court, while Chiefs and Princes bowed
 Before their throne resplendent set with gems,
 While in their Harem countless beauties crowd,
 The fairest women gathered from far and near,
 Some languorous, brought from the Southern plains,
 Others, with bolder mien from Western states,
 And those, whose fairer skins e'en still retains
 The roseate colour left by the mountain winds
 Of their far homes amongst the snow-clad hills.
 With visions such as this imagination's power
 These ancient halls, repopulated, fills.
 E'en so Chitor, the virgin fortress raped
 By Ala-ad-din, and twice again defiled
 By Moslem armies, yet from whose very ills
 A glorious history has by those ills compiled.
 Grass-grown and ruined are the streets and courts,
 About the temples do the jackals howl,
 While through the leaning doorways, debris choked,
 The serpent slithers, in the zenanas prowl
 The gaunt hyena, and over all the moon
 Sailing her course through that star-spangled sea
 Of heaven, sheds down her light, touches again
 Cornice and pinnacle, and by her alchemy
 Transmutes the ruins in the present time



*Grass-grown and ruined are the streets and courts,
.....and over all the moon
..... sheds down her light, touches again
Cornice and pinnacle,.....*

Into the splendours of the ancient past,
 Reincarnating all the hero dead,
 Who lived and loved and fought unto the last.
 The Taj for love in Agra lives and glows,
 Lit by the sun-light, in the moon-light dim.
 The Delhi palace, still speaks of wealth,
 Garnished with gems, an Emperor's costly whim.
 Yet both but speak of vanity and ease,
 Soft living, downy cushions, women's smiles,
 The luxuries of life, whose cloying fare
 The better nature of a race defiles.
 But Chitor, the rocky hill upraised
 From out the plain, so lonely, and so grim,
 By nature is itself an emblem of
 The Rajput's innate ruggedness and vim.
 The shattered walls, the broken gates,
 The carven temples, palaces, and towers,
 The cenotaphs, placed where the heroes fell,
 The entombed bodies in the vaults, endowers
 The fortress with a message, none can fail
 To learn, who gaze this hallowed ruin on;
 The story of the finest race of men, on whom
 The Sun-god's light has ever brightly shone.
 No clear white marble, no inlaid gems nor gold,
 No rose-sweet gardens, trickling waterways,
 In this stern fortress, rugged, bold,
 The tale of love and luxury displays.
 Those shattered walls, and broken gates
 Remind one of their warlike attributes,
 The carven temples, alone embeautified,
 A token of their God-trust constitutes.
 The palaces of hewn stone, so plainly formed,

Their virile nature clearly still forthshow
 Their cenotaphs. raised by admiring friends,
 Tell how their souls did from their bodies go.
 And those closed vaults, behind whose hidden doors
 The countless bones, gem-decked, still resting lie,
 Bring back to memory those Rajput women who
 To save their fame were all content to die.
 The jewels hanging still about their necks,
 A symbol is of that most priceless jewel
 Their chastity, they held of so much worth,
 They for it faced a death most dread and cruel.
 Ruined, yet sacred still in Rajput eyes,
 Chitor has lain since that evil day,
 When Akbar's army, mad with battle lust,
 Broke down resistance in their blood-wet way.
 No more since then have Mewar Ranas held
 Court in the palace, whence vile Udai-Singh
 Fled from the scorn of men who knew the shame
 Of him a coward, though yet a Rajput King
 Hidden among the Arravalli hills,
 Dishonoured, hated, did he live and roam,
 Fearful, until Great Akbar with his spoils
 Had gone away, to make himself a home.
 Then coming forth towards the fertile plains,
 Yet close beside the harbour of the hills,
 He makes a dam across a flowing stream,
 Which as a lake the hill-bound valley fills.
 Beside the lake so formed, not daring to
 Show evermore his face in Chitor's fort,
 He builds a palace and a city where
 He, still the Rana, seeks to hold his court.
 Unto this city did he give the name



*The cream-white palace rising tier on tier
Above the bosom of the tranquil lake
Reflected in its glittering waters clear*

Of Udaipur, thus does it happen so,
 The fairest city of the Mewar state
 Bears yet the name of one who was so low.
 Who may describe the wonders of that place,
 The cream-white palace rising tier on tier
 Above the bosom of the tranquil lake,
 Reflected in its glittering waters clear?
 The beetling hills, by sun and shadow swept,
 Melting away into the distance dim,
 The island-studded lakes about whose marge
 The tall storks strut and countless wild ducks swim?
 Such was the home of this contemptible
 Coward, whose very love was so debased,
 He did seduce the only woman he had loved
 To be his mistress by his act disgraced;
 And after she for him in pain had died,
 Untrue to her in life, in death untrue
 His life was spent in pandering to his lust,
 Ever and ever seeking pleasures new.
 Thus nought remains to record of his life,
 Such histories as his are best unwrit,
 Save as an object lesson to exemplify
 The scorn that's felt for those in power unfit.
 Children he had, of sons more than a score,
 Yet only four are known to history,
 The others sinking, by their useless lives,
 Into the shades of dark obscurity.
 Strange does it seem that good from bad
 May be created, yet 'mongst his sons we find
 Two in whom natures strong and bold appear,
 A cast back to old Sanga's class and kind.
 These two, Pertap and Sakta, both fine men,

Yet differing in themselves, had all the verve
 And courage, that does admiration claim
 From those, who honour those, who honour serve
 But Udai-Singh, their father, hated both,
 Pertap the elder, born of his slighted spouse
 The Sonigurra Chieftain's child, he wed
 In Komulmer, did jealousy arouse
 In him, for as the first-born of his seed,
 His was the right the Ranaship to claim,
 While Udai-Singh for Jagmul wished the throne,
 His favourite son, the off-spring of his shame.
 And Sakta, did he fear, his nature bold
 Showed as a child, so him he sought to slay,
 But did the Chandâvât Chieftain meeting them
 Order his murderers their suborned hands to stay.
 Then going to the Rana did he to him speak,
 Knowing he dare not refuse to him his will,
 Since only by the favour of his Chiefs
 Was he allowed the Rana's throne to fill.
 "Oh ! Udai-Singh, this day without I met
 "Thy son, young Sakta, by assassins led away,
 "Whom did I question as their business with
 "The youthful Prince, and learned that thou would'st slay
 "Thy son, I do not know nor do I care,
 "What be thy reasons for so vile a deed,
 "Knowing full well the evil of thy mind
 "Can only evil thoughts and evil doings breed.
 "But seeing in this child of thine no sign
 "Of the degenerate, as one might well expect
 "In offspring born of thee, despicable,
 "I would adopt him as my heir elect.
 , "No child have I, the last of all my clan,

"He may prove worthy, when death calls me hence,
 "To lead my men, if brought up neath my care,
 "His boldness tempered by my common sense.
 "Therefore I ask that thou should hand to me
 "Sakta, thy son, disclaiming all thy hold
 "On him as father while I adopting him,
 "Will gain a son, which now the Gods withhold
 And Udai-Singh, blustering as are wont
 Those who have no courage, yet would feign
 The very virtues that they truly lack,
 To the contemptuous Chief sought to explain
 His actions, making to him this reply :—
 "Yea, Chieftain, Thou mayest take this son of mine
 "To be adopted in thy clan and state,
 "Thus binding closer my family with thine
 "He did I not endeavour e'er to slay,
 "Thou wert misled by some unfounded lie.
 "For why should I be fearful of the youth,
 "I, Udai-Singh, who Akbar's strength defy?
 "When other Rulers, Ambar and Marwar,
 "Craven did kneel before this upstart King,
 "Did Udai-Singh the Mewar Rana not
 "His foeman harbour and succour to him bring?
 "Some fools may be there who would say that I
 "As Rana should have stayed in Chitor's fort
 "To stand the siege, that by my presence I
 "Could stimulate the feudal soldiers brought
 "By all my clans, but well I knew
 "No chance remained to save the sacred hill,
 "Yet when I counselled withdrawal to the Chiefs
 "No one would hearken to my wiser will.
 "Thy father, whom all men so loud acclaim,

"Jaimul and Putta, now had been alive,
 "Had they but listened, but stubborn in their pride
 "They from my wisdom no prudence could derive.
 "So I, (who knew the power of the King,
 "His Frankish sappers, men of foreign race,
 "Adepts at arts, our Rajput minds would scorn,
 "Thinking their use the media of disgrace,)
 "Withdrew, with those whose minds were not bereft
 "Of sense, nor bound by senseless sentiment,
 "To these wild hills, where we might fight at will
 "With greater freedom, not in a fortress pent.
 "Yea, I was right, foolhardy as they were,
 "They sacrificed themselves, and weakened me,
 "Left with so few, I could no action take
 "To bring them help in their extremity.
 "So I am dubbed a coward, when men should
 "Look up to me, seeing I did foretell
 "The hopeless ending, that by their mutiny
 "They brought upon themselves and me as well.
 "So am I now misjudged, but ever thus
 "Is found the case of those whose subtle minds
 "Can see beyond the veil of present needs,
 "Which grosser intellects completely blinds.
 "Thus even thou, Chandâvât, dare to think
 "I fear my son, and fearing him would shed
 "Blood of my blood; but do I pardon thee,
 "And thou may'st take him, since thine own marriage-bed
 "Has proved unfruitful, while I thy Rana strong
 "Have brought forth sons and daughters at my will
 "To take the place of those who needless fell,
 "A sacrifice on Chitor's fated hill."

No word the Chieftain spoke, well did he knew

The uselessness of bandying words with one
 As Udai-Singh, who could himself convince
 That good it was, not evil, he had done.
 So taking Sakta, did he thence depart
 To far Salumbra, where neath his watchful care
 He taught him how to wield the lance and shield,
 To use the *tulwar* that Rajputs ever wear.
 Thus Sakta left his home, and Pertap too
 An exile wandered, while the coward King
 Lived on in luxury at Udaipur,
 Jagmal, his favourite, sheltered neath his wing.
 But Death, who heeds not man's magnificence,
 But takes to his dark halls, whence none come back
 The Prince and pauper, the good, the bad,
 Brave men and skulkers, the alert, the slack
 Drew near that sun-kissed palace by the lake,
 His dark shade hovering o'er the Rana's head,
 Who ere he died bequeathed the Rana-ship
 To Jagmal, the bastard, from his mistress bred.
 In him there was no sign of strength or truth
 As had his mother shown in her sin.
 If sin was hers, who loved and gave her all,
 Not for herself, but for her lord to win
 Some happiness in life, who through her love
 Strove to incite him to more noble life;
 Contented, if her love could succour him,
 To be his mistress, who could not be his wife.
 Near by the bed-side of the dying Rana stood,
 The Sonigurra Chieftain, kinsman to
 The slighted wife, who had in sorrow born
 Pertap, the exile, in him to fury grew
 His hate of Udai-Singh, who dying dared

To set aside his clean-born rightful heir
 For such an one; so did he fiercely ask
 The Chandâvât Chieftain also standing there :—
 “Will you the issue of Prince Chonda stand
 “And see this wrong to Bâppâ’s holy seed
 “Done by this love-besotted Rana, who would raise
 “This Vaisya bastard Kshatriya clans to lead?”
 To which the wise Chief smiling answered him :—
 “When on his death-bed does a sick man ask
 “For milk, why then oppose him in his will,
 “Better to let him, dying, in his hopes to bask?
 “The time will come when we can settle all,
 “And think not then Prince Chonda’s honour flown,
 “I, the Chandâvât, will have a word to say
 “Before a bastard sits on Bâppâ’s throne.”
 Though still the preparations forward went
 For Jagmal’s crowning, yet was Pertap bid
 To hasten back to Udaipur, from where
 Near Komulmer, in exile he lay hid.
 The Rana died. The Durbar Hall was filled
 With those who came to raise one on the throne,
 And Jagmal, clad in scarlet and in gold,
 Marched boldly forward to claim it as his own.
 Standing beside him was the Chandâvât Chief,
 His was the right to gird the Rana’s sword,
 Upon his other side the Tuar Chieftain stood,
 Whose right it was to first to hail him “Lord.”
 Now ere the sun-disk showed above his head,
 Ere yet his foot upon the dais fell,
 The grim Chandâvât caught him by the arm,
 Holding him there, while like some sudden spell,
 Throughout the hall a breathless silence hold’s

All others rigid, not a sound breaks forth,
 As the Chandâvât, leading him away,
 Speaks to him, craven, trembling at his wrath :—
 "Not thine that seat, we have not sunk so low,
 "As to allow a bastard Prince to fill
 "Great Bâppâ's place, nor wear his wondrous sword,
 "The gods did fashion, by dread Bhavani's will.
 "Truly thy father by his life and works
 "Sought to demean the great Sessodia race,
 "The climax of his arrogance would seem
 "Ordaining you as Rana in his place.
 "You bastard-born, not of the fighting caste,
 "Have here no right within the Durbar Hall,
 "So get ye gone, lest for your father's sins
 "Our vengeance on your bastard head should fall."
 Fearful he crept away, while watching eyes
 Looked down on him, whose glance he dare not meet,
 While curses on his dastard father sound,
 Whence he had hoped to acclamation meet.
 He gone, the Chieftains Pertap forward call,
 Who comes in armour clad, his visor raised.
 Disclosing in his face such nobleness,
 That trials and troubles never yet erased.
 Taller than all, well-knit, his poise
 Spoke of strong muscles, taut, well trained,
 While in his eyes the steadfast gaze of one,
 In whom the best traditions of his race remained.
 Mounting the dais, the sunfaced banner raised
 Above his head, girt with the sacred sword,
 The Tuar Chieftain calls on all around,
 To hail him Rana, their own foredestined Lord.
 Loud were the shouts, that rang across the lake,

"Sun of the Hindus" was he fitly named,
 Driving away the gloom and darkness spread
 O'er Mewar, by a dastard Rana shamed.
 Standing before them, so splendid in his strength,
 Though unadorned by precious stones or gold,
 He Godlike seemed, as hand upraised he vowed
 The throne of Mewar inviolate to hold.
 "My friend, Chândâvat, and Chiefs of every clan
 "I, standing here before Great Bâppâ's throne
 "Call you to witness, this my vow, that I
 "Till I regain Chitor to hold mine own
 "Will never rest, nor will I sleep upon
 "A couch save that of straw, till I may bed
 "My horses in the palace of my foes,
 "My palace roof, the sky above my head;
 "Will now remain, the stars above my light
 "No plates of gold or silver will begrace
 "The Rana's table, twisted leaves of trees
 "Will platters form, until again I face
 "My assembled Chiefs, at banquet, in the halls,
 "Now wrecked and ruined, on the sacred hill;
 "Nor shall a barber trim my hair or beard,
 "Until Chitor we once again may fill
 "With all her bygone glories, once more the Queen
 "Among the cities of fair Rajasthan
 "Her rape avenged, washed in the flowing blood
 "Of these her ravagers, the Moslems of Afghan,
 "My chiefs forgive my sin, we Rajputs hold
 "A child should honour to his father show,
 "But mine I cannot honour, he who fled
 "Deserting those who yet would face the foe
 "Had I but been the Rana Sanga's son,

"And Udai-Singh ne'er come between us twain,
 "No infidel had ever held this fort,
 "That now it is my harder task to gain.
 "Now we alone, the old Sessodia race,
 "Deserted stand by other Rajput states,
 "Mawar, Boondi, Amber, Bikanir,
 "Have done the deed, that every true man hates,
 "Giving their daughters in marriage to the "Toork,"
 "They know our scorn and self-accused desire .
 "To drag us down, until we, as they are,
 "May with them wallow like well-fed swine in mire.
 "No help will come from them, rather will they
 "Seeking to show their fealty to their Lord,
 "Be ranged against us in this holy war,
 "Hoping our lands to have as their reward.
 "Impoverished now by war, and by the vice
 "Of my dead father, Mewar yet must wait
 "Before we have again sufficient strength
 "To hazard all and knock at Akbar's gate.
 "But though we may not conquer, yet may we
 "Harry the plains, and Delhi's power defy,
 "For at the worst, what e'er our lot become,
 "We shall have lived in honour though we die.
 "Those who are with me let them speak and vow
 "Here on my sword to follow where I lead,
 "And those who will not, get ye hence,
 "No faint heart now can serve us in our need."
 No word was heard, when Pertap ceased to speak,
 Silent each man remained, as statues graven
 From marble blocks, till like a lightning flash,
 With one accord their swords to heavenward waved,
 While as the thunder in the lightning's wake,

Their shouts crash forth for Rana Pertap Singh,
 "Sun of the Hindus" who in his glorious might,
 Would honour to the "Sun-got" Rajputs bring.
 One by one, in order of their birth, the Chiefs
 Bow down before him, touch the sacred hilt
 Of Bâppâ's sword, vowing their will to fight
 For him and Chitor, until their blood was spilt,
 Or they victorious should again with him
 Worship "the Mother" in those broken fanes,
 That silent now, unserved by Brahman priests,
 Stand desolate above the war-reaped plains.
 None were there that shirked that vow, save one
 The Rana's brother, Sagra, in whose veins
 The tainted blood of recreant Udai-Singh
 His coward action to the world explains.
 The Durbar ended Pertap cries :—"To horse"
 Riding away to hill-bound Komulmer,
 Leaving the luxuries of Udaipur behind,
 To make his home in that wild fastness drear.
 There did he gather all his faithful Chiefs,
 His brother Sakta too to him he calls,
 Who by his skill in arms, and fearlessness,
 The memories of Prithi-raj recalls.
 Indeed he closely did resemble him
 In mind and body, and once more arose
 Trouble between the brothers, as to whom
 Was fitter leader to withstand their foes.
 Pertap, like Sanga, knew no lasting gain
 Could come, till they had built up their reserve.
 In open battle, where their losses would,
 Though conquering, the numerous Moslems serve.
 His was the policy of "raid and run"

Cutting up convoys, laying waste the fields,
 So that to Akbar's troops upon the march
 The country neither food nor fodder yields.
 Thus all the commerce coming from Surat
 Must pass along a few well-beaten tracks,
 Whereever were they, struggling, open to
 His swift descents, and sudden night attacks.
 So by the plunder gained in these forays,
 His men kept fit, and heartened by success,
 He added to his strength, though wasting none,
 While fear of him did Akbar's troops obsess.
 Sakta however longed for the open fight,
 Contending armies drawn up at large,
 The ecstasy of feeling neath him bound
 The snorting war-horse in a Rajput charge.
 Little he recked the aftermath of woe,
 The gallant remnant, with their power spent,
 Harried and driven, by the vast reserves
 For vengeance on them by the Emperor sent.
 Not his by nature born to count the cost,
 His only wish to take life as it came,
 Ready to hazard his country in a fight,
 If but that fight should bring to Sakta fame.
 So did dissensions rise between the twain,
 Till angry words the widening breach complete,
 And Sakta challenges the Rana to
 Him once for all in single combat meet.
 Mounted on war-steeds, clad in armour, both
 With levelled spears, the others onslaught waits,
 Contending still, who first should strike the blow,
 That would declare the wishes of the fates.
 Neither advantage would of the other take,

So 't was decided at a given word
 They both would charge, when did a holy priest,
 Who of the tumult at the last had heard,
 Stride in between them, bidding them to stay
 This fratricidal combat, but they both,
 Mad now with rage, all sense of right destroyed,
 To stop the duel were in their fury loath.
 Levelling their spears, heads bent about to charge,
 The priest resolves he yet must stop the fray,
 So plunging in his heart his dagger dies,
 Lying between them stricken with dismay.
 Whate'er their madness neither dare to pass
 The barrier formed by his still twitching form,
 Round which in evergrowing depth and size
 Lie ruby pools, his streaming life blood warm.
 Shocked and abashed they look on him who died,
 Till Pertap turning, bids his brother leave
 His State for ever, who with a mocking bow,
 Turns and takes horse, leaving him there to grieve.
 No home remained for Sakta now, outcast
 From Mewar does he seek the Delhi court,
 Where every Rajput, who is trained in arms,
 Was to the Emperor in friendly welcome brought.
 And Pertap, deserted by his kith and kin,
 Yet 'mongst his Chieftains found true loyal hearts,
 The great Chandâvât, sons of Jaimul too,
 And twins to Putta born, all take their parts
 In those exploits, that make his name well-known
 Even to-day : make every hill and pass,
 In those wild wastes, sacred for some great deed,
 Which nought in history can equal or outclass.

THE EXPLOITS OF RANA PERTAP.

How often when a country's history shows
All overcast by trouble's darksome cloud,
And there appear oppressors all around,
And enemies implacable awaiting crowd
On every hand, thirsting for plunder, loot,
While ever day by day, are they increased
By fresh arrivals, like vultures do they watch
The last death struggles of their promised feast ;
Then does arise one man, whose strength and will,
Undaunted by the task before him set,
Knits once again the loosened strands, which form
The country's fabric, does by his vim beget
Like vim in all, inspiring men to rise
To heights of patriotism, content to lose their all
Save only honour and their racial pride
Ready to follow him, or with him fighting fall.
Such was the case of Mewar, after Udai-Singh
Having deserted his own chiefs and left
The loyal remnant fighting at Chitor,
Where did they die of every hope bereft.
Himself despised, the heads of all the clans
Children or striplings, no forces to withstand
Invading armies, even if on the throne
Had been a Rana their ligeance to demand
And not this wanton, sunk to the lowest depths,
Seeking for nought but luxury in life,
Hating the strenuous hardships of campaigns
The moil of battle, the tumult-whirl of strife.

Lower and lower did her prestige sink,
 No tie there was to bind the Chieftains close;
 Until at last, vile Udai-Singh expires,
 Unloved, unmourned, a coward vain and gross.
 Hopeless 't would seem to now reform again
 The shattered forces, rejuvenate the pride
 Of those who lay down-trodden neath the heel
 Of Akbar's power, stretching far and wide;
 Yet rose there one in Pertap, the bold, the strong,
 Who had the power all others to inspire
 With his own prowess, honesty and truth,
 Inflaming all with his own spirit's fire.
 The great Chandavat, leader of all the clans
 First swears allegiance, ready himself to die
 E'en as his father had, rather than bend before
 The hated Moslems, who would his power buy.
 The Sonigurra Chieftain, his uncle, stood
 Ready to follow him, whate'er betide,
 While the twin sons of Patta, posthume born
 After their father so gloriously had died,
 Their mother's spirit had, she who in armour clad
 Had fought beside her husband on the slopes
 Of Chitor's hill, shared with their Rana now
 His toils and troubles, victories, and hopes.
 The sons of Jaimul and Kalla to him thronged,
 The Chief of Jhala, the Rao of Dongarpur,
 Each one inspired by their love and trust
 In him, who as their country's hope they saw.
 Grand is the story of these selfless men,
 Who followed him in exile, murmuring not
 Whatever chanced, victory or defeat,
 Hunger and thirst, whatever was their lot.

So easy was it for them to desert, what seemed
A hopeless cause, and follow in the wake
Of Marwar and Amber, go to the Delhi court,
And from the hands of Akbar respite take.
But what of him who could so influence men
That they were ready, nay clamouring to lose,
All wealth and luxury, ready to follow him,
Wherever he, their worshipped Rana, choose?
Countless the stories of his deeds and life,
Told still around the village fire at night,
While do the Mewar mothers yet uphold
The Rana Pertap in their children's sight
As pattern of the finest Rajput chivalry,
The one who loved his country more than life,
Content to be a wanderer rather than
Befoul her honour, thus doomed to ceaseless strife.
Such was the little hero band of men,
Who did for over twenty years unhelped defy
The Delhi Emperor's power, defeated oft,
Yet holding still their Sun-faced banner high.
This band ensconced among the pathless hills
Harried and swept the one-time fertile plains,
But did Pertap, with wisdom and foresight,
See that upon them no foodstuff now remains,
No goat nor cattle could now pasture there,
All had been driven in amongst the hills,
While weeds and thorns the arid fields encroach,
The hungry panther wanders where he wills.
Empty remain the Chieftain's palaces,
Silent and lifeless every village street,
No chattering women group around the well,
No children's laughter, toddlers round their feet.

Only at night-time, when the moon shines bright,
 Is heard the echo of the jackal's howl,
 And, while the silent watching stars revolve,
 The wild beasts round their erstwhile dwellings prowl
 Choked are the highways, trackless, waste,
 The jungle creepers spread their eager arms,
 Gathering ever into their embrace
 The rose-filled gardens, graced with stately palms.
 Long were the convoys, forced to feed themselves,
 Weak were their escorts, unable to obtain
 Meat for the soldiers or fodder for their steeds,
 Throughout the length of that denuded plain.
 Thus did the riches ordained for Akbar fall
 Into the hands of Pertap and his men,
 Who bursting upon the road-worn escort weak,
 Drove in the convoys to some mountain glen.
 And Akbar watched, unwilling in his heart
 To use his strength to crush one, whom he held
 So fine a character, whom he would rather gain
 As ally, and by friendship fetters weld
 To hold him his; for did this Emperor great,
 Noted and known for his liberal grace,
 Admire all the virtues of the foe
 He could not bribe; the champion of his race.
 And other Rajputs though themselves debased,
 Yet looked on Pertap as "The Hindu Sun",
 Head of the thirty-six great fighting clans,
 Viceroy of Shiv, immortal Rama's son.
 Thus so the Raja Maun of Amber state,
 The first to fall beneath young Akbar's sway,
 Returning from an expedition in the South,
 Asked leave of Pertap that he respects might pay

To him as head of all the Rajputs still
 Although at variance with them, who had given
 Homage to Akbar, fearing by his strength
 They should have been from out their Kingdoms driven.
 And Pertap, hiding all his loathing for
 One who could so forget his birthright's claim,
 Sent him reply bidding him to a feast
 At Udaipur when by that way he came.
 Bedecked in armour, inlaid with beaten gold
 His jewelled pugaree beneath an aigrette set
 With glittering diamonds, so Raja Maun rides up,
 The Emperor's General, who would himself forget;
 In pomp and splendour, that low craven deed,
 Whereby he gained the wealth all may attain,
 But lost his honour, selling in his greed
 That priceless jewel, he can no more regain.
 And there to meet him by that shimmering lake
 Stood Amra, Pertap's first-born stripling son,
 Long-haired, unkempt, clad in war-dinted mail,
 Telling of fights already fought and won.
 Courteously he bids the Raja sit and feast
 Upon the repast, spread beneath the trees,
 Where are soft cushions placed so that the guest
 May there recline in comfort and in ease.
 But nowhere does the Raja, Pertap see,
 So turning to the youth, he thus did speak :—
 "My child, I, Raja Maun of Amber, came
 "Out of my way, Pertap, thy sire, to seek,
 "Yet do I see him not, who is my host,
 "Although the feast for me is ready laid;
 "Therefore it beseemeth not for us to eat,
 "Seeing our host is by some chance delayed."

"Nay, Raja," Amra answered, "the Rana fears
 "He cannot come so sent me in his stead,
 "Since by the dread ill-favour of the Gods,
 "He suffers now from pains about his head,
 "Therefore he begs that you will him excuse,
 "And I, as host, to fill his seat am placed,
 "Trusting that you will find our humble fare,
 "Though rude and rough, according to your taste."
 Deep in his heart the Raja Maun well knows
 The hidden canker of his bitter shame,
 Though seeking by his pomp and luxury
 To smother deep the blemish on his fame,
 Yet does he watch and wait for an affront,
 Finding full oft insults where none were meant,
 So does he see a fresh contumely
 In this the message by Rana Pertap sent.
 Angered he speaks :—"Tell Pertap I can guess
 "His headache's cause, but also say to him,
 "No man can take his place as host to me,
 "Not customed to respect the idle whim
 "Of landless Chieftains, even if their birth
 "Be such that they may as their forbears deem
 "The very Gods. Tell Pertap only he can fill
 "His place as host, as does my rank beseem."
 This message taken, Pertap answer sent,
 Direct as ever was his life and speech.
 Loudly his willing herald called it forth,
 So that to all could this bold message reach :
 "I, Rana Pertap, King of the Sun-got clan,
 "Viceroy of Shiv, born of Great Bâppâ's seed,
 "Homeless, a wanderer, yet still my faith have kept,
 "Ready and willing for that faith to bleed.

"I do not recognize any as of my caste,
 "Who have demeaned themselves to eat the salt
 "Of infidels, though this to some may seem
 "A paltry sin, a small and venial fault.
 "Nor will I ever so forget my birth, as to
 "Break bread with one who shameless gave
 "His daughter to be wedded to a Toork,
 "Thus classing her a harlot, he a slave.
 "Shall I, a Kshatriya, and by birth High Priest
 "Of Eklinga, eat with the Pariah caste?
 "For so I class these fallen Rajputs, who
 "Have they themselves with low-born Moslems classed.
 "Can riches, wealth, lands held in subject fief
 "Prove recompense for loss of honour's dowers,
 "Held by our fathers in all adversity,
 "The splendid birthright of this race of ours?
 "Can gold and gems repay one for such loss,
 "The shame in life, the even deathless stain,
 "That will through all the ages while the world revolves
 "And e'en thereafter erasable remain?
 "And shall I by my actions honour one,
 "However strong and mighty though he be,
 "Who gains that strength and might alone,
 "By loss of honour and vile infamy?
 "Nay, I the Rana Pertap, still maintain
 "Nothing in life is worth such sacrifice.
 "So get ye gone, back to the infidel,
 "My honour still remains above all price."
 Blind-mad with rage the Raja Maun uprose,
 Leaving the feast untasted, while around
 The half-checked smiles of Rana Pertap's men
 The contempt of the answer fitly crowned. *

"Eh ! Rana Pertap !" as he leaves he cries,
 "No food will I from your scant table take,
 "Save only such as all the pious must
 "As a thank-offering to the high Gods make.
 "But bide awhile in peril, if ye will,
 "I will return, and then may hap ye'll find
 "Another welcome for the Raja, who
 "You now deny as of your caste and kind.
 "These beetling hills, these wild beast lairs
 "Will not protect you from Great Akbar's arm,
 "For by the counsel of us Rajput Chiefs
 "He up to now was loath to do you harm."
 This saying, he to his followers waiting gave
 The sign to mount, about to ride away,
 When Rana Pertap does himself appear,
 Which makes him once again his wrath display.
 Scarred and haggard, weather-stained in dress,
 Arms hacked and dented, yet manifest a King,
 Calm in his bearing, clear-eyed, alert was he,
 His very calmness increased his answer's sting.
 And Raja Maun beside himself with rage,
 Babbling his curses, frothing at the lips,
 In seeing him, whom he must still revere,
 The very dregs of Shama's sour potion sips.
 As he departs a final taunt he hurls :—
 "If I your pride do not to earth demean
 "My name is not the Rajput Raja Maun,
 "And for your insults a thousandfold will glean."
 To which the Rana, quiet, dignified,
 Answered :—"I ever shall be glad your face to see."
 But one among his suite, more personal,
 Called :—"Bring your Emperor to share your infamy.

The Raja gone, the ground on which he trod
 Was laved with water from the Ganges brought,
 To purify it from defilement by his touch,
 While Pertap also his own recleansing wrought.
 Nursing his fury, smiled at by his men,
 The Raja Maun from out of Mewar rode
 Back to his master Akbar, and yet mad
 With hate and malice, into the Presence strode.
 There standing before the Emperor, good and wise,
 He told his tale, and by these words he spake,
 Hoped for revenge on Pertap, pure in mind,
 For his defiance of his rank to take :

“Oh ! King of Kings ! I, Raja Maun, whom thou

“Trusting as one, the father of thy wife,

“To serve thee well, sent to the further South

“To quell rebellion, where unrest was rife,

“Have now returned, successful in the task,

“That thou did'st set, but did on my return

“Pass through Mewar, where Rana Pertap still

“Does all thy kindness and advances spurn.

“For did I hope, by mine own influence,

“A brother Rajput, who am blessed to know

“The honour of thy favour, to induce

“Him to become a friend though now a foe.

“Therefore I sought to honour him, outcast,

“Without a home or palace, doomed to live

“In mounta'n passes, that I might gain

“Him as thy subject, since ready to forgive

“Thou, in thy might, art ever wont to be

“To those, who come as suppliants to thy throne

“Showing thy strength in thy magnanimity,

“Ever to mercy and loving-kindness prone.

"But this proud Rana, insolent and wild,
 "Would not receive me, as by right he should
 "Seeing I came as General of thy force,
 "Seeking in friendship his own gain and good.
 "Moreover not content to cast on me
 "Aspersions, for my fealty to thee,
 "He by vile imprecations on thy name
 "Defamed thy honour and thy dignity.
 "I cannot foul thy regal ears indeed
 "With the low sayings of this proud-full Chief,
 "Who by the basest calumnies on thee,
 "Did fill my mind with anger and with grief.
 "Finally, in his blind arrogance,
 "He did defy thy power and thy might,
 "Hinting thy very tolerance but proved
 "Thou wert in fear with his weak force to fight.
 "Great Emperor, will thy patience ever hold
 "Thy hand from meting out his just reward
 "To Rana Pertap, who of thy leniency
 "Takes mean advantage, stirring up discord
 "In all the neighbouring states, claiming forsooth
 "Thy clemency a sign of weakness is,
 "Suborning from thy standard petty Chiefs
 "To cast their lot, bedazzled, in with his."
 To all this wild tirade wise Akbar list,
 Seemingly grave, but deep within his eyes
 Was hidden laughter at the Rajput's wrath,
 Whom in his heart he did himself despise.
 Though well-content to use such tools as these,
 Far-seeing, knowing men, not led away
 By captious bombast, he could guess
 The reason for the Raja's great display

Of anger for the insults, he would show
 Had on his throne been by the Rana cast,
 Knowing that this would not transport him so,
 Him, who Great Akbar as a traitor classed,
 For though he used the war-learned Rajput Chiefs
 To help him in his various campaigns,
 Yet did he know their swords were for the one
 Who best could pay them, and throughout remains
 A deep contempt for those, who like them sold
 Their honour, their religion, and their race,
 For his protection, since he himself too felt
 Like Rana Pertap, better it were to face
 Hunger and thirst, exile and even death,
 To stainless hold one's honour, and aspire
 For one's own faith, be it the right or wrong,
 To fight or fall, as God on high desire.
 Yet still despite the veneration which he felt
 For Rana Pertap, and his lofty mind
 He saw he must exert his strength and crush
 Him, whom he could not as an ally bind.
 For through those frequent forays on the plains,
 His merchants suffered, and by right demand
 From him protection as their Emperor
 To stay the actions of this reiving band.
 So does he answer to the Raja Maun,
 Who cannot see the contempt which is masked
 Within the answer, only seeing that to him
 Is given the revenge, that which he only asked :
 "Eh ! Raja-Ji, first of the Rajput Lords,
 "To see the wisdom of alliance with my throne,
 "Though at that time myself had hardly dared
 "To claim Great Baber's Empire as my own,

"Yet was thy foresight proved well-justified,
 "Since by thy help, I have had power to weld
 "Into my Empire all the Rajput States,
 "Which my forbears had ever in terror held,
 "Till only one, though broken in its strength,
 "Still does refuse to call me, Akbar, Lord,
 "Holding its ancient independence yet
 "More priceless than my power to reward.
 "But thou who knowest all the gain that comes
 "To those who shield beneath my throne's shade,
 "Would seek for these, thy brothers, in their need,
 "An equal blessing which thou so rich has made.
 "And knowing also, in thy subtle mind,
 "That every parent loving yet though wise
 "Must in the teaching of a child respect
 "Not stay his hand, but that dear child chastise,
 "Hast counselled that I should an army send
 "To teach, this Pertap, duty to my might,
 "And lest perchance my Moslems might o'erstep
 "The bounds of kindness in their lust to fight,
 "Thou wilt thyself with other Rajputs go
 "To chasten him, but yet ameliorate
 "His troubles, by thy tenderness and love,
 "Being wholly free from any racial hate.
 "True thou resentest insults on me hurled,
 "As is but right in one, whom I have fed,
 "Yet well I know that blood to blood still calls.
 "And Rajput love for Rajput is not dead.
 "So even as thou wouldst correct a child,
 "Too proud and forward in its childish pride,
 "Thou too would seek to teach a lesson to
 "This Rana, as one best his ways to guide.

"But I would give my son a taste of war,
 "Young still is he, but yet beneath thy care
 "I can, his father, safely trust him still,
 "Knowing that nought could thy loyal trust impair.
 "So under him will I a force send forth,
 "Guided by thee, who knowest all the land,
 "The mountain tracks, o'er which my men must pass
 "To come to grips with this evasive band."

Now Pertap though no foe nor fight he feared,
 Knew Raja Maun would never rest content
 Until he vengeance took for his insults,
 Since conscience rancour to his anger lent,
 So did he gather round him in the hills
 All his adherents, even those small wild men,
 The Mewar Bhils, who knew no fear but would
 Even attack a panther wounded in its den.
 These looked on Pertap almost as a god.
 Since did they only veneration show
 To those, who fearless were, men strong of arm,
 Free from all weakness and other failings low.
 Far in the hills the women folk were sent,
 The little children, and the aged men
 Who now too feeble were to battle face
 Could yet protect the women's honour, when
 Need came, should it occur the Moslem force,
 Defeating those who it would now oppose,
 Should seek them out in their lone fastnesses,
 To be the plunder snatched from fallen foes.
 There in the Aravalli Hills he lay prepared,
 Waiting and watching for Prince Selim's coming force,
 Where from among surrounding hills a plain
 Gave room for him to use his Rajput horse.

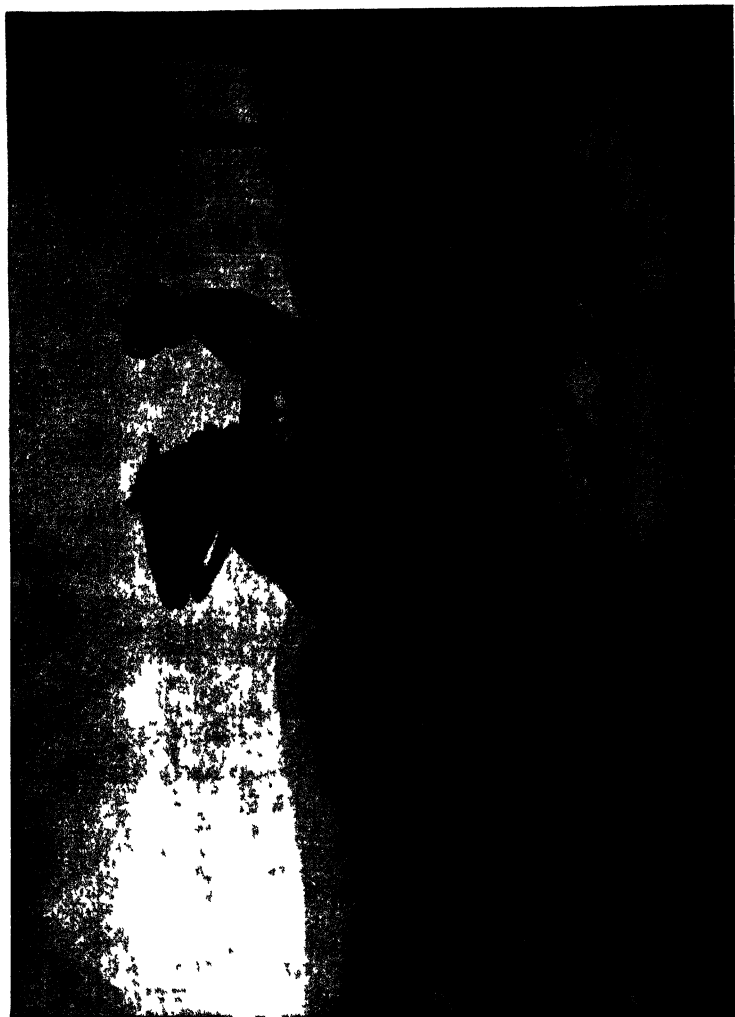
This plain of Huldighat sacred still is held
 By his descendants and of those who fell
 There on the day when Pertap first confronts
 The Moslem army sent his zeal to quell.
 Bright shone the sun, the fleecy cloud-wreaths chaser
 Each other 'cross the sky of deepest azure blue.
 Tinged with light green, of new born budding life,
 The bush-clothed hills their changeful robes renew.
 All nature seemed in gladsome cheerful mood,
 Rejuvenated by the first refreshing draught
 Poured by the Gods upon the arid earth below,
 Which panting, waiting, the early rains has quaffed.
 Such was that fatal day, when torrid June
 Had given place to July's rains and showers,
 That with its humid wind and shady clouds
 New life to earth and man and beast endowers.
 Eight hundred years had passed since Bâppâ rose
 To power at Chitor, and had founded there
 The dynasty that had through all those years
 Ever held high in triumph and despair
 The Sun-faced banner, the emblem of their birth.
 Bright Surya's children, now at the last reduced,
 By necine troubles, to this stalwart steadfast few,
 Who could not be by any bribes induced
 To stain their honour, nor in their straits forget
 Their birth and lineage, all that past history
 So great and fine, that stretched away behind
 Into the times of shadow-covered mystery.
 Yet sad at heart was Pertap when he viewed
 The forces drawn up against him there,
 For in the Moslem ranks he could discern
 Those whose the duty was with him to share

The dangers and the honours that were his
 In thus defending his faith and their own
 Against the infidels, who would by strength of arms
 Make all do homage to their God alone. -
 There was the Raja Maun, grandsire to
 The Moslem Prince, born of his daughter's shame,
 His brother Sakta, the son of Sugra, who
 E'en though a Rajput, bore a Moslem name.
 That these the scions of the purest blood
 Should take up arms beneath the former foes
 Of their forefathers, against their flesh and blood,
 The degradation of their lives and minds forthshows.
 Thus helped by Rajputs, was Prince Selim's force
 More formidable, and did o'erwhelming seem,
 With field artillery, and camel corps
 Upon whose backs the swivel-gun mouths gleam ;
 While like black restless hillocks too appear
 Slow-moving elephants in armour cased,
 Thousands of infantry with matchlocks armed,
 Behind the splendid Rajput horsemen paced.
 And there with Pertap, were twenty thousand men,
 Hard trained and fearless, but for their arms alone
 Their swords and spears, the bowmen with their darts,
 No guns nor matchlocks, which they scorn, they own.
 Clear at their head, Pertap to all is seen,
 Mounted on Chytuc, his horse of Northern breed,
 While close behind him does the Sun-disk glow,
 As he exhorts the heroes he will lead :
 "Great Chiefs of Mewar, and men of many clans,
 "Who still remain as ever faithful, true,
 "To our high Gods, our Country, and our pride,
 "That from the exploits of our forefathers grew,

"See there before you, o'er that sunlit plain,
 "Are ranged the forces of the King, who would
 "Make all men equal, whate'er their caste or birth,
 "Kshatriya or Pariah, and would from heaven exclude
 "All Gods save one, declaring even Shiv
 "Does not exist, nor Surya whom we see
 "Driving his chariot daily through the sky,
 "Giving us life by his benignity.
 "And there with him, against us in the fight,
 "Are our own brothers, now by him debased
 "To hireling soldiers, who conscience-stricken wish
 "To see us also like themselves disgraced.
 "But well I know no man among us is,
 "Who would demean himself like these outcast,
 "And all will e'en to death or victory
 "Follow my lead, still fighting to the last.
 "I for myself ask nothing more than this,
 "That I may with my sword in combat slay
 "The Raja Maun, the falsest Rajput Chief,
 "Who leads his Rajputs in fratricidal fray.
 "Therefore "To horse." Let all this day aspire
 "To show that yet in us there still remains
 "The strength and courage of our fathers, who
 "Still watch our deeds from heaven's vast domains.
 "See there before you are your enemies,
 "Arrayed in order on yon further marge;
 "So sons of Mewar let us no more delay.
 "Death to the Toork!" "Ho, Suryâvânsion Charge!"
 Wild was the onslaught, crashing on the foes,
 Cutting a pathway, strewn with writhing forms;
 While ever in the van the Sun-disk shows
 Where Pertap in the thickest of the turmoil storms.

Ever he seeks to come on Raja Maun,
 But he a coward skulking in the rear,
 Retiring evades Pertap's repeated thrusts,
 Whenever he, in striving, cometh near.
 Madly the battle ebbs and flows,
 The Moslem forces struggling to obtain
 Command of the one exit to the hills,
 Thus pinning down the Rajputs to the plain.
 The Rajputs only filled with lust to kill,
 Those who'd forsaken their country and their faith,
 Seeking by disloyalty to their kith and kin
 To capture for themselves that false-faced wraith,
 That clad in purple, decked with gems and gold,
 Seems to their greed-blind eyes as honour's self
 And not in truth the basest of all lures,
 Vain luxury, bought by blood-bespattered pelf.
 Now in the moil of ruthless whirling strife
 The Rana Pertap finds himself opposed
 To the Prince Selim, in a howdah set,
 While round his elephant his Moslem guardians closed.
 Though far below the Rana Pertap rode
 Upon his horse, these all unequal odds
 Did not prevent him seeking to destroy
 Him, whom he saw as hater of his Gods.
 The mahawat slain in his first bold attack,
 To reach the high-placed Prince he strives again,
 While Chytuc, urged by him, rears high and paws
 The air, as trying by his struggles to obtain
 Foothold upon that steel-clad heaving mass.
 The elephant, maddened by wounds and fear,
 Unguided by a driver, turns about,
 Bearing the Prince to safety to the rear.

Selim is saved ; but round about Pertap
 The struggle thickens, thrice wounded yet he holds
 His own against the ever-swarming foes,
 While all who look the Sun-disk still beholds
 Shining above him, declaring far and wide
 He who it is, that with such prowess strives,
 That does it seem to those he fights against
 The Gods have given to him twenty lives
 Thrice more the Moslem weapons, thirst unquenched,
 Drink of his blood, bite in his quivering flesh,
 Yet still, like Baluram, he strikes and slays,
 The lifeless and the wounded on the ground enmesh,
 Blood-streaming limbs with death-pale limbs entwine,
 Up-grasping hands clutch through the heaving heap,
 While does the smothered murmur flecked with groans,
 To sword's clash treble form a basso deep.
 But all must have an end, howe'er he strives,
 No matter that with more than human strength
 He wields his arms, strong in his sense of right,
 The force of numbers must prevail at length.
 Gradually weakening from the loss of blood,
 The Jhâlâ Chieftain sees his peril clear,
 Thus being himself ready to sacrifice
 His life, if thus he may save one more dear,
 The Sun-faced banner does he seize and rides
 Quickly apart, thereby he draws way
 The stress of battle from where Pertap fights,
 The foemen thinking none would dare display
 The royal ensign, save but Great Pertap Singh ;
 Thus do they follow closing round the Chief,
 Deeming him Pertap, whom he simulates
 And falls undaunted having brought relief



*Straight now before him on that rugged road
There gapes a chasm, terrible and dread,
The timbers of the broken bridge stand stark,*

To him, whose death would seal their country's doom
 That though a thousand die, yet must he live,
 The Hindu Sun, who breaks upon their gloom,
 Giving effulgence that none but he can give.
 The strain removed around him, one snatched his rein,
 Turning his horse towards the harbouring hills,
 Where only now can he in safety hide,
 While fighting still the remnant for him spills
 Their blood in holding back the foes, who press
 Behind him seeking by his death to break
 The last remaining state that will not bend
 Before the Emperor, nor at his storming quake.
 Bitter the mind of Pertap as he rode along,
 Weakened by wounds, from which the blood drops pour,
 And in his sadness does it seem to him
 The fates can hold no greater pain in store,
 Than that he feels, being forced to leave behind
 Brave men still fighting, while he himself must flee,
 Giving their life blood for him and for his throne
 There on the plain, where he would with them be.
 But close behind him, implacable still,
 Two Chieftains follow from Prince Selim's force,
 The Lords of Khorâsân and of Multan,
 Strive to o'ertake his sorely wounded horse.
 Closer they come, each one with eager haste
 To strike him down, too weak to well withstand
 The mutual onslaught, as they propose to make,
 Together charging with spears on either hand.
 Straight now before him on that rugged road
 There gapes a chasm, terrible and dread,
 The timbers of the broken bridge stand stark,
 Caught 'mongst the rocks that line its deep-cut bed.

Steep frown the sides carved from the living stone
By the wild rush of floods for countless years,
While far beneath the hurtling water's voice
At the frail works of man rejoicing jeers.
Beyond, lies safety, below, a dreadful death,
Behind, the gaunt pursuers urge along,
Seeing him, Pertap, hesitate to risk
The leap that even for a fresh horse strong
Had been a test, beyond the power of those
Who were not bred and trained such jumps to clear.
But what for Chytuc, splendid though he be,
Wounded and weary, though still too fine to fear
The test, if but his master ask of him
This last response to his well-known hand,
Which never yet had need to signal twice,
Whatever did his master mind demand?
And Pertap, who saw death behind, below,
Knew that his life he held not as his own,
He, who would give his life for Mewar still,
Must save that life to uphold Mewar's throne.
So with a whispered word in Chytuc's ear,
A swift caress on that fine arching neck,
He gathers him together for the leap,
That will him save, or Mewar fortunes wreck.
And Chytuc seems to know how much depends
Upon his strength, as with his ears forethrown,
Nostrils distended, and eyes so bright alert,
Display that loyal heart that even beasts may own.
Loud clatter of hoofs upon the rocky track,
A flash of light, as horse and rider soar
High in the air, a breathless moment's space,
A sudden clash, heard o'er the torrent's roar,

As hoofs remeet the further pathway sound,
 Then once again, the clatter as they speed
 Away again; yet ever they slower grow,
 As further and further they into the hills recede.
 No longer now do the pursuers ride
 After the Rana, they dare not face that leap,
 But on their quivering horses blankly look
 Into that chasm, so dreadful and so deep
 Their thirst for honour quenched by craven fear,
 Each seeks excuse, that may the other think
 'T is not their own volition stays them there
 In hesitation on the chasm's brink.
 The Chief of Khorásán curses his horse,
 Spurring him hard, yet holding tight his head.
 The Multan Chief a sudden lameness finds,
 Though up to now he had the other led.
 Meanwhile, Pertap rides on, though hardly now
 Can he retain his seat upon his steed,
 Worn out from fighting, weak from loss of blood,
 His early training serves him in his need,
 For only balance saves him from a fall,
 That instinct knowledge of his horse's moves,
 The perfect seat that all true Rajputs have,
 Now in his weakness his salvation proves.
 But Chytuc wounded also cannot last
 Throughout the journey to where the haven lies,
 Yet, like all thoroughbreds, he gallops still,
 Though heaving flanks, and staring glassy eyes
 Speak of the strain. At last, dead spent, he falls
 To rise no more; the trickling blood-stream tells
 Of o'er-strained vessels, and with each pulse-beat now
 The crimson foam from quivering nostrils wells,

Panting and gasping, does the brave horse lie,
 And Pèrtap, who has loved him like a friend,
 Eh! Even more than that, kneels by his side,
 Mourning and watching for the coming end.
 But first that which he can do, he has done,
 The saddle shifted, the bit and straps removed,
 Hé fetches water in his helm to give at least,
 Some soothing to the horse, who in his death had proved
 That marvellous loyalty that but in beasts we find,
 Unthinking, selfless, obedient, ready to defend,
 Asking for nought, with blind unswerving trust
 In those they love and serve unto the end.
 So Pertap, holding Chytuc's drooping head,
 Gazes into those eyes, that seem to speak
 Of all that love, and trust, and vain regret,
 That in the end his strength had proved too weak.
 Softly caressing his sweat-dripping ears,
 The Rana speaks to his now dying horse,
 While manly tears from out his saddened eyes
 Over his cheeks, war-worn and rugged, course.
 "Chytuc, My friend! Though dumb yet dost thou speak
 "To me of days and nights, when we have been
 "More close, in greater harmony of mind,
 "Than I have spent e'en with my wedded Queen,
 "Thou my companion in the swift glad chase
 "After a boar, when both then did but vie
 "To gain the spear, to know the subtle joy
 "Of glorious movement, over the plain to fly
 "Thy feet scarce touching the dead earth thou spurned,
 "Thine eye still watchful for each ditch or brook,
 "While I, in trust of thy surefootedness,
 "Watched but the boar, not needing down to look,

"Knowing full well no need I had of reins,
 "Save but to help thee, for did the quarry turn,
 "Thou also turned, and when we brought to bay
 "The tush-armed monster, whose small eyes seem to burn
 "With direst hate, thou all alert wouldst poise
 "Ready to foil his charge, yet give to me
 "The chance to spear him, never by move nor twinge
 "Didst thou before him show timidity.
 "Ah ! Glorious were those gallops, my old friend,
 "No thought or care in all the world around,
 "Only the blue sky domed above our heads,
 "The sun-light shining on the open ground,
 "And how we loved it ! sharing each other's joy,
 "For I could feel thine in thy prancing pace,
 "And thou too knew, by that telepathy
 "Between a horse and man of Rajput race,
 "The wild delirium of my mind, a blank,
 "To all affairs of state, all troubles shed,
 "With no ambition in my life, but that
 "We may o'ertake that beast before us still ahead.
 "And then again those days and nights we spent,
 "Wandering the hills, sleeping where we might find
 "A place to lie, sometime in wall-bound fortresses,
 "At others neath the open sky star-lined,
 "The bright moon shining, casting shadow shapes,
 "The jungles murmuring a soft lullaby,
 "And thou, my faithful one, ever beside me there,
 "Ready to save me, should I be forced to fly.
 "The thought of nights like these, when we two shared
 "The dangers and the peace of those wild hills,
 Now when I know no more such nights we'll spend,
 "My memory with fondest recollections fills.

"And Chytuc ! how we revelled in the raids,
 "Watching the convoys from some vantage ground
 "Crawling along the roadway far below, at ease ;
 "Hearing the drivers' call, the cheerful sound
 "Of gruff-voiced laughter as the soldiers joked,
 "Riding along, grown careless as such will,
 "And thou and I watching them side by side,
 "While exultation at the coming fight does fill
 "Us both, who think not of the gain to come,
 "But of the jubilation of a sudden rush
 "Down from our crannies, the quick confusing fight,
 "As we cut through them and opposition crush.
 "Eh ! That was even better than the wild boar hunt,
 "For was the quarry and the hunter armed
 "Like one another, and we no vantage had
 "Save that they were by our surprise alarmed.
 "But what of thee ? My closest ally in the field,
 "When in pitched battle, we charge upon the foes
 "Awaiting us, and loud the clarions sound,
 "The roar of conflict to a hubbub grows,
 "All wild confusion in its elements,
 "Yet ordered in the complex plan decreed
 "By master-minds, who throw this force and that
 "Into the medley, as does each crisis need.
 "Oh Chytuc ! Then thou didst surpass thyself,
 So perfectly thou answered to each call,
 "Seeming to almost know before my mind,
 "What I would wish, and though around us fall
 "Thousands of dead, though blood-stench fills the air,
 "The cannons belching fire and shot and smoke,
 "Thou never faltered, eager as even I, the man,
 "While good sweat from every pore out-broke.

"Some give me glory for my fighting strength,
 "But would that have availed me had I not
 "In thee, my comrade of a hundred fights,
 "The truest helpmate, by mutual trust begot?
 "Now thou wilt leave me, who even in death have proved
 "Thy sterling worth, the greatness of thy love,
 "But do I wot, as some true-hearted wives,
 "Thou but precede me to those realms above,
 "Where surely do the Gods, who weigh our deeds
 "As in a balance, sifting the bad from good,
 "Take heed and note the virtues of all beasts,
 "Who as examples to the human race have stood.
 "So there, if I may only too attain
 "To like rewards, so fitly earned by thee,
 "We may again united share once more
 "The joy of gallops o'er the sky-plains free".

Dimmer and dimmer grew the evening light,
 Larger and larger grew the blood-froth pool,
 As Chytuc dies, till with death-given strength
 Once more he neighs, then as the night breeze cool
 Sweeps down the pass, his head more heavy falls
 On Pertap's knee, the stiffening muscles twitch,
 The fond eyes glaze, the halting pulse beats cease,
 The spirit flies to heavenly pastures rich.
 Just when the sun was sinking, and the hills
 Put on their night-robes of purple and of black,
 And hooded owls awoke, and bats flew forth,
 Pertap perceives a horseman on the track.
 No friend expecting from the distant plain below,
 He takes his stand, though wounded, sore, and weak,
 His back against the rocky pass's wall,
 When does a voice in cheery accents speak :—

"Ho, Rider of the roan horsel canst thou tell
 "How does it feel when fleeing for one's life,
 "For so it seems my noble brother has
 "Left others now to bear the brunt of strife?"
 And Pertap knows his brother Sakta's voice,
 Who seems would taunt him in his woeful plight,
 So does he answer, too sad in heart and mind,
 To welcome now, as once, a fratricidal fight.
 "Eh, Sakta! Thou may'st jeer, who art among
 "The conquerors on yonder blood-wet plain,
 "Easy it is for those to cast such slurs as these,
 "Who cannot know nor recognise the pain,
 "That others feel, who staked their all, and lost
 "On one great hazard, ready themselves to die,
 "Or lead to death others, whose hearts as true
 "Could not for any gain their ancient faith decry.
 "Ye see me here a fugitive, and so thou deem'st,
 "That I, the Rana, like our common father vile,
 "Have too deserted in their direst need
 "My Chiefs, who yonder form a gruesome pile
 "Of shattered bodies, torn and twisted shapes,
 "Not seeing in thy haughty arrogance,
 "How I would give a thousand years of heaven
 "To have with them played out that losing chance.
 "But what avail to bandy words, thou art
 "The Emperor's servant, strong, unwounded still,
 "Mounted and armed; so what delays thy hand
 "To carry out thy chosen master's will?
 "Thou didst not fear me in my strength and health
 "In those old days, now wounded, weak am I,
 "So strike, my brother, for if the fates so wish,
 "I sooner would beneath thy tulwar die,

"Than bear thine insults, thy jeers and jokes,
 "That ill beseem thee, whom I have ever held
 "As being more sinned against, than sinning, since
 "'T was I, myself, that thou from home expelled."
 But Sakta answered :—"Stay, brother, stay thy scorn.
 "If I have sinned that sin is mine alone,
 "But by the Gods on high, I came but here
 "So that I might for such, my sins, atone.
 "And knowest thou not yet my nature wild,
 "That will by, may be ill-timed, jokes disguise
 "How much I feel my error and disgrace
 "Now well reflected in my brother's eyes?
 "For when I saw that noble Jhala Chief
 "Seize on the Standard, to lead away thy foes,
 "Another snatch thy bridle, thee to save,
 "While in thy wake thy fated followers close,
 "I knew that thou upon thy shoulders bore
 "The burden of thy kingdom and our race,
 "And well I knew, a bitterer task was thine
 "Than dying there; the game for men to chase.
 "And on thy heels I saw those twain ride hard,
 "Though cowards both, they hoped, in thy weak state,
 "To gain their ends, so did I ride behind
 "To help and shield thee from their greedy hate.
 "Fear not, that I, thy brother, thee would hurt,
 "Their bodies, stretched by yonder deep ravine,
 "Tell Sakta has, in thy extremity, returned
 "To wash his sword in blood of such unclean.
 "Now by thy side, what e'er our case may be,
 "I with thee stand or fall. So take my horse.
 "Flee to the hills, while I return once more,
 "And from Prince Selim's camp withdraw my Rajput force.

"Then will I follow thee, thy will my law,
 "No more aspiring against thy rightful claim,
 "But ever in thy wake upholding thee,
 "I yet may gain forgiveness for my shame."
 So there once more united did the twain
 Join hands in friendship, the very tie more sure
 Through the dissensions, which had caused the breach
 That had divided their brave hearts before.
 And Pertap, on his brother's active horse,
 Rides on into the darkening shades of night,
 While Sakta turns, retracing on foot his way
 To where the Moslem bivouac appears, alight
 With countless fires, as for their evening meal
 The soldiers wait, bind up their wounds, or sleep,
 Worn out with slaughter, and about the plain
 Jackals and wolves, full-gutted slowly creep.
 Long seemed the weary way to Sakta's feet
 Back to that camp; where once within his tent,
 Ere yet he hardly had the dust removed,
 Prince Selim for him to his presence sent.
 There bidden to explain his absence Sakta thought
 'T were better far to hide his changed desires,
 For dead men cannot help a living king,
 So subtle guile his ready tale inspires.
 "Oh, Selim ! Reflex of our Emperor, who this day
 "Have broken up the rebel tribes which dared
 "Defy the "King of Kings" and in their pride
 "Would not accept, as others wise have shared,
 "The peace and mercy, which as refreshing rain
 "Poured from the heavens makes the desert bloom,
 "The brown fields clothes with light reflecting green,
 "Does by its bounty change the barren doom

"Of those who come beneath his benign power.
 "Into luxurious life, as fostered by his grace
 "Their estates flourish, free from the fear of strife,
 "Or eager rivals, who would their rule replace.
 "I, thy servant, saw this Pertap Singh escape,
 "After presumptuously he had endeavoured to
 "Attack thy royal person, ride away
 "Into the hills, so did I fast pursue
 "Him, with the Chiefs of Khorasan, Multan
 "Meaning to capture him, that with his fall
 "This vile rebellion might be crushed and peace
 "Beneath the Emperor be given to us all.
 "Unhappily, such prowess ne'er was seen,
 "This rebel fought as one indeed possessed,
 "Slaying the others, I hardly did escape,
 "My good steed taken by this man obsessed.
 "The truth of this all men can well aver,
 "Since did I come into thy camp this night
 "On foot, the lowly messenger to tell
 "Your Highness, of this last disastrous fight."
 Now Selim, cruel, capricious, in some ways,
 Yet still had something of his father's generous mind,
 And power of reading men, so this wild tale
 In no way did his penetration blind ;
 So did he turn to Sakta whose bold eyes
 Could not look straight into his steadfast own,
 Saying :—"I swear to give thy forfeit life to thee
 "If thou but speak the truth and truth alone."
 Then blazed the spirit of his father's race
 In Sakta's voice as manfully he cried :—
 "The just cause of a Kingdom and a Faith
 "Is on my brother. Should Pertap now have died,

"All chivalry, all that which makes life worth
 "The living, all glory of unselfishness and truth,
 "All high ideals, had with him too have died,
 "And only degradation reigned in very sooth.
 "What does thy father's rule hold out to us,
 "The Rajput clans, save luxury and ease,
 "Service within thine army, crushing down
 "The steadfast few, that nought will e'er appease,
 "By weight of numbers, giving no chance nor hope
 "To them, who dare to hold ideals and dreams
 "Of stablishing again their shattered thrones,
 "Not led away by the false guiding gleams.
 "Of avarice, and lust of quick-found power,
 "Nor willing yet to sacrifice their souls
 "For the vain glory of the present hour,
 "Since still their steadfast faith their life controls?
 "Eh! Blood will call to blood, when blood is spilled,
 "And I that call did hear, and answered to,
 "Saving my brother from the coward twain,
 "Who sought his death, to gain new wealth from you.
 "My sword has cut them down, and now they lie
 "Beside the chasm that they feared to leap,
 "And Pertap speeds on my unwounded horse
 "Far in the hills, his faith and hope to keep."
 Selim in wonder gazed at one who dared
 Such words to speak, yet did admire still
 His courage, and the wondrous lofty aims,
 That did this stalwart, thoughtless, warrior fill;
 Moreover, mindful of his plighted word,
 He did forgive this mad straightforward speech,
 Bidding him leave, and if he yet might so
 To Pertap's cranny in the mountains reach,

So did it happen ere many a day was past,
Sakta rode in, behind him were his sons,
Sixteen strong youths, who later in their lives
Proved, by their prowess, that in their veins still runs
The old-time strain, when Mewar Rajputs were
Held as examples, of courage undeterred,
Upholders of the ancient faith of Shiv,
Ready to die to keep their given word.
Now did the rains of heaven, pouring forth,
Turn every stream into a river wide,
While were the rain-soaked roads unfit for men
To move along, whether they walk or ride,
So did Prince Selim leave Pertap in peace,
And later other tasks his interest held,
So was the Rana by a year of peace enabled to
His broken forces into an army's semblance weld.
Then once again hemmed in and forced to fight
An open battle on a hill-bound plain
'Gainst awful odds, no courage could withstand,
Till only round him do a few remain,
Broken and helpless does he refuge seek
In folds of hills, sheltering where he can,
Though ever yet but giving veneration to
The Gods on high, and not to any man.
How much he suffered in those long-drawn years,
A wanderer ever, yet by his men revered,
A scourge to all who claimed Great Akbar, Lord,
Loved by his friends, and by his foemen feared.
Full twenty years such life as this was his,
Sometimes with scarce sufficient food to eat,
Yet did his Chiefs, who with him on the ground
Shared his repast, treat him with honour meet,

As Rana of Mewar, Viceroy of Shiv,
 And should he deign to offer of his fare,
 E'en though it be but an unleaven cake,
 To them, they held it as an honour so to share
 His food, though would they scorn to taste
 The finest dishes, if but the Emperor's hand
 Had touched the platter, thus was his status held
 By them who formed with him, this homeless band.
 For where the Rana was, there was his court,
 His Durbar-hall, the valleys twixt the hills,
 His palace roof, the heavens over-head,
 While the bright moon the place of lamps fulfils.
 There hid away in caves his wife brought forth
 Children, who ere they were weened from her breast,
 Were carried oft on long and weary flights,
 Close to their foot-worn mother's bosom pressed.
 Rocked in a basket hung on high from trees
 They slept at night, while round the wild beasts prowl,
 Their evening lullaby, the owl's bass hoot,
 The panther's snarl, the hungry tiger's growl.
 But did their father's heart bleed, when he saw
 His children, hungry, save a portion still
 Lest on the morrow, forced in haste to fly,
 There was no more their empty mouths to fill.
 Though for himself nought did he care if he
 Hungry and thirsty went, if but he kept
 His faith and honour clean, but harder still
 He found to listen as these helpless children wept
 For food when none was there, for rest when night
 Still found them toiling o'er some broken hill,
 While ever does the danger of their capture too
 His father's heart with fearsome terrors fill.

Meanwhile those dastard Rajas, who had sold
 Themselves and theirs for peace, in Akbar's court
 Lived lives of luxury, there with their womenfolk,
 Though he defilement of the Rajput wives had sought.
 But such as these, who fearful were to fight
 For their own faith, their homes, and daughters gave
 In wedlock to the infidel, knew how to close
 Their eyes from any such unwelcome sight, to save
 Themselves from drawing on their diminished heads
 Their master's anger, therefore though knowing all
 They hide their knowledge, yet do all men know,
 They do themselves connive at what does now befall.
 Cowards at heart and cowed by Akbar's might,
 Pimps of his lust, they dare not now defend.
 Their wives from him, who could have cast them down
 From their estate, as they well apprehend.
 Although so noble in his statesmanship,
 Like eastern potentates, his passions strong
 Oft led him to do deeds, which his own juster laws
 Declared for men of lesser state as wrong.
 Thus did the Rajputani women noted for
 Their upright forms, full-breasted, clear of eye,
 Raise in his heart ignoble passions, which
 Caused him his better nature to deny.
 E'en now within his palaces are seen
 Around the walls of marble bath-rooms, where
 The women bathed, holes cunningly so wrought
 That he might watch them unclothed, their persons bare.
 Moreover he ordained a monthly mart
 Where all were bound in privacy to go,
 By dark and winding passages in which
 He could waylay them, and his preference show

To those he would within his harem take,
 Or visit in the night time, when he knew
 Their husbands were abroad, and no one dared
 To stay him, since from his power they drew
 Their sustenance, held in the hollow of his hand,
 To raise or break, these Rajputs learned too late,
 How they had their undoing by their own deeds wrought;
 Slaves to him now, controller of their fate.
 Now 'mongst these Rajputs in the Delhi court
 Was Prithi-Raj, brother of Bikanir,
 A poet and dreamer, who though himself so bound
 Could faith and truth in bolder men revere.
 His brother's wife had too a victim been
 To Akbar's passion, and his own but saved
 Her virtue by her courage threatening to
 Slay him if he should dare, by lust depraved,
 To offer insult to her modesty, and he
 Knowing her spirit, slinking in fear away,
 Did her no harm; yet even knowing all,
 Prithi-Raj still lived beneath his vicious sway.
 One day the Emperor the Chieftain to him called,
 Transported with delight a letter also shows,
 Which had by messengers been lately brought,
 The Hindi writing, which the Chieftain knows,
 Was writ by ~~one~~ unlearned in gentle arts,
 The lines uneven, the letters large and small
 Intermingle, and phrases rude and rough
 Tell of a writer, who writes not much at all;
 This signed by Pertap prayed the Emperor's grace,
 Would now admit Mewar amongst those states,
 That subject to him, lived in peace, and knew
 The blessings that his benign power creates.

Hard 't was to credit such a missive would
 Have come from Pertap, who by all was known
 As being so courageous, free from sordid thoughts
 Of power and wealth, he who'd so long alone
 Withstood the Moslems, holding to his faith,
 Proud with the pride immeasurably strong
 In his clean lineage, whose forebears ever stood
 The fearless champions of right against all wrong.
 But true it was, no doubt of it could be,
 In Prithi-Raj's all unwilling mind,
 Though did his eyes each character search out
 Hoping in them some forgery to find.
 For Pertap had so written in his woe,
 His father's heart torn by his children's tears,
 He, who cared nought what hardships him befell
 Was broken by his fond parental fears.
 But Prithi-Raj would not his chagrin show
 To Akbar, and he answered in this wise :—
 "Oh, Emperor ! This comes not from Pertap-Singh,
 "His foes would seek by forgery and lies
 "To thus demean him, I who know him well,
 "Know for your crown he never would enslave
 "The Mewar Rajput neath a Moslem king,
 "Or his own self to feudal state deprave.
 "Therefore let me, in test of this, now write
 "To him and ask if even any thought
 "Has come to him of ever giving thus
 "Away his birthright, which none have ever bought."
 Therefore, when after many days and nights
 In which Pertap had been alternately
 Glad he had written, saving thus his kin
 From further ills and grim adversity,

And sad to think that all had been in vain,
 His thousand fights, his years of poverty,
 And dead his hopes of seeing once again,
 Chitor, the crown of Rajput liberty,
 A rider came from Delhi bringing him
 A letter, but in it was there no command
 To bow himself before the Peacock Throne,
 The newest slave to kiss his master's hand.
 But writ by Prithi-Raj, it did contain
 Words of dismay and grief, that he, of all
 Men should demean himself to seek at last
 The grace of Akbar, and by so doing fall
 From that high eminence, raised far above
 All other Rajputs, and ring the final knell
 Of that grand race, who look alone to him,
 Their only champion to yet the clouds dispel
 Which, through their own low lusts, had veiled
 Them from the glory of the "Hindu Sun"
 Who may resplendent once again break forth,
 When Akbar has his fated life-race run.
 Thus did he write his words forthshowing
 All that his heart, deep hidden, held divine,
 The loyal honour, which in life he dare not show,
 Calling aloud from every polished line :—
 "The hopes of the Hindu on the Hindu yet rest,
 "Shall Pertap forsake them now they are distressed?
 "For but for his valour by Akbar are placed
 "All castes on a level, their birthright disgraced.
 "Our Chiefs lose their valour, our women defiled
 "Conceive in their wombs a lust-given child,
 "And Akbar, the broker, has bought in the mart
 "Our courage and honour, but alone thou apart,

"The great son of Bâppâ, are yet beyond price,
 "Who holding thy faith would all else sacrifice.
 "What Rajput would part with his honour or wife?
 "Yet many have bartered for safety and life
 "Them both to this broker, who holds them in fief,
 "The cause of their down-fall, while granting relief.
 "Will Chitor be auctioned? Will Pertap too sell,
 "His wealth alas squandered, his honour as well?
 "This treasure he fought for, for which men have died,
 "And give to the Emperor a daughter as bride?
 "Full many, despairing, have come to this mart,
 "Alone has great Pertap not suffered the smart
 "Of knowing the disgrace that such infamy brings
 "As the vassal and barter of "the Buyer of Kings."
 "The world has enquired from whence dost thou draw
 "The help that upholds thee, a vagrant and poor,
 "Alone midst thy foemen, thou yet hast maintained
 "The pride of a Rajput, which alone is explained
 "By the soul that is in thee, thy sword at thy side,
 "The gift of the Goddess, thine honour thy guide.
 "And Akbar, the broker of men will one day
 "Be himself overreached, nor can for ever hold sway,
 "And Death, the grim master of all, will demand
 "The payment of tribute, 'tis his to command,
 "Then will our race come to Pertap for seed
 "To restore once again the true Rajput breed,
 "To harrow the tares from the weed-grown fields,
 "The grange of pure grain, that loyalty yields.
 "To thee all men look, our seed to preserve,
 "That again in its splendour our race may deserve
 "To be classed as the offspring of Rama and hold
 "Thee, Pertap, as leader the upright, unsold."

This Pertap read and as some nightmare saw
 Himself degraded, feeding from Akbar's hand,
 Classed lower than the Raja Maun, he once had spurned,
 While Moslem Lords held rule upon his land.
 And could he too, broken and helpless save
 His women, and the women of his trusting Chiefs
 From Moslem lust; would not they whom he'd held
 So long at bay, thus adding to his griefs,
 Seek to debauch these whom they clearly knew
 Were more to him than even life itself,
 And drag his honour through the Delhi dust,
 Claiming he sold his women as a pimp for pelf?
 Would not he rather see his children die,
 Even as he would die, than that they should,
 In after years, in Moslem harems closed,
 Call him to mind as one, who dastard could
 Condemn his blood to live such lives of shame,
 The purchased playthings of their lust-filled Lord,
 And curse him as a father and a man,
 Who had so sold them for a King's reward?
 Thus by the words of one, who had himself become
 The bartered vassal of "the Broker King",
 Who knew and felt the burden of his shame,
 Yet desperate still to future hopes could cling,
 Pertap was heartened, no more he dares to think
 Of giving in, making a coward's peace,
 He whom the Rajputs looked towards to guard
 Their racial honour, until they gained release
 From their own slavery, to keep before their eyes
 The lofty pattern of their Godlike ancestry,
 Which lost to them would be the final end,
 The doom of them and their posterity.



*Pertap, the Rana stands
Before them all, clad in his dinted mail,
High on a beetling cliff, taking farewell
To his own land*

Yet plain it was no longer could he hold
 His own in Mewar, therefore he boldly planned
 To lead his clan, the grand Sesodia men,
 To found a Kingdom in some foreign land.
 Far where the Indus from the mountain flows,
 Where desert wastes would a sure rampart make,
 Pertap decides to plant his banner, unsullied still,
 His loyal Chieftains too following in his wake.
 Throughout Mewar the word is quickly sent,
 The Chieftains flock to the appointed place,
 Camels and carts and litters, crawling, bring
 The Mewar women, the mothers of their race.
 When all is ready, Pertap, the Rana, stands
 Before them all, clad in his dinted mail,
 High on a beetling cliff, taking farewell
 To his own land, which scorching teardrops veil;
 With hands stretched out towards that sacred hill,
 The ruined Chitor, whereon his forebears died,
 Ragged, unshorn, greyhaired, but yet sublime,
 The broken Rana lifted his voice and cried :—
 "Farewell, my country! Farewell those golden hopes,
 "I had when first my destiny ordained,
 "I should take up the glorious patrimony
 "Bequeathed to me by hero men, who reigned
 "From far dark ages o'er the splendid seed
 "Of Surya, who turns the darkest night to day,
 "Driving his chariot through the heavens wide,
 "Beneath whose touch the mist wreaths fade away.
 "So did my forebears rise, and shed their light,
 "The Sun-faced banner, emblem of their soul,

"Driving away the gloom of foreign foes
 "From out the land they fend for and control.
 "And I, their son, have striven hard to keep
 "That heritage unsullied, to regain
 "Yon hill, now desolate, a wild beasts' lair,
 "Where jackals crouch in garden, palace, fane.
 "What hopes had I? But now at last I see,
 "My land a desert, myself unable to defend
 "My steadfast friends, and poverty grinds down
 "The helpless ryot. Did I the Gods offend
 "By my presumption, hoping by their aid
 "To free my land, to wash away the stain,
 "In their own blood, that had those Moslem thieves
 "Placed on my Hindu state, to once again regain
 "My capital at Chitor, re-raise the Shivite faith,
 "Rebuild the temples, repopulate the town
 "With loyal Rajputs, where did these infidels
 "Slay and debauch, and break our idols down?
 "Do our Gods sleep? Or do they turn away?
 "Do they not care? Or do they deign no more
 "To give their help to me, the Rana, who
 "Am born of him who sacrificed Chitor?
 "Yet sad it is to leave the land I love so well,
 "Land of my fathers, where their blood was shed
 "For it, and fare away to lands unknown,
 "Leaving behind the ashes of my dead.
 "Ah! Had I died at fatal Huldighat,
 "I had died happy on that blood-wet plain,
 "But did the Gods, in their longdrawn revenge,
 "Add to my days, and multiply my pain.
 "Farewell Mewar! Farewell far-off Chitor!
 "Oft in my dreams, I may as visions see

"Thy smiling valleys, moonlit hills, and so
 "In spirit dwell where yet I may not be."
 So did he speak; and all men hushed remained,
 Knowing his anguish, all his bitter woe,
 Feeling with him the loss of home and all
 They now relinquished to their hated foe.
 And harder still it seemed that all their loss
 Was brought more surely by a Rajput's hate,
 The infamous and dastard Raja Maun,
 Who throve in shame, contented with his state.
 Down sank the moon by dawn mist closely veiled,
 The amber tints of dawn repaint the sky,
 The fire-cast shadows fade, the clarions call,
 The sun-disk gleams, the eagle flying high
 Lit by the rising sun, sees far on earth below,
 A slow-stepped nation moving through the hills,
 Men, women, children, cattle, sheep, and goats,
 Following their Rana, where their Rana wills.
 Down t'wards the North, through passes rude and rough
 The concourse moves, towards the desert drear,
 None knowing where the leader leads them, still
 Trusting and following without qualm or fear.
 Yet, when the Gods have seemed to hide away,
 Granting no help, and even Surya's heat
 Seems not to succour, but more burdens caste
 On these his children, as do his strong beams beat
 On them at noonday, parching their dust-grimed flesh,
 Drying their lips, dazzling their aching eyes,
 While ever just beyond, born of his rays,
 The mirage from their hasting, mocking, flies,
 Then when the final dregs of fate's sour cup
 Seemed to be quaffed, all unexpected came

Respite for all, for there in Pertap's way
 Stood Bhâma Sâh, by this deed known to fame.
 He and his father had for long past years
 Held the high office of Chief Minister,
 And now he offered of the wealth they'd gained
 To change the fate, that seems so sinister.
 Sufficient had he and his fathers stored,
 To, in the field, a fighting force maintain
 Of five and twenty thousand hireling men
 For full twelve years; this whole long hoarded gain
 He lays before the Rana's feet and prays
 That he will turn again, and strike once more
 Another blow for Mewar, and by this aid
 Strive to regain his throne at Chitor.
 The Lords of Akbar held high revelry
 In town and fortress, now they thought that he,
 Pertap, the impetuous, was far removed,
 Struggling across the desert, which as some sea
 Storm-tossed, with towering waves has been
 By wizard wand transformed to dust and sand,
 These seeming waves moving slowly with the wind,
 Seeking to smother him and his long straggling band.
 Perchance he dies, as others oft have died,
 Misguided, finding not some hoped-for well,
 Their water finished, sinking at last, where now
 New formed the sand waves o'er their bodies swell.
 But what care they, his palaces and forts
 Are now for them, theirs the power to take
 The Rajput women, though few indeed they find,
 That they with them may their lust-thirsting slake?
 Fair are the lakes, the hills with game abound,
 Pleasant it is to dream away the night,

After a day of sport, on those still waters, which
 Glitter and sparkle in the soft moonlight,
 While the weird music of musicians floats
 Down on the breeze, and scent and sound-wave blends
 Into a fragrant lovesong, so mystically combined,
 The senses know not where one begins or ends.
 And Akbar, also thinking that at last Mewar
 Was his, and Pertap was no longer to be feared,
 Withdrew his troops, leaving but just enough
 To form a guard; truly to him appeared
 The time had come when all of Rajasthan
 Was wholly his, the Rajputs slaves or driven
 To far off lands; yet still respect he felt
 For this man Pertap, who to the last had striven,
 Not giving in, but hopeless in his hate,
 Would rather face a future all unknown
 In foreign lands, than sacrifice his faith,
 Or ligeance to a Moslem Emperor own.
 Now suddenly a rumour spreads abroad
 In every village square the whisper's heard :—
 "Pertap is coming!" Though no one seems to know,
 Who was the first to pass around the word.
 The Moslem Lords, deeming the rumour false,
 Still take no heed, but in each humble cot,
 The Rajputs lift again their hidden swords,
 Ready to welcome the venger of their lot.
 Swiftly he comes, hard on the rumour's heels,
 Striking and slaying, leaving nought behind
 But bodies of his slain foes to mark
 The track of him, "Deliverer of his kind"
 So great the fear that did his deeds inspire
 None would withstand him, save those who sheltered in

The stronger forts of Ajmer, Mandalgarh,
 And Chitor, which in vain he strived to win,
 Yet save these three, all Mewar now became
 Once more his own, then did he turn to wreak
 His longed-for vengeance on the Raja Maun,
 Who had reviled him when his arm was weak.
 Leading his army against the Amber state,
 He sacked Malpura, the chief commercial town,
 Looting the palace, whence Raja Maun had fled,
 Saving his life, but losing his renown.
 And Akbar all this while looked on, nor moved
 To stay his conquest, for apt to rule he knew
 That all the Rajputs, though beneath his sway,
 Still looked to Pertap, who in seeming drew
 Some mystic succour from their ancient Gods,
 Seeming when stricken to revive once more,
 With more than pristine power, how obtained
 No one could tell, so thus in him they saw,
 Not just a man more upright than the ruck,
 But one a demigod, or even some averred,
 An avatar of Krishna, who was in former days
 By all the Demon Kings for deeds of prowess feared.
 So did he know no help from them was his,
 And further South his armies were engaged
 In warfare in the Deccan, where so many fights
 Have been by Delhi Emperors in lust of conquest waged.
 Therefore he troubled not if Mewar fell
 Into the hands of Pertap, if but himself he held
 Ajmer and Chitor, which fixed for him confines,
 Which did he break, by force must be repelled.
 So Pertap reigned once more in peace, but body's peace
 Is yet no boon, when peaceless is the mind,

"Whereat he cursed. Will such a one withstand
 "Hardships and hunger, the cold earth for his bed?
 "Will not these huts give way to palaces, and ease
 "Be bought by bartering the freedom of our land,
 "For which we bled, for which have thousands died,
 "Alas in vain, I see my hopes are banned?
 "And you, my Chiefs, will follow where he leads,
 "Soft living, luxury, will make your spirit weak,
 "Until Mewar no longer will be held
 "The land of heroes, but for the peace you'll seek
 "'T will be abandoned to the hated Toork, and be
 "Like Amber is, a vassal state, whose king
 "Is but the pander of his Moslem Lord,
 "His own shame hiding beneath his Emperor's wing."
 Then swore Salumbra and the other Chiefs,
 Pledging themselves to guarantee his son,
 Standing around, his sword hilt to their lips,
 Binding themselves, even as he had done.
 Thus did the fine old Chieftain for them speak :—
 "Oh, Rana-Ji! Thou whom by right I girt
 "With Bâppâ's blade, so many years ago, now swear
 "Never the cause of Mewar to desert.
 "Never to permit mansions to be raised,
 "Or flowering gardens, scent-laden, to be made
 "Wherein thy son might pass his hours in ease,
 "Forgetful of thy task upon him laid.
 "But we thy Chiefs, companions of thy trials,
 "When on the mountains we together shared
 "Our scanty meals, when on the battle field
 "We fought and bled, nor friend nor foeman spared,
 "We will uphold thy banner and will watch,
 "Like jealous husbands o'er thine honour, lest

“Ought may besmirch it. Will keep the Sun-disk bright,
“And in the cause of Mewar will not sleep or rest.”
Then one by one each filed beside his couch,
Kissing the hilt of his heaven-given sword,
While all clasped once again the shaking hand
Of Pertap-Singh, their well-beloved Lord.
Thus Pertap satisfied relapsed in sleep,
That last long sleep, from whence he wakes again
In those far realms by the Gods prepared,
Wherein he knows not trouble, doubt, nor pain.
Thus closed the life of this brave Rajput, who
E’en yet in every Rajput heart still lives,
Binding that race with ties that nought can break,
The tie of Honour, that honour to prowess gives.

And Pertap, who still longed Chitor to free
 At Udaipur no tranquil joys could find.
 Bound by his oath without the palace he
 Lived in a hut of bamboos and of leaves,-
 Wherein with all the state of Mewar Ranaship
 He homage and respect from all receives.
 Not old in years, but broken by fatigue,
 Covered with scars so honourably obtained,
 He sits and longs for death, hating Akbar's grace,
 That leaves him there in pity, yet restrained
 From capturing that hill which he can see
 Dim in the distance on the twilight plain ;
 Whilst in the "dark chamber" of his mind he views
 The old time battles, in visions of his brain.
 There, Bâppâ towers, on his head the "Mor"
 Won from the Mori Prince, there one by one
 The sons of Lakshman lead their men to die,
 So that the favour of the Goddess may be won,
 There is the young Deola Chief, Patta and Jaimul too,
 Each one who died and willing gave their lives
 For Chitor's Fort, the vast bejewelled throng,
 The Rajput women, heroines and heroes' wives.
 Then as the shades of night draw a screen
 Over the plain, the vision taking wing,
 He sees a figure flying thence, and knows
 It is the wraith of craven Udai-Singh.
 Stirred by the heroic pictures which his mind
 Portrayed, he turned to brood on his own state,
 The outcome of so many years of strife,
 His bold attempt to shape his life and fate.
 Drear is this vision that appears to him ;
 What did he see ? His fondest wish ungained,

While what revolted him, was that he now,
 By Akbar's pity, by Akbar's will, remained
 At peace to live or die, so long as he
 Did not attempt to strike another blow
 To gain Chitor, and did that canker-worm
 Gnaw at his mind, till peace he did not know.
 More bitter than contempt or scorn he felt
 This pity was, that he who'd held so high
 His head, to now be looked on by his foe
 With such compassion. Ah ! If he could but die.
 But if he died, would Amra-Singh, his son,
 Who cursed his huts and looked with longing eyes
 On those fair palaces, built by the sleeping lake,
 Keep still his vow, when once he, Pertap, dies ?
 Thus did his mind distraught prey on his frame
 Exhausted by the years in camp and field,
 Till did he lie decrepit in the summer days,
 When no refreshment do the hot winds yield.
 There in his lowly dwelling, watched around
 By his old Chiefs, companions of those days,
 Soul-stirring, glorious, when at their head he rode,
 While all around the tide of battle sways.
 Tossing he lies, while they with hearts too full
 For speech, watch there their Rana and their friend
 Fight his last grim battle with a foe, whose strength
 They know must conquer, and him cannot defend.
 Salumbra hears a groan, and bending asks :—
 "What doth afflict thee, that thy soul cannot
 Depart in peace?" To which the dying Rana cries
 "I call to mind a scene. My son, the Prince, forgot
 The lowness of my dwelling, and his turban caught
 Upon the lintel, dragging it from his head,

Turning to those, who mournful stand around,
 His brother Chiefs, with flaming wrath-filled eyes,
 He pointing to the Rana, who recumbent lay,
 These heartfelt words before him heedless cries :—

“See, thou my brothers, what has come to us,
 “Who faithless have not kept our sworn oath
 “To Rana Pertap, well did he dying know
 “His son and us, when he mistrusted both.
 “Did he not warn us, that should we live in peace,
 “And this, his son, build palaces and live
 “In luxury, soon would we find that he
 “Would sell our freedom, if this to him might give
 “More vicious joys, more money, which might pay
 “These posturing women, harlots without shame,
 “To dance before him, and by their lasciviousness
 “Awake vile passions, which I may not name?
 “See how his palace stinks, as does some bawdy-house,
 “With Musk and Mowar, and long mirrors add
 “Each one their quota to the lewd nautch,
 “All of which were by our sworn oath forbade.
 “Shall we not now redeem our oath and force
 “This youth to carry on his father’s fame,
 “Then if we die, we yet may face our friend,
 “But if we leave him, we shall die in shame,
 “And in those realms where his soul now lives,
 “We could not face his sorrow for our sin,
 “Therefore let us by force the Rana take
 “To fight with us, whether we fall or win”.

Thus having spoken does he seize a weight,
 Which held the carpet corner to the ground,
 And hurled it at the largest mirror, which
 It shattered with a crash, while all surround

The enraged Rana, lift him and in their arms
 Carry him forth, set him upon his horse,
 Raise the Sun-disk behind him, lead him on,
 Down to the plain, whereon the vast concourse
 Of Rajput warriors wait for him to lead
 Them forth to battle. Mad, wild, with rage
 The Rana comes, helpless, his Chiefs among,
 But does this sight his craven doubts assuage.
 There on the plain, drawn up, each clan by clan,
 Clad in their armour, glinting in the sun,
 Thousands of Rajputs, waiting his coming, stand;
 And as the Sun-disk shows there seems to run
 A tremor through them, a sudden hush,
 Ere loud as thunder, they all together shout
 The battle-cry of Mewar, and the echoing hills
 Repeat their cry; their tulwars drawn out,
 Like summer lightning, o'er the close ranks flash,
 Ere silence falls, that all more silent seems
 For the past uproar. There Rana Amra sits,
 And in his eyes the battle spirit gleams.
 Who could look on an army such as this,
 And know that they, the men, who formed it, were
 His only, ready to follow him where e'er he lead,
 Ready to die for him, their loyalty their spur,
 That ever drove them on to deeds sublime,
 And not be moved by loyalty like theirs,
 Catching the fever of their eagerness,
 That only for the joy of battle cares?
 Not one of Rajput blood. And Amra was
 His father's son, though luxury had cloyed
 His spirit's working, thus when he saw the throng,
 His better nature his craven thoughts destroyed.

THE RANA AMRA-SINGH.

A reign of more than fifty years gave Akbar time
To mould the Empire, which his strength had gained,
Into a homogeneous whole, within whose bounds
His equal laws and justice have remained
Proof of his genius, while his benevolence,
His freedom from all pettiness and hates,
Which (even though he sometimes deigned to do
Such things as were beneath his dignity), creates
In every mind a vision of a man, and Emperor,
Who justly was then called, "The King of Kings,"
"Shadow of God," and e'en in Rajput legends does one find
The bard, of him cojoined with Pertap, sings.
He wise and busy with the task of weaving in
The thousand threads, that formed the motely weft
Of this his Empire, could spare no time nor men
To harass Mewar, so was the country left,
When Amra had succeeded Pertap on the throne,
In peace and quiet. So this young Rana, who
Had with his father from his earliest years
Lived in the wilds, and while so fighting grew,
Was able now to rest, build up new laws,
Assess the lands, distribute fiefs and states,
The tale of which he caused to be engraved ;
The laws on pillars, the fiefs on copper plates.
Yet was this respite filled with danger too,
For now forgetful of his dying father's pledge
He built himself a palace by the hill-bound lake,
Standing upon the very water's rocky edge.

There did he lie on cushions, watch the sway
 Of dancing girls, while many mirrors clear
 Show endless vistas, room after room in which
 The nautch girls' postures to dimness disappear.
 For twelve long years, this enervating peace
 Sapped at the vitals of the Mewar race,
 Though did the older Chiefs admonish him,
 Fearing, like Pertap, that finally disgrace
 Would follow pleasure, and luxury demand
 A greater scope, and that their land, the price,
 Would come into the Delhi Emperor's hand,
 Their Rajput honour, the final sacrifice.
 Akbar now dead, Prince Selim reigned and took
 The name of Jehangir, "Grasper of all the world,"
 And in his arrogance and lust of power
 Against the Rajputs a Moslem army hurled.
 Now did the old Rajput war-spirit rise
 In the great Chieftains, those who'd fought beside
 The Rana Pertap on many a bloody field,
 And later watched when he, their friend, had died.
 Mounting their war-steeds, gathering their men,
 To Udaipur they rode, where they on Amra called
 To up and lead them against the Moslems now,
 That by attack their plans could be forestalled.
 But Amra listless lay, loath now to leave
 His luxury for all the hardships of the field,
 And by the coward counsel of some parasites,
 Had even thought, 't were better if they yield.
 No words could stir him, though the Chieftains beg
 Him as their Rana to lead them to the fray,
 Until at last the old Chandâvât Chief
 In desperation casts all respect away,

Turning towards the Chieftains who had dared,
 Despite his insults, to pull him from the mire,
 In which he wallowed, he addressed them thus,
 As noble thoughts his noble words inspire :—
 “My friend Chandâvât, and thou my brother Chiefs,
 “I ask thy pardon for my frowardness and pray
 “That thou wilt in the greatness of thy hearts
 “Wash from thy minds my perverse deeds away.
 “Had thou, like I, forgotten that sworn oath,
 “That did my father dying on us place,
 “The name of Amra had been handed down,
 “As Udai-Singh’s, the symbol of disgrace.
 “But now hereafter, having seen my sin,
 “Thou’lt have no cause my sire to regret,
 “I, as thy Rana, will lead thee on to victory,
 “Until my banner on Chitor’s hill is set.”
 Heartened by words like these, as they disheartened were
 When first they found loath to lead the van,
 They felt more loyalty now than if at first had he
 With quick assent, consented to their plan.
 And even as a horse responding to his rider knows
 By some telepathy, not known nor explained,
 His mind and feelings, so through that vast array
 Of fighting men, unreasoned faith obtained
 In Rana Amra, trust in his will to win,
 Trust in his power to lead, and still more strong
 Trust in themselves to overcome all foes,
 By one swift battle, or e’en by warfare long.
 So full of heart, joyous, they started out
 To meet the Moslems, ready to fight and die,
 Yet every one thought not of death, but looked
 Back to return, their banners flying high.

And Amra, who had with his father tactics learned,
Drew up his force to meet them in a pass
Between two hills, from whence on either flank
He could attack their blocked, immobile, mass.
Long was the combat, bloody was the fight,
As hemmed and trapped the fated Moslems fought
With that grim courage helplessness inspires,
Seeking to make the victory dearly bought.
But all things end, and the scant remnant flees
Back to the Emperor, a torn and tattered few ;
While Amra and his Rajputs from this their victory
Fresh confidence in their own power imbue.
But short the truce that followed, Jehangir
Another army against the Rajputs sent,
But now fresh Chiefs had thrown in their lot
With Amra, who with greater forces went
To meet his foemen, and again among the hills
At Rampur did he the Imperial army crush,
Almost exterminating their well-found force,
On whom entangled do the Rajputs rush,
Their wondrous horsemen, slashing and cutting down
The distraught Moslems, who cannot turn nor flee,
Carving broad pathways through their melting ranks,
Till as a mountain torrent by the rains set free,
The crimson blood-stream from the pass pours forth,
Out to the thirsty plain, which drinking deep
Red flushed becomes, while echoing hill to hill
There sounds the clash of arms, and hoarse groans deep
Mark where the wounded half drowned in blood pools lie ;
And over head, watched with eager eyes
Vultures and crows, self-bidden to Death's feast,
In closing circles watch for each one that dies.



*the wounded half drowned in blood pools lie
And over head watched with eager eyes*

Great was the joy in Mewar but in the Delhi court
 Jehangir was troubled at these failures twain,
 For well he knew his enemy by these
 Would new adherents to his force obtain.
 Now Jehangir not willingly would risk again
 A force and loss of prestige by a third defeat,
 Yet hopes by cunning and diplomacy
 To gain his ends, and Rana Amra cheat
 Of the full fruits of his victorious march,
 To turn away the Rajputs from their faith,
 Hoping by seeming to give to them a demigod
 Lead them astray, the followers of a wraith.
 This contemplating, he a Rana raised to rule
 At Chitor, knowing well that every Rajput held
 That fort as sacred, mourning night and day,
 That Bâppâ's seed was from it now expelled.
 And true of Bâppâ's seed his dastard puppet was,
 Sugra, the renegade, son of vile Udai-Singh,
 He too had fought against his brother long,
 The tool and pander of his Moslem King.
 Him did he style, Rana of Mewar, and him he placed
 At Chitor, there to hold his court with those
 Such other Rajputs as would share his shame,
 Lick-spittle scum that every Emperor's knows.
 But no true Rajput would acknowledge him,
 "The Shadow king", who midst grim shadows reigned,
 The tool of Jehangir, as all men knew,
 From whom he had his Ranaship obtained.
 There mongst the palaces despoiled, the shrines profaned,
 He lived with phantoms of the ne'er forgotten dead,
 While old traditions and memories of the past
 Whirled through his mind, as nightly on his bed

He seemed to see dim shadows flit and pass,
Feel on his brow the icy chill of death,
As if some phantom, invisible, yet stood
Beside him, whilst he tightly held his breath,
Striving to catch a sound, then would he hear
Weeping and cries, the tread of ghostly feet,
Rustles and murmurs, the whole night seemed alive
With living dead, he dare not face nor meet.
There midst the wild beast and the ghosts he sat,
Acknowledged only by those men who with him came,
Haunted, reminded, by every sacred spot
Of his dishonour, his past and present shame.
More and more troubled became his restless mind,
Fearful to sleep, though all the long night through
He watched for shadows, no peace at night-time came,
Nor respite from the torments which he knew.
Then on a night, when thunder crashed and rolled,
And lightning flashes, dazzled and displayed,
With vivid light, an instant, every corner clear,
Ere blacker darkness settled; he afraid,
Crouched in his palace, close in his chamber hid,
All entries closed, the windows shuttered tight,
Striving by such means as these to keep away
The phantom terrors of this wild and awful night.
Then, why he knew not yet by some agency
He felt compelling, was he forced to turn,
And seek for something hidden in the shades
Caused by the lamp, that did beside him burn.
Yet nought he saw, but flickering shadows move,
As rose and fell the flame, till to his distraught mind
These shadows seem to gather substance and to mould
Themselves into a figure dimly lined



... .. to his distraught mind
These shadows seem to gather substance and to mould
Themselves into a figure dimly lined

Against the wall ; then sounds a deep pitched voice
 Out of the shadows, and cringing Sugra knows
 There stands the Chitor Goddess, who speaking now,
 More dread and awful to his seeming grows :—

“What dost thou here, thou Sugra, faithless spawn

“Of Udai-Singh, that coward who defiled,

“Though of his right, the throne of my Kings,

“And for vain pleasures from my defence resiled ?

“Have I not sent my spirit messengers

“Nightly to warn thee, thou who dost dare to hold

“Thy mimic court in sacred Durbar Halls,

“Thou who hast to the Moslem Emperor sold

“Thyself and thine, thy son an infidel,

“Thy women folk the harlots of the court,

“Like to thyself, they hold their virtue cheap,

“A thing for auction, for gold and silver bought ?

“Dost think that I will have these ancient halls

“Defiled by thee ? Dost think my arm is weak,

“That by the desolation of my home,

“I cannot still my Godlike vengeance wreak

“On such as thee ? Had but thy blood not been

“The blood of Bâppâ, though coward still thou art,

“Thou hadst not stayed so long, but try me not

“Get to thy kennel, thou dastard dog depart !”

No more he hears, prone on the floor he falls,

And there is found, gibbering in his fear,

When servants, hearing cries, break in the door,

Nor can he to their questions answer clear.

Thereafter does he word to Rana Amra send

Offering to hand to him Chitor, that he

Himself by thus restoring to the rightful heir

The Mewar throne, may be from terrors free,

Nor haunted by the spirits of the hero dead,
 Sleep once again, unfearful of the dark, and know
 Such peace as may to those unworthy come,
 When by their deeds they do repentance show.
 So did he flee from Chitor, hid himself away,
 Fearing the wrath of Jehangir, yet is it writ,
 That after years he did return once more,
 Driven by madness to the Delhi court, and sit
 Within the Hall of Audience, where Jehangir
 Upraided him, speaking to him in his rage,
 More angry at the ruin of his cunningness,
 By which he'd hoped rebellion to assuage.

"Ho, Rana ! dost thou come again to see
 "If thou canst sell some more of thy vile wares ?
 "Hast thou another throne, or another life
 "To barter to whoe'er for such trash cares ?
 "Thou who at first betrayed thy father's land,
 "Selling for riches honour and renown,
 "Content if thou thyself might softly lie
 "To see thy daughters women of the town.
 "Madness must have been mine to trust
 "One such as thee, e'er dreaming all thou gained
 "By fealty to me would make thee faithful to
 "Thy salt, and that no taint remained
 "Of thy unfaith ; well should I then have known,
 "That once a man a traitor is he ever lives
 "A traitor still, and stupid is the man,
 "Who to a traitor power for treason gives,
 "Or trusts a traitor, unless he still shall hold
 "The power to punish, yet had I often heard
 "Of Rajput honour, but truly do I find
 "No truth remains in thy sworn Rajput word.

"Art thou so tired of life, thou darest to come
 "Here in my Audience Hall, to flaunt thy deed,
 "Or dost thou think, in my stupidity,
 "That I will to some other trick accede?
 "Truly the Rajput courage must be great
 "For thee, a double traitor, to thus face
 "The flouted dupe of thine own infamy;
 "Thou outcast bastard of the Rajput race."
 There did the traitor stand, his starting eyes
 Flaming with madness, his shrunken wasted form,
 And trembling limbs, speak of his troubled mind,
 In which a thousand devils seem to storm.
 Yet do these words sink in, and well he knows
 His own disgrace, till driven wild he drew
 His dagger from his belt, and there before the King
 With one swift stroke himself before him slew.
 So Sugra died, dead at the Emperor's feet,
 Scorned by the Moslems, by the Rajputs scorned;
 Traitor to both, his body was cast forth,
 The food for dogs, unburied and unmourned.
 Meanwhile had Amra, on his forefather's throne,
 Collected round him many Rajput clans;
 But finding the old fort untenable, decides
 To leave it now, yet with his Chieftains plans
 To wrest away such other towns and forts,
 As could be held, from Delhi's power and spread
 The Mewar rule, rejuvenate again
 Their former prestige, with himself as head.
 Now mongst the Rajputs, who flocked beneath his sway,
 Were the sixteen sons, who were to Sakta born.
 Great Pertap's brother, who once had saved his life
 When after Huldighat, Pertap forlorn,

Wounded and bleeding, with his war-steed dead,
 Had turned to bay, then had this brother stood
 Beside him there, in the wild darksome pass,
 Swearing his fealty against the Moslem brood.
 In after years settled at Bhynsrorgarh,
 He had reared up his family, his sons
 Wild head-strong youths, though strong and brave,
 There did he die, and so the story runs,
 That did the eldest Bhânji then suggest
 His other brothers should at once prepare
 The funeral pyre and so perform the rites,
 While he himself remaining guardian there
 Should watch, lest had the Moslems, hearing of
 Their father's death, think now to make attack,
 Holding that they would all unready be,
 And win again their longed-for fortress back.
 The younger brothers no objection raised,
 The corpse was burned, the mourners purified,
 And back returned to Bhynsrorgarh to find
 The gateways shut, while from the walls replied
 Their brother to their questions, that there were
 Too many mouths to feed at home, and they
 Must seek their fortunes for themselves, and leave
 Their fortress home, where he to rule would stay.
 Little cared they ; only their steeds and arms they ask,
 Then fare away, free as the wandering wind,
 Ready to welcome any chance that comes,
 So long as they may some excitement find.
 Three things they had that every Rajput loves,
 His steed, his sword, and his own wedded wife,
 With these to hand, no more than this he asks,
 Scorning the ennui of a sheltered life.

Such were the new recruits that Amra gained,
 Achil their leader, while Bâllo named "the strong"
 Was second in command of these wild youths,
 Heroes of many a Rajput battle song.
 Foremost in battle, heedless of their lives,
 In camp they heartened others by their will
 To toil and moil, as preparation needs,
 While joy of life, that seems their lives to fill
 Gives them in every hardship cheerfulness,
 And Bâllo's strength in every man inspires
 The will to work, though tedious be the task,
 That must be done, despite their own desires.
 Thus did "the Sâktâwats" gain their name and fame,
 And high in Amra's confidence, he to them gave
 Honours, that they by birth could not command,
 Though earned by deeds, the brave among the brave.
 Thus when he did Ontâllâ fort surround,
 Not thinking what dissensions might arise,
 He promised that theirs should be the right
 To lead the vanguard and the foes surprise.
 Now had this honour been for countless years
 The Chandâvât Chieftain's hereditary claim,
 Ever since Chonda had Chitor regained
 To hold and rule in his young brother's name.
 So when the Chandâvât Chieftain heard the word
 In anger did he Amra's presence seek,
 Vowing that never should his house's right
 Be given to others by the Rana's unjust freak.
 Who were these upstarts? The sons of Sakta true,
 Brave men no doubt, but though the Rana's kin,
 Their father had in Delhi's forces fought,
 And nought could wash away that cursed sin.

Were he and his, the sons of Chonda now
 To follow in the wake of such as they,
 Not even Chieftains, younger sons who sought
 To carve their fortunes in the battle fray?
 But Amra, caring not to break his plighted troth,
 Answered him thus :—"Let prowess the claims decide
 "He who is first in yonder fort shall hold
 "The future right the vanguard to provide."
 Brave men were these, and loyal, and knowing well
 Confusion would arise if they in pride should strive
 To force their claims, contented were to stake
 All on this chance, to lose or to derive
 Still further honour, no matter which should win,
 If but their efforts placed the Sun-disk high
 O'er wall and bastion, so long as Mewar gained
 They were content, ready themselves to die.
 Why suffer prestige to blind their Rajput eyes
 To their one goal, the triumph of their race,
 Or risk the fulness of altruistic life,
 By deeming loyalty could ever bring disgrace?
 Ere break of day the two clans, mustered strong,
 Start on their way towards the fated fort,
 Each eager to obtain the right to lead the van,
 No matter at what price the right be bought.
 The Saktâwâts first before Ontâllâ came,
 But in their eagerness no ladders with them brought
 To scale the walls, so to the gateway rushed,
 Seeking an entrance ; while the Chandâvâts caught
 In a wide marsh, floundering on their way,
 Saw in the dawn light the Saktâwât clan
 Round the great gateway, then hurry to the walls
 Still hoping yet their right to lead the van

To save from these new upstarts ; so they place
 Their scaling ladders, while foremost at their head
 The Chieftain leads ; but does a well-aimed bolt
 Strike him. He falls among his clansmen dead.
 Meanwhile against the gate the Saktâwâts flung
 Themselves, hewing and battering for an entrance there,
 While over all their war-cry rose and fell,
 The clash of arms, the strident trumpets' blare.
 Yet still the gate withstood, the Chandâvâts now
 Were seen about the walls, then Achil cried :—
 "Bring up the elephants, that they may crush
 "This armoured gate which has our rams defied."
 But was the gate from top to bottom armed
 With iron spikes to fend against attacks,
 Which as the elephants sagacious see,
 Each from those points in trepidation backs.
 No goads nor curses could persuade them to
 Charge on the spikes, that seeing do they fear,
 And from the distance the Chandâvât's cry
 Does Achil, fuming, all too plainly hear.
 Desperate from out the howdah does he jump,
 And stands before the beast, his back tight-pressed
 Against the spikes, determined, though he die,
 The Leader's honour from the rival clan to wrest.
 Then does he to the mahawat loudly cry :—
 "Drive on thy beast against my body, or
 "Thou diest now, for so he cannot see
 "These dagger points, that has he feared before".
 Once more the goad is lifted, driven home,
 The elephant in madness, lumbering, rushed
 Against Achil, crashed through the broken gate,
 Whereon his body, by spikes transfixed, is crushed.

But yet too late. As the Chandâvât fell
 His next of kin, a man already famed,
 For strength and daring, lifted his body up,
 Determined his dead Chief, as he had claimed
 In life, should yet in death be his to claim
 The first to be within that fortress grim.
 The Vanguard Leader, not his by birth alone
 But rightly won, though death first came to him.
 Now climbing up a ladder, though shot rained
 About him, as the hail stones in a storm,
 And swords flashed in the air, as lightning gleams,
 He, upward ever, did with his burden swarm.
 There on the very ramparts did he stand,
 Shouting :—“The vanguard to the Chandâvâts”, we
 “Are first within Ontâllâ,” and he flung
 The Chieftain’s body within the walls, while he
 And all the clan ready to follow still in death,
 As oft in life, their leader overpoured
 The battlements, yelling as madmen may
 The battle cry of their dead Chief and Lord.
 E’en at that moment did another cry ring clear,
 As through the battered gateway dashed the throng
 Of the Saktâvâts, rushing o’er the corpse
 Of their own Chief, yet that for which they long,
 The prize of victory to the Chandâvâts falls,
 The right to lead the vanguard still is theirs,
 The first to be within Ontâllâ’s walls,
 Though each with each the meed of glory shares.
 For to the sons of Sakta honour must be given,
 Who join their rivals in the bloody fray,
 And through defending Moslems, in their path,
 To the strong keep hew out a corpse-strewn way.

Thus fell Ontâllâ, and eighty other forts
 The Rana wrested from the Moslem King,
 Seventeen pitched battles did he fight and win
 Against his foes ; but yet no peace they bring.
 For ever as one army does he break and crush
 Another rises, drawn from the Empire wide,
 While his force weakened in each victory has
 No place from which recruits can be supplied.
 Now Jehangir, after these last defeats,
 Decides by one last effort to throw down
 This Rajput Rana from the pinnacle of fame,
 And in the ocean of his Empire's might to drown
 The Mewar Rajputs, who had so long defied
 The waves of conquest, as some grim reef of rocks
 Stands against the tumult of the storm
 By it o'er-swept, yet still defiant mocks
 The ocean's strength, cleansed by its furious surge,
 Resplendent showing, when placid calm succeeds
 The vain onset, and sullenly the sea once more
 In rolling swell from the attack recedes.
 To this end at Ajmer does he now raise
 The Imperial standard, and underneath his eye
 Prepared an army, of which command he gave
 To his son Pârvez, thinking he might rely
 On him to lead his arms to victory, and he
 This final order gave, ere he, his son, goes forth :
 "If should the Rana or his son to thee repair
 "Receive him not as if thou came in wrath,
 "But with attention, as a Prince, whose blood
 "Is purer than that of these Chiefs who live
 "Beneath our sway, content to be our serfs
 "For that reward which we have power to give.

"Nor yet molest his country, nor profane
 "Their fanes or temples, for well I know they hold
 "Their faith and honour higher than their lives,
 "Thus they may give, what they have never sold."
 But little did the Rana Amra think
 Of weak submission, flushed with his own success,
 He marched against Pârvez, ere he attacked,
 And drove him back. The Moslems e'en confess
 In their own histories, that he was forced to flee
 In wild disorder, pursued, vast numbers lost,
 Back to Ajmer, while Amra still remained
 Rana of Mewar, though sad had been the cost.
 His veterans slain, and no repose is his
 To husband his resources or train young men
 To fill the places of their fathers, who
 Have passed away beyond all mortal ken.
 And yet again a mightier army still
 Jehangir raised, which neath his famous son
 Prince Khuram, better known as Shah Jahan,
 A final victory against the Mewar Rajputs won.
 Not bloodless, though a handful but remained
 To follow "The Sun-Disk" that had so oft
 Led them to victory, gleaming o'er the field,
 As the bright emblem of Surya, who aloft
 Driving his chariot through the heavens doth give
 Light to the earth, and by his mystic power
 Gives life to all things that through his vigour live,
 So did this banner men's hearts with strength endower,
 And with its fall, e'en as the gloom of night
 Covers the earth, and nought but wild beasts prowl,
 So did adversity, and worse than all, disgrace,
 Cover the land with its dark loathsome cowl.

Sad is the history of that last defeat,
 Though even to the last still Amra strives,
 Till did the Moslem by some woeful chance
 Capture and hold the children and the wives
 Of several Chieftains, and messengers forth sent
 Declaring that should Amra not give in,
 They now his hostages, should ere one moon, become
 The playthings of his host, even as Ala-ad-din
 In former times had sworn to vengeance take
 On fair Padmini; but now alas no way
 There was to save them, who hapless now were held
 Prisoners in bonds behind his vast array.
 So fearing for their chastity, which Rajputs hold
 More dear than all things, Amra must agree
 To make submission to his foe, as that alone
 Can these brave women from such defilement free,
 So does he call his few remaining Chiefs to him,
 Holding this last Durbar as independent King,
 Standing before them, no longer upright, strong,
 A grey-haired man, heart-broken, to whom must cling,
 Throughout all ages, the stigma of defeat,
 The only Rana from Bâppâ's days to yield,
 To claim the moslem's grace, though by the Gods themselves
 His doom was written, and his fate was sealed.
 There from the bitterness of his own heart he speaks,
 'And few that heard him could restrain their tears,
 While seeking no condonement does he tell
 Of past ambitions lost in the passing years.
 "My chiefs, the end has come, the bitter end,
 "That we and our forefathers for so long have sought
 "To ward away, for which have thousands died,
 "But has their sacrifice but proved as nought.

"Glorious their deaths, and deathless is their fame,
 "Would we were with them, not theirs the pain to be
 "The humbled vassals of these accursed men,
 "Who Mewar rape of her virginity.
 "You know my father feared my weakness should
 "Reduce his country to its present hopeless plight,
 "But the just Gods on high know well indeed
 "I have like him been foremost in the fight.
 "True, luxury and pleasure cast their lures
 "About me, till you Chieftains showed the way,
 "But not since then can any one aver
 "They e'er saw Amra the coward or poltroon play.
 "How could a leader of such men debase
 "Himself and them by aught but bravery;
 "But to what end has all our striving been,
 "Only to make more hateful this our slavery?
 "For had we killed or smothered in lust and vice
 "Our nobler natures, surely 't would be less hard
 "To feel ourselves the mates of such as those,
 "Who at the first could their own faith discard.
 "What hopes had we, when Sagra, the traitor, gave
 "Chitor to us, and when the Empire's might
 "We overcame, taking the forts and towns,
 "Which had been ours, by conquest and by right?
 "But these were doomed, too many were our foes,
 "Not only Moslems, but those craven curs,
 "Who hated those, like us, whose honour was
 "Too great to buy, not saleable as theirs.
 "And now these Moslems hold within their camp
 "Women and children, knowing that but for them
 "They might our lands lay waste, and we ourselves,
 "Like sheep for slaughter, within their outposts hem,

"Yet could not break us, we who would joyful die
 "Rather than ask for pity, or renounce our rights
 "As Rajputs, men of the Sun-got clan,
 "Descendants of those hero men, whose old-time fights
 "Still form the burden of the legends told
 "Throughout the land; sons of those women who
 "So gladly died on Chitor's hill, that they
 "Might dying still remain both chaste and true.
 "And can we leave their daughters to become
 "The ravaged victims of the Moslem's lust,
 "They who unable are themselves to free,
 "Even by death, and solely in their trust
 "Of us have hope of being saved from that
 "Which is to Mewar women worse than torture dread?
 "What choice is ours, dishonour to our wives,
 "Or sacrifice of all for which our forebears bled?"
 Then spoke the Chiefs:—"Oh, Rana, Thou hast shown
 "Our only way. And none can cast the blame
 "Of this our fall on thee, whose name will still
 "In far off ages yet be known to fame.
 "Well hast thou borne thyself, well hast thou led,
 "True son of Pertap; but now the time is here,
 "When Mewar can no longer hold her own,
 "And still her honour keep unstained and clear.
 "Nought now remains save an ignoble peace,
 "Yet e'en in this our clan alone can boast.
 "We were not beaten, but by ill luck o'ercome,
 "Though close beset by all the Moslem host."
 So were there envoys to Prince Khuram sent,
 Two of the Chiefs, and through them did he plead,
 For safety for the Rajput women, who were held,
 And for their liberty. He for himself agreed

To pay respects to him the Delhi Prince,
 And send his eldest son unto the Moslem court
 To serve the Emperor, but on account of age,
 Excuse from serving for himself he sought.
 And Jehangir, exuberant with delight, -
 That now at last the Mewar Rana should
 Make his submission, he, and whose forebears, had
 Throughout all times all foreign might withstood,
 Fearing that if he treated with harshness now
 The broken Rana yet might some chance arise,
 E'en at the last, to stay his outstretched hands
 From grasping fast the so-long fought-for prize.
 So did the Emperor a friendly firman send,
 That might the Rana rest assured and live
 In his protection, underneath his care,
 And as a solemn testimony to give
 Of his sincerity, he imprints thereon
 His "five fingers," being the manual sign
 Of his own orders, also to Prince Khuram he
 Sent, word, that he should a favouring ear incline
 To any wishes that this illustrious Lord
 Should deign to ask. So was submission made
 Easy indeed for Rana Amra. For it was ordained
 Upon no Mewar Rana should the need be laid
 Of his attending at the Emperor's court,
 Only without his capital each Rana would receive,
 On his accession an Imperial decree,
 Confirming him in power, by the Emperor's leave,
 Thus showing his fealty, and would provide
 A thousand horsemen of the true Rajput breed,
 Equipped and mounted, ready for the field,
 Whenever should the Emperor reinforcements need.

So ran the treaty, but still there yet remained,
 For Amra the sad task of bending down before
 The Moslem Prince, owning his own defeat,
 A degradation that hurt his feelings more
 Than any torture, death, or exile from
 His country, for in his heart he cursed
 The bitter fate, that gave to him no choice
 But to give in, and he to be the first
 Rana of Mewar ever to bow before a man,
 Viceroy of Shiv, High Priest of Eklinga,
 Ah ! bitter was this cup fate held for him
 To drink, or still worse shame by shunning it incur.
 But he, who had faced death a thousand times,
 Born in the hills, brought up to know and see
 The path of honour, would not flinch at last
 From this one course to set these women free.
 So he in state, surrounded by his Chiefs, set forth
 To meet Prince Khuram, though mournful was his face
 He still appeared a worthy scion to represent
 The noblest born of his great birth-proud race.
 And did the Moslem Prince, in whose own veins
 Ran Rajput blood, full honour to him show,
 Seeking by kindness, to mitigate the pain,
 He truly felt the Rana could but know.
 But how could courtesy, or kindness help
 Such bitterness, e'en though the Rana's heart
 Was touched, and for the man a friendship felt,
 Nothing could ease his trouble's aching smart.
 Did not this very kindness pity show,
 And to what state, now fallen, had he come,
 That it should raise in these his foemens' hearts
 Pity for him, and nothing could benumb

The pain he felt, compassion did but pour
 Vitriol upon the bare wound of his pride,
 Who would have rather met with arrogance,
 Than feel that these could fearless put aside
 Their enmity, knowing him helpless now
 To lead again an army 'gainst their might,
 To head a charge of Rajput cavalry,
 And win the glory of a hard-fought fight?
 Nay, nought could now make easier his mind,
 Yet steadfast still, on this his blackest day,
 He showed no anger, and repressed his pain,
 A stoic's part determined there to play.
 Soon was the trial ended, Amra gave
 Presents as fitting to the Prince, and took
 The oath of fealty, and received in turn
 The Emperor's firman; and his voice ne'er shook,
 As he gave up his liberty and land,
 His home, his country, and his pride of race,
 Bowing before the Moslem Prince, although
 His heart was broken by what he felt disgrace.
 As the sun sank, towards his camp he turns,
 No longer free, but now a vassal bound,
 He who had held his head through years so high,
 Rides now degraded, his eyes upon the ground.
 Next morn, true to his word, he sends his son,
 Prince Kurran, to the Moslem camp that he
 Should be presented to the Emperor Jehangir,
 The first from Mewar to own his sovereignty.
 So to Ajmer the young Prince journeyed forth,
 Where he was treated with respect, and placed
 On the right hand of Jehangir, who felt
 Such noble blood the Emperor's throne graced.

There for a year he lived, beloved of all,
 Among the splendours of that regal court,
 But did he feel a poor exchange it was
 For freedom spent in some wild rugged fort,
 His clansmen round him, grim veterans, who loved
 The mad glad life, the early morning breeze
 No freer than themselves, though scant their fare,
 Who scornful hate wine, luxury and ease.
 But what the young Prince felt was multiplied
 A thousand-fold for Amra, for he had breathed
 Throughout his life the breath of freedom, and now gasped
 A vassal ruler, his sword for all time sheathed.
 What though the Emperor to him presents sent,
 Armour and horses. What use had he for these,
 He who could now no longer wage a war,
 Save for the Emperor, and if the Emperor please?
 All was vain mockery, life held for him no bliss,
 His war-spent life had cured him of youth's lust
 For nautch girls dancing, for lasciviousness and ease,
 Which at his country's call he had behind him thrust.
 But now no joy he found in these, and nought beside
 Was left for him; a broken man he hid
 Himself within his palace, brooding on his fate,
 No Emperor's gifts nor kindness could him rid
 Of his great anguish, thus when the Prince returned,
 He did his Chiefs to an assembly call,
 Where did he for one last time speak to them,
 Standing before them in his own Durbar Hall.
 "My Mewar Chieftains! My day is done,
 "My life is over, I can no longer reign
 "The Emperor's vassal, I Great Pertap's son,
 "On whom the Fates too great a task has lain,

"Can not hold up my head and look on you
 "Without a feeling, that somehow I have erred,
 "Done some misdeed, or left some deed undone,
 "Or why have I such punishment incurred,
 "As do the Gods in their great wisdom mete
 "On me defenceless, poor mortal that I am ?
 "Yet though I search my mind, I cannot find
 "The reason that they thus should wish to damn
 'Me who have ever upheld their faith and fought
 "The infidel, not caring what the cost
 "Might be, if only I in fight upheld
 "Their rule on earth, which now indeed seems lost ?
 "I cannot rule, I cannot learn the tricks,
 "That subject rulers must like pet dogs play,
 "Fawning upon their masters, cringing at their word,
 "Eating the scraps, that they may cast their way.
 "Too old am I to learn such tricks as these,
 "I who have ruled so long, unfettered, free ;
 "Therefore will I relinquish all my rights,
 "Since even Death has turned his face from me.
 "Now I upon the forehead of my son,
 "Mark with my finger the "Teeka," to him give
 "In trust the honour of Mewar to hold ;
 "And for that honour only now to live.
 "While I, my Chiefs, bid ye a last farewell,
 "Foredoomed, accursed, why I do not know,
 "Yet so it is, therefore no more to reign
 "I all my honours and my throne forego."
 So speaking did he leave the Durbar Hall,
 Walked from the palace, never to return,
 Until, in after years, his body was
 Brought back, to on his funeral pyre burn.

So ends the history of Rana Amra-Singh,
Last of the freeborn rulers of Mewar,
A noble man, in form as well as mind,
But born, alas, beneath a luckless star.
Thereafter Mewar, rested, sunk in peace,
A subject Kingdom, gaining wealth thereby
Yet by this seeming blessing does her strength
Through long disuse, impotent, atrophy.
Her Chiefs and warriors, though carrying still their swords,
More customed are to bargain than to fight ;
So does the splendour of the "Sun-got" clan
Fade as great Surya's neath the cloud of night.
No more her Ranas lead her cavalry,
In break-neck charges o'er the blood-wet plain,
No more her sons and daughters fighting die,
That true to their own faith they may remain.
And ruined Chitor, crumbling away to dust,
Deserted stands, the emblem of their state,
The outer semblance of strength, yet void
Of that old spirit, which heroes did create.

THE CURSE OF MEWAR.

Come near my son and listen ; bring my sword,
That sword which I shall never wield again
Against the Rajput's foes, who grind us down.
Would I had died upon some bloody plain,
Mid clash of harness, neath the horses' feet,
Mid shouting clansmen. But, alas, no more
The Rajput fights for home, nor wife, nor land,
As once they fought on Chitor's hill of yore.
Soft living, wine and women, now have sucked
The courage from their hearts, their arms are weak,
The foeman comes, the hireling takes the field,
And conquering takes that which the foemen seek.
So whether conquering, or defeated now,
The Rajput loses ; thus indeed our lands,
For which our fathers fought pass from us, fill
The coffers of the hateful Moslem bands.
Ah ! Well it is to die, when all is lost.
I clasp my sword unsullied still and bright,
As it was given to me by those dead hands
Stretched out to welcome me this dreary night.
Well I remember when my father died,
Happy, though stricken, on the battle-field.
Around him lay the foes this sword had slain,
The carnage by the setting sun revealed
More bloodsome seemed in its ensanguined rays.
Far o'er the plain our horsemen urging fast,
Drive on before them all the conquered horde
Of flying foes ; like as a sudden blast

Of wind doth bend and break the ripened corn,
 So stricken these before them bend and fall,
 Then sinks the sun from which our race is sprung,
 And night in kindly darkness covers all.
 Soft blew the night-wind and revived
 The passing spirit with its cooling breath;
 Then, leaning in my arms, my father spoke
 Gazing undaunted in the face of death : —
 "My son, death claims me now the gods decree,
 "That I must leave this land I love so well,
 "And pass to that unknown whence none return;
 "Yet ere the spirit leaves this battered shell,
 "I give to thee my blessing and my sword,
 "A Rajput sword, undrawn save on the side
 "Of Right or Weakness, do thou guard it well
 "As thou wouldst guard thy newly-wedded bride.
 "Thou, who wilt now become, ere morning light
 "Breaks on the hills around this darksome plain,
 "The second in the kingdom that has borne
 "Aloft its Sun-faced banner free from stain.
 "Through countless ages; guard that banner well.
 "That where e'er the Sun-god throws his light,
 "The name of Mewar and the "Sun-got" clan
 "May ever with him shine undimmed and bright.
 "But moisten now my lips and lay me down,
 "Death closes in. Ah! Brahma, Vishnu, Shiv,
 "Gods of my fathers, Râmâ see thy son
 "Comes to thy call, if sinful, Gods forgive."
 He died :—Fast sped swift horsemen to the hills
 Wherein our ancient stronghold peaceful lay,
 The tidings shouting :—"Weep! Your lord is dead."
 But answering came a voice :—"How went the day?"

Checked were the horsemen for before them stood,
 Veiled but erect, superb in form and mien,
 She whom I called my mother, Rajput she
 First of the battle news from them would glean.
 Then having heard, upraised her voice and cried :—
 "Shout songs of joy, victorious in the fight,
 "My Lord was slain, thrice happy knowledge his,
 "Who dying saw the victory of right,
 "And saw beside him in a living son
 "The semblance of his youth reborn again,
 "And knows that now before another night
 "Has cast her mantle over hill and plain
 "I shall be with him, whom he held so dear,
 "Though dearer still was he indeed to me."
 Here her voice faltered, but the happy thought
 Of quick reunion bade her sorrow flee.
 There by the river's rocky bank we built,
 High as befitting him, who died, his pyre,
 Soaking the wood with oil and scented spice,
 That fiercer still might rage the raging fire.
 Then at the close of day, when falls the night,
 My mother comes in all her jewels decked,
 Around her women shriek and beat their breasts,
 She silent comes, tearless her head erect.
 She climbs the pyre, standing before us lit
 By light of torches, held aloft by slaves
 In dismal saffron clad, while darkness shrouds
 All things below in thick and murky waves
 Hushed was the weeping, no sound was heard,
 Save the shrill hiss of breath through tight-clenched teeth,
 While she alone, there on that awful pyre
 Speaks once again to me who stood beneath :—

"My son, thou whom I ever loving taught,
 "E'en from the day when first thy childish mind
 "Could understand the meaning of my words
 "The duty of a Rajput to his kind;
 "Keep truth and honour ever as thy guide,
 "Nor dream that any deed of ill can gain
 "Merit for any reason, bad seed brings forth
 "Nothing at harvest save unwholesome grain.
 "Therefore, since thou this night will be bereft
 "Of both thy parents and must tread alone
 "Without their counsel all the path of life,
 "From now until death claims thee for his own.
 "Mark thou these words, and let thy life forthshow,
 "By truth and honour in each trivial deed,
 "Thy parents' teaching; thus may honour come
 "To us departed, and the Rajput seed.
 "Fear not to speak should silence breed the thought,
 "That thou consent to aught that seems a lie,
 "E'en to the King. Thy truth is more to thee
 "Than life itself, for it if needs be die.
 "Nor ever let thine honour be besmirched
 "By word or deed, but as a breast-plate bright
 "Keep thou its sheen undimmed through all thy years,
 "And have no fear of any man's despite."

Now as she ceased to speak, the fire was lit,
 Up leap the flames, as though they would aspire
 To fold her round in passionate embrace,
 While curling smoke resists their hot desire.
 How can I tell thee more of that grim night?
 When all is hazy from the mist of pain
 That shrouded all. I with unseeing eyes
 Still gazed, while streamed my tears like rain.

Thus died my parents, happy in their love.
 But I must tell you ere this laboured breath
 Fail me, why I their son forlorn and old,
 Hold out my arms to welcome tardy death.
 Long years ago, when I in boyhood came
 From this grim fortress to that palace fair,
 That rising from the waters of the lake
 O'er-tops the city, gleaming in the air,
 And like some fairy castle first reflects
 The sun-beams in the city of the dawn,
 And in the evening blushes to receive
 The parting kiss of Surya. There was born,
 In the zenana at the dawn of day,
 A female child, perfect in form and face,
 More fair than even fair Padmini's self.
 And ever as she grew she grew in grace.
 How beautiful she was ! Ah well I know,
 Who saw her oft as when a child unveiled
 She played about the palace, and my heart
 Beat faster as she came by love assailed.
 Yet those were happy days, when she and I,
 Unhampered by the purdah's cruel law
 Could play together, and she'd beg of me
 To tell her stories of the Chiefs she saw,
 Or how the former rulers of Mewar
 Had fought the ever-coming Moslem hordes,
 How often broken these were driven back
 Before the men who scorned to call them Lords.
 But of Padmini she more often asked,
 And never wearied of the tale oft told
 Of her whose beauty caused such bitter woe
 To come upon the Rajput clan of old,

Who rather than she should a victim fall
 Into the hands of the great Moslem King,
 Calm to a living death by choking fire
 Lead all her handmaids. Then to me she'd sing
 The songs of Meerabai, poetess and queen,
 Of Kumbha Rana, and the soft sweet notes
 Of her pure matchless voice, I can recall
 As down the vale of time the vision floats
 Of her as then I saw her, long ago.
 But soon unbending custom from my view
 Took that sweet presence, I had learned to love,
 And her within the falling purdah drew.
 While I without, bereft, lived in the past,
 Which none could take away, and in my heart
 Enthroned alone, she reigned supreme;
 Ah hapless fate that kept us two apart!
 She born of those, whose fate it is to rule,
 I born of those, whose fate it is to fight,
 For those her parents, and 't was vain for me
 To ask her hand, nor yet in hidden flight
 Could I have found my happiness with her.
 For had we fled, then had been drawn my sword,
 (That selfsame sword my father gave to me),
 In war against my brothers and my Lord.
 Forsooth could I? "The guardian of the Queens'
 Steal from among them one beneath my care?
 What though she love me, could that love blot out,
 The vile dishonour I should make her share?
 Then came the news, that almost broke my faith,
 She was betrothed to Jaipur's wealthy King,
 Wealthy indeed by vile and faithless deeds,
 Such power too had he as wealth may bring,

But ne'er could power wash away the stains
 That had besmirched the fallen Rajput name,
 Had they not sent their daughters, Rajput maids,
 To Delhi's court to live the life of shame?
 Selling their honour as the price of peace,
 They had become the outcasts of our race.
 Should we then give them of our purest blood?
 Pandering to them share in their disgrace?
 Yet was the realm of war's long ravage weary,
 Poor were the people, famine stalked the land,
 So many counselled :—"Better seek delay,
 And send soft answers by some trusty hand."
 Then stood I forth in Durbar, thus I spoke :—
 "What is this counsel? Better seek delay"
 "Are we not Rajputs of the "Sun-got" clan?
 "Shall we not answer either Yea or Nay?
 "Truly our courage wanes if now we fear
 "To answer thus to these vile Jaipur thieves
 "Since when have we become so weak of will
 "That we by words, would seek these vain reprieves?"
 Some laughed, but some among the elder men
 Up held my saying, until one man rose up,
 And speaking thus, gave words to many's thought
 Though none had spoken; 't was the bitter cup
 We had put from us, seeking not to see
 That which was daily plainer to the view,
 For with the arrogance of our proud race,
 Before our eyes the veil of pride we drew.
 "How shall Mewar Princesses husbands find
 "Fit for their blood, when all beyond our lands,
 "Have done the cursêd thing, have given their maids
 "To be the playthings of the Moslem bands?

"Yet if we only marry mongst ourselves,
 "Then will the race degenerate until
 "We are no longer men of strength and power
 "But weak and forceless puppets without will.
 "Therefore I counsel, for the greater good
 "Of all our clan, that we at last withdraw
 "Our veto from this marriage and allow
 "Our daughters to the Chiefs they wed of yore."

His word prevailing, answer then was sent
 Back to the King, that when the maid became
 Of fitting age, and the sage Brahman priests
 Should a propitious marriage day proclaim,
 She should be given him, with dower meet.
 Without the city gate should be prepared,
 Upon the plain, a camp for him and his,
 When he unto the marriage feast repaired.
 From out the Durbar when this word was sent,
 I walked as one, who in the depths of night,
 Sleeping, without volition rises up
 And walks unknowing, without aim or sight.
 Down the steep stairs outside I found my way,
 Through the main courtyard to the outer gate,
 Then on the shores of the Pichola lake,
 Alone I fought my battle with my fate.
 Hard 't was to know which way my duty lay,
 Whether to listen to that haunting cry
 That thundered :—"Surely far for her 't would be
 "Better a virgin maid unwed to die
 "Than in all honour, in those cursed arms,
 Become the wife of an unhonoured King."
 Then whispered passion's tempting voice :—
 "Why should she do the one or other thing?

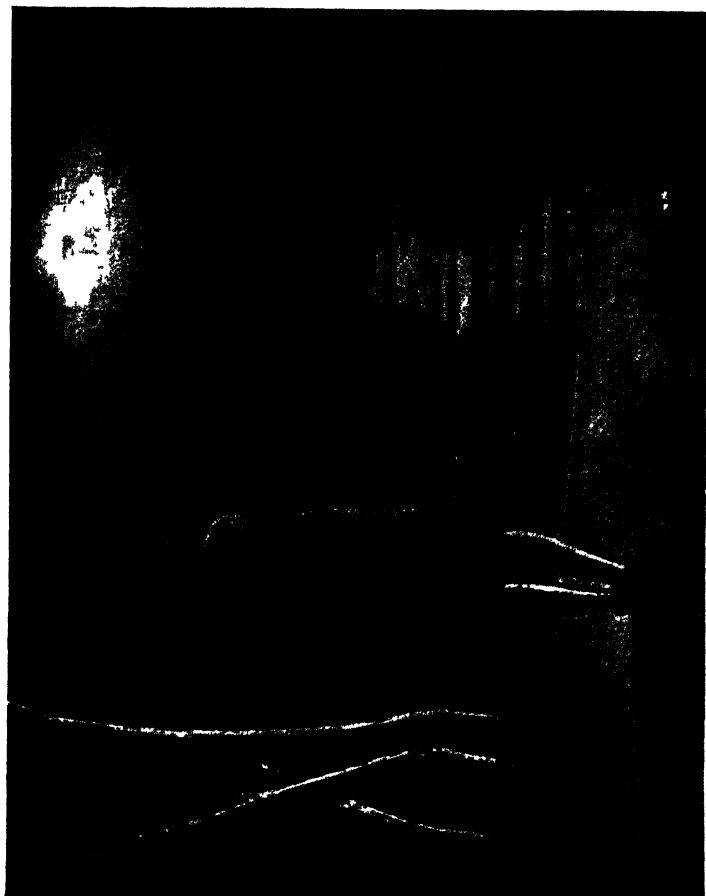
"Are you not equal to this King in blood ?
 "Are you not royal, in all but very name ?
 "Why not then take her, save her life, and e'en
 "Save her dishonour from that bed of shame ?"
 Thrice t'wards the palace listening I turned,
 Thrice clearer reason turned my feet again,
 Then prone upon the ground, I fell, and cried
 Unto the Gods to keep us both from stain.
 How could I know then how my humble prayer
 Would granted be, or how the Gods on high,
 Smiling indeed at men's simplicity.
 Grant them their prayer, but yet their wish deny ?
 Just as the sun behind the mountains sank,
 Came to my mind my mother's parting words :—
 "Keep truth and honour ever as thy guide."
 Soft in the wind they came as songs of birds.
 Then in my heart I saw, which way was mine,
 Honour forbade with her my seeking flight,
 And since the Rajput word had promised her,
 Truth forbade death to her in its despite.
 Time passed. But ere the marriage-day was fixed
 Her father and our King, by death displaced,
 Bhim Singh, the wanton, on the throne was set,
 And by his vices all the clan disgraced.
 Jodhpur, his weakness seeing, quickly sought
 By daring inroads fertile lands to gain
 From Mewar, tired of endless sand and drought,
 That were his birthright on the Mâr-wâr plain.
 Bhim Singh, the coward, as the price of peace,
 Unheedful of his father's plighted troth,
 Offers his sister to the Jodhpur Prince,
 He fears to fight, so breaks a Rajput oath.

But this more danger to his country brings,
 Since when this contract is by Jaipur known,
 His greater army on our Northern states
 In quick revenge by him in force is thrown.
 Now, 'twixt two foes, Bhim Singh repents too late
 The broken promise, and in fear aspires
 To make them fight together shunning still
 The battle, lest his own debased desires
 Should be curtailed, so mid his women he
 Lustful and drunk by opium and by wine
 Lies in his palace, while the Rajput clans
 Fighting together, plunder and rapine.
 The Moslems now no allied foe to fear,
 Come 'gainst the Rajputs swift from South and North
 Yet does Bhim Singh, ravager of maidens,
 Lie with his women, fearful to go forth.
 At last in private came some lewd fellow
 Of his excesses, and this counsel gave :—
 "Better it were if you the Princess slay,
 And by her death the war-racked Rajputs save."
 Cursêd his word, yet this in very truth
 Seemed but the way to end this fatal strife.
 Still had we fought when first the lust of land
 Had brought Jodhpur, we then had saved her life.
 But all the weakness, cowardice, and lies
 Had left no opening save this vile deed,
 So by the counsel of this drunken knave
 Bhim Singh was led, and so her death agreed.
 When this I heard, all my hidden passion
 Leaped once again to newer wilder life,
 What were the Rajputs? What my country's weal?
 If I could only call that maid my wife?

Unstayed by sentries, drawn from my own men,
 In the Zenana she I fearless sought,
 Found her and told her, how ere morning light
 Peace with her life her brother would have bought.
 Then like a torrent suddenly released
 From all restriction, burning words pour forth,
 No longer honour, country, clan, nor king,
 Live to restrain them in my passion's wrath.
 Pleading, I tell her how my love for years
 Grew from the day when first I saw her face,
 How had my heart with yearning almost broken
 In those long years outside her bidding place,
 How I had stood at night-time fondly gazing
 On that dim light that from her window came,
 How I had tried in vain my love to stifle,
 But could not quench so fierce a burning flame.
 Then I besought her from her death to flee,
 Leaving for ever that accurséd place,
 And in some country with a chosen few *
 Retrieve the fortunes of the Rajput race.
 But thus she answered, and her bright eyes shone,
 As stars at night-time when the moon is hid,
 "Surely, Salumba, thus you ne'er taught me
 "In those old days, aye then thy words forbid
 "All thought of self the country's weal before,
 "And oft ye told me happy 't was to die
 "For home and country, for the Rajput race,
 "Yet now thou comest, tempting me to fly.
 "Is it not best for me a virgin maid
 "To die in honour for my country's weal,
 "Than to become the Queen of either King,
 "For whom no love nor honour could I feel?

"How could I honour those who pander to
 "The foes of our religion and our race ?
 "And love ; Ah, thou hast all I have to give.
 "Oft from behind the grille I saw thy face
 "As thou from Durbar or affairs of state
 "Came from the King, and happy then was I
 "And on that vision lived until some chance
 "Brought thee again before my longing eye.
 "Ah ! Peace how perfect, had but fate decreed
 "That you and I in wedlock might be bound.
 "Ah ! Joy how great, could honour but allow,
 "We twain, as one, in this world then had found.
 "But yet perchance beyond Death's closêd door
 "We may together in new worlds more fair
 "Be joined as one, Oh ! blessed hope of bliss
 "That keeps my heart from breaking in despair.
 "There too may we, not fearing Death's grim call,
 "Find peace and joy, that are denied us here
 "Where cruel fate and honour's laws divide
 "Our aching hearts. Thus death no longer drear
 "Holds out new hopes for me of perfect bliss,
 "That I on earth could in no way obtain ;
 "Life means dishonour, thus my death alone,
 "The Gods decree, can keep us both from stain.
 "Love ! but for thee my heart is sore oppressed,
 "Since thee I leave to bear the harder lot,
 "Thy country riven by opposing foes,
 "Thy King, my brother, but a drunken sot.
 "Thy hand must raise the Sun-faced banner high,
 "Thy life must be a pattern for the youth
 "Of Mewar, and thou too must raise up sons,
 "To propagate thine honour and thy truth.

“For now more than at any other time
“Good men must raise good to counteract
“The vices that these softer times have brought,
“And this proud kingdom have so sorely racked.”
There then I left her, without touch of hand,
I left her standing, for my manhood strong
Had ne’er resisted touch of flesh on flesh.
I knew her right, my passion did but wrong
The faith I had in her, who e’er had shown
A love for those who sacrifice their life
For country’s good ; yet bitter did it seem
To have her bid me seek another wife.
Too hard it seemed that night when once again
I wandered by the dark Pichola lake,
Knowing that there within that hated pile
She soon would die. I felt my heart must break.
What happened then I know not but at dawn
Far in the hills, me roaming, still they found.
One of that fateful night the story told,
And grief by anger in my heart was drowned.
When all was quiet in the outer courts,
And far below the sleeping city lay,
To the Zenana came a shrouded man,
Shunning the light of lantern’s fitful ray ;
Up the dark stairway, by the passage wall,
Feeling each turning, silently he creeps,
Scarce drawing breath, he to the chamber comes
Wherein alone the Mewar Princess sleeps.
Deeply she sleeps in peace, now the turmoil
Of hard decision has been swept away ;
There to her bed-head crawled the assassin,
And gazes on her as she dreaming lay.



*Too hard it seemed that night when once again
I wandered by the dark Pichola lake,*

Down from her face, as she slept, had fallen
 Her veil and falling left to sight revealed,
 In the dim light of a lamp low burning,
 All her fair beauty unto now concealed.

Silent he looks, spell-bound without motion,
 On that pure maiden, he had come to slay,
 How can he murder one so exquisite ?

Dropping his sword, he blindly turns away.
 At the sound, upstarts the outraged maiden,
 Snatching her veil about her blushing cheeks,
 Sees on the ground the sword where it had fallen,
 And the plot knowing, proudly to him speaks :—

“What means this insult ? By whose base command
 “Has this Zenana violated been ?

“Cannot a Princess unveil, while sleeping,
 “Without the fear she veilless may be seen” ?

Shamed by her hauteur, as before subdued
 By her great beauty, thus he makes reply :—

“Vile was my action and accursêd he

“Who shameless sent me, I deserve to die.

“Thy face so matchless to mine eyes revealed

“Sapped all the strength I had to do the deed,

“Now therefore slay me, let my blood atone,

“Humbly I kneel and death from you do plead.”

“Nay” she replied, “no Rajput by my hand

“Shall fall in death ; yet since no more your hand

“Can strike me down ; speak thus unto the King,

“Whose want of honour these dark doings planned.”

“Thus saith thy sister, whom I cannot slay,

“Shameless is he who lifts a sister’s veil

“Before the eyes of men of lesser state.

“Have ye no spark of honour that a male,

"By your command, within these walls is sent

"To slay at dead of night a Raput maid ?

"Am I a wanton or a courtesan,

"That you have thus my hidden charms displayed ?

"Now since this man has found too hard for him

"The task thou set him, let some female slave

"Bring me a poisoned cup, that I may die

"By mine own hand, and thus the Rajputs save".

At her command he sought out where the King,

Seeking to fan his burnt-out passion's fire,

By lewd music, and naked nautch-girl's dance,

Would satiate his hardly-won desire.

He from her virgin presence lately come,

Revolting at the vice, her message gave,

Then hastes away and with that unstained sword

Took his own life and did his honour save.

That night, alone, she in her chamber took

The fatal cup, that one to her had brought,

Then, (so a list'ning slave-maid since has told),

Once cried my name ere death in it she sought,

Ah ! How my anger flamed, madly I strode

Back to the palace, to the Durbar hall,

And standing there, before the quaking King,

I spoke these words, clear in the face of all.

"Thou call'st thyself, King of the Sun-got clan,

"Thou cringing wanton. Thou who bring'st disgrace

"By thy vile deeds, and cowardice, and lies,

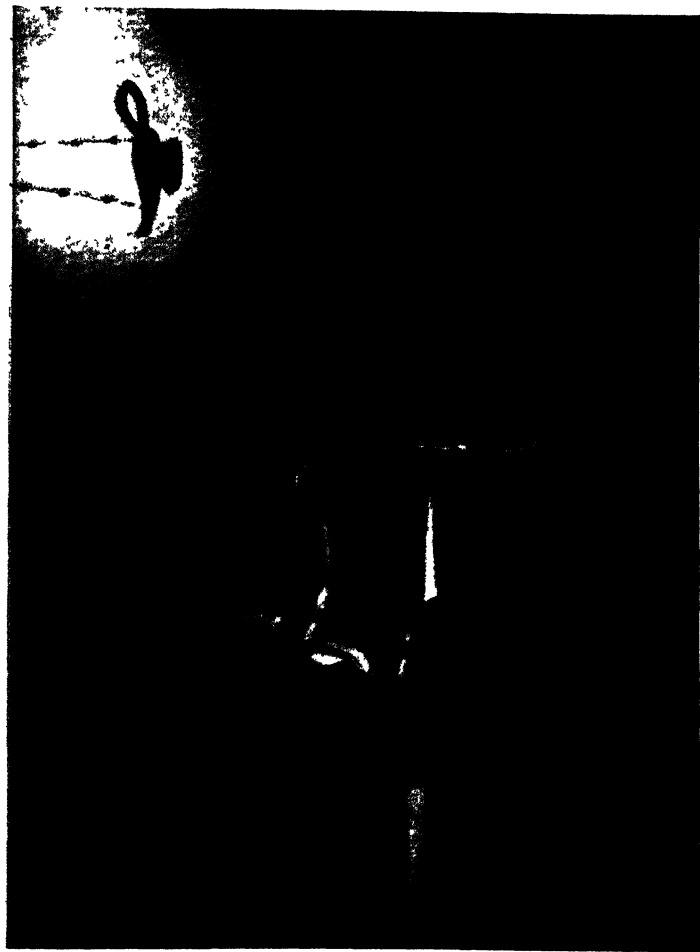
"On all the men, who comes of that grand race.

"Thou who but now hast vilely done to death

"One of thy blood :—though how the selfsame womb

"Could such twain offspring to one father bear

"Passes my ken. Had but the mystic loom



*That night, alone, she in her chamber took
The fatal cup.*

"Of fate wove out her destiny to be
 "The Mewar ruler, then had our swords mown
 "The foemen down, e'en as a sickle mows
 "The golden corn. Then had our banner flown
 "On Jodhpur's fort, had he but dared to loose
 "One single man of all his thieving bands
 "On Mewar soil, nor had the jackal host
 "Of Moslems feast upon the Rajput lands.
 "But thou accursêd coward that thou art,
 "Shirkest thy duty in thy country's need.
 "Therefore before thy very throne I stand,
 "And pray the Gods to damn thee and thy seed,
 "Lest things like thee, I cannot call them men,
 "Should from thy loins and thy debasêd lust
 "Rise to the Kingship; and by vice and wine
 "Drag down the Mewar honour to the dust.
 "I call the Gods to witness to my curse,
 "That on thy death shall live no son of thine
 "To rise to Kingship, nor shall son again
 "Succeed in Mewar in the Kingly line."
 Thus did I curse him in the years gone by,
 The years that crawled, for me they never sped,
 Thou knowest how the Gods my curse did hear,
 And how his almost hundred sons are dead,
 Not one remained to take his place when he
 Besotted, feeble, by his loathsome life,
 The pander of our foes, lost to all shame,
 Died on the bosom of his newest wife.
 He died; and dying even now I pray :—
 "In Hell, Ye Gods, if Hell indeed there be
 "Let his soul burn and burn and pity not,
 "But damn ye him to all eternity."

And now Death's darkness closes all around.

But what is that sweet vision that I see ?

"My Love ! My Love ! I see thine arms outspread

"In welcome to'ards me, and I come to thee !"

